



301 East Main Street
Lowell, Michigan 49331
Phone (616) 897-8457
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CITY OF LOWELL
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2017
12 NOON

AT

LOWELL CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SECOND FLOOR
301 EAST MAIN STREET

1. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL
2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
3. APPROVAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)
 - a) December 8, 2016
4. TREASURER'S REPORT
5. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA
6. OLD BUSINESS
 - a) Downtown Development Plan – Update from Karen Waid – Chess Club
 - b) South Monroe Park Lot
7. NEW BUSINESS
 - a) Approval of the 2017 Meeting Dates
 - b) Downtown Plan Approved in 2015
 - c) Veterans Parking Lot – Directional Arrows
8. REPORTS AND MEMBER COMMENTS
9. ADJOURNMENT

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2016**

1. **CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL**

The Meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Chair Jim Reagan.

Present: Cliff Yankovich, Rita Reister, Brian Doyle, Mike Larkin, Dean Lonick,

Absent: April McClure, Mike Sprenger, Mayor Mike DeVore and Chair Reagan.

Also Present: City Manager Mike Burns, DPW Director Rich LaBombard and City Treasurer Suzanne Olin.

2. **EXCUSE OF ABSENCES**

IT WAS MOVED BY LONICK and seconded by LARKIN to excuse the absence of Boardmembers April McClure, Mike Sprenger, Mayor Mike DeVore and Chair Jim Reagan.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 4. MOTION CARRIED.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by LONICK to approve the agenda as written.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 4. MOTION CARRIED.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

IT WAS MOVED BY LONICK and seconded by LARKIN to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2016 meeting as written.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 4. MOTION CARRIED.

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FUND
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
December 7, 2016**

Beginning Balance:	\$378,716.20
Revenue:	
TIFA Revenue	331,093.03
Interest	116.79
Misc.	

Total Revenues	\$709,926.02
Expenditures:	
Capital Outlay	\$67,222.25
Salaries/FICA	\$14,042.75
Maintenance Supplies	\$22,501.67
Utilities	\$8,823.70
Misc. and Community Promotions	\$6,384.98
Accrued Wages	\$2,329.17
Accrued payables	\$87,214.84
Administration	\$3,793.66
Prof. Services	\$1,524.02
Transfer to General Fund	
Total Expenditures:	\$213,837.04
Ending Balance	\$496,088.98

Capital outlay appropriated

\$ 13,447.00 exterior handicap accessibility Lowell Arts

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by LONICK to accept the Treasurer's Report as written.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 4. MOTION CARRIED.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

No comments were received.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Downtown Development Plan—No updates
- b. South Monroe Parking

DPW Director Rich LaBombard commented that the trees have been installed and the construction has been finalized. LaBombard stated next year the south side of the parking lot will be graded to restore it from the weeds taking over, if there was no objection from the board.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Sidewalks.

DPW Director Rich LaBombard discussed the sidewalks near 815 W. Main. He explained the ADA standards are eight percent forward slope max and two percent cross slope max. The sidewalks within the DDA were inspected and 12,800 square feet of the sidewalks would need to be replaced if the City wants to set such standards. The cost would be \$7.75 per square foot.

Boardmember Larkin noted the City has an ordinance in place for the sidewalks as well as maintenance. City Manager Burns suggested focusing on the core downtown area. Boardmember Lonick noted the available funds. It is the DDA's intention to improve the City.

Boardmember Yankovich questioned liability issues and the effects of not maintaining the sidewalks to the ADA standards. Burns advised MDOT would require ADA standards along M21 if any enhancements were to be done.

Yankovich asked if there was money in the budget to repair the sidewalks. He advised that some of the sidewalks were already fixed. Boardmember Lonick noted the liability falls onto the property owner. LaBombard asked if the DDA would consider incorporating the ADA standards. Burns advised the City Council should set this standard. He also noted federal projects must comply with federal standards.

Yankovich questioned whether or not the DDA should be in the sidewalk business and if so, is it going to be the entire DDA or just Main Street. Lonick believed sidewalks are an imposed burden on the property owner and the DDA should try and offset that burden and help all involved. Boardmember Reister was surprised at how many sidewalks were nonconforming. Boardmember Doyle stated he would be in favor of the DDA repairing such sidewalks. Yankovich noted this is good infrastructure and would provide walkability and wheel chair accessibility.

Lonick and Yankovich suggested bringing the worse sidewalk cases back to the DDA in the spring for more discussion.

9. REPORTS AND MEMBER COMMENTS

City Manager Mike Burns commented on the statutes that are moving through the House and Senate. However, this does not pertain to the City of Lowell.

Boardmember Lonick questioned the skid-steer and front end loader. Discussion continued in reference to the financing and cost for the DDA.

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by REISTER to adjourn at 12:45 p.m.

YES: 5. NO: 0 ABSENT: 4. MOTION CARRIED.

Date:

APPROVED:

James E. Reagan, Chair

Susan Ullery, City Clerk

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FUND
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
February 7, 2017

Beginning Balance:	\$378,716.20
Revenue:	
TIFA Revenue	\$341,193.03
Interest	116.79
Misc.	
PPT Reimbursement	\$16,097.54
Total Revenues	\$736,123.56
Expenditures:	
Capital Outlay	\$135,765.83
Salaries/FICA	\$20,676.95
Maintenance Supplies	\$28,838.96
Utilities	\$13,411.99
Misc. and Community Promotions	\$37,599.05
Accrued Wages	\$2,329.17
Accrued payables	\$87,214.84
Administration	\$5,969.07
Prof. Services	\$2,020.21
Transfer to General Fund	
<i>Total Expenditures:</i>	\$333,826.07
Ending Balance	\$402,297.49

Capital outlay appropriated

\$ 13,447.00 exterior handicap accessibility Lowell Arts to be paid shortly!



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2017 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING DATES
12:00 NOON
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – SECOND FLOOR

January	5	July	6
February	9	August	10
March	9	September	7
April	6	October	5
May	4	November	9
June	8	December	7



DOWNTOWN LOWELL PLACEMAKING PLAN ►

2015



Acknowledgements

The planning and design team would like to acknowledge the City of Lowell's staff, elected, and appointed officials for their constant support and assistance. The local partners ensured that the team had data, documents and the community input necessary for developing this report. Special thanks to Mark Howe, City Manager, and Liz Baker, Director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for coordinating local efforts.

The team would also like to express gratitude to the Lowell residents, business owners, and other community leaders who participated in meetings and provided feedback during this process. Placemaking begins with a community-supported vision for what makes a place a true destination; without the support of the community, this process would not be possible.

Williams & Works

VIRIDIS
Design Group



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place is created
when people come
together; we must
compel them through
great design of our
public spaces

Introduction to Placemaking

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being.

The concept of placemaking builds upon the idea that creating a culture of place takes intentional and integrated efforts from community leaders, civic staff, local organizations, and people.

Placemaking recognizes that a "plan" isn't required to make a place unique. However, having clear guidelines for how a place is going to look, feel, and interact with its residents and visitors is important for maintaining the positive, distinct qualities of a place and making the most of existing resources.

PLACEMAKING IS:

Community-driven
Visionary
Function before form
Adaptable
Inclusive
Focused on creating destinations
Flexible
Culturally aware
Ever changing
Trans-disciplinary
Context-led
Transformative
Inspiring
Collaborative
Sociable

PLACEMAKING ISN'T:

Imposed from above
Reactive
Design-driven
A blanket solution
Exclusionary
Monolithic development
Overly accommodating of the car
One-size-fits-all
Static
Discipline-driven
Privatized
One-dimensional
Dependent on regulatory controls
A cost/benefit analysis
Project-focused
A quick fix

Source: Project for Public Spaces



Process

Placemaking is both an idea as well as a tool. The ideas generated in this process are meant to be used as transitional tools to implement the community-driven vision.

The Power of 10 is a concept the organization People for Public Spaces uses to begin a Placemaking process. The idea is that it's not enough to have just one great place in a neighborhood- you need a number of them to create a truly lively city or town. It's not enough to have only one superior neighborhood in a city- you need to provide people all over town with close-to-home opportunities to take pleasure in public life. And, it's not enough to have one livable city or town in a region- you need a collection of interesting communities.

The Lowell Downtown Placemaking Plan takes this approach- that of analyzing several places within a singular downtown- and works to identify the assets, opportunities, and challenges that unite these places to create cohesive solutions.

Listed at right is the process the planning team followed to create the final concept plans included in this document.

On the following page, we list the 10 Principles for Placemaking according to the Project for Public Spaces, and include a description of how this planning process addressed each principal.



TEN PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING GREAT COMMUNITY PLACES

THE COMMUNITY IS THE EXPERT

It is important at the beginning of the placemaking process to identify the human assets of a community, and to meet with these residents, business owners, and stakeholders to learn about the story of the community. *During Phase 1 of the Downtown Lowell Placemaking Plan process, a stakeholder input meeting was held to learn what local experts had to say about the future vision of Lowell.*

CREATE A PLACE, NOT A DESIGN

It is the aim of placemaking to turn underutilized or unwelcome public spaces into places that can be enjoyed to help foster a stronger relationship between people, public activities, and community assets. *Early in the process, a downtown inventory was created in an effort to catalogue the components that would collectively come together to add up to something more.*

LOOK FOR PARTNERS

Partners are critical to the future success and image of a public space improvement project. *During Phase 1 of the placemaking plan, a network of partners was established to ensure that the work of the placemaking plan could be translated into initiation and action.*

YOU CAN SEE A LOT JUST BY OBSERVING

By looking at how people are using (or not using) public spaces and finding out what they like and don't like about them, it is possible to assess what makes them work or not work. *Through detailed observations and public input received during Phase 1 of the planning process, it became apparent what kinds of activities are missing and what might be incorporated.*

HAVE A VISION

A vision needs to come out of each individual community. However, essential to a vision for any public space is an idea of what kinds of activities might be happening in the space, a view of how the space will function, and an image for how it will become an important place where people want to be. *During the planning process, two public open house events were held to help identify how placemaking could instill a sense of pride in the people who live and work in the surrounding area.*

SOURCE: PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC SPACES

START WITH PETUNIAS: LIGHTER, QUICKER, CHEAPER

Public spaces are complex, and often change can not be expected immediately. The best spaces experiment with short term improvements that can be tested and refined over many years. *During Phase 2 when conceptual design plans were crafted, elements such as seating, outdoor plazas, public art, and striping of crosswalks, were included as examples of improvements that can be accomplished in a short time.*

TRIANGULATE

Triangulation occurs when external stimuli encourage people to interact. In public spaces, the choice and arrangement of different elements in relation to each other can put the triangulation process in motion. *The preliminary design plans developed in Phase 2 emphasize the potential of triangulation for creating a more vibrant Downtown Lowell.*

FORM SUPPORTS FUNCTION

The input from the community and potential partners, the understanding of how other spaces function, experimentation, and overcoming obstacles provides the concept for the space. *Although design is important, the concept plans drafted in Phase 2 highlight how form will accomplish the future vision for Downtown Lowell.*

MONEY IS NOT THE ISSUE

Once you've put in the basic infrastructure of the public spaces, the elements that are added that will make it work will not be expensive. In addition, if the community and other partners are involved in programming and other activities, this can also reduce costs. *During Phase 3 when the final development plans were presented, the emphasis was on community driven initiatives whose benefits will be well worth the up front costs.*

YOU ARE NEVER FINISHED

By nature good public spaces that respond to the needs, the opinions and the ongoing changes of the community require attention. Amenities wear out, needs change and other things happen in an urban environment. Being open to the need for change and having the management flexibility to enact that change is what builds great public spaces and great cities and towns. *Flexibility was built into the final development plans, and initiatives were structured in such a way that they could be incrementally achieved.*

INTRODUCTION

Background

Lowell has a rich history dating back to the early 1800s. Founded as an early trading post, the community grew around the abundant resources at the confluence of the Grand and Flat Rivers and a robust downtown sprang up around manufacturing, commerce, and retail.

Lowell has maintained it's lively downtown core for more than 200 years. Today, the community of Lowell is known for it's historic and eclectic shopping district with a range of local businesses, it's excellent school system, and vibrant arts scene.

In addition to diverse downtown offerings, the Lowell community enjoys an array of recreational amenities. These range from large areas of woodlands and wetlands available for recreation, and developed facilities for organized or casual outdoor sports. Lowell is home to the national North Country Trail Scenic Trail, lies in the center of the new 125 mile rail-trail pathways, and boasts its own local non-motorized trail system. The confluence of the Flat and Grand Rivers in downtown Lowell and their associated river valleys characterize the land forms of the community with rolling woodlands, broad meadows and prairie, wetlands and unique wildlife habitat.

The residents of the area enjoy the small town character of the community, excellent schools and services and are able to take advantage of the region's ready access to the urban amenities of West Michigan.

In 2012, the City of Lowell and Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, along with Lowell Charter Township, Vergennes Township, and Lowell Public Schools undertook a collaborative planning effort which became the Greater Lowell Vision Plan. The Greater Lowell Vision reflects a genuine desire to recognize the numerous common interests among the local units of government while retaining and protecting the unique character and charm of the area.

The process to create the Greater Lowell Vision consisted of multiple steps including a review of current plans, policies and trends; consensus building, visioning and public engagement; creating and refining the vision, implementation steps, and finalization and celebration of the vision. Most importantly, the planning process resulted in an implementation plan to assure that steps are taken to bring the vision to life.

Several focus areas of the Vision Plan are foundational for a placemaking plan. These include business recruitment and retention; parks, trails, and recreation; arts, culture, and historic preservation; local food and agriculture; collaboration and talent development.

This information was sourced from the Lowell Master Plan, Greater Lowell Vision Plan, and the City of Lowell web page.



Background

Key Placemaking Factors

A comprehensive Placemaking Plan for Downtown Lowell is a timely strategy to address a number of emerging and continuing trends within the Lowell community that include:

Future Populations

As the existing population ages, it will be critically important to retain the area's younger generations and attract new families. Residents of the Greater Lowell Community enjoy a high quality of life and the community can further enhance this by strengthening elements that attract young families and people of higher education. Downtown Placemaking initiatives are meant to support and strengthen neighborhoods to make them safe, welcoming, and prosperous places for families.

Business Growth

The West Michigan economy will slowly evolve and regain strength somewhat more quickly than other parts of Michigan, but progress relative to other parts of the country may be slow. Communities with a diverse and agile economy will fare better than those tied to a few industries. The Greater Lowell Community will benefit as part of the West Michigan economy and may be advantaged by the high quality of life, strong schools and through community collaboration among the various jurisdictions. This effect can be further enhanced if the community actively seeks to promote entrepreneurship and a welcoming spirit for new residents of diverse background.

Cultural Diversity

West Michigan is increasingly an attractive place for immigrants and foreigners to work, go to school, and settle with their families. It is inevitable that this shift in the makeup of the region will effect the Greater Lowell Community. This is a trend to be planned for and embraced, rather than resisted. The mixing of diverse ethnic cultures, while potentially disruptive in the short-term, has always produced new economic opportunities and stronger, more interesting and sustainable communities. Placemaking can help to honor the historic qualities of a community while incorporating modern elements of social design that allow for more opportunities for people to interact and enjoy leisure activities that promote socializing.

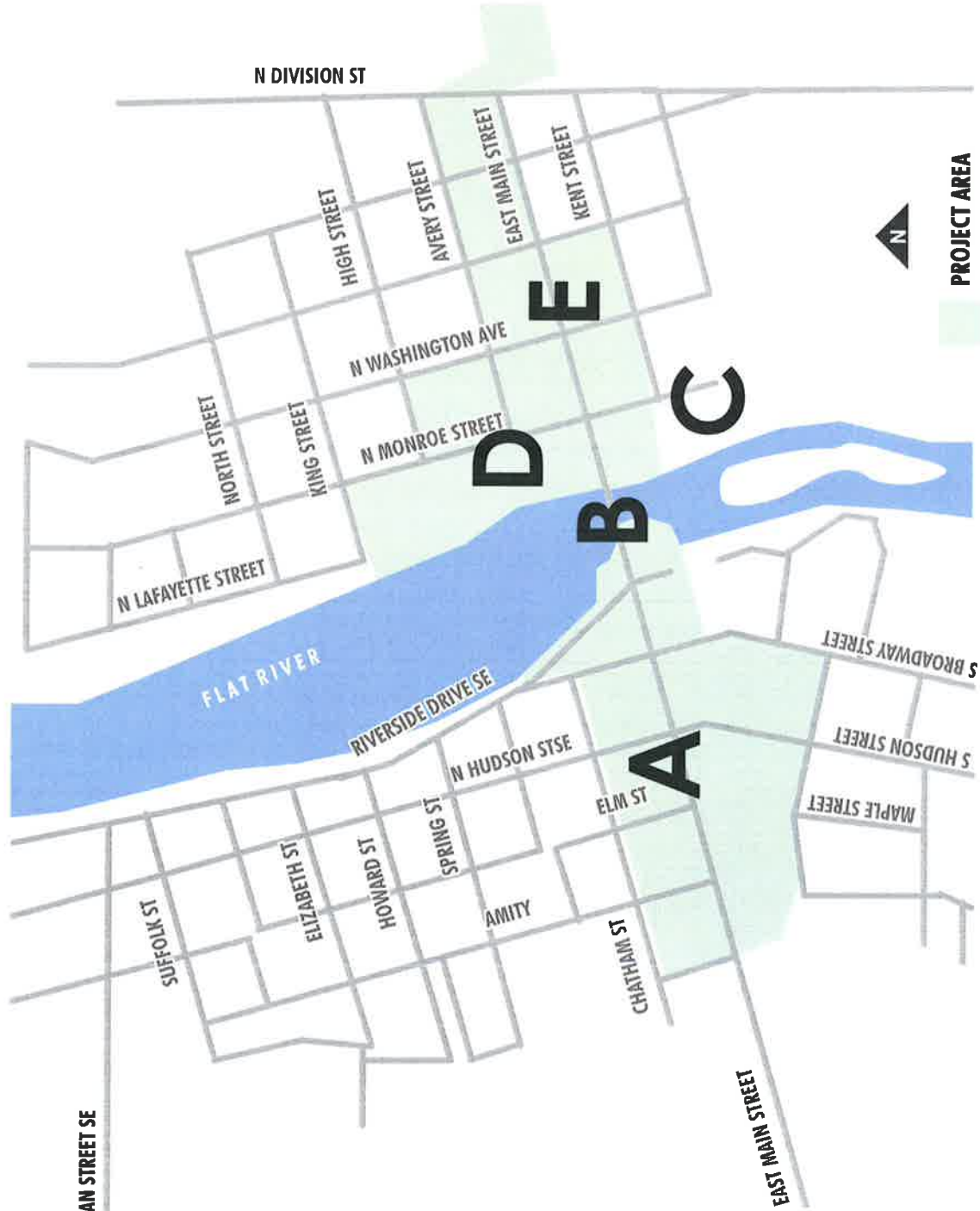
Smart Growth

Efforts to protect high quality farm lands and rural character will be challenged by low density residential growth, a desire in the marketplace to live in a natural setting, and a desire on the part of land owners to capitalize on that demand. This effect can be lessened with a strong placemaking plan that encourages a diversity of industrial, business, retail, and housing opportunities centered in dense yet desirable downtown areas. The Downtown Lowell Placemaking Plan helps to support agricultural preservation by encouraging growth in the downtown district.

Sourced from the Greater Lowell Vision Plan.

Project Area

The Downtown Lowell Placemaking Plan covers an area of roughly 71 acres, and is broken up into five sub areas, shown below.



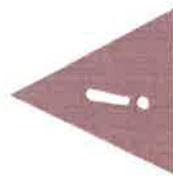
Sub Areas

- A** Downtown West
- B** Core Downtown
- C** River South
- D** Monroe Street
- E** Downtown East

Within the project area, there are over 20 retail and shopping establishments and 9 bars and restaurants. There are roughly thirteen occupied units in downtown Lowell with the potential (including planned building renovations, conversion from vacant, and new development) for 83 units in Downtown Lowell in the future. This does not include detached single-family homes.

Placemaking Goals and Initiatives

The following are the placemaking goals that were identified through public outreach and engagement. Below are the preferred initiatives the steering committee developed in order to meet the goals for the Downtown Lowell Placemaking Plan.

	SAFETY	Improve pedestrian access in the downtown area and slow traffic
	BUSINESS ACCESS/ PARKING	Increase parking and access by all modes to the downtown
	RECREATION	Expand recreation opportunities including trails and river access
	HISTORY	Preserve unique historical features to help reinforce a sense of place
	AESTHETICS	Integrate urban design principals within th existing building fabric

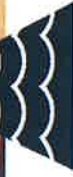


Represented below are eight essential placemaking initiatives within this plan. The colored dots indicate which of the five goals these initiatives will achieve.



Public Input

Strategic public engagement was essential to the planning process. Stakeholders identified needs, proposed solutions, and offered implementation strategies. They have taken ownership of this plan and have expressed commitment to advancing its design initiatives. From the initial list of five goals, stakeholders honed their list to the top three priorities for downtown Lowell. Below are the top priorities recorded from public input.



A desire to maintain the small town, historic feel of Downtown Lowell

AESTHETICS

Streamline aesthetics so that Lowell feels like a distinguished "place"

Maintain continuity along Main Street with buildings built to the street, doors at the sidewalk/street frontage, permeable edges with windows, and ample sidewalks for dining, furnishings, and walking



Improve access to the Flat River

RECREATION

Include more green space along the river's edge in the downtown area

Provide safe, convenient, and attractive trails and access points at the river and expand trail connections.



Improve parking in the Downtown business district

BUSINESS

ACCESS/PARKING

Plan for more residential parking spaces as infill development occurs

Continue to make it easy and accessible for people to walk, park, ride, and drive downtown to eat, shop, work and play

PLACEMAKING SOLUTIONS

Downtown Lowell will benefit from a streetscape improvement plan that will slow traffic, make pedestrian accessibility a priority, and introduce modern amenities within a historic context

Downtown Lowell will serve as a gateway to regional recreation amenities, as well as offer expanded recreational amenities along the river's edges for active and passive uses

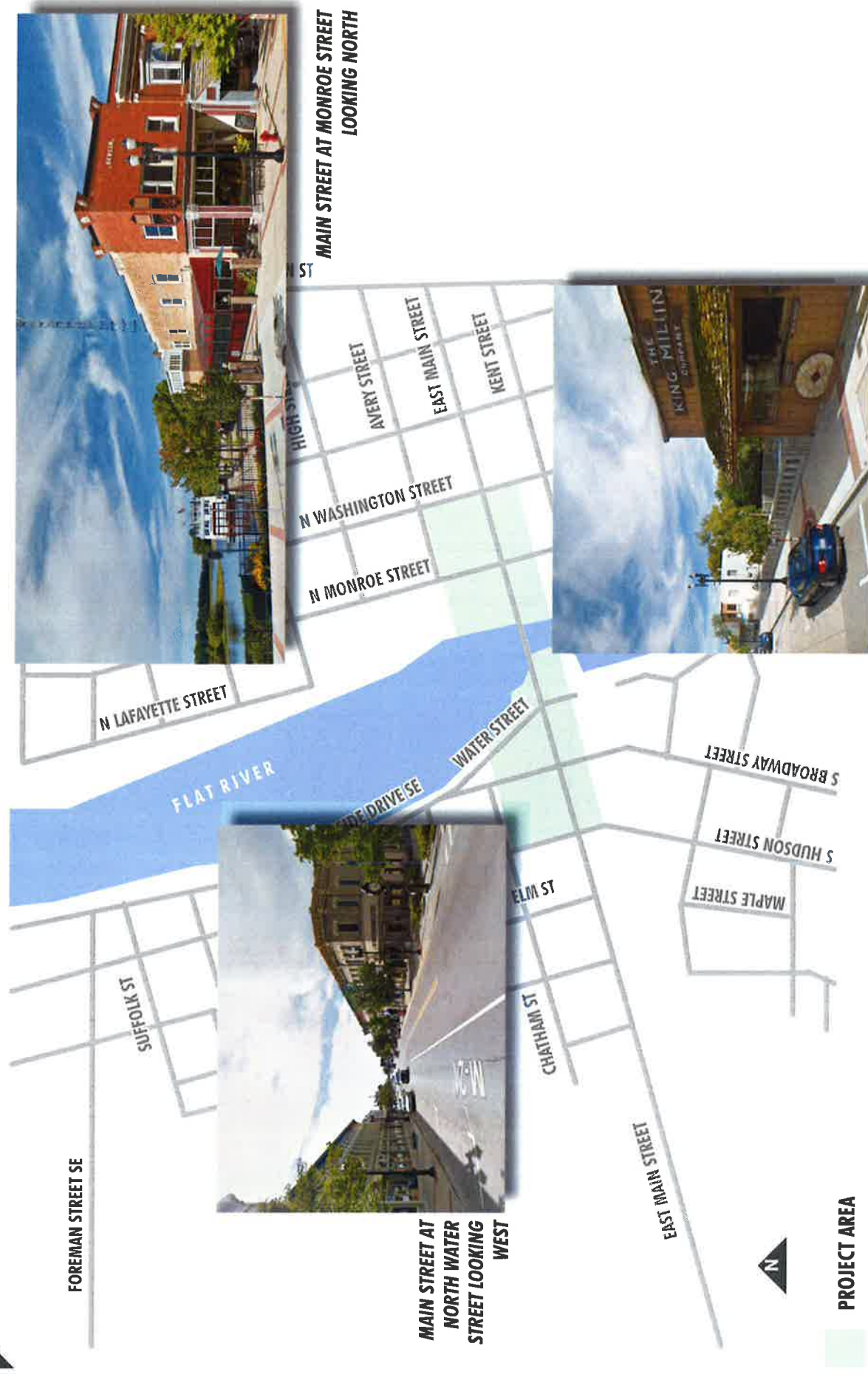
Streetscape Improvements will add on-street parking spaces to the downtown to serve businesses, and additional parking will be accommodated within the existing framework of the downtown

DOWNTOWN CORE

The Downtown Core sub area includes Main Street as the primary thoroughfare from Hudson Street to Washington Street. This section includes the bridge over the Flat River area and is 1,328 linear feet, featuring many of the historic buildings in Downtown Lowell.



Downtown Core



MAIN STREET AT BROADWAY STREET LOOKING EAST

ANALYSIS AND PLANS

► Downtown Core Analysis

Main Street east from Hudson Street to Washington Street

The Downtown Core is what is traditionally recognized as the “downtown” of Lowell. It is characterized by ample views of the Flat River, the beginning of multi-story historic mixed use buildings, and easily accessible on-street parking.

Key landmarks in the Downtown Core include views of the Flat River and Lowell Showboat, several locally-owned restaurants, antique stores, boutique shops, and a small inn.

The Downtown Core features the longest stretch of Main Street and includes four distinct blocks. The western-most block is between Hudson and Broadway, west of the Flat River. The north block includes the Lowell Area Historical Museum and Theater. The intersection at Main Street and Hudson Street features Shell and BP gas stations.

The blocks between Broadway and Water include several mixed use buildings, with retail storefronts and residential on upper stories.

Some upper-floor residential is underdeveloped.

This sub area contains 176 parking spaces, or 15.6% of total available parking downtown. The majority of this parking (126) spaces are located between Broadway Street and Water Street in a municipal parking lot.

This sub area features a strong public realm, with mixed use buildings framing the street, wide sidewalks, on-street parking, trees, benches, wayfinding signage, and decorative lighting.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE //
Lack of residential housing



BEST OPPORTUNITY //

Promote redevelopment of upper-level residential and office uses in mixed use buildings





Downtown Core Analysis

Street section is from Hudson Street, east to N. Monroe Street

Community Defined Priority Key

- AESTHETICS
- RECREATION
- PARKING / ACCESS
- OTHER (BIKE FACILITIES, HISTORY, SAFETY, BUSINESS ACCESS)



LEGEND

- PEDESTRIAN-VEHICULAR OR SITE DISTANCE CONFLICT
- NO PEDESTRIAN CROWDS PRESENT
- GOOD REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN SCALE DEVELOPMENT
- EXISTING ON-STREET / PUBLIC PARKING
- RIVERWALK EXTENSION OPPORTUNITY
- LARGE/FREQUENT TURNING MOVEMENTS FROM LOCAL TRUCK TRAFFIC
- LIMITED OR NO WAYFINDING SIGNAGE AVAILABLE

GENERAL NOTES

Within the core, the road width is ample enough to propose multiple lane configuration options including: lane width reduction, on-street parking, bike sharrow marking and possible bike lanes, if desired.

The mid-block pedestrian crossing at the river is a challenge due to the extended width of the right-of-way and no defined crosswalk.

For the most part, the core of downtown has many great placemaking opportunities. Some of the key items that could be introduced are: better wayfinding signage to public parking and key destinations, increase on-street parking, lane width-reduction, and consistent streetscape amenities including benches, litter, planters, and decorative paving. Street lighting style and scale are appropriate; however, lights are spaced too frequently for the scale and size of downtown.

ANALYSIS AND PLANS

► Downtown Core Placemaking Plan



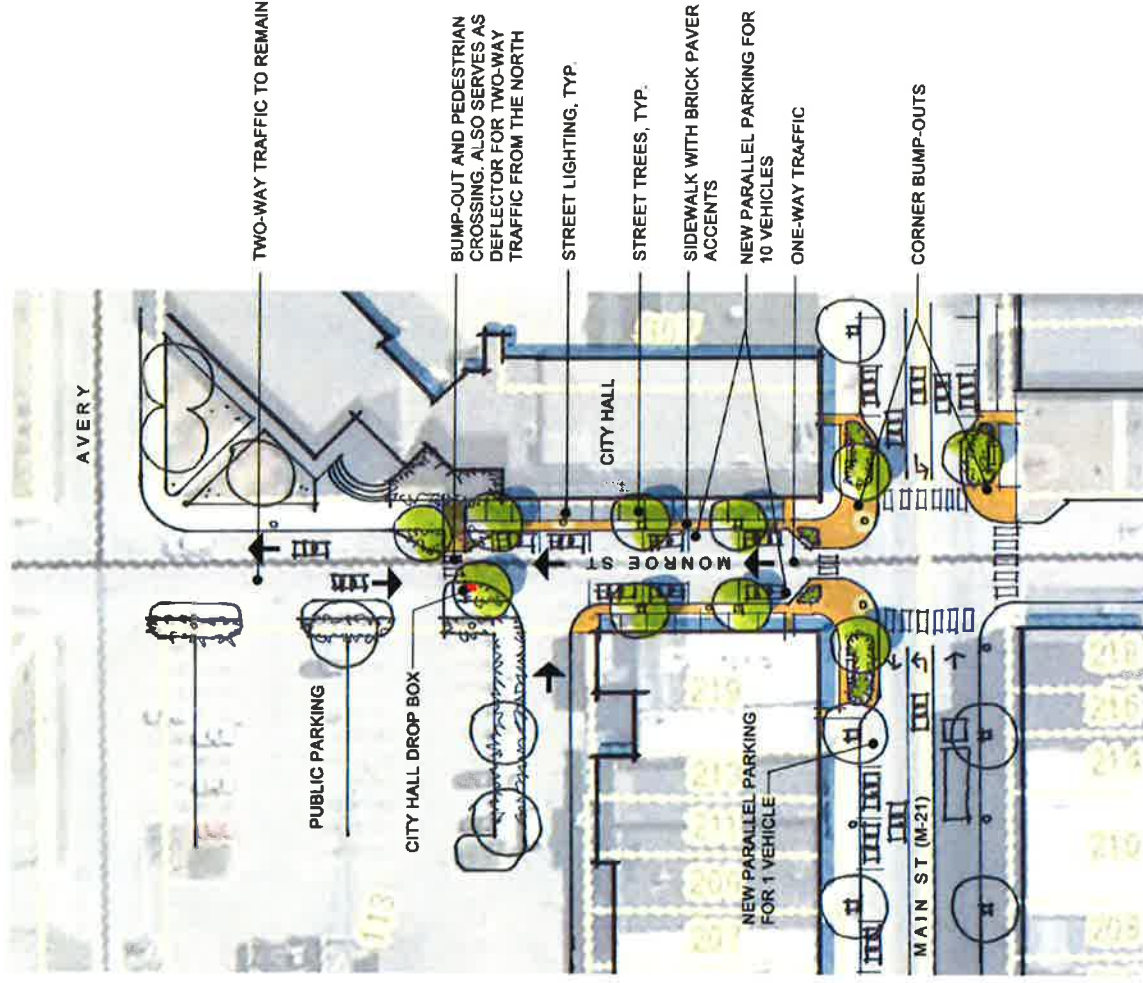
Monroe Street Placemaking Plan

Monroe Street lies within the Downtown Core sub area and serves as a gateway to several city municipal buildings.

Monroe Street will continue to serve as a gateway to municipal services and civic institutions by way of a one-way traffic lane featuring pedestrian crossings and corner bump-outs for enhanced pedestrian safety and access. By reinstating Monroe from a two-lane road to a single-lane one direction access road, visibility will be enhanced at the Main Street entrance, and will potentially allow for better vehicular and pedestrian usage. In addition, the one-way road may easily be closed off and serve as a public plaza for community events.



An example of an enhanced street crosswalk featuring bump-outs near on-street parking reduces crossing widths resulting in an increased perception of safety.



Monroe Street Placemaking Plan



The rendering shows before and after sketches of Monroe Street with two-way travel changed to one-way, bump-outs, public art, enhanced parkways, street lighting, and reconfigured on-street parking.

EXISTING



PROPOSED

ANALYSIS AND PLANS

16

Downtown sculptures and art, like the ones shown at left and the ones in the rendering below help to distinguish unique downtown areas and create a sense of place. Sculptures can help to create an image that is synonymous with Downtown Lowell and the local arts community.

SOURCE: CHURCH STREET, BLACKBURN, LANCASHIRE COUNTY, ENGLAND



SOURCE: CHARGER ENTERPRISES, INC. Bollards, shown above, and in the rendering at left, were originally short posts that were installed on docks to anchor ships while in port. Today, they are used as a traffic-calming mechanism in busy downtown areas.

River South Placemaking Plan

River South holds great potential for enhanced recreational features for the community of Lowell.

Currently, River South features an indistinguishable river's edge with outdated infrastructure and a lack of significant access points.

Two small islands within the Flat River offer opportunities for expanded recreation opportunities.

River South will offer new opportunities for Lowell residents and visitors alike to experience recreation and entertainment opportunities on an enhanced river edge featuring pedestrian trails, interpretive signage, rain gardens, seating areas, a canoe and kayak launch, and fishing access.



► River South Placemaking Plan



This bold vision for River South includes island access via a clear span bridge and provides pedestrian connectivity to the north edge of the river. Tree lined walkways with ample lighting will ensure that River South can be enjoyed in all seasons and at all times of day.



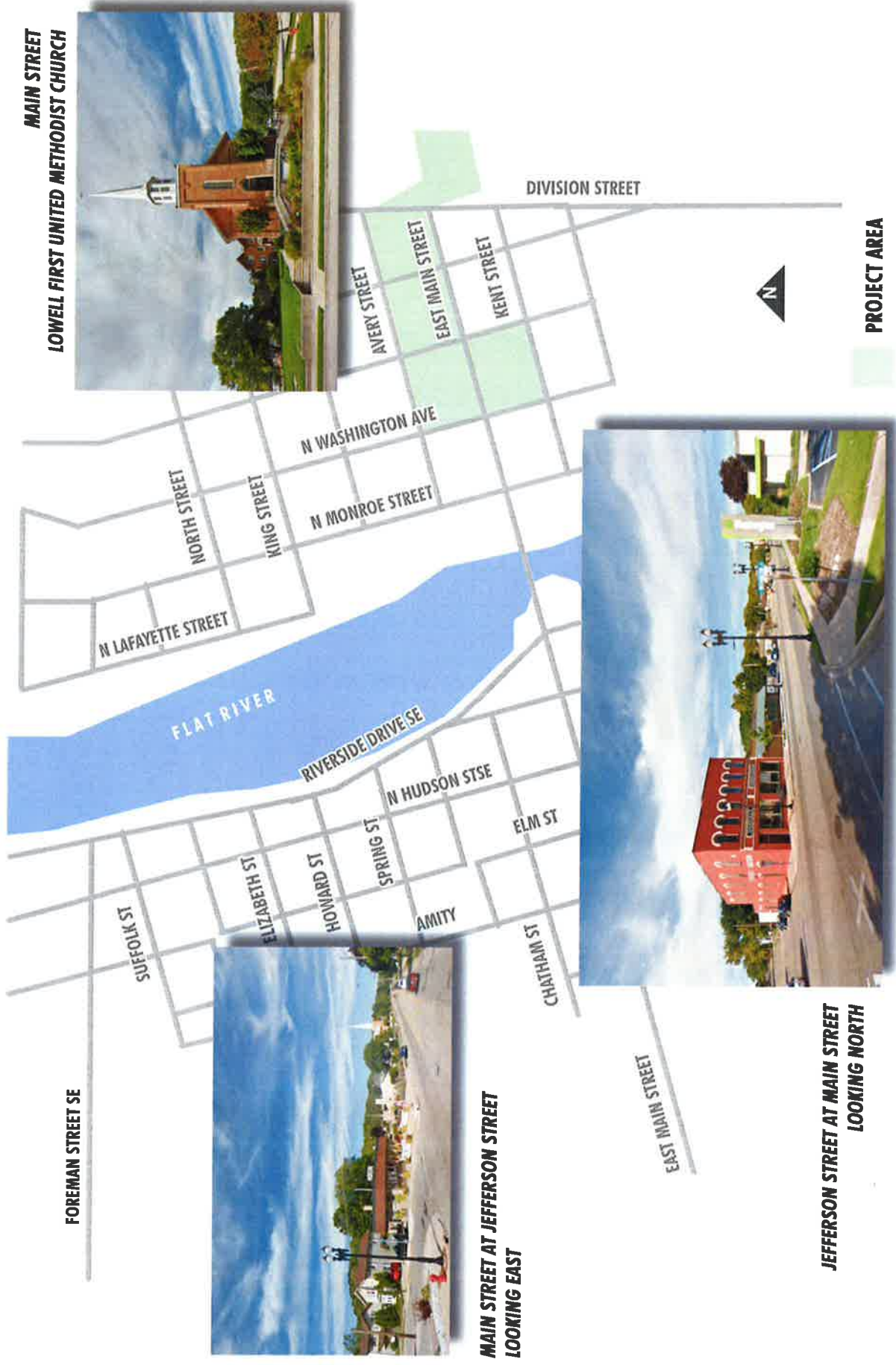
PROPOSED

DOWNTOWN EAST

The Downtown East Sub Area includes Main Street as the primary thoroughfare from N Washington Avenue to Division Street. This sub area includes several locally owned businesses, as well as housing.



Downtown East



► Downtown East Analysis

Main Street east from Washington Street to Division Street

The Downtown East is the second largest sub area within the study area. As the eastern-most extension of Main Street, Downtown East transitions from the downtown core to a mix of single and multi-family residential and commercial buildings. The block north of Main between Washington and Jefferson is composed almost entirely by Dollar General and its parking facilities. In addition, this block holds a small commercial building and street-facing parking lot. The south side of the Main Street block between Washington and Jefferson is anchored by Huntington Bank and a few residential properties. The sub area includes other well-visited places such as Ball's Softee Crème ice cream, and at the eastern most block along Division is the First United Methodist Church.

Downtown East holds 35% of the study area's available parking facilities. This sub area is served by east and west traffic lanes, a turning lane, and on-street parking on the north side of Main Street. Street lighting extends east to Jefferson Street. The downtown street scape and sidewalks are interrupted east of Washington Street

where the Dollar General parking lot extends past the sidewalk to Main Street. While there is a green buffer on the south side of Main Street, the grass and trees have been removed on the north side of Main Street.



HUNTINGTON BANK



BALL'S SOFTEE CREME

► BIGGEST CHALLENGE //

Lack of a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Wide road leads to accelerated speeds when entering downtown. No formal gateway to Downtown Lowell.

► BEST OPPORTUNITY //

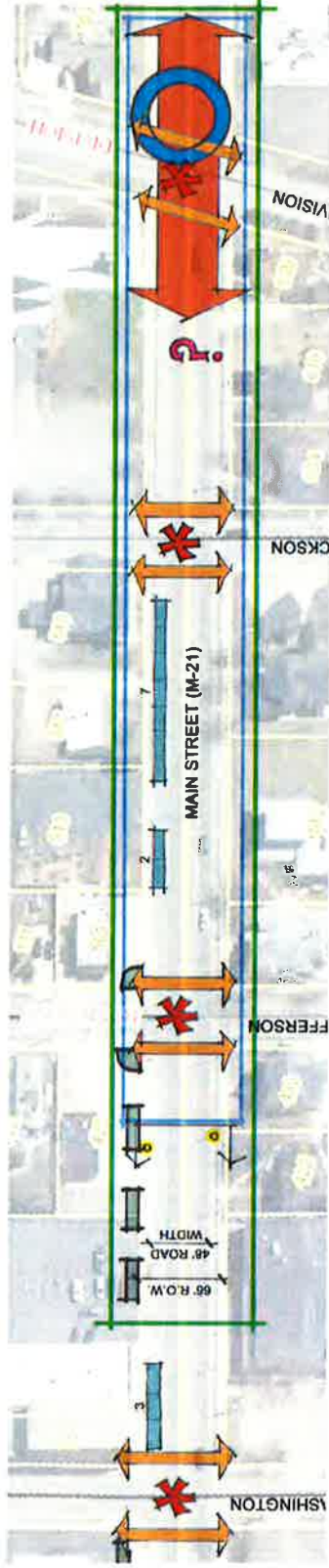
Re-establish parkways between the street and sidewalk. Add bike markings and wider sidewalks, while extending the core sub area street configuration and streetscape east, resulting in traffic calming at the eastern gateway of the downtown.

Downtown East Analysis

Street section is Main Street from Washington Street east to Division Street

Community Defined Priority Key

- ✓ AESTHETICS
- ✓ RECREATION
- ✓ PARKING / ACCESS
- ✓ OTHER (BIKE FACILITIES, HISTORY, SAFETY, BUSINESS ACCESS)



LEGEND

	PEDESTRIAN -VEHICULAR CONFLICT	
	NO PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS PRESENT	
	PARKING LOT BEAUTIFICATION OPPORTUNITY	
	EXISTING ON-STREET / PUBLIC PARKING	
	DOWNTOWN GATEWAY OPPORTUNITY AREA	
	WIDE ROAD WITH MINIMAL TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES CREATES A PLACE WITH A LACK OF HUMAN SCALE, PEDESTRIAN UNFRIENDLY, AND CHARACTER INCONSISTENT WITH THE DOWNTOWN	
	AREA WITH LIMITED OR NO STREET TREES	
	AREA WITH LIMITED OR NO PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHT FIXTURES	
	LIMITED OR NO WAYFINDING SIGNAGE AVAILABLE	

GENERAL NOTES

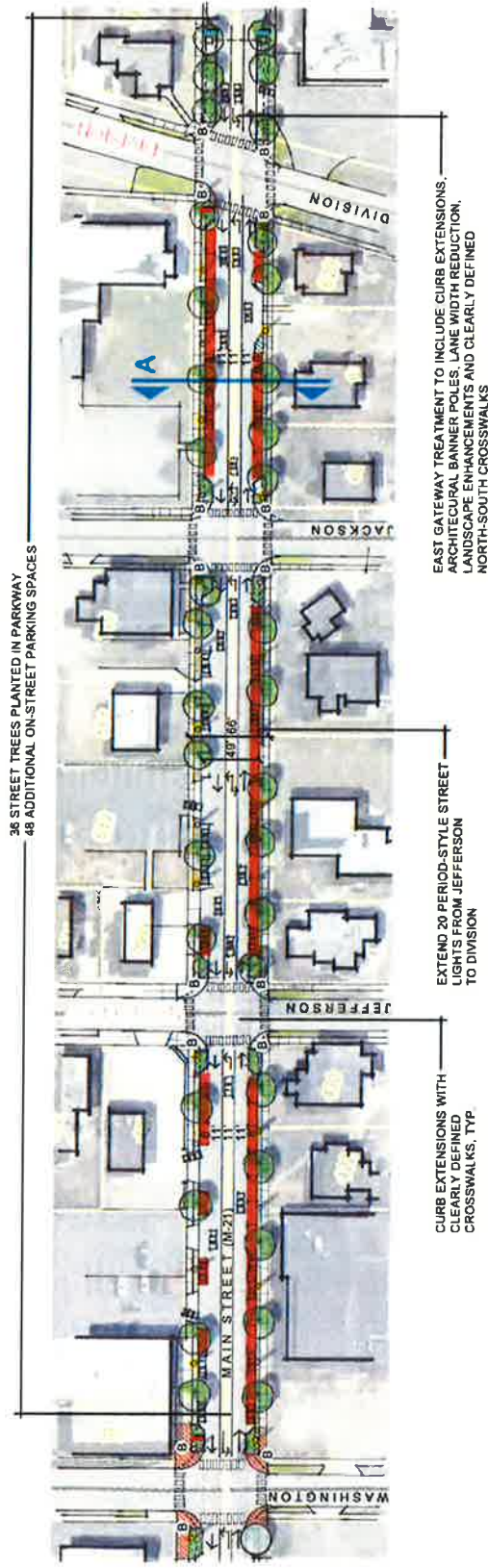
The Downtown East Sub Area features ample existing road width to propose multiple lane configuration options, including: lane width reduction, on-street parking, center boulevard, sharrow markings and possible bike lanes if desired.

The north-south pedestrian crossings across Main Street are a challenge due to the length of crossing, no defined crosswalks, and high speeds due to minimal traffic calming measures. In addition, many of the existing curb ramps do not comply with today's barrier-free standard.

A lack of trees and ornamental lighting (vertical elements), as well as the absence of buildings at the street, reinforces the openness of the corridor, resulting in higher vehicular speeds and a general trunkline aesthetic.

Downtown East Placemaking Plan

Downtown East will continue to balance residential and commercial land uses with on street parking, new crosswalks, curb extensions (bump-outs), street lights, and unified landscaping. These simple modifications should work to reduce speeds on Main Street, and wayfinding signage will help to establish Downtown East as a formal entry to downtown Lowell.



LEGEND

- PROPOSED CURB EXTENSION (BUMP-OUT). SEE ENLARGEMENT PLAN FOR OPTIONAL TREATMENTS
- EXISTING STREET TREE
- PROPOSED STREET TREE. SEE STREETSCAPE AMENITIES PLAN FOR OPTIONAL TREATMENTS
- PROPOSED ON-STREET PARKING
- PROPOSED CROSSWALK
- PROPOSED PERIOD STYLE STREET LIGHT
- PROPOSED WAYFINDING SIGN. SEE SIGNAGE PLAN FOR WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY SIGNAGE OPTIONS
- PROPOSED GATEWAY SIGN. SEE SIGNAGE PLAN FOR WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY SIGNAGE OPTIONS

Community Defined Priority Notes

- ✓
 - ✓
 - ✓
 - ✓
 - ✓
 - ✓
 - ✓
 - ✓
- PROPOSED TREES WITHIN THIS SECTION WOULD BE PLANTED IN LAWN PARKWAYS
- PROPOSED REMOVAL OF EVERY OTHER FIXTURE AND NEW FIXTURES @ 120' O.C

Community Defined Priority Key

- ✓ AESTHETICS
- RECREATION
- PARKING / ACCESS
- OTHER (BIKE FACILITIES, HISTORY, SAFETY, BUSINESS ACCESS)

Downtown East Placemaking Plan



EXISTING



PROPOSED

The rendering shows before (above) and after (at-right) sketches of Downtown East with bump-outs and enhanced street crossings. Signage and lighting are placed within the bump-out to attract attention, slowing traffic at the gateway to downtown.



SOURCE: CITY OF DECATUR, GEORGIA

Wayfinding Signage throughout the corridor, and especially at prominent city entrances help to establish a sense of place for visitors and residents alike.



SOURCE: CITY OF CHAGRIN FALLS, OHIO

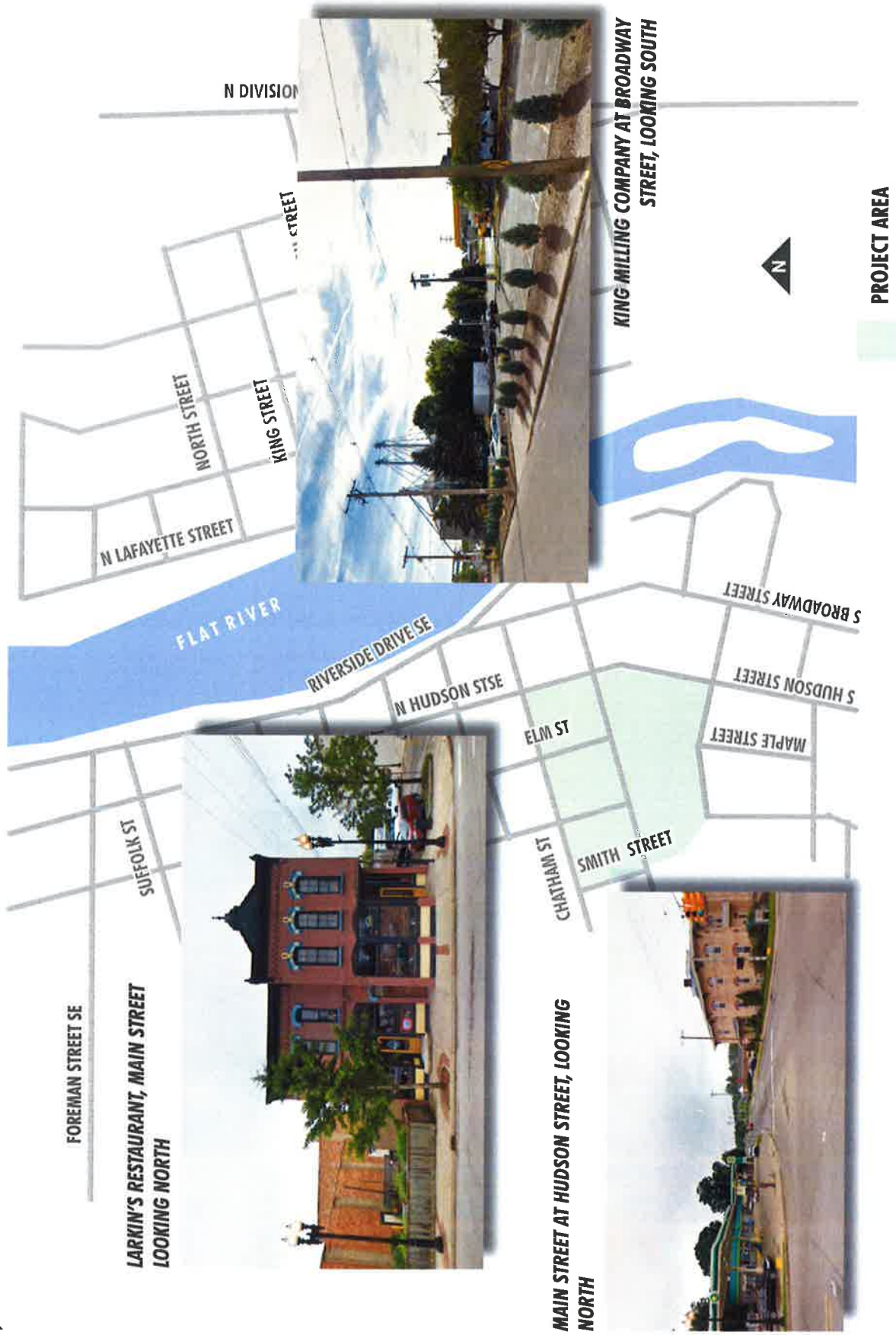
Bump-outs with attractive flower beds provide a buffer between vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and can be maintained seasonally by area garden groups.

DOWNTOWN WEST

The Downtown West includes Main Street as the primary thoroughfare from Smith Street east to Hudson Street. This section is considered the west entrance to Downtown Lowell, is 973 linear feet, and features some of the city's older, more industrial developments including King Milling Company.



Downtown West



► Downtown West Analysis

Main Street from Smith to Hudson

The Downtown West represents the western gateway to Downtown Lowell. The street is bordered primarily by single-family homes and is intersected on the western-most border by a single rail line. Landmarks include Fry Daddy Restaurant, King Milling Flour Company, and the historic yet vacant Blue Ribbon Feed Company. There is a retail strip center called Lowell Plaza which faces west on Main Street. The subject area is intersected north to south by Smith, Amity, and Lincoln Lake, serving primarily single-family residences.

Alden Nash is a main thoroughfare that crosses the Grand River south of Lowell and traverses rural, residential, and agricultural lands while serving as the main artery to Lowell from I-96. A key observation of the West is that it lacks a distinguishable gateway to Downtown Lowell. This segment of Main Street is transitional space that physically morphs from the more suburban style development of Fulton Street to a dense, urban development pattern found along Main Street in the core.

In addition, this portion of Main Street is primarily auto-oriented with high speed limits, two full service gas-stations, and sidewalks interrupted up by large parking lots. This sub area holds 196 parking spaces, or 17% of the total available parking downtown.



KING MILLING COMPANY

► BIGGEST CHALLENGE //

Lack of urban form and formal “gateway” to Downtown Lowell.

► BEST OPPORTUNITY //

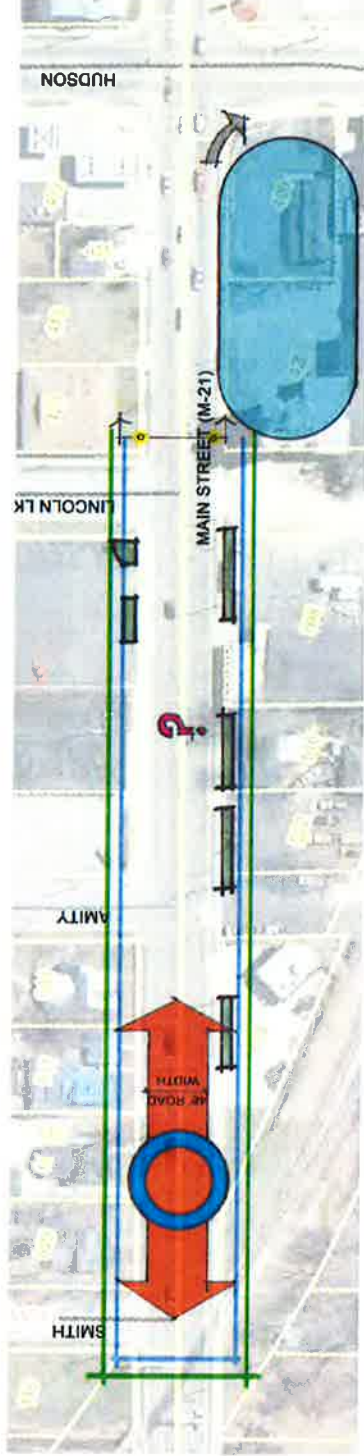
Continue the urban form from the Downtown Core sub area west to Smith Street.

Downtown West Analysis

Street section is Main Street from Smith to Hudson

Community Defined Priority Key

-  AESTHETICS
-  RECREATION
-  PARKING / ACCESS
-  OTHER (BIKE FACILITIES, HISTORY, SAFETY, BUSINESS ACCESS)



LEGEND

-  KEY DOWNTOWN NODE / REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
-  PARKING LOT BEAUTIFICATION OPPORTUNITY
-  DOWNTOWN GATEWAY OPPORTUNITY AREA
-  LIMITED OR NO WAYFINDING SIGNAGE AVAILABLE
-  WIDE ROAD WITH MINIMAL TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES CREATES A PLACE WITH A LACK OF HUMAN SCALE, PEDESTRIAN UNFRIENDLY, AND CHARACTER INCONSISTENT WITH THE DOWNTOWN
-  AREA WITH LIMITED OR NO STREET TREES
-  AREA WITH LIMITED OR NO PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHT FIXTURES
-  LARGE/FREQUENT TURNING MOVEMENTS FROM LOCAL TRAFFIC. CONSIDER DEDICATED RIGHT TURN

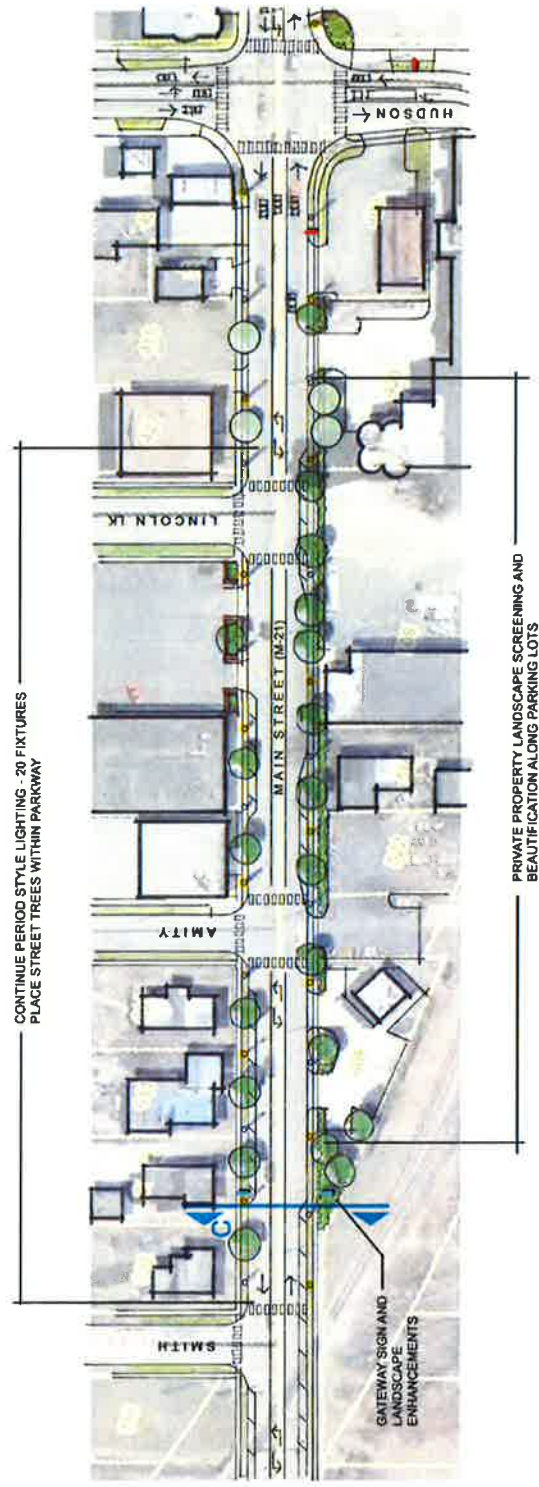
GENERAL NOTES

The lane configuration west of Downtown transitions from 3 to 4 lanes and back to 3 lanes. There is ample existing road width to propose multiple lane configuration options including: lane width reductions and pavement marking or bringing curbs in, reducing overall road width.

A lack of trees and ornamental lighting (vertical elements) reinforces the openness of the corridor, resulting in higher vehicular speeds and a general trunkline aesthetic. The blue circle shown on the map above notes the Blue Ribbon Feed property which is identified as having redevelopment potential.

ANALYSIS AND PLANS

Downtown West will be reinstated as a main gateway into Downtown Lowell and will feature a prominent focal point sign and landscaping where the rail line crosses Main Street. The continuity of landscaping, crosswalks, and street/sidewalk enhancements will blend the residential and commercial uses of Downtown West.



LEGEND

- PROPOSED CURB EXTENSION (BUMP-OUT). SEE
ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOR OPTIONAL TREATMENTS
- EXISTING STREET TREE
- PROPOSED STREET TREE. SEE STREETSCAPE AMENITIES
PLAN FOR OPTIONAL TREATMENTS
- PROPOSED CROSSWALK
- PROPOSED PERIOD STYLE STREET LIGHT
- PROPOSED WAYFINDING SIGN. SEE SIGNAGE PLAN FOR
WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY SIGNAGE OPTIONS
- PROPOSED GATEWAY SIGN. SEE SIGNAGE PLAN FOR
WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY SIGNAGE OPTIONS

Community	Defined	Priority	Notes
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-
- A 3x7 grid of arrows. The top row has 7 grey arrows pointing up and to the right. The middle row has 7 arrows: the first is green pointing up and to the right, the second is green pointing up and to the right, the third is green pointing up and to the right, the fourth is green pointing up and to the right, the fifth is green pointing up and to the right, the sixth is green pointing up and to the right, and the seventh is green pointing up and to the right. The bottom row has 7 arrows: the first is black pointing up and to the right, the second is black pointing up and to the right, the third is black pointing up and to the right, the fourth is black pointing up and to the right, the fifth is black pointing up and to the right, the sixth is black pointing up and to the right, and the seventh is black pointing up and to the right.

Community Defined Priority Key

-  AESTHETICS
-  RECREATION
-  PARKING / ACCESS
-  OTHER (BME FACILITIES, HISTORY, SAFETY, BUSINESS ACCESS)

PROPOSED TREES WITHIN THIS SECTION WOULD BE PLANTED IN LAWN PARKWAYS

PROPOSED REMOVAL OF EVERY OTHER FIXTURE AND
NEW FIXTURES @ 120' O.C



Downtown West Placemaking Plan



EXISTING



The above rendering shows before and after sketches of the Downtown West sub area with narrowed travel lanes, enhanced parkways, street lighting, and on-street parking. **PROPOSED**



SOURCE: CITY OF DENVER, COLORADO

A marked shoulder on Main Street will encourage bicyclists to use the road safely and allow for sidewalk accessibility for pedestrians.



Human-scale street lamps interspersed with street trees help to define a sidewalk or shopping promenade.

SOURCE: CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON

PLACEMAKING STREET ELEMENTS



The Streetscape, Traffic Calming and Why it Matters

Pages 38 and 39 of this report contain renderings of proposed street-section designs and modifications. The primary purpose of these renderings is to visually demonstrate how built environment streetscape features can help achieve placemaking initiatives. Streetscape modifications, like the ones proposed on the following pages work in two ways; first, they have the potential to slow traffic speeds primarily on Main Street in Downtown Lowell by narrowing the perceived width of the roadway; and second by allowing for alternative users such as pedestrians and bicyclists to safely use the street.

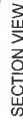
Below is a description of some of the streetscape modifications that are included in this plan.

Bump-Outs

Bump-outs are primarily used to extend the sidewalk, reducing the crossing distance and allowing pedestrians to cross. Approaching motorists can make eye contact with the pedestrian since they are no longer hidden behind vehicles parked on the street.

Bike Sharrows (Shared-lane Marking)

A shared-lane marking or sharrow is a street marking installed on existing roadways. This marking is placed in the center of a travel lane to indicate that a cyclist may use the full lane. Shared-lane markings are used to: alert motorists of the location bicyclists are likely to occupy within the traveled way; encourage safe passing of bicyclists by motorists; and reduce the incidence of wrong-way bicycling. Source: *US Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*



An example of bike sharrows and on-street parking.



(See page 23 for reference)



Brick paver bump-outs in a downtown extend the pedestrian right-of-way.



(See page 13 for reference)

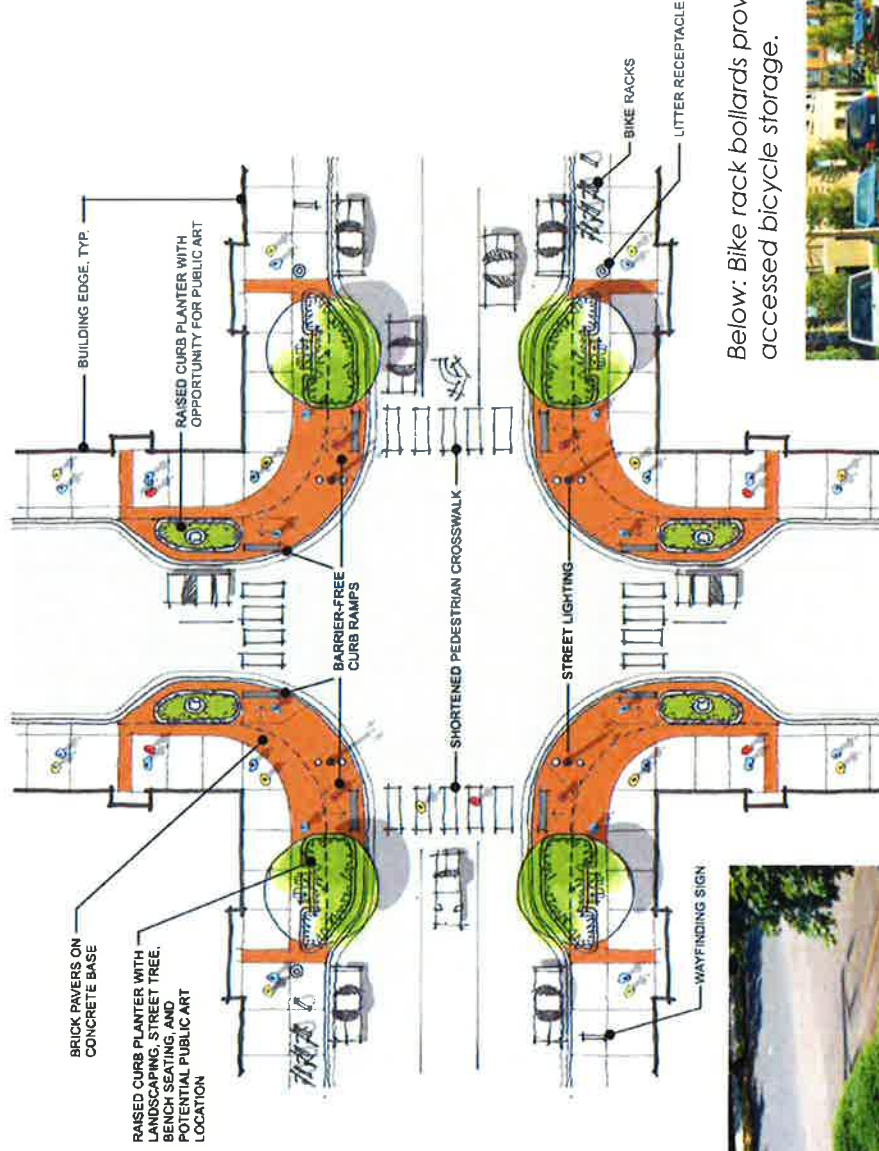
ANALYSIS AND PLANS

Striped pavement markings allow for traffic calming without extensive infrastructure changes.



(See page 29 for reference)

Streetscape Placemaking



Top: Brick pavers and raised pavement at curb crossings signals the roadway. Left: Landscaped edges provide a buffer for the sidewalk.

Below: Bike rack bollards provide easily accessed bicycle storage.



The Principles of Wayfinding

Wayfinding has the function to inform people of the surroundings in the built and natural environment. It is important to show information at strategic points to guide people into the right directions. An effective wayfinding system is based on human behavior and consists of the following characteristics:

- Do not overcomplicate
- Create a comprehensive, clear and consistent visual communication system with concise messaging
- Show only what is needed
- Show information that is relevant to the space, location, and/or or navigation path
- Remove excessive information
- Remove unnecessary elements to create a clear visual environment ahead

Wayfinding is especially important in the creation of vibrant, walkable downtown areas. When creating a wayfinding scheme the following characteristics influence the way pedestrians interpret the built environment. These characteristics informed the criteria used to select wayfinding signage locations shown on the following pages.

Landmarks

To create a memorable environment it is necessary to mark specific spaces and / or locations. This reinforces the recognition of places and plays a part in placemaking. With the use of landmarks and marking elements an area will become more visible and will be understood better in the human memory. Landmarks can be art-objects, buildings, street art, natural elements, or striking elements in a landscape. These elements combined will shape the identity of an (unknown) area as seen from pedestrians perspectives.

Orientation

In order to navigate, pedestrians need to know where they are and where other destinations are located. Preferably, it is good to know the distance in time from one place to another. If people are able to orientate themselves within the built environment, it will be easier to understand destinations and to navigate by landmarks. In wayfinding, maps are commonly used to indicate location. The usage of maps is a very powerful way of expressing and cataloging the built environment. Maps displayed in the heads-up position in the direction pedestrians are facing allows them to easily orient themselves and may encourage visitors to stay longer and check out unseen sites.

Navigation

Navigating the physical reference to a particular area, setting or destination encourages walkability and siteseeing. With the usage of directional (static) signs people will be guided along their path towards destination(s).

Source: designworkplan.com/about

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signs and public art are some of the many elements that make up the streetscape – its visual quality and its amenity for people on foot. The design and location of wayfinding signs and public art must be carefully coordinated with other streetscape elements including paving treatments, landscaping and street furniture (e.g., street lights, benches). The following pages detail locations for wayfinding signage that will bring continuity and consistency to the Downtown Placemaking Plan.

SIGNAGE LEGEND

PROPOSED TRAILBLAZERWAYFINDING SIGN

POTENTIAL MESSAGE:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. → DOWNTOWN
→ RIVERFRONT
→ FAIRGROUNDS | 5. → CITY HALL / POLICE
→ RIVERFRONT ACCESS
→ PUBLIC PARKING |
| 2. → DOWNTOWN
→ RIVERFRONT
→ LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL | 6. → PUBLIC PARKING
→ CITY HALL
→ SHOWBOAT / RIVERFRONT |
| 3. → PUBLIC PARKING
→ DOWNTOWN
→ RIVERFRONT | 7. → PUBLIC PARKING
→ CITY HALL / POLICE
→ SHOWBOAT / RIVERFRONT |
| 4. → PUBLIC PARKING
→ LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL
→ FAIRGROUNDS | 8. → DOWNTOWN
→ SHOWBOAT RIVERFRONT
→ PUBLIC PARKING |

PROPOSED GATEWAY SIGN/BANNERS

EXISTING OVER-STREET STREAM BANNER

EXAMPLES



TRAILBLAZER / WAYFINDING



GATEWAY SIGN

TRAILBLAZER WAYFINDING SIGNS

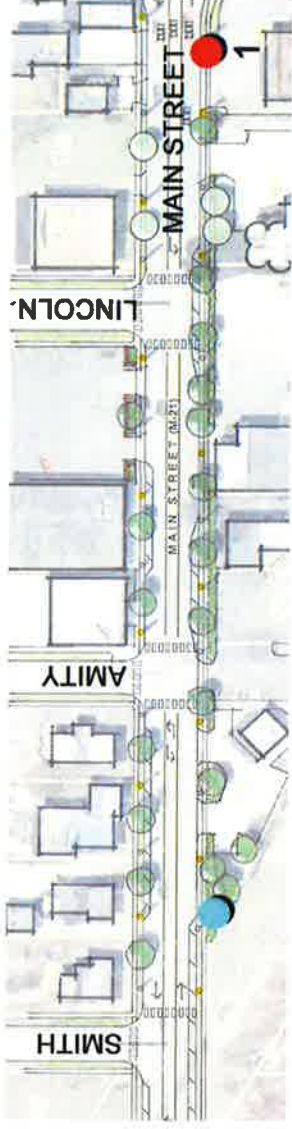
Trailblazer and Wayfinding signs are shown at key sites in the Downtown corridor. Beginning at Hudson Street in the Downtown West subarea (1) and (2), act as guides toward the Downtown, the riverfront, and Lowell Fairgrounds. Other trailblazers (3) and (4) in the Downtown Core alert visitors to Public Parking areas. Others (6), (7), and (8) guide Main Street users towards City services including City Hall, the Library, and municipal services on Monroe.

GATEWAY SIGNS AND BANNERS

Gateway signs and banners are important at entrances to the Downtown corridor. The banners placed in Downtown West and just east of Division mark the west and east entries to Downtown. They signal a sense of arrival and help calm traffic by alerting drivers.

Wayfinding Signage

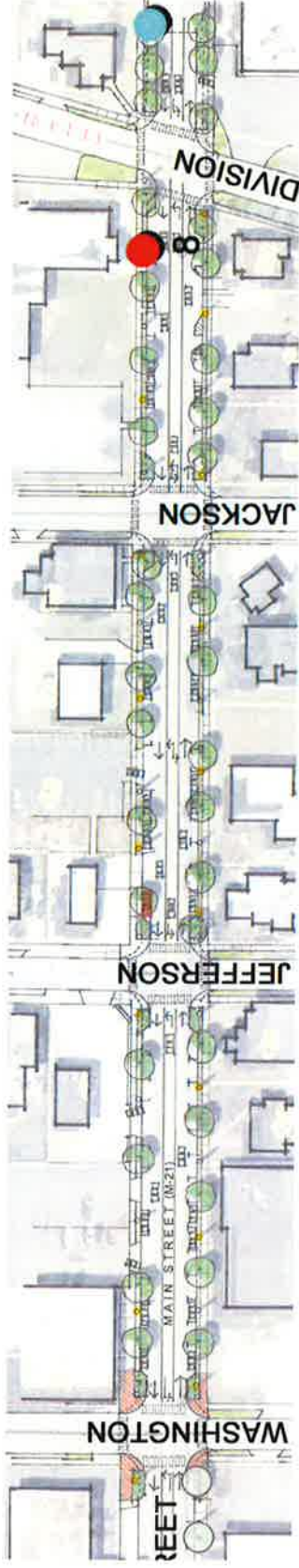
DOWNTOWN WEST



DOWNTOWN CORE



DOWNTOWN EAST



Public Art

Public art is one of the many elements that make up the streetscape – its visual quality and its amenity for people on foot. The design and location public art must be carefully coordinated with other streetscape elements including paving treatments, landscaping and street furniture (e.g., street lights, benches). The following pages detail proposed locations for public art that will bring continuity and consistency to the Downtown Placemaking Plan.

PUBLIC ART LEGEND

 POTENTIAL PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION LOCATIONS

EXAMPLES

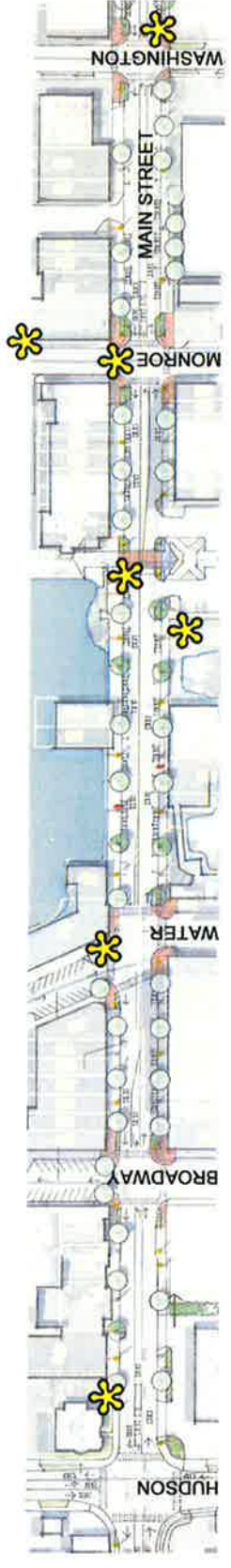


Public Art

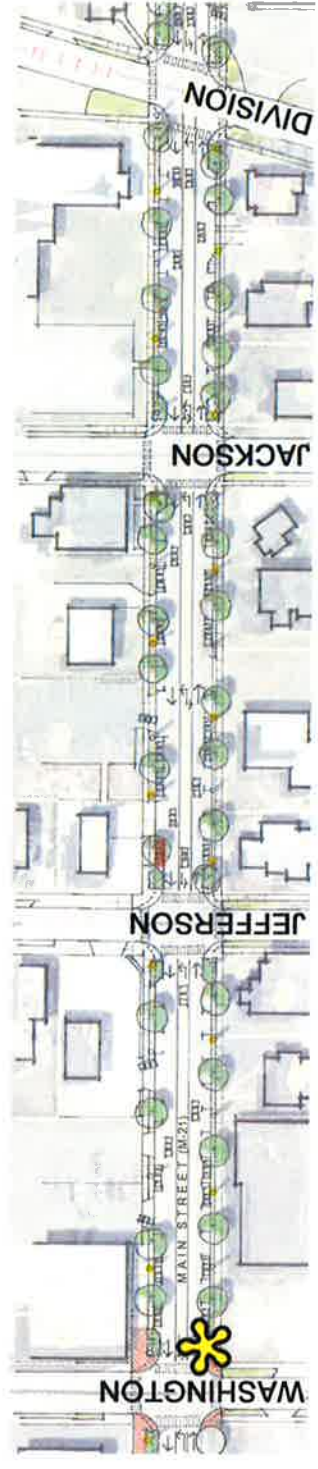
DOWNTOWN WEST



DOWNTOWN CORE



DOWNTOWN EAST



Conclusion

The City of Lowell Downtown Placemaking Plan represents a community-driven and publically-supported implementation plan for enhancing the physical appearance and overall functioning of Lowell's public realm. The public realm, being the publically-owned spaces between buildings and property lines, are not only the areas of the City under local control, they are also the "outdoor rooms" of the city. These outdoor rooms are the spaces and places for community gathering, outdoor dining, and celebrating with neighbors and visitors alike. A city's streets and sidewalks, and parks and parking areas, are often the places most forgotten, yet possess the most potential for positively impacting quality of life and visitor experience.

The concepts included in the plan are accompanied by cost estimates, which are on file with the City of Lowell. The cost estimates will be used for municipal capital improvement planning, and will include the Downtown Development Authority resources, when available.

Great places are ever changing. It will take incremental investments and proper decision-making that prioritizes people and human experience. It is the people who make great places, and when we design for people (of all ages and abilities) we are ensuring that our communities are more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable over time.

Williams & Works

