



Mississauga Retail Strategy

Phase 2 – Strategy & Implementation Plan

January 6, 2026

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Preface

Study Team

The project consulting team responsible for completing this **Retail Strategy** in collaboration with the City of Mississauga's Planning & Building Department (Economic Development, Development & Design and City Planning Strategies Divisions) includes a range of industry-leading professionals offering expertise spanning the full breadth of land economics, land use planning and municipal strategy / policy implementation. Parcel Economics Inc. ("Parcel") has served as the project lead for this study, with additional project support provided by Gladki Planning Associates ("Gladki", "GPA").

Parcel

Project Lead & Land Economics

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Land Use Planning & Policy

Study Overview

This study process has involved a critical assessment of current and future market opportunities and existing Official Plan policy relating specifically to retail/service commercial uses. It has also included the identification of local constraints and needs as they relate to retaining and attracting retail and commercial business in a complete communities context. Collectively, this information is intended to support the City in: (i) developing effective long-term recommendations for the *Economic Development Strategy 2025-2030*; as well as, (ii) informing other municipal policies and programs that seek to foster a healthy retail sector and sustainable, walkable communities.

Phase 1 A baseline work program comprising a range of supporting research and analysis summarized across four distinct reporting elements, available under separate cover:

- Phase 1A - Land Use Analysis
- Phase 1B - Market and Community Analysis
- Phase 1C - Assessment of Current Context, Benchmarking and Market Feasibility
- Phase 1D - Stakeholder Consultation

Phase 2 The development of a city-wide retail framework relying on data analysis and outcomes from the various distinct reporting elements above. ***Focus of this report.**

Implementation

To effectively implement the new action items and recommendations identified in this Retail Strategy, the addition of a dedicated staff resource may be needed. This role could be critical in coordinating efforts across internal partners and external stakeholders, ensuring alignment, consistency, and momentum throughout the execution process. The position could also play a key role in designing and delivering solutions that are distinctly **“Mississauga made”** – tailored to the city’s unique context, needs, and opportunities. With focused capacity to manage, advance and monitor these initiatives, Mississauga will be better positioned to foster a healthy, resilient retail environment that supports complete and walkable communities.

1.0

Current Context:

Retail in Mississauga

The Challenges:

Context

Mississauga is rapidly evolving due to continued growth, ongoing development and changing demographics. By 2051, the City is anticipated to reach a population of nearly **one million residents**, representing growth of 31% from current 2024 population levels. Existing and anticipated growth in Mississauga necessitates new retail space to ensure the city continues to develop as a vibrant, inclusive and walkable community.

Despite the critical role of retail across Mississauga, the city is increasingly challenged to maintain, preserve and acquire retail / service commercial space. Competing priorities, including a push for residential infill and intensification, are increasingly at the expense of the city's existing retail supply as these sites represent prime candidates for redevelopment. Simultaneously, new developments that are predominantly mixed-use in format, are also challenged to introduce a meaningful amount of retail space due to a myriad of factors that complicate their feasibility.

Further, evolving market conditions (e.g., e-commerce, consumer behaviours, local development pressures, etc.) continue to challenge the City's ability to sustain and support an attractive, robust and vibrant commercial landscape.

Some of the specific challenges facing retail / service commercial space in Mississauga are summarized in further detail below. It is clear that existing dynamics necessitate the development of practical strategies that will assist the city in retaining, attracting and support retail / service commercial development going forward.

Note: For purposes of this study, Retail is defined, or shall be interpreted, to include a broad range of uses, inclusive of conventional retail (e.g., supermarkets, clothing stores, pharmacies, general merchandise stores, etc.), as well as personal services, restaurants, among other services and amenities.

Challenge #1: Changing Retail Landscape

- From substantial growth in e-commerce activity, continued shifts in merchandise / service offerings, a reduction in store sizes—or “footprints”—and other ongoing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **retail sector has faced a range of material changes in recent years**. The ways in which each factor will impact retail in Mississauga is expected to vary. E-commerce for example, is anticipated to have a less notable impact on convenience-oriented stores and service-oriented businesses relative to stores that provide less customizable products. Over time, this could impact the city’s ability to maintain a full range and even distribution of retail / service commercial businesses.
- E-commerce growth is also pushing retailers to develop new ways to deliver value as physical destinations. Creative placemaking, or experiential retailing (e.g., cultural celebrations and programming, semi-permanent and permanent installations, seasonal art, etc.) is becoming increasingly important to draw people back to stores and generate increased foot traffic. As this form of placemaking becomes an increasingly valuable investment, this could generate new challenges for the physical design, location and format of commercial spaces in Mississauga.
- Reduced store sizes may increase the city’s ability to accommodate independent businesses, while also impeding their ability to support larger format commercial uses. This could also **challenge the city’s ability to sustain a diversity of retail / service commercial uses**, as smaller format spaces are generally more conducive to service commercial providers.
- While the exact ways in which these trends could manifest in the Mississauga context will vary, protecting and integrating opportunities for local businesses and retail / service commercial uses more generally will continue to be key.

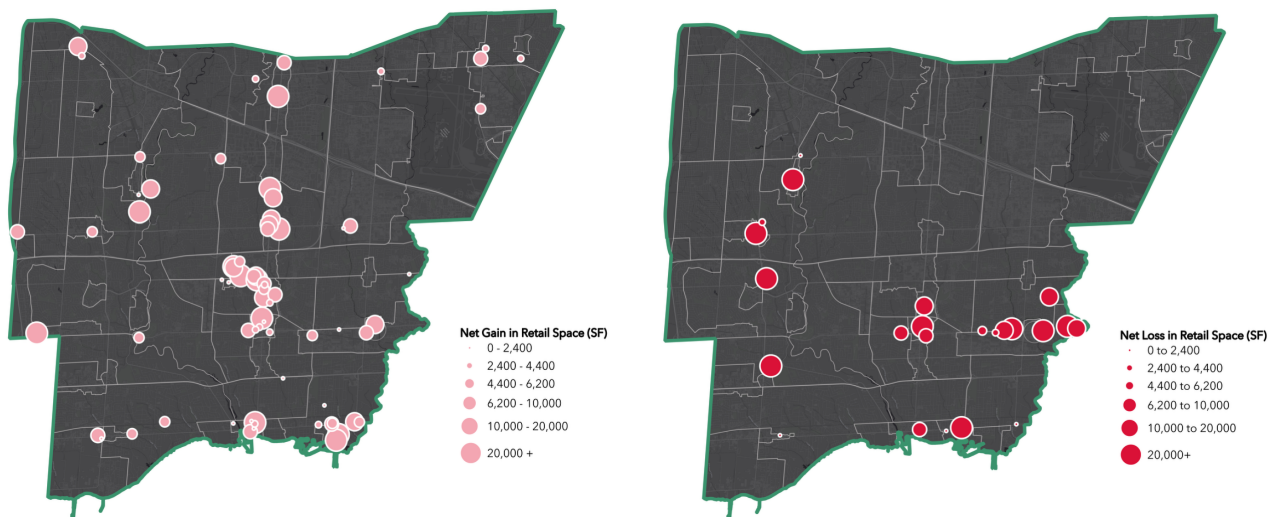
Challenge #2: Unmet Demand

- Significant population growth is anticipated to generate **demand for upwards of 5.4 million square feet** of additional retail / service commercial space in Mississauga to 2051. Most of this space will be required in the Downtown Core and the city’s Growth Nodes, or the areas that are anticipated to host a growing share of Mississauga’s population going forward.
- As intensification and mixed use development takes hold in Mississauga, the city will be challenged to attract new retail space and sustain its existing supply, particularly as **newer developments increasingly prioritize residential development**. While this is often a function of feasibility characteristics and competing priorities, the city will also need to provide an adequate supply of retail / service commercial space to meet the needs of its growing population.

Challenge #3: Reductions to Existing Supply

- Applications for development and redevelopment involve a varying amount of retail / service commercial space. While some projects do propose a net increase in the amount of retail / service commercial space on-site, others would **amount to a net reduction** if they are advanced to market, as currently contemplated. This is particularly apparent across the city's Growth Nodes, which could lose 140,000 square feet of retail space based on existing development proposals in the pipeline.
- The loss of existing retail / service commercial space to new development, **further complicates the city's ability to sustain an adequate supply of retail space**. It is also particularly challenging recognizing significant population growth and mounting demand for new retail space throughout the city.

Applications Resulting in a Net Change in Retail / Service Supply



Source: Parcel based on development applications provided by the City of Mississauga in October 2024. Existing estimates include all applications that are under construction, approved, outstanding or active. Rounded to the nearest 100 square feet.

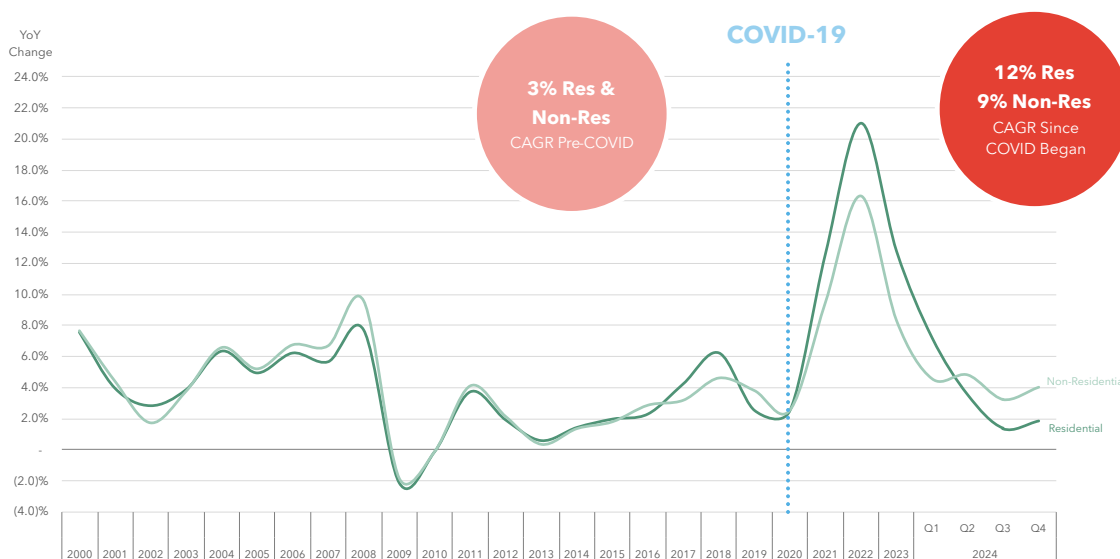
Challenge #4: Barriers to Entry

- As a baseline condition, new real estate developments across the country have become **extremely challenged to achieve financial feasibility as of late**, with only selected development opportunities being underwritten as “viable”. This is a function of a myriad of factors, including rising construction costs (per

chart below), interest rate changes, shifting land use policy objectives, among other variables (many of which are well beyond the immediate control of municipalities).

- Further compounding this relationship, the inclusion of **retail/service commercial and other non-residential spaces often represent a “drag” on financial feasibility**, given that the revenue-generating opportunities associated with these types of uses are often limited relative to the significant capital costs associated with their development. This impedes its delivery, even where market conditions are favourable (i.e., even when there is an identified demand—or “need” for the space).
- As commercial components continue to be challenged to deliver in a “new build” context, particularly when compared to residential uses, this further disincentivizes the development of new retail space and ultimately **compounds the city’s ability to attract new retail supply** over the short and longer term.

Change in Construction Price Index



Source: Parcel, based on Statistics Canada Building Construction Index (BCPI) data. As of Q4 2024. Pre and post-COVID-19 rates expressed on the basis of Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR).

Challenge #5: Rental Rate Dynamics & Affordability

- In conjunction with the above, to make developments with new commercial units financially viable, developers and property managers are requiring higher rental rates for commercial space than are currently prevailing in the market. This increase in lease rates directly impacts the type and diversity of

tenants that can occupy these types of “new build” commercial spaces, often **reducing the competitiveness of smaller businesses and service providers in favour of larger chains and national retail “banners”**. Relative to well supported chain retailers, smaller retail businesses often lack the capital to survive significant upswings in cost. To maintain a diversified retail landscape, overcoming concerns around occupancy costs will be key to ensuring opportunities for a range of retail businesses (including differing types, formats and scales).

The Opportunities:

Context

Mississauga is a vibrant, growing, well-established and diverse city that has evolved with a full complement of residential and non-residential development. Over time, it has grown to include a vibrant mix of complete neighbourhoods, including established and stable areas of the city, as well as numerous areas experiencing more significant growth and intensification.

The City continues to support and advance transit infrastructure, including the 18-kilometre Hazel McCallion Line—or Light Rail Transit (LRT) project, that connects Mississauga to Brampton. Over time, this will enhance connectivity across key areas of the city, helping support movement and development along and near the corridor. Furthermore, the city sustains a notable range of community and institutional amenities including centres for cultural expression, social diversity and economic activity. It has also developed as a diverse city, with a significant share of its population having immigrated to Mississauga from elsewhere.

Each of these factors has created a robust retail landscape that reflects the City’s cultural and ethnic diversity and contributes to the city’s positive reputation and continued growth. In light of its attractiveness as a place to live, work and play, the city also continues to maintain low retail vacancy and stable rental rates, demonstrating its attractiveness and draw for commercial space expansion.

Existing opportunities for retail / service commercial space in Mississauga are more explicitly detailed below. Ultimately, each opportunity represents unique characteristics the city should consider and leverage in the context of other economic and market pressures that are currently impacting retail / service commercial development.

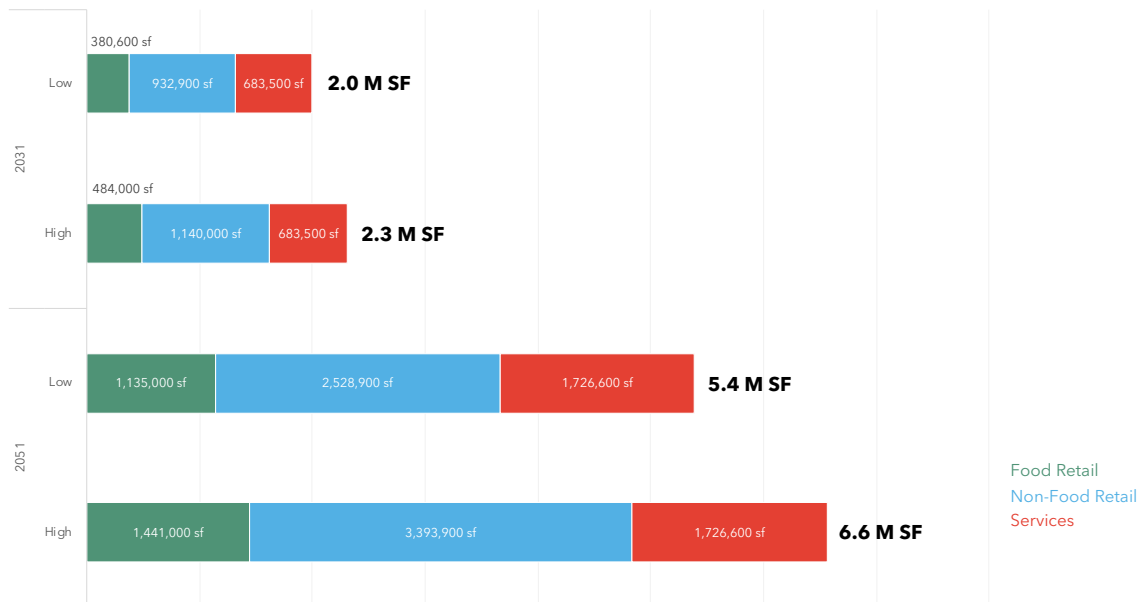
Opportunity #1: Positive Market Indicators

- Consistently **low retail vacancy and stable rental rates** demonstrates demand for commercial space expansion in Mississauga, especially as the community grows and intensifies. Mississauga also maintains approximately 38.7 square feet of retail / service commercial space per capita, which is in-line (or just below) the typical requirement of 40 – 44 square feet per capita necessary to support the daily and weekly needs of residents. This—combined with a low vacancy—points to a well-functioning retail environment that supports and caters to the needs of local residents.
- Despite this demand, the construction of new retail / service commercial has stalled due to a range of development-related factors, including elevated construction costs and other financing challenges. As the city is able to overcome these challenges and/or spur the development of new retail supply, it has the **necessary market conditions in place to attract tenants and support an evolving retail environment.**
- In the interim, existing demand continues to put pressure on the City's existing supply, adding to the diversity of the city's retail environment while **simultaneously driving sales performance for existing retailers.**

Opportunity #2: Available Market Support

- As previously mentioned, **significant population growth in Mississauga will drive demand** for 5.4 million square feet of additional retail / service commercial space to 2051. This includes demand for a mix of retail and service uses, including those required to support both the daily and ongoing needs of residents and visitors of the city (as itemized below).
- Significant demand enables the city to continue developing a diverse and dynamic retail landscape that **enhances Mississauga's attractiveness and vibrancy**, while simultaneously supporting its economy at a larger scale. Furthermore, it presents an opportunity for the city to encourage and enhance local business opportunities, including those that promote the city's unique culture and offer distinct shopping experiences for residents and visitors.

Forecast Demand for New Retail / Service Commercial Supply

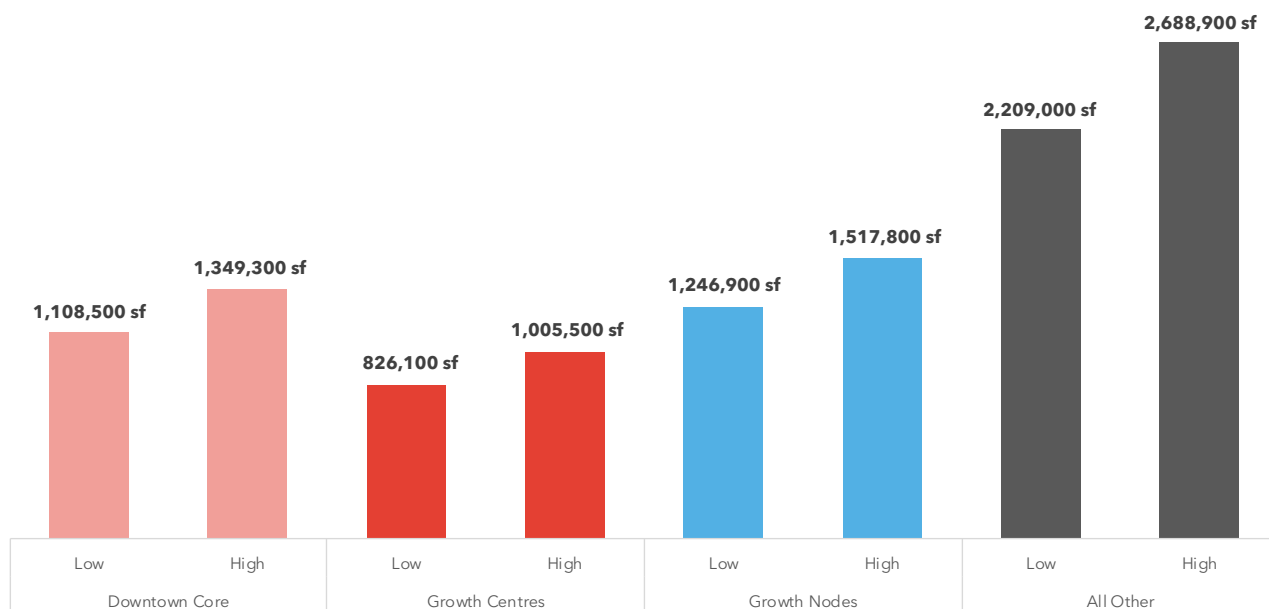


Source: Parcel.

Opportunity #3: Geographic Distribution of Space

- Retail / service commercial demand across Mississauga is anticipated to be warranted throughout the city, with a heightened concentration anticipated throughout the City's Strategic Growth Areas (specifically the Downtown Core and the City's Growth Nodes), as these areas are anticipated to host a growing share of the City's future population. This presents an **opportunity to deliver new commercial supply where it is needed most** to keep pace with recent and forecast growth.

Anticipated Distribution of Retail / Service Commercial Supply



Source: Parcel.

- Distributed demand is favourable in sustaining and creating a balanced retail market. It helps minimize competition across specific areas, while also allowing for new opportunities across Mississauga. It also allows for more **tailored retail experiences**, where tenants and business can continue to cater to the specific needs and preferences of a more local area or community while still supporting the daily and weekly needs of residents and visitors.
- From a broader land use planning and “complete communities” perspective, a more comprehensive distribution of space across the municipality can also yield important benefits relating to convenient access to commercial uses and potential improvement to the overall liveability of neighbourhoods. In particular, this type of dispersed retail enables **improved transportation options** (e.g., ability to walk, cycle, take transit or drive, depending on the nature of each shopping trip). This improved accessibility to a range of retail nodes can help attract visitors from a variety of locations, thereby improving market penetration and sales performance for individual retailers.

Opportunity #4: Diverse Retail Landscape

- Mississauga is a diverse city, with 53% of residents having immigrated to the municipality from elsewhere. Much of this diversity is already reflected in the city's existing retail supply. The diverse retail environment in Mississauga has **helps establish an enhanced sense of community** by increasing opportunities for cultural exchange while also creating a more inclusive environment for residents and visitors of differing backgrounds.
- As the city grows and intensifies, the existing range of retail options will help **ensure that residents have access to the goods and services they need, regardless of their background or cultural preferences**. It will also help the city differentiate itself from other communities and hopefully help draw new tenants and visitors to the city over time.

2.0

Future Context:

Action Items & Implementation

Retail Strategy Parameters & Structure

In order to bolster Mississauga's retail sector into the future, we have developed a series of recommendations to assist the city in developing strategic priorities related to the evolution of complete, walkable and vibrant communities.

With the specific challenges and opportunities identified above forming the basis of **why** this strategy has been developed, the recommendations herein have been summarized further to itemize: (i) **what** specific factors are being addressed; (ii) **how** they are being addressed; (iii) **who** is responsible for implementing individual aspects of the strategy; (iv) **when** individual elements should be implemented; and (v) **where** specific aspects of the strategy will be most impactful.

Identification of Key Goals (What?)

- The recommendations and specific action items identified under this strategy have been **summarized into key goals**. Each seeks to leverage the city's existing strengths and assist in their ability to overcome existing, and anticipated future, challenges.

Goal #1: Retain Existing Supply

Goal #2: Expand New Supply

Goal #3: Balance Competing Priorities

Goal #4: Enable Diversity, Equity & Access

Goal #5: Encourage Placemaking and Placekeeping

- Additionally, details of the specific ways in which the strategy can be monitored moving forward have been provided across all goals, including consideration of targeted "**monitoring strategies**". It will be important for the City to regularly revisit these items at key intervals to ensure that progress is being made and adjust—or "course-correct"—accordingly into the future.

Identification of Importance (Why?)

- Building on the specific challenges and opportunities facing the retail sector today (as identified in Section 1.0), a brief and more tailored introduction to each of the key action items identified herein has been provided.

Identification of Key Actions (How?)

- In addition to the goals identified above, a range of supporting **market- and policy-based actions** have been provided. This includes identification of strategies that could be used to enhance the city's retail landscape at the city-wide and/or area-specific level, as well as relevant tools that could be used enhance the city's attractiveness and visibility to a range of retailers, including chain-stores and independent businesses. From a policy perspective, the newly adopted OP policies seem to address the City's aspirations and needs for retail and service commercial uses from a land use planning perspective. Policy-based actions herein include a few (considerations) to optimize the policy framework and some opportunities for future study.

Other Implementation Factors (Who?, When? & Where?)

Within each of the key goals and specific action items identified, additional direction and clarity has also been provided in relation to the following key variables:

- **Responsibility** – Identifies the primary or key facilitator responsible for supporting and enabling each action item.
- **Complexity** – Refers to the complexity of each action item, thereby identifying how quickly a particular action item could be achieved or implemented. More “complex” action items are expected to be done over the longer-term, relative to more “simple” action items that are likely to occur in the shorter-term.
- **Geography** – Specifies if a given action should be applied city-wide or specifically to Strategic Growth Areas (“SGAs”) and/or Neighbourhood Areas as a result of differing growth and development trajectories.

Goal #1: Retain Existing Supply

1A Replacement Policies

Why This Matters: Existing retail uses are regularly at threat of being eliminated or significantly reduced via redevelopment, especially as the City continues to face growth pressures. This risks creating an imbalance between growing residential demand and reduced commercial supply, so it can be important to preserve existing uses.

Action(s):

- Monitor Official Plan *Policy 10.2.6.3.ii* to assess the policy's intent and outcomes to ensure that retail replacement functions are improved. The policy requires an existing portion of retail GFA to be replaced. In the future, replacing form and function may be an important factor to retaining significant and important retail that may be less likely to be replaced as part of redevelopment and should be considered as part of the monitoring process.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 year)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

1B Retail Gaps & Matchmaking

Why This Matters: Typical leasing patterns and deteriorating affordability can result in local tenants not completely satisfying the needs—or desires—of local residents, at least in full. It can therefore be helpful to “connect the dots” between available commercial spaces and interested tenants through additional matchmaking efforts.

Action(s):

- Appoint a dedicated staff member or assemble a working team, including Executive Director's from local Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and the city (e.g., planning, economic development staff etc.) to provide better coordination between new or existing businesses and available vacant units and/or properties (including both existing vacant spaces and new-build spaces). This could include direct support for (i) navigating city regulations and planning policies, and (ii) understanding timelines and application process such that the time it takes to tenant available commercial units is minimized.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

High (5+ years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Publicly track retail vacancies, by geography, to better identify opportunities for new market entrants or businesses seeking relocation.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Leverage relationships with local BIAs, businesses and organizations to assist in matching potential tenants with existing vacancies to support business growth and retail diversification. Vacant storefronts and underused spaces can be activated using cultural activities including temporary art displays, music, theatre and film events to help maintain public safety, draw more people to the area, support local retail businesses and welcome art into new places in the interim.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

1C Employment Areas

Why This Matters: Retail uses within Employment Areas also face development pressure from conversions to residential or mixed use projects. Given the significant supply of commercial space in these areas, it will be important to track the impact that development pressures have on the supply of commercial space in these areas today and going forward.

Action(s):

- Identify and inventory the individual Employment Areas that contain a significant cluster of retail space given the meaningful supply of retail in these areas, including the Northeast Employment Area, the Dixie Employment Area and the Mavis-Erindale Employment Area. Similar to other areas, retail in Employment Areas face development pressure from conversions to residential or mixed use that threaten to reduce the city's overall commercial supply.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

- Given these risks, we recommend the City (consider) undertake more focused research of individual Employment Areas to better quantify and assess the nature, value, and function of retail in these areas. Prior to advancing new development applications, this information should be used to understand the potential magnitude or impact of each application on the supply of retail space.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

City-wide

Monitoring Strategies

- Establish key metrics for tracking retail performance in the city and/or selected areas. Metrics could include retail/service commercial vacancy, age of businesses, store turnover, average size of businesses by store/service category, as well as the quantity and proportion of local businesses and chain stores. It will also be important for a “target” for each metric and area to be established by city staff identified (e.g., healthy commercial vacancy rate is between 4% - 8% and can vary depending on locational context). Once determined, provide data over regular intervals (e.g., quarterly) to track and identify the performance of each metric, as well as relative to previous periods.
- Continue **monitoring Employment Area policies with the Province** while simultaneously continuing research and observation of how other municipalities are approaching retail space within employment areas, including any legal challenges and outcomes. Use this to adjust the City's approach accordingly.

Goal #2: Expand New Supply

2A Flexibility

Why This Matters: The retail sector is constantly evolving, as are broader real estate market conditions and dynamics relating to the feasibility of new developments. It is important to maintain flexibility to adapt to and accommodate these changes, as they emerge.

Action(s):

- The city should seek to encourage and promote flexible retail design (e.g., moveable fixtures and walls, reduction in the use of structural columns and permanent or fixed barriers, adjustable lighting tracks) that support more flexible interior partitioning through the development of a retail design manual. This will help preserve opportunity for larger unit formats, in addition to 'micro-retail' units that are more affordable and of less risk from a tenancing perspective. Where possible, the city could also promote developments through their online channels, design standards or local BIAs, that integrate these features, as a means to highlight their value and appeal to a range of different tenants.

Responsibility:

Planning/Building Liaison

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

- Consider public recognition or promotion of projects that demonstrate or integrate flexible design features as a way to highlight specific projects and promote adaptable building concepts. One approach could be adding a Retail category to the Mississauga Urban Design Awards. If and/or when these types of preferred projects are successful, they can also serve as a positive demonstration—or “proof of concept”—that could be replicated by other developers into the future.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

- Explore where an expanded delegated authority to the Commissioner from Committee of Adjustment would benefit retail businesses to help minimize barriers faced by existing and future businesses.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

2B Financial Supports

Why This Matters: As the financial feasibility of new developments continues to be challenged for all types of real estate, the amount of commercial space envisioned in projects continues to decline and is generally not keeping pace with population growth. Additional financial supports in the form of cost reductions and/or revenue supplements may therefore be necessary to provide a “helping hand” in seeing these projects along.

Action(s):

- Explore Business Development and Federal Government grants available to support small and local businesses (e.g., small business grants and/or loans from organizations like the Business Development Grant of Canada (“BDC”).

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Simple (< 1 year)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Advocate support for taxation policy at the provincial level (i.e., explore mixed use retail tax class).

Responsibility:

Planning/Economic
Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- At the municipal level, design an incentive that can be stacked with current incentive programs in Mississauga to encourage mixed use (e.g., Vaughan, through a *Community Improvement Plan* (CIP), is proposing to use a mix of development charge deferrals, grants and forgivable loans to promote the development of office and non-residential uses).

Responsibility:

Planning/Economic
Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

2C Other Incentives & Enablement

Why This Matters: In addition to direct financial supports, there are other ways to improve project viability and encourage an increased delivery of commercial space in new developments. Namely, this can be achieved through some combination of: (i) reducing approval timelines / delays; (ii) alleviating direct or indirect costs; and/or (iii) establishing additional certainty / mitigating risk.

Action(s):

- Consider additional opportunities to streamline development approvals and enhance collaboration between cities and the development community and/or landowners (e.g., the “three strikes and you’re in” approach, or similar commitments to advancing application review in a timely manner). This could include the development of targeted resources for business seeking additional information.

Responsibility:

Planning/Development
Liaison

Complexity:

Simple (<1 year)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Seek to leverage Building Development liaison as well as liaising opportunities with brokers to further support this process. In the future, there could also be consideration for a more specialized position specific to retail in the city.

Responsibility:

Planning/Building Liaison

Complexity:

Simple (<1 year)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Where possible, simplify and communicate permitting regulations for commercial spaces to encourage new businesses to open.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Promote business counter services; encourage building owners and leasing managers to consult with staff in-person as part of due diligence and to build trust.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Simple (<1 year)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

2D Minimum Requirement Policy

Why This Matters: In cases where there is a pre-existing commercial function on-site that satisfies a portion of local resident shopping needs (capable of serving both existing and future populations), it can be important to be mindful of how much space is re-integrated in new developments.

Action(s):

- Monitor and assess the effectiveness of OP Policy 10.2.6.3.i. Recognizing the need for flexibility for landowners and the prime objective to create mixed use communities, the City may consider creating a mechanism to transfer minimum retail requirements between sites within a specified area.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

High (5+ years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

2E Mix & Composition of Retail Space

Why This Matters: Not all types and configurations of retail space are equal. In addition to being mindful of the total amount of commercial space available within a community, it is also important to ensure there is an appropriate mix and range of operators represented (i.e., spanning small vs. large retailers, chain stores vs. “mom and pop” shops/services, as well as across different store and service categories).

Action(s):

- Maintain flexible land use permissions that do not restrict the amount of retail / service commercial space that can locate in an area.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Simple (<1 year)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Continue to ensure that land use and zoning permissions allow for a variety of businesses and retail uses, such as cafes, services commercial uses, smaller and large-format retailers, rather than overly prescriptive to individual retail / service categories and/or space formats.

Responsibility:

Planning/Zoning Initiatives

Complexity:

Simple (<1 year)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Working with local BIAs, consider offering city-funded financial incentives (e.g., grants, etc.) for specific tenants that satisfy a need for a specific store or service categories. The City of Windsor, through its Economic Revitalization CIP, provides financial incentives to businesses across targeted economic sectors (e.g., businesses who introduce a specific amount of manufacturing jobs). A similar model could be used to target specific store types for which there is a pre-existing and/or anticipated gap in the market (e.g., food stores and other basic day-to-day shopping needs).

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

High (5+ years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

Monitoring Strategies

- To help identify shifts in the city's retail supply, consider requiring applications that propose a net change in retail / service commercial space to submit a higher-level **Planning or Justification Study** that identifies the potential impact of their proposed development on the surrounding area.
- For applications that propose a net change +/- 3,000 square metres, require a **Comprehensive Planning / Impact Study** to justify that the proposal will have no negative impact on the city. This could involve tailored amendments to the standard terms of reference for technical studies required in support of the planning approvals process - specifically where significant changes to retail are contemplated (e.g., planning justification reports, market impact reports, etc.).
- The **retail inventory of the City's Strategic Growth Areas** could be updated at regular intervals to help track shifts in the supply of retail space and to identify that there is enough commercial space to meet future needs of each area (including both in aggregate square footage, but also in terms of composition of space by store / service sub-category). As highlighted in the previous goal relating to preserving existing commercial spaces, this could also include a range of other details, including vacancy rates, age of business / turnover statistics, average unit sizes, number and mix of independent vs. chain stores, etc.).

Goal #3: Balance Competing Priorities

3A Retail and Residential Uses

Why This Matters: Improving housing choice and affordability in Mississauga is a priority for the municipality. While this is extremely important unto itself, it can have the unintended consequence of limiting the delivery of non-residential uses, including retail/service commercial. Maintaining a balance across both of these priorities is key.

Action(s):

- As identified in the Mayor's Housing Task Force Report as a strategy to make non-residential space more affordable, explore incentives for multi-floor retail to support the OP density bonus policy, which indicates that non-residential uses above the ground floor do not count in a buildings height calculation (Policy 10.2.6.4).

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

High (5+ years)

Geography:

City-wide

- Explore other opportunities to provide municipal-led incentives that attract retail/service commercial space delivery in projects where they are required (e.g., city-funded grants or subsidies that support individual space fit-outs and/or reduce operating costs, etc.), as well as encourage additional construction in areas where commercial is not currently mandated. Additionally, it may be helpful to leverage parallel incentives and/or supports available that are specific to housing, which could indirectly benefit mixed use projects as a whole (i.e., improving "project level" feasibility for developments that include both residential and commercial uses).

Responsibility:

Planning/Economic
Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

City-wide

3B Retail and Other Non-Residential Uses

Why This Matters: Maintaining a balance among and between various types of non-residential uses is also essential. Namely, residential/service supply must be considered in parallel to the maintenance and delivery of office, industrial, institutional and other types of community uses on a community-wide basis.

Action(s):

- Maintain flexible Zoning By-law definitions related to retail to ensure maximum flexibility to accommodate a full spectrum of retail / service commercial uses and/or other non-residential uses.

Responsibility:

Planning/Zoning Initiatives

Complexity:

Simple (<1 year)

Geography:

City-wide

- Re-evaluate or simplify requirements for form and design elements (i.e., entrance requirements, loading areas, etc.) that could compound challenges in developing new retail space. This will need to be done in a manner that is mindful of parallel Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements and therefore focused on design aspects that can be influenced directly by the city.

Responsibility:

- Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

3C Parking

Why This Matters: Notwithstanding continued investments in new transit infrastructure and potential future shifts in transportation patterns, Mississauga residents still rely heavily on automobile travel to get around the city. As a result, most retail/service operators equivalently rely on at least some form of convenient access to visitor parking to attract customers.

Action(s):

- Enhance flexibility in parking requirements in intensifying areas and/or continue to look at reducing parking requirements in BIAs and key locations. This could include interim parking requirements (for phased developments) or shared parking allowances for sites located proximally (e.g., within a reasonable walking distance for patrons of commercial establishments).

Responsibility:

Planning/Zoning Initiatives

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- To help support local businesses on streets or in areas where existing parking cannot be changed, investigate opportunities to pilot temporary stop or loading areas.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Monitor visitation and parking patterns in and around existing commercial establishments. This could be achieved either through third-party data suppliers (i.e., mobile data tracking) and/or other supplementary research (e.g., intercept surveys or other field research).

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

3D Area-Specific Market Research

Why This Matters: While there are common metrics around the amount and type of commercial space generally required to meet local resident needs, each neighbourhood has a unique character and customer profile that must be taken into consideration as part of more area-specific space planning and programming.

Action(s):

- Seek area-specific market research and information that considers the amount, type and location of retail at a finer grain to ensure greater alignment between retail supply and more localized needs, demand and market positioning.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

Monitoring Strategies

- Track Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and Zoning Bylaw Amendment (ZBA) applications to see where retail is being lost/gained, what type of retail is being lost/gained, and if new retail development is keeping pace with population growth. The Development Review process should be considered as key input for the monitoring and evaluation of Mississauga's retail landscape, as it can provide early indication of potential issues prior to project implementation, and balance retail needs in light of other municipal priorities (i.e. housing).
- Use current retail supply and anticipated population growth to determine the amount and type of retail space that will be required either city-wide and/or within selected smaller geographic areas, as applicable. In light of this, track the total floor area (existing and/or proposed) dedicated to various residential and non-residential use types (including retail/service commercial) to help gauge the extent to which an appropriate balance and mix of uses is being maintained over time. Rather than explicit policy-based requirements, this could be derived from more market-led targets and guidelines, similar to the results of the warranted space analyses prepared to date as part of this Retail Strategy.

Goal #4: Enable Diversity, Equity & Access

4A Cultural Objectives & Enhancements

Why This Matters: Valuing the cultural and ethnic diversity of the community is a central aspect of living in Mississauga. Reflecting the unique demographic profile a community through tenanting of local food stores and restaurants, clothing stores and other service providers can be an effective way to express and celebrate this diversity.

Action(s):

- Introduce a mural / streetscape program that provides funding for businesses or community groups on private property that contribute to the promotion of a local theme or neighbourhood identity through outdoor enhancements (e.g., façade enhancements, murals, etc.). This would complement existing programs that already exist on public property and likely help draw more customers to the area, further supporting and strengthening retail businesses.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

City-wide

- Consider the use of a CIP in areas where there is not an active BIA to help fund physical property improvements that increase the attractiveness of the local streetscape and / or contribute to a greater sense of place. Places like the City of Toronto and the Town of the Blue Mountains use this type of incentive to encourage the private sector to invest, rehabilitate and physically improve their units and buildings, and ensure their long-term viability.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

City-wide

- Support BIAs in installing art banners, streetscaping or other public realm improvements in conjunction with City strategies, including the Public Art Plan.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

4B Consistency & Access City-Wide

Why This Matters: Based on historical patterns of development and continued dynamics relating to the distribution of different land uses across the city, access to retail is not equal throughout Mississauga. Improving the ability of residents to conveniently access a full range of basic, day-to-day shopping needs is an important aspect of fostering healthy and liveable communities.

Action(s):

- Create pathways to initiate conversation with residents about retail and how neighbourhoods may change as Mississauga intensifies (i.e., citizens panel, social media, newsletters, virtual events etc.).

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

Neighbourhood Areas

- Convene an inter-departmental team with an aim to share information and coordinate efforts to support the retail sector. This team could include representatives from Planning, Culture, Events, Transportation and Works, Municipal Parking, Parks and/or Visit Mississauga.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

Neighbourhood Areas

4C Affordability

Why This Matters: Similar to housing, equitable and affordable access to commercial spaces continues to prove challenging for communities like Mississauga. Strategies that help lower the costs for small businesses to access commercial space are important to fostering a diversity of retail tenants and service providers locally.

Action(s):

- Enable opportunities for shared spaces and/or shared resources (e.g., one kitchen, seating area, access point, etc.) to allow multiple retailers to use a unit more affordably.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

4D Supportive Resources

Why This Matters: In conjunction with above, commercial tenants can often become displaced as a function of increased carrying costs and/or redevelopment that fundamentally alter the operating profile of their business. Additional supports and resources are often necessary to combat this dynamic and ultimately help bridge the “gap” between revenues and costs.

Action(s):

- Consider a tenancy assistance program (e.g., resources, guidance, relocation supports) that ensures equal and reliable access to commercial tenants, including primarily those displaced by new development.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Consider a Construction Impacted Business Grant for retail uses that are impacted by surrounding intensification and major infrastructure projects. Similar to how it has been used in Brampton and Toronto, this grant is intended to ease the burden of major construction activity on nearby businesses and could be used to fund additional marketing efforts, support placemaking and events activation, or as a rebate for necessary enhancements (i.e., safety or beautification measures etc.) or adjusted business operations affiliated with surrounding projects.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Consider programming that allows short-term rentals in vacant spaces / spaces awaiting redevelopment to culture, creative and community groups in need of space to bring people and interest to less travelled areas of the city.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

High (5+ years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

4E Type of Commercial Space

Why This Matters: As highlighted earlier in this strategy, not all retail is equal. It is not only important to ensure there is an adequate supply of commercial supply in aggregate, but also in the context of representation across a variety of store types, space configurations and locations throughout the community.

Action(s):

- Develop more targeted retail design requirements to encourage units that can accommodate a broader range of retail uses (i.e., large format uses, independent businesses, etc.). This could be achieved through revisited and/or new guidelines that encourage improved flexibility in relation to floor plans and in particular ground floor programming (e.g., optionality in relation to interior partitioning and division of commercial spaces, consideration of relationship to street in the context of other entrances / lobbies, residential amenities, storage, etc. at grade).

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Establish preferred / target commercial store type mix, based on supporting market research program and analysis covered up to the Interim Report prepared as part of this Retail Strategy study.¹ This type of investigation and targeting could also be tailored in coordination with BIAs and/or other representatives of the local business community within a given area.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

¹ Alternatively, preferred / target commercial store type mix could be established via updated research and analysis undertaken in “real-time” as new area-specific research or policy initiatives are advanced over time.

Monitoring Strategies

- To help maintain a unique supply of stores and services, the city should maintain up-to-date information that tracks the **number of chain and independent stores** across the City's Strategic Growth Areas.
- Track the **amount and type of commercial space** in operation across the City to ensure a balanced mix of Food Retail, Non-Food Retail and Services type space, at least at a high-level. This could also be undertaken in conjunction with monitoring and setting targets relating to the total amount and/or percentage of space that remains vacant as another key measure as to the overall “health” of the local retail environment in the City, among other related measures highlighted earlier in this strategy (e.g., age of business / turnover rate, composition of chain vs. independents, etc.).
- Work with BIAs to **monitor affordability issues**, including identification of specific businesses or business types unable to locate in new development formats due to heightened rents.
- For more qualitative feedback, additional engagement (e.g., citizen satisfaction surveys) could be conducted with stakeholders at regular intervals to track satisfaction with retail offerings and access.

Goal #5: Encourage Placemaking & Placekeeping

5A Events / Programming

Why This Matters: Commercial spaces are intrinsically linked to local event programming, festivals and other leisure activities. Encouraging and fostering this relationship can be mutually beneficial to local event programmers and retail/service operators alike (i.e., by driving additional visitation and patronization of both, among other forms of “cross-shopping”).

Action(s):

- Minimize regulations related to noise, loading and permits to increase opportunities for public events (e.g., live music, farmers markets, etc.) throughout intensifying areas of the city.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Work directly with BIAs to develop and strategically align annual event programming throughout the city.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

5B Gathering Places

Why This Matters: To appropriately capture the benefits associated with placemaking and the unique identity that can be established within a given commercial district, it is important to ensure there are suitable spaces and places for people to gather. This can lead to increased “dwell time” and a commensurate boost to spending at local commercial establishments.

Action(s):

- Support actions 7 & 8 in Future Directions Culture Plan, as follows:
 - “#7 Create at least one new serviced public space in each Service Area to increase cultural and

creative sectors use and add vibrancy across the city”; and,

- “#8 Identify opportunities to expand planning tools and reduce regulatory barriers within City policies, bylaws and processes to increase support for cultural and creative sectors activities”.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

- Identify opportunities for events throughout the city. This could include specific locations, such as the Living Arts Centre, or broader types and spaces such as outdoor patios or market that could be utilized for outdoor concerts or farmers markets. As part of this, ensure the necessary and supportive permissions (e.g., allowances for temporary spaces, on-street patios, temporary road closures etc.) are in place.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

City-wide

- Support the addition of new infrastructure (i.e., “hookups” for water, power, etc.) in public parks / squares to enable these spaces to more easily accommodate events.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

High (5+ years)

Geography:

City-wide

5C Relationship to the Street

Why This Matters: In addition to regular visitation from their existing customer base, many retail/service providers rely on visibility and frontage along the street to attract additional sales support (i.e., via improved market capture among local residents, as well as in the form of “inflow” sales from other types of walk-in customers or visitors, etc.). Improving the connectivity, access and visibility of retailers to “passers-by” can help drive sales.

Action(s):

- Support and encourage temporary uses or “pop-ups” on vacant lands or spaces slated for redevelopment or updating. This could involve extra coordination and facilitation with landowners / developers to encourage the inclusion of these types of uses in pre-development phases, as well as assisting with the identification of specific operators or organizations interested in such temporary spaces (e.g., seasonal operators, fledgeling new businesses unable to afford traditional commercial real estate, etc.).

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Encourage "active uses" or those that encourage enhanced street-level activity (e.g., restaurants with patios, grocery, entertainment uses etc.) along main streets and/or additional uses that meet city requirements to help bring people to the area.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

Low (1-2 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Continue to invest and prioritize streetscape design, seating, beautification and other streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian activity around retail areas, as well as improve access to retail storefronts. The focus of these efforts should be placed more specifically on the consumer experience rather than more broadly to quality architecture, urban design and/or land use considerations, which can and should be addressed separately.

Responsibility:

Planning

Complexity:

High (5+ years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

- Investigate interactive, "playable city" streetscape projects (e.g., interactive murals) to help draw the public.

Responsibility:

Economic Development

Complexity:

Medium (3-5 years)

Geography:

Strategic Growth Areas

Monitoring Strategies

- Ensure alignment with area-specific retail goals and/or economic development directions when **reviewing applications that propose a net change in retail / service commercial supply**.
- Identify **number and location of annual event programming** occurring across the city to better identify gaps in the distribution, type and amount of these events.
- As part of identifying event opportunities (i.e., locations for hosting) throughout the city, track and monitor the **type, date and format of events** that occur such that the city can increase support for these events and/or adjust permissions to ensure there are minimum obstacles preventing the hosting of these events.



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