

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN CONWAY

Conway Downtown Partnership

Economic development study and real estate analysis

Prepared by
EY Economic Development Advisory Services

November 2024



Table of contents

Introduction and project overview	3
Competitive benchmarking assessment	5
SWOT analysis	11
Conway economic development plan alignment	15
Leading-practice examples	18
Analysis and considerations for downtown real estate and Markham Street redevelopment	27

***Disclaimer:** Our report may be relied upon by Conway Downtown Partnership for the purpose set out in the Scope section only pursuant to the terms of our engagement letter dated March 22, 2024. We disclaim all responsibility to any other party for any loss or liability that the other party may suffer or incur arising from or relating to or in any way connected with the contents of our report, the provision of our report to the other party or the reliance upon our report by the other party.*

Introduction

In March 2024, Conway Downtown Partnership (CDP) hired Ernst & Young LLP (EY) to conduct an economic development study and real estate analysis for Conway's downtown. This project was initiated while another EY-led engagement, an economic development strategic plan for the Conway Chamber (Chamber) and Conway Development Corporation (CDC), was underway. The CDP project addresses the following objectives:

- ▶ Completion of a competitive benchmarking assessment of Downtown Conway against peer markets
- ▶ Gathering of input from local leaders and stakeholders
- ▶ Collection of insights from leading practices in benchmark and other communities
- ▶ Real estate analysis for key sites and assets
- ▶ Exploration of CDP's strategic alignment with the Chamber/CDC economic development plan
- ▶ Identification of opportunities to consider for real estate development and redevelopment

Below is an overview of the content included in this report:

1. **Competitive benchmarking analysis** - A quantitative economic analysis of Conway's downtown relative to 10 benchmark communities
2. **SWOT analysis** - A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats assessment based on the aggregated information and input gathered from stakeholder input and research
3. **Conway economic development plan alignment** - Identification of key areas where downtown development can reinforce priorities and goals in the Chamber/CDC strategic plan
4. **Leading-practice examples** - Examples of downtown revitalization that are advanced through private, public and public-private partnership-led funding, along with site improvement examples
5. **Downtown real estate and Markham Street analysis and considerations** - An evaluation of residential and commercial properties, land use possibilities for key sites, infrastructure and/other elements in downtown; and considerations for future residential and commercial development in downtown, along with opportunities for redevelopment in the Markham Street neighborhood

This report is intended to summarize research and insights and provide examples and options that inform the CDP's ongoing revitalization efforts. The client's discretion will be required for determining which examples, considerations and options are most relevant and feasible for its work moving forward.

Project overview: process and timeline

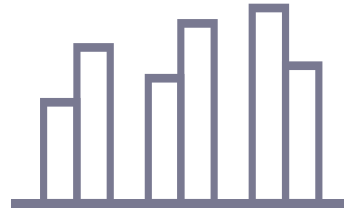
Project management and client collaboration

Stakeholder Engagement March - April 2024



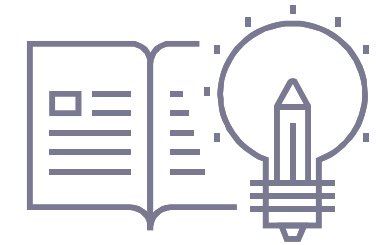
- ▶ Project kickoff
- ▶ Stakeholder interviews
- ▶ Steering committee meeting
- ▶ EY trip: In-person meetings and site visits

Research and Analysis April - May 2024



- ▶ Benchmarking assessment
- ▶ Downtown real estate analysis
- ▶ Markham Street redevelopment analysis
- ▶ Leading practices (redevelopment and public-private partnerships)
- ▶ SWOT analysis

Conway Downtown Study June - August 2024



- ▶ Development of draft project report
- ▶ Presentation of draft report to steering committee
- ▶ **Finalization of economic development study and real estate analysis**

A blue pen is positioned diagonally across the upper left portion of the frame. The background is a document featuring a bar chart with several blue bars of varying heights. A large, semi-transparent grey number '1' is overlaid on the left side of the page. A dark grey horizontal band spans the width of the page, containing the main title text.

1 Competitive benchmarking assessment

Benchmark communities

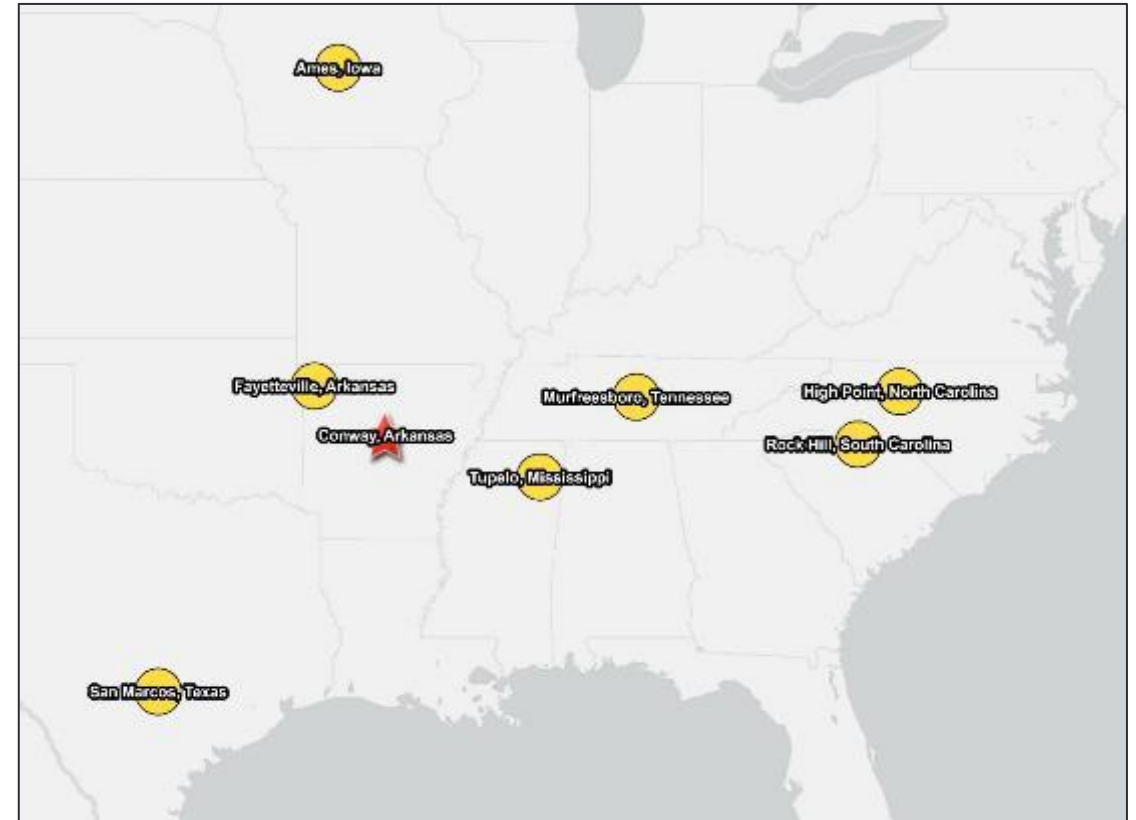
Benchmarks for downtown Conway

With input from the Conway Downtown Partnership (CDP), EY selected a subset of peer benchmark locations that were included in the economic development strategic planning project for Conway Area Chamber of Commerce and Conway Development Corporation. As the markets that were selected for the broader study had similarities with Conway as a whole, this subset includes those benchmarks that demonstrate significant and/or recent development and redevelopment efforts in their downtowns. Many of the communities have an accredited Main Street program, and all have employed actions to improve their downtown areas.

In addition to the subset selected, Fayetteville, AR, and Tupelo, MS, were added at the suggestion of CDP and stakeholders. Fayetteville shares similar characteristics with Conway and is located in Northwest Arkansas, considered to be a dynamic and attractive region in the state. Tupelo has pursued a robust redevelopment and revitalization agenda for its downtown.

These communities provide valuable context for a comparative assessment of the current state of downtown Conway as it relates to population, employment, and retail and restaurant options. While not exhaustive, these indicators are critical pieces to a resilient and vibrant downtown that thrives across seasons, times of day and varying economic winds. A well-rounded downtown also serves many professionals who are looking for a work-live-play environment.

They also provide various examples of how other communities have tackled revitalization and financing challenges to catalyze development in downtown. These lessons can be instructive for Conway as it seeks to continue its downtown revitalization efforts, which are viewed favorably by many community members.



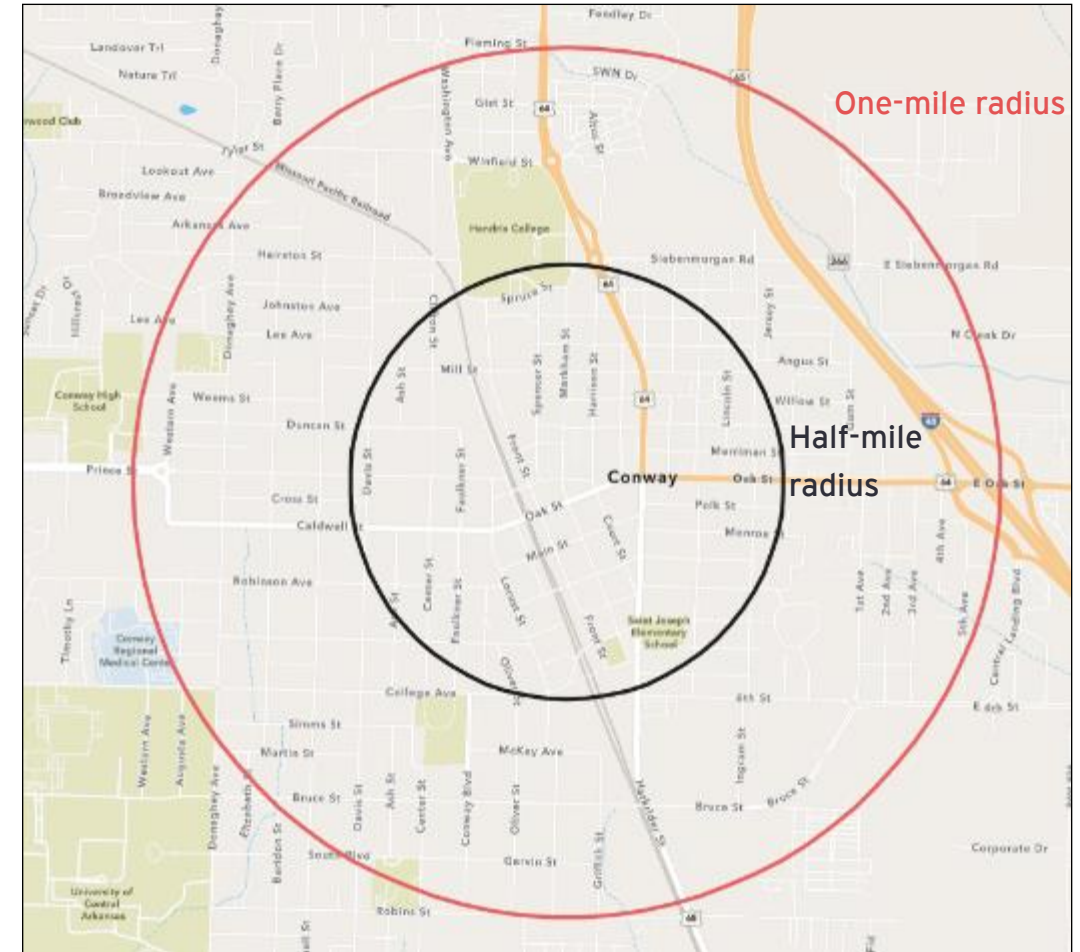
- ▶ Ames, Iowa
- ▶ Fayetteville, Arkansas*
- ▶ High Point, North Carolina
- ▶ Murfreesboro, Tennessee
- ▶ Rock Hill, South Carolina
- ▶ San Marcos, Texas
- ▶ Tupelo, Mississippi*

Methodology for benchmarking

To understand how downtown Conway compares to benchmark communities, we needed to establish a common definition of “downtown.” Given that different communities may use different definitions for what is considered downtown, the EY team estimated a center point of the historic downtown in each of the benchmark communities and Conway. We then created a half-mile and one-mile buffer around the center points to establish how “downtown” would be defined for this project.

When looking at population, we used a one-mile radius and data from the 2020 Decennial Census. This geography allowed the analysis to capture historic neighborhoods in walking distance of downtown. The proximity of these neighborhoods and their residents allows them to contribute to downtown vibrancy as consumers and in some cases as employees of downtown businesses. Given the relatively small size of centrally located commercial districts, a half-mile radius was used for job and establishment comparisons. 2018 is the most recent year that offers geographic data at this level.

Downtown Conway - half-mile and one-mile radii



Summary of key findings

- ▶ While the share of the population in proximity to downtown was similar in Conway to many peer communities, there is opportunity to increase population density in downtown.
- ▶ While Conway had fewer jobs than many peer communities within a half-mile radius of downtown, it had more jobs in traditional office sectors than most peer communities.
- ▶ Conway had more retail establishments within a half-mile of downtown than all peer communities but had an average number of food and beverage options. More restaurant and drink options could help drive activity in downtown in the evenings.

Population

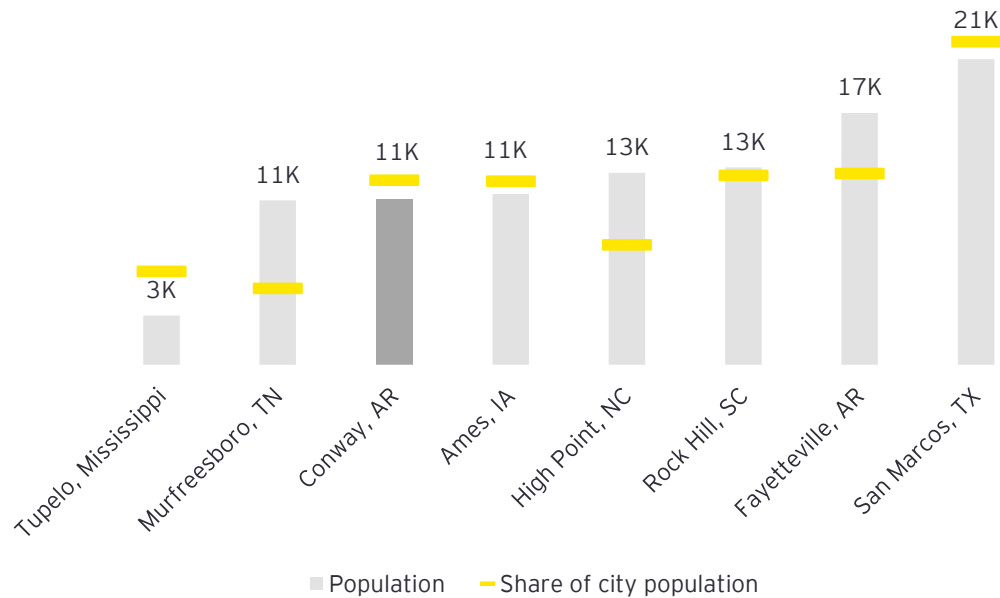
Increasing residential density could help accelerate downtown vibrancy

Compared to peer communities, Conway has a similar share of its population within one mile of downtown, but fewer in total numbers. Fayetteville, AR, and San Marcos, TX, which have the most people in proximity to downtown, benefit from very large universities around one mile from downtown.

Expanding residential options in downtown is an opportunity that was raised during stakeholder engagement. Looking at the map of downtown Conway, very few people reside within Conway Downtown Partnership's service area in central downtown. Increasing population density in and around downtown could further support restaurants and events that are open after business hours. These mutually reinforcing opportunities, greater residential density and more evening and night-time offerings could help to enhance downtown vibrancy.

Population, 2020

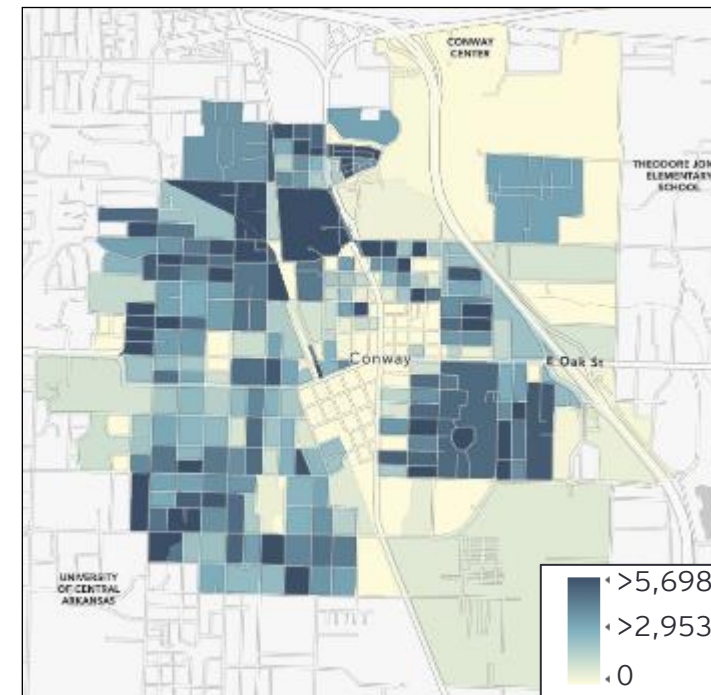
One-mile radius from downtown



Source: US Census, Decennial Census, 2020. Geography created by all census blocks that overlapped with one-mile radius.

Population density, 2020

Residents per square mile



Job concentration

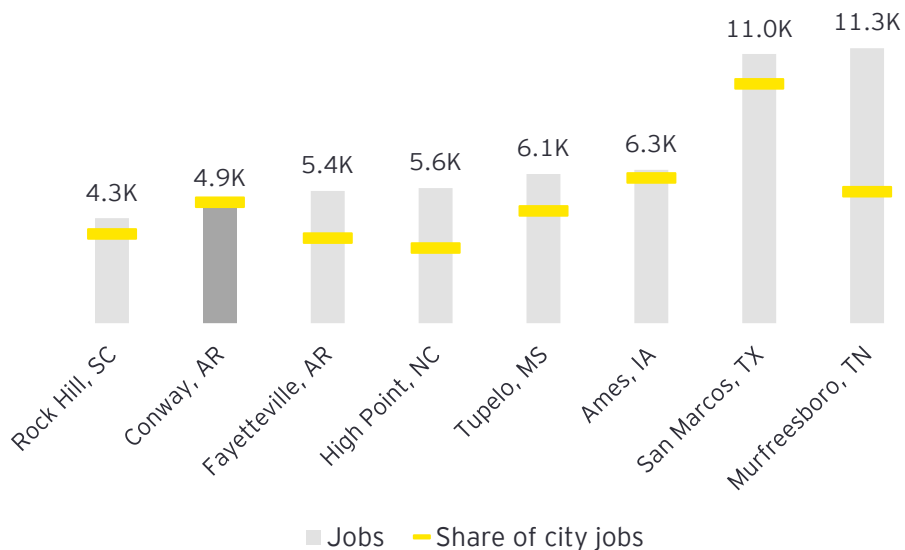
The office sector is a major employment driver in downtown Conway, but opportunity remains

While the total number of jobs located within a half-mile of downtown is lower in Conway than in many of its peer communities, it has more jobs in office-sectors than four of the benchmarks. The finance and insurance industry along with the management of companies and enterprises, which includes headquarters and shared services operations, had the most employment in proximity to downtown Conway among office-sectors.

Similar to total population, San Marcos, TX, has a high number of jobs in proximity to downtown while Murfreesboro, TN, is a leader in total jobs and office-sector jobs in proximity to downtown. Surprisingly, Tupelo, MS, which is the smallest city by population, leads the benchmark communities in jobs in office-sectors in proximity of downtown. It has a high number employed in the finance and insurance industry and professional, scientific and technical services industry. Only Rock Hill, SC, and Fayetteville, AR, had over 200 employed in the information industry, which includes many tech companies, including software publishers.

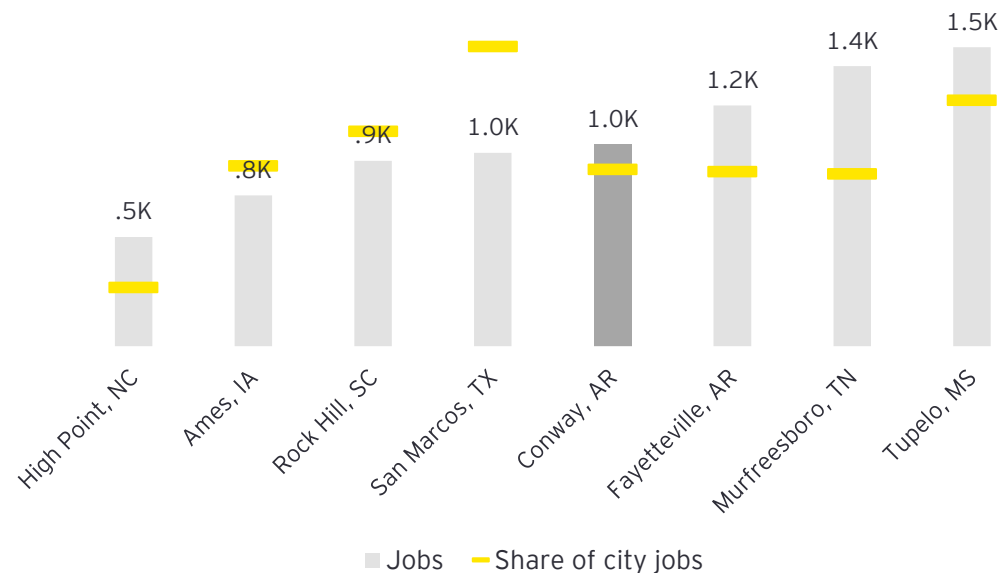
Jobs, 2018

Half-mile radius from downtown



Jobs in office-sectors, 2018

Half-mile radius from downtown



Source: US Census, On the Map. Arkansas data not available from 2019-2021. Geography created by all census blocks which intersect with radius from mid-point.

Office sectors defined as: Information (51); Finance and insurance (52); Real estate and rental and leasing (53); Professional, scientific and technical services (54); Management of companies and enterprises (55).

Retail and entertainment options

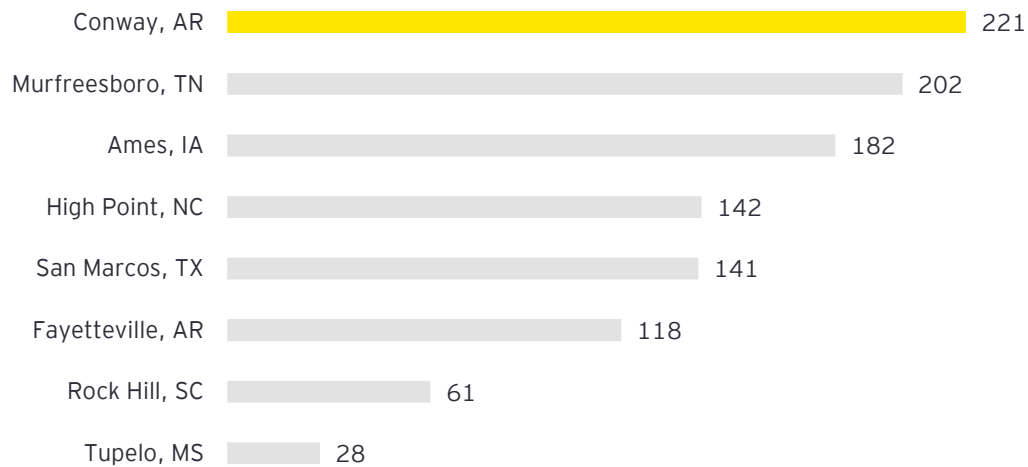
Downtown has a strong concentration of retail and entertainment but could be further diversified

An important part of any vibrant downtown is variety in retail, including restaurant, shopping and entertainment. Conway has more retail establishments in proximity to downtown than all seven peer communities. While some stakeholders remarked that there was opportunity for greater variety in the types of retail offered in downtown, the total number is relatively high and supports the potential of downtown Conway as a destination for those in the Little Rock region.

For food and drink options, Conway is about average for the total within a half-mile of downtown with 14. However, because of current local regulations that require establishments to serve food if they serve alcohol, there are no “bars” or “nightclubs” in the technical sense. This aligns with stakeholder input regarding the lack of evening and late-night options for patrons. While there is progress being made with the number and type of restaurants, providing more options for daytime and later seems to be essential for continued economic and community development in downtown. While traditional bars and night clubs may not be a fit, the pending refurbishment of the downtown theater and other arts and entertainment-related projects could serve as essential anchors for further development and redevelopment in this area.

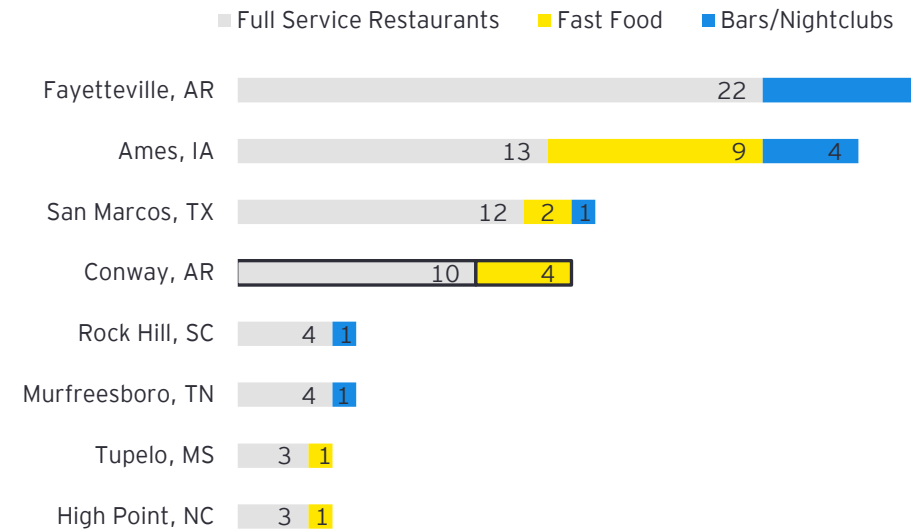
Retail establishments

Half-mile radius from downtown



Restaurants and bars

Half-mile radius from downtown



Source: CoStar, 2024.



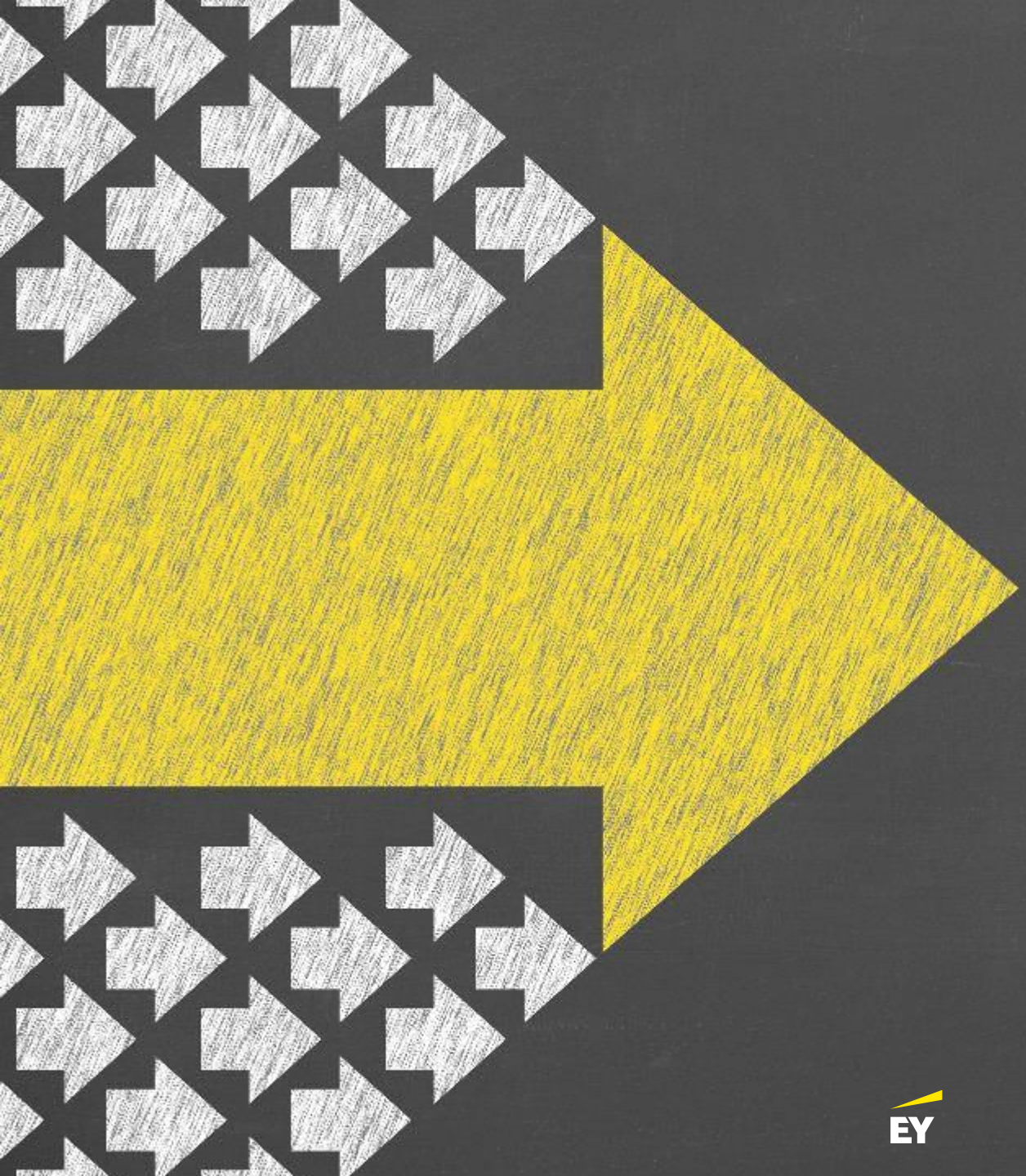
SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis reflects the qualitative and quantitative insights gathered for the project (stakeholder engagement and economic research).

The SWOT is organized around the following themes:

- ▶ Strengths and Weaknesses
 - ▶ Physical environment - Refers to development, real estate, streets and other revitalization elements
 - ▶ Economic vibrancy - Relates to business activity, retail, arts, entertainment and residential presence
- ▶ Opportunities
 - ▶ Development and connectivity - Refers to types and characteristics of development, amenities and other offerings
 - ▶ Branding and marketing - Includes aspects regarding identity, communications and awareness related to attractions and amenities
- ▶ Threats
 - ▶ Market competition - Spotlights areas where Conway's downtown could be more competitive given offerings in other locations
 - ▶ Possible inhibitors - Identifies vulnerabilities that may negatively impact future growth



Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

Physical environment

- ▶ Substantial investments have been made in downtown redevelopment in the past 20+ years
- ▶ Pedestrian-friendly walkways and crosswalks
- ▶ Streetscaping has improved significantly (e.g., visual elements of sidewalks, building facades, adjacent public spaces)
- ▶ Preservation of historic buildings contributes to a distinct appeal and character

Economic vibrancy

- ▶ Progress with availability of restaurants, breweries, entertainment, and stores
- ▶ Locally owned boutique shops and other retail offerings more prominent than chains
- ▶ Collaborative and supportive small-business community
- ▶ Downtown generally viewed as the center of arts, culture and entertainment

Weaknesses

Physical environment

- ▶ Perceived lack of office space for new and expanding businesses, as well as one- to two-bedroom apartments
- ▶ Perceived lack of parking, or proximate parking, according to some stakeholders
- ▶ Alleys that need to be cleaned up and maintained to enhance walkability
- ▶ Financing for preservation and renovation of historic buildings is challenging

Economic vibrancy

- ▶ Lack of office and residential offerings has implications for employee attraction and retention (especially young talent)
- ▶ More variety of arts, culture and retail options for college students, professionals and other groups
- ▶ Need for a grocery store to support residential growth
- ▶ Still lacks perception of being a “cool” (compelling) destination within the broader region and state

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

Development and connectivity

- ▶ Prioritizing mixed use development (e.g., residential, retail, office and boutique hotel)
- ▶ Completing Grand Theatre renovation and re-establishing it as an anchor for arts/cultural activity
- ▶ Late-night eating and entertainment options
- ▶ Further enhancing the downtown outdoor experience with pocket parks, bike lanes, walking trails and alley activation
- ▶ Downtown shuttle service for college students

Branding and marketing

- ▶ Establish an updated tagline that captures the essence of downtown (Current slogan is “Your Place is Here”)
- ▶ Integrate downtown attractions into broader Conway marketing and communications targeted to residents and visitors
- ▶ Highlight and promote amenities, assets and activities that make Conway’s downtown unique
- ▶ Leverage earned and paid media for PR and marketing

Threats

Market competition

- ▶ Appeal of Northwest Arkansas and out-of-state markets to talent and visitors
- ▶ Residents continue to look elsewhere for late-night eating and entertainment options
- ▶ “Dry county” restrictions can impact perception of entertainment quality and experience
- ▶ Availability of downtown real estate for businesses and residents in other markets
- ▶ Privately owned parking can be removed without notice

Possible inhibitors

- ▶ Lack of population and consumer density could inhibit the expansion of arts, entertainment and retail offerings
- ▶ Continued limitations of downtown amenities can reinforce workforce attraction and retention challenges
- ▶ Insufficient downtown office space may present risk of existing companies relocating and/or missed opportunities for business recruitment and expansion
- ▶ Rising costs of renovations and other development



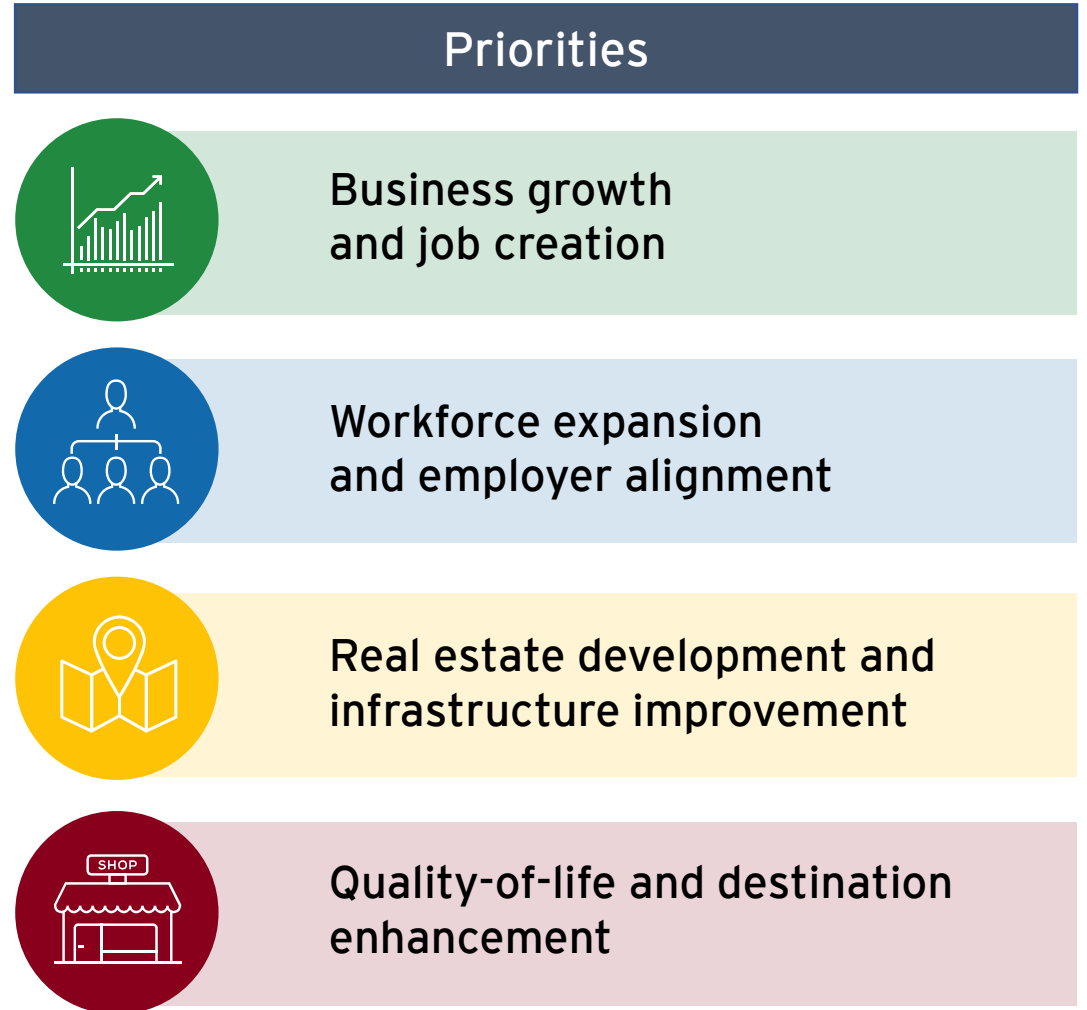
Conway economic development plan alignment

Chamber/CDC economic development strategic framework

The Chamber/CDC economic development strategic plan provides an organizing framework and path that can help move Conway toward an economic future with opportunities for all. The priorities are deemed essential areas of focus and the goals describe what could ultimately be accomplished in the priority areas. Aligning CDP's initiatives and activities with the priorities and goals of the Chamber and CDC can help to accelerate growth in downtown, the City of Conway and Faulkner County:

- ▶ **Business growth and job creation**
 - **Goal 1:** Proactively identify and recruit new business and support the expansion of existing businesses to generate quality jobs and capital investment.
- ▶ **Workforce expansion and employer alignment**
 - **Goal 2:** Elevate awareness of career opportunities in Conway and strengthen the connectivity between employers, education institutions and workforce development organizations.
- ▶ **Real estate development and infrastructure improvement**
 - **Goal 3:** Prepare sites which are suited to accommodate companies in Conway's growing industries and sectors and reinforce business growth efforts.
- ▶ **Quality-of-life and destination enhancement**
 - **Goal 4:** Champion the continued development and diversification of amenities and attractions for residents, students, workers and visitors.

Possible alignment opportunities for CDP in regards to the Chamber/CDC strategic plan are provided on the subsequent page.



CDP alignment opportunities with Chamber/CDC strategic plan

Business growth & job creation

Goal 1: Proactively identify and recruit new business and support the expansion of existing businesses to generate quality jobs and capital investment.

- ▶ Collaborate with Chamber and CDC to generate more leads for business recruitment and expansion projects in downtown
 - ▶ Showcase downtown assets when hosting site selection consultants in Conway
 - ▶ Consider forming a downtown business council consisting of employers in Conway's target industries (corporate office, technology and professional services), and others to facilitate knowledge and best-practice sharing.
-

Workforce expansion & employer alignment

Goal 2: Elevate awareness of career opportunities in Conway and strengthen the connectivity between employers, education institutions and workforce development organizations.

- ▶ Include downtown employers in career fairs, school visits, and other career awareness activities
 - ▶ Facilitate internships and other work-based learning opportunities for college and high school students
 - ▶ Identify young professionals to serve as ambassadors for promoting the benefits of working (and living) in downtown
-

Real estate development & infrastructure improvement

Goal 3: Prepare sites which are suited to accommodate Conway's emerging industry sectors and reinforce business growth efforts.

- ▶ Develop and renovate buildings to accommodate business occupants in Conway's growth industries and sectors that may prefer downtown locations (e.g., Corporate Office, Technology and Professionals Services).
 - ▶ Establish a public-private partnership (P3) that garners expanded investment for downtown development, redevelopment and improvement projects
-

Quality-of-life & destination enhancement

Goal 4: Champion the continued development and diversification of amenities and attractions for residents, students, workers and visitors.

- ▶ Continue development and revitalization efforts that position downtown as a center of attraction for residents and visitors
- ▶ Update marketing materials and messaging and integrate into broader Conway promotional efforts targeted to tourists, as well as prospective and current students and talent



4 Leading-practice examples

Leading-practice overview

To help inform future downtown development and revitalization in Conway, 12 leading-practice examples have been identified and organized in the following categories:

- ▶ **Public sector-led projects** - Arts/culture and other revitalization initiatives and projects advanced primarily with local government funding
- ▶ **Private sector-led projects** - Mixed-use projects driven by investment from private developers
- ▶ **Public-private partnerships (P3s)** - Projects advanced by contractual arrangements between a public and private sector entity for large-scale developments and redevelopments
- ▶ **Social districts** - Designated entertainment areas approved by state and local policies.

Examples of **site improvement and business support** programs have also been provided.



Leading-practice examples: downtown redevelopment and revitalization



Public sector-led project

The Ramble (Arts Corridor) - Fayetteville, AR

The Cultural Arts Corridor, renamed The Ramble, is a 50-acre public space created to revitalize Fayetteville's downtown area. The project is a result of a bond package approved by Fayetteville citizens in April 2019. The Ramble enhances connectivity between the city's cultural institutions, including theaters, studios, the library and the University of Arkansas Art and Design District. The project will provide a new, enhanced civic space to showcase and celebrate local arts culture, and serve as a catalyst for future development.

Source: "Cultural Arts Corridor," *City of Fayetteville Arkansas*, fayetteville-ar.gov/3456/Cultural-Arts-Corridor.



Public sector-led project

Mesa Arts Center - Mesa, AZ

Mesa Arts Center is owned and operated by the City of Mesa, Arizona. A quality-of-life bond provided the initial capital for the three-building complex, which had a total development cost of about \$95 million and is Arizona's largest arts center. Sitting on seven acres, it has four theaters, five art galleries and 14 art studios. The center welcomes over 425,000 visitors annually and hosts live performances, visual art exhibitions and art classes. The Mesa community can enjoy two free annual community festivals and other community events hosted by the center throughout the year.

Sources: "Mesa Arts Center," *Visit Mesa*, visitmesa.com/things-to-do/arts-culture/performing-arts/mesa-arts-center/; "The Center of Mesa Revitalization," *Salt River Stories*, saltriverstories.org/items/show/425

Leading-practice examples: downtown redevelopment and revitalization



Public sector-led project

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Troy, NY

The State of New York invested \$10 million into 11 revitalization projects for downtown Troy. The projects will enhance arts and culture offerings, improve streetscape, expand housing opportunities and increase community services. The investment is intended to build on prior investment and transform the area into a “regional center of innovation and talent,” with enhanced public spaces, small businesses and arts and entertainment venues.

Source: “Governor Hochul Announces 11 Transformational Projects for Troy as Part of \$10 Million Downtown Revitalization Initiative,” *New York State Government*, governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-11-transformational-projects-troy-part-10-million-downtown.



Public sector-led project

Municipal Parking Garage - Edmond, OK

The City of Edmond is in the process of constructing a three-story parking garage in the heart of downtown Edmond. The garage will have 216 free parking spaces for city employees and downtown visitors. This project is attached to a larger development, the City Center Complex, which includes city hall and the municipal court. Other adjacent downtown building projects are in development to enhance the experience of residents and visitors in downtown.

Source: “Edmond’s New City Hall and Municipal Court, and parking - The Project begins,” *City News OKC*, citynewsokc.com/community/edmonds-new-city-hall-and-municipal-court-and-parking---the-project-begins/article_16d8052e-2cb7-11ee-90bb-bb4d75f783a7.html.

Leading-practice examples: downtown redevelopment and revitalization



Private sector-led project

The Thread - Rock Hill, SC

The Thread is a redevelopment project led by the Keith Corporation to transform a 400,000-square-foot historic textile mill into a mixed-use space. Located in the heart of Rock Hill's Knowledge Park, the project will serve as a new destination for the community and connect to Winthrop University's campus. The three-story building will feature office, retail and restaurant space. The Thread, along with multiple development projects, represents nearly \$500 million investment in Knowledge Park.

Source: "The Thread," *The Keith Corporation*, thekeithcorp.com/properties/tkc-portfolio/the-thread/.



Private sector-led project

North City - San Marcos, CA

North City is a \$2 billion investment project led by Sea Breeze Properties. The 200-acre development will be a center of activity for San Marcos and North County, with appeal to students and personnel at California State University, San Marcos. The development will feature residential units, hotels, office space and retail space, granting a new sense of vibrancy to the area.

Source: "North City," *Sea Breeze Properties*, seabreezeproperties.com/projects/north-city.

Leading-practice examples: public-private partnerships



Public-private partnership project

Uptown development - Goose Creek, SC

The City of Goose Creek and Urban Core Advisors formed a public-private partnership to develop Uptown Goose Creek. The project is a \$50 million investment to transform the downtown area into a new walkable destination with 100,000 square feet of restaurants, retail and flex space. There will be public green space for the City of Goose Creek to activate for people to enjoy. The development began in 2022, with the first commercial spaces opening in 2023. The entire project will be completed in 2026.

Source: "Public Private Partnership Brings 50 Million Investment to Goose Creek," *City of Goose Creek*, cityofgoosecreek.com/article/public-private-partnership-brings-50-million-investment-goose-creek



Public-private partnership project

1st ON MAIN - Carmel, Indiana

The City of Carmel and Lauth Group entered a public/private partnership to build a \$45 million mixed-use development. The project will feature condominiums and luxury apartments at the top with retail, office and restaurant space at the bottom. In addition to the residential and commercial space, a 310-space parking garage was built for public use. Its location will serve as a community-gathering plaza, featuring Carmel's Rotary Clock.

Source: "A Snapshot of City Projects Going Into 2022," *Carmel Monthly Magazine*, carmelmonthlymagazine.com/a-snapshot-of-carmel-projects-going-into-2022/.

Leading-practice examples: public-private partnerships



Public-private partnership project

Alpharetta City Center - Alpharetta, GA

Alpharetta City Center is a 26-acre mixed-use development, stemming from a public-private partnership between the City of Alpharetta and MMS Partners. City Hall, Fulton County Library, retail space, restaurant space, office space and luxury apartments are featured in Alpharetta City Center. Greenspaces are spread throughout to add vibrancy to the area.

Source: "Welcome to the Heart of Downtown Alpharetta," *City of Alpharetta*, citycentralalpharetta.com/about-new/.



Public-private partnership project

The View at Castle Rock - Castle Rock, CO

The View at Castle Rock is a redevelopment project in downtown Castle Rock. Castle Rock Downtown Alliance, Castle Rock Development LLC and the Town of Castle Rock engaged in a public-private partnership to create this \$70 million mixed-use development with a 399-space parking structure. The project is expected to generate \$6.2 million in new tax revenue through 2038.

Source: "The View at Castle Rock," Town of Castle Rock, crgov.com/3202/The-View.

Leading-practice examples: social districts to enhance downtown engagement

Social districts such as the Catalyst Social District in High Point, NC, and the Leisure and Recreation District in Tupelo, MS, were created to increase business activity in downtown and urban areas of cities. Social districts are typically approved through state legislation and local ordinances and are intended to foster safe public spaces for alcoholic beverage consumption. Ordinances include some of the following guidelines:

- ▶ Specific boundaries and hours of operation
- ▶ Container requirements (e.g., cup size and beverage allowance)
- ▶ Signage requirements throughout the district with code of conduct
- ▶ Business participation requirements (e.g., must be an ABC-permitted establishment)

Social district examples

Catalyst Social District - High Point, NC



Photo credit: City of High Point

Leisure and Recreation District - Tupelo, MS



Photo credit: Tupelo Main Street

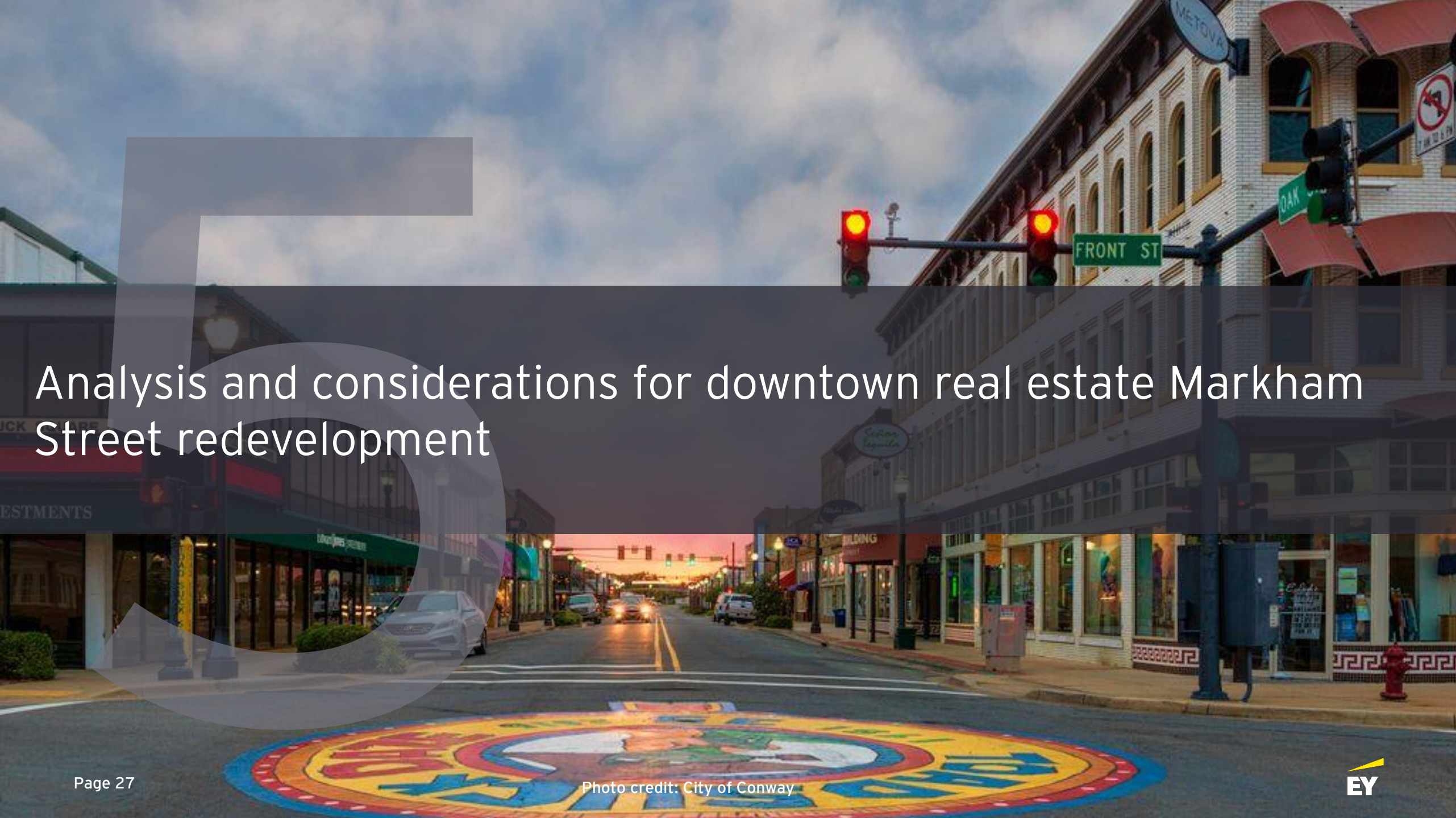
Sources:

"High Point Social Districts," *City of High Point*, highpointnc.gov/2568/Social-District#; "Leisure and Recreation District Ordinance," *Downtown Tupelo*, tupelomainstreet.com/leisure-and-recreation-district

Site improvement and business support examples

It is commonplace for cities and other localities to offer programs and incentives to attract the types of investment they wish to see in their communities. Below are examples provided by some of the benchmark communities.

City	Incentive	Description	Source
Rock Hill, SC	Development/Growth Management Incentives	Financial incentive package allocated to new construction or redevelopment projects to be used toward impact fees, water/sewer meter set fees and building permit fees.	https://www.rockhillusa.com/business-support/incentives
San Marcos, TX	Façade Improvements BIG Grant	Businesses can be reimbursed up to \$20,000 of well-designed property improvements. The reimbursement covers exterior facades, signage, lighting and safety systems for commercial buildings.	https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/3552/Facade-Improvements-BIG-Grant
Troy, NY	Infrastructure Improvement Program	Infrastructure Improvement Program funding is funneled through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). This program covers improvements such as street improvements/paving, sidewalks and curbing, street lighting, water and sewer improvements, catch basin improvements, handicap access improvements and street trees.	https://www.troyny.gov/199/Programs-Grants
Mesa, AZ	Downtown Small Business Utility Rate Program	Qualifying businesses located in Town Center and Central Business District can receive a 25% reduction on electric and water bills for the first three years. Businesses must apply within the first year of operation.	https://www.selectmesa.com/business-environment/incentives-programs/mesa-incentives-and-programs



Analysis and considerations for downtown real estate Markham Street redevelopment

The proposed economic development strategy triggers opportunities to activate and strengthen the vibrancy and sense of place in downtown Conway

With a strategic focus on key asset classes outlined below, the real estate approach can help ease implementation of the strategic plan by prioritizing and sequencing investment and activation of assets that align with targeted growth industries, while incrementally creating an active and vibrant downtown for visitors, residents, and students.

Hospitality



Establishing a boutique hotel in downtown Conway increases the immediate service offerings available to visitors looking for a more curated experience during their visit. The addition of a full-service hotel with restaurant and bar services would expand the food and beverage (F&B) offerings in downtown and would give both residents and tourists a place to gather and further activate the downtown.

Tech office



Incorporating tech office space into downtown Conway attracts employees who are looking to reside in a live-work-play environment. Tech employees typically desire living and working in an urban, amenitized, walkable and vibrant environments. Focusing on the tech industry and attracting its employees compounds the activation and vibrancy created through the development of multifamily, hospitality and entertainment.

Parking



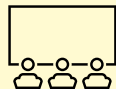
Parking considerations are critical as new developments are contemplated given increased parking options will be necessary to coincide with the growth of downtown. While current parking appears sufficient given existing needs, as development progresses, there will be additional demand for parking for employees, visitors, and residents of downtown Conway.

Multifamily



Currently, downtown Conway lacks adequate housing options for those seeking the convenience of apartment living. Downtown market dynamics suggest an opportunity for amenitized multifamily development targeting employees and young families. With home price appreciation and high interest rate trends, the younger generation is looking to rent rather than buy their first home. Thus, a downtown multifamily development with a wide array of amenities will help to create a live-work-play environment for employees and young families, that increases density and activation of the downtown, spurring commercial growth and investment.

Arts, Entertainment and Culture (AE&C)

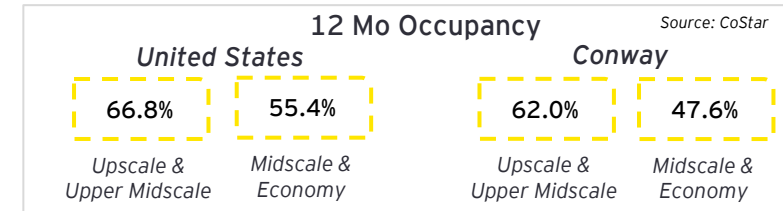
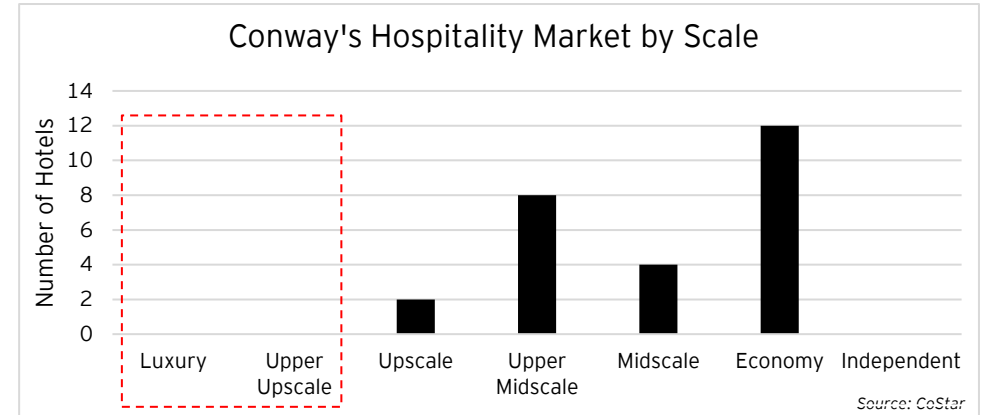


The Conway 2035 plan emphasizes arts, entertainment and culture as one of its top priorities. There are existing opportunities to expand the entertainment offerings within downtown, specifically along Markham Street, to create a truly integrated experience with three local universities and downtown businesses. Downtown would benefit from a work/study space for university students or work-from-home community members, which could also feature retail spaces such as a coffee shop. A food hall and an art collective or gallery to showcase local artists would provide additional entertainment options for families, young professionals, and college students.

Strategic growth in Conway presents the opportunity to develop an upscale boutique hotel to support local businesses and institutions

Current State

- Currently, there are no existing boutique hotels in Conway, nor are there luxury or upper upscale options. We note all existing hotel offerings in Conway are limited/select service hotels lacking a true food & beverage component.
- Conway is lagging the United States' hospitality market in terms of its 12-month occupancy, indicating that existing demand may not support a boutique hotel without further growth.
- Local businesses have expressed the need for an upscale downtown hotel to entertain clients, executives, and board members, offering an innovative food & beverage menu as well as meeting and entertainment space.
- Stakeholders expressed there is an outstanding need for a downtown anchor to drive the energy and vibrancy in downtown after workhours and on weekends.
- Hendrix College has expressed a need for upscale lodging during large gatherings such as home sports games and big weekends (e.g., homecoming, graduation).
- Stakeholder feedback suggests that more exploration and due diligence may be needed to determine feasibility of a boutique hotel or other downtown lodging option.



Vision for Downtown Conway

Opportunity:

- As the broader strategic economic development plan evolves, there may be a need for more of a curated hospitality experience to further activate the downtown and support local businesses and institutions. Potential future opportunities will benefit from an attractive food & beverage option, including a full-service bar, to provide locals and tourists with more vibrant entertainment opportunities. There are opportunities to preserve the character and history of Conway's downtown by reimagining the existing built environment to accommodate hotel development.

Key Steps:

- Commission a formal hotel feasibility study to identify the demand, appropriate service offerings, room count, branding/theme and desired amenity needs, in accordance with design standards outlined under the Old Conway Design Overlay District.
- Assess continued growth against feasibility outcome to identify appropriate timing for the addition of a boutique hotel.
- Based on feasibility programming, perform site selection to align with size, configuration and location. Select a site that is centrally located for both tourists and employees and is close to downtown amenities and local attractions, which could be leverage for thematic branding of the lodging experience.
- Engage with stakeholders to understand community needs (e.g., local business usage, institutional use) to identify size and amenities.

Similar towns to Conway offer examples of innovative boutique hotels with unique curated experiences

Case Study: 21C Museum Hotels

Location: Bentonville, AR

Overview:

- 104-room boutique hotel, contemporary art museum and cultural civic center
- Located on the corner of the town square
- Award-winning restaurant which provides in-room dining services
- Over 12,000 square feet of exhibition space, with galleries open every day (exhibitions rotate so there is always something new)
- Amenities include a fitness center, business center, laundry service, museum shop, complimentary bike valet, pet-friendly rooms, and free Wi-Fi



Case Study: The Laurel Hotel & Spa

Location: Auburn, AL

Overview:

- A boutique hotel with 26 rooms located right next to Auburn University with expansive street frontage
- Modern design with high end amenities and a scenic view of Auburn
- Tasting-menu only restaurant, rooftop bar/lounge with a pool and garden, adjacent food hall
- Partnership with the Horst Schulze School of Hospitality Management at Auburn University, which provides students with hands on training experiences at the hotel and teaching restaurant
- Received a Five Diamond Designation by AAA Travel for 2023, which recognizes the hotel as offering world-class luxury, amenities and experiences
 - The hotel is the first property in the state of Alabama to receive this recognition

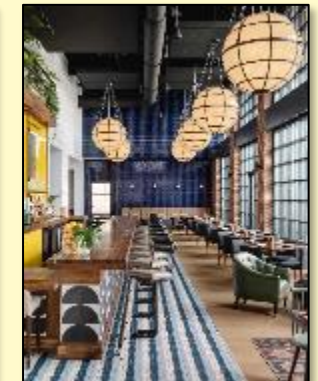


Case Study: Hotel Tupelo

Location: Tupelo, MS

Overview:

- Boutique hotel featuring 79 rooms and suites, private event spaces, fitness center, complimentary parking, bikes, Wi-Fi and is dog-friendly
- 2023 Hospitality Design awards winner; hotel design inspired by Elvis Presley and the rock & roll culture
- Located downtown in the hub of its dining and shopping district
- Includes a restaurant and bar that serves breakfast, brunch and dinner

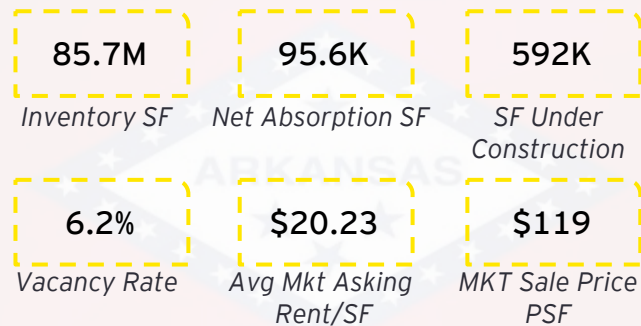


Current office fundamentals suggest a relatively stagnant market supporting the need for purposeful strategic planning to drive commercial growth

Current State

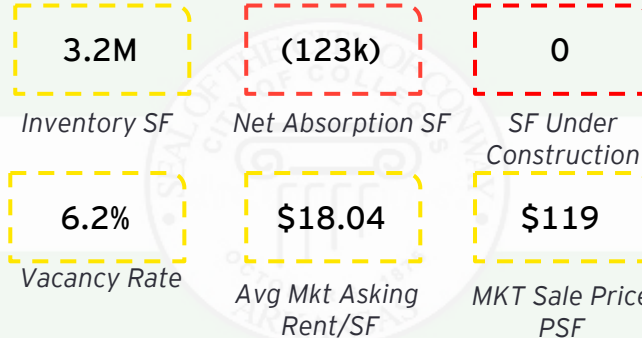
- Through the economic development study, tech office was identified as a growth industry within Faulkner County.
- At present, existing tech office users are limited within Conway, however the economic development strategy suggests that the workforce and training programs can drive economic development in downtown Conway through an increased tech presence.
- The higher education presence in Conway with computer science and software development programs provides for a strong future workforce pool in the tech industry.
- Employees at tech firms typically gravitate towards a walkable, amenitized, live-work-play environment where they can engrain themselves into the community.
- Given increasing competition resulting from the high level of recent turnover in the technology sector, tech office design is pivotal in attracting and retaining talent. Tech leaders are interested in office space which reflects company culture and accommodates a variety of work styles.

Arkansas Office Metrics



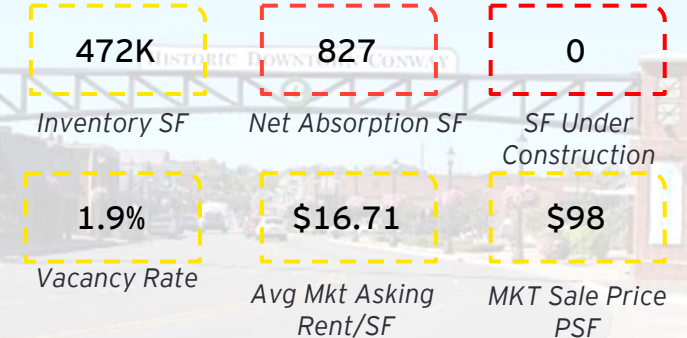
Source: CoStar

Greater Conway, AR Office Metrics



Source: CoStar

Downtown Conway, AR Office Metrics



Source: CoStar

Characteristics of the typical tech employee

The typical tech employee prefers to reside and work in a live-work-play environment, which fosters vibrancy and innovation. The employees are typically younger in age and seeking to live in an urban environment with a diverse and complete array of amenities and entertainment.

Market metrics suggest that there is currently not a robust office market in Conway as there is negative absorption within Greater Conway with no properties under construction. The growth of the tech industry in Conway and will require the execution of a comprehensive economic development plan.

The presence of tech office space fosters activation and vibrancy of the local community through a lively and engaged employee base

Characteristics to Prioritize in Tech Office Space

Flexibility

An important factor in attracting and retaining tech talent is creating a flexibly work environment through aspects such as modular furniture, height-adjusting desks, and privacy walls. Oftentimes a divide between social and quiet work is an important factor as well.

Mobility

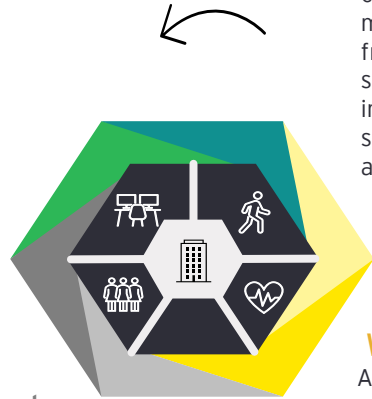
A common theme in tech companies is their desire to move through the office freely. Thus, creating drop in spaces for employees is important to be combined with spaces which can be reserved ahead of time.

Socialization and collaboration

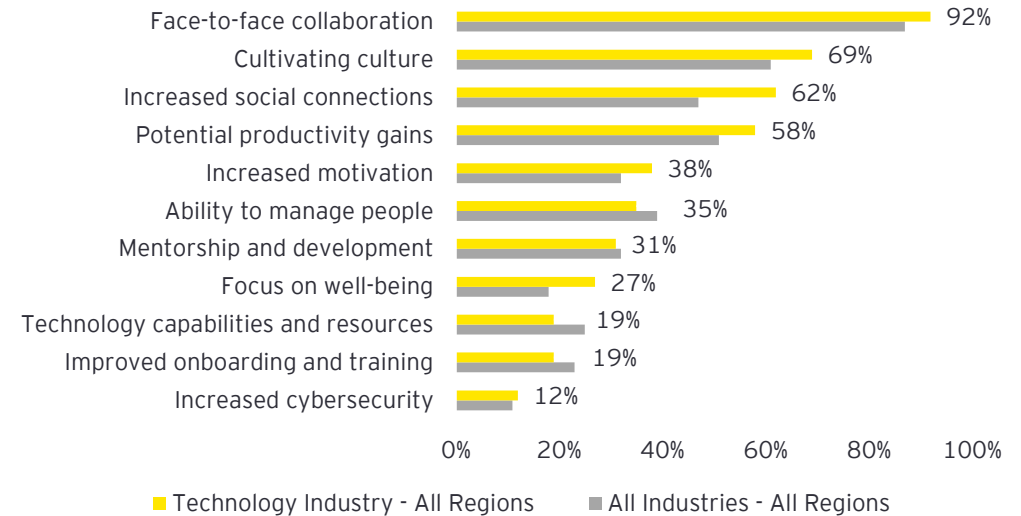
Encouraging socialization and collaboration within the workplace often aligns with technology companies work environment.

Well-Being

Access to outdoor and communal spaces improves an employee's work experience. Additionally large windows to allow for natural light combined with natural plants to incorporate nature within the office promotes well-being.



The Value of Office Space in the Technology Industry



Source: JLL Technology Spaces Report, November 2023

As the chart above indicates, there is an increased emphasis in the technology industry in fostering collaboration, culture, and social connection when compared to all other industries. When combined with the initiatives in the economic development strategy, the culture created within tech offices can provide a means for downtown activation as the employees begin to engage with Conway through utilization of entertainment options, multifamily developments, and hotels.

Vision for Downtown Conway

Opportunity:

- Downtown Conway can benefit from preserving and creating office space that is attractive to technology focused firms. Employees at tech firms typically gravitate towards a live-work-play environment where they can engrain themselves fully into the community. Opportunities exist for new and existing firms to partner with local universities to build-out education programs to meet their technical needs.

Key Steps:

- Develop relationships with existing property owners, landlords, and managers to identify existing spaces that can lend themselves to adaptive re-use for tech office users.
- Begin building a "property bank" of potential spaces in the downtown, including vacant parcels, under-utilized upper floor space, redevelopment opportunities, consolidation/combination of existing spaces to have available when approached by a target company or when marketing Conway to tech firms.
- Collaborate and partner with local universities to promote educational programs which are better suited to train a future tech workforce.
- Foster conversations with existing businesses to identify growth opportunities as it relates to space needs in the downtown.

Tech office space is often characterized as open, with high ceilings, large windows, and natural light, making adaptive reuse a desirable option for users

acretrader

ACRETRADER FINANCIAL, LLC MEMBER FINRA|SIPC

Company: ACRETRADER
Financial
Address: 26 W Center St
City, State: Fayetteville, AR
SF: 9,091
Floor: 2

Defining Characteristics:

- Recently renovated building
- High ceilings
- Large windows
- Open working space



ZENWORK

Company: Zenwork
Address: 1 E Center St
City, State: Fayetteville, AR
SF: 5,000
Floor: 2

Defining Characteristics:

- High ceilings
- Natural light
- Located within a commercial clusters (retail, hospitality, restaurants)



Concerns related to the perceived lack of parking are based on convenience, as the amount of available parking appears adequate to support existing activity

Additional parking in downtown Conway does not appear to be of immediate concern, as the strategic economic plan gains momentum and downtown activation is enhanced through the addition of new multifamily, office and entertainment related developments, the need for additional parking will become more immediate.

Case Study: Franklin, TN - Downtown Parking

Location: Downtown Franklin, TN

Overview:

- Downtown Franklin consists of two free parking garages with approximately 300 spaces as well as paid street and lot parking.
- Paid parking is time restricted and is enforced Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM.
- Curb parking is managed with a 2-hour time limit to encourage turnover in the downtown retail areas.
 - The time limits aims to increase the availability of parking spaces for short-term visitors and encourage long-term visitors to utilize the free unlimited parking garages.



Current State

- The need for more parking appears to be more of a perception issue focused on convenience, as the availability of parking in downtown Conway does not appear to be an immediate concern.

Case Study: Bentonville, AR - Downtown Parking

Location: Downtown Bentonville, AR

Overview:

- Downtown Bentonville is equipped with street parking, lot parking, and two parking garages totaling 697 spaces.
- One parking garage offers free parking and includes signage showing the number of available spots.
- The second parking garage offers free parking on holidays, weekends, and after 5:30 PM on weekdays.
- There are twelve total parking lots (including parking garages) which vary in cost.



Vision for Downtown Conway

Opportunity:

As the growth of Conway continues and additional employees, residents and students descend on the downtown, parking will become a more immediate concern and should be a priority in discussions and planning for new development.

Key Steps:

Parking should be part of any discussion and a key consideration in the feasibility of future development in downtown to preserve accessibility and provide necessary incremental parking inline with growth.

- Potential parking options include the development of a centralized parking deck to accommodate growth in residential, commercial and hospitality,
- With growth in density and demand, parking in downtown could be a revenue stream under certain future scenarios.

Prioritizing investment in and development of various arts, entertainment & cultural amenities will preserve local community along side commercial growth

Current State

- Conway has historically prioritized and promoted the local arts, entertainment & culture community, including Toad Suck Daze, recognition of local arts groups, performing arts, expansive bike path system, sports fields, and the addition of the multi-activity aquatic center.
- The Conway 2035 plan emphasizes arts, entertainment & culture as a top priority of the community. Stakeholders have identified additional needs, including creating spaces for local artists and musicians to celebrate and display their talents.

Current Strengths

- Connect Conway greenway trail: City of Conway has been awarded \$24.6 M to construct 15 miles of bike and pedestrian infrastructure to connect 10 parks, 7 schools, 3 major retail areas, 3 universities, 14 major employment centers and 16 neighborhoods
- Bike paths: Conway recognized as the most bike-friendly community in central Arkansas with a silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community award
- Multi-activity aquatic center: will include a public community pool with a lazy river, café, tennis, pickleball and volleyball courts, gym, and community party rooms
- MLK Jr. Square: the 1.5-acre urban public space serves as a water quality demonstration project, and it includes bike lanes, sidewalks, an open grass and garden area, amphitheater and children's play area
- Conway Symphony Orchestra: a professional orchestra with over 80 musicians
- Sports fields: in 2023, new artificial turf was completed at Conway Station Park which now includes a 9-field baseball complex, 8 225' fences, 1 350' fence, and a large stocked fishing pond.

Goals of the Conway 2035 Plan

- Establish an entertainment, performing arts, public arts, and regional shopping destination in downtown Conway
- Expansion of live music venues of various sizes
- Additional public green space
- Community-wide beautification master plan including public art
- Expansion of paths and trails including bike lanes to increase the connectivity of Conway to surrounding areas, while also creating a walk-friendly community
- Facilities to host large tournaments of any variety
- Appointment of a director of Arts & Culture

Vision for Downtown Conway

Opportunity:

Implementing the arts and entertainment goals of the Conway 2035 plan alongside commercial growth efforts will continue to preserve and recognize Conway's creative and active community and drive activation and vibrancy to the downtown.

Key Steps

- Gather and prioritize community input related to the continued development of the arts, entertainment & cultural fabric of the community.
- Identify opportunities to engage local universities and their students in the local arts, entertainment and cultural scene
- Engage with local arts leaders and organizations to identify opportunities to display and promote their work (e.g., temporary displays in public spaces throughout the community, dedicated local artist gallery).
- Bring late-night entertainment options to downtown, such as bars/beer garden or additional performing arts/live music venues.
- Explore opportunities to create a centralized downtown public green space to host arts, entertainment, and recreation events in Conway's urban core.

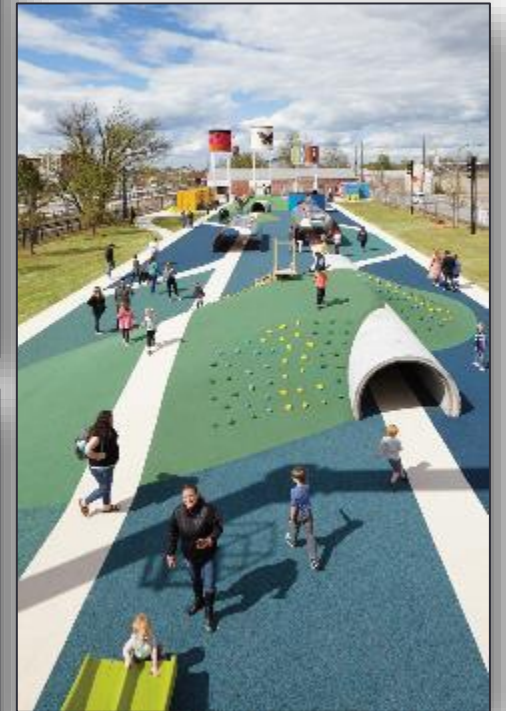
Creating a central gathering destination in downtown through arts and entertainment will enhance its sense of place and fulfill outstanding needs

Case Study: Railyard Entertainment District

Location: Rogers, AR

Overview:

- Includes a plaza, park with a playground and splash park for children, as well as an event stage
- Features benches, seating, tables, shaded areas, restrooms, bike paths and added walkability to the community
- Host events such as farmer's markets, art shows, holiday celebrations and concerts
- The development connects the east and west downtown areas across the railroad, which previously was disconnected
- The 2021 inaugural concert season attracted more than 15,000 people (60% locals)
- The project utilized a robust community outreach effort, helping to create a sense of ownership and pride from both city staff and residents
- The project has consolidated and linked new programs in a successful effort to re-center Rogers' downtown area
- Anchoring the historic downtown, it is aimed at catalyzing economic growth while providing a variety of public spaces for communal use
 - Rogers has already seen some new businesses crop up near the park



Demand exists for an amenitized multifamily product in downtown Conway within walking distance to amenities and key demand drivers

Downtown Conway Multifamily Snapshot



Multifamily inventory in Downtown Conway currently includes three multifamily properties totaling units, 53 not including any additional individual multifamily units situated above existing retail. According to stakeholders, there is demand for additional housing options for employees, students, and young families. Incorporating multifamily housing into downtown Conway with adequate amenities can aid in the activation of the overall downtown community through its social and economic benefits.

Current State

There are only 53 multifamily units in downtown with an occupancy of nearly 93%. Stakeholders, local real estate brokers and developers suggest there is demand for certain types of downtown multifamily development as housing prices have increased and development of new single-family homes is limited by space and infrastructure connectivity. Current housing options within downtown Conway do not align with the desires of those looking for multifamily living as they do not include amenities and are generally small in size. Recent success at Fontaine Bleu Central Landing, which includes amenities such as a pool and fitness center, as well as larger unit sizes, suggests that there is demand in the market, but there is currently a lack of supply within downtown.

Fontaine Bleu Central Landing



- | | |
|--|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong occupancy Large unit size Ample amenities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not walkable to downtown |

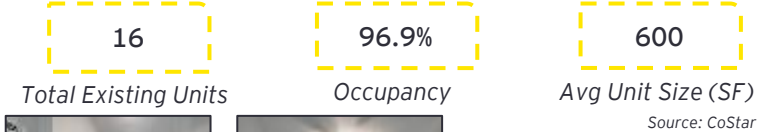
Existing Inventory Downtown

J-Loft Apartments



- | | |
|--|---|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to downtown Newly constructed units | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small unit size Not ideal for family living Lacks amenities |

1313 Elm Street



- | | |
|---|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to downtown Recently renovated units | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small unit size Abnormal floor plans Lacks amenities |

1404 Place



- | | |
|---|---|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to downtown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small unit size Outdated construction Lacks amenities |

Incorporating amenities into a multifamily development can foster community and attract and retain tenants into the downtown corridor



Case Study: G at Market Apartments

Location: Bentonville, AR

Overview:

- In 2022, 82 units in the heart of Bentonville, Arkansas were constructed with modern living and ample amenities in mind. The unit mix ranges from studios to 2-bedrooms.
- Amenities at the building include a co-working lounge, 24-hour fitness center, bike storage lockers, private covered parking, private outdoor courtyards, EV charging stations, private patios, a community firepit, outdoor grills and more.
- G at Market offers an all-inclusive convenience package which includes electricity, water, trash, sewer, internet, valet trash, and smart home features.

Performance:

- Average Rent/Unit: **\$1,306**
- **91.2%** occupied

Vision for Downtown Conway

Opportunity:

- Demand appears to exist for additional multifamily housing options in downtown, catering to young professionals, students, and young families. Development opportunities exist along Markham Street and within the core downtown, adjacent to amenities and entertainment.

Key Steps:

- Engage in a master planning exercise to vision the future built environment for downtown and determine the size, amenities, location, and target tenant base for the development.
- Discuss potential partnerships with local universities and potentially cater future developments to undergraduate and graduate students.
- Survey the community to determine which amenities are most suitable for the potential tenant base.

Common Downtown Housing Amenities

In order to attract new residents, and as demonstrated by Fountaine Bleau Central Landing, it is important to provide key amenities that cater to the urban dweller:

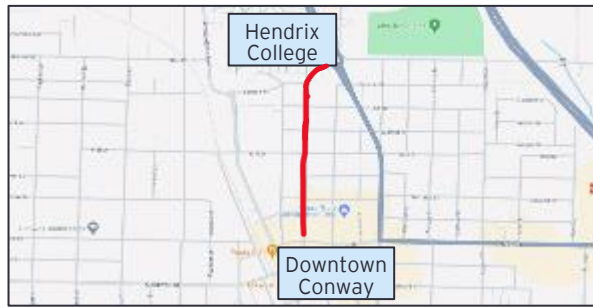
Parking			
Parks and Open Space			
Roof Top and/or Balconies			
Fitness Center			
Bicycle Storage			
Ground Floor Retail			

Development along the Markham Street corridor can activate the built environment and enhance the integration of Downtown and Hendrix College

Markham Street has seen several recent improvements as a result of the Markham Street Jump Start Improvements Project which incorporated pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape features making the corridor increasingly assessable and inviting. The focus for Markham Street should be around asset classes which foster the creation of a vibrant community aiding in the activation of broader downtown Conway and integrating the college with the downtown. This approach would include a variety of uses, including amenitized multifamily development and engaging arts and entertainment options to attract community members and students.

Markham Street Introduction

Markham Street is centralized within downtown Conway, providing for a direct connection between Hendrix College and the remainder of downtown.



Markham Street Current Progress - Phase II

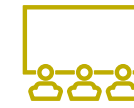
The future goal of the redevelopment of Markham Street is to create a sustainable, mixed-use, mixed-income, and pedestrian friendly community.



Asset Class Opportunities



Mixed-Use/
Multifamily



Arts, Entertainment
and Culture



Hospitality



The Markham Street District is encumbered by commercial mixed-use and residential mixed-use zoning which each have unique overlay regulations

According to the Markham Street Neighborhood Specific Plan, the neighborhood is divided into three Neighborhood Transect Zones which are used to create a vision for how different areas the neighborhood are development. Each zone establishes building standards such as height, bulk, location, functional design, and parking.



The lots located along Markham Street are primarily defined as Commercial Mixed Use (C-MU) and Residential Mixed Use (R-MU) zones.

Commercial Mixed-Use Zone

C-MU zones are used to create transitions between downtown Conway and Markham Street.

Accepted Development: office, retail, live-work, urban residential

Development Standards: transitioning the use and scale from high intensity downtown, to lower intensity towards the interior of the neighborhood.

Residential Allowances: upper floors, residential lofts, live-work units

Max Number of Stories: 4

Residential Mixed-Use Zone

R-MU zones are used to establish smaller-scale developments and establish building transitions to adjoining uses.

Accepted Development: live-work, townhomes, duplexes, patio homes, etc.

Development Standards: small scale urban residential uses

Residential Allowances: ground floor, upper floor, residential lofts, townhomes, single family detached dwelling, accessory residential, live-work

Max Number of Stories: 3

Source: Markham Street Neighborhood Specific Plan

A mixed-use multifamily development allows for increased downtown activation while abiding by the permitted uses indicated by current zoning

Any multifamily development along Markham Street should be considered alongside arts and entertainment amenities that entice tenants and drive visitation, such as ground floor retail or culinary components. While broader Conway has experienced an increase in supply of multifamily units as part of the developments at Central Landing, these units do not satisfy the requirements of downtown tenants, seeking an urban core location, a walkable lifestyle, and a live-work-play environment.

The table below illustrates a theoretical estimate of the number of mixed-use residential units allowable based on Markham Street's zoning standards and an assumed lot size and avg unit square footage.

	C-MU	R-MU
Max Number of Stories	4	3
Assumed Unit Size	800 SF	800 SF
Max Lot Coverage	100%	80%
Assumed Land Size	1.75 acres	1.75 acres
Max Lot Coverage	76,230 SF	60,984 SF
Max Building SF	304,920	182,952
Ground Floor SF	76,230	60,984
Residential SF	228,690	121,968
Living Area*	171,518	91,476
Estimated Max Number of Units	214	114

*Our calculation assumes an estimated load factor of 25%.



An important aspect to incorporate into a mixed-use development is ample parking for the residents as well as the retail/restaurant customers. Markham Street zoning standards require **1 parking space per each dwelling unit** for residential uses under C-MU and R-MU zoning.

Use	Zoning Allowances	
	C-MU	R-MU
Ground Floor Residential		X
Upper Floor Residential	X	X
Retail	X	C
Restaurant	X	C
X	Permitted Use by Right	
C	Uses where special conditions apply	
	Prohibited or Currently Not Listed (blank)	

Current State
Existing multifamily inventory in downtown Conway is limited and doesn't offer the suite of amenities that newer buildings offer.

Vision for Markham Street

Opportunity:

- Markham Street can be an active, vibrant and engaging corridor connecting Hendrix College with the downtown and encouraging students to interact with local business and take part in downtown events. When considering zoning, location, and demand, Markham Street is well-suited for a mixed-use multifamily development aimed at attracting young professionals and students.
- The University of Arkansas Community Design Center conducted a study which proposed mixed-use residential development along and around Markham Street, which corroborates the vision for Downtown Conway to create pedestrian friendly streets and centralized urban housing options.

Key Steps:

- Incorporate Markham Street into a broader downtown master planning exercise to identify uses, priorities, sequencing and strategic positioning of these specific uses along the corridor.
- Conduct a formal feasibility study to further refine the concept by defining the project programming, size, amenities, location, zoning and land use planning of potential sites.

There is precedent in the regional market supporting upscale urban multifamily housing with an array of diverse amenities and mixed uses

Case Study: Lumen Luxury Lofts

Location: Bentonville, AR

Overview:

- A mixed-use multifamily development is underway in Bentonville, scheduled to be complete in the summer of 2024.
- **The development includes 252 residential units, known as Lumen Luxury Lofts, as well as three retail units and one restaurant space located on the ground floor.**
- The development is located on 4.59 acres of land and is 281,684 SF in total.
- The unit mix at the residential portion of the project will include micro studios, standard studios, and various 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom units.
- **Additional amenities at the development include a pool, plunge spa, dog park, coffee bar, fitness studio and secured parking decks.**

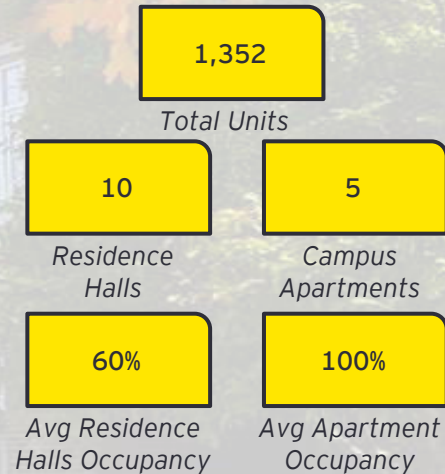


Master planning Markham Street should include student housing options to activate the corridor and offer amenitized housing to attract students

Given the proximity to Hendrix College, there is potential to leverage this proximity to master plan student housing into the Markham Street corridor. Currently, student housing options for upperclassmen at Hendrix College are smaller in size and lack attractive amenities. New, amenitized student housing could help activate Markham street, connect the built environment and entice incoming students with desirable housing options, including larger floor plans, close-proximity to campus and downtown, and attractive amenities (e.g., pool, gym, study rooms, food, recreation, outdoor space)

“More than 90% of students live in college-owned co-ed and single-sex housing, including six traditional residence halls, five residence houses, three theme houses, and five apartment complexes” - Hendrix College

Summary of Existing Housing



Case Study: State on Campus Tuscaloosa

Location: Tuscaloosa, AL - University of Alabama

Address: 513 13th St, Tuscaloosa, AL

Overview:

- An off-campus housing option was constructed in 2013 for students at the University of Alabama consisting of **174 beds** with an average unit size of 1,212 square feet.
- Each room is fully furnished and includes full-sized a washer and dryer as well as private lockable patios.
- **Amenities include an outdoor pool, study lounge, private courtyard, grilling area, lounge seating, gaming area, and an outdoor lounge.**
- **The ground floor of the property is used as a covered parking lot.**
- The property is located within walking distance to the university and is professionally managed and maintained.



Prioritizing and enhancing the arts and entertainment offerings along the Markham Street corridor should be a primary focus of development concepts.

Markham Street can be its own distinct and branded “district” of Conway by connecting the downtown with Hendrix College and bringing residents together through the creation of additional arts & entertainment venues. As the strategic economic development plan comes to fruition and with the addition of multifamily housing and the tech office workforce, residents will need additional spaces to come together to socialize, recreate, celebrate the arts and culture of Conway.

Vision for Markham Street

There are a variety of creative and innovative ways to incorporate arts and entertainment into commercial corridor developments, similar to Markham Street.

- Food halls have shown to be a success in other developments, providing a diverse culinary selection, typically coupled with a curated menu of beverages, including beer, wine, and cocktails. The venues typically host events such as karaoke, trivia, game or movie nights to serve as additional entertainment options for families, young professionals, and college students.
- Collaboration space or work/study space for university students or work-from-home community members, could also feature retail spaces such as a coffee shop or event spaces for larger gatherings.
- Strengthening the partnership between the city and Hendrix College through some form of shared space, such as an art collective, business incubator, professional development/internship center to connect students with local employers.

Case Study: Stock & Grain

Location: High Point, NC

Overview:

- Food hall with 12,000 square feet of restaurants and take-away counters
- There are 9 independently-owned food concepts and 2 bars
- Host events such as concerts, workshops, trivia night, karaoke, etc.
- Located in The Outfields adjacent to Truist Point (baseball stadium)



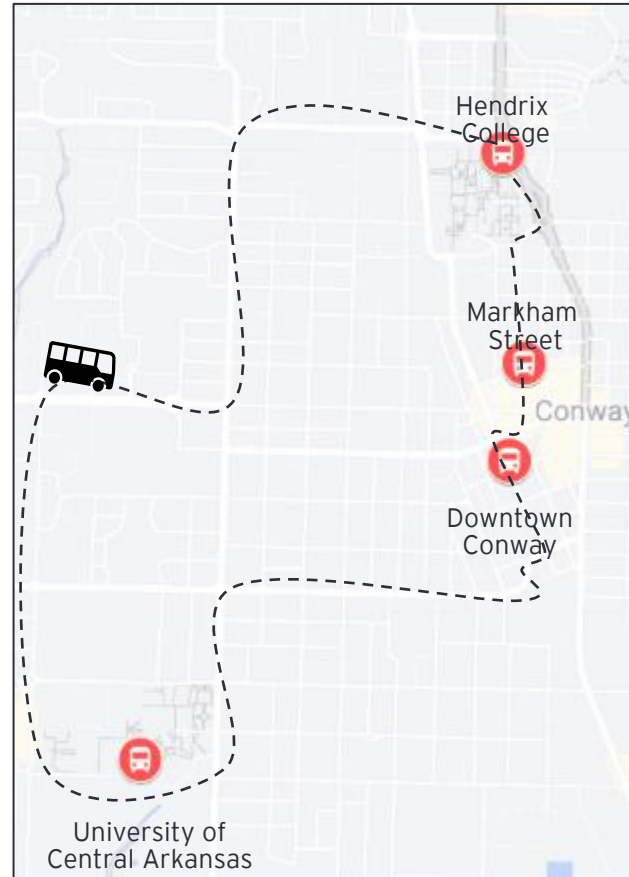
Transportation to downtown can encourage students to engage with local businesses and events and participate in activities on other campuses



The graphic features a yellow background with a black silhouette of a bus and two street signs at the top. Below this, the text discusses the vision for Markham Street, highlighting the need for transportation to connect the downtown area with nearby colleges and universities, thereby encouraging student engagement with local businesses and activities on other campuses.

Vision for Markham Street

- In addition to the physical connectivity of the built environment along Markham Street, access and transportation need consideration. There is precedent among colleges and universities to provide transportation to make engagement with nearby downtowns and other institutions more accessible. There is an opportunity here to implement a shuttle-like system, beginning with a pilot program, to connect the downtown with the colleges and universities to encourage students to engage with downtown, support local business, seek internships and employment in Conway, and explore activities on other campuses.



Examples of College Shuttles Connecting Campus & Downtown

Grinnell College

Location: Grinnell, IA

Overview:

- Grinnell College offers several regional transportation options for students including Saturday Shuttles, Des Moines Airport Shuttles, Chicago Shuttles, and bus and taxi services.
- Saturday Shuttles run every weekend to a different location approximately an hour from Grinnell including malls, town centers, etc.
 - Tickets can be purchased Monday through Friday for \$5.
- Burlington Trailways Bus Service provides regular service between Omaha and Chicago with drop off and pick up at Grinnell College.

Colby College

Location: Waterville, ME

Overview:

- Offers Jitney Service, which brings students to and from medical, business, and personal appointments, as well as a shuttle which provides students with transportation to and from shops, restaurants, theatres, grocery stores, and more.
- The school shuttle operates Monday through Sunday from 6am or 8am to 1:30am or 2:30am depending on the day of the week.
- Jitney Service operates Monday through Friday and students can request a pick-up/drop-off through the campus app.

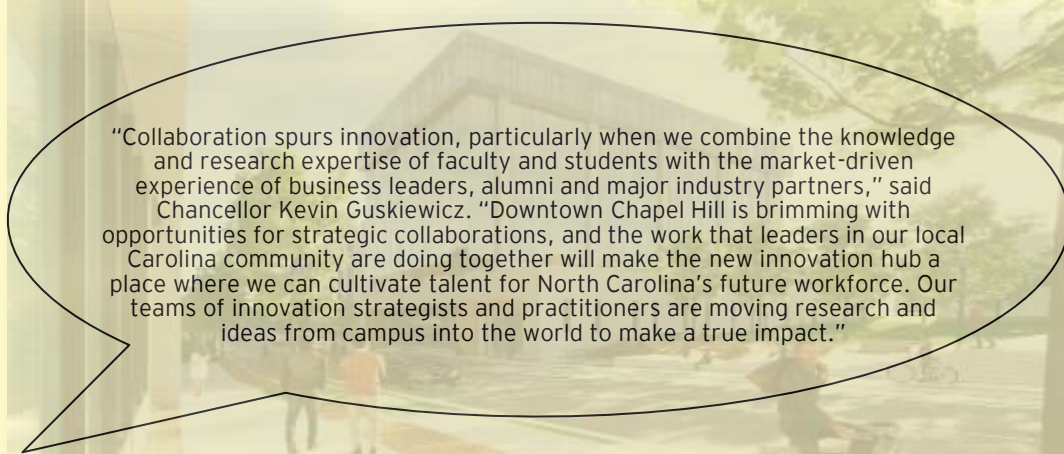
A partnership between Hendrix College and the Markham Street corridor will function to connect students with the greater community and encourage downtown visitation

Case Study: UNC-Chapel Hill Innovation Hub

Location: Chapel Hill, NC

Overview:

- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill launched a full-scale innovation hub through their lease of 20,000 square feet at a property under renovation in the center of downtown Chapel Hill
- The property will house Innovate Carolina, which is the university's team that will provide guidance, tools & resources to support both organizations on campus & in the surrounding community that make an impact through innovation, entrepreneurship & economic development
- **Includes workspaces for life science and high-tech companies, promoting partnership between the university & those in industry**
- **The hub is part of the Carolina Economic Development Strategy, which plans to create a downtown innovation district in order to attract & retain innovation companies & talent to Chapel Hill**



"Collaboration spurs innovation, particularly when we combine the knowledge and research expertise of faculty and students with the market-driven experience of business leaders, alumni and major industry partners," said Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz. "Downtown Chapel Hill is brimming with opportunities for strategic collaborations, and the work that leaders in our local Carolina community are doing together will make the new innovation hub a place where we can cultivate talent for North Carolina's future workforce. Our teams of innovation strategists and practitioners are moving research and ideas from campus into the world to make a true impact."

Case Study: Congdon Yards

Location: High Point, NC

Overview:

- Destination to work, gather, innovate and celebrate
- Located downtown in the fully renovated Factory and Plant 7 buildings
- Work: offers studios for startups and small business, private offices and full-floor suites for established enterprises, with the option to build out a fully customized office
- **The Commons: public space with desks/tables to work and collaborate or meet with others**
 - Lil's Coffee Bar offers breakfast and lunch, coffee/tea/beer/wine
 - Boardroom for larger meetings
- **The Courtyard: outdoor common space which hosts community events such as movie nights**
- The Loft: 4 distinct event spaces & 2 private suites (perfect for weddings)
- The Generator: includes industrial-grade woodworking machinery accessible to all furniture designers and makers, interior designers and architects – as well as small, medium and large furniture companies
 - Note that High Point is known for its furniture industry



There is potential for future hospitality development along Markham Street to support demand from the local college and business community

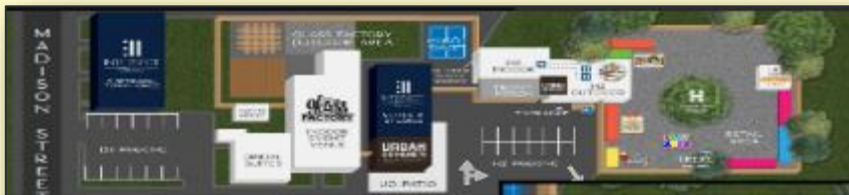
Given the number of available infill locations along Markham Street and their proximity to neighboring Hendrix College, the potential for a boutique hotel which compliments the mixed use residential and arts/entertainment uses may be well suited for select sites. Note that current zoning permits a hotel on CCMU or CMU zoned sites. Prioritize a hotel feasibility study to determine appropriate service offerings, room count, and desired amenity needs.

Case Study: The Hotel at Huntington Square

Location: Jonesboro, AR

Overview:

- The only hotel in downtown Jonesboro and only independent hotel in the greater area
- Features 25 rooms including one-bedroom suites or studios and two or three-bedroom townhouses
- All room options include kitchens/kitchenettes, washer and dryers (except for studios), 24-hour contactless self-check in, Wi-Fi, HULU tv and are pet friendly
- **Part of an eat-play-party-stay space that includes on-site dining, a speakeasy lounge/bar, food truck park and entertainment options such as live music/games**



Case Study: Graduate Hotels

Location: Fayetteville, AR

Overview:

- **Boutique hotel based on college nostalgia, located next to the University of Arkansas campus**
- Located right off the Downtown Square, with 234 rooms
- Amenities include a pool, flexible event venues, fitness center, bike rentals, Wi-Fi and is pet friendly
- Restaurant and bar on-site



A strategic master plan provides the prioritized direction for transforming downtown Conway into a lively and vibrant town center



"...the Conway community can revitalize this historic neighborhood as the connection between anchors and help it become a truly successful place."

Holistic Vision:

Downtown Conway & Markham Street Corridor

- **Next steps for downtown Conway and Markham Street development:**

Feasibility Study: conduct formal feasibility studies for multifamily and hospitality projects to determine size, land use, zoning, service offerings, etc.

Master plan: develop a downtown master plan for the proposed uses (boutique hotel, multifamily, AE&C, parking) in order to determine appropriate prioritization and timing. The master plans should take into account strategic connectivity, identification of parcels by potential use, design for pedestrian access and bikeways, beautification, and resident safety. The purpose is to create a visual plan to serve as a playbook for execution of the economic development strategic plan.

Develop a "property bank": Strengthen relationships with property owners, operators, and landlords, to compile a data base of potential properties and parcels in the downtown which are well suited for tech office space in alignment with the opportunities highlighted in the master plan.

Foster community involvement: Survey the community on preferred AE&C developments in order to encourage community involvement through arts, entertainment, amenities, etc.

Develop meaningful partnerships: Partner with the local colleges and universities, hospitals, and businesses, to drive workforce development, investment in transportation, and foster connectivity between students/employees and downtown Conway.



Conway Vision Statement

Conway is a vibrant and collaborative community driven by skilled talent and an economic future with opportunities for all.

Source: Markham Street Executive Summary



Real estate definitions

Independent hotel:

A hotel that is independently owned and operated; not related to a hotel chain or management company

Boutique hotel:

A hotel that is smaller than a typical chain hotel (typically with fewer than 100 rooms), with a distinct character, intentional design and curated services

Limited-service hotel:

Budget-friendly hotel that does not have a food and beverage component, such as a restaurant

Select-service hotel:

A blend between a limited-service and a full-service hotel, it tends to offer a range of amenities between the two

Full-service hotel:

A hotel that offers a variety of amenities, including a food and beverage component. Full-service hotels include mid-price, upscale or luxury hotels.

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