



301 East Main Street  
Lowell, Michigan 49331  
Phone (616) 897-8457  
Fax (616) 897-4085

CITY OF LOWELL  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2018  
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) September 6, 2018
4. TREASURER'S REPORT
5. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA
6. OLD BUSINESS
  - a) Downtown Master Plan
7. NEW BUSINESS
8. REPORTS AND MEMBER COMMENTS
9. ADJOURNMENT

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
OF THE  
CITY OF LOWELL  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2018**

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

The Meeting was called to order at 12:18 p.m. by Chair Reagan.

Present: Boardmembers Cliff Yankovich, Rita Reister, Mike Larkin, Rick Seese, Brian Doyle, Mike Devore, April McClure and Chair Jim Reagan.  
Absent: Boardmember Dean Lonick.  
Also Present: City Manager Mike Burns, City Clerk Susan Ullery, DPW Director Rich LaBombard.

2. **EXCUSE OF ABSENCES**

IT WAS MOVED BY REISTER and seconded by YANKOVICH to excuse the absence of Dean Lonick.

YES: 8. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by MCCLURE to approve the agenda as written.

YES: 8. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by LARKIN to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2018 meeting as written.

YES: 8. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FUND  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
August 22, 2018**

|                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Beginning Balance: | \$292,918.62 |
| Revenue:           |              |
| TIFA Revenue       | \$35,500.00  |
| PPT Reimbursement  |              |
| Total Revenues     | \$328,418.62 |
| Expenditures:      |              |
| Capital Outlay     |              |
| Salaries/FICA      | \$7,129.78   |

|                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Maintenance Supplies           | \$6,476.19  |
| Utilities                      | \$1,186.43  |
| Misc. and Community Promotions | \$2,075.00  |
| Accrued Wages                  | \$2,454.14  |
| Administration                 | \$1,945.57  |
| Accrued Payables               | \$10,195.92 |

Transfer to General Fund

*Total Expenditures:* \$31,463.03

Ending Balance \$296,955.59

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

YES: 8. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

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

There we no public comments.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

a. **Downtown Master Plan.**

City Manager Mike Burns stated that since receiving the walkability study report, they have been working on tying in many of those recommendations to the Master Plan. Andy Moore with Williams & Works presented his revisions to the master plan for DDA Councilmembers to review and then recommended to Council. Burns added that he recommends Council look at enhancing the rear side of downtown buildings as an action strategy and utilize the South River Walk as a very important piece to enhance the downtown (a splash pad if possible) should also be considered.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Recreation Park Study.**

City Manager Mike Burns stated in this year's budget, funds were budgeted for a feasibility study of the future use of Recreation Park once the Kent County Youth Fair vacates to their new location. I reached out to our Consultant, Williams and Works, to submit a proposal to us for this study and to do this in phases. The first Phase would be for the background with City administration and other key representatives regarding the property. We would begin a community outreach phase where we can look at different options including a charrette. We would then take the information from those engagements and utilize toward designing a plan. After this, we would finalize the plan and take steps to begin implementation once the KCYF leaves. Total Project cost is \$10,000 without a design charrette and \$13,500 if we hold a design charrette. It may be the best option to hold one as an opportunity to seek a greater input.

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by DEVORE to approve the Downtown Development Authority partner with William and Works to conduct a feasibility plan for the future use of Recreation Park not to exceed \$13,500.

YES: 8.0 NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

Councilmember Cliff Yankovich left at 12:45.

b. Christmas Marketing.

Liz Baker with the Chamber of Commerce spoke regarding the Christmas in Lowell marketing funds and requested \$6,450 in sponsorship for the event.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by DOYLE to provide a sponsorship to the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce at a cost not to exceed \$6,450 for the Christmas in Lowell marketing sponsorship.

YES: 7.0 NO: 0. ABSENT: 2. MOTION CARRIED.

c. Marketing.

Liz Baker with the Chamber of Commerce spoke regarding the annual marketing funds requests for the Chamber of Commerce, this year requesting \$40,000 in sponsorship. An increased amount was provided for marketing in the Fiscal Year 2019 budget.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by DOYLE to provide a sponsorship to the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce at a cost not to exceed \$40,000 for their annual marketing.

YES: 7.0 NO: 0. ABSENT: 2. MOTION CARRIED.

9. REPORTS AND MEMBER COMMENTS

Boardmember Mike Larkin asked how MDOT deciphers the speed limits, bumpouts, speedsigns, etc for different cities.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by REISTER to adjourn at 1:10 p.m.

YES: 7. NO: 0 ABSENT: 2. MOTION CARRIED.

Date:

APPROVED:

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James E. Reagan, Chair

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Susan Ullery, City Clerk

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FUND  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
October 8, 2018

|                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Beginning Balance:             | \$273,118.62 |
| Revenue:                       |              |
| TIFA Revenue                   | \$458,273.08 |
| PPT Reimbursement              |              |
| Total Revenues                 | \$731,391.70 |
| Expenditures:                  |              |
| Capital Outlay                 |              |
| Salaries/FICA                  | \$12,723.95  |
| Maintenance Supplies           | \$13,259.50  |
| Utilities                      | \$3,771.05   |
| Misc. and Community Promotions | \$2,180.47   |
| Accrued Wages                  | \$2,454.14   |
| Administration                 | \$4,121.41   |
| Accrued Payables               | \$10,195.92  |
| Transfer to General Fund       |              |
| <i>Total Expenditures:</i>     | \$48,706.44  |
| Ending Balance                 | \$682,685.26 |

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| Check Date                                        | Bank | Check # | Payee                        | Description                     | Account | Dept | Amount   |
|---------------------------------------------------|------|---------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|------|----------|
| Fund: 248 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY          |      |         |                              |                                 |         |      |          |
| 08/30/2018                                        | GEN  | 71738   | SITEONE LANDSCAPE SUPPLY LLC | TREEGATOR - DDA                 | 740.000 | 463  | 214.11   |
| 08/30/2018                                        | GEN  | 71741   | STRAIN ELECTRIC CO           | BROKEN LIGHT POLE               | 930.000 | 463  | 440.00   |
| 09/06/2018                                        | GEN  | 71757   | BC PIZZA                     | DDA MEETING 9/6/18              | 880.000 | 740  | 83.93    |
| 09/14/2018                                        | GEN  | 71760   | BERNARDS ACE HARDWARE        | STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT            | 740.000 | 463  | 25.98    |
|                                                   |      |         |                              | STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT            | 740.000 | 463  | 3.99     |
|                                                   |      |         |                              | CHECK GEN 71760 TOTAL           |         |      | 29.97    |
| 09/14/2018                                        | GEN  | 71797   | LOWELL LIGHT & POWER         | ELECTRIC STATEMENTS             | 920.000 | 463  | 561.69   |
|                                                   |      |         |                              | ACCESS POINT/ST LIGHT R & M     | 930.000 | 463  | 182.54   |
|                                                   |      |         |                              | CHECK GEN 71797 TOTAL           |         |      | 744.23   |
| 09/14/2018                                        | GEN  | 71812   | SELF SERVE LUMBER            | ACCOUNT STATEMENT               | 740.000 | 463  | 26.22    |
| 09/14/2018                                        | GEN  | 71820   | VISA                         | ACCOUNT STATEMENT               | 930.000 | 463  | 477.00   |
| 09/21/2018                                        | GEN  | 71860   | WEST MICHIGAN FLAG POLES     | FLAG POLE ROPE                  | 930.000 | 463  | 120.00   |
| 09/28/2018                                        | GEN  | 71864   | PETTY CASH                   | MISC PETTY CASH                 | 880.000 | 740  | 15.54    |
|                                                   |      |         |                              | MISC PETTY CASH                 | 880.000 | 740  | 6.00     |
|                                                   |      |         |                              | CHECK GEN 71864 TOTAL           |         |      | 21.54    |
| 09/28/2018                                        | GEN  | 71868   | DAVE COLE DECORATORS, INC.   | FLAGPOLE PAINTING               | 930.000 | 463  | 2,875.00 |
| 09/28/2018                                        | GEN  | 71878   | KERKSTRA PORTABLE, INC.      | PORTABLE RESTROOM - BOAT LAUNCH | 740.000 | 463  | 190.00   |
| Total for fund 248 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY |      |         |                              |                                 |         |      | 5,222.00 |



# DOWNTOWN LOWELL PLACEMAKING PLAN ►

2018





## 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 Mike Burns, 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





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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

SOURCE: PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC SPACES

## 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.*

## 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*

## 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.*

## 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.*

## 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.*

## 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.*

## 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.*

## 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 its lively downtown core for more than 200 years. Today, the community of Lowell is known for its historic and eclectic shopping district with a range of local businesses, its 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.

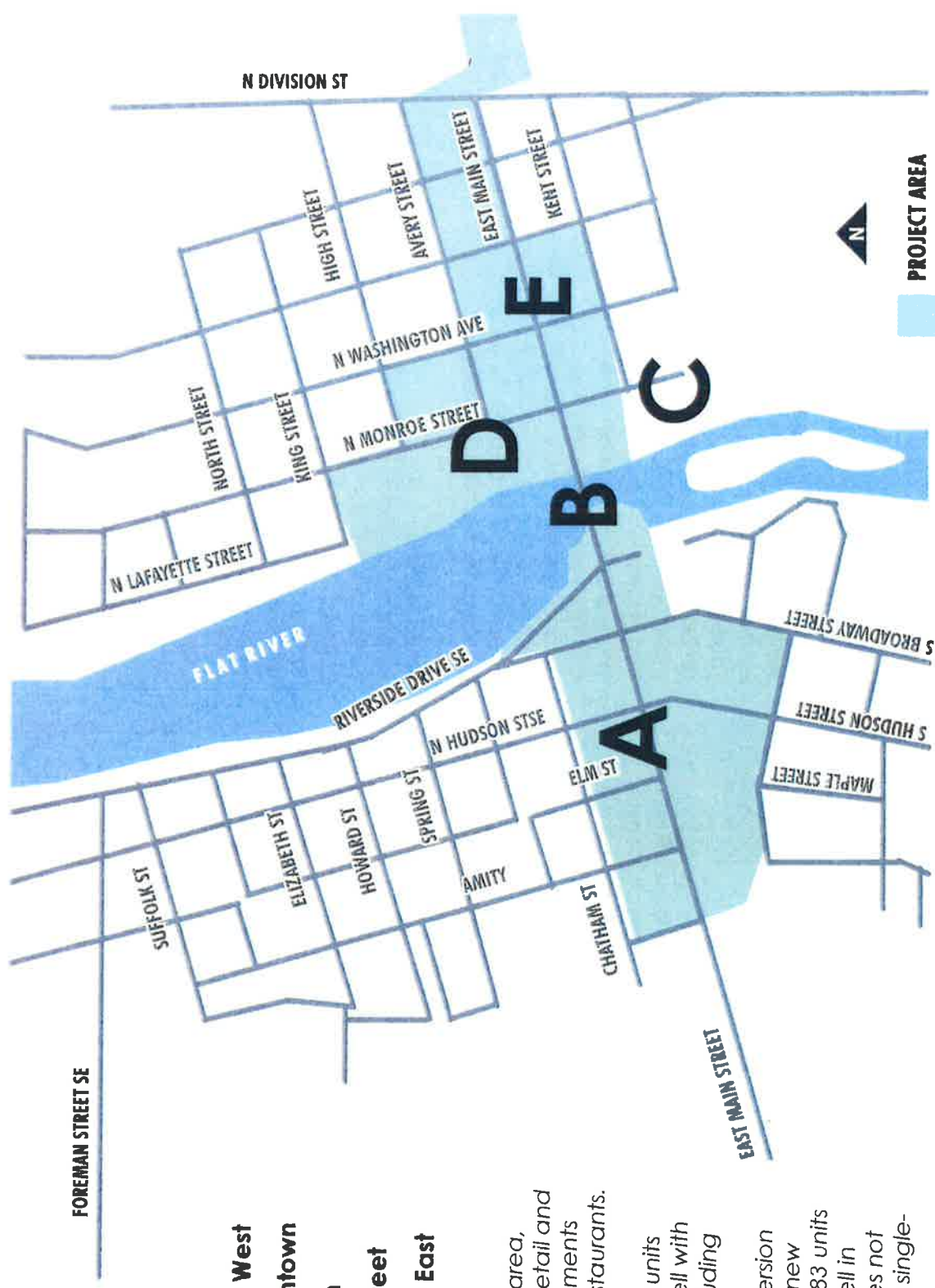
## Smart Growth

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.

|                                                                                     |                                 |                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>SAFETY</b>                   | Improve pedestrian access in the downtown area and slow traffic        |
|  | <b>BUSINESS ACCESS/ PARKING</b> | Increase parking and access by all modes to the downtown               |
|   | <b>RECREATION</b>               | Expand recreation opportunities including trails and river access      |
|    | <b>HISTORY</b>                  | Preserve unique historical features to help reinforce a sense of place |
|    | <b>AESTHETICS</b>               | 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.



## AESTHETICS

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

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



## RECREATION

Improve access to the Flat River

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.



## BUSINESS ACCESS/PARKING

Improve parking in the Downtown business district

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

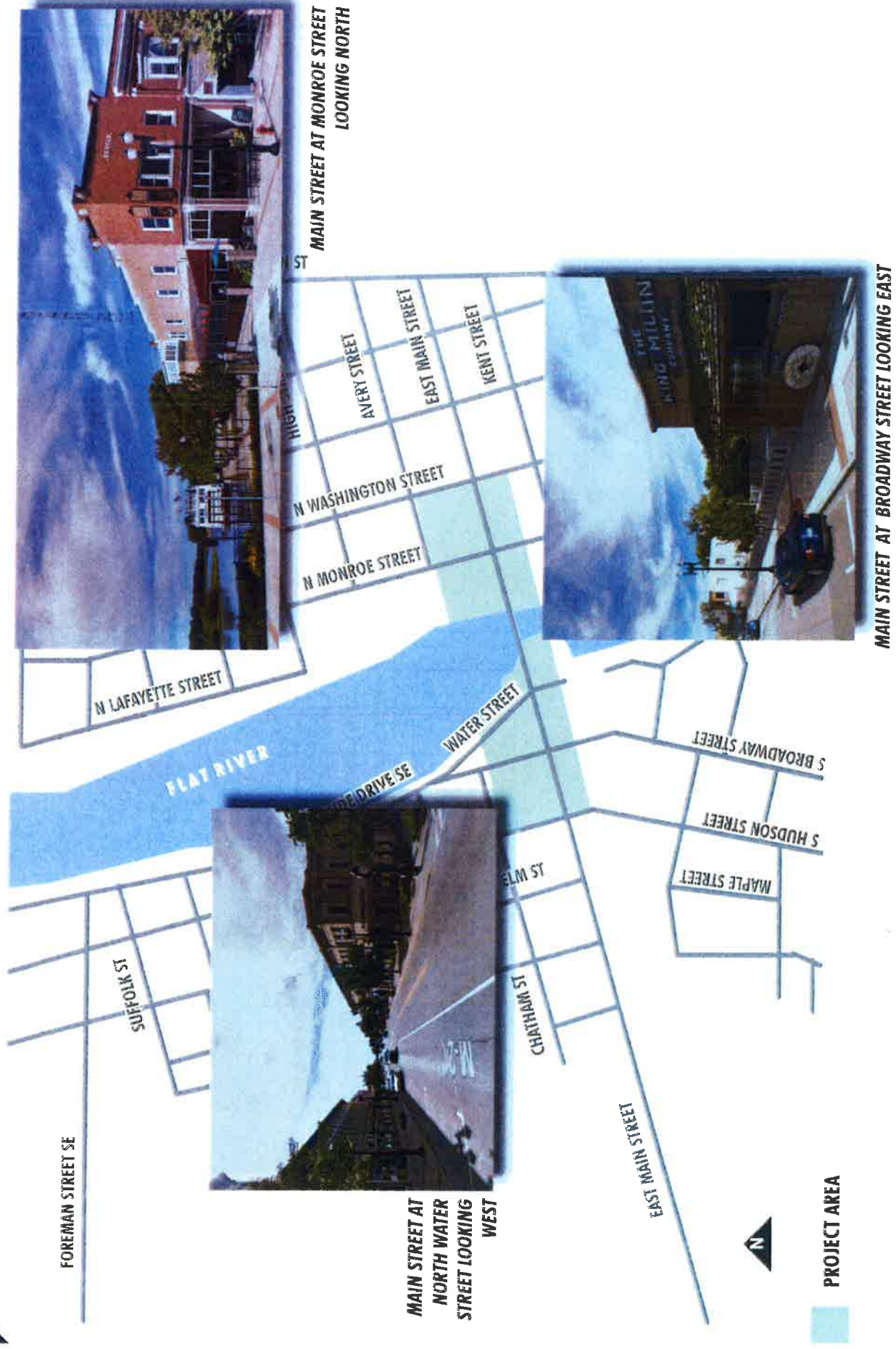
Streetscape improvements will add on-street parking spaces to the downtown to serve businesses, and additional parking will be accommodated within the existing framework of the downtown

## **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



# ► 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



# Community Defined Priority Key



OTHER (WITH FACILITIES USING SAFETY BULKING ACCESS)

PEDESTRIAN -VEHICULAR OR  
SITE DISTANCE CONFLICT

NO PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS 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



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.

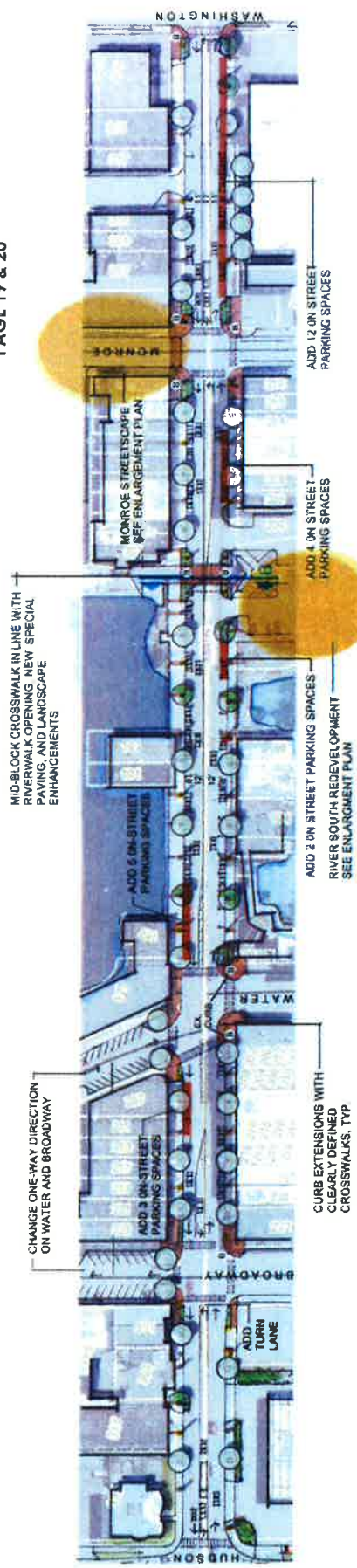
For the most part, the core of downtown has many great placemaking opportunities. Some of the key items that could be introduced are: better wayfinding signage to public parking and key destinations; increase on-street parking, lane width-reduction, and consistent streetscape amenities including benches, 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.

## 12

# Downtown Core Placemaking Plan

The Core Downtown will be a focal point for recreation, entertainment, and business. Streetscape enhancements will improve pedestrian access through proposed curb extensions (bump-outs), street trees, human scaled lighting, prominent crosswalks, and wayfinding signage.

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| LEGEND |                                                                                       | Community Defined Priority |   | Notes |                                                                                           |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|        | PROPOSED CURB EXTENSION (BUMP-OUT). SEE ENLARGEMENT PLAN FOR OPTIONAL TREATMENTS      | ✓                          | ✓ |       |                                                                                           |
|        | EXISTING STREET TREE                                                                  | ✓                          | ✓ |       | CURRENTLY THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF STREET TREE CONDITIONS, IN GRATES AND IN RAISED CURB     |
|        | PROPOSED STREET TREE. SEE STREETSCAPE AMENITIES PLAN FOR OPTIONAL TREATMENTS          | ✓                          | ✓ |       |                                                                                           |
|        | PROPOSED ON-STREET PARKING                                                            | ✓                          | ✓ |       | PROPOSED REMOVAL OF EVERY OTHER FUTURE. USE REMOVED FIXTURES ON EAST AND WEST STREETSCAPE |
|        | PROPOSED PERIOD STYLE STREET LIGHTS TO REMAIN                                         | ✓                          | ✓ |       |                                                                                           |
|        | 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 Key |                                                           |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓                              | AESTHETICS                                                |
| ✓                              | RECREATION                                                |
| ✓                              | PARKING / ACCESS                                          |
| ✓                              | OTHER (BIKE FACILITIES, 108 (NNY SAFETY BUSINESS ACCESS)) |

## ► Downtown Core Placemaking Plan



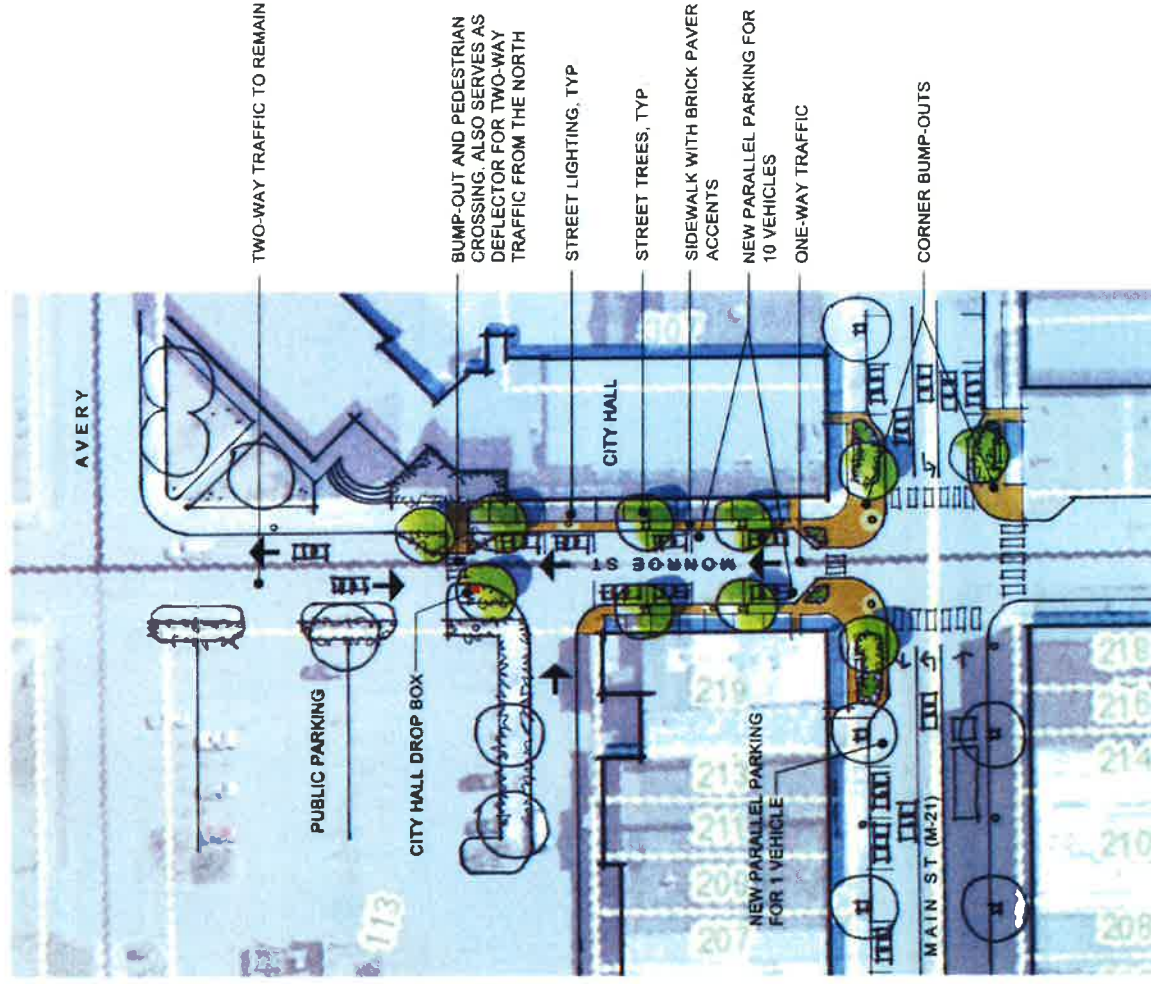
# Monroe Street Placemaking Plan

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

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.

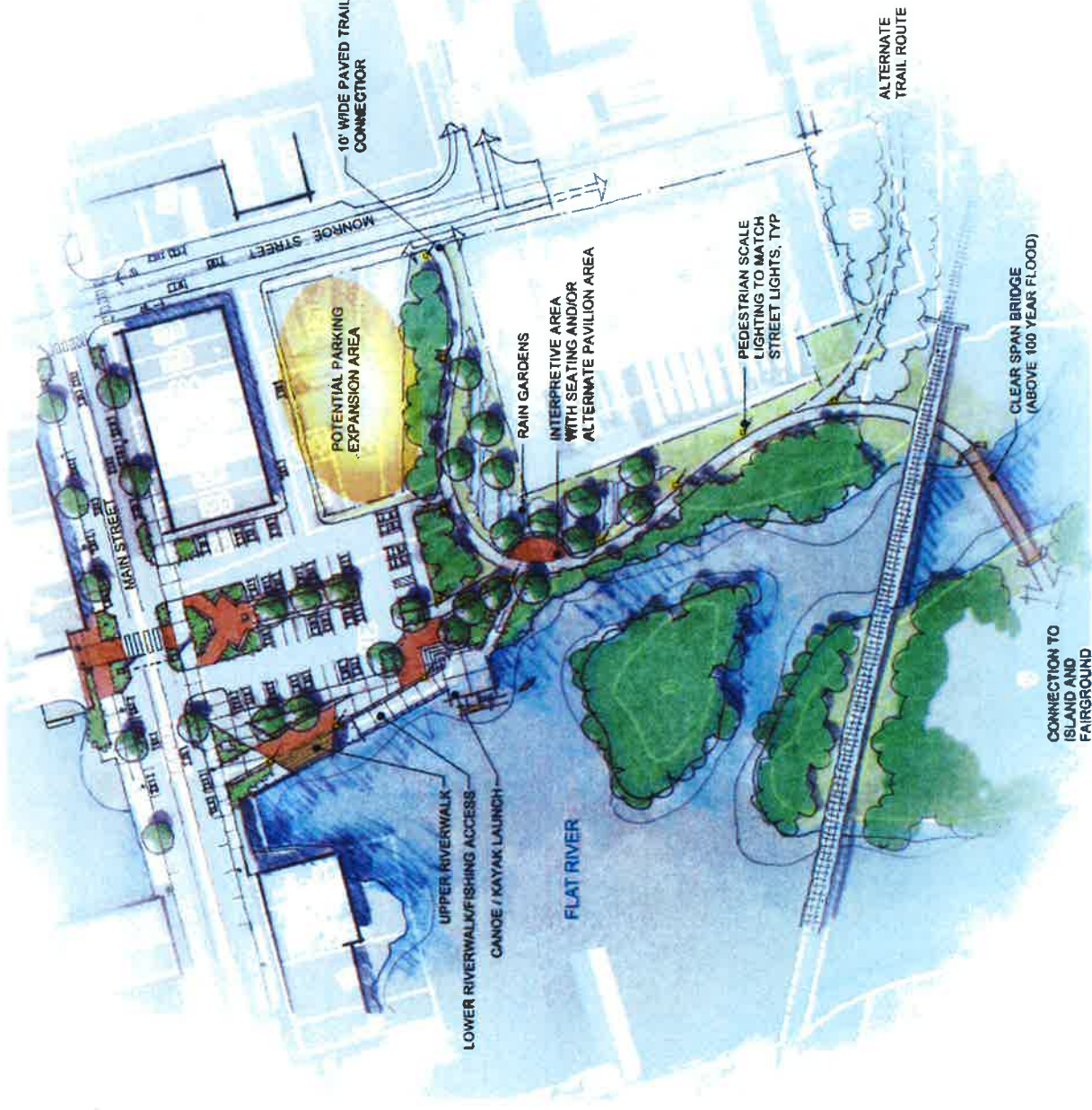
# River South Placemaking Plan

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 for opportunities.

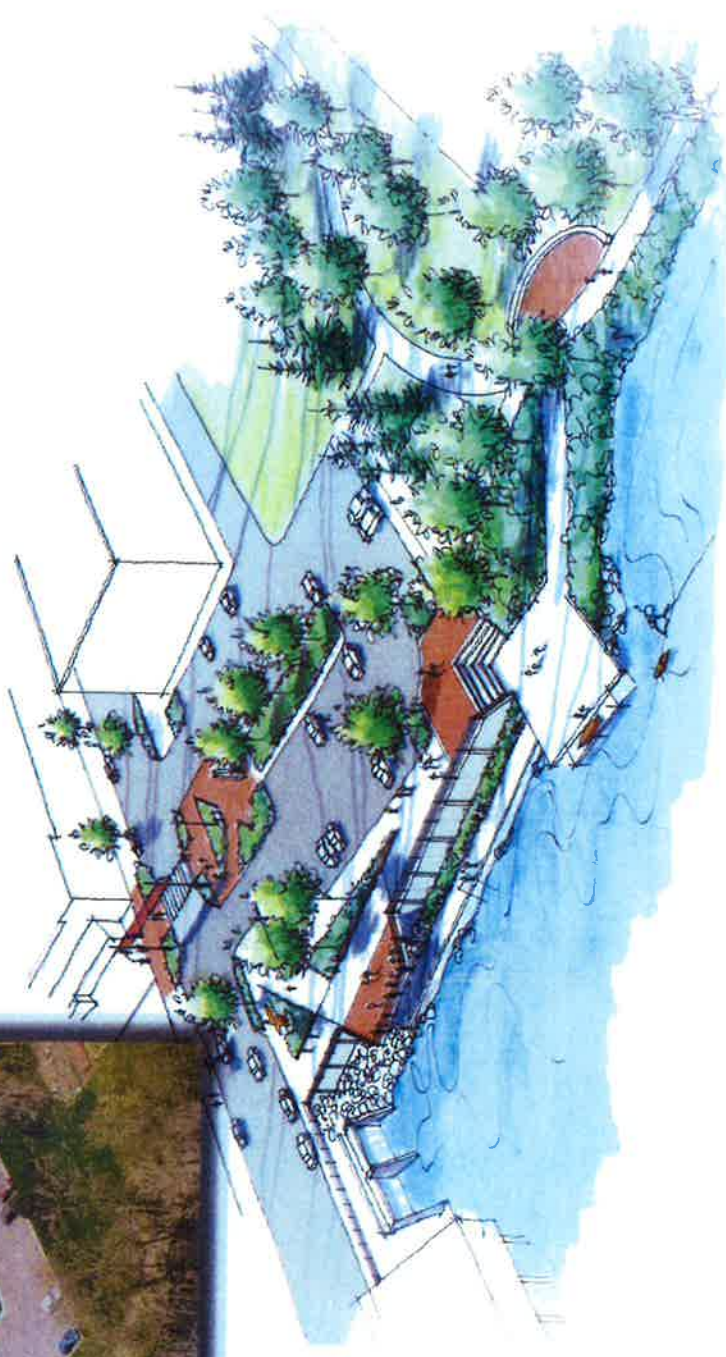
River South will offer new opportunities for Lowell residents and visitors alike to experience recreation and entertainment opportunities on an enhanced river edge featuring pedestrian trails, interpretive signage, rain gardens, seating areas, a canoe and kayak launch, and fishing access.



## ► 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.



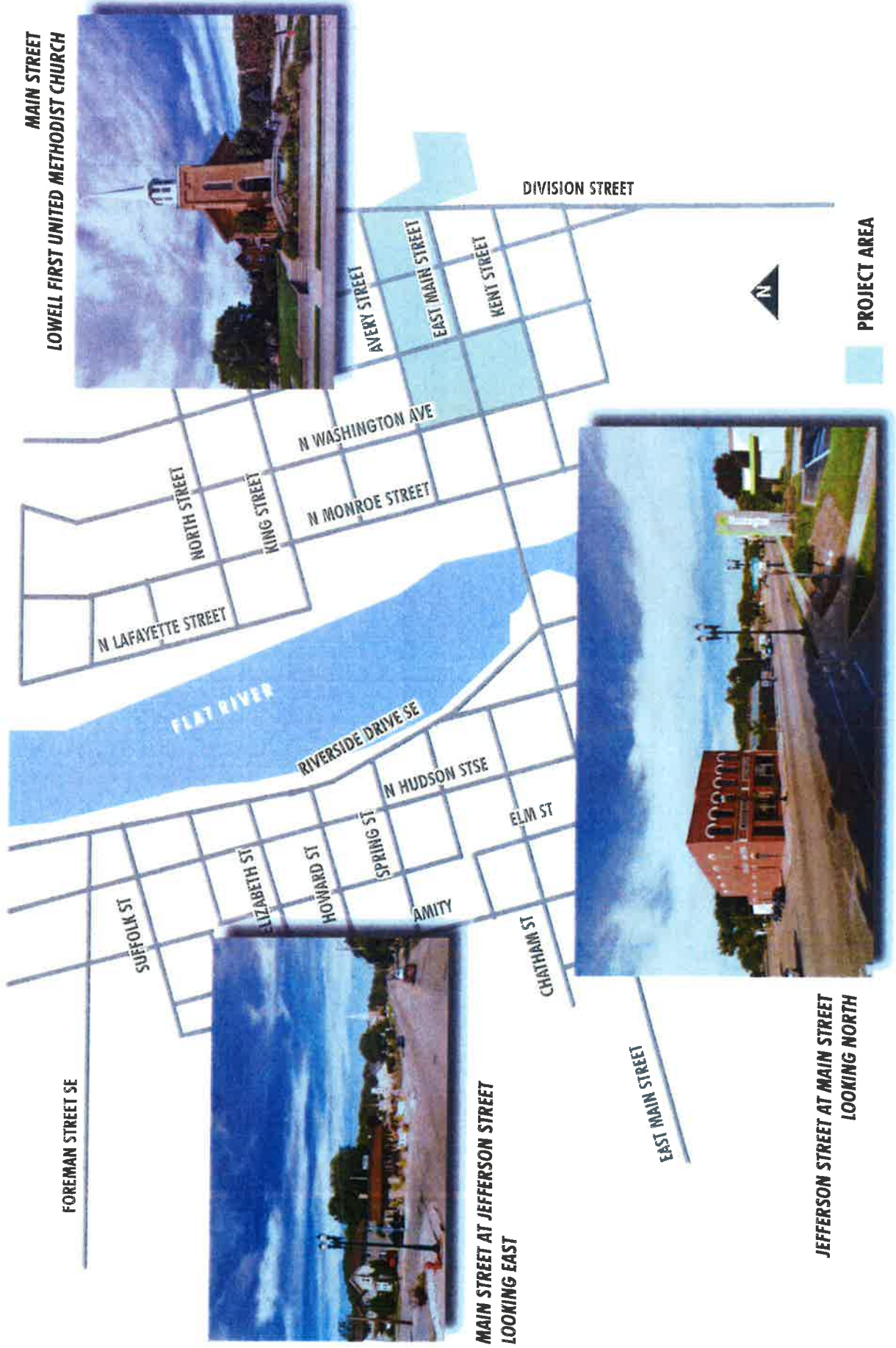
PROPOSED

## **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 //

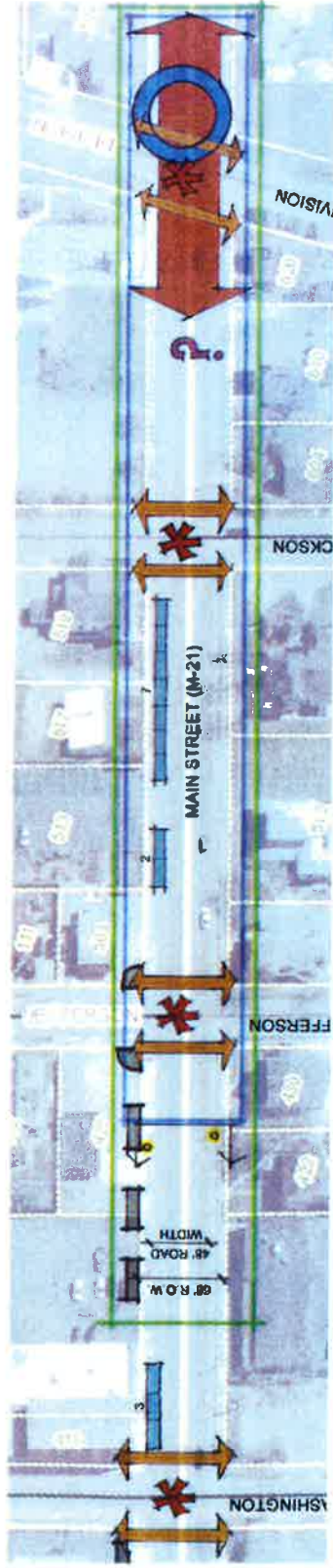
Re-establish parkways between the street and sidewalk. Add bike markings and wider sidewalks, while extending the core sub area street configuration and streetscape east, resulting in traffic calming at the eastern gateway of the downtown.

# Downtown East Analysis

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

## Community Defined Priority Key

- ✓ AESTHETICS
- RECREATION
- PARKING / ACCESS
- OTHER (UNE / 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 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

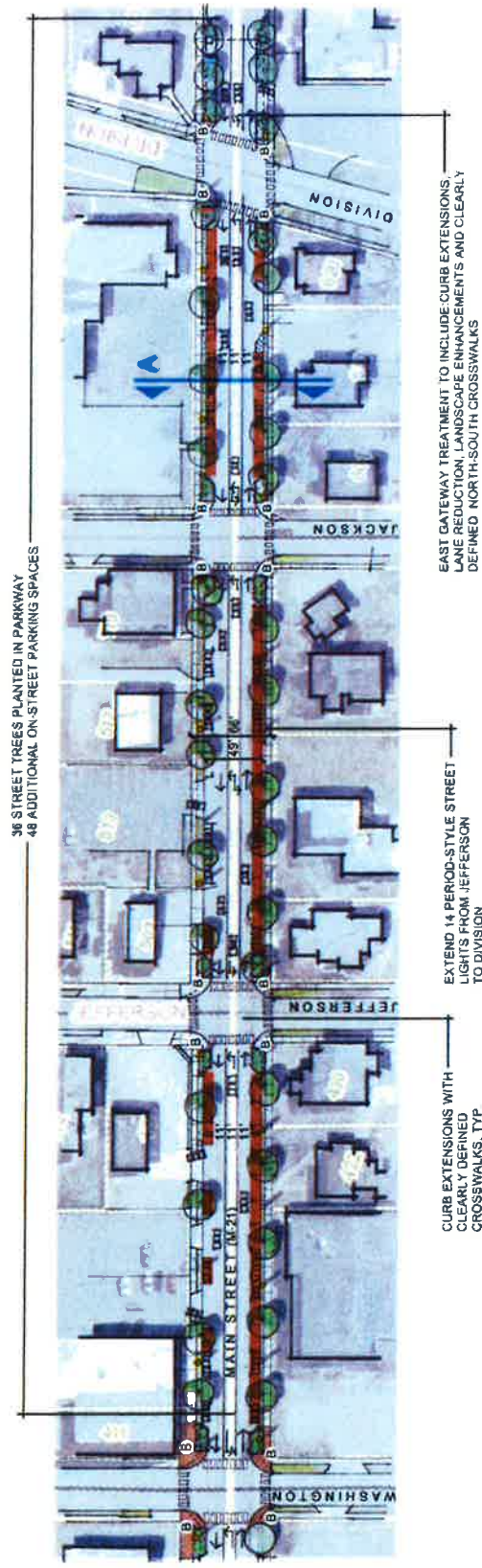
The Downtown East Sub Area features ample existing road width to propose multiple lane configuration options, including: lane width reduction, on-street parking, center boulevard, sharrow markings, and possible bike lanes if desired.

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
- USED GATEWAY SIGN. SEE SIGNAGE PLAN FOR WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY SIGNAGE OPTIONS

## Community Defined Priority Notes

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

## 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

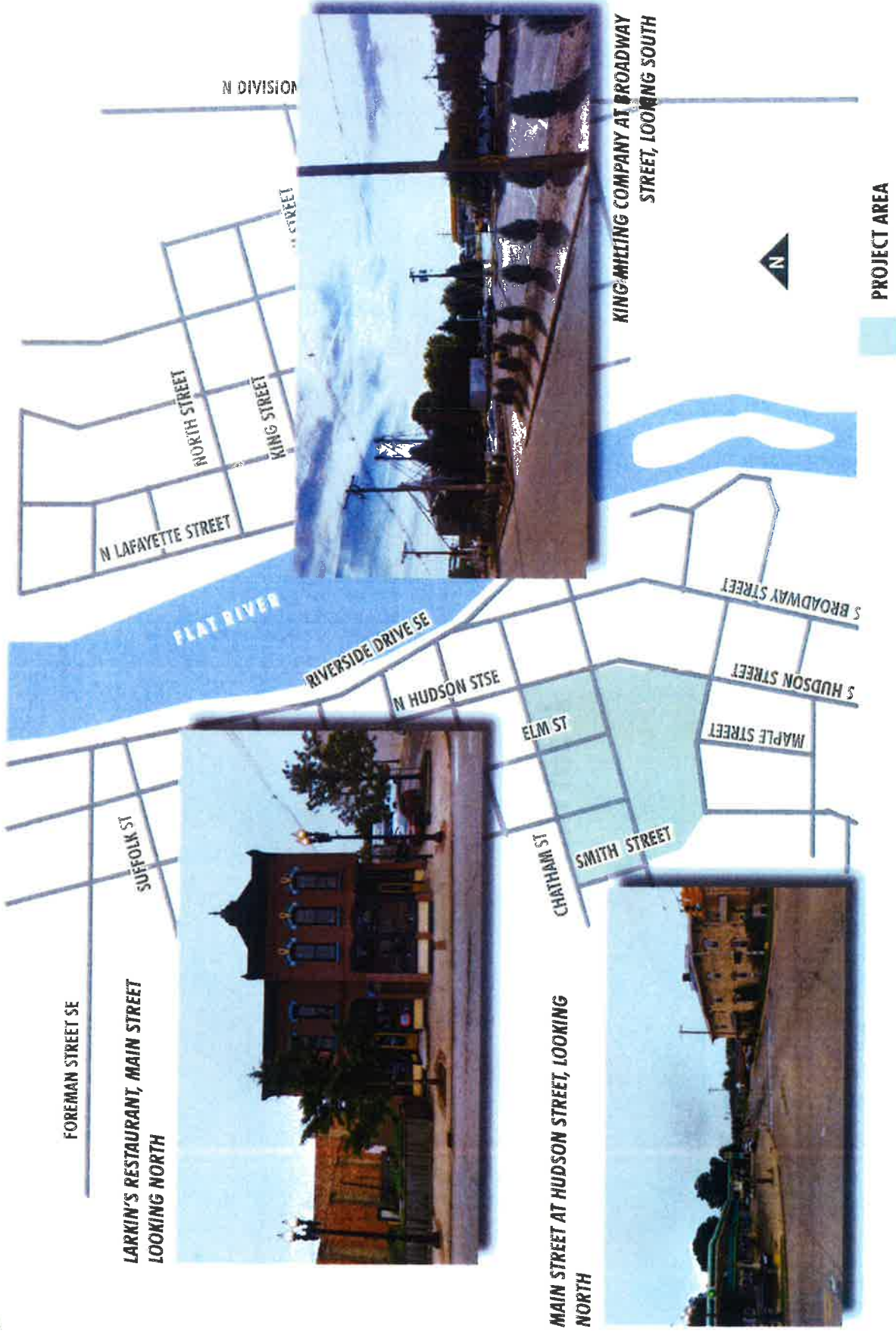
Bump-outs with attractive flower beds provide a buffer between vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and can be maintained seasonally by area garden groups.

## **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

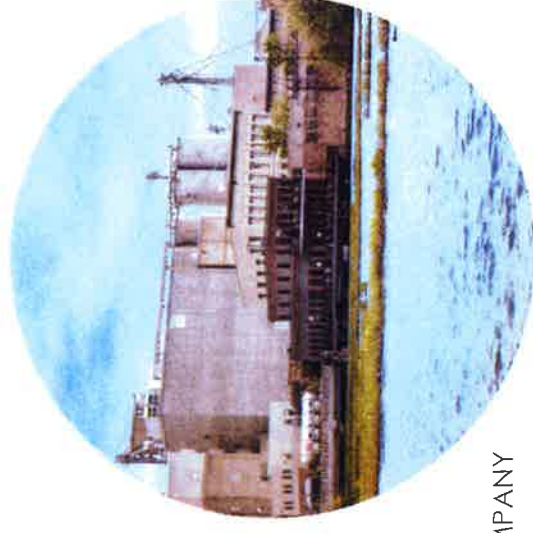
## Main Street from Smith to Hudson

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.

► **BIGGEST CHALLENGE //**  
Lack of urban form and formal “gateway” to Downtown Lowell.

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

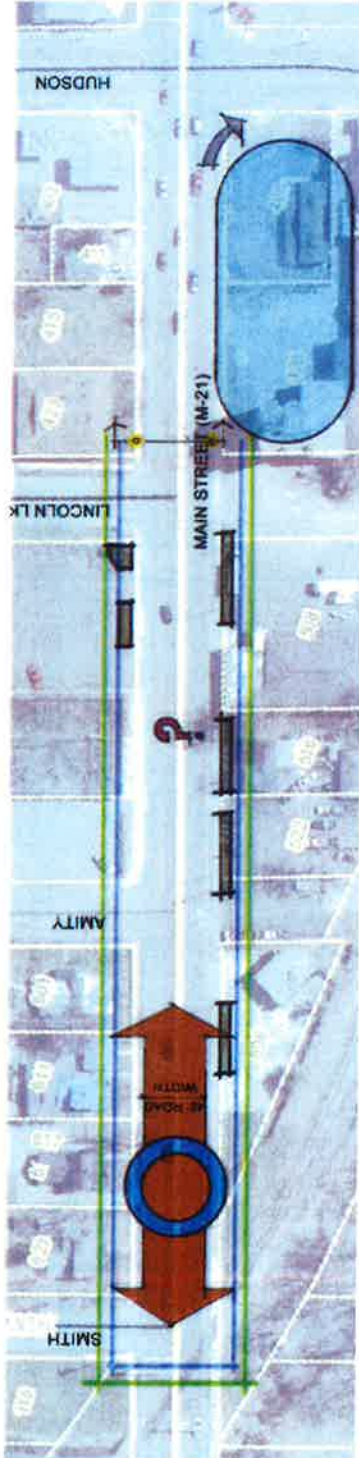
► **BEST OPPORTUNITY //**  
Continue the urban form from the Downtown Core sub area west to Smith Street.

# 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 PLACES IN 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.



# 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.



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.

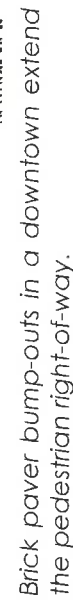
Below is a description of some of the streetscape modifications that are included in this plan.

## **Bump-Outs**

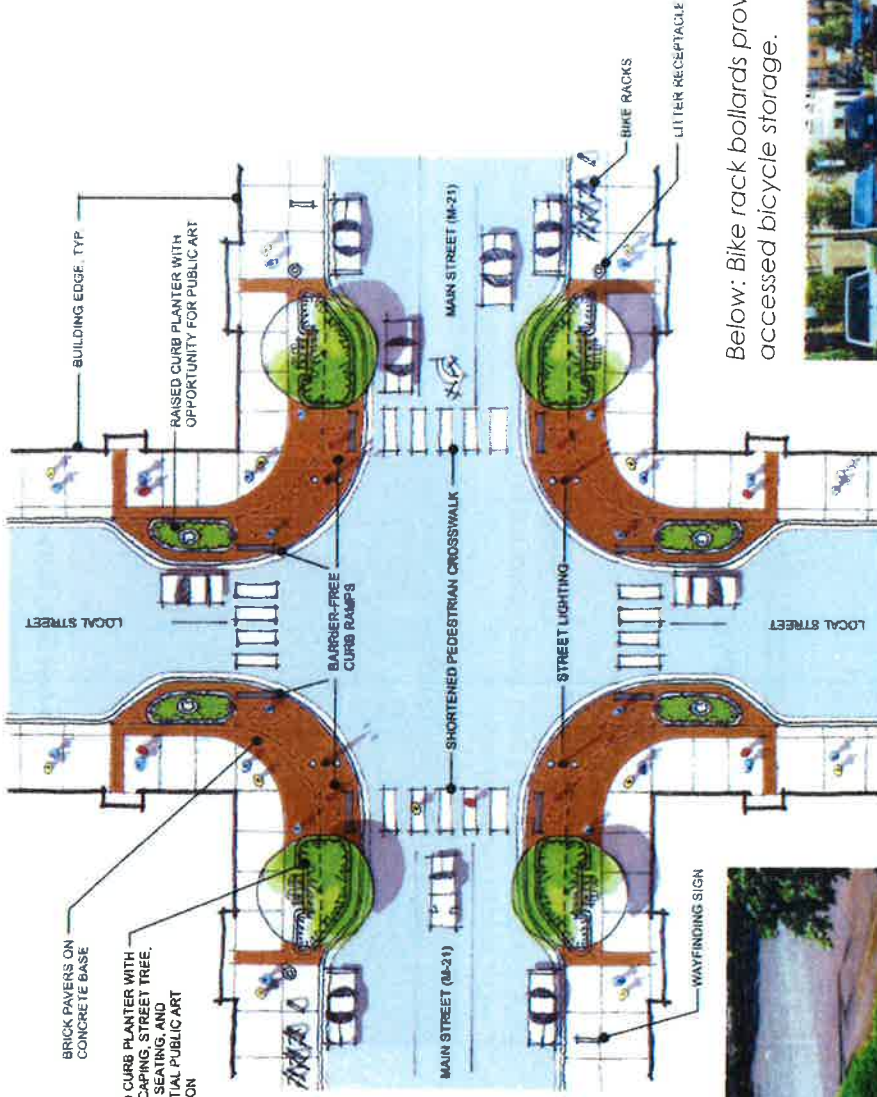
Bump-outs are primarily used to extend the sidewalk, reducing the crossing distance and allowing pedestrians to cross. Approaching motorists can make eye contact with the pedestrian since they are no longer hidden behind vehicles parked on the street.

## **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*



# 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 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 sightseeing. With the usage of directional (static) signs people will be guided along their path towards destination(s).

Source: [designworkplan.com/about](https://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
2. → DOWNTOWN  
→ RIVERFRONT  
→ LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL
3. → PUBLIC PARKING  
→ DOWNTOWN  
→ RIVERFRONT
4. → PUBLIC PARKING  
→ LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL  
→ FAIRGROUNDS
5. → CITY HALL / POLICE  
→ RIVERFRONT ACCESS  
→ PUBLIC PARKING
6. → PUBLIC PARKING  
→ CITY HALL  
→ SHOWBOAT / RIVERFRONT
7. → PUBLIC PARKING  
→ CITY HALL / POLICE  
→ SHOWBOAT / RIVERFRONT
8. → DOWNTOWN  
→ SHOWBOAT RIVERFRONT  
→ PUBLIC PARKING

● PROPOSED GATEWAY SIGN/BANNERS

● EXISTING OVER-STREET STREAM BANNER

## EXAMPLES



TRAILBLAZER / WAYFINDING



GATEWAY SIGN

## ● TRAILBLAZER WAYFINDING SIGNS

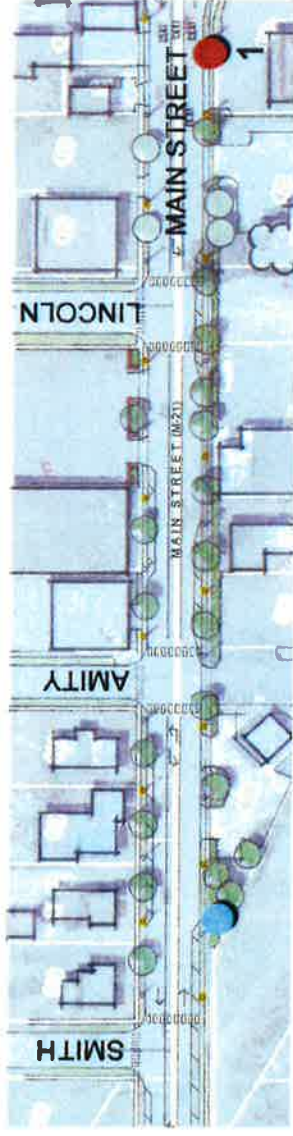
Trailblazer and Wayfinding signs are shown at key sites in the Downtown corridor. Beginning at Hudson Street in the Downtown West subarea (1) and (2), act as guides toward the Downtown, the riverfront, and Lowell Fairgrounds. Other trailblazers (3) and (4) in the Downtown Core alert visitors to Public 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

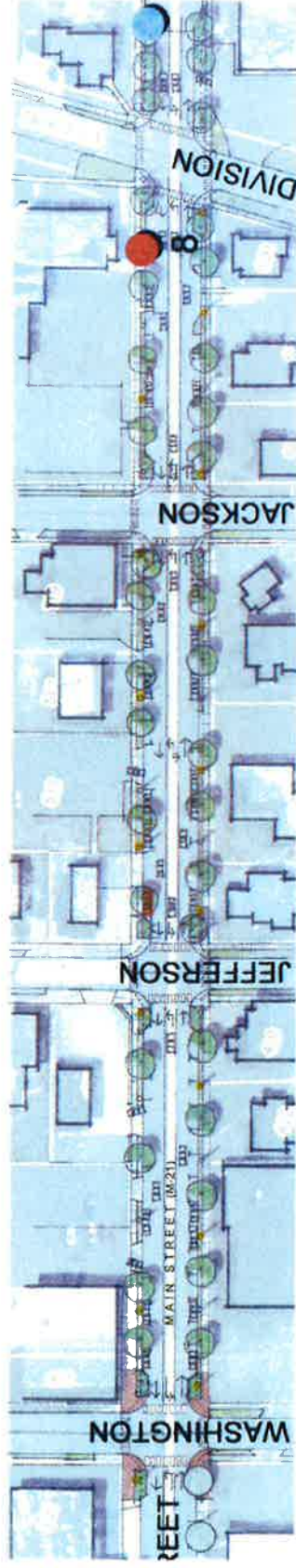
## DOWNTOWN WEST



## 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

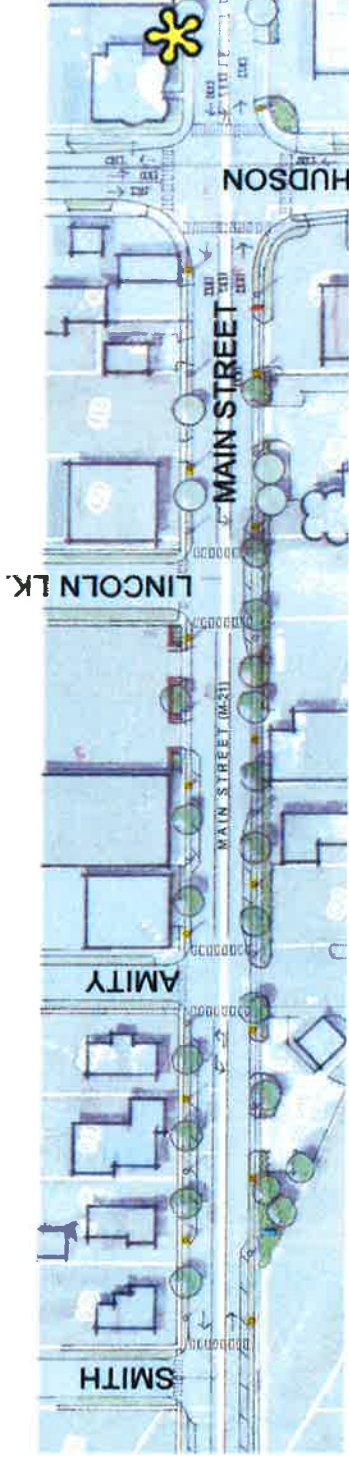
 POTENTIAL PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION LOCATIONS

## EXAMPLES



# Public Art

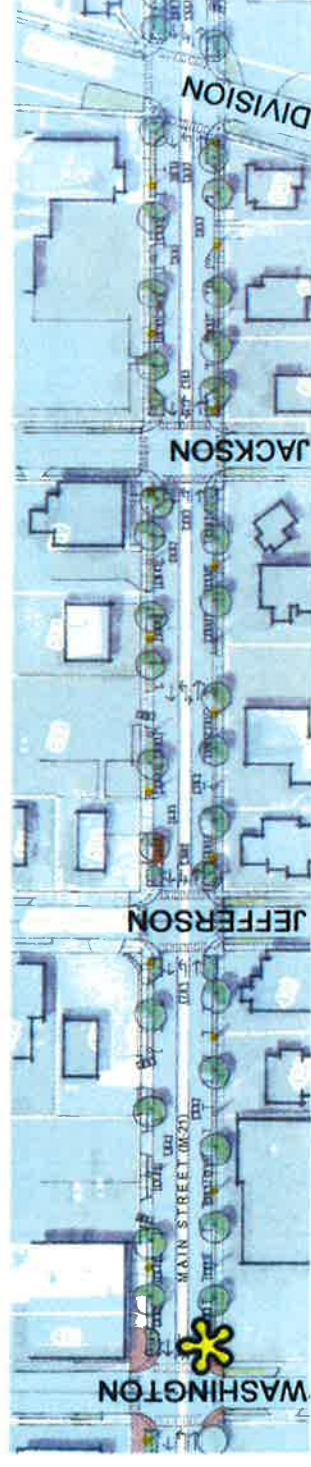
## DOWNTOWN WEST



## DOWNTOWN CORE



## DOWNTOWN EAST



# ► Action Strategies

In order to promote strategic development in the downtown area, it is important to outline an action plan. This identifies specific projects that will be given priority for achieving the vision of this plan. Listed below are projects that are recommended in the near term (from 2019 to 2024 five years) to implement this Placemaking Plan for downtown Lowell.

## **South Riverwalk / Overlook (Pages 17-18)**

The implementation of the South Riverwalk Placemaking Plan will enhance recreational and entertainment options in the community. By connecting providing additional river access and additional recreational and gathering spaces, the riverwalk will natural extend south of Main Street and allow a larger area to be enjoyed by the community. This space can also be used to implement aspects of the City's Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan.

## **Bump-outs (Page 34)**

Pedestrian safety and access will be encouraged through the addition of bump-outs in the downtown area. These reduce the crossing distance on streets, improve driver visibility of pedestrians, improve downtown aesthetics, and provide increased access to surrounding businesses. Therefore, they are an important element for a creating safe and accessible place for pedestrians. The City will need to coordinate this work with MDOT carefully to ensure that the final implemented design is acceptable to all parties.



## **Colorized Lanes and Intersections**

Colorized lanes and intersections provide a more defined space for different modes of transportation. Bikes and vehicles are given their own defined place, which reduces conflicts of interest between cyclists and motorists.

## **Tactical Projects**

Before a permanent structure is built, it can be helpful to set up temporary situations and observe the public response. This provides insight on the design that can best accommodate public preferences. For example, the layout of a bump-out can be adjusted by using temporary bollards until the most suitable design is identified. This increases the public acceptance of a new design and tests new ideas without requiring a large public investment.



## **Gateway Signage**

The addition of gateway signage will provide a visual transition from the outskirts of the City and surrounding Townships to the downtown core. Gateway signage can signal a sense of arrival to a place and increase awareness of the area. This will help define the public realm in downtown Lowell as a unique shared community place.

## **Mini Circles**

These elements can provide traffic calming measures without compromising efficient traffic circulation and levels of service at key intersections. Portions of the City presently experience high traffic speeds through the area threaten pedestrian safety. Therefore, adding mini circles can improve safety and accessibility for drivers and pedestrians.

# Conclusion

## Street Parking

The addition of additional on-street parking in the downtown area (primarily on side streets) will increase safety, accessibility, and parking capacity. Pedestrians will have closer access to businesses and traffic speeds will be reduced from narrowed traffic lanes and additional visual obstructions that tend to naturally reduce traffic speeds. This the City may also explore methods to control on-street parking and encourage turnover with metering, permitting, odd-even parking, or other strategies.

## Focus on "B" Sides of Buildings

The form and aesthetic of "B" sides of buildings downtown should be considered as a placemaking and design strategy. "B" sides of buildings include the rear and sides which do not necessarily face a public right-of-way or major street, but nonetheless contribute to the public realm and the experience of visitors to downtown. These facades should not simply act as a wall of the building, but should contain interesting features such as art, balconies, lighting, planters, windows, and similar features.



The City of Lowell Downtown Placemaking Plan represents a community-driven and publicly-supported implementation plan for enhancing the physical appearance and overall functioning of Lowell's public realm. The public realm, being the publicly-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