



DOWNTOWN ALBANY STRATEGY

PHASE 2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

February 6, 2026

Prepared by Highland Planning



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OVERVIEW

DOWNTOWN ALBANY STRATEGY

In Spring 2025, Governor Kathy Hochul launched the Championing Albany's Potential (CAP) Initiative, a historic \$400 million State-led investment to revitalize the city's core. A central component is the Downtown Albany Strategy, a public process to create a blueprint for high-impact projects that strengthen economic vibrancy, housing, public safety, and quality of life. The CAP Initiative is led by Empire State Development (ESD) and dedicates \$200 million to implementing projects that reinvigorate commercial corridors, expand housing, support small businesses, and transform underutilized spaces, ultimately diversifying Albany's economy, attracting new investment, and delivering visible results for the community. The development of the Downtown Albany Strategy is led by MIG and supported by Highland Planning, Streetsense, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Metropolitan Urban Design Workshop, STC Design, and Sherpa.

Phase 1 of the Downtown Albany Strategy focused on understanding priorities for growth and impact, as well as establishing a set of strategies to measure the success of the proposed investment. Community input helped refine top priorities for downtown, informing investment opportunities, growth targets, and evaluation criteria. Read more about the public input received during Phase 1 here: downtownalbanystrategy.com/engagement.

ABOUT PHASE 2

Public engagement during Phase 2 focused on identifying the investment opportunities and policies most likely to drive meaningful change in Downtown Albany. This stage was designed to refine the Strategy's emerging building blocks and priority areas, serving as a framework for future development rather than a final selection of specific projects.

Through Phase 2 engagement, the project team received input from over 500 people. Engagement activities included a public Open House, online Questionnaire #2, and a youth focus group. These outreach efforts were guided by the project's core engagement principles of continuous transparency, accessibility, flexibility, and trust to ensure an inclusive and responsive process that represents the diverse voices and needs of Downtown Albany.

GROWTH PRINCIPLES

Based on public feedback in Phase 1, growth principles were developed to guide decision-making related to Albany's growth. The following growth principles were shared with the public during Phase 2 engagement:

- Attract and retain residents;
- Grow and diversify jobs;
- Create vibrancy and boost visitation;
- Attract private investment;
- Reduce vacancy; and
- Ensure that growth benefits everyone.

WHERE WE'RE CONCENTRATING

In Phase 2, three geographic areas were introduced as the focus of the Downtown Albany Strategy.

THE CORE

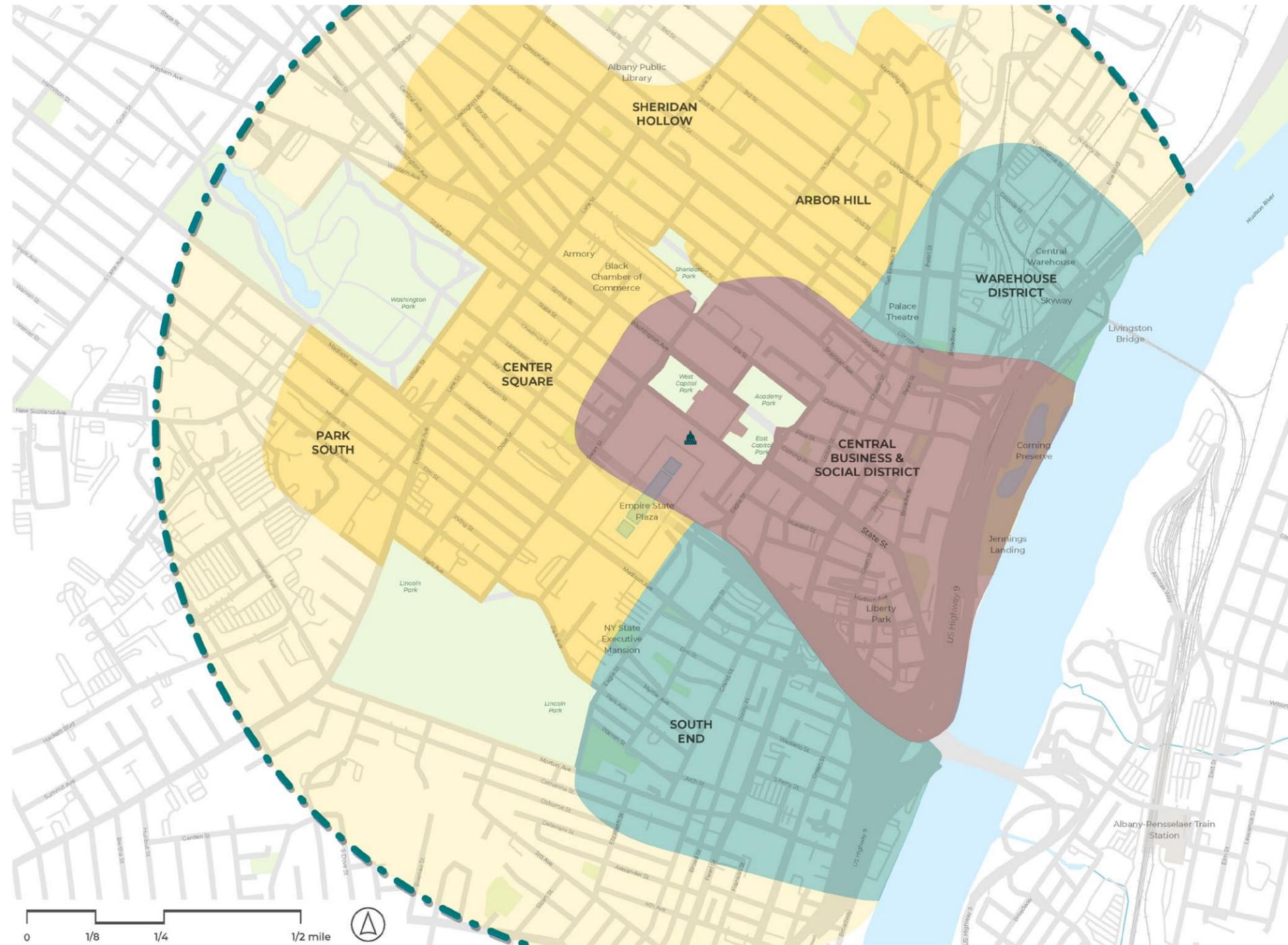
Downtown's engine of growth—where new housing, jobs, and culture take root. This is where major **residential buildings, street life, and investment** set the pace for the rest of the city.

DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS

Where Downtown's energy expands into gateways that **connect** the core, neighborhoods, and waterfront. These areas **mix and concentrate jobs, housing, and culture** so more people share in Downtown's growth.

NEIGHBORHOOD ANCHORS

The neighborhoods that make Downtown **livable**—with new housing, safer streets, and everyday destinations. Anchors **extend the benefit of growth**—new homes, small businesses, and culture—into surrounding communities.



INVESTMENT AREAS

Within the three geographic areas where the Downtown Albany Strategy is focusing, seven Investment Areas were described and shared with the public during Phase 2.

Neighborhood Anchor
International District

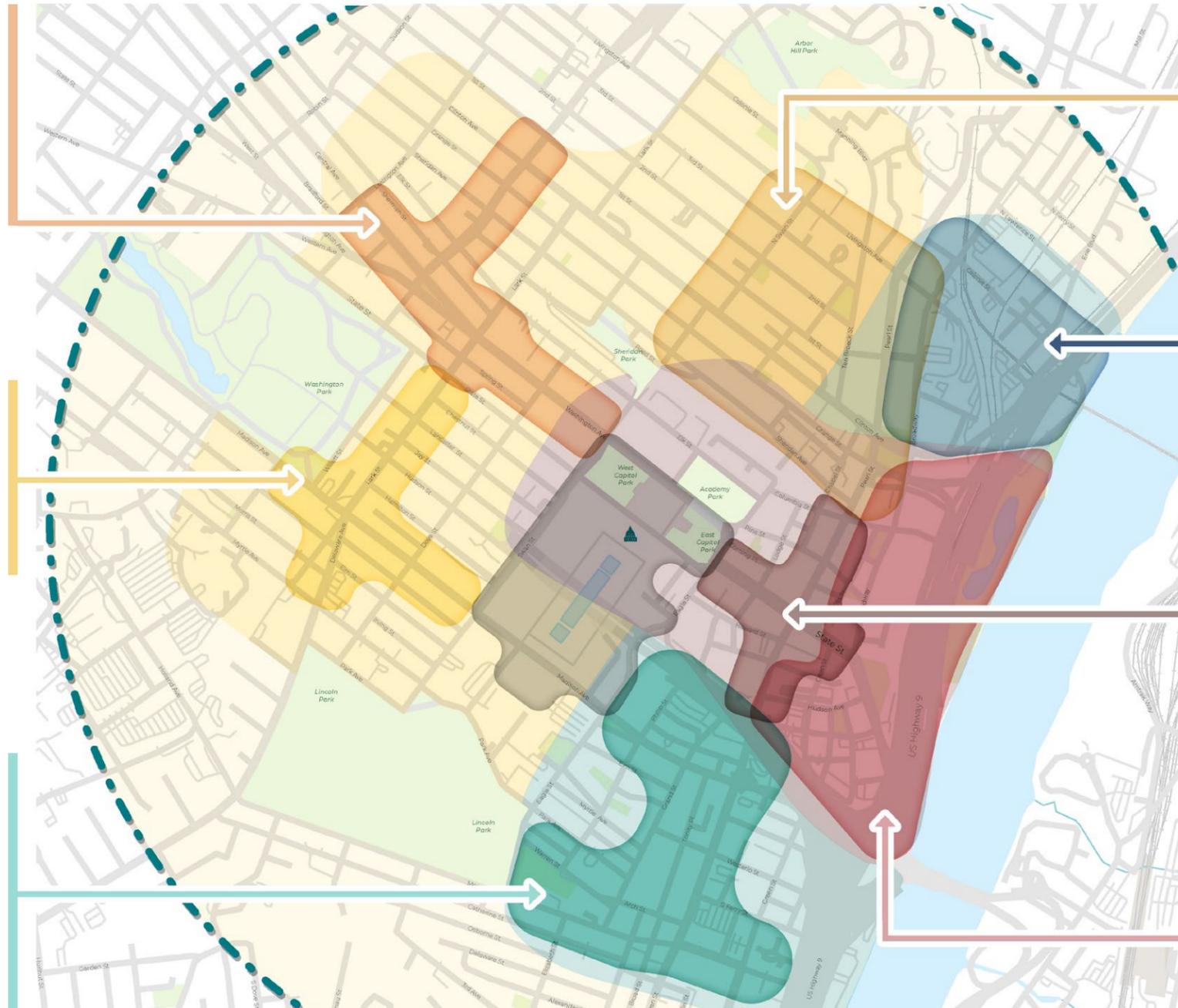
A multicultural destination celebrating Albany’s global businesses—with walkable streets, welcoming public spaces, and new housing opportunities.

Neighborhood Anchor
Center Square

Lark Street strengthened as Albany’s primary village corridor—linking parks, civic life, and local shops in a walkable, welcoming corridor.

Downtown Gateway
South End Gateway

A residential and institutional southern gateway connecting across former barriers—where diverse housing options, local institutions, and heritage destinations benefit longtime and new residents.



Neighborhood Anchor
Clinton Square Arts & Heritage District

A historic neighborhood reconnected to Downtown’s core through culture, heritage, new housing, and year-round activity.

Downtown Gateway
Warehouse District Gateway

Where industry meets creativity—a growing waterfront gateway that extends Downtown north, connecting the core to a wealth of new living, jobs, entertainment, and recreation opportunities.

The Core
Albany’s Downtown Heart

State and Pearl Streets reborn as the Capital Region’s premier living, dining, and shopping destination—a true 24/7 social district and city center.

The Core
Albany’s New Downtown Neighborhood

A new mixed-use neighborhood for jobs, housing, and culture—anchored by Liberty Park, Broadway’s historic buildings, signature public spaces, and connections to the waterfront.



2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

OPEN HOUSE

The second public event for the Downtown Albany Strategy was an Open House held on Wednesday, November 12, 2025 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Albany Hilton, hosted by Empire State Development (ESD). Approximately 300 participants attended, including state agency staff and elected officials. The Open House provided public updates on the planning process, shared investment opportunities and policies, and gathered feedback on specific strategies to refine focus areas.

The event featured five interactive stations, each containing four to six exhibits guided by facilitators. The Open House exhibit boards are available on the [project website](#). Attendees used a “[Local Guide](#)” to document their input and participated in an interactive poll. Partner agencies, including the New York State Office of General Services and Department of Transportation, were also present to share information on the Reconnect the Plaza and Reimagine I-787 initiatives. Key engagement activities included:

- Providing feedback on proposed strategies via open-ended questions and sticky notes.
- Documenting specific input on proposed investment bundles within the provided Local Guide.
- Engaging with subject matter experts at themed stations to discuss Downtown Albany’s future.

The open house was held in an ADA-compliant facility with Spanish-language translators available throughout the session. Outreach for the event was conducted via a coordinated effort including flyers, palm cards distributed at local businesses, social media, ESD email announcements, and a dedicated Eventbrite page.

QUESTIONNAIRE #2

From December 2 to December 16, an online questionnaire was available to collect input from those unable to attend the Open House, and 155 responses were recorded. The questionnaire replicated the engagement activities from the in-person event, inviting participants to share feedback on proposed investment bundles and strategies for the three Investment Areas. The questionnaire was designed to be completed in approximately 20 minutes and was promoted alongside other Phase 2 engagement efforts through the project website, social media, and email, with additional outreach supported by the Youth Focus Group.

YOUTH FOCUS GROUP

On December 10, the Downtown Albany Strategy consultant team, in collaboration with Reimagine I-787 and Reconnect the Plaza, conducted a youth-centric focus group about the future of Downtown Albany at the Albany Public Library on Washington Avenue. The focus group included about 30 youth, young adults, and youth organizers. Participation was coordinated by:

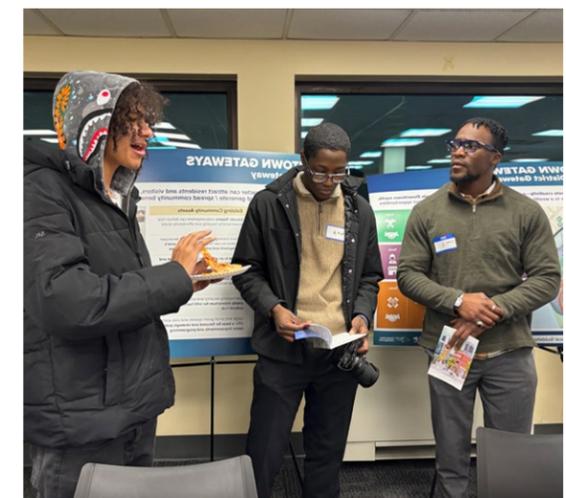
- We Are Revolutionary,
- Boys and Girls Club,
- Capital District YMCA, and
- City of Albany Department of Youth and Workforce Services.

After a brief introduction to the Governor’s CAP Initiative (including Downtown Albany Strategy, Reimagine I-787, and Reconnect the Plaza), participants were invited to identify changes that would make Downtown Albany a place where they would choose to stay and build their lives. Participants brainstormed ideas, selected their top five priorities, and then presented their top priorities to the full room. Participants then circulated throughout the room to speak with the different project teams and review draft recommendations.



*Our kids are more than basketball. We need more **third spaces** and **youth-led programs** that let them build life skills like cooking, language learning, and professionalism.*

YOUTH ORGANIZER





KEY TAKEAWAYS ACROSS PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Phase 2 community feedback helped shape the overall investment approach and clarify priorities for future decision-making. The key themes that emerged are summarized below, with additional detail provided in the following chapter and informed the investment structure of the final strategy.

Neighborhood Investment

- Prioritize **human-scale, mixed-use development** rather than large, single-use projects. Focus on tangible, near-term improvements and using updated incentives to support **responsible redevelopment**.
- **Invest equitably and visibly** to support residents through housing that is within reach to multiple income levels, essential services, and **dedicated youth activities**, creating stronger economic and civic pathways.
- Focus on **adaptive reuse and revitalization of existing buildings**, preserving historic assets while encouraging infill and neighborhood-compatible growth.

Public Spaces & Local Businesses

- **Activate downtown and neighborhood hubs** with cultural events, community activities, and accessible youth programming, creating **vibrant public spaces**, third spaces, and social gathering opportunities.
- Center development on residents' needs, providing **essential services** such as grocery stores, pharmacies, housing, and family-friendly amenities.

Safety & Comfort

- Promote **safe and welcoming streets** by addressing concerns around drugs and violence while supporting community-based programs and environmental design strategies that help residents and visitors feel secure.

Connectivity

- Focus on **multimodal investments**, including walkability, transit, and safe streets, that ensure the public realm is accessible, inclusive, and usable for people of all ages and abilities, while **linking neighborhoods** to key waterfront and cultural destinations.

YOUTH-CENTRIC PRIORITIES

Participants in the Youth Focus Group reflected on what would motivate them to make Albany their permanent home. Many themes identified in the Youth Focus Group were also echoed in comments from the Open House and Questionnaire #2.

Expand youth-centered spaces and programming.

Establish affordable, year-round indoor gathering spaces, teen clubs, and extracurriculars. Prioritize **youth-led initiatives** that allow teens to design programs while building practical life, career, and leadership skills.

Increase access to jobs and career pathways for teens.

Create more paid opportunities for younger teens (ages 12–16) alongside apprenticeships, internships, and vocational training to provide early exposure to the trades and professional fields.

Enhance public safety & urban vibrancy.

Improve the visual quality of Downtown Albany by investing in better lighting, sidewalk maintenance, and the reduction of blighted properties to create safe, active, and appealing public spaces.

Prioritize housing.

Focus on long-term retention through the adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, rehabilitation of distressed properties, and robust support systems for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Support accessible, low-cost transportation.

Ensure reliable and youth-friendly public transit is available to bridge the gap between residents and essential jobs, programs, and community hubs.

Integrate social services & cultural expression.

Combine accessible mental health and health clinics with increased opportunities for cultural expression. Expand public art, maker spaces, and food supports to reduce barriers to civic participation.

FEEDBACK ON GROWTH PRINCIPLES

During the Open House, feedback gathered regarding the principles guiding Albany's growth. Participants advocated for a shift toward quality-of-life infrastructure over purely aesthetic projects. Feedback on the growth principles is summarized below.

Mobility and Quality of Life: Emphasis on improving bike, pedestrian, and transit connections; creating a safer, more welcoming Downtown transportation hub; and prioritizing public spaces that enhance daily livability.

Equitable Neighborhood Investment: Strong support for investment in the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown core to ensure growth benefits existing residents, improves safety, expands food access, and enhances overall livability.

Waterfront Activation and Connectivity: Broad support for canal and waterway concepts, including restoring Lock 1, expanding boat access, and better connecting development to the Hudson River.

Adaptive Reuse and Housing: Preference for renovating and activating existing storefronts and buildings to address vacancies, with support for mixed-use development and a variety of housing types rather than widespread demolition.

GROWTH PRINCIPLES WITH IMMEDIATE IMPACT

At the Open House, participants used interactive polling to identify the Growth Principles they believed would have the greatest immediate impact. Community input indicated strongest support for the following priorities:

- **Attract and Retain Residents:** Double the number of people living in the core of downtown
- **Create Vibrancy and Increase Visitation:** Host 10 million+ annual visits and 100+ event days downtown.
- **Grow and Diversify Jobs:** Grow the private-sector share of downtown jobs from ~33% today to ~45% in 5 years and ~55% in 10 years.

The other Growth Principles, “Ensure growth benefits all,” “Attract private funding,” and “Stop vacancy” received comparatively less emphasis during the polling activity.

4 FEEDBACK ON THE INVESTMENT AREAS

Overview

Through the Open House and Questionnaire #2, the public provided input on the proposed vision statements and investment bundles for seven Investment Areas across Downtown Albany, including **The Core**, **Downtown Gateways**, and **Neighborhood Anchors**. The following section summarizes this input, giving the project team insight into the **community's vision, recommended investments, and priorities for implementation**. This feedback helps refine the Downtown Albany Strategy and supports prioritization of near- and long-term actions.



ALBANY'S DOWNTOWN HEART

Vision Feedback

Participants generally supported the vision of State and Pearl Streets as a lively downtown hub but wanted it to focus more on **residents' needs**. They emphasized **essential services** like grocery stores, pharmacies, gyms, and small-scale housing, along with better transit and trolleys to **connect to other neighborhoods**, and accessible parking. Activating downtown with events, markets, and nightlife was included as a strategy to **support small businesses and create a lively downtown**, while keeping it dense but comfortable, and prioritizing residents over workers.

VISION STATEMENT

State and Pearl Streets Reborn as the Capital Region's Premier living, dining, and shopping destination—a true 24/7 social district and city center.

Investment Bundles Feedback

Feedback on the proposed “Downtown Heart” bundles revealed a clear desire for a **livable, resident-focused urban core**. Housing emerged as a primary concern, with a strong push for **mixed-income and ownership opportunities**, such as co-ops and condos, alongside family-sized units; noting that growth must be paired with greater accountability for landlords and developers to ensure long-term stability.

To support this residential density, participants identified a critical need for **essential neighborhood services**, specifically full-service grocery stores, pharmacies, and daily retail. **Public safety and mobility** were cited as the foundation for a walkable environment. Suggestions included increased

PROPOSED INVESTMENT BUNDLES IN ALBANY'S DOWNTOWN HEART



foot patrols, improved lighting, and community-based safety resources to address drug activity and homelessness. Regarding transportation, the community advocated for a **pedestrian-first approach**, calling for protected bike lanes, ADA-accessible pathways (especially on steep grades like State St.), and frequent transit options.

Participants said that economic and cultural growth should be driven by **small-scale, human-centered development** rather than massive singular projects, like a soccer stadium. There is a strong desire for **creative placemaking**, including artist housing, galleries, and venues. This extends to a

sober-friendly nightlife and ground-floor retail that fills vacant storefronts while **preserving Albany's historic character**.

Finally, the community expressed a preference for **basic infrastructure and family amenities**, such as libraries, inclusive third places, and aging water/sewer systems. While visionary ideas like a downtown waterway hold interest, participants stressed that funding should prioritize long-term, state-aligned investments that **secure the city's core infrastructure and serve the daily needs of its youth and families**.

Proposed Investment Bundle	Support Rate
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS	
2 Pearl Street: Shopping, Dining, Entertainment	72%
1 State Street: Housing on the High Street	60%
3 Events Evenings Loop	40%
4 Live / Play Around the Arena	37%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (306 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADVANCING GROWTH PRINCIPLES	
2 Pearl Street: Shopping, Dining, Entertainment	71%
1 State Street: Housing on the High Street	60%
3 Events Evenings Loop	31%
4 Live / Play Around the Arena	30%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (302 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES IDENTIFIED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION	
2 Pearl Street: Shopping, Dining, Entertainment	65%
1 State Street: Housing on the High Street	52%
3 Events Evenings Loop	31%
4 Live / Play Around the Arena	19%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (302 respondents)</small>	

ALBANY'S NEW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Vision Feedback

Participants generally supported the vision of a mixed-use downtown but wanted it to be more **human-scale and community-focused**. They emphasized **essential services, diverse housing, better transit, and pedestrian-friendly streets**, while opposing a downtown soccer stadium and oversized luxury projects. Activating the waterfront, outdoor dining, arts, and small businesses were also referenced to ensure the **neighborhood serves residents and attracts activity**.

VISION STATEMENT

A new mixed-use neighborhood for jobs, housing, and culture— anchored by Liberty Park, Broadway's historic buildings, activated public spaces, and connections to the waterfront

Investment Bundles Feedback

Community input showed a desire to transform Albany's New Downtown Neighborhood into a vibrant, year-round residential neighborhood. Participants prioritized **housing for families and middle-income residents**, emphasizing the need for mixed-use development that includes **essential services** like grocery stores and pharmacies. Rather than isolated projects, commenters called for a cohesive system that ensures walkability, safety, and protection against displacement.

Connectivity and transportation emerged as dominant themes, with I-787 identified as a primary barrier to the waterfront. Suggested solutions ranged from converting the highway into a boulevard to a full street-level

PROPOSED INVESTMENT BUNDLES IN ALBANY'S NEW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD



redesign. To shift the area from a pass-through zone to a true neighborhood, participants advocated for **enhanced bike and pedestrian safety, traffic calming, and improved transit options** like shuttles or an intermodal hub.

While the Hudson River is seen as Albany's greatest asset, opinions differ on the timing of its development. Proposals for canals, riverwalks, and marinas were viewed by some as transformative, while others argued that downtown density should be prioritized before making major waterfront investments. Regarding Liberty Park, there was **strong opposition to stadiums or large venues**; instead, feedback favored **green space,**

historical preservation, and human-scale development that integrates with the city's historic character.

Finally, participants stressed the importance of preserving **historic assets**, such as 48 Hudson Avenue and Union Station, though views on the station's reuse as a transit hub remain divided. Concerns regarding the Pastures neighborhood focused on affordability and resident protection. Throughout the feedback, a clear preference emerged for **incremental, community-focused improvements**, such as history trails and mobility hubs, over large-scale, single-purpose interventions.

Proposed Investment Bundle	Support Rate
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INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

1 Liberty Park: Seed a Mixed-Use Neighborhood	64%
2 Broadway Waterfront District	60%
3 Broadway Mixed-Use Hubs	53%

Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (306 respondents)

INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADVANCING GROWTH PRINCIPLES

1 Liberty Park: Seed a Mixed-Use Neighborhood	63%
2 Broadway Waterfront District	51%
3 Broadway Mixed-Use Hubs	49%

Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (305 respondents)

INVESTMENT BUNDLES IDENTIFIED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION

1 Liberty Park: Seed a Mixed-Use Neighborhood	58%
2 Broadway Waterfront District	50%
3 Broadway Mixed-Use Hubs	41%

Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (305 respondents)

WAREHOUSE DISTRICT GATEWAY

Vision Feedback

Participants supported the vision of making the Warehouse District a vibrant, mixed-use area that **supports residents** and **connects downtown to the waterfront**. Comments included balanced residential, commercial, and recreational development; improved transit; sustainable, high-quality buildings; and the revitalization of vacant or underused spaces, while ensuring local **investment benefits the community** and prevents displacement.

VISION STATEMENT

Where industry meets creativity—a growing waterfront gateway that extends Downtown north, connecting the core to a wealth of new living, jobs, entertainment, and recreation opportunities

Investment Bundles Feedback

Feedback emphasized that the Warehouse District Gateway requires ambitious, high-quality design to avoid utilitarian outcomes. Comments indicated that success depends on pairing development with **essential amenities**, such as grocery stores, green spaces, and family-friendly infrastructure, while ensuring **safe, walkable streets**. **Housing** remained a top priority, alongside calls for developer accountability and a focus on environmental resilience.

Connectivity was a central theme, with participants advocating for **multimodal transportation** including mass transit, water-based shuttles, and improved parking management. There was a strong desire to celebrate Albany’s

PROPOSED INVESTMENT BUNDLES IN THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT



canal heritage by **rehabilitating historic buildings** and **supporting small businesses**. This vision includes year-round programming to maintain district vibrancy and an equitable distribution of public funding.

The **Central Warehouse** was viewed as a critical catalyst; many suggest redevelopment of the site into a mixed-use housing hub. Comments called for investment prioritizing the **Broadway Corridor** to improve lighting, greenery,

and pedestrian access, fostering a more livable neighborhood.

Several comments shared support for uncovering and restoring **Lock 1 and the Weigh Lock** as a heritage centerpiece. Conversely, **I-787 and Route 90** were seen as major barriers to the waterfront that require better crossings. Comments mentioned that the **Skyway** is successful model for future pedestrian expansion across Downtown Albany.

Proposed Investment Bundle	Support Rate
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS	
3 Waterfront Access & District Programming	58%
2 Broadway Corridor	57%
1 Central Warehouse Anchor	47%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (306 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADVANCING GROWTH PRINCIPLES	
2 Broadway Corridor	57%
3 Waterfront Access & District Programming	53%
1 Central Warehouse Anchor	46%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (305 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES IDENTIFIED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION	
2 Broadway Corridor	48%
3 Waterfront Access & District Programming	46%
1 Central Warehouse Anchor	43%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (306 respondents)</small>	

SOUTH END GATEWAY

Vision Feedback

Participants supported aspects of the vision. Comments focused on improving housing, walkability, and investment in historic buildings. Some participants challenged the ‘gateway’ framing, arguing the South End should prioritize **resident needs, poverty reduction, and local programming** over downtown connectivity. Feedback emphasized **rehabilitating existing housing**, creating multi-generational units and housing that is within reach to a variety of income levels. Additionally, residents called for **better green spaces, preserving cultural asset, transit, and bike infrastructure**.

VISION STATEMENT

A residential and institutional southern gateway connecting across former barriers—where diverse housing options, local institutions, and heritage destinations benefit longtime and new residents

Investment Bundles Feedback

Feedback indicated further actions are needed to address the South End Gateway community’s needs. There was a strong emphasis on **safety, housing, basic services, and reinvestment** led by and serving existing residents. Comments repeatedly described concerns about **crime, drug activity, and perceptions of danger** as fundamental barriers to neighborhood stability, business success, and resident quality of life. Views on how to address safety varied, including calls for increased patrol policing and arguments for community-based safety, social services, and investments that address underlying conditions such as **poverty, housing quality, and access to daily needs**.

PROPOSED INVESTMENT BUNDLES IN THE SOUTH END GATEWAY



Several comments related to **housing** emphasized the need for **mixed-income development**, including family-sized units and opportunities for homeownership and wealth-building. Respondents emphasized avoiding additional concentration of low-income housing while ensuring that reinvestment benefits current residents. Many also called for **rehabilitating vacant and underused buildings**,

increasing landlord accountability, and providing access to **essential amenities** such as grocery stores, childcare, community services, and employment support. Support for **small businesses, entrepreneurship, and a consistent retail** presence were frequently mentioned as important factors for stabilizing the area and meeting daily needs.

Proposed Investment Bundle	Support Rate
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS	
2 South Pearl Everyday Needs	69%
4 District Link: Safe Streets	56%
1 Public / Underused Sites & Lincoln Towers	51%
3 Culture & Community Node	31%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (299 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADVANCING GROWTH PRINCIPLES	
2 South Pearl Everyday Needs	65%
1 Public / Underused Sites & Lincoln Towers	54%
4 District Link: Safe Streets	51%
3 Culture & Community Node	31%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (300 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES IDENTIFIED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION	
2 South Pearl Everyday Needs	62%
4 District Link: Safe Streets	49%
1 Public / Underused Sites & Lincoln Towers	36%
3 Culture & Community Node	18%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (298 respondents)</small>	

INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT

Vision Feedback

Participants generally supported the International District vision. Comments included enthusiasm for catalytic projects, improving **connectivity** between neighborhoods, expanding and activating **open space**, addressing **social and public health** challenges, enhancing **mobility** and traffic flow, and creating welcoming **third spaces** for residents and visitors.

VISION STATEMENT

A multicultural destination celebrating Albany's global businesses—with walkable streets, welcoming public spaces, and new housing opportunities

Investment Bundles Feedback

Feedback indicated that ongoing needs should be met through **pragmatic, community-led investments** rather than pursuing larger, more complex projects. Participants shared interest in **quality of life, safety, and economic vitality**, emphasizing the need to support existing businesses and residents while addressing long-standing infrastructure issues. **Public safety** was a recurring concern, with many calling for improved lighting, traffic enforcement, and **pedestrian-friendly street designs** to combat reckless driving and uncomfortable nighttime conditions.

Economic stability and neighborhood livability were also central themes. Participants advocated for stronger support for Albany's diverse local

PROPOSED INVESTMENT BUNDLES IN THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT



businesses through grants and mentorship, noting a troubling trend of business turnover. In addition to economic aid, feedback stressed the importance of **housing, landlord accountability, and the restoration of essential amenities** like grocery stores and pharmacies. Improving **public transit, bike infrastructure, and general cleanliness** were also identified as vital to the area's daily function.

Comments mentioned specific locations

require targeted interventions to improve safety and utility. **Townsend Park** was mentioned as needing better definition and amenities, while **Central Avenue and Henry Johnson Boulevard** were said to need urgent traffic calming, better lighting, and increased patrolling to manage traffic and safety perceptions. Concerns at **Washington Avenue, Lark Street, and Washington Park** further underscored the demand for safer intersections and family-friendly spaces that encourage walking and community engagement.

Proposed Investment Bundle	Support Rate
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS	
1 Safer, More Active Streets and Storefronts	75%
2 Henry Johnson Blvd: A Walkable Gateway	49%
4 Shop & Dine Loop	37%
3 Year-Round Cultural Calendar	31%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (299 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADVANCING GROWTH PRINCIPLES	
1 Safer, More Active Streets and Storefronts	74%
2 Henry Johnson Blvd: A Walkable Gateway	44%
4 Shop & Dine Loop	38%
3 Year-Round Cultural Calendar	29%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (298 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES IDENTIFIED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION	
1 Safer, More Active Streets and Storefronts	71%
2 Henry Johnson Blvd: A Walkable Gateway	39%
4 Shop & Dine Loop	24%
3 Year-Round Cultural Calendar	18%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (298 respondents)</small>	

CENTER SQUARE

Vision Feedback

Participants generally supported the vision of Lark Street as Albany’s primary village corridor. They suggested enhancing the vision by adding more **restaurants, entertainment, and small-business growth**. Participants also stressed practical considerations, including improved **pedestrian access**, wheelchair **accessibility**, safe and sufficient **parking**, and careful planning to maintain **neighborhood character**, avoiding over-commercialization or excessive street events.

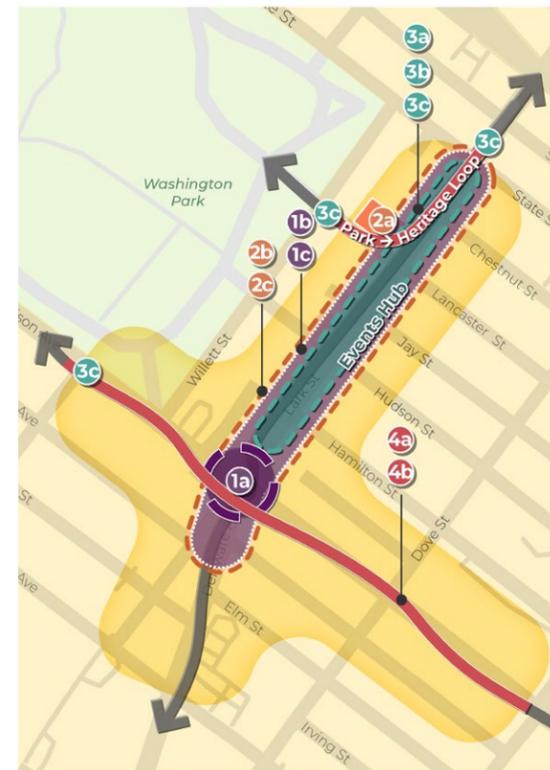
VISION STATEMENT

A safe, welcoming, year-round neighborhood village where small businesses thrive, streets feel comfortable day and night, and housing and culture reinforce a strong local identity

Investment Bundles Feedback

Community input emphasized improving the neighborhood’s **quality of life and economic appeal**. The feedback revealed a strong desire to prioritize people over vehicles, **Pedestrianization and traffic management** were frequently mentioned issues. Many participants supported transforming the stretch of **Lark Street from Washington Avenue to Madison Avenue** into a dedicated pedestrian zone or restricting it to transit and emergency vehicles. Similarly, there was considerable support for pedestrianizing **Washington Park** to improve safety for walkers and cyclists.

PROPOSED INVESTMENT BUNDLES IN ALBANY’S NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGE



A common theme in the comments was the restoration of the neighborhood’s unique character through a focus on **identity, vibrancy, and community events**. Commenters called for the return of **Larkfest** and other community-centric festivals to drive foot traffic and support the local economy. There was a clear preference for **small businesses** and **third spaces**.

Regarding the neighborhood’s physical condition, feedback expressed a need for consistent trash collection, sidewalk repairs, and improved lighting on the stretch of **Lark Street between State and Clinton**. The intersection of

Madison Avenue and Lark Street was cited as a neglected gateway in need of beautification.

Public safety was a recurring concern that participants described as barriers to investment. Many residents reported issues with aggressive panhandling and open drug use, particularly along **Lark Street** and at the **Madison Avenue intersection**. Public suggestions to address these challenges included increasing the presence of patrol officers or introducing street ambassadors to manage the environment and improve perceptions of safety.

Proposed Investment Bundle	Support Rate
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS	
2 Redevelop Key Sites	63%
1 Public Realm & Small Business Upgrades	58%
3 Village Events Spotlighting Food, Culture, Small Businesses	48%
4 Park-to-Heritage Loop	22%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (302 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADVANCING GROWTH PRINCIPLES	
2 Redevelop Key Sites	59%
1 Public Realm & Small Business Upgrades	54%
3 Village Events Spotlighting Food, Culture, Small Businesses	46%
4 Park-to-Heritage Loop	20%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (302 respondents)</small>	
INVESTMENT BUNDLES IDENTIFIED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION	
2 Redevelop Key Sites	49%
1 Public Realm & Small Business Upgrades	48%
3 Village Events Spotlighting Food, Culture, Small Businesses	36%
4 Park-to-Heritage Loop	12%
<small>Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (301 respondents)</small>	

CLINTON SQUARE ARTS & HERITAGE DISTRICT

Vision Feedback

Participants generally supported the vision of reconnecting a historic neighborhood to downtown. There was emphasis on stronger **arts and event programming**, preservation of **green space**, and rehabilitation of **vacant buildings**. Some comments suggested expanding the arts district, improving pedestrian and bike access, coordinating events with existing venues, providing public restrooms and parking, and creating a community reuse center.

VISION STATEMENT

A historic neighborhood reconnected to Downtown's core through culture, heritage, new housing, and year-round activity

Investment Bundles Feedback

Public feedback emphasized an integrated neighborhood revitalization that balances **cultural preservation with improved connectivity**. A major focus was placed on **heritage-driven** projects, specifically calling for the funding of the **Ten Broeck Mansion's Education Center** and a new facility for the **Underground Railroad History Project**. While the **Palace Theatre** remains a vital cultural anchor, residents noted it currently feels isolated and requires better parking and expansion to stay competitive.

Opinions on existing **public spaces** like the **Clinton Market Collaborative** were mixed, with many labeling it "bleak" and calling for more consistent programming. Similarly, there was a strong community desire for the

PROPOSED INVESTMENT BUNDLES IN CLINTON SQUARE ARTS & HERITAGE DISTRICT



adaptive reuse of St. Joseph's Church and Park into a functional community hub or green space. Overall, participants stressed that these areas require better maintenance and frequent cultural events to improve **neighborhood safety** and foster a sense of belonging.

Participants identified **infrastructure and housing** as barriers to growth. Respondents argued that the **Skyway** and **I-787** currently disconnect the **Warehouse District** from the waterfront, suggesting that highway segments be brought to ground level to improve pedestrian mobility. To support this connectivity, the comments advocated

for a diverse housing strategy, prioritizing the **rehabilitation of vacant buildings** and **middle-income infill** projects over high-end developments.

Finally, comments stressed **economic growth** must be supported by **essential local services**. Participants frequently mentioned a grocery store as a top priority for the downtown area to improve daily livability. Additionally, there was a clear demand for **small business support** through collaborative storefronts, ensuring that development translates into tangible opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

Proposed Investment Bundle	Support Rate
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INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

1 Infill and Affordability	60%
2 Public Realm & Small Businesses	56%
4 Arbor Hill to The Palace to Downtown	47%
3 Unified Cultural District	36%

Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (290 respondents)

INVESTMENT BUNDLES ADVANCING GROWTH PRINCIPLES

1 Infill and Affordability	61%
2 Public Realm & Small Businesses	48%
4 Arbor Hill to The Palace to Downtown	42%
3 Unified Cultural District	37%

Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (289 respondents)

INVESTMENT BUNDLES IDENTIFIED FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION

1 Infill and Affordability	49%
2 Public Realm & Small Businesses	42%
4 Arbor Hill to The Palace to Downtown	34%
3 Unified Cultural District	24%

Source: Community feedback from Open House & Questionnaire #2 (289 respondents)

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NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

Next, engagement shifts from planning to implementation. Informed by public input from Phases 1 and 2, the Downtown Albany Strategy will share an action-oriented blueprint for the next 5-10 years, focused on building momentum and advancing projects and partnerships that deliver lasting results and unlock Albany's full potential.



