



Northern California

Downtown Revitalization Playbook

City of Wheatland
October 13, 2026



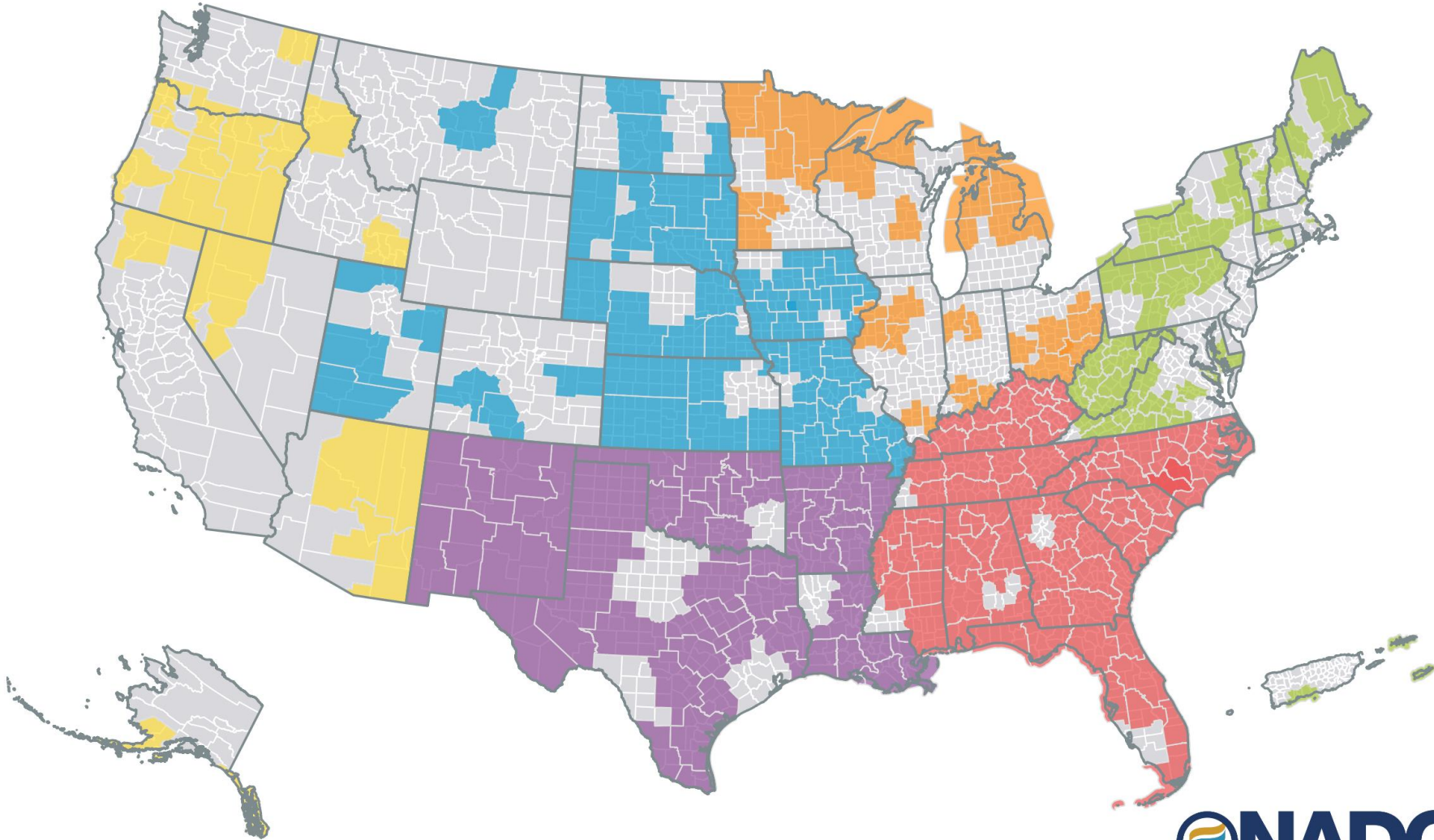


With support from Wells Fargo, the Downtown Revitalization Playbook reflects a collaborative effort to help rural communities strengthen their downtowns, build local leadership capacity, and create opportunities for long-term economic growth and community vitality.





RDO MEMBERS



122 C. Street NW, Suite 830 | Washington, DC 20001
nado.org | September 2026





MORRISON



10/6/2026





Community	County	Population
Alturas	Modoc	2,626
Corning	Tehama	8,260
Eureka	Humboldt	25,304
Garberville	Humboldt	1,719
Live Oak	Sutter	9,558
Oroville	Butte	20,451
Weaverville	Trinity	3,105
Wheatland	Yuba	4,369



Why the Project Was Undertaken



Address common challenges



Identify local assets, challenges, and opportunities



Provide practical, adaptable tools



Build local capacity and momentum



Support informed decisions for next steps

How We Got Here



10/6/2026

Stakeholder interviews and focus groups

Downtown property/building inventories and data collection

In-person downtown assessments

Research of strategies, tools, and comparable approaches



Core Objectives



Remove barriers that prevent local governments from taking action on vacant or blighted downtown properties.



Provide actionable tools (policies, scripts, templates, and incentives) that cities and counties can immediately apply.



Train local champions who can sustain revitalization momentum beyond the project's duration.

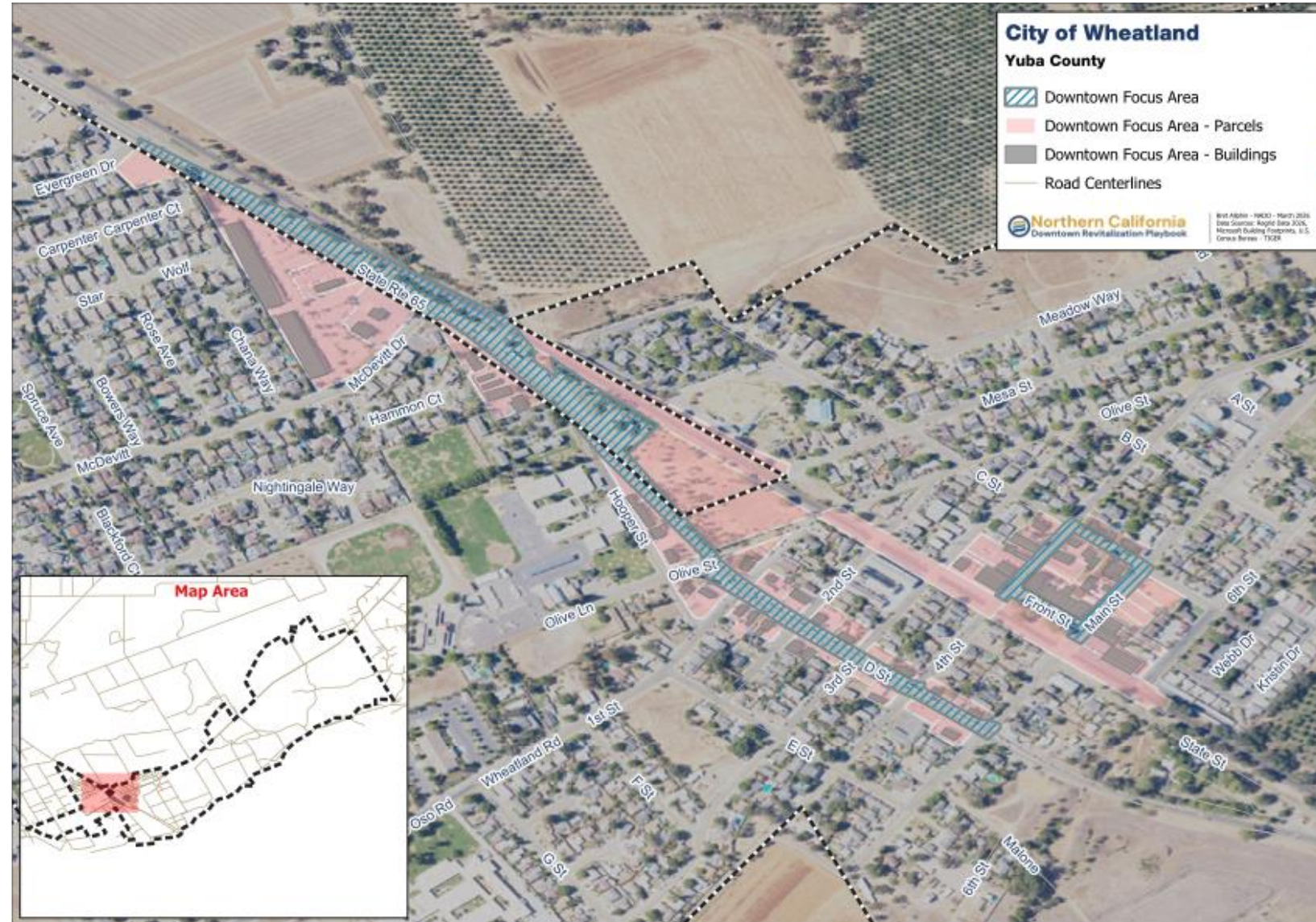
Data Collection and Inventory

- Goal was to parallel the [MSA BOOMS tracker](#) format, to facilitate future information transfer.
 - Parcel level data collection.
 - Information that will be available for future update and use.
- ***Basic Identification, Use and Productivity, Classifications, Characteristics, On-Site Features***
 - ***Some items will require local assistance.***
 - ***Some items may be unknown and unknowable!***



Focus Areas

- Each community identified specific focus areas
- Corridor or small multi-block locations
- Primary locations for supporting actions and assistance



Datasheet Example



NorDown
Oroville, Butte Co
Focus Area Property Inventory

116 Parcels
25 parcels with no address

How to use this sheet:
Properties within the selected focus area are listed by address retrieved from tax assessor's records. The address is followed by the street name and by property number.

Bird St.
1859 BIRD ST
1870 BIRD ST
1876 BIRD ST
1880 BIRD ST
1898 BIRD ST
1909 BIRD ST
1910 BIRD ST
1933 BIRD ST
1944 BIRD ST
1945 BIRD ST
1950 BIRD ST
1954 BIRD ST
1960 BIRD ST

Downer St.
1330 DOWNER ST
1453 DOWNER ST
1459 DOWNER ST

2040 HIGH ST

APN 012-097-010-000

Address 2040 HIGH ST City Oroville State CA Zip 11111

Property Contact Phone

Oroville
Butte County

Survey Status

Last Update Date:

Back to Index Sheet

Map Link

Catalyst Potential
Opp. Category
Next Step

Follow Up Party
Confidence Level

Notes

1. Occupancy and Current Use

Parcel Type

Is the parcel a valid address/property

Is there a building on this parcel

How many floors are above ground

Ground floor occupancy status

Upper floor occupancy status

What is the property used for

Zoning Classification

Opportunity Zone

Parcel Size (Ac.)

Approximate square footage

Number of operating businesses

Number of housing units?

Is off street parking available?

Products/ Services

Hours of Operation

Estimated FTE

Primary Customer Base

2. Ownership and Contact

Owner known?

Ownership Type?

Owner Location

Owner Name

Property Manager/Broker Identified?

Known Owner Interest

Prior Owner Outreach Conducted?

Ownership or Title Issues Suspected?

3. History and Utility

Culturally or historically significant?

Known environmental risks?

Building Age

Power Supply

4. Physical Condition

Overall exterior condition

Storefront/façade condition

Entrance/sidewalk condition

Visible safety concern

Deferred maintenance level

5. Reuse Readiness/ Rehabilitation Needs

Apparent reuse readiness

Visible structural concerns

ADA/code barriers apparent

Environmental concerns

Est. investment needed

6. Housing and Mixed Use Potential

Upper floors suitable

Estimated units possible

Upper floor access

Barrier to housing conv.

7. Marketability and Economic Potential

Visibility

Parking availability

Likely best fit future use

Suitable for temp. activation

Marketable near term

8. Public Realm/ Block Context

Adjacent sidewalk cond.

Ped. Lighting adequate

Adj. to vacant property

Near anchor bus./civic use

Block face strength

9. Regulatory/ Implementation Barriers

Zoning/land use concern

Complex permitting likely

Code enforcement concern

Tax delinquent/lein issue

Enf./nuisance priority

2150 Bird St. 2170 Bird St. 1330 Downer St. 1453 Downer St. 1459 Downer St. 2040 High St. 2044 High St. 2060 High St. 1230 Huntoon St. 1330 Huntoon St. 1337 Huntoon St. +

1580 HUNTOON ST 1933 MONTGOMERY ST 1440 MYERS ST 012-094-003-000

1941 MONTGOMERY ST 1445 MYERS ST 012-094-010-000

1955 MONTGOMERY ST 1450 MYERS ST 012-094-011-000



Focus Groups - Questions

- Assets/strengths in the downtown
- Barriers/challenges
- Businesses, services, spaces needed
- Downtowns you admire... what is different?
- Who is downtown serving or not serving?
- What would success look like to you in five years? How would you know revitalization worked?
- What do you think would help with downtown revitalization?



Focus Groups - Assets

Across the eight communities

Historic character
& authentic
“bones”

Compact,
walkable
downtown cores

Strong sense of
place & local
identity

Arts, culture &
creative energy

Parks, waterfronts
& outdoor
recreation

Existing events,
festivals &
community
traditions

Dedicated local
leadership &
champions

Strategic regional
location & access

Untapped
buildings &
opportunity sites



Wheatland

Assets

- Strong community identity and history - Deep ag roots, historical assets, active civic groups
- Regional attractions and anchor - Pumpkin farm, Big Al's grocery.
- Physical assets – Mature trees, Front Street, Settlers Village



Focus Groups – Key Challenges

Across the 8 communities.

Vacant,
deteriorating &
underutilized
buildings

Misalignment
between zoning,
policy, & desired
downtown use.

Cost & risk
barriers for small
businesses

Weak evening &
everyday activity

Transportation,
highway &
physical barriers

Overreliance on
events without
spillover

Fragmented
leadership,
capacity, &
ownership

Limited visitor
orientation &
marketing

Economic leakage
to nearby cities



Wheatland

Barriers

- Transportation and access – highway and rail line bisect town. Limited ability for pass-through traffic to stop.
- Downtown viability – lack of foot traffic and destinations on Front Street, vacant buildings, fragmented property ownership.
- Economic limitations – limited employment base, local demand not enough.



Key Principles

1. Asset-based approach
2. Keeping wealth local
3. Collaboration is key.
4. Start small with quick wins
5. Focus on a growth mindset.



Vacant, Deteriorating and Underutilized Buildings

Step by Step Strategies



Assess Vacant and Underutilized Properties



Create Supportive Programming and Assistance



Bolster Enforcement and Compliance Processes



Pursue Creative Methods for Property Activation

Misalignment Between Zoning, Policy, and Desired Downtown Use

Step by Step Strategies

01

Assess the challenges identified by property owners, developers, municipal staff, and other downtown stakeholders.

02

Examine requests for variances, special use permits, and other variations from standard zoning or permitting policy and procedures.

03

Examine the status of connections between local planning efforts and zoning policies.

04

Perform a periodic zoning code audit for timely updates that might reflect changes in the local environment.

05

Maximize the use of enacted enforcement policies and available enforcement actions.



Cost and Risk Barriers

Step by Step Strategies

Pop-up Retail

Micro-Grants and
facade grants

Community Benefit
District or Business
Improvement
District Models

One-Stop
Permitting Centers

Fee Waivers or
Deferrals

Experiential Retail
and Community
Events



Weak Year-Round Demand or Weak Evening and Everyday Activity

Step by Step Strategies



Form a Downtown Activation Team



Secure Commitments from Businesses



Business Integration

Overreliance on Events Without Spillover

Step by Step Strategies



Passport Program

Extend business hours
beyond event days

Redesign event layouts to
drive movement



Limited Visitor Orientation and Marketing

- ***Step by Step Strategies***



Make downtown
more accessible

Create a strong
downtown identity

Transportation, Highway, and Infrastructure Barriers

Step by Step Strategies

Assess	Evaluate	Experiment	Build
Assess conditions and areas of greatest concern	Evaluate potential solutions of all sizes	Experiment with temporary or short-term implementations	Build support for larger or longer-term efforts



Fragmented Leadership, Capacity, and Ownership

Step by Step Strategies

Assess the network of partners

Assess the status of current or past efforts

Examine alignment with current needs and goals.

Initiate or re-initiate efforts based on learnings.

For a regional hub

Identify the host or lead organization of the hub.

Identify large anchors as regional leaders.

Identify mid-size communities as operational hubs.

Identify small communities as tactical strategy hubs.

Economic Leakage to Nearby Cities

Step by Step Strategies

1

Assess local market conditions and competing locations

2

Survey consumers and visitors

3

Fill retail and service gaps by supporting existing businesses (retention), working with entrepreneurs, and fostering the local business ecosystem.

4

Strengthen the downtown experience as a community's primary gathering place.

5

Support "Buy Local" campaigns and other efforts to prioritize local institutions

6

Cultivate a unique local identity

Opportunities for Wheatland

- Catalytic investment – funding or incentives to rehab 1-2 key downtown buildings.
- Market readiness – clear market analysis to show viable business types.
- Infrastructure solutions – planning on wastewater connections and future highway bypass.
- Programming/activation – downtown based events; arts/events
- Partnership/leadership – reframe downtown as destination.



Overarching Process



How to Use the Playbook

- Assess the challenges.
- Understand capacity.
- Understand low, medium and high-energy strategies for each challenge.
- Choose strategies at each level.



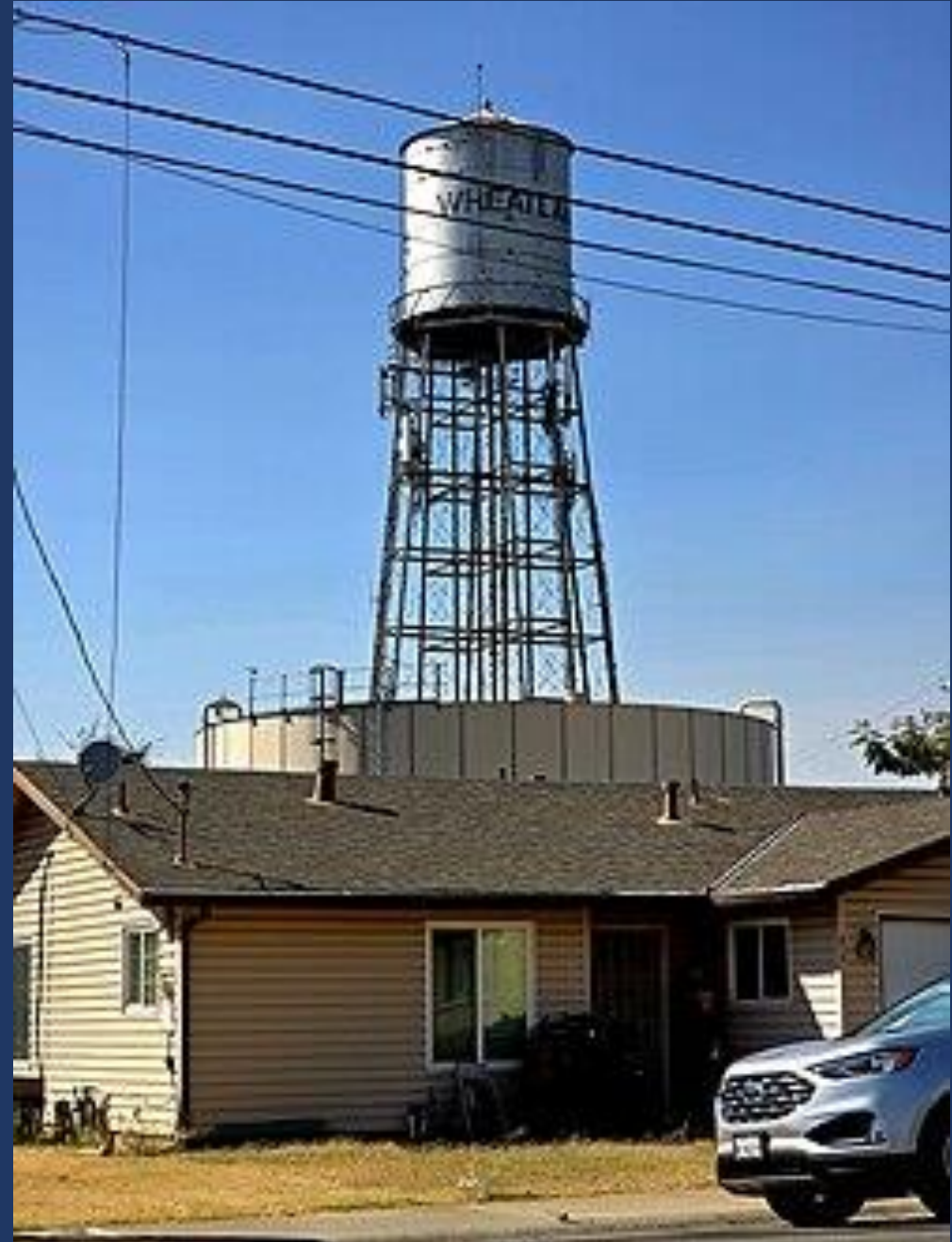
First Next Steps

Assessment.

Identify key partners to engage.

Low hanging fruit – what are some simple, no or low cost actions to take to show early progress and build excitement?

Map out a plan.





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