

BATTLE CREEK DOWNTOWN PLAN



ADOPTED FEBRUARY 28, 2018



CITY OF BATTLE CREEK
COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT – PLANNING and ZONING

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE MASTER PLAN AND FUTURE LAND USE PLAN, AND THE DOWNTOWN SUB-AREA PLAN,
FOR THE CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

At a meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Battle Creek, held on February 28, 2018 at 4:00 P.M. at City Hall, the Planning Commission determined that:

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended, required the Planning Commission to make and adopt a basic plan or part of a plan corresponding with geographic sections of the City as a guide for the physical development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, notices of intent to prepare an updated Master Plan were sent to all required entities and other government agencies, consistent with the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008 as amended; and

WHEREAS, throughout the process the City provided public messages relative to the necessary update and status of the plan, and provided significant opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement into the development of the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has made careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and the future needs of the City and surrounding land areas and have prepared a draft of the updated Master Plan and future Land Use Plan and Downtown Sub-Area Plan; AND

WHEREAS, the Master Plan and Downtown Plan includes text, maps, land use, and development policies, existing and future land use, demographics, and implementation strategies; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan includes a future Land Use Plan for the City of Battle Creek that allocates land in appropriate amounts for the future development of single-family and multiple-family residential uses, office, commercial, industrial, and public uses; and

WHEREAS, the City of Battle Creek mailed notices of distribution to each entity required by statute, and provided public notices that the plans were available for review and comment for at least 63 days; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing in accordance with the procedures of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the City of Battle Creek Planning Commission adopts the Master Plan and Downtown Sub-Area Plan, dated February 28, 2018.

Adopted February 28, 2018

Daniel R. Buscher, Planning Commission Chair

Yeas: Baldwin, Buscher, Gray, Hopkins, Newman, Sobieralski, Stetler, Whitfield

Nays: 0

Absent: Godfrey



Resolution NO. 106

A Resolution to accept and place on file the City Master Plan and Downtown Sub-Area Plan adopted by the Planning Commission on February 28, 2018.

BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN - 3/6/2018

Resolved by the Commission of the City of Battle Creek:

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended, required the Planning Commission to make and adopt a basic plan or part of a plan corresponding with geographic sections of the City as a guide for the physical development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, notices of intent to prepare an updated Master Plan were sent to all required entities and other government agencies, consistent with the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008 as amended; and

WHEREAS, throughout the process the City provided public messages relative to the necessary update and status of the plan, and provided significant opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement into the development of the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has made careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and the future needs of the City and surrounding land areas and have prepared a draft of the updated Master Plan and future Land Use Plan and Downtown Sub-Area Plan; AND

WHEREAS, the Master Plan and Downtown Plan includes text, maps, land use, and development policies, existing and future land use, demographics, and implementation strategies; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan includes a future Land Use Plan for the City of Battle Creek that allocates land in appropriate amounts for the future development of single-family and multiple-family residential uses, office, commercial, industrial, and public uses; and

WHEREAS, the City of Battle Creek mailed notices of distribution to each entity required by statute, and provided public notices that the plans were available for review and comment for at least 63 days; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing in accordance with the procedures of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the City of Battle Creek City Commission acknowledge and accepts the City Master Plan and Downtown Sub-Area Plan, adopted by the Planning Commission at their February 28, 2018 meeting, as the City's guiding document for land development, polices, and programs.

I, Victoria Houser, City Clerk of the City of Battle Creek, hereby certify the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Battle Creek City Commission at a Regular meeting held on March 6, 2018.

Victoria L. Houser
Victoria Houser

Battle Creek City Commission
3/6/2018
Action Summary

Staff Member: Christine M. Zuzga, AICP, Planning Manager
Department: Planning

SUMMARY

A Resolution to accept and place on file the City Master Plan and Downtown Sub-Area Plan adopted by the Planning Commission on February 28, 2018.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The adoption of these plans will approve funding for any project or program; any implementation costs would be associated with regular operating budgets allocated in the budgeting process.

HISTORY, BACKGROUND and DISCUSSION

The Master Plan and Downtown Sub-Area Plan will serve as the City's official guide for growth and development over the next 10-20 years. It is the "road map," detailing long-term vision for important issues related to growth, development, land use, sustainability, and design of public and private spaces.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, as amended, allows for municipalities to create and adopt a master plan that serves the following standards:

- (a) Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.
(b) Considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development.
(c) Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
(d) Includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following:
(i) A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets and provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods by motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users.
(ii) Safety from fire and other dangers.
(iii) Light and air.
(iv) Healthful and convenient distribution of population.
(v) Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.
(vi) Public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements.
(vii) Recreation.
(viii) The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

Michigan Planning Enabling Act outlines the responsibility of a Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a master plan, and after adoption, requires the plan to be forwarded to the legislative body. Planning staff and the Planning Commission recognizes the important role the City Commission has had in the development of this plan, and although not required by Statute, requests approval of the attached resolution acknowledging and accepting the master plan.

The City contracted with Houseal Lavigne for the development of the plan, and they and staff invested a lot of time dedicated to research, analysis, and community engagement. While visionary in nature, effort was made to frame the plan in reality, and as such includes very tangible action items that provides direction to the City related to projects, programs, budgeting, and policy.

The plan incorporates planning efforts that have been completed thus far in the community including BC Vision, Target Market Analysis, Housing Market Study, Placemaking Study, etc. A lot of time, effort, and input was invested in these plans, and staff felt that it was important to include that work into the Master Plan where possible.

In addition to using the public input from these other plans, the development of the Master Plan included community engagement throughout the process, which included targeted efforts with residents, business owners, community stakeholders, and other City departments. Efforts were made to provide public awareness in a variety of ways including radio, tv, newspaper, social media, water billing inserts, posters, flyers, and website updates. Additionally a variety of methods were used to elicit feedback including workshops, open houses, one on one conversations, survey (online/paper, written/map/photo survey) and presentations to local organizations. Throughout the course of the project, there were over 50 scheduled discussion opportunities with 2,500 points of contact made in the community.

Once adopted, the heavy lifting begins. Staff has already started a project list based on the action items in the plan, and will be proceeding with a public awareness program throughout the implementation to ensure the community remains informed with the progress.

DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE

POSITIONS

ATTACHMENTS:

Table with 2 columns: File Name, Description

No Attachments Available

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Introduction	4
B. Plan Framework.....	6
C. Assets and Opportunities	8
D. Land Use and Development	10
<i>Catalytic Site - Van Buren Street Lot</i>	<i>14</i>
E. Transportation and Parking	16
<i>Catalytic Site - Jackson Street Lot</i>	<i>20</i>
F. Placemaking	22
<i>Catalytic Site - Southern Gateway Riverfront</i>	<i>26</i>
G. Marketing + Branding Strategy	28
H. Implementation	30

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City Staff:

- Ted Dearing, Asst. City Manager
- Christine Zuzga, Planning Manager
- John Hart, DDA Director

Consultants:

- LSL Planning, a SAFEbuilt Company
- SmithGroupJJR
- MKSK
- Poggemeyer Design Group

This plan was created through a partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Program.

Thank you to the stakeholders who participated in interviews and on Design Day to help craft the recommendations for this plan.

A. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This plan builds on the community's vision and acts as a guiding framework for the ongoing development of Downtown Battle Creek. This plan is the next necessary step to implementing the vision shared by the community and the City as outlined in the Battle Creek Master Plan. This plan will define a direction for future development and redevelopment of the downtown area of Battle Creek.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

This Downtown Plan provides detailed, area-specific recommendations for land use and development, parking, circulation, and placemaking for Downtown Battle Creek consistent with the objectives of the Battle Creek Master Plan (expected 2017). This document incorporates the plans, documents, and strategies, some already prepared for and some in preparation of the future of Downtown Battle Creek. These documents include some of the following:

- Battle Creek Master Plan (Houseal Lavigne Associates, expected 2017)
- Target Market Analysis of Downtown Battle Creek (Zimmerman/Volk Associates, 2015)
- BC Vision Plan (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2015 and ongoing)
- Rethinking the Kalamazoo River in Battle Creek (Battle Creek Whitewater, Inc., 2014)
- Downtown Parking Needs Assessment (Walker Parking Consultants, 2013)

- Fiscal Impacts of Development (Smart Growth America 2016)
- Live Local Study (U3 Advisors, 2015)

Each of these documents represents a piece of a more comprehensive strategy to support and improve Downtown Battle Creek. Many ideas remain relevant, and their findings have subsequently been incorporated into the analysis and recommendations of this document.



GOAL 5

Elevate Downtown as an energetic community focal point and center of government and commerce

RATIONALE

- Recent investment within Downtown Battle Creek has provided a foundation upon which further efforts should be taken to enliven the City's core.
- As the heart of Battle Creek, Downtown must be a versatile shared space that meets the needs of residents, business owners, government, visitors, and a large employment base.
- Downtown currently has a high rate of vacancy which discourages residents and visitors from patronizing the area and contributes to an impression of emptiness.

GOAL 6

Activate the Kalamazoo and Battle Creek Riverfronts

RATIONALE

- As demonstrated by Linear Park and Friendship Park, local riverfronts offer the opportunity for parks and open space.
- Despite being located at the confluence of the Kalamazoo and Battle Creek Rivers, Downtown Battle Creek has few spaces which utilize riverfront views or access.
- The channelized segment of the Kalamazoo River has an industrialized appearance which decreases the potential for outdoor spaces along the river.
- The size and flow of local rivers provides the opportunity for water-based recreation such as canoeing, kayaking, and fishing.

The 2017 Citywide Master Plan's goals support the vision of this Downtown Plan

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

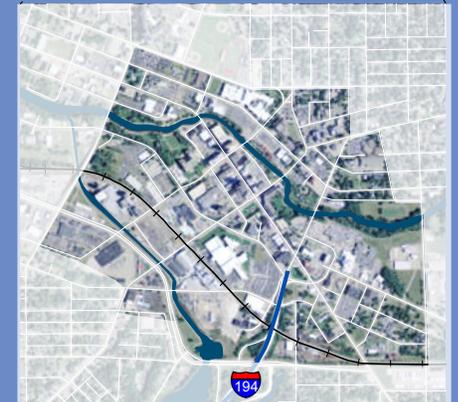
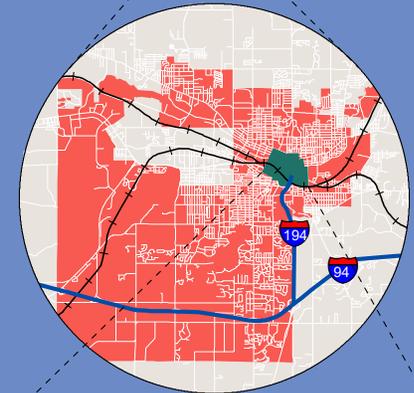
A series of interviews were conducted in August 2016 with local business owners, residents, and community members that provided detailed background information on some of the key successes, opportunities, and challenges facing downtown. The input gathered during stakeholder interviews was used to identify key issues and inform the preliminary approach towards a draft vision.

A one-day design workshop was conducted in September of 2016 which included an introduction to the planning process, a walking tour of downtown, and a series of interactive sessions, throughout which participants offered more detailed insight into the needs of downtown Battle Creek. Meeting participants were asked to identify which elements of the project area's physical environment they would preserve, enhance, or transform, defined as:

- **Preserve:** Places or key attributes within the project area that strongly contribute to the community's economic, cultural, architectural, and social strength and should be preserved based on their value to the community.
- **Enhance:** Places or attributes within the project area that demonstrate positive potential as to their physical form and economic and cultural importance but are in need of re-investment to help them reach their potential.
- **Transform:** Places or attributes within the project area that are in need of more dramatic change or complete redevelopment and should be transformed in use, physical form, etc.

A map was used for each of the key redevelopment areas, and participants noted areas on each map where they believed preservation, enhancement, or transformation should occur.

Following this set of meetings, several redevelopment concepts were created and presented to the public alongside the draft plan for additional feedback and input.



STUDY AREA

The Downtown development area is comprised of the core business district extending as far south as Dickman Road and as far north as Battle Creek Central High School. It extends eastward as far as Elm Street, and to the west as far as Washington Avenue.



B. PLAN FRAMEWORK

WHAT MAKES A VIBRANT PLACE?

The following downtown planning principles make up the foundation of this document, and are used as a basis for the specific goals listed to the right.

Diversity of Uses

- Attracts more people
- Provides a broader range of services for the neighborhoods
- More employment opportunities
- Extends street life over a longer portion of the day
- Mixture of sizes of uses compliment one another

Density of Development

- Promotes walkability
- Lessens traffic congestion
- More convenient for shopping
- Creates opportunities for housing

Well-Designed Public Realm

- Consistent and well-maintained streetscape and sidewalks
- Space for cafes, plazas, and gathering spaces
- Low Impact Design – stormwater management
- Street trees and green spaces
- Amenities – seating, lighting, and public art
- Activities, events, and programs

Well-Designed Private Realm: Buildings

- Appropriate mass and height to street
- Quality architecture and detailing
- Ground level window display
- Variety of sizes to accommodate different uses

Well-Designed Private Realm: Site

- Pedestrian/transit oriented urban form
- Buildings placed along, and oriented to, the street to create outdoor rooms
- Parking placed behind buildings

Balance of Transportation Options

- Serves all users and all modes – people, transit riders, cyclists, autos and freight
- Accommodates all abilities

DOWNTOWN GOALS

Economic Development:

- Add 100 units of housing per year for 5 years utilizing a mixed use approach in existing and new buildings
- Attract and retain businesses in the Downtown area for residents and visitors
- Continue to prioritize mixed-use development
- Promote Downtown as a premier place to work, live, play, and invest
- Promote “health and wellness” for downtown recreation and healthy living building on the city’s food industry roots
- Provide incentives to reduce renovation costs

Environment:

- Find creative solutions for parking to minimize runoff
- Support riverfront restoration efforts that improve the downtown riverfront
- Expand tree canopy in parking lots and in the right-of-way

Design and Character:

- Improve the overall perception of downtown
- Extend streetscape improvements beyond the downtown core
- Promote new development that complements existing properties and meets changing market demands for a variety of interests, incomes and household types
- Ensure the design and placement of infill buildings encourage and promote sidewalk activity

Vehicular Movement and Parking:

- Promote clear wayfinding and signage
- Ensure parking is easily accessible and not an impediment to visitors
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities throughout downtown streets and in parking areas
- Incorporate pedestrian-friendly design into street design
- Reduce long-term use of surface parking lots
- Ensure new development includes building-integrate parking

Gathering Spaces and Walkable Connections:

- Improve connections between key destinations, public places, and the riverfronts throughout downtown
- Maintain a walkable downtown for everyone to enjoy

IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

The recommendations for improving and revitalizing downtown are based on an overarching set of implementation principles:

- Downtown needs a set of catalytic investment projects to get the redevelopment ball rolling, from both private development and public infrastructure sectors.
- Downtown has a solid framework in place, so the real need is for incremental development and partnerships – not a wholesale reconstruction.
- Zoning approaches and redevelopment plans that encourage desired redevelopment should have flexibility so users can respond as the market changes.

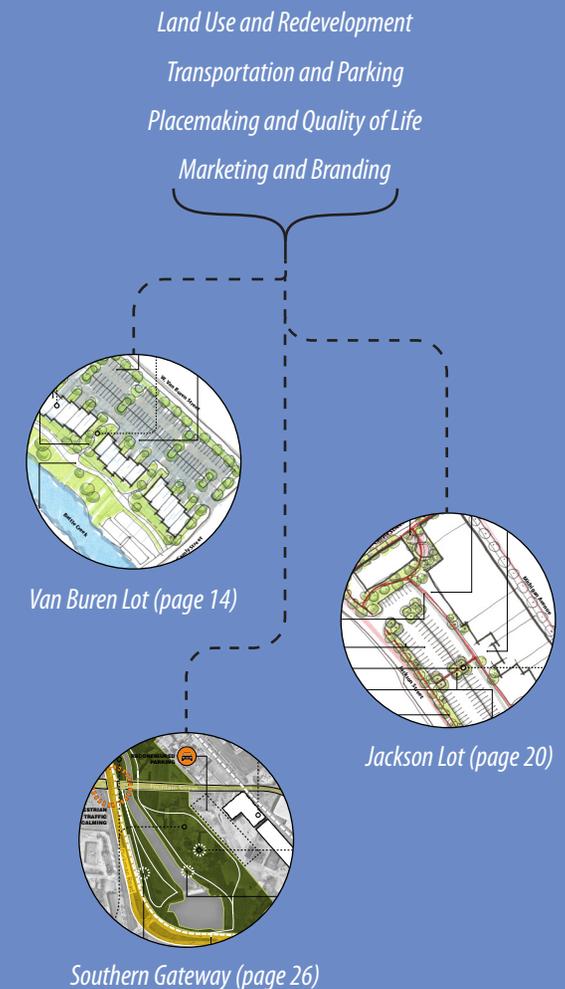
PLAN TOPICS

The following sections delve into more detail on specific recommendations and best practices on four topics:

- Land Use and Redevelopment page 10
- Transportation and Parking page 16
- Placemaking and Quality of Life page 22
- Marketing and Branding page 28

CATALYTIC SITES

Three sites were prioritized to demonstrate how the recommendations in this plan can be applied to specific projects in the downtown to set an example for future redevelopment projects. Each focuses on enhancing the economic vitality, visitor experience, and sustainability of Downtown. While these catalytic sites are featured in the context of one topic area of the plan, these sites incorporate recommendations from all the topics.



C. ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The mix of land uses in Downtown’s existing framework recognizes economic realities, and emphasizes residents’ strong appreciation of neighborhood character. To envision what Downtown Battle Creek can become tomorrow, it is helpful to understand what makes it unique today.

INSTITUTIONS

Battle Creek is home to top tier institutions with an impressive breadth of resource offerings, including several colleges and universities, a trade school, and a competitive public school system.

- **Math & Science Center**

One of 33 regional centers in the Michigan Mathematics and Science Centers Network, which provide a variety of resources and support to educators in local school districts.

- **Battle Creek Public Schools**

The Battle Creek Public Schools district serves a major portion of the City of Battle Creek, portions of Emmett Township, Pennfield Township, Bedford Township, and the City of Springfield. The district includes one high school, two middle schools, six elementary schools, including a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) school, and a new Alternative High School housed at the W.K. Kellogg Middle School. There are four sites in the district for Early Childhood Education, the Battle Creek Area Math and Science Center, and an adult education program. The district also has one of

the nation’s few remaining Outdoor Education Centers located on beautiful Clear Lake in Dowling, Michigan.

- **Kellogg Community College**

KCC’s Regional Manufacturing Technology Center is home to the College’s Industrial Trades and Workforce Solutions departments, located outside the downtown, but an asset for downtown and the community.

These training programs are designed to meet the employee training needs of area business and industry.

- **St. Philip Catholic High School**
- **Western Michigan University**
- **International Food Protection Training Institute**

CIVIC ANCHORS

The diversity of civic organizations in and near downtown reinforce a culture that has something to offer for all ages and interests.

- **Willard Library**
- **Calhoun County Visitor’s Center**
- **Kool Family Community Center**
- **Federal Center**
- **Battle Creek YMCA**
- **City and County Government**

RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATIONS

With almost 30 miles of linear trail system, Kellogg Arena hosting regular live concerts, numerous events and festivals, and more than 40 race events to choose from every year,

there is no shortage of athletic group and club activity around downtown.

- **Kellogg Auditorium**
- **Kellogg Arena**
- **Full Blast Recreation Center**
- **Flash Flood Water Park**
- **Festival Square Farmers Market**
- **Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Rivers**

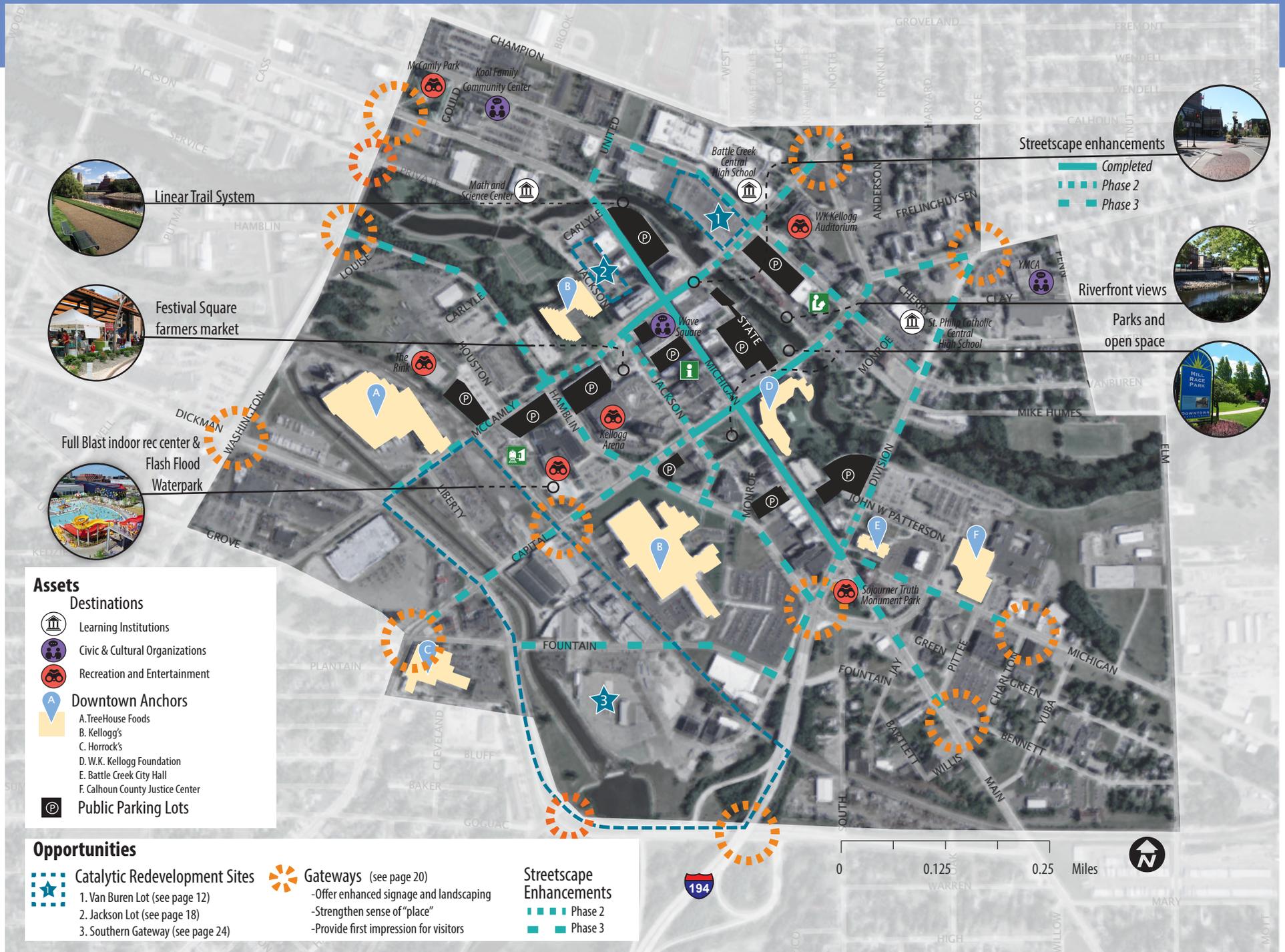
Private Investment

The recent Target Market Analysis shows significant potential for expanded residential development in the downtown, and several projects are in the works for new residential units. Battle Creek Tower, the only available residential in the downtown, has had a wait list since opening in 2010.

The remaining vacant properties are large, multi-story buildings that have the potential to be redeveloped and subdivided into smaller, multi-tenant spaces with independent storefronts and utility connections.



DOWNTOWN ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Linear Trail System



Festival Square farmers market



Full Blast indoor rec center & Flash Flood Waterpark



Streetscape enhancements

- Completed
- - - Phase 2
- . . . Phase 3



Riverfront views

Parks and open space



Assets

Destinations

- Learning Institutions
- Civic & Cultural Organizations
- Recreation and Entertainment

Downtown Anchors

- A. TreeHouse Foods
- B. Kellogg's
- C. Horrock's
- D. W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- E. Battle Creek City Hall
- F. Calhoun County Justice Center
- Public Parking Lots

Opportunities

- Catalytic Redevelopment Sites
 1. Van Buren Lot (see page 12)
 2. Jackson Lot (see page 18)
 3. Southern Gateway (see page 24)

- Gateways (see page 20)
 - Offer enhanced signage and landscaping
 - Strengthen sense of "place"
 - Provide first impression for visitors

- Streetscape Enhancements**
 - - - Phase 2
 - . . . Phase 3

D. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

ASSESSMENT

- There are a number of key opportunities for redevelopment of underutilized properties, some of which are publicly-owned land, including parking lots.
- There is not a strong urban residential population living in the core downtown, due to lack of available housing. While there are strong neighborhoods both north and south of downtown, neighborhoods on the south side are separated by Dickman Road.



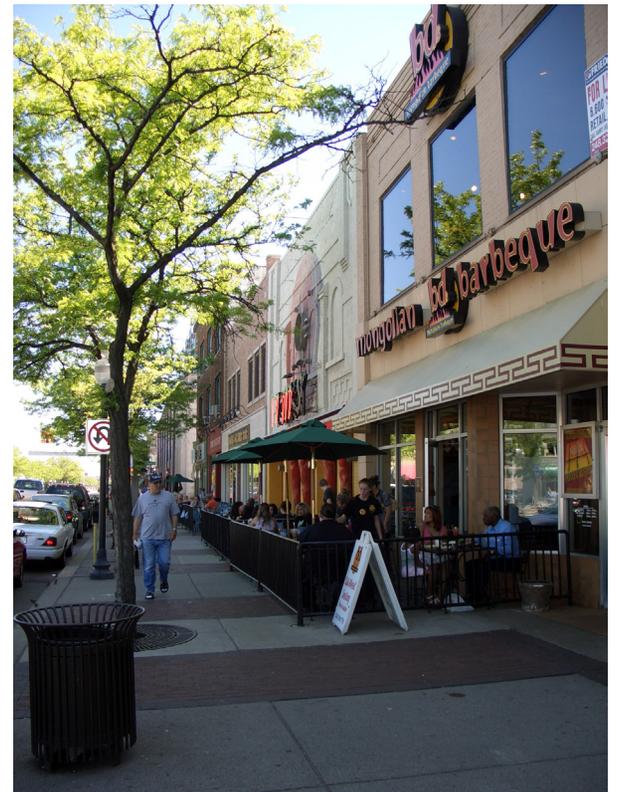
A key component of maximizing downtown's potential will be to fill downtown commercial vacancies. Larger spaces may be obsolete for the current market demand and require white boxing to fit up smaller spaces, especially to foster start ups and business incubators.

Jobs, a healthy tax base, and community pride are all critical components to sustained economic growth in downtown, as well as a draw for new residents. Building off the existing energy of downtown with more activity will continue to strengthen downtown as the hub of Battle Creek. The following land use strategies will help reinvigorate the downtown for long-term sustainability:

- Capitalize on institutional anchors, especially their employee base and visitor draw for hospitality and entertainment uses
- Build downtown residential population
- Preserve historic character while incorporating new, quality design

BEST PRACTICES: DOWNTOWN LAND USE

- Active ground floor uses including retail and service uses such as shopping, restaurants, cafes, and salons to enhance the pedestrian experience
- Entertainment and recreation uses to complement Kellogg Arena and the riverfronts and build off the healthy living strategy
- Office and employment uses, especially on upper floors of mixed-use buildings
- Large scale employers whose employees can be the core of users and residents for downtown amenities
- Residential units, especially lofts and apartments above storefronts in the heart of downtown and townhouses on the periphery
- Governmental uses, like city and county buildings that anchor the eastern end of the main retail spine



Examples: Active ground floor uses like dining positively contribute to the walkability of Downtown

DEVELOPMENT DESIGN AND CHARACTER

Downtown Battle Creek has all the physical ingredients to contribute to a vibrant place. Building on the historic character, employment, and natural resources will ensure the design of downtown matches the walkable, livable places desired by residents, employees, and visitors.

Important design strategies include the following:

- Continuous street edge with multi-story buildings and well-articulated facades
- New development complementary with existing building forms and materials
- Retain and maintain older structures, especially historic facades
- Welcoming storefronts with active window displays and outdoor seating
- Pedestrian-scale design elements like awnings, projecting blade signs, landscaping, and lighting
- Well-screened service areas: waste receptacles, delivery areas, mechanical equipment, and utilities
- Landscaped parking areas with well-defined pedestrianways and screening from sidewalks
- Parking structures lined with first-floor storefronts and upper story mixture of uses



Best Practices: Vibrant downtowns contain friendly streetscape and quality building design



HOUSING & DOWNTOWN LIVING

A robust residential base is a key part of any successful downtown. A mix of housing types and sizes provides options for all the varied lifestyles that are part of a vibrant downtown.

Amenities associated with downtown living include greater access to the city's primary employment center, and community facilities as well as a wide range of shopping, entertainment, health and personal services.

Downtown Battle Creek offers an abundance of community facilities such as schools, parks, grocery shopping and entertainment located within walking distance. These benefits have led to an increasing number of people moving into downtown, many of them empty nesters or young professionals. As a result, the demand for downtown housing has increased substantially in recent years.

HOUSING MARKET STUDY

A housing market study prepared in 2015 analyzed the market potential for housing – both adaptive reuse of existing non-residential buildings and new construction – that could be leased or sold in Downtown Battle Creek over the next five years. The study showed between 375-450 new rental and for-sale market-rate units could either be constructed or created through adaptive reuse by 2020.

Best Practices: a mix of housing options increases housing choice and ensures access to Downtown for a wider variety of lifestyles.

Top right: Renovations are complete for the Battle Creek Tower, which has a wait list for its 23 luxury units. There is a need for additional such housing throughout Downtown. (Credit: www.battlecreektower.net)



FUTURE LAND USE PLACE TYPES

Downtown Core

- Historic “Main Street” character
- Prime retail along Michigan Avenue
- Greatest opportunity for mixed-use infill
- Minimize surface parking

Entertainment

- Destinations for residents and visitors
- Recreational uses
- Entertainment venues
- Transit connections
- Strengthen walkable connections to Core

Institutional

- Governmental hub
- Non-profit institutions
- Historic public buildings

Employment Campus

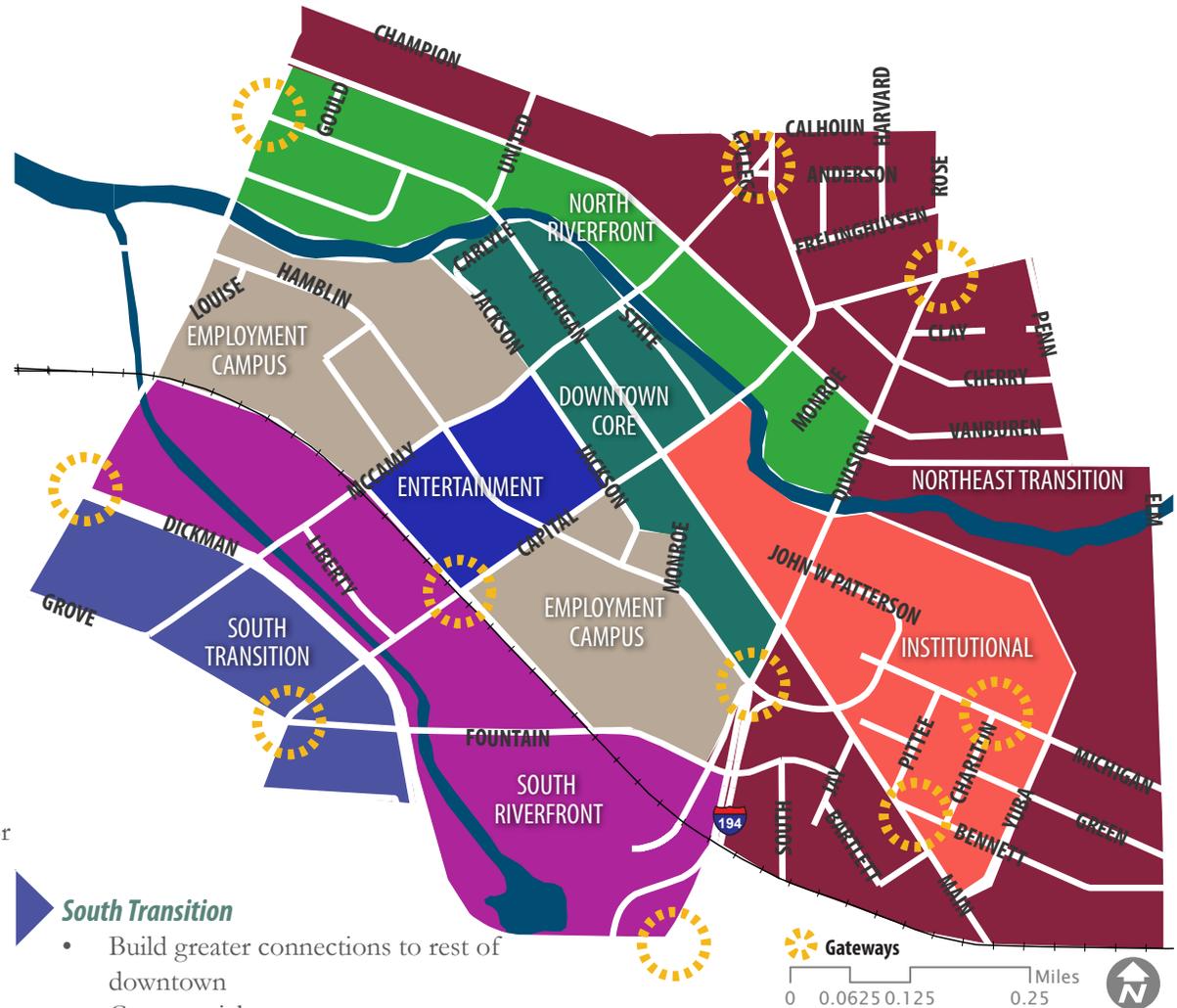
- Large-scale employers
- Long-term goal to transition from suburban character to more urban scale: smaller setbacks, fewer parking lots
- Consolidate surface parking into garages or decks to encourage future infill

North Riverfront

- Opportunities for parking lot conversions
- Attached housing
- Community institutional
- Mixed-use opportunities, especially blocks opposite the river from downtown
- Recreation opportunities tied to river
- See Catalytic Site, page 14

South Riverfront

- Attached residential, mixed-use infill
- Recreation
- Warehouse conversions
- See Catalytic Site, page 26



South Transition

- Build greater connections to rest of downtown
- Commercial
- Mixed-use/attached residential infill opportunities

Northeast Transition

- Downtown supportive uses
- Flexibility for a mixture of uses dependent on what other place types are adjacent
- Residential: detached and attached
- Institutional
- Creative industrial reuse

Gateways

While these are primarily for signage and landscape treatments, these gateway areas are priorities for improved buildings to help signify the transition into the downtown (see more on page 22).

CATALYTIC SITE - VAN BUREN STREET LOT

This public parking lot provides an excellent opportunity for a pilot project to demonstrate urban living and mixed-use as a positive reuse

CHALLENGES:

- Pedestrian safety across Van Buren and McCamly
- Untapped demand for recreation uses
- Disconnect between current uses and adjacent development, i.e. Clara's, ice cream shop

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Potential mixed-use opportunity
- Trail head with dedicated parking for trail riders
- Pop-up kayak/canoe/fly fishing rental



Existing Parking Lot Conditions

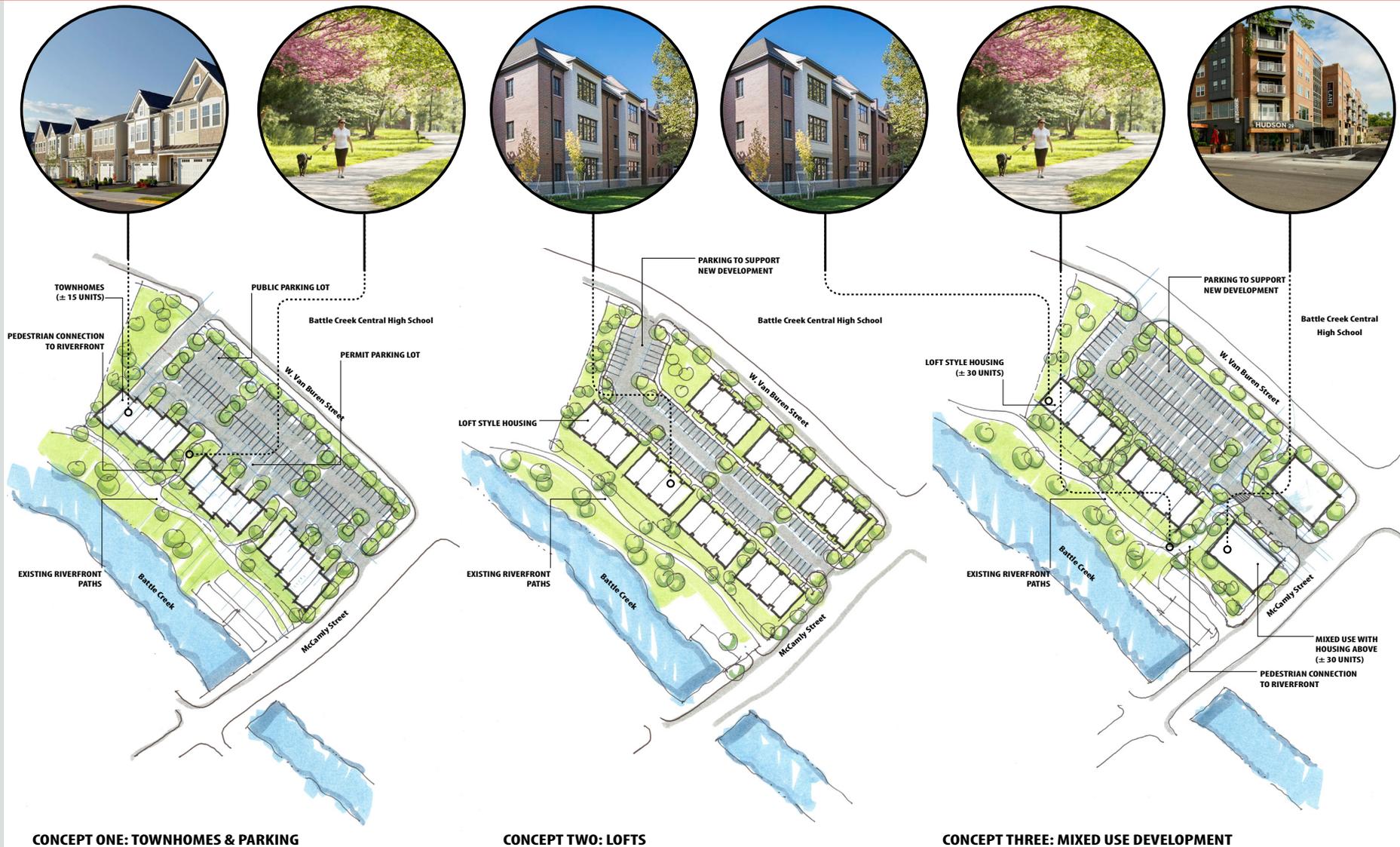
At the corner of McCamly and W. Van Buren Streets, this lot is at the northern edge of downtown. The lot is not in high demand, though it does serve as a convenient location for employees for downtown, for surges in demand related to the nearby restaurants, and W. K. Kellogg Auditorium. The lot also has a prime location along the riverfront, and parking does not represent the highest and best use for such sites.

Given the relatively low demand for parking, the walkable distance to the downtown, the proximity to the riverfront and related amenities, and the growing demand for downtown housing opportunities, the discussions at the community charrette focused immediately on redeveloping the lot for purposes other than just parking.

The alternative concepts prepared as a result of the charrette explore different uses and densities which could be developed at the site. In all cases the concepts focus on taking advantage of the riverfront, and creating stronger streets by placing new development close to, and facing, the adjacent street and sidewalk.

Best Practices: New riverfront housing will be a welcome addition to Downtown as illustrated in the concepts on the following page





Concept One is the least dense scheme, illustrating 15 townhomes which face the river and path and maintaining a bay of public parking along W. Van Buren Street.

Concept Two includes loft style housing facing the river and W. Van Buren Street, providing additional density of housing (about 84 to 112 units, depending on building heights). The parking illustrated on the plan would support the new development and would not be open to the public.

Preferred Alternative: Concept Three provides for a mix of uses on the site—30 to 40 loft style units, retail or office on the first floor of the two buildings front McCamly, and apartments or additional office on the floors above. Parking would support the housing, as well as the retail and office use needs.

E. TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

ASSESSMENT

- Non-motorized facilities are inconsistent.
- Better connections to the neighborhoods are needed. Traffic calming on Dickman Road is necessary to tie the area around Horrocks to downtown.
- Surface parking lots appear desolate, disconnected and deter motorists from using them.
- Parking is confusing. It is hard to determine what is public, private, and permit-only.



Improved intersection crossings at Van Buren and McCamly and Capital and pedestrian refuge islands at Hamblin and Jackson should be replicated elsewhere as identified on the Transportation Map (page 19). Crossings could be even more attractive with colored pavement and landscaping (below example).



For the next 20 years, improvements to Battle Creek’s transportation system will be as much about complementing the desired character of the surroundings and moving all types of users as it will be about moving autos. Recommendations in this plan build upon the city’s recent efforts to reconstruct streets so they are safer for motorists, and include streetscape and design details catering to the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. Nationally, this approach is often referred to as “complete streets,” harmonizing streets with their surroundings while interlacing transportation networks to meet the mobility needs of all users, of all ages — motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and emergency service vehicles — making trips easier around downtown no matter what mode of transportation is chosen.

Streets are, therefore, among the most important public infrastructure and placemaking elements of the city because they can define how a visitor, resident, or worker perceives a neighborhood, downtown, or the city as a whole. While it is important that streets foster safe travel for all modes of transportation and are easy to navigate, they must also look good, be inviting, and create the right impression. The elements that most influence how people react to the character and design of streets include right-of-way and street widths, pavement conditions, driveway placement, sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, traffic speeds, on-street parking, setbacks (the way buildings frame the street) and the presence (or lack there-of) of street trees. In combination, these factors define

the character of a given area and influence the perception of an entire district, such as downtown.

The following recommendations are further illustrated on the Transportation Map on Page 19.

STREET CROSSINGS

The design of crosswalks is critical to ensure proper safety for pedestrians and vehicles, especially as they may intersect at mid-block locations. Safety hazards exist whenever pedestrians or bicyclists intersect with individual driveways, or where they meet at an intersection.

Several crosswalks have been enhanced throughout downtown, but many more need improvements to increase safety for users. Crosswalk improvements in the downtown should consider the following:

- Use pavement markings to clearly indicate where pedestrian activity will occur; vehicles must not be allowed to block these areas
- Colored or decorative pavement treatments will bring greater visibility to crossings.
- Maintain clear vision zones at intersections to increase visibility.
- Provide adequate lighting at intersections so pedestrians are safe at all hours.



- Include overhead flashers to indicate nonsignalized crossing points. Mid-block crossings can be further enhanced by using pavement markings or texture and signage at the motorists' eye level.
- Consider restricting right turns on red at high volume intersections, as most motorists fail to consider the pedestrian when turning.
- Include medians in the design of intersections, especially where a high volume of pedestrian activity is expected. Medians provide safer crosswalk options and refuges for pedestrians.
- Mid-block crossings should include pedestrian refuge islands, similar to those installed recently near the multi-modal station and on Hamblin Avenue.
- Decrease street width at crossing points by installing sidewalk flares and curb extensions, medians or raised islands to create a safe haven for pedestrians and bikers.

ROAD REDESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

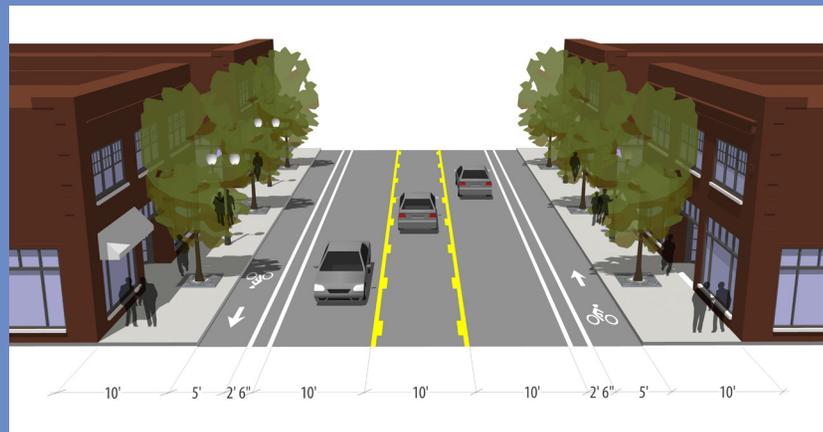
While the core retail area along Michigan Avenue has been redesigned to feature streetscape improvements and bike lanes along Van Buren Street, many of the streets in downtown lack the amenities to safely accommodate pedestrians. The overarching goal of these recommendations is to provide connections between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Many of the following recommendations can be implemented simply through restriping. Others will require greater traffic analysis:

- Dickman Road: continue median with short left-turn lanes, reduce travel lanes to 11 feet. Potentially could reduce to 3 lanes with separated bikeways and, if needed, mid-block pedestrian islands. 3 lanes can handle the current volumes (12,000 ADT) up to 18,000 ADT.
- Hamblin Avenue: Consider 4 to 3 lane road diet and add bike lanes (redesign will require a traffic evaluation)
- Capital and McCamly Streets: Narrow lanes to 11 feet to provide wider sidewalks and bike facilities
- Long-term, look at reducing Capital from 4 lanes to 3 (redesign will require a traffic evaluation)



Long-term, as the riverfront area develops, improvements should be made along Fountain Street including the addition of sidewalks and reconnecting across railroad tracks

As streets and parking lots are built or redesigned, an effort should be made to minimize stormwater runoff on site through the use of low impact design such as permeable pavers and rain gardens.

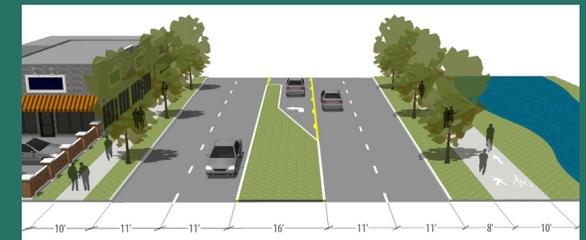


TYPICAL RECOMMENDED STREET CROSS SECTION

Many travel lanes are currently overbuilt (as wide as 14') and can be narrowed to provide room for bike and pedestrian facilities.

- Non-MDOT roads can be reduced to 10 foot lanes
- Sidewalks should be a minimum of 10 feet

DICKMAN RECOMMENDED STREET CROSS SECTION



This cross-section should be continued east of Upton, with special consideration given to median design and maintenance and a shared use path fronting the riverfront. A three lane cross section could be evaluated with a traffic study in the future.

PARKING

Off-Street parking (parking lots) are an important part of downtown's success. Customers are more likely to frequent a business where parking is viewed as safe and convenient. In some cases, however, the amount of parking provided is excessive and deters from the vibrancy the city desires. In cases where excess parking exists, spaces can be used instead for new buildings or more green space (which could be a holding zone until a future use is identified). Inclusion of parking islands, clearly delineated pedestrian access, and buffers/screening from the sidewalk can also help improve circulation, aesthetics and make it more inviting for visitors to park once and walk. Those types of changes can also reduce the amount and pace of stormwater runoff.

Signage, time restrictions, and permit locations should be reviewed for overall parking clarity. Permits for long-term users should be limited



Parking lots should be buffered from the sidewalk

to the top floors of parking structures and surface lots on the periphery of downtown in order to maintain high turnover spots for visitors. Long-term visitor parking (more than 2 hours) should be permitted.

On-street parking is prevalent on several streets downtown. This parking not only provides a convenience to residents and access for customers, it also helps to calm traffic speeds and makes walking along the sidewalks more comfortable. Much of the on-street parking is not striped, making its use inefficient. Striping parking spaces can help organize the parking to pick up additional spaces.

While there is not a current need for more parking, these needs should be reevaluated as projected housing developments are built. The parking usage should be reviewed annually (peak day, Friday or Saturday parking counts). If these show capacity at 85% or above, reevaluate the need for a parking structure. Locations of future structures should not be located along the Battle Creek River and should be lined with mixed-uses, retail on the first floor similar to the existing Michigan Street structure. Their design should blend into the character of adjacent buildings. Should parking reach critical capacity, Battle Creek Transit routes and amenities should be assessed

Parking for bicyclists can also help support the goal of a more bikeable city. Select on-street parking spaces can be converted to bike parking. Similarly, one space on the first floor of parking structures should be converted to bike parking, with a couple of pilot projects used to help identify the demand.

Best Practices: Parking Lots



Parking lots should be well landscaped and have safe pedestrian access



Any future parking structures should be lined with mixed-uses



Structures should blend into the character of downtown buildings

CATALYTIC SITE - JACKSON STREET LOT

This site exemplifies a strategic approach to rethinking parking in downtown. Applying green technology to treat stormwater runoff and improve aesthetics are among major recommendations for this site's transformation.

CHALLENGES:

- Inefficient parking design—"sea of asphalt"
- Poor pedestrian access
- Stormwater runoff issues

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Redesign parking using a placemaking approach
- Pedestrian-friendly amenities, landscaping
- Incorporate redesign of Carlyle Street
- Explore opportunity to narrow Jackson to allow for expanded parking



BUILDINGS

The Jackson street parking lot is publicly owned and serves the north end of downtown. Recent open space enhancements provide an excellent connection to Michigan Avenue, and the development potential for the adjacent block is ripe, given the proximity to daytime office workers and the Battle Creek waterfront. The older brick building fronting Carlyle Street has been brought under the control of a local developer who as of this plan's date has wishes to renovate it into apartment units.

One key opportunity for this area of downtown is to utilize the rear of the buildings for more than just service. Coupled with parking lot improvements, the rear building entrances should be enhanced with lighting, signage, canopies, and facade updates. Further, the site areas on private land to the rear of the buildings could provide interesting outdoor activity venues -for eating, socializing and activities related to the businesses. Waste receptacles could be consolidated, and the parking lot lane used for service parking.

Across Jackson Street, the trees should be trimmed and lighting added to improve safety and walkability to complement improvements to the parking lot.

PARKING

The parking lot is past due for improvements to the paving surface, and the layout of the lot is not particularly efficient, forcing drivers to weave through a number of sort lanes in the quest to seek a place to park.



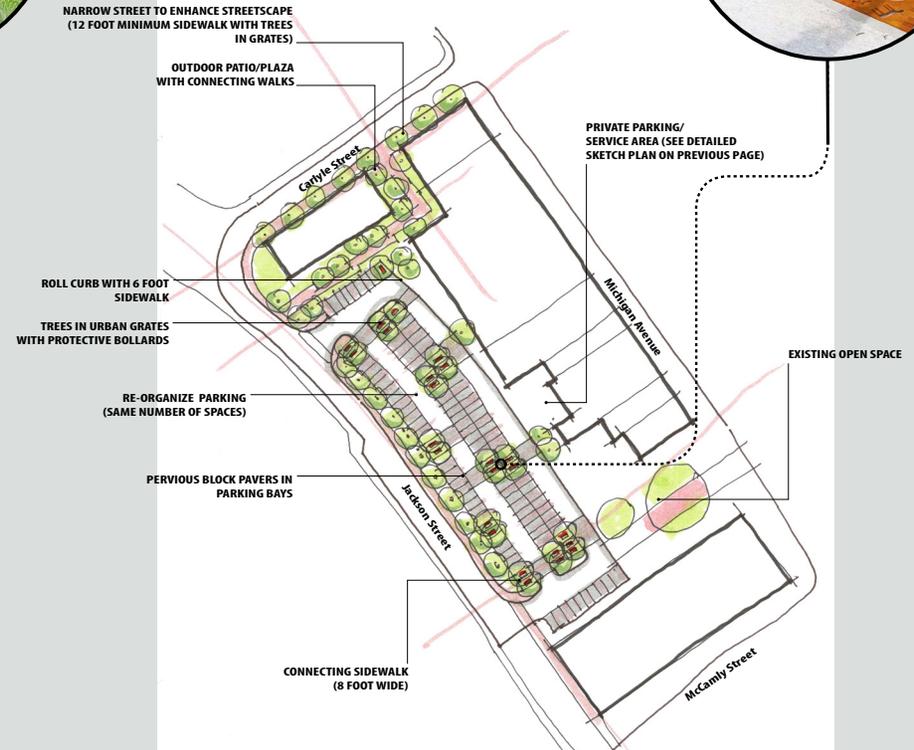
Rear Entry Detail: Activating the "back door" space with improved pedestrian facilities and landscaping

A number of ideas were explored for the lot, including the potential to create a parking ramp and/or setting aside some of the site for land development. Given the site's narrow dimension, the desire for a quality pedestrian experience connecting the downtown to the north side of the river, and needs for service access for businesses fronting Michigan Avenue and the Kellogg Headquarters, the potential for a reasonably efficient parking deck is limited, and would require the use of the Jackson Street right-of-way. Given the desirability of surface parking and the demand for parking in the area, the use of the site for private development is not as valuable in supporting existing businesses and development opportunities as is surface parking and service lanes.

Two Alternate Concepts have been developed for the lot, and both include the following attributes:

- Meeting or exceeding current parking space counts.
- Reorienting the parking lot access lanes to simplify the layout
- Providing a service lane along the rear of businesses for daily needs
- Pedestrian paths through the lot to connect Jackson Street, the parking spaces, the rear of businesses, and Michigan Street

- Enhancing the vacant land on the north of the site as outdoor social space and pedestrian connection to Carlyle Street
- Widening the sidewalk on the south side of Carlyle Street by narrowing the roadway to provide adequate pedestrian space and enhance the setting of the potential redevelopment site for outdoor dining and visual streetscape enhancements.



Concept One is the more straightforward approach to redeveloping parking to meet current best practices for sustainable treatment of stormwater, while improving access and movement for drivers and pedestrians. Features specific to Concept One include the following:

- Fewer, but larger landscape islands which provide space for pedestrian walks and rain gardens
- A sidewalk along the east side of the lot to improve pedestrian movement and encourage the development of rear access points to the businesses.
- The use of pervious asphalt in the parking bays

Concept Two creates a multi-use space that can be partially or completely converted to other uses and activities, such as a special event, due to its designed appearance to be as much of an urban plaza as it is parking lot. Features specific to Concept Two include the following:

- The use of pervious precast concrete pavers in the parking bays
- Groupings of trees in urban grates (protected by bollards)
- Poured concrete aisles, with occasional patterns of pavers where pedestrian movement is encouraged

F. PLACEMAKING

ASSESSMENT

- Public spaces could be activated for greater usability
- The downtown district is not clearly defined and is weakly connected to adjacent neighborhoods, lacking distinct gateways.
- Recent streetscape enhancements to the Michigan Avenue core significantly contribute to the sense of “place” in downtown and complementary streetscape features should be extended.
- Strong presence of public art can be continued with new redevelopment.



All successful downtowns have memorable spaces for public gatherings, special events, and recreation. Public spaces, in the form of parks and plazas, provide the special places for residents and shoppers to gather and enjoy. They also provide visual relief to the urban environment, contributing to the variety and identity of the downtown. Downtown Battle Creek offers some of these elements; however, access to open space, particularly along the Kalamazoo River and Battle Creek River, should be improved. The following are strategies to develop public spaces throughout the downtown that offer comfortable places for visitors to gather and circulate:

- Protect and enhance the relationship of civic uses to adjacent public spaces such as city hall, the library, and Mill Race Park
- Take advantage of smaller areas and incorporate opportunities for pocket parks with trees and seating
- Require active uses at street level for all downtown buildings
- Concentrate uses that generate foot traffic and focus on providing quality walking environments
- Orient buildings toward the street so entrances are complementary and open to the public
- Discourage the development of additional surface parking lots in the downtown

- Promote healthy living and recreation uses to contribute to a new downtown brand.

GATEWAYS

Downtown Battle Creek is surrounded by a number of diverse neighborhoods, respected anchor institutions and institutions of higher learning.

Convenient, safe, and attractive linkages between these locations and downtown must be provided. The City should work with local businesses and residents to prioritize these connections and identify appropriate improvements.

Gateway treatments will help signal the entrance to a cohesive district and calm traffic to alert drivers to increased pedestrian activity.

There are a number of potential “gateway” locations throughout downtown – from Capital Avenue by Horrock’s; Interstate 94 at Dickman Road; and neighborhood connections such as on McCamly Street at North Avenue and Main Street at Hamblin Avenue. These areas offer unique opportunities to create an identity for downtown using art, landscaping, lighting and construction materials to build on streetscape improvements and wayfinding. See page 13 for a map of proposed gateways.

Best Practices: Gateways



INCREASED WALKABILITY

Safe pedestrian environments are a critical element of a vibrant downtown. Transit users are pedestrians, as are people who leave their car to frequent one of the many businesses throughout the downtown area. A pedestrian's needs are fairly basic: comfortable, safe, and interesting places to walk, and destinations within walking distance. The following are several of the necessary ingredients of an inviting walking environment:

- A mixed-use development pattern that is compatible with walking; trips are short and can be made on foot.
- Continuous sidewalks of appropriate width.
- Safe and frequent locations for crossing.
- Buffers between pedestrians and traffic in the travel lane.
- Interesting and inviting buildings which address the street with observable doors and windows.
- Comfortable places to sit and wait.
- Streetscape of trees and lighting that provides shade, security and help define the pedestrian realm.

STREETSCAPE

Streetscape elements include inviting building facades, landscaping, sidewalks, street paving, street furniture, signs, awnings, and street lighting. Recent streetscape improvements along Michigan Avenue set a strong precedent for future streetscape improvements. Future extension of streetscape improvements should complement the

design of Michigan Avenue, not seek to duplicate it. Taking design cues from the water theme and extending improvements east and west of the Michigan Avenue core will significantly improve the pedestrian environment and further emphasize the intended district character.

- The sidewalk environment should accommodate ample space for pedestrians, street furniture, prominent storefronts, and outdoor dining where feasible. Street trees and other elements that create a comfortable separation between parking and drive lanes and the pedestrian areas should also be included.
- Receptacles, planters, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, and other such amenities should be strategically placed throughout the district.
- Bike racks should be provided near entrances to buildings.

Phasing for the extension of streetscape improvements is shown on the Downtown Framework Map on page 9, extending outward from the Michigan Avenue core. As travel lanes' widths are reduced, as described in the transportation section above, some of the extra right-of-way should be rebuilt with wider sidewalks (minimum 10 feet) to implement the recommendations of this plan.



Best Practices: Streetscape improvements increase walkability by creating a more comfortable, inviting environment for pedestrians.

PUBLIC SPACES

Providing sufficient public gathering and open spaces is an important goal to help contribute to the vibrancy and identity of downtown. The recently renovated street environment of downtown is a significant improvement and enhances pedestrian activity and economic vitality. Downtown also has a great series of open spaces that support commercial and civic life including Friendship Park, Mill Race Park, Festival Square Market, and Wave Square. Each of these spaces has a role in downtown, and comparable communities typically do not have such strong open space facilities.

That being said, there are additional and complementary opportunities to provide a series of smaller urban spaces to enliven the downtown. This should not occur at the expense of losing buildings that define the public realm but as part of new infill development. Successful pedestrian spaces in urban areas have common characteristics which include:

- proximity to retail, food service, and/or residential activity and amenities
- visual connections to people and the street
- programmed activities
- a sense of security and comfort, source of shade, and choice of seating.

Urban spaces which do not have these attributes can still be valuable for green space, but should be designed accordingly with a focus on sustainable landscape, visual quality, and safety.

As infill development occurs, attention should be given to add more public gathering opportunities where supported by pedestrian activity. Also, the existing smaller plazas in downtown should be reviewed against the criteria of successful spaces noted above and improvements to programming and physical amenities considered.



Best Practices: Vibrant public spaces are a critical part of a healthy downtown.

PUBLIC SPACES - BEST PRACTICES



Walking, running, and biking trail with amenities



Multi-purpose public space to create framework for diversity of land uses and economic development



Improved streetscape and public space promotes enhanced pedestrian activity



Walking paths, plazas, patio



Public gathering event

CATALYTIC SITE - SOUTHERN GATEWAY RIVERFRONT

Restoring the Kalamazoo River's banks to their natural state was identified as an opportunity to encourage additional development and an improved anchor for the southern end of downtown. Mixed-use infill, enhanced signage and active and passive recreation uses were all identified during stakeholder meetings as components of site redevelopment.

CHALLENGES:

- Low activity + high visibility between active industrial uses= an “eyesore” at key gateway to downtown
- Truck thru route creates conflict with pedestrian uses
- Underutilized riverfront property
- Connections to adjacent neighborhoods
- Aging street and flood control infrastructure

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Support current whitewater planning efforts
- Enhanced aesthetics, signage for visitors into downtown
- Better balance between existing industry and passive recreation uses
- Feasibility for mixed-use infill
- Preserve flood control while enhancing environmental quality and access to water for recreation purposes

The Southern Gateway Riverfront was selected as an opportunity site for Downtown Battle Creek because of its proximity to the Downtown core, the declining of industrial uses, the possibility of an amenity-rich riverfront, and the ambitious re-naturalization plans brought forward by the community for the Kalamazoo River. The redevelopment of this section of the city allows for an opportunity to create a southern gateway from M-66 onto Dickman Road, and to better connect the neighborhoods to the north and southwest. The property is large and can be reimagined as new mixed use development, open area and greenspace, and as recreational gem on the river.

- Riverfront properties should be seen as assets and their revitalization should be made a priority for the City of Battle Creek
- The creation of a gateway treatment and roadway improvements for pedestrians and cyclists on Dickman coming into the downtown area from M-66 would help to make this area feel like an extension of the downtown
- Need to connect the neighborhoods across Dickman to downtown through streetscaping and better pedestrian and bicycle access in order

to make the Kalamazoo Riverfront feel like a part of the greater downtown area

- The Riverfront property should be predominately used for park space and waterfront mixed use development that extends movement and activity to this part of downtown
- Parks should offer a mix of passive and active uses to give neighborhood residents a reason to walk there
- Environmental cleanup efforts should be directed at making the land useable for development and park space
- The planning efforts towards the re-naturalization of the riverfront should be consulted and used when master planning the area
- Attendees of the design workshop expressed a desired to have this riverfront park dedicated to “The Bottoms”; an historically African American community that was removed for the predominantly industrial uses existing today
- The vacation of Liberty Street should be considered to add additional area for a catalytic development
- A pedestrian bridge and pathway connecting Lower Mill Pond to the Kalamazoo Riverfront should be considered to add additional access to the areas natural features





G. MARKETING + BRANDING STRATEGY

Downtown Battle Creek is at a tipping point created by a convergence of development projects with the potential to transform the city. At a large scale, there are ongoing plans to redevelop Heritage Tower into a vibrant mixed-use center and plans to transform the Kalamazoo River into an outstanding recreational attraction. At a more modest scale, downtown events are expanding and people interviewed during the planning process say that Downtown Battle Creek is generally a more desirable place than it was five years ago. However, amongst these positive signs, there is also a sense that the trajectory of downtown improvement is not as robust and vigorous as desired.

Like most communities, steps to boost downtown livability must center on physical improvement projects aimed at recreating more desirable spaces. Downtown development and redevelopment projects are clearly important among all efforts, and this plan illustrates additional transformative and catalytic projects that would move downtown forward. Apart from a focus on physical projects is the need to develop and maintain a supportive marketing and branding strategy. A common trait that distinguishes highly successful communities from those that experience modest success is the existence of a clear marketing and branding strategy. Highly successful communities know their brand identity, express this brand intentionally and take steps to manage their brand over time. They also appreciate how

effectively communicating their brand can leverage economic development and attract investment.

Effective brands evoke an emotional connection and promise a unique experience. Marketing and branding strategies must rest on undeniable truths and authenticity. A community that tries to market itself as something it is not, quickly fails as people are not fooled by misleading and disingenuous claims. The challenge facing communities that wish to leverage the benefits of coordinated branding and marketing is the need to identify a brand that is authentic and real. A brand is simply a verbal and/or graphic expression of a promise to deliver an experience. Simply put, when you deliver on a brand promise the brand is strengthened. When the actual experience falls short of the brand promise, the brand is diminished.

Building an effective community brand requires close examination of core strengths and foundational truths. During the planning process, it became clear that Downtown Battle Creek - and to some extent the whole city - has several attributes that could be regarded as strong brand elements. These included:

1. The story of the Kellogg family is a familiar one that connects to an authentic local narrative that promotes wellness through healthy living and a whole grain diet.
2. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is an internationally known philanthropic organization that concentrates resources toward children's health and education as well as family security, civic engagement and racial equity.
3. Plans for reimaging the Kalamazoo River and adjacent spaces in downtown seek to establish urban river trails, kayak/canoe launch sites along with many types of active and passive recreational opportunities.
4. There is anecdotal evidence that the area includes many "foodies" who seek unique food offerings. This idea is supported by recognizing establishments such as Horrocks that serve as a popular grocery store downtown. It includes a farm market, restaurant and specialized offerings of foods, produce, meats, bulk goods, wines and nursery products.
5. The idea that downtown is a destination for distinctive foods is also supported by recognizing the unique restaurants downtown. These include Clara's on the River, Griffin Grill and Pub, Malia Mediterranean Bistro, Pancake House, and Pastrami Joes. Clara's is located in the old Michigan Central Railroad Depot (built in 1888) and Arcadia Ales is specialized microbrewery and restaurant. Combined, these and other establishments, are helping to create a critical mass of offerings that can begin to support the perspective that

downtown Battle Creek is a destination for those wishing a unique dining experience.

6. There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that Battle Creek is a magnet for sporting activities. Organized sporting events draw large numbers of people and the construction of a climbing gym downtown is now actively being pursued. The city also continues to build a non-motorized transportation system that encourages walking and biking. These considerations blend well with the plans to develop the Kalamazoo River as a more active recreational area mentioned previously.

Some common themes among the considerations listed above include the idea that downtown Battle Creek can be associated with the brand elements of:

- Health
- Fitness
- Active living
- Unique foods

More local conversation is needed to define the specific terms and to decide if these elements fully express the essence of how Battle Creek should market/brand itself. Subsequent dialog should keep in mind the fact that it is absolutely essential to deliver on the brand promise. There may be enough critical mass now to begin building

the brand based on health, fitness, active living and unique foods, but there is much more room to develop and cultivate this brand. Future strategic steps to create and maintaining a strong brand include developing a graphic, tag line and associated materials that can be used to express an identity that defines the expectation for a specific experience in downtown. Conversations that took place during the planning process suggest that Battle Creek could benefit from an effort to refresh, recalibrate, and promote its unique brand.

At present, the main municipal web page (www.battlecreekmi.com) includes a link to www.downtownbattlecreek.com, which is the primary portal for information about downtown Battle Creek. The tag line, “Live it up! In downtown Battle Creek” is displayed across the top, and information is organized into six dropdown tabs: “Live”, “Work”, “Play”, “Invest”, “Transform” and “Business.” The website contains a lot of good information, but it could be made stronger if organized around a foundation of authentic brand elements and more supporting detail.

The apex of the Downtown Battle Creek brand should be a logo a tag line. Presently, the downtown Battle Creek website does not present a graphic logo, and the tag line “Live it up! In downtown Battle Creek” seems somewhat generic.

A new logo and tag line should be considered (factoring in previous comments) and should be produced as a collaborative venture with the City, DDA, CVB, Chamber, and other organizations. This work is likely to be challenging as it shouldn't identify trite, catchy phrases or images, but should dig deep into the essence of Downtown Battle Creek.

Once a new logo and tag line are developed, the brand can be more fully communicated through a “family” of marketing materials. This can also drive the organization of information among various means of communication. For example, on the website, brand elements such as health, fitness, active living and unique foods could be highlighted in the context of downtown living, work, recreation, investment, etc. In this way, the brand elements become central organizing principles that express more deliberate messages, communicating why Downtown Battle Creek is desirable. The “family” of marketing materials includes brochures, web-based material, signage, letterhead, business cards, specific promotional flyers, etc. When a clear and strong brand is used in a variety of formats, in different contexts and with different media, it can gain strength and meaning.

H. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this Downtown Plan will be accomplished gradually and through a variety of means. Many of the recommendations will occur as the private sector redevelops individual sites and buildings. The city's primary role will be implementing the street improvements and zoning amendments in the near future. Some recommendations can be accomplished through public/private partnerships as redevelopment of key parcels occurs. The recommendations are summarized in the chart on the following pages in order of priority by topic. For more detail, see the recommendations sections of the previous chapters.

REGULATORY

Recommendations are provided for amending city ordinances to better support plan proposals. Most of these actions could be implemented as part of an update to the zoning ordinance and other regulations related to land use, streets, and infrastructure.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Streets, trails, utilities, parks, and municipal buildings are the integral framework that supports quality development. Capital projects have been identified and constructed to help support and promote desired development, and to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the city. The number of projects and project timing are influenced by several factors, in particular, the cost, need for environmental clearance or approval by other agencies, and funds available. For example, the amount of funding available from outside sources varies as new programs are established.

PARTNERSHIPS

While the City is in a position to coordinate many of the plan's implementation tasks, responsibility should not solely rest on the government. Instead, the vast array of stakeholders having key roles in either the city or region should all participate. Partnerships with the public and private sector, including Cereal City Development Corporation, Battle Creek Public Schools, Calhoun County, neighborhood associations, the nearby higher education institutions, neighboring

municipalities, major employers, and business will also lead to success implementing the plan's initiatives. Partnerships may range from sharing information to funding and shared promotions or services. The spirit of cooperation through alliances and partnerships will be sustained to benefit everyone in the region. City government cannot and should not do it all. Only through public/private collaboration can the plan's vision be realized.

FUNDING

Some of the recommendations may be funded locally, some through outside funds, and many through a combination. The city monitors new federal and state funding programs that may be available to assist in implementation. In addition, foundations and other organizations may provide contributions. In addition to traditional sources, the city has the ability to raise revenues within a specific geographic area for specific purposes, or to capture the new increment of tax revenues in a specific geographic area for specific purposes. One example is the Downtown Development Authority. Another tax-based program is the Brownfield Act that provides funding for reuse of eligible sites. The City of Portage has used special assessment districts for several public improvement projects. In cooperation with other governmental agencies with taxing authority, the City has effectively used tax increment finance programs to capture the new increment of tax revenue for a specific area and use those funds for public improvements within that area.

GOAL	ACTIONS BY PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <p><i>Attract and retain businesses in the Downtown area for Battle Creek residents and visitors</i></p> <p><i>Continue to prioritize mixed-use development</i></p> <p><i>Promote Downtown as a premier place to work, live, play, and invest</i></p> <p><i>Promote “health and wellness” for downtown recreation and healthy living building on the city’s food industry roots</i></p> <p><i>Provide incentives to reduce renovation costs</i></p>	Promote the availability of small turn-key retail spaces; host a Vacant Building Workshop to educate owners on key steps needed to white box their vacant buildings.	CCDC
	Solicit MEDC partnerships through the Community Revitalization Program (CRP) and Brownfield TIF to help bridge the financing gap for redevelopment projects.	CCDC
	Utilize incentives to invest in business and employment development Downtown.	CCDC
	Issue RFP for city-owned underutilized sites.	CCDC
	Create a new logo and tagline for Downtown Battle Creek.	CCDC
	Collaborate with private and philanthropic organizations to strengthen redevelopment priorities and fund disposition	CCDC
	Continue to identify prime redevelopment sites, prepare vision and concept drawings, and compile into Property Information Packages or RFQ/PS for redevelopment	CCDC

CCDC=Cereal City Development Corporation
 DPW=Department of Public Works
 Planning=Planning and Zoning Division
 Parks/Rec= Parks and Recreation Department

GOAL	ACTIONS BY PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <p><i>Find creative solutions for parking to minimize runoff</i></p> <p><i>Support riverfront restoration efforts that improve the downtown riverfront</i></p> <p><i>Expand tree canopy in parking lots and in the right-of-way</i></p>	Secure brownfield remediation for the Southern Gateway riverfront to transition from industrial to recreation uses.	CCDC, Planning, DPW
	Utilize low-impact design in streetscape and parking lot design to minimize runoff.	Planning, DPW
	Reduce the urban heat island effect by planting shade trees, especially in public open spaces and the right-of-way.	Planning, DPW
	Actively pursue public recreation, especially watersports.	CCDC, Planning
	Provide physical access to the water's edge to increase activity on and near the water.	Parks/Rec
	Provide interpretive learning opportunities about the value of the river and impacts caused by urban development.	CCDC, Planning, DPW
<p>DESIGN AND CHARACTER</p> <p><i>Improve the overall perception of downtown</i></p> <p><i>Extend streetscape improvements beyond the downtown core</i></p> <p><i>Promote new development that complements existing properties and meets changing market demands for a variety of interests, incomes and household type</i></p> <p><i>Ensure design and placement of infill buildings encourage and promote sidewalk activity</i></p>	Streetscaping- These efforts should first be made on Capital and Dickman. Fountain Street can follow as the Kalamazoo Riverfront remediation moves forward. Streetscaping elements can be complementary to other areas downtown, such as Michigan Ave. or the Riverwalk. Pull in complementary lighting or plantings and leave all of the brick and pavement work to the "Main Street" of Michigan Ave. This will save on costs and time to make improvements.	CCDC, Planning, DPW
	Adopt a downtown form-based code to streamline the development review process, allow a greater mixture of housing types, and embed the character vision into the zoning ordinance.	Planning
	Require form-based standards such as a build-to line, facade variation and delineation, minimum fenestration, and pedestrian-oriented areas that transition to the right-of-way.	Planning
	Provide permitting process incentives to encourage redevelopment.	Planning
	Gateways- Pursue local partnerships to fund signage, art installations, landscaping and site maintenance of select gateways into Downtown	CCDC, Planning, DPW

GOAL	ACTIONS BY PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<p>VEHICULAR MOVEMENT AND PARKING</p> <p><i>Promote clear wayfinding and signage</i></p> <p><i>Ensure parking is easily accessible and not an impediment to visitors</i></p> <p><i>Improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities in parking lots</i></p>	Design parking lot improvements to support civic and commercial programmed activities throughout the year.	CCDC, DPW
	Utilize better organized, clearly written and recognizable parking signs.	CCDC
	Ensure public parking is convenient and conspicuous.	CCDC, DPW
	As right-of-way improvements are made, coordinate infrastructure upgrades for non-motorized users.	DPW
	Ensure the Capital Improvements Plan is updated to include recommendations from this plan.	CCDC, Planning, DPW
	Commission a downtown parking management plan to supplement the 2013 Parking Needs Assessment.	DPW
	Consider a road reconnection at Jackson Street to aid in circulation.	DPW
<p>GATHERING SPACES AND WALKABLE CONNECTIONS</p> <p><i>Improve connections between key destinations, public places, and the riverfronts across downtown</i></p> <p><i>Maintain a walkable downtown for everyone to enjoy</i></p>	Create a bike network across downtown. These will be essential to better connectivity from the surrounding neighborhoods. Most roads seem to have extra capacity and should be evaluated for a road diet in which bike lanes can be added. The Michigan Department of Transportation has a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), that funds bike infrastructure projects. Pursuing these funds should be considered for projects in the downtown.	CCDC, Planning, DPW, Parks/Rec
	Pedestrian refuge islands should be provided for streets with more than three lanes.	DPW
	Crossings should be marked and signed.	DPW
	Pedestrian signals should automatically come up with each light cycle and not require pedestrian activation.	DPW
	Rapid flashing beacons should be installed at mid-block crossings.	DPW
	Consider pursuing an MDOT PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkages) Project for improving Dickman.	DPW
	A pedestrian bridge should be considered long term for a southern crossing over Dickman by Lower Mill Pond.	DPW, Parks/Rec