

Town of Parksley Downtown Revitalization Project CDBG Planning Grant Report



MARCH 2017

*Prepared for:
Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development*

*Prepared by:
Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission*

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I. Introduction

The Town of Parksley was granted Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) assistance from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) for a Downtown Revitalization Project. The project is intended to develop economic plans to address identified needs and leverage existing assets in advance of the relocation of the new Eastern Shore Public Library facility and the anticipated increase in economic activity, number of businesses, and vehicular and foot traffic in the area. The Town utilized CDBG funding in the 1980s to improve the street scape by repairing and widening sidewalks, building a pavilion and small community activity area in the Town Square, expanding parking downtown, and completing additional streetscapes. These activities successfully attracted businesses, but primarily focused along Dunne Avenue and not where future improvements are anticipated to be necessary. The current project will explore opportunities to address needs that may connect the improvements made in the 1980s to the Eastern Shore Public Library and other businesses along Cook and Bennett Streets.

The planning project described herein occurred during January, February, and March of 2017 and involved the establishment of the Project Management Team, coordination of a public engagement process, development of a downtown needs assessment, and development of a regional asset inventory to identify and prioritize potential improvement projects for downtown revitalization.

Public Engagement

The Town envisioned the downtown revitalization process as a community-based project. An initial public meeting was held during the Town's monthly Council meeting on February 13, 2017 at the Parksley Town Office. Curt Smith, A-NPDC Director of Planning, provided an overview of the project including notice of the Town's intent to comprehensively evaluate the economic and physical improvement needs within the downtown area by surveying businesses, residents, and others to confirm needs and demand. Those in attendance were notified of how to become involved in the process and given a schedule of meetings which they were encouraged to attend. Notifications of the first public meeting were posted to the Town and A-NPDC's social media accounts and flyers were distributed and posted around the Town (flyer included in **Appendix A**).

A second public meeting was held during the Town's monthly Council meeting on March 13, 2017. Shannon Alexander of the A-NPDC presented the Management Team's proposed downtown revitalization projects and encouraged feedback from those in attendance. Several questions arose regarding the process and several suggestions were made regarding stormwater drainage. Being that each of the Management Team's projects would consider stormwater drainage during the design process, it was determined that the proposed projects considered the suggestions in a satisfactory manner.

The Town plans to continue to engage the public in any future downtown revitalization activities.

Project Management Team

A Management Team was established to develop a plan for completing the initial Planning Grant activities. Stakeholders invited and encouraged to participate on the Management Team included residents, downtown business and building owners, and other agencies and organizations with vested interest in Parksley’s downtown. The members of the team are included in the following table.

Project Management Team	
Member	Affiliation
Jimmy Eichelberger	Mayor, Town of Parksley
Wayne Marshall	Vice Mayor, Town of Parksley
Frank Russell	Council Member, Town of Parksley
Cara Burton	Director, Eastern Shore Public Library
Elaine Meil	Executive Director, A-NPDC
John Aigner	Community Development Coordinator, A-NPDC
Mark Bowden	Building Official, Accomack County
Harris Phillips	Downtown Business Owner, Town of Parksley
Tim Valentine	Downtown Business Owner, Town of Parksley
Billy Graham	Downtown Business Owner, Town of Parksley
Dana Bundick	Resident, Town of Parksley
<i>Project Management Team Staff</i>	
Denise Bernard	Clerk, Town of Parksley
Shannon Alexander	Coastal Resources Program Manager, A-NPDC
Curt Smith	Director of Planning, A-NPDC

The first Management Team meeting was held on February 14, 2017 at the Parksley Town Office. Staff provided an overview of a detailed work plan and the group worked towards establishing criteria to be included in the downtown physical inventory survey and identifying existing assets within the region.

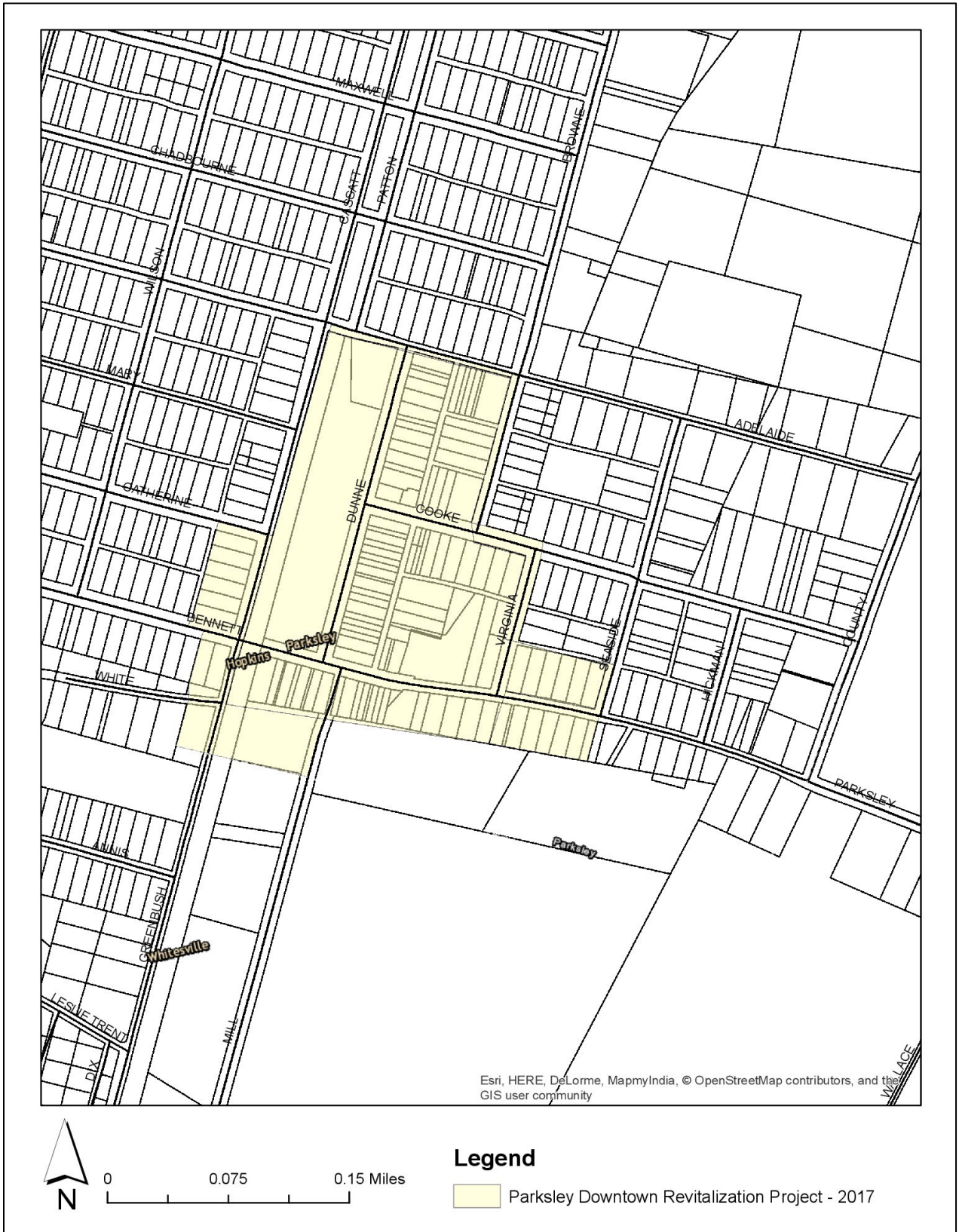
A second Management Team meeting was held on March 9, 2017 at the Town Office. Staff provided outcomes and summaries of the downtown and regional inventories and facilitated an exercise to identify and prioritize downtown revitalization projects eligible for CDBG funding.

The Town intends to retain the Management Team during any future downtown revitalization activities.

Downtown Physical Inventory Survey

The Town and Management Team carried out a comprehensive inventory of properties within downtown. First, the downtown area was defined and then specific criteria were selected. The Town Mayor and Clerk conducted the vast majority of surveys and A-NPDC staff photographed all properties ([available here](#)). A-NPDC staff then incorporated all information into a spreadsheet ([available here](#)) and created maps and tables to assist with interpretation.

It was determined that the Town Council would be responsible for defining the specific area which would define “downtown”. This exercise was completed during the monthly Council meeting on February 13, 2017 and the area can be seen in the following maps.





The downtown area definition included the entire area included in the downtown revitalization work completed in the 1980s, but also included additional properties along the southern side of Bennett Street on the eastern side of Town, along the western side of Cassatt Avenue on the southwestern side of Town, and along the western side of Mill Road on the southwestern side of Town. The downtown area include a total of 74 properties.



The Management Team completed a facilitated exercise to identify all of the items they would consider when conducting a downtown needs assessment. The items identified were related to several general topics including public safety, accessibility, aesthetic qualities, and natural hazard mitigation. Following discussions on all of these topics, it was decided that the following criteria would be included during the development of the downtown inventory. Each property was assigned an unique identification number and each property was photographed ([available here](#)).



Downtown Physical Inventory Criteria	
Property Name	Building ADA Compliance Status
911 Address	Property Parking Needs
Year Built	Total Building Square Footage
Structure Occupation Status	Total Square Footage In Use
Vacant Parcel Status	Total Square Footage Unused/Available
Current Property Use Type	Physical Blight Status
Current Business Type	Economic Blight Status
Structural Repair Needs	Current Owner Name
Exterior Paint Needs	Current Owner Address
Signage Upgrade Needs	Tax Parcel ID Numbers
Street Lighting Needs	Electric Utility Monthly Costs
Electric Upgrade Needs	Water Monthly Costs
Wastewater Treatment Type	Wastewater Monthly Costs
Wastewater Upgrade Needs	Heating Type
Stormwater Drainage Needs	Heating Monthly Costs
Sidewalk Status	Other Needs/Comments
Sidewalk Repair Needs	

While most of the items in the inventory are straight forward, several require further explanation. Specifically, the Management Team determined that the Current Property Use Types would be divided into the following five categories: Residential, Commercial, Mixed Use (Residential/Commercial), Public/Non-Profit Organization, and Other (Vacant/Open Space). For business use types, it was determined that the inventory should be conducted using a standardized classification system and the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) was selected as the desired classification system.

Physical Blight, as for the purposes of the downtown inventory, was defined by the Management Team as meaning “The deteriorated condition or state of disrepair of business district infrastructure, building, and other physical elements which detract from the overall appearance and identity of the district and, in turn, depress property value and the ability to market and attract investment.”

Economic Blight was defined by the Management Team as meaning “The existence of vacant, disinvested, or underutilized building and parcels which represent unrealized commercial potential and project a negative image that harms efforts to attract new investment.”

Physical and economic blight for each downtown property were made at the discretion of the person conducting the survey and/or the property owner. Each blight determination was reviewed by the Management Team prior to becoming finalized.

Regional Initiative Coordination

The Management Team conducted an inventory ([available here](#)) of existing assets and initiatives within the region and within proximity to the downtown area. This inventory is intended to assist with identifying actions the Town and Management Team can undergo to leverage and position the downtown in a manner that maximizes benefits to businesses and residents. The inventory provides the

downtown revitalization perspective into potential ways the project could be aligned with existing and ongoing assets and initiatives. It is anticipated that several of the opportunities generated through this process may be eligible for VDHCD funding and many more opportunities could be accomplished separately by the Town in separate activities.

The Management Team considered assets as being either community, culturally, recreationally, or industrially-focused. Community assets included schools, health care facilities, and other assets critical to downtown activity. Cultural assets included historic places and properties including museums. Recreational facilities included public access facilities and trails. Industrial facilities included nearby operations which provide significant amounts of employment for downtown residents.

The inventory included identification of owner or responsible person/entity, approximate number of visitors, a general description of available amenities, and potential benefits to downtown.

Downtown Revitalization Project Identification and Prioritization

During the second Management Team meeting, staff presented all information gathered from the downtown and regional inventories. Staff then facilitated an exercise to identify and prioritize potential revitalization projects. A-NPDC staff provided guidance on project eligibility for DHCD funding and overall budget development. In addition to a prioritized list of DHCD-eligible projects, a separate list of other opportunities for downtown revitalization was generated to benefit the Town.

The prioritized list was presented to the public for review and comment prior to being finalized.

Development of Draft Procurement Document

A draft Request for Proposals (RFP) was developed for procuring necessary assistance during the construction of the prioritized and selected activities. The draft was submitted to VDHCD staff for review and approval ([available here](#)).

Coordination with Virginia Department of Historic Resources

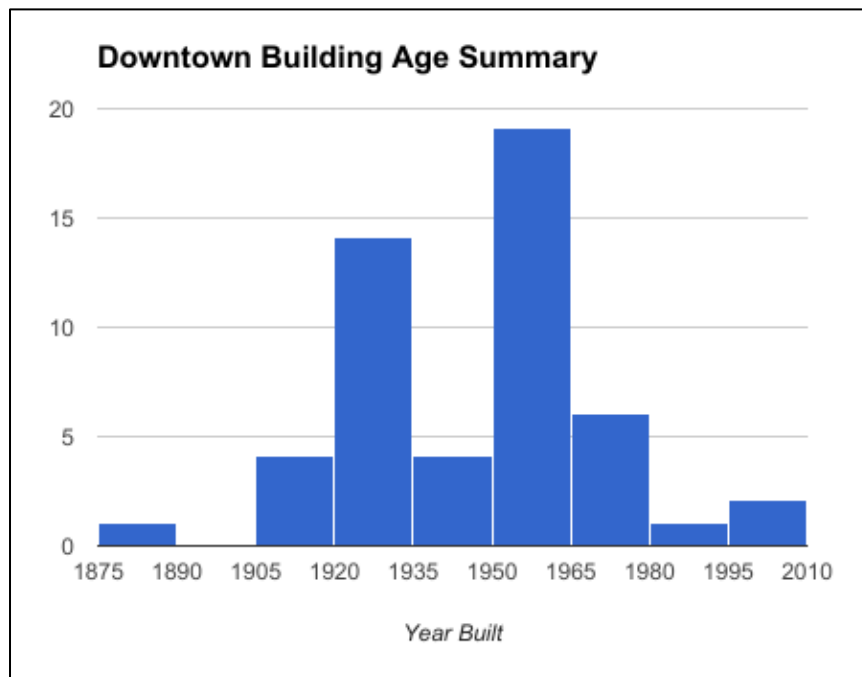
The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) was contacted regarding the activities prioritized during the current planning project. All correspondence with VDHR was provided to VDHCD.

II. Results

The following sections summarize the findings of the Downtown Physical Inventory ([available here](#)) and the Regional Asset Inventory ([available here](#)).

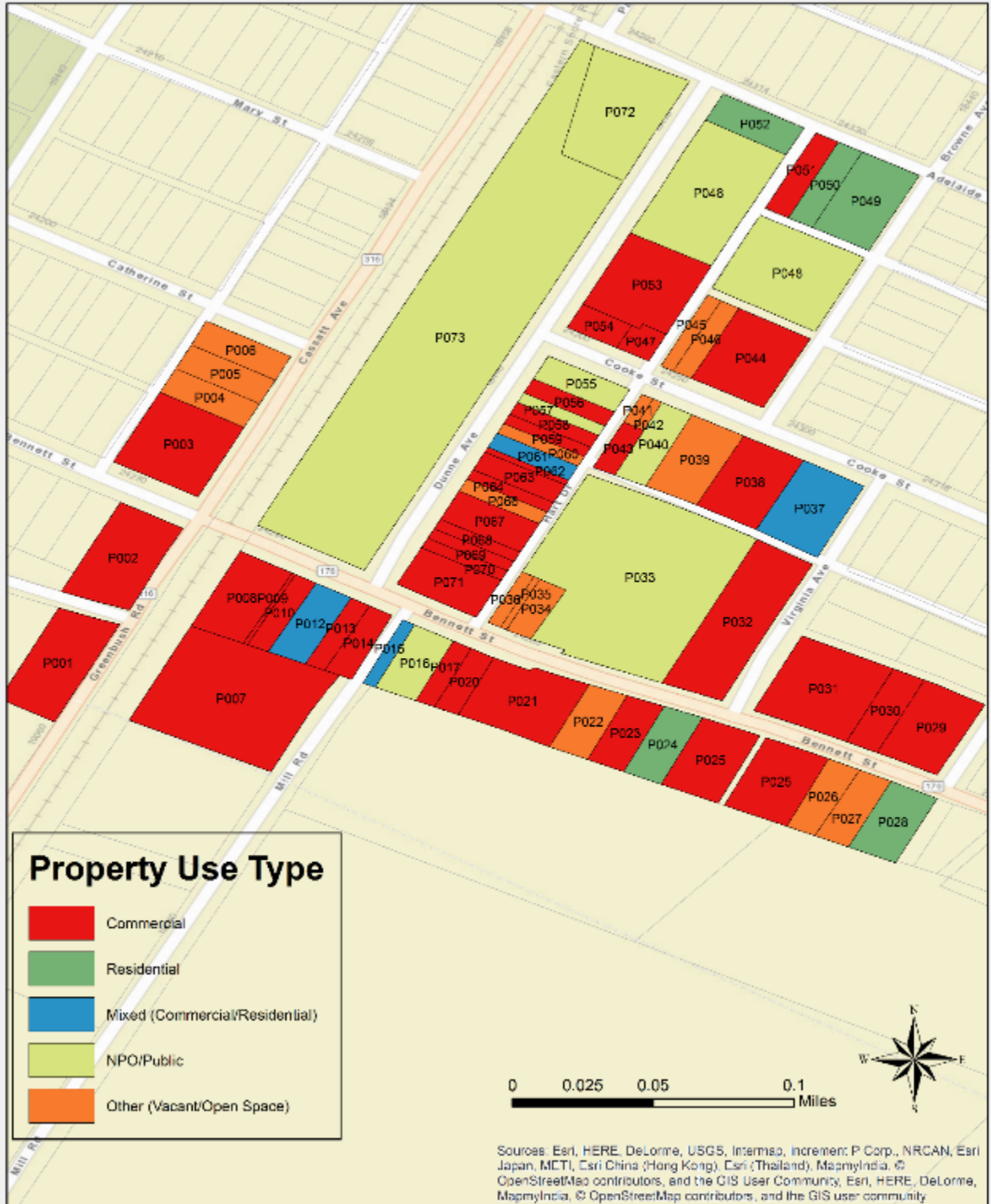
Downtown Physical Inventory Survey

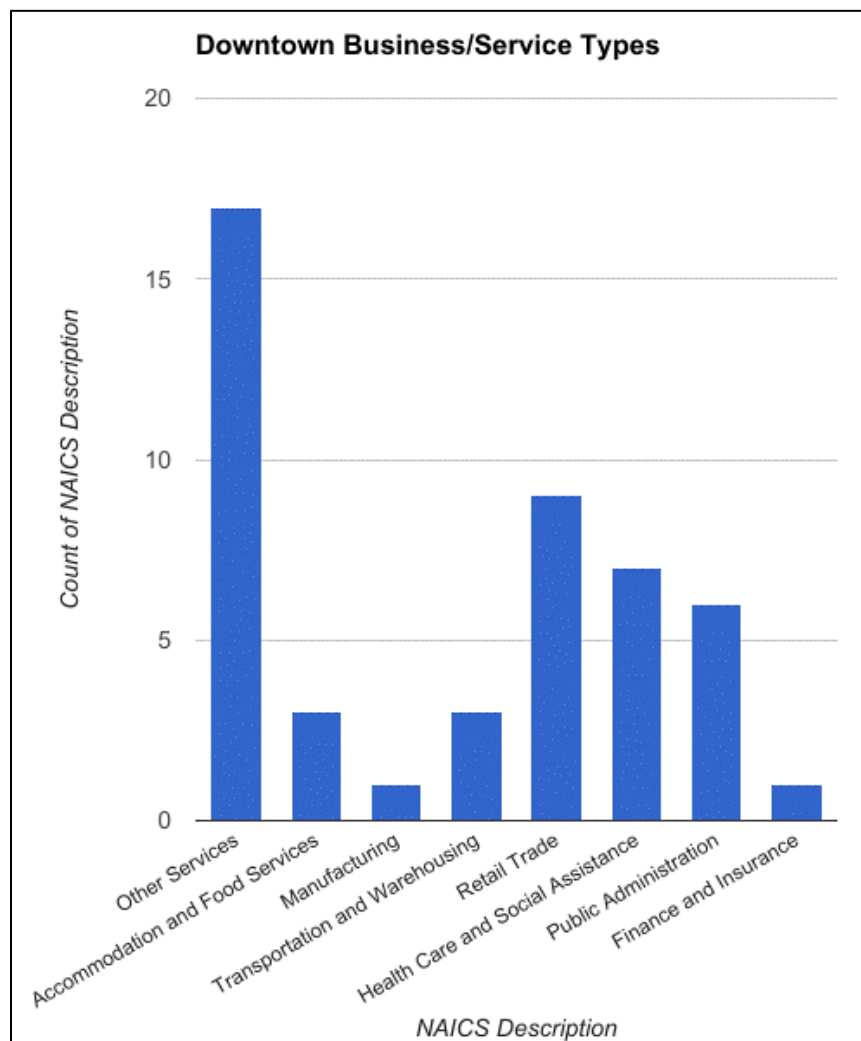
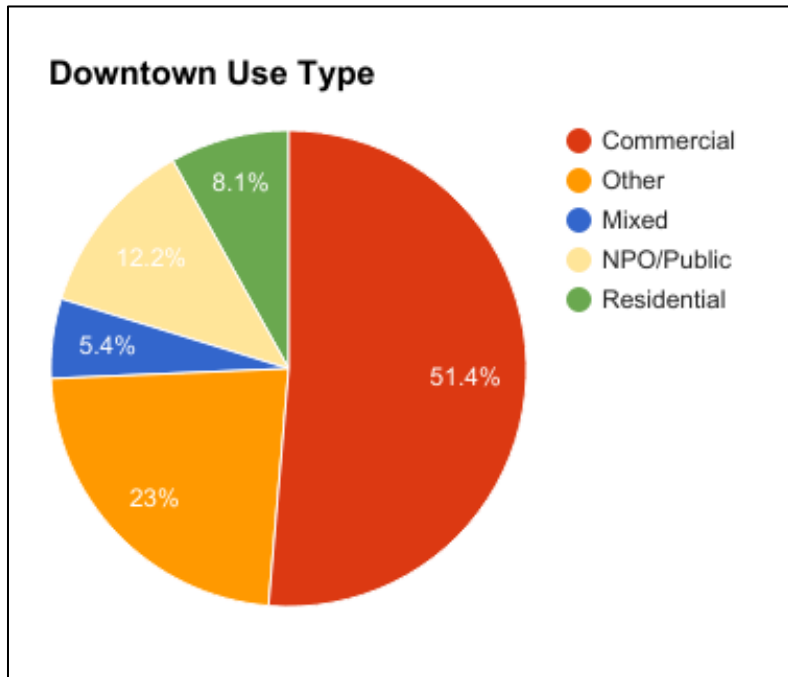
The Town of Parksley was established as a planned town following completion of the Eastern Shore railroad. Much of the Town was constructed in the decades following the Town's founding in 1885. As such, one of the major challenges facing the Town today are the age of the building stock. Many of the buildings in Town were constructed during the late 19th and early 20th Century including approximately one third of the downtown buildings for which ages could be determined. These older downtown buildings are now over or approaching 100 years in age. A common life expectancy for structures of similar design and materials is approximately 70 years. The following graph summarizes the ages of buildings in the downtown for which ages could be determined.

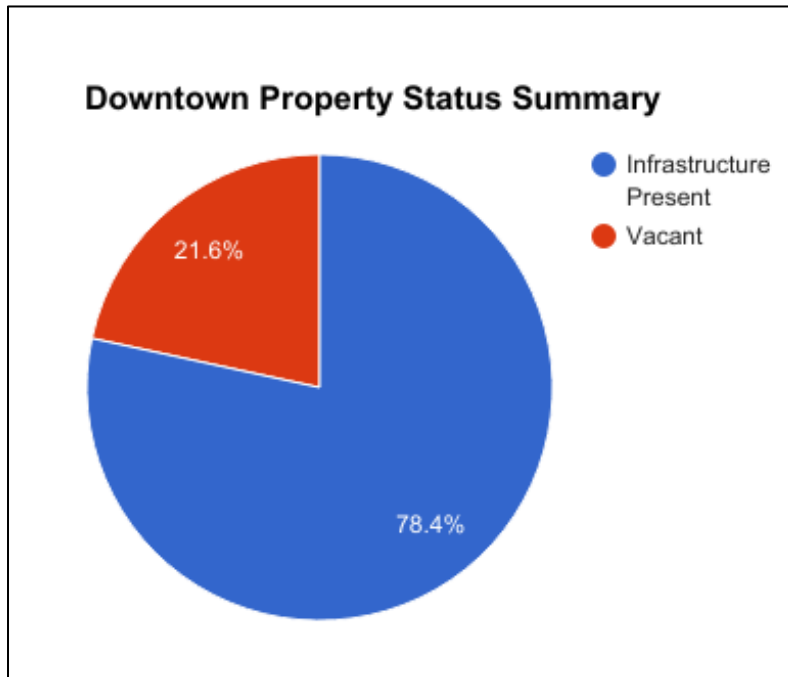


Just over half of the properties were found to currently be used for commercial purposes. The Management Team identified the lack of lodging as one of the greatest challenges to the downtown and the inventory agreed as only 5.4% of the properties currently offer mixed use.

Downtown Inventory Survey - Current Property Use

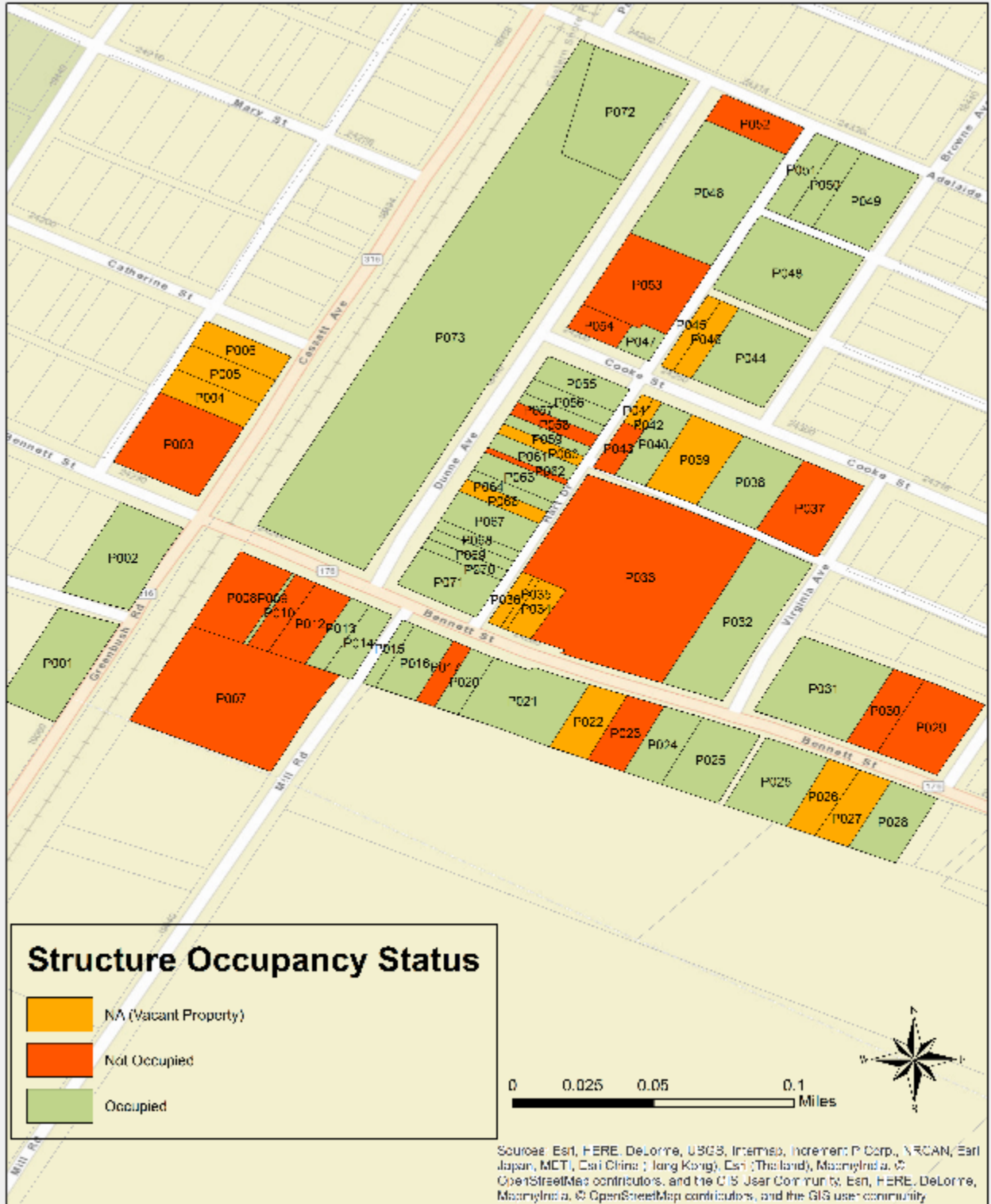


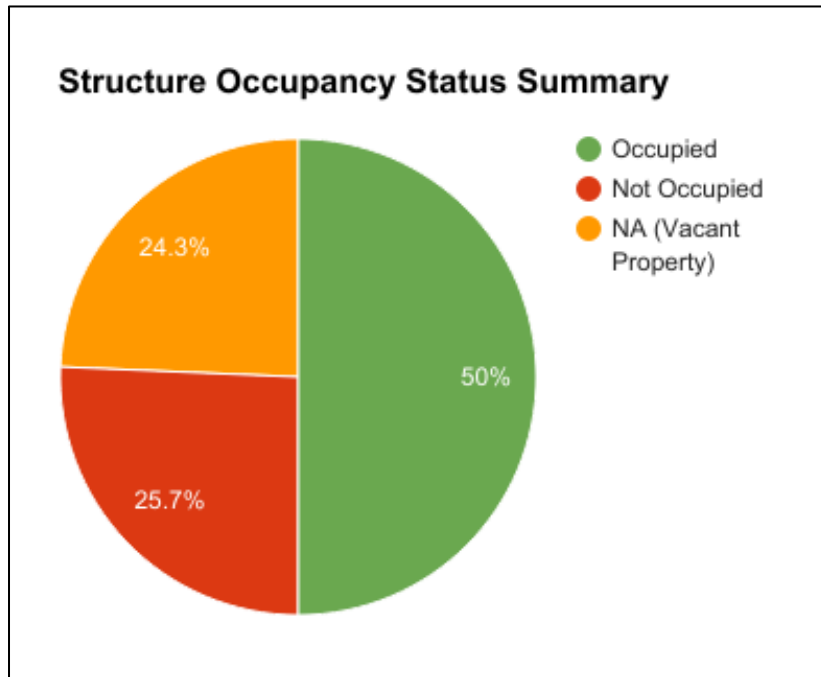




Over 20 percent of the downtown properties were found to be vacant and lacking structures. This amount of open space presents potential opportunities for future growth or use of the open space for other purposes that could support recreational activities or stormwater drainage. Some of the vacant parcels are in ideal locations between the Town Square and future public library and could be repurposed as walkways providing increased connectivity and access around Town.

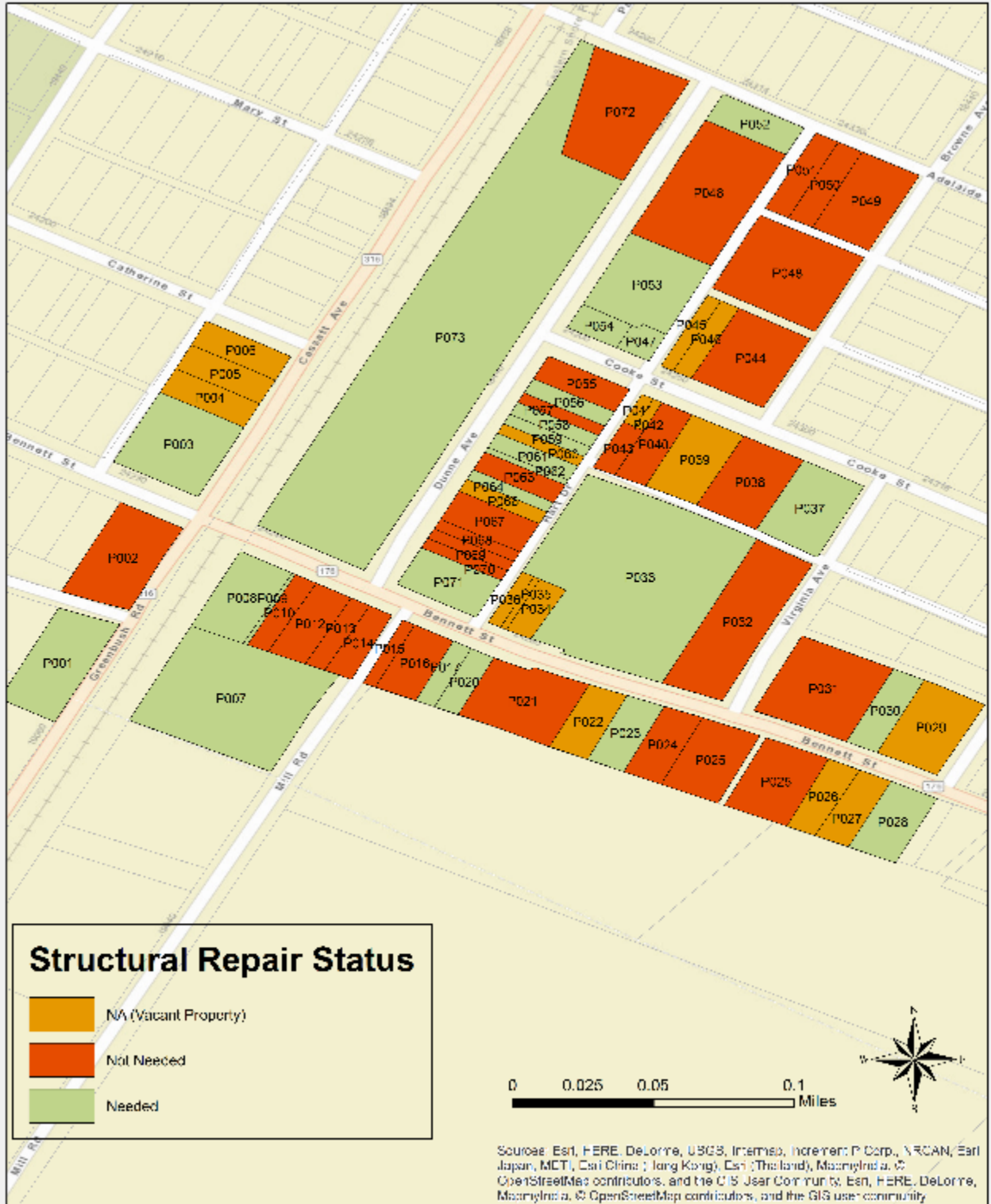
Downtown Inventory Survey - Structure Occupancy Status

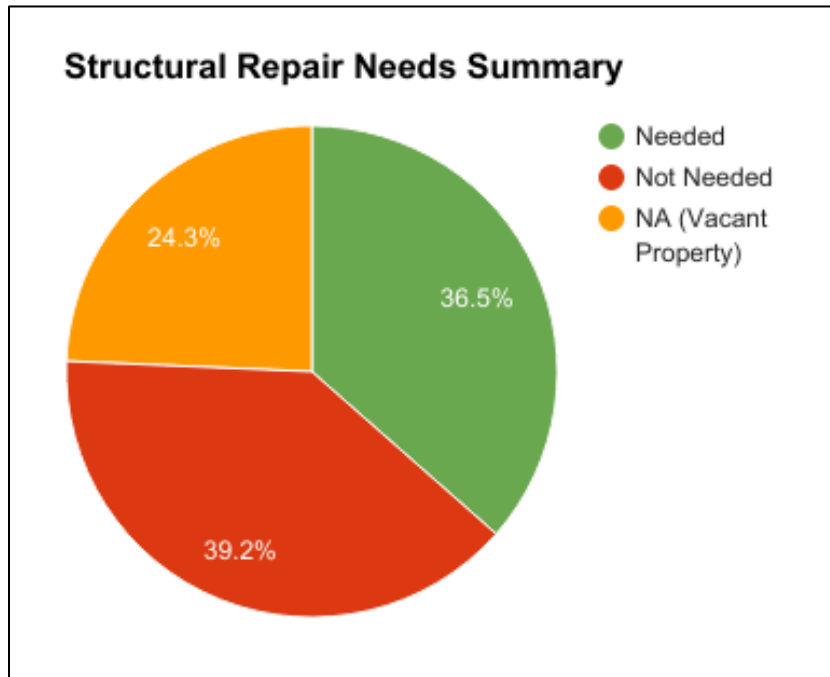




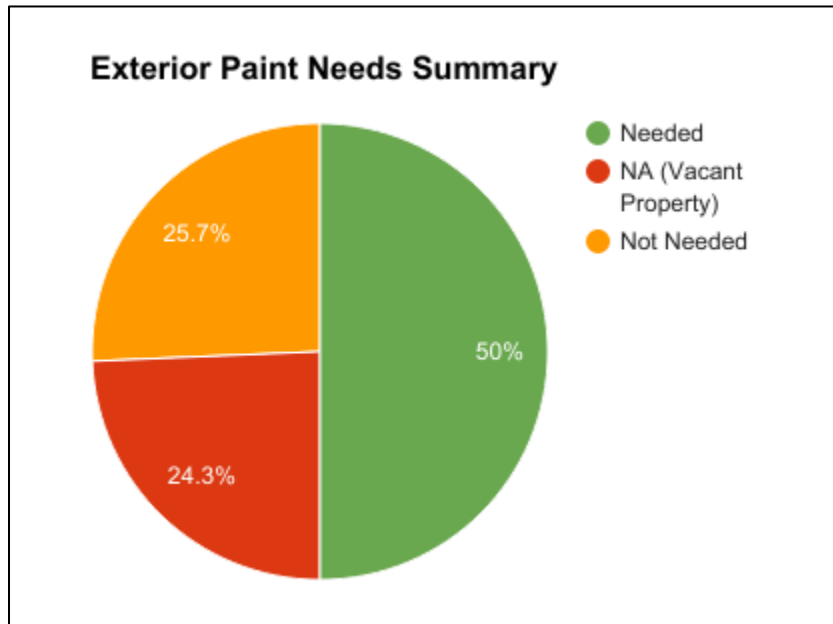
Approximately one quarter of the properties in downtown have buildings that are currently not occupied. This includes commercial, residential, and mixed use properties. This amount of not-occupied buildings presents a major challenge to the downtown economy. A significant amount of buildings adjacent to the Town Square and Bennett Street, the downtown’s highest traffic areas, are not occupied.

Downtown Inventory Survey - Structural Repair



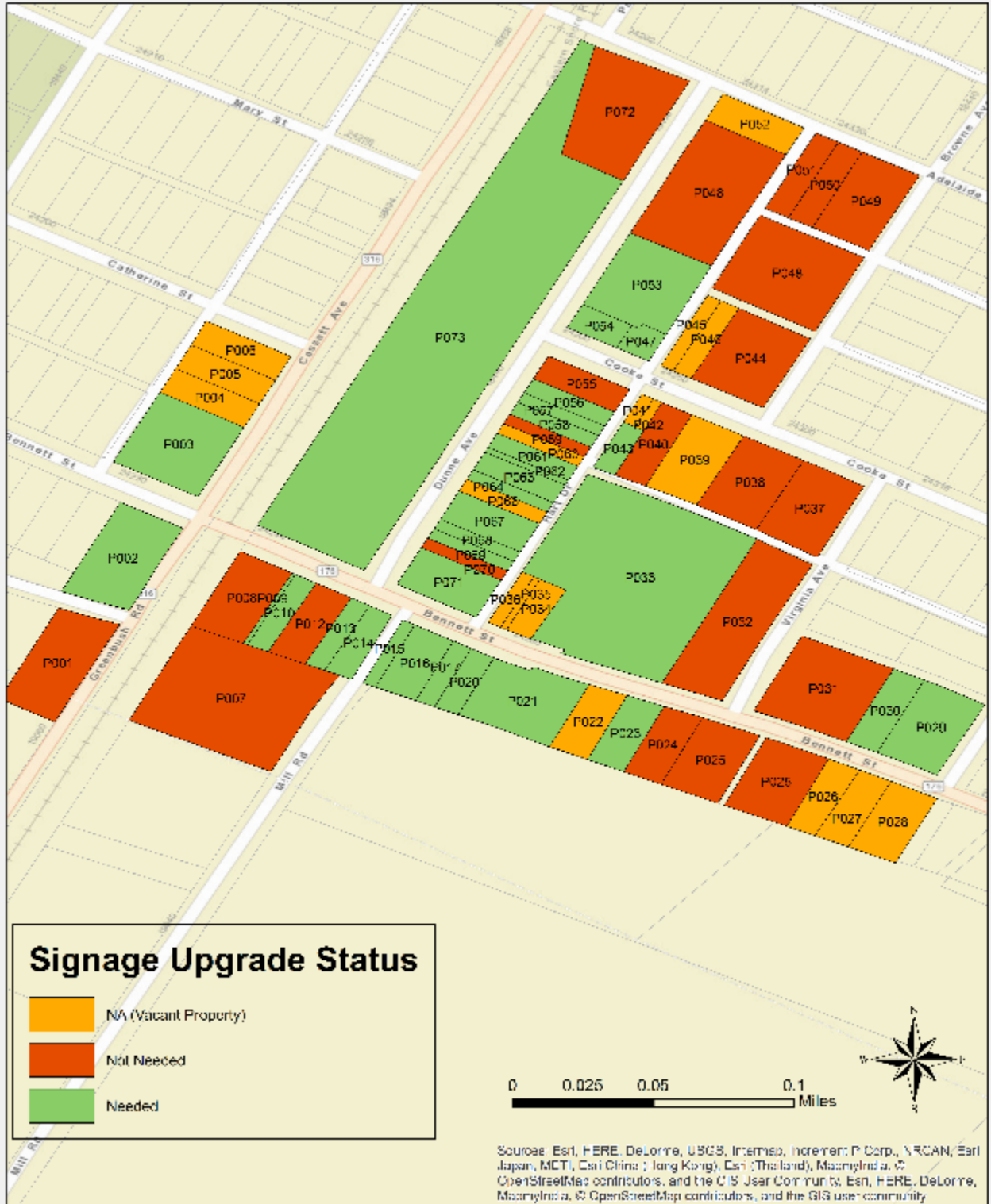


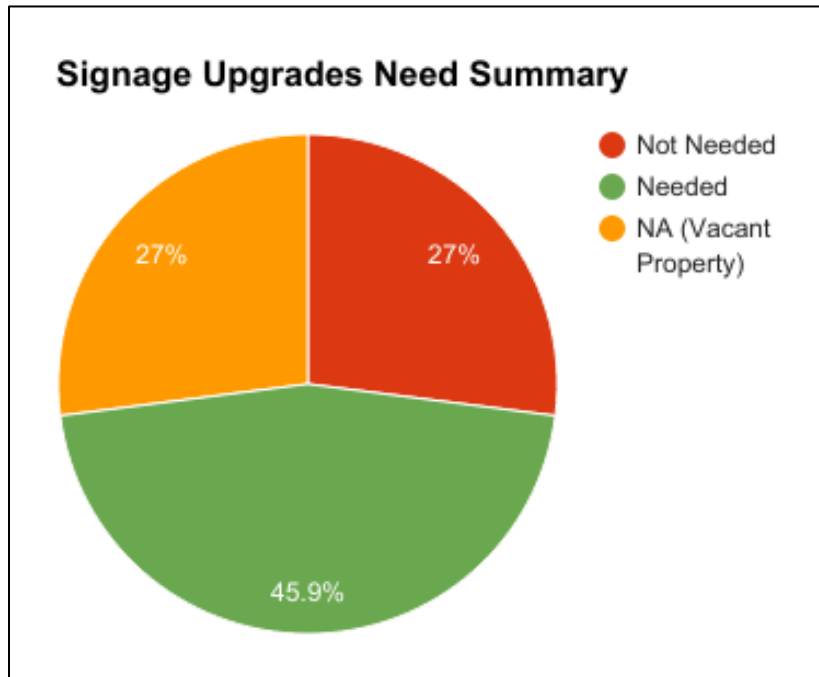
Over one third of the downtown properties have buildings in need of structural repair and in some cases the structural issues may constitute a public safety risk. Many of these tend to be older structures. The buildings in need of repair are widespread around downtown; however, there is a concentration along Dunne Avenue and adjacent to the Town Square.



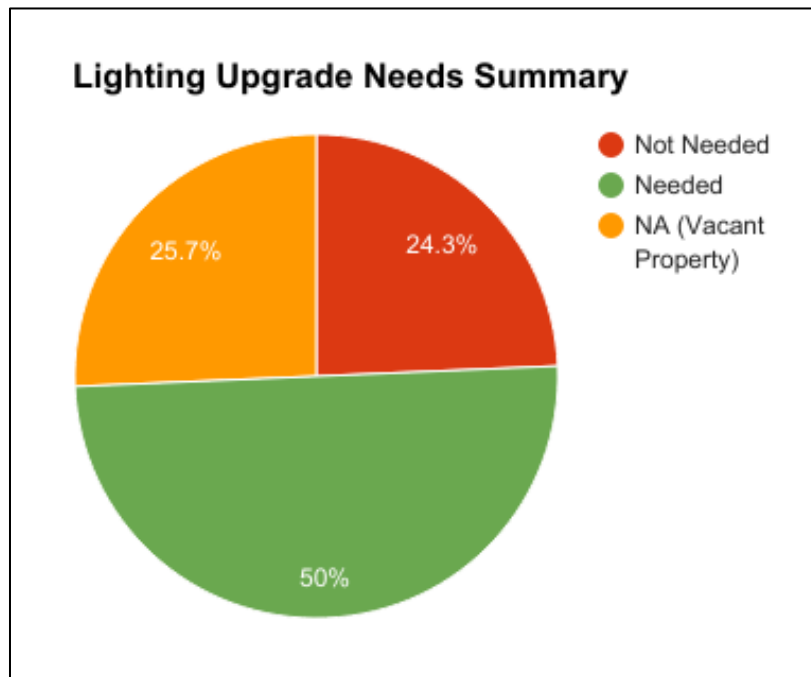
One half of the downtown properties have buildings that are in need of exterior painting. One quarter of the properties have buildings that have exteriors that are slightly or not in need of fresh coat of paint. Many of the buildings in need of exterior paint are located in the highest traffic areas adjacent to the Town Square. This has major implications on the overall appearance and welcoming nature of the downtown.

Downtown Inventory Survey - Signage Needs



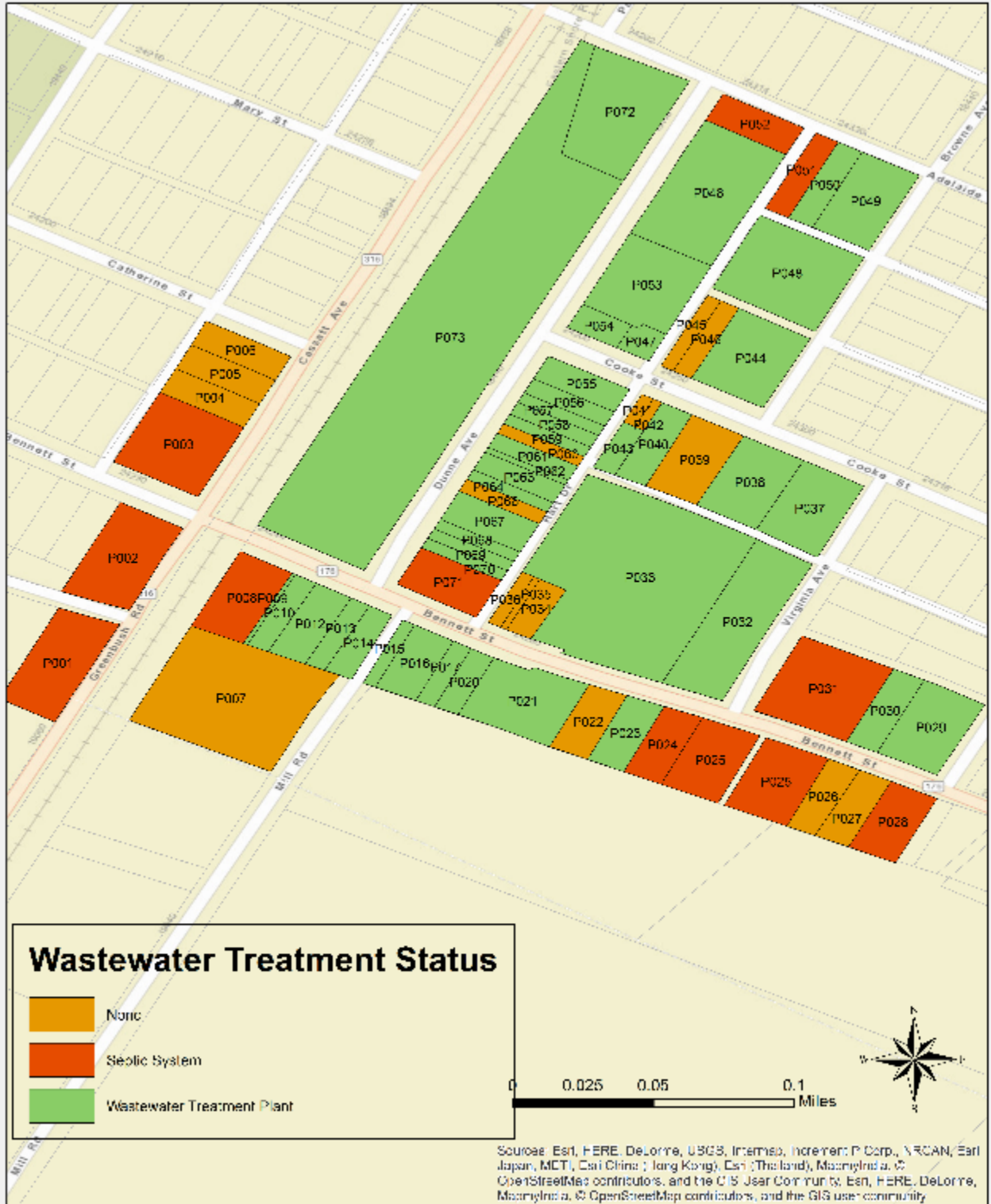


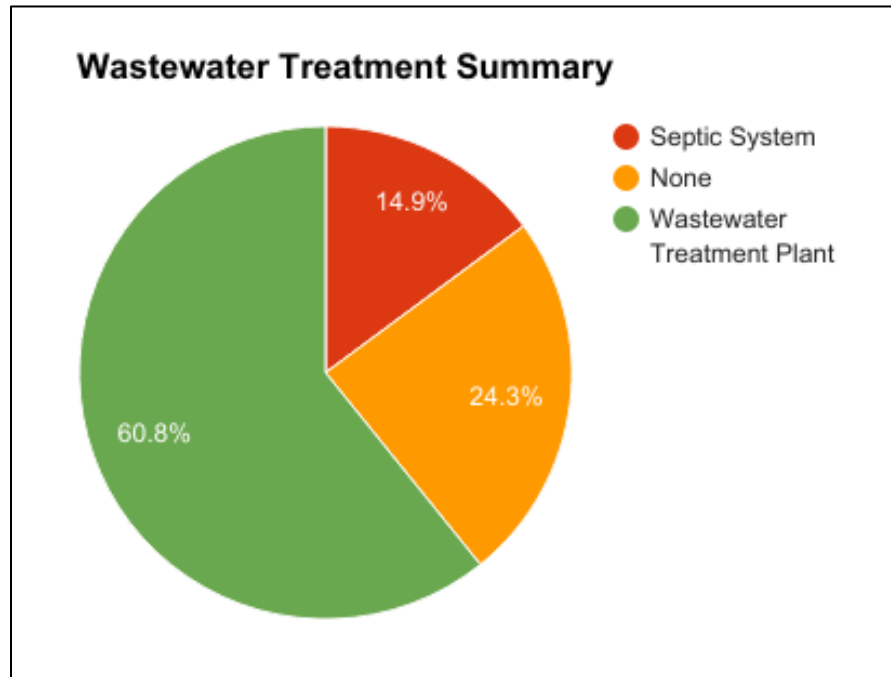
Nearly half of the downtown properties have buildings that either lack signage or have signage that is in need of repair or upgrading. This high number of buildings with inadequate signage not only makes it difficult for patrons to find and visit a business but also contribute to the downtown area having an overall less-welcoming feel. Further, there is a high concentration of buildings lacking adequate signage adjacent to the Town Square and along Bennett Street, the highest traffic areas in downtown.



Half of the downtown properties have buildings that either lack street lighting or have inadequate lighting to make the downtown area serviceable to patrons during evening hours. Inadequate lighting not only presents a public safety issue for downtown, but also limits the potential productivity of businesses by limiting the number of hours patrons can safely and easily access a business. Many of the buildings with inadequate lighting are adjacent to the Town Square and along Bennett Street, the highest traffic areas in downtown.

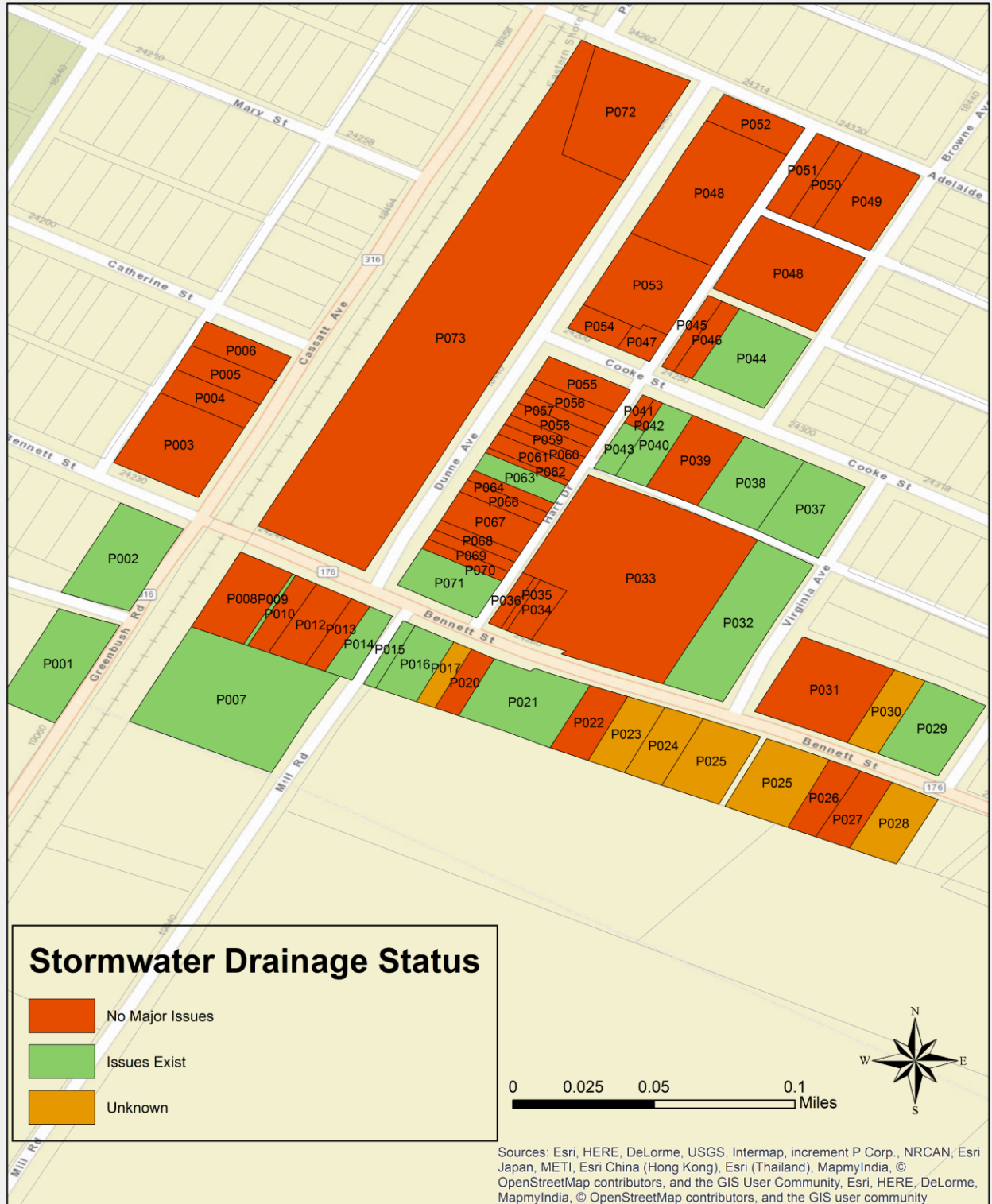
Downtown Inventory Survey - Wastewater Treatment

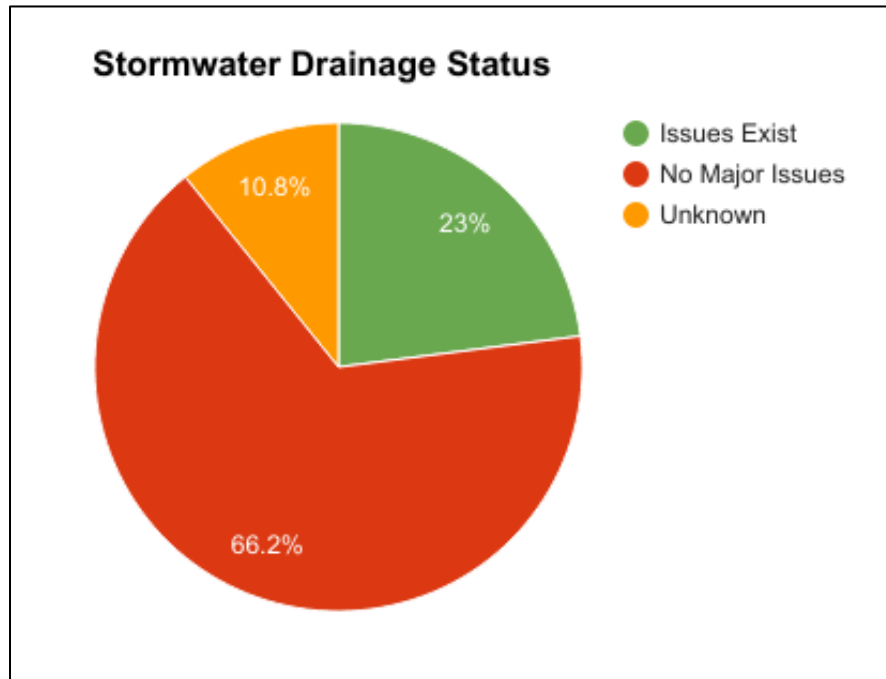




The Town of Parksley operates a community waste water treatment system. Hookup to the system is voluntary for property owners. The plant was constructed in part to address historic issues with failing septic systems from downtown businesses as the Virginia Department of Health had threatened to close businesses due to public health concerns. While approximately 60 percent of downtown properties are connected to the wastewater treatment system, approximately 15 percent of properties remain on septic systems. It was reported during Management Team meetings that several of these downtown septic systems are being closely watched by the Health Department and have been found to be failing.

Downtown Inventory Survey - Stormwater Drainage

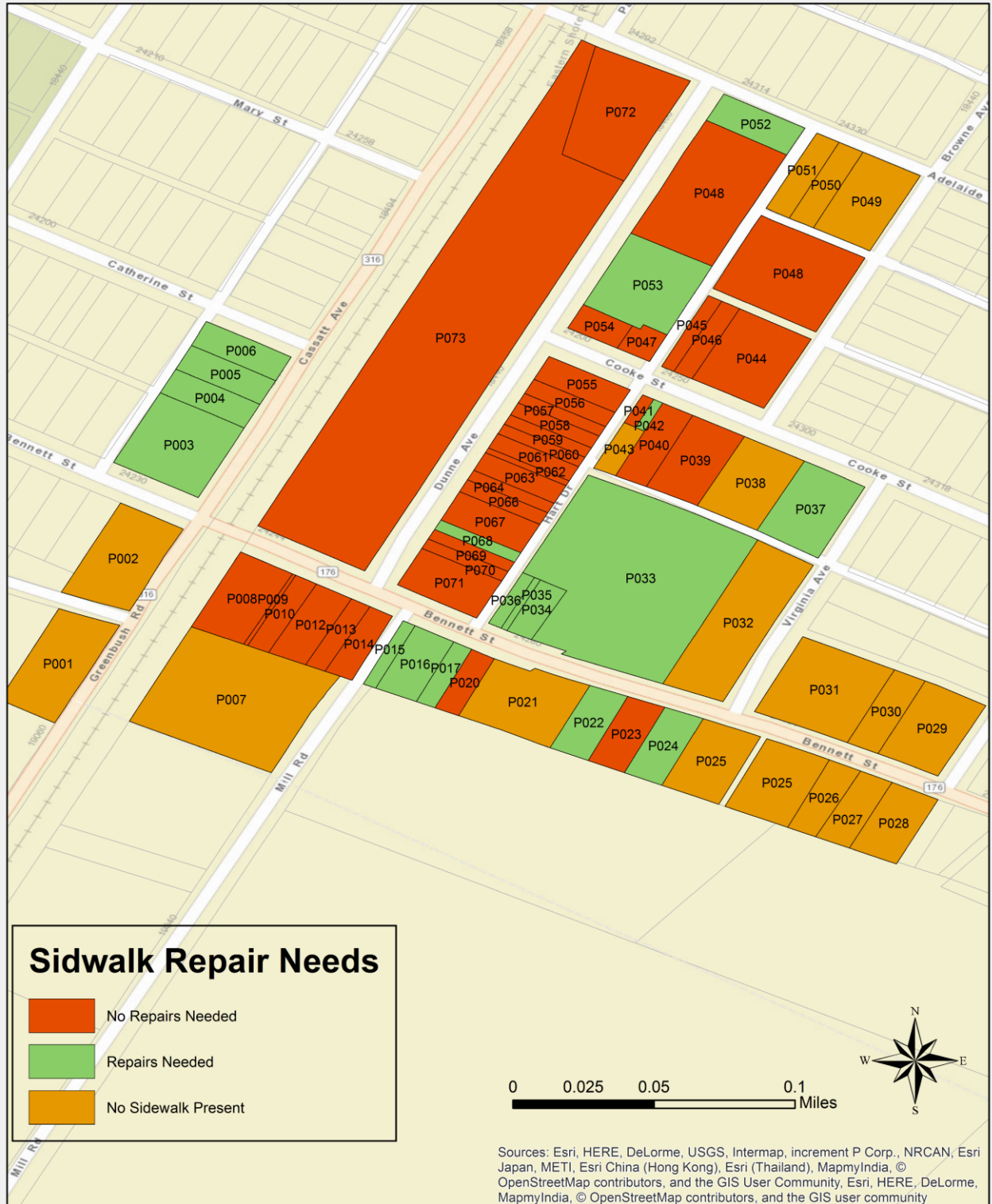


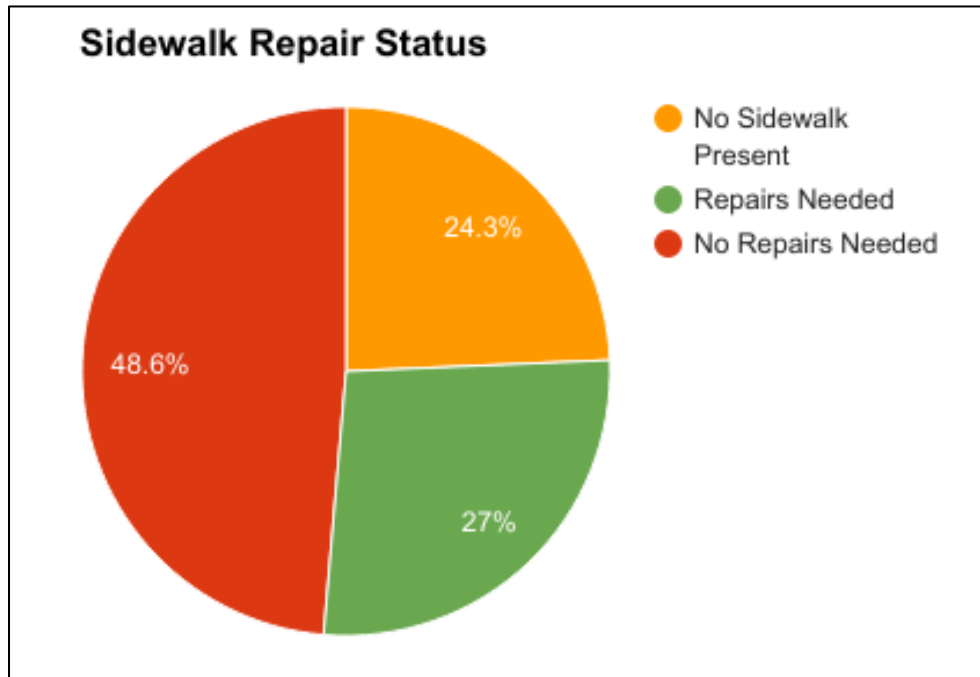


The downtown area has historically experienced issues with stormwater drainage. The Town’s natural topography is relatively flat and features several surficial depressions which naturally retain rain water. In addition, the Town’s stormwater drains and roadway/sidewalk/railroad designs have historically worsened the problem. The Management Team reported that while stormwater issues still remain, improvements to stormwater drains and transportation infrastructure have resulted in the issues being far less severe.

The downtown inventory shows that approximately one quarter of the downtown properties were experiencing major stormwater drainage issues which either resulted in damage to property or inhibited business activity. Problem areas were identified along Bennett Street, Cassatt Avenue, and various locations along Dunne Avenue.

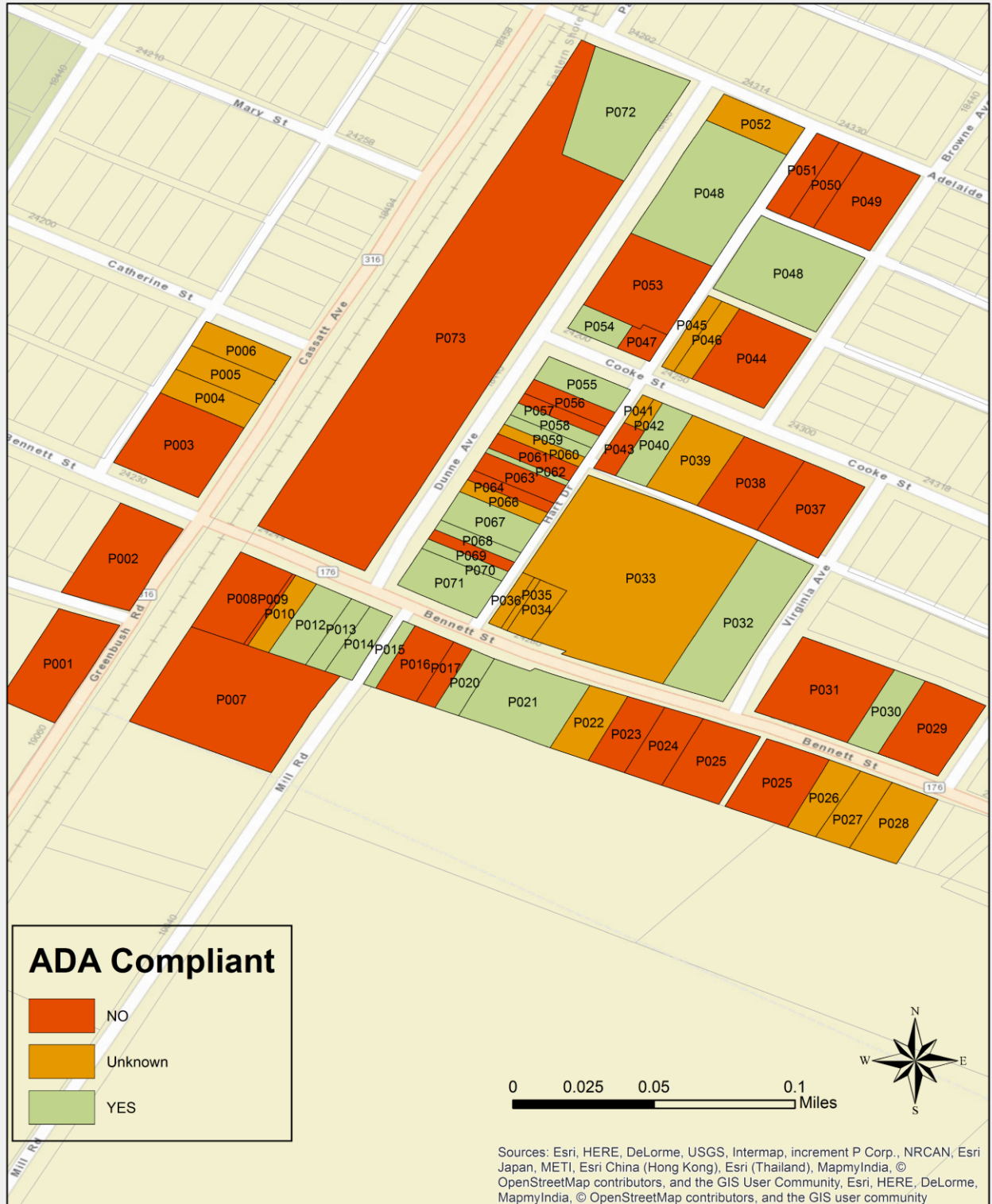
Downtown Inventory Survey - Sidewalk Repair Status

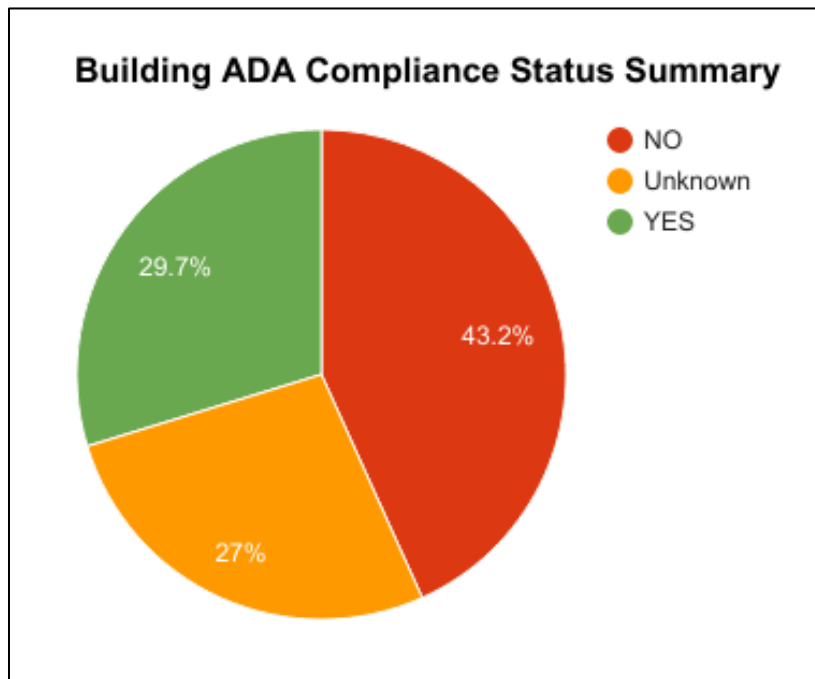




Over half of the downtown properties either lack sidewalks (24%) or have sidewalks that are in need of repair (27%). While the majority of areas adjacent to the Town Square and along portions of Cooke Street have adequate sidewalks, there are significant areas along Bennett Street and Cassatt Avenue that lack sidewalks or have sidewalks in need of repair. The Management Team identified sidewalks as one of the greatest needs within downtown and the inventory reflects this need.

Downtown Inventory Survey - ADA Compliance Status

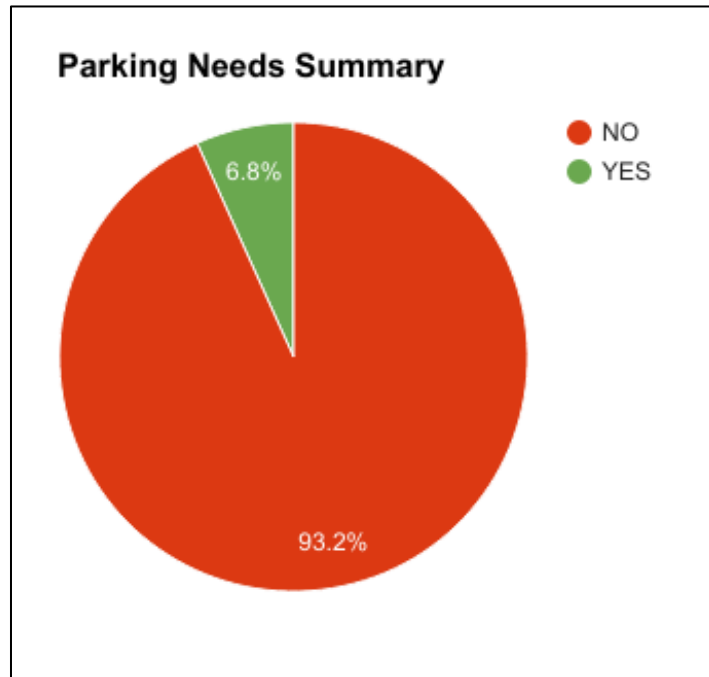




Approximately 43 percent of downtown properties have buildings which are not easily accessible by individuals with disabilities. The Management Team attributes these issues to the age of downtown buildings including dated designs with narrow doorways and not-flat entranceways. Further, owners cite the relatively greater costs in renovating the older structures to become compliant.

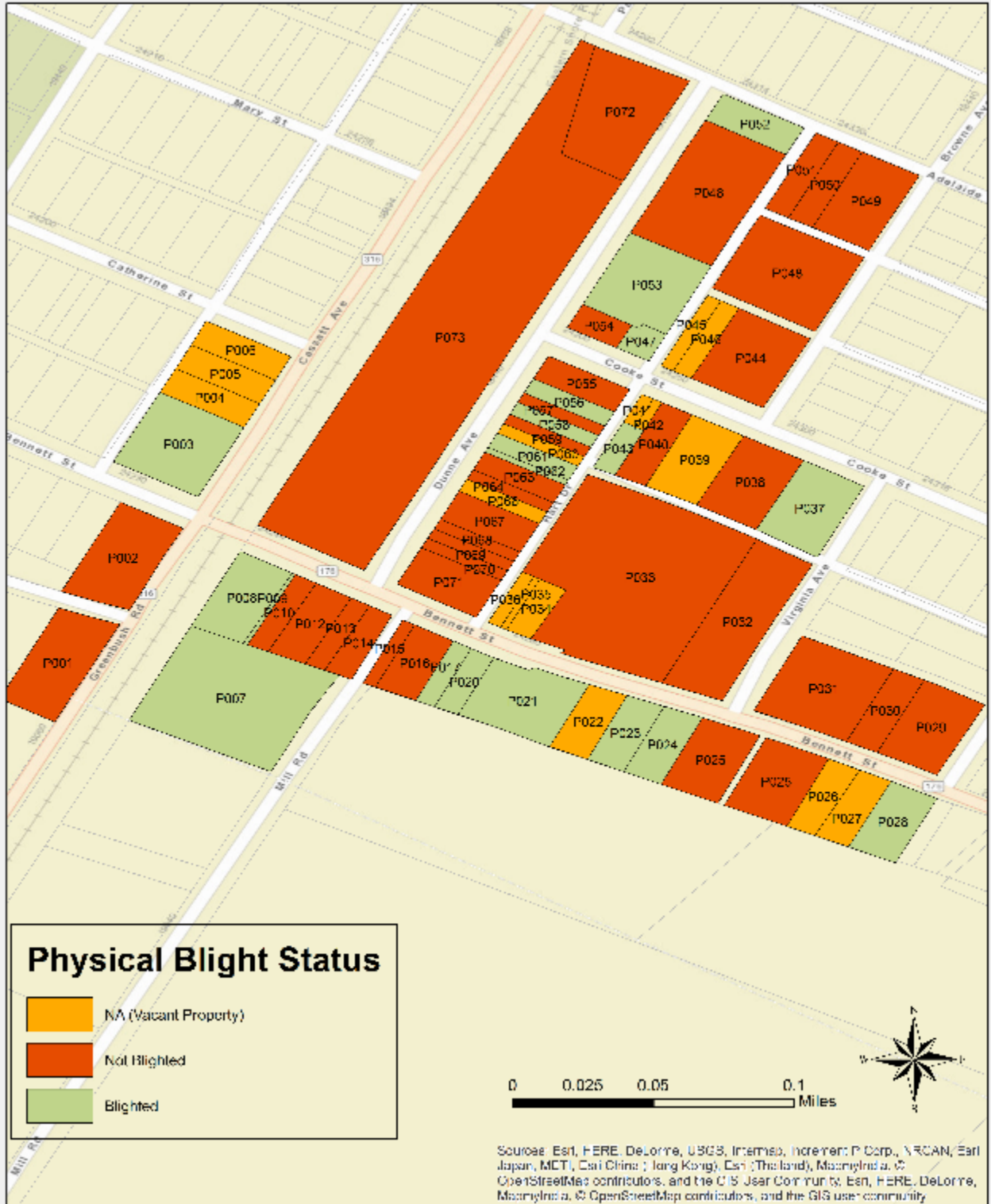
Downtown Inventory Survey - Parking Needs Summary

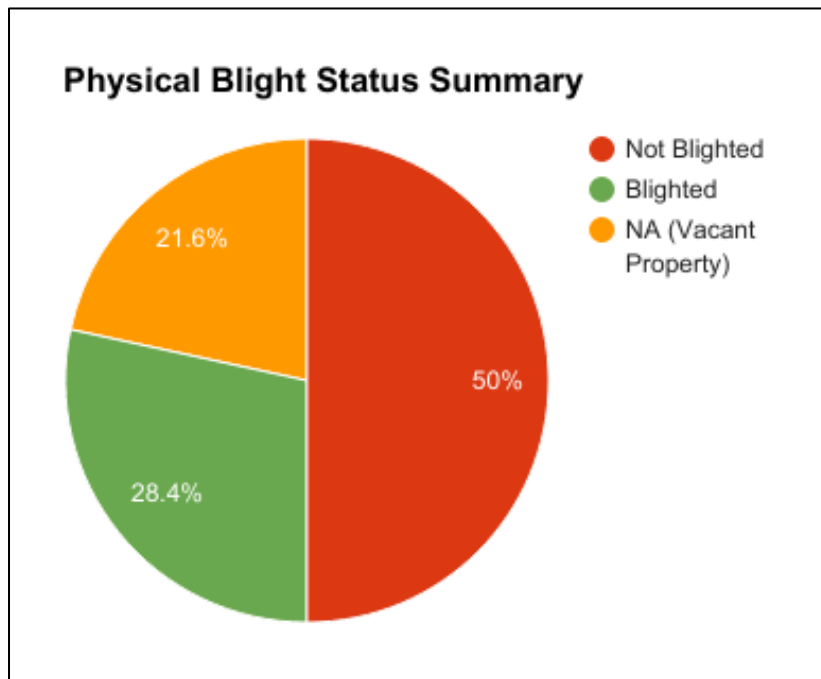




Parking was deemed to be ample for the majority of downtown. Only approximately seven percent of downtown properties were observed as needing additional parking. Areas needing parking include the eastern portion of Bennett Street where there is limited space along the VDOT right of way, adjacent to the former hotel at the corner of Cooke Street and Virginia Avenue, and the current dentist office on Cooke Street.

Downtown Inventory Survey - Physical Blight Status



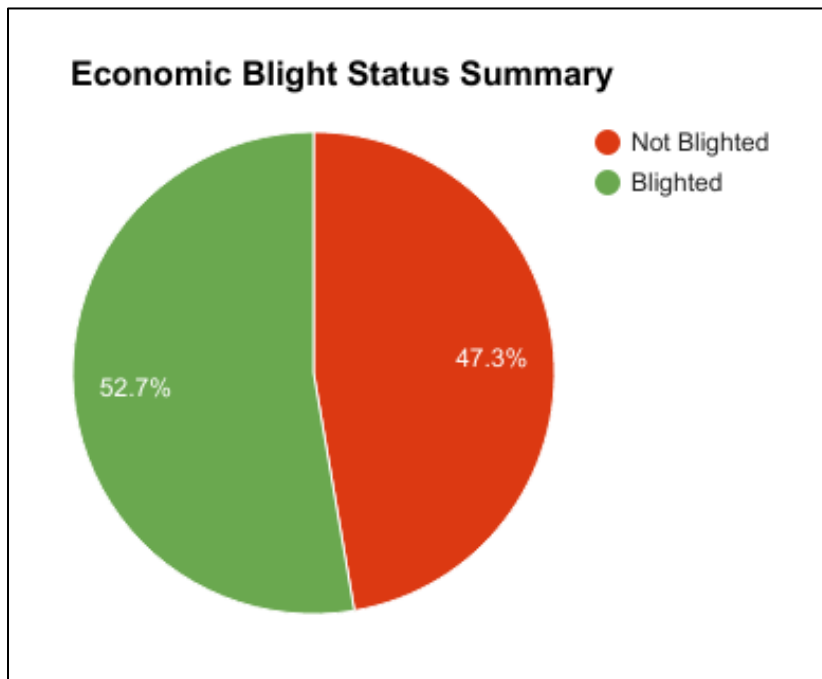


Physical Blight was defined by the Management Team as meaning “The deteriorated condition or state of disrepair of business district infrastructure, building, and other physical elements which detract from the overall appearance and identity of the district and, in turn, depress property value and the ability to market and attract investment”. This definition is only applicable to properties which have buildings (78.4% of properties) and is primarily focused on appearance and impact on the overall identity of downtown.

Approximately 28 percent of all downtown properties or approximately 36 percent of all downtown buildings met the criteria for being defined as physically blighted. The physically blighted properties are located in highly visible downtown areas including town entrances on Bennett Street and Cassatt Avenue, along Bennett Street. and in and adjacent to the Town Square.

Downtown Inventory Survey - Economic Blight Status





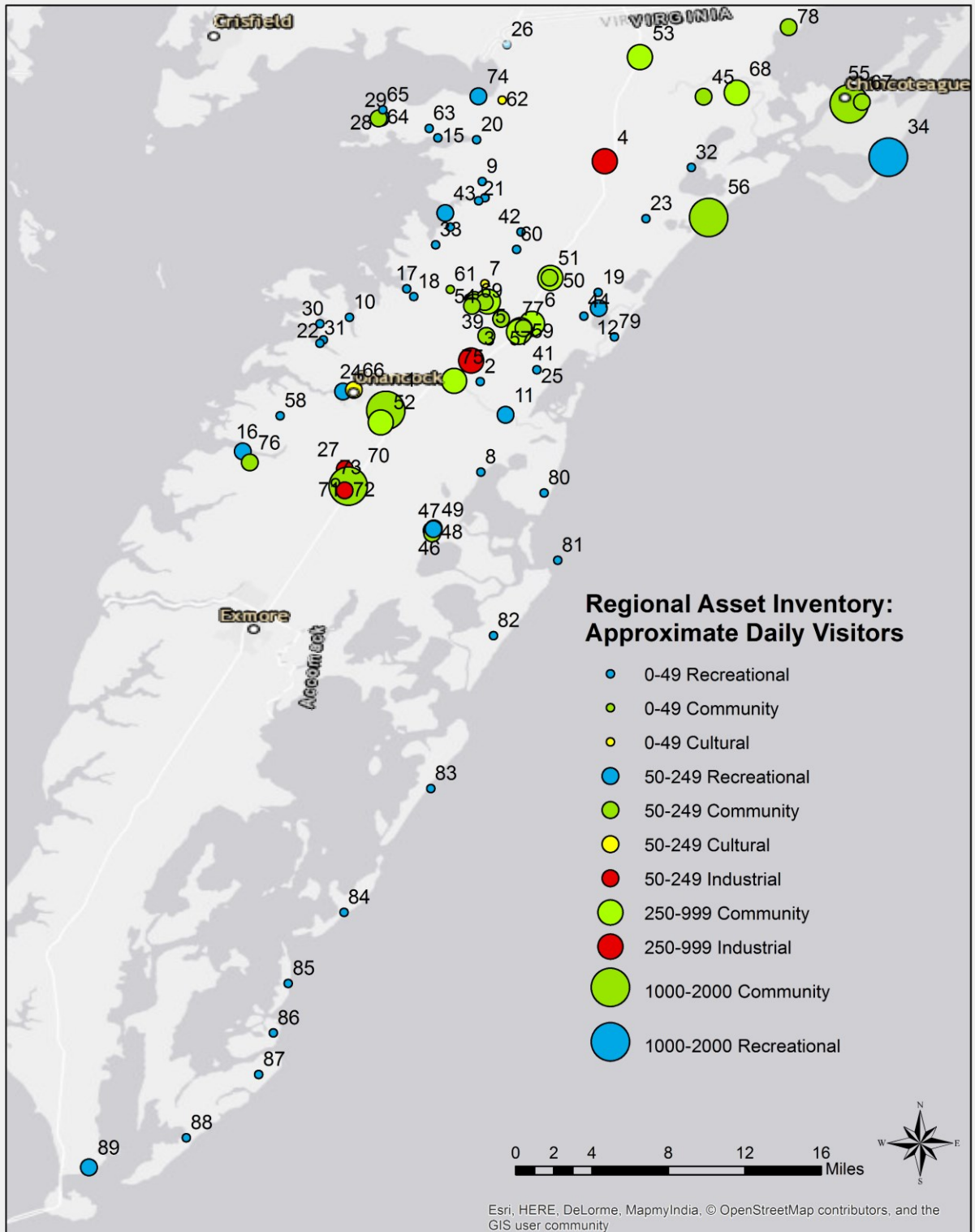
Economic Blight was defined by the Management Team as meaning “The existence of vacant, disinvested, or underutilized building and parcels which represent unrealized commercial potential and project a negative image that harms efforts to attract new investment”. Economically blighted properties include the vacant downtown properties and unoccupied buildings.

Approximately 53 percent of downtown properties met the criteria within the Management Team’s definition of economic blight. These properties are located in key areas around downtown in terms of accessibility and visibility. The Public Library is listed as a currently economically blighted property, but is to be redeveloped in the near future. This property will serve as a new economic anchor for downtown and should greatly contribute to the pace at which downtown revitalization occurs.

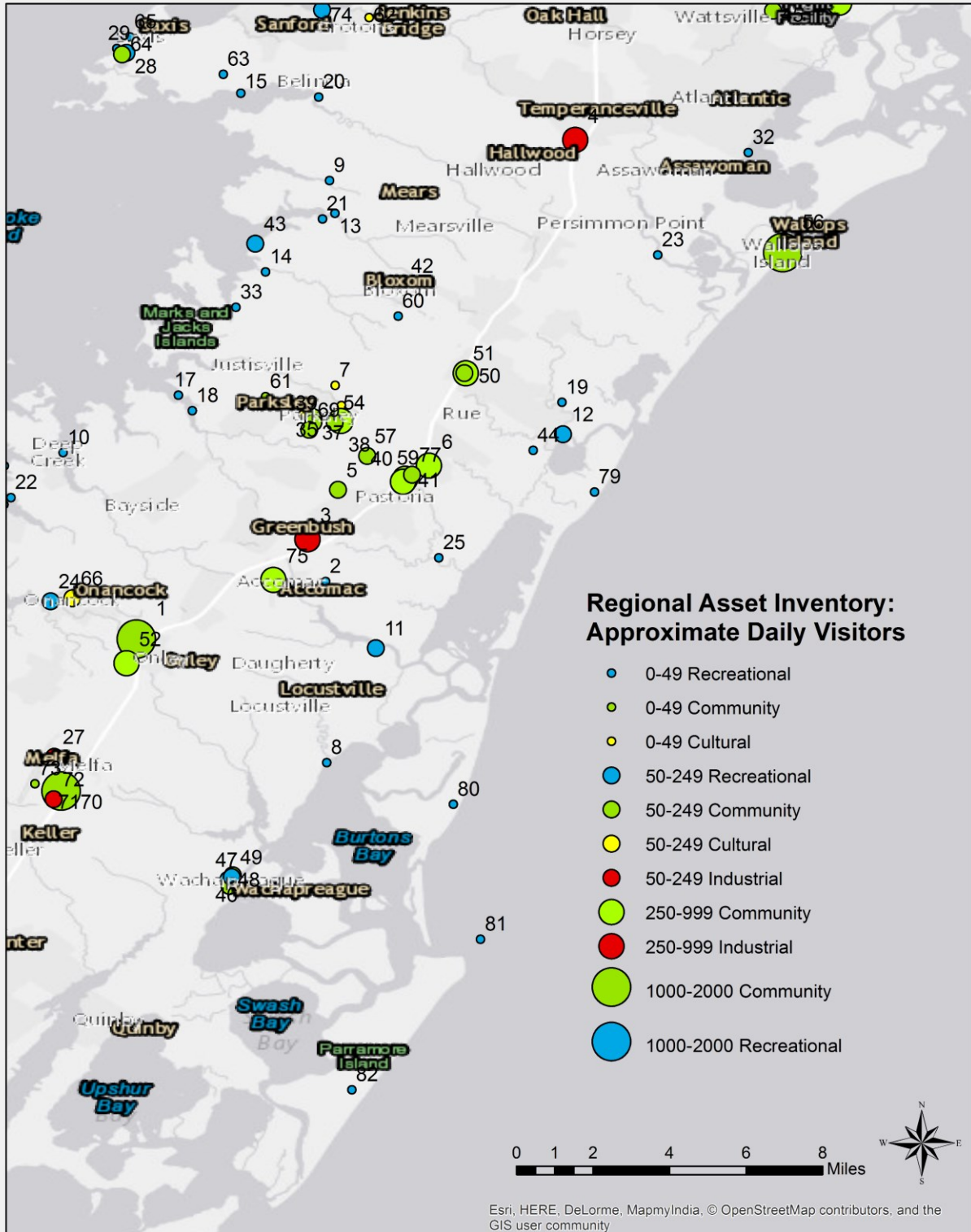
Regional Initiative Coordination

The Town of Parksley’s history is directly connected to the original asset for which the Town was created, the railroad. The railroad connected the Town to large urban markets and opened up the region for trade. Equally important assets within the region which have benefitted the Town are the interstate highway system and the abundance of navigable creeks along the Chesapeake Bayside and Atlantic Ocean Seaside of the Eastern Shore Peninsula. Parksley is centrally-located within Accomack County and has potentially to leverage and connect its downtown to assets from both within Accomack County and neighboring jurisdictions of Northampton County to the south and Worcester and Somerset Counties in Maryland to the north. Beyond these jurisdictions, Parksley is within a single day’s drive from over one third of the nation’s population and is proximal to urban centers including New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Richmond, and Hampton Roads. While it is important to note these proximal urban assets, the Management Team focused solely on identifying and assessing regional assets within the Eastern Shore of Virginia, which are illustrated in the following maps and inventory table [here](#).

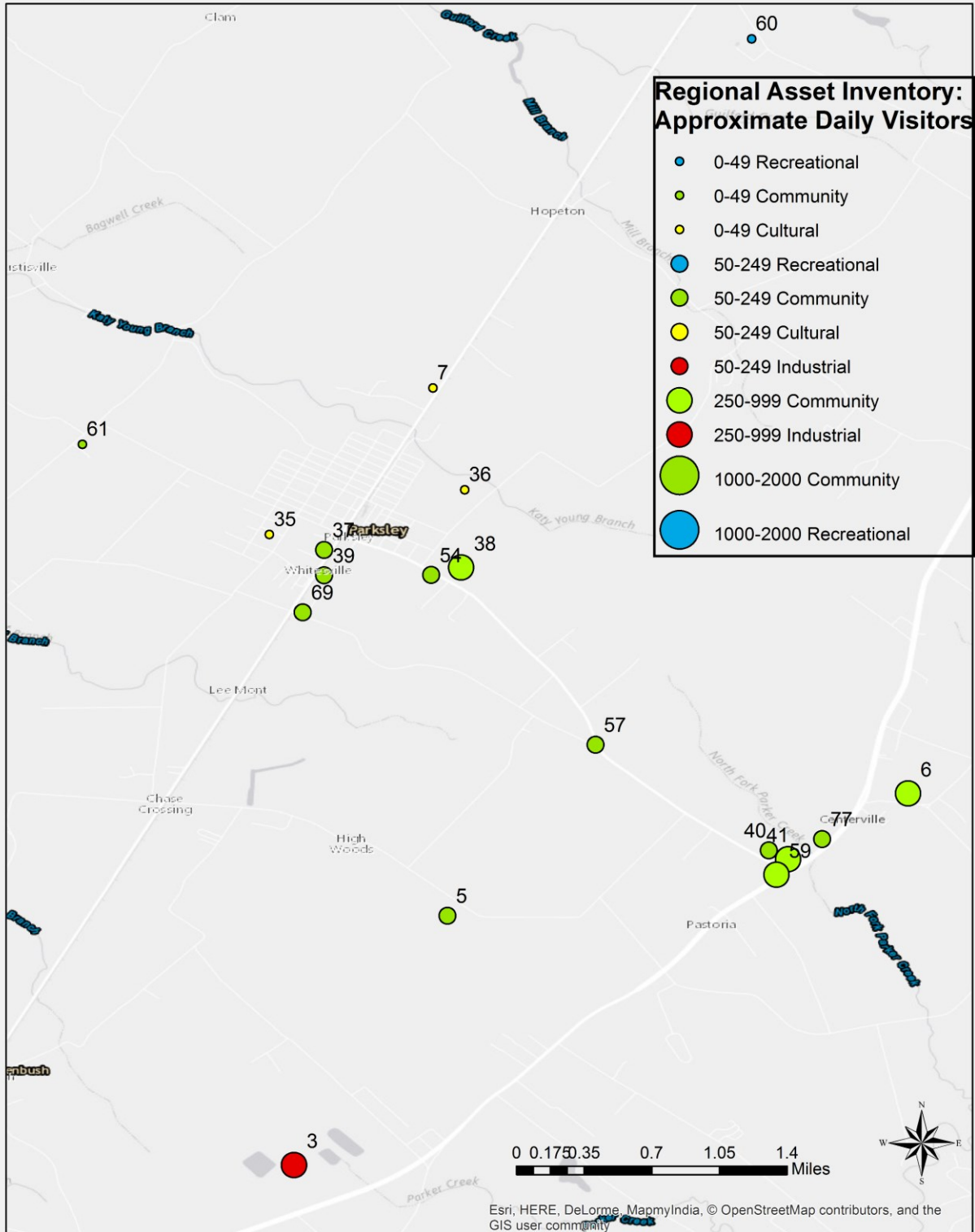
Regional Asset Inventory Map - Eastern Shore of Virginia



Regional Asset Inventory Map - Accomack County



Regional Asset Inventory Map - Parksley Vicinity



Eighty eight proximal assets were identified within the region from which downtown Parksley does and could potentially benefit from. These assets vary in use from cultural, community-based, recreational, and industrial. While many of these assets have been in existence for some time and the Town has currently relied on proximity and connection to them to sustain its downtown economy, there are several recent and ongoing initiatives from which the Town should anticipate receiving additional benefits. In terms of daily visits, the construction and opening of the new Shore Memorial Hospital in Onley during February, 2017 should directly benefit the downtown. Specifically, proximity to health care resources is now approximately 35 minutes closer than the previous hospital in Nassawadox. Over time, it could be expected that downtown property values may increase as result of this change and the potential for businesses associated with health care interested in relocating to downtown Parksley could increase as well. In addition to the new hospital, Virginia is making significant investments in the nearby Eastern Shore Community College where a new main college building is to be constructed in 2018 among other improvements. Furthermore, two industrial employers which have historically employed Parksley residents, the Parksley and Tyson Poultry Processing Plants, were recently expanded with multi-million dollar investments. The poultry industry is expanding in the region and may bring additional jobs which could potentially benefit downtown. Finally, growth is also being experienced in northern Accomack County with new programs and jobs at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility and tourism-based growth in the Town of Chincoteague. Each of these are both potential sources of employment for Parksley residents and potential sources of tourism from which Parksley could attempt to connect to.

Greatest Identified Regional Assets		
<i>Asset Name</i>	<i>Asset Type</i>	<i>Approximate # Daily Visits</i>
Shore Memorial Hospital	Community	1,000-2,000
Assateague Island National Seashore/Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge	Recreational	1,000-2,000
Town of Chincoteague	Community	1,000-2,000
NASA Wallops Flight Facility	Community	1,000-2,000
Eastern Shore Community College	Community	1,000-2,000
Perdue Plant Expansion	Industrial	250-999
Tyson Plant Expansion	Industrial	250-999
Accomack Manor	Community	250-999
Metompkin Elementary School	Community	250-999
Accomack County Convenience Center (Fishers Corner)	Community	250-999
Shore Medical Center at Metompkin	Community	250-999
Onley Community Health Center	Community	250-999
Atlantic Community Health Center	Community	250-999
Fishers Corner Royal Farms	Community	250-999
NASA Visitors Center	Community	250-999
Accomack County Seat	Community	250-999

While the list of assets receiving the greatest amounts of daily visitors is comprised predominantly of community-related assets, the greatest number of assets identified were classified as recreational. Collectively, the surrounding recreational assets were identified as having the overall greatest potential

for enhancing the downtown revitalization. Among these recreational facilities are many public access locations, the majority of which provide access to the nearby waters of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean.

In addition to facility assets, fourteen regional trails, plans, and services were identified that provide and could provide significant economic activity for downtown. These are summarized in the following table.

Regional Trails, Plans, and Services			
<i>Asset Name</i>	<i>Responsible Agency</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Potential Benefits to Downtown</i>
Birding & Wildlife Trail	Virginia	Nearby sites include Gargatha, Guard Shore, Saxis and Queen Sound	Proximity to regional trail sites
Heritage Trail	ESVA Historical Society	Includes Railway Museum, Public Library and nearby sites including Saxis Island Museum, ES Waterman's Museum & Research Center	Sites exist within and proximal to town
Artisan Trail	Artisans Center of Virginia	Nearby sites include Red Dog Decoys, Ten Good Sheep, Perennial Roots Farm, and Edwards Seafood	Proximity to multiple sites with potential for other businesses to join.
Virginia Oyster Trail	Artisans Center of Virginia	Nearby sites include Ten Good Sheep and multiple sites in Onancock	Proximity to trail sites with potential for other businesses to join.
Virginia Civil War Trail	Virginia Tourism	Nearby sites include Guard Shore	Potential for town to participate
Seaside Water Trail	A-NPDC	Nearby water trail for the seaside waterways	Proximity to water trail access points and recreational activity
Bayside Water Trail	A-NPDC	A-NPDC seeking to develop water trails for bayside creeks and linking to local businesses and lodging	Proximity to water trail access points and potential for local businesses to be incorporated into trail
Cpt John Smith Nat. Historic Water Trail	National Park Service	Nearby water trail with nearby sites on bayside (Onancock and Pitts Creek)	Proximity to national historic water trail sites
Star Transit	Acc.-North. Transport. Dist. Comm.	Public transit service providing access to downtown	Potential for improving existing bus stops or developing additional routes/service to the Town
Broadband Network	ESVA Broadband Authority	Regional broadband network currently providing service to Town	
Regional Economic Development Plans	A-NPDC	Regional Plans focusing on developing the industry sectors important to downtown economy	Potential for immediate regional collaboration for Town
Regional Bicycle Plan	A-NPDC	Plan to develop regional pedestrian trail	Could connect to downtown
Regional Transportation Plans	A-NPDC, VDOT	Plan for road construction and improvements	Enhancement of downtown transportation infrastructure
Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan	A-NPDC	Plan to reduce damages from natural hazards	Town can leverage stormwater drainage improvements

Downtown Revitalization Project Identification and Prioritization

During its second meeting on March 9, 2017, the Management Team reviewed the outcomes of the downtown and regional inventories and conducted an exercise to identify and prioritize downtown revitalization projects eligible for CDBG funding. The following project ideas were generated based off the items of greatest need as determined in the downtown physical inventory:

Downtown Revitalization Project Ideas (in no particular order)	
Project	Description
Sidewalk expansion and repairs	Construct new sidewalks in areas of greatest need and repair existing sidewalks where most needed. Pursue enhanced connectivity between Town Square/Dunne Avenue businesses and the Public Library by creating at least one walkway in a vacant parcel.
Water tower beautification	Repaint or redesign tower to match new downtown theme and provide unique character.
Façade improvements	Add wrap or billboard showing victorian style to improve buildings, vacant lots, and walkways. Repaint buildings in need.
Town square improvements	Repave parking lot and pursue improvements for stormwater drainage. Redesign/repaint parking lot to accommodate recreational vehicles (RVs, tour buses, through-travellers, etc.) to make downtown an unique destination. Construct publically-available electric hookup stations for recreational vehicles and electric cars.
Bicycle trail destination	Participate in development of regional bicycle plan and make downtown a tourism destination for bicyclists.
Public restrooms	Upgrade existing and/or add additional facilities.
Railcar conversions for lodging	Convert the historic railcars in the Town Square for use as overnight lodging
Additional parking	Create additional public parking that could serve Bennett and Cooke Streets.
Establish high viewing point	To provide water view of Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean, build a tower, offer hot air balloon ride, etc.
Lighting improvements	Perform functional upgrades to street lighting in needed areas for public safety and accessibility and make decorative lighting improvements including distinctive lighting around buildings or projecting images of trains on buildings or on water tower
Downtown walking and historic trail	Create new walking trails and a historic trail recognizing the Town's rich historical assets.
Stormwater drainage improvements	Improve stormwater drainage through the construction of new rain gardens, swales, etc. and incorporate improvements into construction or repairs of sidewalks.
Signage improvements	Convert all existing signage to Victorian-themed signage and add new signage of same theme where needed

Once these projects were identified, A-NPDC staff assisted with identifying which projects would be potentially eligible for CDBG funding and which should be pursued separately. Once the list had been

narrowed to projects potentially eligible for CDBG funding, each Management Team was directed to vote for its top two priority projects. The final voting and prioritization was as follows:

Prioritized Project Ideas for CDBG Funding		
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Number of Votes</i>
1 (tie)	Town square improvements	5
1 (tie)	Sidewalk expansion and repairs	5
3	Lighting improvements	3
4	Signage improvements	2
5 (tie)	Additional parking	1
5 (tie)	Establish high viewing point	1

Following prioritization of the list of potential projects to be considered for CDBG funding, A-NPDC staff and other Management Team members assisted with developing an approximate budget for a CDBG grant by providing approximate cost estimates for various projects. This exercise was completed to determine how many of the higher priority projects could potentially be pursued under a single CDBG grant. It was noted that a minimum of 5 percent of the overall budget was required for façade improvements per the CDBG program guidelines and as such, these activities were added to the budget. Additional costs for grant administration and preliminary engineering designs were also included in the budget.

Draft Budget for CDBG Grant		
<i>Budget Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Town square improvements	Repave parking lot and pursue improvements for stormwater drainage. Redesign/repaint parking lot to accommodate recreational vehicles (RVs, tour buses, through-travellers, etc.) to make downtown an unique destination. Construct publically-available electric hookup stations for recreational vehicles and electric cars.	\$240,000
Sidewalk expansion and repairs	Construct new sidewalks in areas of greatest need and repair existing sidewalks where most needed. Pursue enhanced connectivity between Town Square/Dunne Avenue businesses and the Public Library by creating at least one walkway in a vacant parcel.	\$240,000
Lighting improvements	Perform functional upgrades to street lighting in needed areas for public safety and accessibility and make decorative lighting improvements including distinctive lighting around buildings or projecting images of trains on buildings or on water tower.	\$45,000
Signage improvements	Convert all existing signage to Victorian-themed signage and add new signage of same theme where needed	\$45,000
Façade improvements	Add wrap or billboard showing victorian style to improve buildings, vacant lots, and walkways. Repaint buildings in need.	\$30,000
Engineering & Design	Preliminary engineering design, environmental review (if needed), structural inspections (if needed), other	\$30,000
Grant Administration	A-NPDC grant administration direct and indirect expenses	\$70,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST		\$700,000

Public Review and Comment

The top-priority downtown revitalization projects were presented for review and comment during the second public meeting during the March 13 Town Council meeting. One comment and request was received from a downtown business owner regarding the projects. It was requested that stormwater projects be considered during this process to address ongoing drainage issues in specific areas downtown. In response to the input, it was explained that the drainage issues have been significantly improved in recent years and further, any future Preliminary Engineering Report will include considerations for stormwater drainage for the repaving and sidewalk components of the project. The business owner has expressed interest in participating in the Management Team and will be invited to all future meetings.

Development of Draft Procurement Document

A draft Request for Proposals (RFP) was developed for procuring necessary assistance during the construction of the prioritized and selected activities. The draft was submitted to VDHCD staff for review and approval ([available here](#)). The Management Team plans to work with VDHCD during the remainder of the planning process to finalize this document and properly procure needed services.

Coordination with Virginia Department of Historic Resources

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) was contacted via telephone on March 14, 2017 and via email on March 15, 2017 regarding the activities prioritized during the current planning project. All correspondence with VDHR was provided to VDHCD and the Management Team intends to coordinate and communicate with VDHR during all future activities.

III. Summary and Conclusions

Public Engagement

- Members of the public were invited and encouraged to participate and become involved in the planning process for a community-based project during two meetings of the Parksley Town Council.

Project Management Team

- A diverse management team of stakeholders was established and was responsible for conducting a downtown physical inventory and regional asset inventory and identifying an economic development restructuring plan based on their findings.

Downtown Physical Inventory Survey

- A comprehensive inventory ([available here](#)) was completed of 74 properties within downtown
- Downtown Inventory Outcomes:
 - Building Stock Age – Approximately one third of the buildings for which ages could be determined are either over or approaching 100 years in age
 - Current Property Use –
 - Just over half of the properties were found to currently be used for commercial purposes.
 - Only 5.4% of the properties currently offer mixed use indicating a need for additional lodging options
 - Nearly one quarter of the downtown properties were found to be vacant properties with open space indicating an opportunity for potential development for various use.
 - Current Property Status –Over 20 percent of the downtown properties were found to be vacant and lacking structures.
 - Building Occupancy Status - Approximately one quarter of the properties in downtown have buildings that are currently not occupied.
 - Building Repair Status - Over one third of the downtown properties have buildings in need of structural repair and in some cases the structural issues may constitute a public safety risk
 - Exterior Paint Needs - One half of the downtown properties have buildings that are in need of exterior painting
 - Signage Upgrade Needs - Nearly half of the downtown properties have buildings that either lack signage or have signage that is in need of repair or upgrading

- Lighting Upgrade Needs - Half of the downtown properties have buildings that either lack street lighting or have inadequate lighting to make the downtown area serviceable to patrons during evening hours
- Wastewater Treatment Status –
 - Approximately 60 percent of downtown properties are connected to the Town’s wastewater treatment system
 - Approximately 15 percent of downtown properties remain on septic systems
- Stormwater Drainage Status - approximately one quarter of the downtown properties were experiencing major stormwater drainage issues which either resulted in damage to property or inhibited business activity
- Sidewalk Status –
 - Over half of the downtown properties either lack sidewalks (24%) or have sidewalks that are in need of repair (27%)
 - Significant areas along Bennett Street and Cassatt Avenue that lack sidewalks or have sidewalks in need of repair
- ADA Compliance Status - Approximately 43 percent of downtown properties have buildings which are not easily accessible by individuals with disabilities
- Parking Status –
 - Parking was deemed to be ample for the majority of downtown.
 - Approximately seven percent of downtown properties were observed as needing additional parking.
- Physical Blight Summary –
 - Physical Blight was defined by the Management Team as meaning “The deteriorated condition or state of disrepair of business district infrastructure, building, and other physical elements which detract from the overall appearance and identity of the district and, in turn, depress property value and the ability to market and attract investment”.
 - Approximately 28 percent of all downtown properties or approximately 36 percent of all downtown buildings met the criteria for being defined as physically blighted.
- Economic Blight Summary –
 - Economic Blight was defined by the Management Team as meaning “The existence of vacant, disinvested, or underutilized building and parcels which represent unrealized commercial potential and project a negative image that harms efforts to attract new investment”.
 - Approximately 53 percent of downtown are economically blighted.

Regional Initiative Coordination

- A comprehensive inventory of existing assets in the surrounding region ([available here](#)) was completed and 88 facilities, businesses and programs were identified
- Regional Inventory Outcomes:
 - Recent and future investments in the following facilities are expected to provide significant direct and indirect benefits to downtown

- Shore Memorial Hospital: Relocation to Onley in February, 2017 positions downtown significantly closer to health care services and increases potential for health care-related businesses wanting to open downtown
- Eastern Shore Community College: Upcoming campus building and improvements in 2018 provides enhanced higher education and workforce development opportunities
- Perdue and Tyson Poultry Processing Plants: Significant investments in and expansions to the two industrial facilities may provide more employment opportunities for Town residents
- NASA Wallops Flight Facility: Recent addition of new programs and anticipated future growth may provide more employment opportunities for Town residents. Growing tourism industry surrounding rocket launches can benefit downtown also.
- Town of Chincoteague: New businesses, hotels, and tourism industry can benefit downtown.
- The greatest number of facility assets identified were recreational and predominantly were nearby public access facilities providing access to the nearby waters of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean.
- Fourteen regional trails, plans, and services were identified that provide and could provide significant economic activity for downtown. The Town could pursue finding ways to become involved in and benefit from:
 - Four recreational trails (water trails, birding & wildlife trail)
 - Four cultural trails (artisan, heritage, oyster, and civil war trail)
 - Public transportation (Star Transit)
 - Broadband network
 - Planning initiatives (economic development, bicycle, transportation, and hazard mitigation)

Identified Downtown Revitalization Projects

- The Management Team considered the outcomes of the downtown and regional inventories to identify potential revitalization activities to guide the downtown areas future growth for years to come.
 - Activities include both innovative and functionally-necessary projects which strive to make downtown more attractive, accessible, safe, lively, and unique (see table on page 43 for list)
- A prioritized list of revitalization projects eligible for CDBG funding was developed and the public was engaged for review and comment. The prioritized list included:
 - Town square improvements
 - Sidewalk expansion and repairs
 - Lighting improvements
 - Signage improvements
 - Additional parking
 - Establish high viewing point
- A budget for a \$700,000 CDBG grant was developed and included significant allocations for town square improvements and sidewalk expansion and repairs with lesser allocations for lighting, signage, and façade improvements.

Appendices

Town of Parksley

Downtown Revitalization Planning Project



*Play a Part in Preparing for Parksley's Future!!!
Attend the project kickoff to learn more and get involved*

Community Kickoff Meeting:

Monday, February 13

7:00 p.m.

Parksley Town Hall

For more info:

Please contact the Town Office
at 665-4618 or the Accomack-
Northampton Planning District
Commission at 787-2936.

From January until March 2017, the Town of Parksley and Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission are conducting a planning process to assess needs for the downtown area and to develop ideas for how best to revitalize downtown to ensure a bright future for the Town and its residents and businesses.

