

AUSTIN & MOWER COUNTY, MINNESOTA

One Vision. Two Governments. One Community.

Regional Visioning • Comprehensive Planning •
Place-Based Economic Development

Overview

Austin and Mower County recognized that while numerous organizations were working to strengthen the region, many planning efforts were occurring independently. Community leaders sought a shared vision capable of aligning local government, economic development organizations, institutions, and community partners around common priorities for long-term growth.

Velocity Group led a collaborative visioning process involving more than 100 business leaders, elected officials, institutional partners, nonprofit organizations, and residents. **The result became One Vision. Two Governments. One Community.**—a unified framework that aligned City and County leadership around shared goals and coordinated future investment.

One of the project's defining outcomes was the creation of the **Food City** vision, recognizing Austin's unique competitive advantage as one of Minnesota's leading food communities. Rather than treating agriculture, food manufacturing, restaurants, tourism, hospitality, workforce development, and local food systems as separate industries, the strategy united them into one place-based economic development framework.

Building upon that vision, Velocity partnered with Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) to integrate comprehensive planning, downtown revitalization, parks and open space, food systems, tourism, arts and culture, hospitality, neighborhood planning, and economic development into a single implementation strategy.

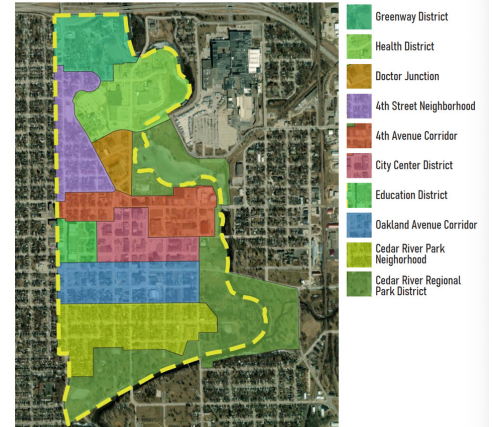
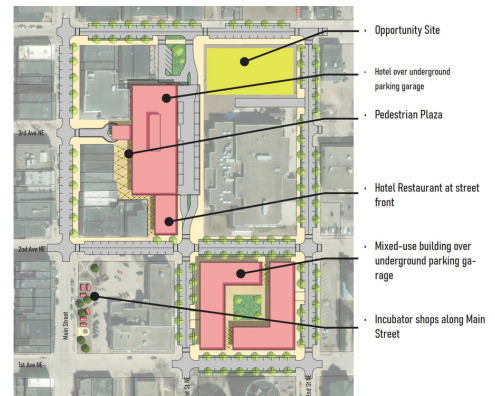
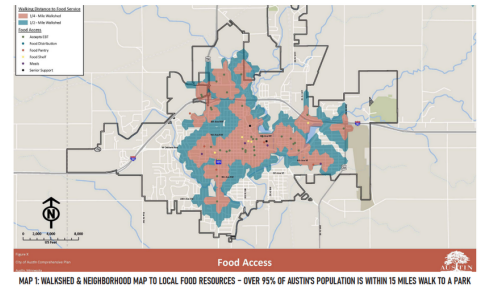
Serving as the strategic integrator, Velocity coordinated multidisciplinary consulting teams, led community engagement, and ensured every recommendation reinforced the community's shared vision.

The project team included **SEH, CIVITAS, Urban3, Place Strategies, DMOproz, Karin Endy,** and **Maxfield Research**, with Velocity providing overall strategic leadership and integration.

Project Outcomes

- ✓ City & County Comprehensive Plans
- ✓ Downtown Strategic Plan
- ✓ Regional Food Systems Strategy
- ✓ Parks & Open Space Master Plan
- ✓ Arts & Cultural Strategy
- ✓ Tourism Strategy
- ✓ Hospitality & Restaurant Strategy
- ✓ Community Implementation Playbook
- ✓ Organizational Governance Framework
- ✓ Communities of Practice
- ✓ Catalytic Project Portfolio

The engagement process reached **thousands of residents** through public workshops, interviews, advisory committees, online engagement, interactive mapping, and Communities of Practice, creating broad community ownership and a long-term framework for implementation.



Velocity's Role

- Regional Visioning
- Community Engagement
- Strategic Integration
- Place-Based Economic Development
- Food Systems Strategy
- Multidisciplinary Team Coordination
- Implementation Planning
- Organizational Alignment



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