

RECONNECTING CINCINNATI WESTWAY

The economic benefits of investing in a better
Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project

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Executive Summary

The Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project (the “BSB Project”) is a nearly \$4 billion dollar infrastructure effort that will add a companion bridge and reconfigure the bridge and on-ramps for a span connecting Northern Kentucky to downtown Cincinnati. The current plan, led by the Ohio Department of Transportation (“ODOT”), will free up to ten acres of developable land by ensuring that the new bridge’s entrance and exit ramps are well integrated into the Cincinnati street network. Bridge Forward Cincinnati, a grassroots consortium of local planners and activists, believes the current plan misses the opportunity to generate greater economic potential for the long-term success and growth of downtown Cincinnati. In their alternative roadway plan (the “Bridge Forward Concept”), Bridge Forward instead proposes to free up to 25 acres of land for new mixed-use development immediately adjacent to the Central Business District (“CBD”).

Developing the high-value land (referred to as the “Westway Area”) recaptured by the Bridge Forward Concept could bring significant job and housing opportunities to the growing downtown Cincinnati area. The potential Westway real estate development project contemplated in this report (the “Westway Project”) could generate \$3.4 billion more dollars per year in economic impacts for the local economy and create 23,000 more jobs (including those during the construction period and those created and sustained through the new commercial and residential space) than a comparable and proportionate real estate development made possible by the current ODOT plan. These economic impacts would be shared throughout the region and state through increased tax revenue, while also directly benefiting surrounding neighborhoods.

Additionally, the Bridge Forward Concept would substantially increase connectivity between Queensgate and the rest of the downtown area to the east. This would bring increased investment to this long-underutilized area, thereby effectively expanding the landlocked urban basin of Cincinnati.

Policy makers should earnestly consider the Bridge Forward Concept given the magnitude of its long-term economic benefits.

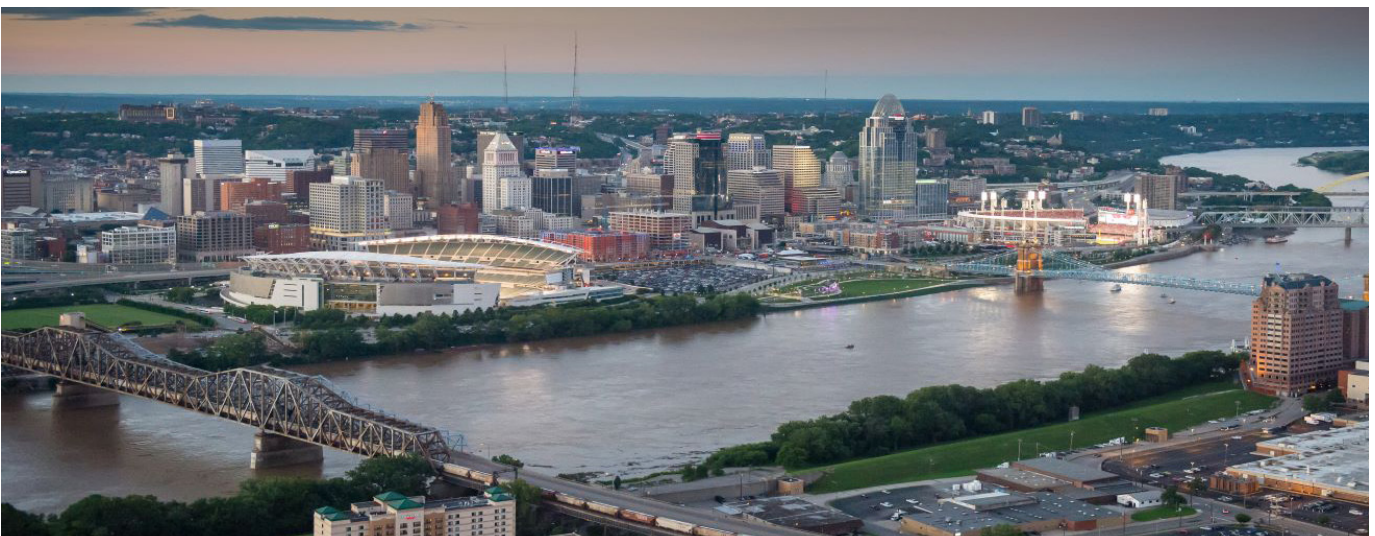


Image Credit: City of Cincinnati, <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/>

Background and Current Conditions

Introduction to the BSB Project and the Westway Area

Named after Kentucky's longest serving congressman at the time and originally built in 1963, the Brent Spence Bridge (the "BSB") is the gateway for motorists traveling between Ohio and Kentucky using Interstates 71 and 75, a vital corridor for national freight and local passengers. Designed to accommodate 80,000 vehicles a day, the bridge now carries more than double that amount of traffic, creating the second-worst interstate truck bottleneck in the nation. The foot of the bridge on the Ohio side lands just west of the CBD, Cincinnati Convention Center, and downtown riverfront area, all of which have received significant investments over the last decade. The large swath of land that is currently covered by highway interchanges and bridge on-ramps was once the densely populated West End neighborhood, which was demolished in the 1960s in part to make way for the highway, displacing ~5% of Cincinnati's population, most of whom were African American residents. Today this highway infrastructure is a physical barrier between Cincinnati's downtown and the riverfront as well as the neighborhoods to the west, such as Queensgate. In fact, due to fixed topography to the east, the Ohio River to the south, and a National Historic District neighborhood (OTR) to the north, the I-75 corridor on the west side of Cincinnati's CBD currently landlocks the region's urban core and prevents future downtown expansion.

Current ODOT Plan

The BSB Project is intended to drastically reduce traffic congestion, while supporting access and connectivity to communities on both sides of the interstate highway. After decades of promises and years of negotiations between state and federal governments, the project received over \$1.6 billion in federal funding through 2021's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, with the remaining roughly \$2 billion funding to be shared by Ohio and Kentucky (1). Cincinnati and Ohio policy makers and citizens are eager to move these plans forward to take advantage of this political alignment and

improve the poor traffic conditions that have been plaguing the region for decades.

The current ODOT plan, which is largely based on the 2012 plan that received National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") approval, reconfigures the existing interchange in the Westway Area to slightly reduce the overall highway footprint on the Ohio side of the river. While a future real estate development project is not explicitly part of ODOT's scope of work, the agency has announced that this interchange reconfiguration would free up 10 acres for downtown development (2).



Image Credit: WKYT News, <https://www.wkyt.com/>

Missed Opportunity for Cincinnati

While the commitment of federal infrastructure funding and environmental approvals allow the BSB Project to move forward – remedying decades of inaction – the current ODOT plan does little to improve the overall urban fabric, lack of connectivity, and resultant quality-of-life issues created by the existing 1960s highway design.

Modeled after the successful Fort Washington Way interstate design, the Bridge Forward Concept aims both to reclaim up to 25 acres of prime downtown land for mixed-use development and to provide much better connectivity between the CBD and Queensgate. This is accomplished in the Concept by consolidating and lowering the interstate into a trench, extending the existing downtown street over the interstate, and reducing the walking distance between the CBD and Queensgate as much as possible. Compared to the existing I-75 corridor and the current ODOT plan -- neither of which provide decent connectivity (especially for pedestrians) between the CBD and Queensgate -- the Bridge Forward Concept will transform the connectivity between these two important areas of the urban core.

Additionally, the Bridge Forward Concept would create new opportunities for businesses and residents, building on the existing increase in investments and tourism in downtown Cincinnati, in addition to the potential Duke Energy Convention Center expansion project. Finally, this alternate design would be an opportunity to right the wrongs of the past and bring thousands of people back to this neighborhood.



Image Credit: "Fort Washington Way at night." EEJCC. Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 1: Current conditions (left) versus the current ODOT plan (right). ODOT plan is for illustrative purposes and might not reflect the most current design. Images Credit: Bridge Forward

Westway Area Development Scenarios

Westway Project Development Program

Bridge Forward is contemplating one potential real estate development scenario for the Westway Area – referred to as the “Westway Project” – which will occupy 25 acres of reclaimed land and house a 4.6 million square foot (“sf”) mixed-use program that responds to the current trends and demands in downtown Cincinnati. To be clear, this contemplated development is only one potential use for the Westway Area, and higher and better uses could ultimately be pursued. The downtown area has seen a significant increase in investment over the past few decades, with businesses and residents relocating to the CBD. The downtown residential population increased by 14% from ~20,000 people in 2010 to ~22,700 in 2022 (3). Despite the population increase, multi-family housing construction

continues to lag behind other Midwest downtown submarkets, leading to higher rents and burdening the existing tenants (4). To address this gap, the Westway Project envisions building 2.85 million sf of residential (approximately 2,140 units), with 17% of the units reserved for affordable housing.

The remaining 1.8 million sf of the Westway Project development is envisioned as commercial space, including office, retail, and hotel uses. The existing and growing businesses in downtown Cincinnati, as well as the industry standards for retail use in downtown submarkets, informed the contemplated mix of uses for office and retail space. The prominent industries in downtown Cincinnati are

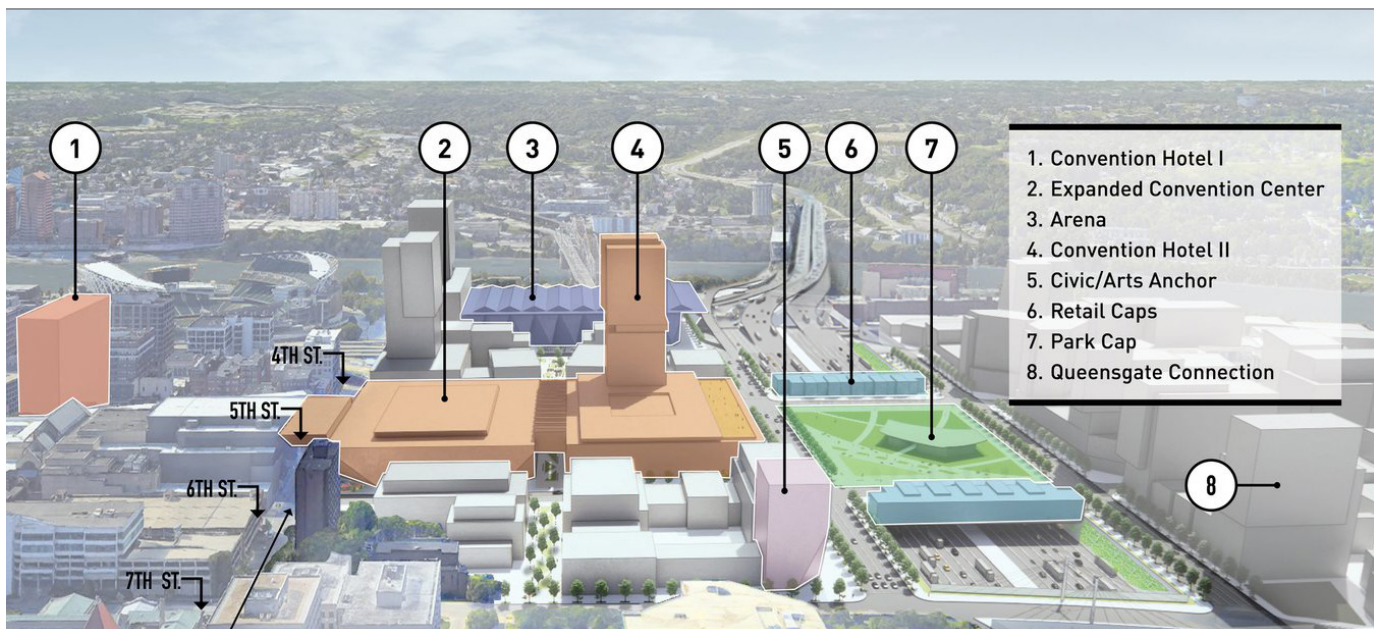


Figure 2: Massing study by GBBN, for illustrative purposes only

comparable to other similar-sized Midwestern cities, with a large majority of the population employed in the professional services, finance, insurance, real estate (“FIRE”), or other managerial sectors (5). Cincinnati has many large anchor corporations and employers, such as Kroger, Procter and Gamble, Fifth Third Bank, and Western & Southern, which could look towards new construction, Class A office space for expansion opportunities. Additionally, Cincinnati recently announced a \$200 million renovation of the existing Duke Energy Convention Center, which is immediately adjacent to the Westway Area. The associated increase in tourism and commercial activity is anticipated to drive demand for adjacent hotel and retail uses that can be directly addressed through the Westway Project (6).

To support the increase in new residents and commercial activity, the Westway Project will include approximately 3,200 underground parking spaces, and 142,000 sf of new open space.

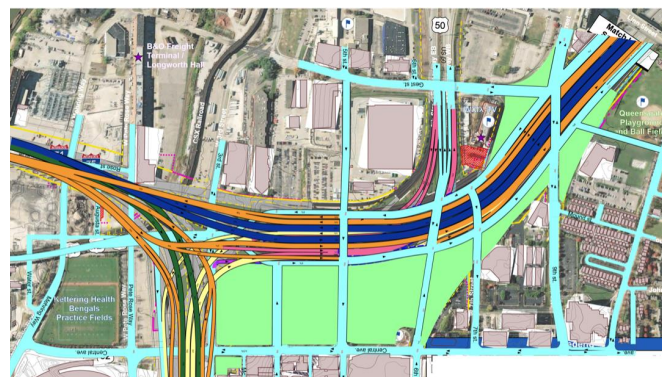
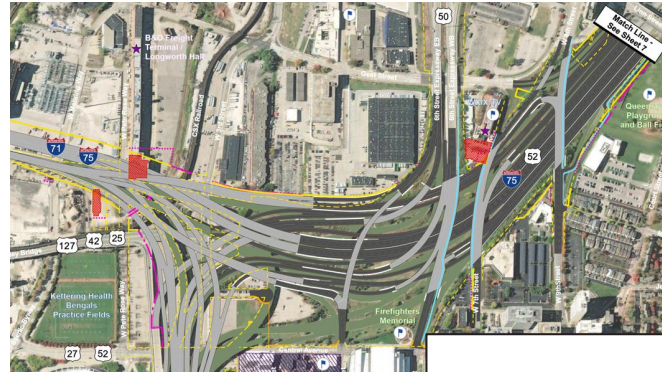


Figure 3 (right): Current ODOT plan (top) versus Bridge Forward Concept (bottom). Plans are for illustrative purposes and might not reflect the most current designs. Images Credit: ODOT and Bridge Forward

Total Development Capacity Assumptions

GBBN, an architecture and design firm with offices in Cincinnati, assisted Bridge Forward in analyzing the development potential of the 25 acre Westway Area. Through a massing study (pictured below), GBBN determined that the site could reasonably accommodate 190,000 sf per acre, totalling 4.6M sf across the site. They also confirmed this proposed density was reasonable in comparison to other case studies across the Midwest and in similar cities, including Grandview Yard (Grandview Heights, Ohio), the Arena District (Columbus, Ohio), Lincoln Yards (Chicago), and The Central (Dallas).

Specialty uses called out in the GBBN massing study, such as convention center and arena, did not inform the assumed development density of 190,000 sf per acre; only the standard blocks listed (A, C, F, G, and H) informed this assumption.



PARCEL BLOCK	TOTAL FLOOR AREA (sf) <small>(does not include below grade parking)</small>
A	1,060,000 sf
B	1,050,000 sf <small>(Includes 750,000 sf convention center)</small>
C	1,780,000 sf
D	1,150,000 sf <small>(Includes 700,000 sf arena)</small>
E	90,000 sf <small>(commercial)</small> 130,000 sf <small>(greenspace)</small>
F	1,150,000 sf
G	1,780,000 sf
H	1,180,000 sf
	9,370,000 sf total

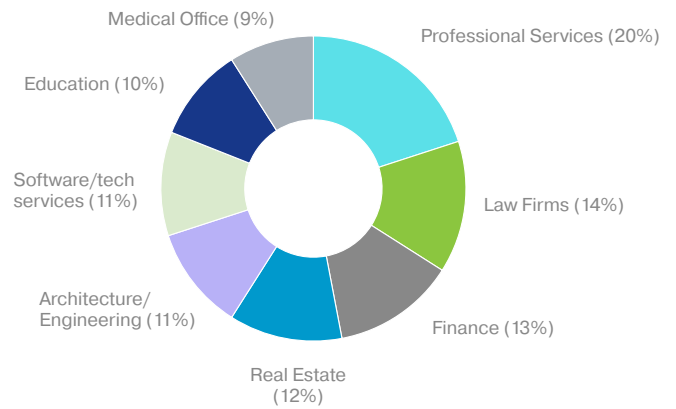
Three Scenarios

The Westway Project anticipates a full build out of 25 acres of land made available due to the consolidation of highway infrastructure. The floor area calculations described on the following page are based on that 25 acre scenario. To further stress-test the proposal, this study also calculates:

- The economic impact of developing & building out only 10 acres, the amount of land returned to the City under the current ODOT plan (7); and
- A 17.5 acre scenario in between the current ODOT plan and the fully built-out Westway Project.

The proposed development program at each of the three scales remains proportional. See Figure 6 for a full breakdown of three scenarios by overall square footage per building use.

Office Use



Retail Use

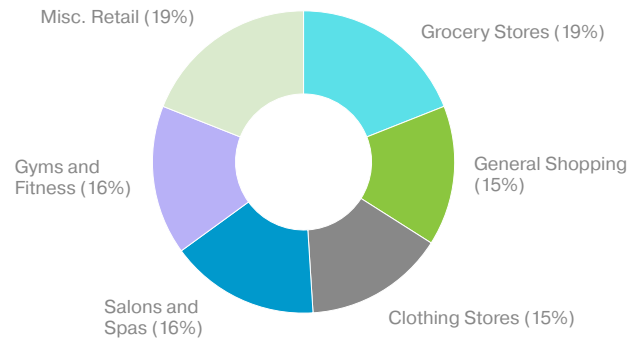


Figure 4: Commercial floor area breakdown by use



25 acres (full Westway Project)



17.5 acres



10 acres (current ODOT plan)

Figure 5: Illustrative site plan of three development scenarios

Building Use	% of Development Program	25 acres	17.5 acres	10 acres
TOTAL BUILT FLOOR AREA (not including parking)	100%	4,607,500 sf	3,325,000 sf	1,900,000 sf
Commercial Office	22%	997,500 sf	698,250 sf	399,000 sf
Retail/Restaurants	9%	427,500 sf	299,250 sf	171,000 sf
Hotel	7%	332,500 sf	232,750 sf	133,000 sf
Residential (incl. affordable)	62%	2.85 million sf / 2,137 units	1.99 million sf / 1,496 units	1.14 million sf / 856 units
Parking Spaces	-	3,200	2,250	1,300
New Open Space	-	142,500 sf	99,750 sf	57,000 sf

Figure 6: Development scenario building program

Economic Impact Analysis

Defining Methodology

For the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, and the State of Ohio to fully evaluate the Bridge Forward Concept against the current ODOT plan, policy makers must consider the BSB Project's life-cycle and economic benefits of future developments in the Westway Area, and the economic benefits of new, catalytic connections between the CBD and Queensgate. This study quantifies the potential economic benefits of development in the Westway Area. Specifically, this study uses the development assumptions described on pages 6 and 7 to inform an impact analysis model based on RIMS II input-output data (see the RIMS II call out box for more information on this data and methodology). This analysis considers both the construction phase (temporary jobs created over the course of project construction across multiple industries) and the operations phase (permanent

jobs and new residents due to the new commercial and residential space coming online). See more details on the methodology and data assumptions in the endnotes.

However, economic output alone does not capture the totality of the Bridge Forward Concept's impacts. The study also quantifies some of the additional indirect benefits arising from new development and an improved downtown public realm, such as retail sales increases and additional state and local tax revenue, as discussed later in this report.

RIMS II Calculations

Additional Impact Analysis



Figure 7: Economic impact methodology diagram

RIMS II data, published by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, is a list of input-output multipliers broken down by industry. Multipliers calculate the total economic impact of a project on a region, based on the ripple effects of spending from a new or increase in economic activity. For example, a residential construction project will lead to increased purchasing of steel and glass, which will increase manufacturing, and those manufacturing workers will spend more in the region. For the purpose of this analysis, the region is defined as the Cincinnati Metropolitan Statistical Area (“MSA”), which covers sixteen counties across Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. The RIMS II analysis includes assumptions for how much of the new economic activity and spending occurs within and outside of the MSA. See the appendix for a full list of additional disclaimers on the RIMS II methodology (8).



Figure 8: Cincinnati MSA. Image Source: <https://eiben.space/>

DEFINITIONS

Total Economic Output: Economic output encapsulates the increased economic activity due to the project, i.e., it quantifies the dollar amount of new money circulating through the MSA’s economy due to direct, indirect, and induced spending. This amount is calculated on an annual basis, as it is tied to annual sales and income of new businesses and residents.

Total Jobs: The model estimates the total jobs, both full-time and part-time, that are created or sustained through the increased economic activity due to the project. For the construction phase, these jobs would be temporary for the time period of the construction. For the operations phase, the job numbers assume the creation of new jobs in the first year, but those job numbers are sustained in subsequent years.

Wages: Compensation, or wages, quantifies the total earnings of all jobs created and sustained through the increased economic activity, including employee wages and proprietor income.

Direct Impact: The increase in revenue/spending due to the subject industry. For example, a real estate development project will increase revenue for various construction trades.

Indirect Impact: The increase in business-to-business spending due to the initial project. For example, the construction trade company will purchase tools and raw materials from suppliers.

Induced Impact: Increased household spending due to increased earnings. For example, an actively-employed construction worker may spend more money on meals and entertainment.

Construction Phase – 25 acres

The construction phase of a 4.6 million sf mixed-use project would support just shy of 21,000 jobs and generate \$3.2 billion in total economic benefits throughout the course of construction for the Cincinnati MSA. With an anticipated total construction cost (9) of approximately \$1.5 billion dollars (10), this spending would support a significant number of temporary jobs and generate revenue across multiple construction-related industries and the businesses that support the workforce. Given the exact timeline for the construction of the Westway Project is unknown, the impacts reflect the full construction time period, and have not been broken down into annual rates.

Operations Phase – 25 acres

The 4.6 million sf Westway Project will contain a mix of commercial and residential uses, all with varying impacts to the local economy. Unlike the analysis of the construction phase, the impacts of the future development's operations

will be continuous and ongoing (as long as the floor area remains occupied). Additionally, a project of this scale will take time to develop and lease out, and therefore the full economic benefits to Cincinnati will not be seen immediately upon completing construction. Policy-makers should weigh the long-term benefits of ongoing operations and an improved public realm against the potential short-term costs of adopting the Bridge Forward Concept.

Commercial

The Westway Project anticipates approximately 1.7 million sf of new commercial uses, with approximately 8,300 new employees in the mix of offices, retail, eating and drinking establishments, and hotels (11). This increased commercial activity would contribute over \$2 billion annually in direct, indirect, and induced impact to the local economy. In addition, the new businesses would generate approximately \$750 million in total earnings and 15,500 jobs (12).

Construction Type	Construction Cost	Total Economic Output	Total Wages	Total Jobs
Nonresidential Structures	\$503,257,500	\$1,095,690,000	\$414,079,500	7,323
Residential Structures	\$859,075,500	\$1,871,753,000	\$674,030,500	12,207
Parking	\$137,428,000	\$271,393,000	\$74,981,000	1,299
Open Space	\$8,783,000	\$18,339,000	\$6,581,000	137
TOTAL	\$1,508,523,000	\$3,257,176,000	\$1,169,672,000	20,958

Figure 9: Construction Phase Impacts - 25 acres

Commercial Use	Total Employees	Total Annual Economic Output	Total Annual Wages	Total Jobs
Office	5043	\$1,666,603,000	\$585,552,000	10,627
Retail	753	\$99,603,000	\$34,969,000	1,066
Food and Beverage	2280	\$387,969,500	\$114,054,500	3447
Hotel	222	\$47,873,500	\$13,896,000	364
TOTAL	8,298	\$2,202,049,000	\$748,471,500	15,504

Figure 10: Commercial Operations Impacts - 25 acres

Economic impacts of the Operations Phase are calculated on an annual basis. Therefore, the stated economic output and wage dollar amounts would recur annually as long as the anticipated commercial businesses remain in operation. The jobs, however, account for new jobs created when commercial operations begin, and subsequently those jobs would be sustained year after year (13).

Residential

Approximately 60% (14) of the floor area in the Westway Project, or 2.85 million square feet, is dedicated to new multi-family residential development (15). The influx of new residents to both the market-rate and affordable housing units would generate \$212 million in total economic output annually, have a total earnings impact of just under \$64 million annually, and support 1,450 jobs across the Cincinnati MSA.

While the commercial use impact analysis is based on annual revenue, residential impacts are based on household income and spending. Assumptions on the number of residents per unit, annual income, and unit affordability levels are based on a demographic and market analysis of the downtown Cincinnati area (16). Additionally, we are only accounting for residents who would be new to the Cincinnati MSA, as residents who are simply relocating from elsewhere within the catchment area would not contribute to new spending (17).

Residential Uses	Total New Units	Total New Residents to Cincy MSA	Estimate of Total Annual Income	Total Annual Economic Output	Total Annual Wages	Total Jobs
Market Rate Residential	1,781	1,806	\$159,728,000	\$182,473,500	\$55,090,000	1,253
Affordable Residential	356	180	\$25,542,000	\$29,179,000	\$8,809,500	200
TOTAL	2,137	1,986	\$185,270,000	\$211,652,500	\$63,899,500	1,454

Figure 11: Residential Operations Impacts - 25 acres

25 Acre Development Scenario Results

Construction Cost	\$1,508,523,000			
Phase	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Operations</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Per Acre</i>
Output	\$3,257,176,000	\$2,413,702,000	\$5,670,878,000	\$226,835,000
Wages	\$1,169,672,000	\$812,371,000	\$1,982,043,000	\$79,282,000
Jobs	20,958	16,957	37,915	1,517

Figure 12: Economic impact Scenario Comparison.

Note: Construction phase metrics are reported for the entire build-out, Operations phase metrics are reported as annual benefits.

17.5 Acre Development Scenario Results

Construction Cost	\$1,055,904,000			
Phase	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Operations</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Per Acre</i>
Output	\$2,280,030,000	\$1,689,605,000	\$3,969,635,000	\$226,835,000
Wages	\$818,772,000	\$568,664,000	\$1,387,436,000	\$79,282,000
Jobs	14,670	11,870	26,540	1,517

10 Acre Development Scenario Results

Construction Cost	\$603,410,000			
Phase	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Operations</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Per Acre</i>
Output	\$1,301,946,000	\$965,591,000	\$2,268,537,000	\$226,835,000
Wages	\$467,890,000	\$324,982,000	\$792,872,000	\$79,282,000
Jobs	8,383	6,784	15,167	1,517

Figure 12 (cont.): Economic impact Scenario Comparison

NOTE ON THE THREE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

The results of our economic modeling analysis, as outlined in the three charts in Figure 12, only account for the direct input-output impacts of the developments based on total square footage and construction costs. However, in the real life application of the development scenarios, there are substantial additional benefits and exponential returns of building at scale. The full 25 acre build out will allow for various development and construction efficiencies that would likely lead to construction savings and improved overall program and design.

Additionally, the full redevelopment of the Westway Area would be the only solution that provides seamless connectivity between downtown and Queensgate (described in more detail later in the report) and provides local street access on multiple sides of the developable

land, enhancing the practical real estate opportunities of the scenarios greater than 10 acres. The 10 acre plan, already achieved by the current ODOT plan, would not allow this local street frontage, which is critical to attracting pedestrian activity and successful retail. These urban fabric and public realm improvements would not only increase the value of the Westway Area development, but bring increased pedestrian activity and investment to the surrounding blocks.

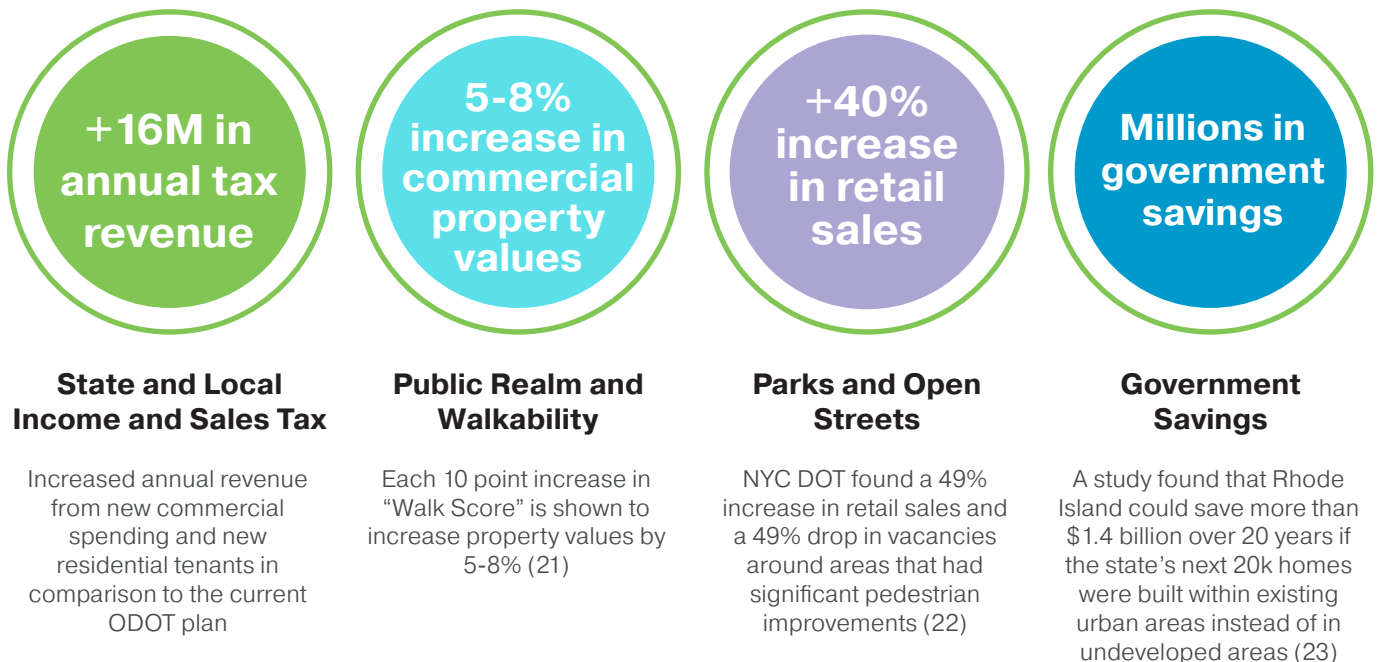
So while Figure 12 shows a linear relationship between the three scenarios, **it is likely the 25 acre plan is actually undervalued in comparison to the 10 acre plan** when we account for these more qualitative and indirect benefits. All factors should be considered when weighing the delta between the Bridge Forward Concept against the current ODOT plan.

Additional Economic Benefits

Defining Methodology

Beyond the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts that would come from increased business sales and household spending, there are many additional economic benefits of the Westway Project to Ohio and the Cincinnati region, including increased tax revenue. Based on the estimated incomes of the residents moving into the Westway Area from outside of the MSA, this could generate close to \$2 million in City earnings taxes and around \$3 million in Ohio state income tax per year above the current 10 acre ODOT plan (18). Additionally, the sales from new retail and restaurants would bring close to \$11 million in sales taxes per year above the ODOT plan (19).

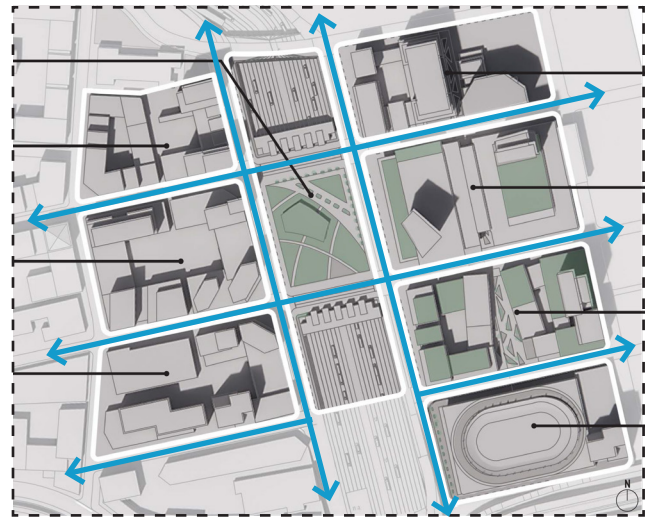
In addition to these direct tax benefits (20), investing in an improved Westway Area and more walkable, pedestrian friendly urban fabric has both quality of life improvements for residents and employees, but also real economic benefits for retail sales and property values. These benefits are frequently studied and quantified by urban planning and economic professionals, including the few case studies highlighted below.



Impact on Queensgate Neighborhood

Westway as a Connective Thoroughfare

The Westway Area is at a critical juncture between multiple neighborhoods and Cincinnati attractions, including the CBD, the riverfront with multiple sports stadiums, the Convention Center, and Over-the-Rhine and the West End just to the north. The southern portion of the Queensgate neighborhood, located immediately west of Westway, is largely underutilized despite it being immediately adjacent to these high value areas. The approximately 160 acres is physically cut off by the highway infrastructure, and has currently predominantly light industrial, wholesale, transportation, and surface parking uses.



Planning Efforts for Queensgate

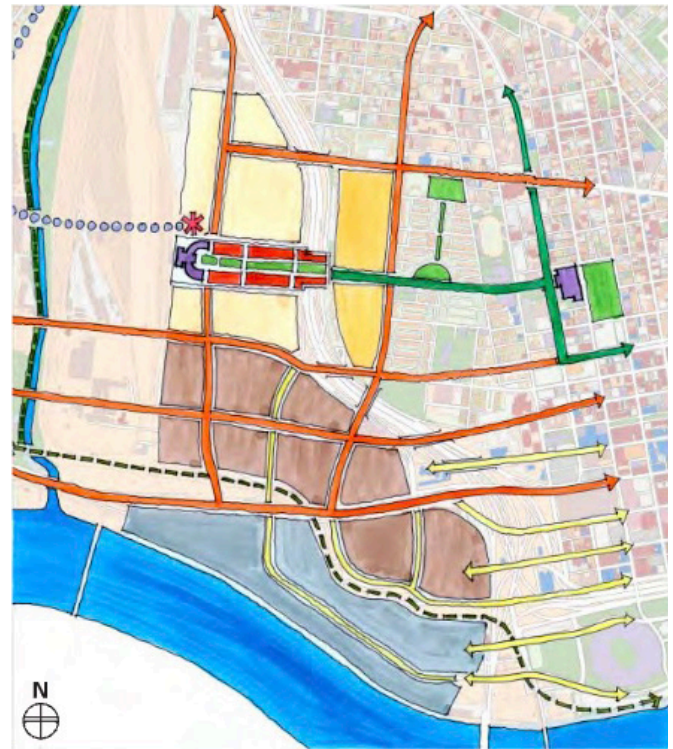
Over the last several decades, there have been multiple attempts made by various local institutions to spur development in Queensgate. Given its great location near downtown and the riverfront, the neighborhood should be well positioned to take part in the revitalization efforts and increased private investment happening in downtown, Over-the-Rhine, and throughout Cincinnati. Some of these planning efforts include “GO Cincinnati” in 2009 (24), the Queensgate 2010 Development Initiative (25), and the “ReviveCincinnati” Report in 2011 (26), all of which identify Queensgate as an “opportunity area” and note it is an “industrial corridor ripe for redevelopment.”

However, none of these efforts have succeeded in creating a wholesale transformation of Queensgate, and the neighborhood continues to confound local electeds and planners. This is likely due to the physical disconnection to the rest of the downtown area due to the current Interstate 71 and 75 interchange and lack of city street connections throughout the Westway Area.



QUEENSGATE AND THE WEST END

- » Mitigate the divide between east and west of I-75 with better connected street network
- » Recover real estate for downtown growth and competitiveness
- » Continue and enhance services as an intermodal transfer point
- » Connect trail and park network from Mill Creek to Lower Price Hill, the Banks, and points east and west along the Ohio River
- » Create premier industrial and flex space real estate opportunities that are development-ready



INITIATIVE DIAGRAM The initiative diagram illustrates the strengths that the community identified and some of the visions for the future, including connections to existing cultural and open space amenities in the city.

Figure 13: Planning diagrams from “Revive Cincinnati.” Urban Design Associates. (2011)

Opportunity for Queensgate with the Bridge Forward Concept

If the Bridge Forward Concept for the BSB Project is adopted, the increased economic activity and the improved walkability across the highway infrastructure could have transformative impacts on the Queensgate neighborhood. The area defined as Southern Queensgate on the map below is approximately 230 acres, and development at this scale could produce substantial economic benefits. Although the precise economic benefit of an enhanced connection to Queensgate is not quantified in this study, we can use other similar sized developments in peer cities as case studies:

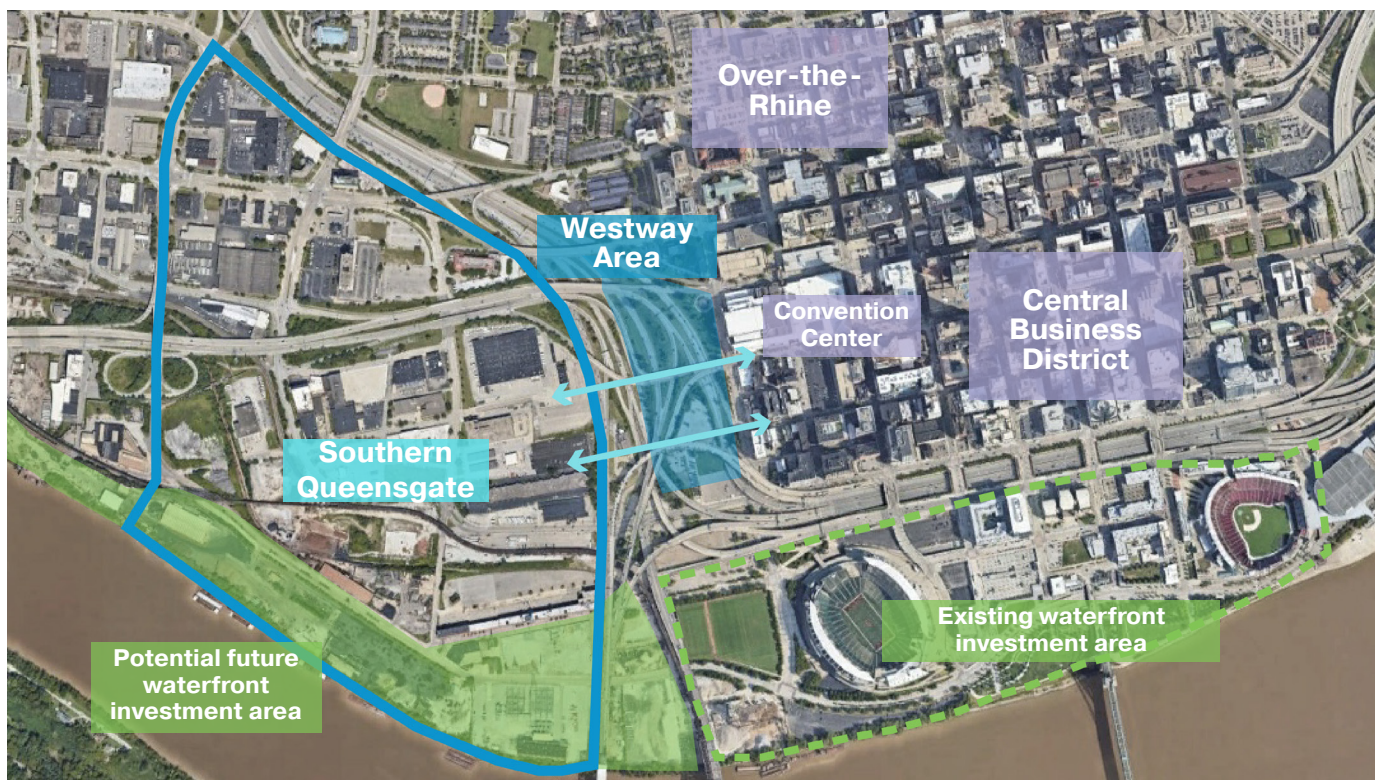
- Grandview Yard, a 125 acre development in Columbus, Ohio, has created 4,600 jobs, \$300M in annual payroll, and increased annual income tax by approximately \$12M in 12 years (27).
- The Gulch, a 110 acre development in Nashville, is projected to generate over \$15M in revenue for the city's general fund, including sales and property tax (28).

Currently, the Queensgate market is very static – there was only one property sale in the last year and there have been no constructions in the last decade (29). Without the increased residents, foot traffic, and connectivity of the Westway Project design, it is unlikely Queensgate will become a desirable location to attract investments in new businesses and residents.

Potential Projects in Queensgate

Despite the lack of current major planning initiatives and investment in Queensgate, there are a few individual projects that are gaining popularity. This includes the proposed redevelopment of the old Queensgate Correctional Facility, which could house over 100 small businesses and studios for creative professionals (30). There are also existing historic assets, such as Longworth Hall, that are underutilized. These projects would greatly benefit from increased foot traffic and spending in the immediate area.

Due to the manufacturing nature of Queensgate, it is unlikely that the area would be a direct competitor to the contemplated Westway Project redevelopment. While Westway is positioned to attract more traditional commercial uses and mixed-income residential, Queensgate could provide space for more creative industries and the growing advanced manufacturing sector. Cincinnati is already seeing this in the Pendleton and Over-the-Rhine areas, and Queensgate could provide a significant amount of developable space to support these growing industries in Cincinnati.



Conclusion

The Bridge Forward Concept would deliver significant short term and long term economic benefits for the Cincinnati region. This includes over \$3.4 billion in economic impacts, 23,000 new jobs, and over \$16 million in local and state tax revenue through the contemplated Westway Project in comparison to the benefits anticipated with the current ODOT plan. As a comparable, Cincinnati has already seen economic impacts of this scale with recent redevelopment projects and investments into the public realm— specifically, The Banks and broader Riverfront Redevelopment, which currently generates \$2.5 billion in annual economic impacts and created approximately 5,000 permanent jobs (31).

Additionally, the Bridge Forward Concept offers the tremendous benefit of transforming the connectivity between downtown Cincinnati and Queensgate, unlocking the Queensgate neighborhood for modern development. Finally, beyond the substantial economic impacts, an improved and more pedestrian-friendly public realm can have transformative effects on the quality-of-life and desirability of the surrounding downtown neighborhoods, which are not expressly monetized in this report. Policy makers should consider these recurring, life-cycle economic benefits while analyzing the Bridge Forward Concept.

**\$3.4
Billion**

**In direct, indirect, and
induced economic
benefits per year**

**+\$16
Million**

**In increased sales and
income tax per year**

23k Jobs

**Both construction
labor and permanent
employment
opportunities**

**Opportunity
for
Queensgate**

**Reconnecting
Queensgate to the
rest of downtown
Cincinnati**

Appendix and Methodology Notes

1. <https://www.brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/sherrod-brown-president-biden-celebrate-more-than-16-billion-brent-spence-bridge-funding>
2. <https://www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/news/2022/11/10/city-odot-propose-adding-10-acres-to-cbd.html>
3. ESRI Business Analyst
4. CoStar Multifamily Market Report
5. Esri Business Analyst (Market Profile)
6. Planalp, B. (2022, October 17). 3CDC unveils 'bold' vision for \$200 million convention center redevelopment. Fox19. <https://www.fox19.com/2022/10/17/plan-revealed-200-million-redevelopment-duke-energy-convention-center/>
7. <https://www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/news/2022/11/10/city-odot-propose-adding-10-acres-to-cbd.html>
8. RIMS disclaimers:
 - Project construction cost is based purely on the cost of the Westway Project. It does not consider the engineering and highway construction cost associated with the ODOT BSB project.
 - Project construction cost does not consider additional public service expenses required to support increased populations, such as utilities, schools, and infrastructure.
9. The first step in the analysis is identifying projected construction costs for each of the construction types, and using that spending and RIMS II multipliers, the model can project economic output, earnings, and jobs. The construction costs for each construction type were obtained from RS Means Data (trial version) for Cincinnati which is benchmarked to 2011 costs. The numbers used in our analysis can vary depending on multiple factors such as the type of building (luxury or mid range), square footage of the building, number of stories, contractor and architect costs, etc.
10. Construction costs were adjusted for inflation to reflect 2030 dollars as an estimate for a potential future build year. According to ODOT, the BSB Project is slated for substantial completion in 2029, so it is reasonable construction on the overbuild could commence in 2030.
11. This is approximately .005 employee per square foot of commercial space.
12. The impact model uses assumptions on employees per square foot and industry standards as established by RIMS II data to estimate annual commercial revenue and quantify the ripple-effect impacts throughout the economy.
13. Our commercial analysis assumes that the stated commercial uses will be new businesses and economic activity for the reason, as downtown Cincinnati is seeing economic growth in many sectors. However, if the development occurs during a period of economic contraction, there could be more businesses relocating from elsewhere in the MSA, causing our resulting economic impacts to look higher than in practice.
14. The proportion of residential versus commercial is responding to the market demands for housing units in the growing downtown Cincinnati area, and uncertainty around commercial market trends in the post-COVID 19 economy. Approximately 17% of all units are reserved for permanent affordable housing, as the current Cincinnati population has been burdened by increased housing costs and lack of supply.
15. The 2.85M square feet of residential floor area would permit 2,137 new units, assuming 25% of gross floor area would be dedicated to circulation, common spaces, and utilities. Assuming these units represent a range of studio, 1 bedroom, and 2 bedroom units, this averages out to about 1,000 sf per unit.

16. ESRI Business Analyst (ACS Key Population and Household Facts, 2017-2021). We used an average of 1.69 people per unit and Downton median household income of \$70,757 to get to the unit affordability levels based on the data obtained from the ESRI Business Analyst for downtown Cincinnati (area covering 3.44 sq miles) as well as review of research reports. For income levels, we estimated the anticipated income percentage for individuals who can afford to buy homes at market rates to be 125% of the area median income. For those who are eligible for affordable housing, we assumed income levels to be 60% of the area median income. These numbers are estimates based on desktop research and available data, and adjusted to account for developments in the future but actual numbers can vary.
17. The study assumes that 60% of market rate units and 30% of affordable units will be utilized by residents who will be new to the Cincinnati MSA. The rationale behind this assumption is that individuals with high-income levels are more likely to have the resources to move into a new MSA as compared to low and middle-income individuals who could face economic barriers to mobility. This accounts for what might look like a discrepancy between the 17% of total units being affordable and only 180 new residents.
18. Income tax projections are based on a 1.8% income tax rate for Cincinnati (<https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/finance/income-taxes/>) and the respective effective tax rates for the projected market rate and affordable tenant incomes (<https://www.forbes.com/advisor/income-tax-calculator/ohio/>).
19. Sales tax projections are based on Ohio's total combined sales tax rate of 7.8%, with 2.05% of that dedicated to Hamilton County (<https://www.salestaxhandbook.com/ohio/rates/cincinnati>).
20. Property taxes were not included in the tax revenue calculations. Property taxes, based on the assessed land value, would be an additional income stream for the County and State.
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About Karp Strategies

About

Founded in 2015, Karp Strategies is an equity-driven WBE/DBE/SBE-certified urban strategy consultancy that has become the go-to firm for community-economic development planning, community and stakeholder engagement, and real estate and urban planning strategy, design, and implementation. We partner with our clients to identify their unique needs and provide tailored solutions. We take analysis to action so that government agencies, private companies, and non-profit organizations can make better decisions and advance their projects. Karp Strategies' advisement is informed by our deep, cross-sector experience throughout New York City, the Mid-Atlantic, and New England, including at city and regional agencies.

Our team:

- Conducts thorough and thoughtful planning and economic analyses of neighborhoods that surround projects, including examining demographic, employment, business, and overall economic and market trends, and surfacing all trajectory options to inform client decision-making.
- Develops short, medium, and long-term visions and solutions with and for clients to ensure that all hurdles, including regulatory ones, are successfully mapped out and overcome.
- Designs and executes holistic outreach and community engagement strategies to understand and reflect community and client needs. The inclusion of multiple perspectives often makes projects stronger by achieving community understanding or buy-in, and likely ensuring fewer delays in the long term.
- Directly manages projects to improve effectiveness and efficiency.
- Provides clients a valuable return on their investment, measured in numerous ways, including: surfacing critical information about a local market, securing stakeholder buy-in, appealing to key demographic markets, and helping deliver projects on time and on budget.

Our Approach

Karp Strategies considers the development of place and community through a holistic, inclusive approach that looks at data, people, and place. We consider how different elements knit together to make the urban fabric and to understand what makes vibrant places, thriving economies, and engaged communities.

By employing this approach, Karp Strategies seeks to:

- Create incredible public realms - spaces in which people want to live, work, and play.
- Provide hard evidence to support or debunk preconceptions.
- Reveal trends and identify opportunities to build upon those trends.
- Understand how the data connects to the reality on the ground.
- Become a trusted neutral advisor for multiple stakeholders.

Prepared by Karp Strategies

