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PLANNING COMMISSION-CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CITY OF LOWELL, MICHIGAN
AGENDA
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M.
AT THE
LOWELL CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SECOND FLOOR
301 EAST MAIN STREET

1. CALL TO ORDER: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
 - a. October 9, 2017 – Regular Meeting
4. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA
5. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Short Term Rentals
 - b. Zoning Ordinance Amendments
6. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Schneider Manor Site Plan Review – 725 Bowes
 - b. Lowell Downtown Placemaking Plan
7. STAFF REPORT
8. COMMISSIONERS REMARKS
9. ADJOURNMENT

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION-CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CITY OF LOWELL, MICHIGAN
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF
MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2017, AT 7:00 P.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL.**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Barker.

Present: Commissioners David Cadwallader, Marty Chambers, Jim Salzwedel, and Chair Barker.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Clerk Susan Ullery and Williams and Works Planner Andy Moore.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

IT WAS MOVED BY CHAMBERS and seconded by SALZWEDEL to approve the agenda as written.

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

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

IT WAS MOVED BY CADWALLADER and seconded by CHAMBERS that the minutes of the September 11, 2017 regular meeting be approved as written.

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

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

Students from Lowell High School stated they were attending the Planning Commission meeting in order to receive credit from their government class.

5. **OLD BUSINESS**

a. **Short-Term Rentals.**

Andy Moore of Williams and Works reviewed the terms of a Special Land Use for the Commission. Moore advised he attended the Committee of the Whole meeting last month where the City Council directed the Planning Commission to develop a zoning amendment to address short-term rentals as a Special Land Use. This would likely be in the form of an amendment to various district chapters along with regulatory standards added to Chapter 17.

Moore explained there is an enforcement process and provisions written into the ordinance already, so if there are problems and complaints, or they are found to be in violation, there is a way by which we can revoke or suspend the Special Land Use permit.

The Commission discussed the following topics as to Special Land Use and had some recommendations. a) Minimum duration of stay; the Commission decided three days for minimum

duration of stay. b) Zoning district limitations; the Commission agreed on Suburban, R1 and C2 for Zoning District limitations. c) Minimum lot area requirement; Chair Barker advised Moore to stay with what is stated in the Ordinance for minimum lot area and for d) Minimum floor area requirements; e) Maximum number of guests; the Commission agreed on fifteen guests; f) Additional parking requirements; the Commission agreed on one space for every bedroom.

6. **NEW BUSINESS.**

a. **Zoning Ordinance Amendments.**

1. **District Standards (Chapters 5-13, 16, and 16A).**

Chair Barker recommended that because of parking, signs, administration, and short-term rentals all affect those districts, the Commission would like to get these resolved before looking at District Standards.

2. **Parking.**

Chair Barker recommended parking be discussed during the January meeting. Moore advised this would be specifically downtown.

3. **Signs.**

Chair Barker recommended Signs be discussed during the January meeting.

4. **Administration and Enforcement (Chapter 22).**

Chair Barker recommended Andy Moore bring Chapter 22, Administration and Enforcement to the Commission at their November meeting.

5. **Short-Term Rentals.**

This was discussed under Old Business.

7. **STAFF REPORT**

Staff report was presented by City Clerk Sue Ullery. The Commission was also reminded that there will be a joint Planning Commission meeting with Lowell and Vergennes Township on October 23, 2017 at 7:00 at Lowell Township Hall.

8. **COMMISSIONERS REMARKS**

Commissioner Chambers mentioned that at the City Council meeting, he forgot to thank Mark Mundt for a tour of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Chambers advised it was very interesting and encouraged all commissioners to tour the plant if they have the opportunity.

IT WAS MOVED BY SALZWEDEL and seconded by CADWALLADER to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Bruce Barker, Chair

Susan S. Ullery, City Clerk

Proposed Definition:

Short-Term Rental. The rental or subletting of any dwelling for a term of 30 days or less, but the definition does not include the use of campgrounds, hotel rooms, transitional housing operated by a non-profit entity, group homes such as nursing homes and adult foster care homes, hospitals, or housing provided by a substance abuse rehabilitation clinic, mental-health facility, or other health-care related clinic.

Proposed Districts:

SR, R-1 and C-2, only as a special land use.

Proposed Regulations:

EE. *Short-Term Rental*

1. Exemptions: Any member of a family, as well as that family member's guests, may occupy a dwelling as long as that family member's family owns the dwelling. Also exempted are family guests, exchange students, visitors, medical caregivers, and child caregivers, without remuneration to the owner.
2. A short-term rental is permitted with special land use approval only in the SR, R-1 and C-2 districts.
3. A short-term rental shall require a minimum stay of three (3) days and shall not exceed 30 days.
4. A short-term rental shall meet the dimensional requirements for the district in which it is located.
5. The maximum occupancy for a short-term rental is two (2) guests per bedroom, but in no case shall occupancy exceed fifteen (15) guests per dwelling. The Planning Commission may permit additional occupancy, up to two (2) additional guests per finished floor, if the following requirements are determined to be met:
 - a. The short-term rental affords sufficient visual privacy and/or screening from adjacent residential properties;
 - b. The short-term rental is located on a lot of two (2) or more acres;
 - c. The short-term rental provides sufficient off-street parking to accommodate the additional vehicles.
6. One (1) off-street parking space shall be provided for each bedroom. Except for short-term rentals in the C-2 district, all parking shall be off-street and provided on the lot where the short-term rental is located.
7. A host shall notify, in writing, the Lowell Area Fire Department and Lowell Police Department of the dates and number of guests for each unique stay.
8. A host shall provide the City with a 24-hour telephone number with which the host or host's agent can be reached in case of emergency and/or enforcement matters.

9. A host shall provide an in-unit notice in a conspicuous place that includes the property address, a 24-hour telephone number with which the host or host's agent can be reached, all applicable rules and ordinances related to the short-term rental, and the maximum occupancy of the dwelling unit as permitted by this subsection.
10. Short-term rental shall be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the customary use of a single-family dwelling. The unit shall provide safe, reasonable, and adequate sleeping arrangements in traditional bedrooms with proper egress or as consistent with law. The use of campers, tents or similar arrangements to provide additional occupancy on the premises is prohibited.
11. Occupants shall not encroach on neighboring properties.
12. The host shall provide sufficient waste receptacles substantially screened from view; and the premises shall be maintained free of debris and unwholesome substances. Garbage must be kept in a closed container and disposed of on a regular weekly schedule.
13. The appearance of the short-term rental shall not conflict with the residential character of the neighborhood. The dwelling shall be properly maintained per all applicable local and state codes, and kept in good repair so that the use in no way detracts from the general appearance of the neighborhood.
14. The host or host's agent must be available to accept telephone calls at all times that the short-term rental is rented. The host or host's agent must have a key to the unit and be capable of being physically present at the unit within 60 minutes to address issues, unless arrangements are made for a substitute person to address issues within the same timeframe.

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MEMORANDUM

To: City of Lowell Planning Commission
Date: November 8, 2017
From: Andy Moore, AICP
Nathan R. Mehmed
RE: **Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments**

With this memorandum, please find proposed zoning amendments to update Chapter 22 – Administration and Enforcement and draft language to regulate short-term rentals as a special land use in the City. Both have been previously discussed by the Planning Commission and our drafts reflect previous discussions and direction.

Administration and Enforcement

The attached language to amend Chapter 22 includes a new subsection C within Section 22.02 that addresses zoning compliance permits. The City has issued zoning permits for some time, so these permits should be supported by enabling language within the Zoning Ordinance. We also clarified the language for zoning amendments and provided review criteria for the Planning Commission and City Council when reviewing amendment requests.

We have also included a new section on public hearing and notice requirements that outline compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and a new section which provides direction for fees and applicant escrow accounts for applications and appeals.

Short-Term Rentals

Also included is a first draft for language to address short-term rentals. It includes a proposed definition for “short-term rental” and adds short-term rentals as a special land use to the SR Suburban Residential, R-1 Residential, and C-2 Central Business districts. We have also included site design standards for short-term rentals in Chapter 17 – Special Land Uses, which address a number of potential concerns. These standards include length of stay, maximum occupancy, parking requirements, public safety notification, host contact information, and in-unit postings.

Please note that this amendment language does not address “homestays,” or the renting out of a single room or rooms within an owner-occupied dwelling while the owner is present. In conjunction with addressing short-term rentals, the Planning Commission may wish to adjust the definition for “bed and breakfast” to clarify that bed and breakfasts are owner-occupied. This would help to avoid confusion and regulatory conflict with short-term rentals in the City.

As always, please feel free to contact us if there are questions or comments. We look forward to reviewing this with you at our November 13 meeting.

CHAPTER 22. - ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

SECTION 22.01. - ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.

- A. Authority. Except where herein otherwise stated, the provisions of this ordinance shall be administered by the zoning enforcement officer, or such other official or officials as may be designated by the city council. The zoning enforcement officer shall have the power to:
1. Issue certificates of occupancy;
 2. Make inspections of buildings and premises necessary to carry out the duties of administration and enforcement of this ordinance;
 3. Issue and serve appearance tickets on any person with respect to any violation of this ordinance where there is reasonable cause to believe that the person has committed such an offense;
 4. Maintain and safely keep copies of all plans other than for single-family dwellings and fees submitted with such application, and the same shall form a part of the records of his office and shall be available to the council and all other officials of the city.
 5. Perform such other functions necessary and proper to enforce and administer the provisions of this ordinance.

(Ord. No. 95-06, § 1, 12-27-95)

SECTION 22.02. - PERMITS.

- A. Building permits.
1. No building, structure, or commercial sign shall be erected, altered, moved, or substantially repaired unless a building permit shall have been first issued for such work.
 2. No building permit shall be issued for the erection, alteration, or use of any building or structure or for the use of any land which is not in accordance with all provisions of this ordinance.
 3. The holder of every building permit for the construction, erection, alteration, repair, or moving of any building or structure shall notify the building inspector immediately upon completion of the work authorized by the permit for a final inspection.
- B. Certificate of occupancy.
1. No vacant land shall be used and no existing use of land shall be changed to a different class of use unless a certificate of occupancy is first obtained for the new or different use.

2. No building or structure which is hereafter erected or altered shall be occupied or used unless and until a certificate of occupancy shall have been issued for such building or structure.
3. Certificates of occupancy, as required by the currently adopted Building Code for the City of Lowell, shall also constitute certification of compliance with the zoning ordinance.
4. A record of all certificates of occupancy issued shall be kept on file in the office of the zoning enforcement officer and copies shall be furnished upon request to any person owning or renting the property which is the subject of the Certificate.
5. Applications for certificates of occupancy shall be made in writing to the building inspector on a form furnished by the City of Lowell. Certificates shall be issued within ten (10) days after receipt of such application if the building or structure or use of land is in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance and the other applicable ordinances of the City of Lowell.

C. Zoning Compliance Permits.

1. No permit or approval shall be issued for any use, building, construction, work, alteration, addition, or improvement to land or land division, until a zoning compliance permit has been issued by the zoning enforcement officer under the terms and provisions of this Ordinance.
2. The issuance of any other approval or certification of a site plan, variance, special land use permit, planned unit development, or other discretionary permit by any board or body under this Ordinance, shall not supersede or lessen compliance with this Ordinance and that any use, development, construction, improvement or work allowed under the discretionary permit, shall in all cases be further conditioned on compliance with this Ordinance and shall not be allowed until the issuance of the zoning compliance permit in accordance with this Chapter.
3. An application for a zoning compliance permit shall be signed by the owner of the land, or the owner's duly authorized agent and be accompanied by a site plan, where required under other provisions of this Ordinance, or a drawing, that provides the following information:
 - a. Scale, date and north point.
 - b. Location, shape and dimensions of the lot.
 - c. Legal description, tax parcel number and address of the lot.
 - d. Location, outline and dimensions of all existing and proposed structures and the location and extent of all uses not involving structures.
 - e. A clear description of existing and intended uses of all structures.
 - f. Additional information as required by the zoning enforcement officer for purposes of determining compliance with this Ordinance.

4. A zoning compliance permit shall be signed and issued by the zoning enforcement officer.
 - a. The application and all supporting documentation shall be considered a part of the permit.
 - b. Any alteration, false statement, change or other variation between the application and its supporting documents, and the use, construction, work, development, alteration, addition, or improvement authorized by the permit, shall render the permit null and void.
 - c. Any change, variation or alteration of the application and supporting documents, shall require resubmission to the zoning enforcement officer and the re-issuance of a new zoning compliance permit.
5. All fees due under this Ordinance, or under other Ordinances or policies of the City for municipal services and development of the work, must be paid in full prior to the issuance of the zoning compliance permit, unless exception is made by the appropriate board authorized to waive or delay the payment of the fees. The applicant shall furnish to the zoning enforcement officer, upon request, a title insurance policy or other acceptable evidence of ownership.
6. The zoning enforcement officer is authorized to prepare and furnish to the public, from time to time forms for application for a Zoning Compliance Permit.
7. The zoning enforcement officer is authorized to affix to the face of any zoning compliance permit any condition authorized by the Ordinance or under any discretionary permit issued by any Board under this Ordinance, or under other Ordinances or promulgated policies of the City, pertaining to the use, work or occupancy of the land and premises. Failure to comply with any condition shall render the zoning compliance permit null and void.

C.D. Fees for the inspection and issuance of building permits, certificates of occupancy, zoning compliance permits, or copies required or issued under the provisions of this ordinance, may be collected by the city in advance of issuance. The amount of such fees shall be established by resolution of the city council and shall cover the cost of inspection and supervision resulting from the enforcement of this ordinance.

(Ord. No. 95-06, § 1, 12-27-95)

SECTION 22.03. - ENFORCEMENT.

A. Violations.

1. A violation of this ordinance shall be a civil infraction subject to a fine. Increased civil fines will be imposed for repeated violations that occur within a six (6) month period. The civil fine for a first offense is fifty dollars (\$50.00). The civil fine for the first repeat offense is two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00). The civil fine for the second repeat offense is five hundred dollars (\$500.00). The city shall also be entitled to equitable relief to abate the violation and to such other relief as may be available to the city

pursuant to chapters 83 and 87 of the Michigan Revised Judicature Act, as amended.

2. Each day on which any violation of this ordinance occurs shall constitute a separate offense.
- B. Any building or structure which is erected, altered, or converted, or any use of premises or land which is begun or changed subsequent to the time of passage of this ordinance and is in violation of any of the provisions thereof, is hereby declared to be a public nuisance per se, and may be abated by order of any court of competent jurisdiction.

SECTION 22.04. - PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES.

- A. As a condition of approval of a site plan review, special land use, or planned unit development, the planning commission or zoning enforcement officer, whichever is designated as the approving authority, may require a financial guarantee of sufficient sum to assure the installation of those features or components of the approved activity or construction which are considered necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and of users or inhabitants of the proposed development. Such features or components, hereafter referred to as "improvements," may include, but shall not be limited to, streets, curbing, landscaping, fencing, walls, screening, lighting, drainage facilities, sidewalks, driveways, utilities, and similar items.
- B. Performance guarantees shall be processed in the following manner:
 1. Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall submit an itemized estimate of the cost of the required improvements which are subject to the performance guarantee, which shall then be reviewed by the zoning enforcement officer. The amount of the performance guarantee shall be one hundred (100) percent of the cost of purchasing of materials and installation of the required improvements, plus the cost of necessary engineering and a reasonable amount for contingencies.
 2. The required performance guarantee may be in the form of a cash deposit, certified check, irrevocable bank letter of credit, or surety bond acceptable to the city.
 3. Upon receipt of the required performance guarantee, the zoning enforcement officer shall issue a building permit for the subject development or activity, provided it is in compliance with all other applicable provisions of this ordinance and other applicable ordinances of the city.
 4. The zoning enforcement officer, upon the written request of the obliger, shall rebate portions of the performance guarantee upon determination that the improvements for which the rebate has been requested have been satisfactorily completed. The portion of the performance guarantee to be rebated shall be in the same amount as stated in the itemized cost estimate for the applicable improvements.
 5. When all of the required improvements have been completed, the obliger shall send written notice to the zoning enforcement officer of completion of said improvements.

Thereupon, the zoning enforcement officer shall inspect all of the improvements and approve, partially approve, or reject the improvements with a statement of the reasons for any rejections. If partial approval is granted, the cost of the improvement rejected shall be set forth. Where partial approval is granted, the obliger shall be released from liability pursuant to relevant portions of the performance guarantee, except for that portion sufficient to secure completion of the improvements not yet approved.

6. A record of authorized performance guarantees shall be maintained by the zoning enforcement officer.

(Ord. No. 95-06, § 1, 12-27-95)

SECTION 22.0405. - ~~ADOPTION AND ZONING~~ AMENDMENTS.

A. Procedure.

1. Written applications for the adoption of a ~~zoning change~~rezoning or amendment to this Ordinance may be initiated by:
 - a. Any public agency;
 - b. Any interested person;
 - c. The planning commission; or
 - d. The city council.
2. If said application is for a ~~rezoning change~~, an "interested person" shall either be the City or the owner of the property which will be considered for the ~~rezoning change~~, or, if not the owner of the property, the applicant shall submit a written statement from the property owner indicating his or her permission to submit such application.
3. Application for a zoning ~~change amendment~~ shall consist of:
 - a. A written statement from the property owner indicating his or her permission to submit such application, if applicable.
 - b. Payment of a fee, as established from time to time by the city council.
 - c. A map clearly showing the property to be considered for the zoning change, including all properties within one quarter (¼) mile of the subject property and the current zoning of all such properties.
 - d. A legal description of the property to be considered for the zoning change.
4. Following receipt of the completed application, the Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing. Notice of the public hearing shall be provided pursuant to Section 22.05 of this Ordinance and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, as amended.
5. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission shall forward the application, along with its recommendation, to the City Council for a final decision.

6. Review Criteria. In making a decision on a zoning amendment, the Planning Commission and City Council shall consider the following standards:

- a. If the proposed zoning amendment is consistent with the goals, policies, and future land use map of the City of Lowell Master Plan; or, if conditions have changed significantly since the Master Plan was adopted, if the zoning amendment is consistent with recent development trends in the area.
- b. If the zoning amendment is compatible with existing or future land uses in the vicinity
- c. If the site is capable of accommodating all uses allowed by the zoning change, considering existing or planned public infrastructure, including streets, sanitary sewers, storm water, water, sidewalks, and street lighting.

7. The City's decision of a zoning amendment shall not be appealed to the board of zoning appeals.

(Ord. No. 95-06, § 1, 12-27-95)

SECTION 22.06. – PUBLIC HEARING AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS.

Where this Ordinance requires the City to provide notice of a public hearing for any decision or action permitted, authorized or required by this Ordinance or under Act 110 of the Public Acts of 2006 as amended, notice of the public hearing shall be given as follows:

- A. The notice shall be published once, at least 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing, in a newspaper of general circulation in the City.
- B. Except as provided in subsection D below, a notice of public hearing shall also be mailed or personally delivered to the following persons, at least 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing:
 1. The applicant;
 2. The owner or owners of the subject property;
 3. All persons to whom real property is assessed within 300 feet of the property that is the subject to the application or request, even if the 300 feet extends outside of the City's boundaries; and
 4. The occupants of all structures within 300 feet of the property that is the subject of the application or request, even if the 300 feet extends outside of the City's boundaries. If the name of the occupant is not known, the term "occupant" may be used in making notification under this subsection.
- C. The notice of public hearing shall include the following information:
 1. A description of the nature of the proposed amendment, application or request.
 2. An identification of the property that is the subject of the application or request, if applicable. Except as provided in subsection D below, the notice shall include a

listing of all existing street addresses within the property. Street addresses do not need to be created and listed if no such addresses currently exist within the property and another means of identification of the property shall be used.

3. State when and where the application or request will be considered.

4. Identify when and where written comments will be received concerning the application or request.

D. When a proposed zoning amendment involves the text of the Zoning Ordinance or if a rezoning involves 11 or more adjacent properties, or when a petition to the board of zoning appeals involves an interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance or an appeal of an administrative decision that does not involve a specific parcel, the mailing or delivery requirements of subsections B(2), B(3) and B(4), of this Section are not required, and the listing of individual property addresses under subsection C(2) is not required.

E. For a zoning ordinance amendment, including rezoning of property, the notice shall be given by first-class mail to each electric, gas, and pipeline public utility company, each telecommunication service provider, each railroad operating within the district or zone affected, and the airport manager of each airport, that registers its name and mailing address with the City for the purpose of receiving the notice of public hearing.

F. After providing the notice required under this section and without further notice, except that as required under the Open Meetings Act, the body holding the public hearing may adjourn from time to time a duly called public hearing by passing a motion specifying the time, date, and place of the continued public hearing.

SECTION 22.07. FEES AND APPLICANT ESCROW ACCOUNTS

A. The Lowell City Council may establish, fees for appeals, application for amendments, special uses, site plan reviews, zoning compliance permits, signs, and other matters pertaining to this Ordinance. The schedule of fees shall be posted in City Hall and may be altered only by resolution of the City Council. Until all applicable fees, charges and expenses have been paid in full, no permits shall be issued related to any application or appeal.

B. If the planning commission or board of zoning appeals determines that the basic fees provided under subsection A above will not cover the actual costs of the application review or appeal, or if the planning commission or board of zoning appeals determines that review of the application and/or participation in the review process or appeal by qualified professional planners, engineers, attorneys, or other professionals is necessary, then the planning commission or board of zoning appeals may require the applicant to deposit with the City Treasurer such additional fees in an amount sufficient to cover the estimated additional costs.

C. These additional fees shall be held in escrow in the applicant's name and shall be used solely to pay these additional costs. If the amount held in escrow becomes less than ten percent (10%) of the initial escrow deposit or less than ten percent (10%) of the latest

additional escrow deposit and review of the application or decision on the appeal is not completed, then the zoning enforcement officer may require the applicant to deposit additional fees into escrow in an amount determined by the zoning enforcement officer to be equal to the estimated costs to complete the review or decide the appeal. Failure of the applicant to make any escrow deposit required under this Ordinance shall be deemed to make the application incomplete or the appeal procedurally defective thereby justifying the denial of the application or the dismissal of the appeal. Any unexpended funds held in escrow shall be returned to the applicant following final action on the application or the final decision on the appeal. Any actual costs incurred by the City in excess of the amount held in escrow shall be billed to the applicant and shall be paid by the applicant prior to the issuance of any permit or the release of a final decision on an appeal.

SECTION 22.058. - EFFECTIVE DATE.

Public hearing having been held hereon, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby adopted, and this ordinance shall take effect on the 26th day of January, 1996.

(Ord. No. 95-06, § 1, 12-27-95)

SECTION 22.0609. - REPEAL OF PRIOR ORDINANCE.

The zoning ordinance adopted by the City of Lowell, known as Ordinance No. 87, and all amendments thereto, are hereby repealed. The repeal does not affect any act done or offense committed, or any liability, penalty, forfeiture, or punishment acquired thereunder.

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MEMORANDUM

To: City of Lowell Planning Commission
Date: November 10, 2017
From: Andy Moore, AICP
Nathan Mehmed
RE: **Schneider Manor – Site Plan Review**

Mr. Robert Pfaller, on behalf of Schneider Manor, has submitted an application for site plan review for the construction of a multi-family apartment building located at 725 Bowes Road. The purpose of this memorandum is to review the request pursuant to the City of Lowell Zoning Ordinance.

Background

The overall subject property, including the three existing parcels where the proposed building would be constructed, has an area of approximately 15.07 acres and is located at 725 Bowes Road. The applicant is seeking to construct a twelve unit, single-story multiple-family dwelling on the subject property, which is zoned R-3, Residential District. Multiple-family dwellings are permitted by right in the R-3, Residential zoning district. The proposed project would be an expansion of the existing use, Schneider Manor.

Site Plan Review

Dimensional Requirements. The proposed structures meet the setback, density, and dimensional requirements as specified in Section 8.04.

Lighting. The site plan does not indicate whether or not new lighting fixtures would be installed. If new lighting fixtures are proposed, the applicant should provide lighting details that comply with Section 4.24.

Parking. The applicant is proposing 23 additional parking spaces on the subject property for a total of 208 spaces. Section 19.07 of the Zoning Ordinance requires multiple-family dwellings to provide two parking spaces per dwelling unit. With the addition of the proposed twelve-unit building, the subject property will house a total of 104 units; thus, 208 parking spaces are required.

Landscaping. The applicant has not submitted any landscaping details for the site; however, landscaping details are not a site design requirement in the R3 District. The Planning Commission may require landscaping between the parking area adjacent to Bowes Road, just to the east of the proposed building.

Signage. The applicant does not appear to be proposing any additional signage at the site. If any additional signage is desired, the applicant should obtain a sign permit from the City and comply with Chapter 20. This can be addressed as a condition of approval.

Site Plan Review Standards

Section 18.09 of the Zoning Ordinance sets forth six standards that must be utilized by the Planning Commission in reviewing site plans. Those standards, along with our remarks, are below:

- A. The uses proposed will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare. Uses and structures located on the site shall be planned to take into account topography, size of the property, the uses on adjoining property, and the relationship and size of buildings to the site. The site shall be developed so as not to impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in this ordinance.

Remarks: The proposed use of a multiple-family dwelling is generally compatible with the multiple-family dwelling uses to the north and east and the single-family dwelling uses to the south and west. The subject property abuts properties zoned R-2, Residential to the west, R-3 Residential to the south and east, and C-3 General Business / I General Industrial to the north.

- B. Safe, convenient, uncongested, and well-defined vehicular and pedestrian circulation shall be provided for ingress/egress points and within the site. Drives, streets, and other circulation routes shall be designed to promote safe and efficient traffic operations within the site and at ingress/egress points.

Remarks: The applicant is not proposing any additional points of vehicular ingress or egress or changes to vehicular interior circulation patterns. An existing sidewalk crosses the frontage of the property on both Bowes Road and Pleasant Avenue and the applicant is proposing a paved pedestrian connection from the proposed building to the sidewalk on Pleasant Avenue. In addition to this connection, it may also be prudent to provide another pedestrian connection from the proposed walkway closer to the Bowes Road/Pleasant Avenue intersection.

- C. The arrangement of public or private vehicular and pedestrian connections to existing or planned streets in the area shall be planned to provide a safe and efficient circulation system for traffic within the City of Lowell.

Remarks: The applicant is not proposing any additional points of ingress and egress or significant changes to adjacent connections or streets. An existing sidewalk crosses the frontage of the property on both Bowes Road and Pleasant Avenue. The site plan indicates that the new building will be accessible from the existing sidewalk through pedestrian connections. As noted above, an additional pedestrian connection may be prudent to access the sidewalk near the Bowes Road/Pleasant Avenue intersection.

- D. Removal or alteration of significant natural features shall be restricted to those areas, which are reasonably necessary to develop the site in accordance with the requirements of this ordinance. The planning commission requires that approved landscaping, buffers, and/or greenbelts be continuously maintained to ensure that proposed uses will be adequately buffered from one another and from surrounding public and private property.

Remarks: The subject property is void of any significant natural features and is currently occupied by a single-family dwelling. Nonetheless, the subject property is located within the 100-year floodplain and will require a permit from the MDEQ for a compensating cut to mitigate the fill necessary for the development. The Planning Commission may address this as a condition of approval.

- E. Satisfactory assurance shall be provided that the requirements of all other applicable ordinances, codes, and requirements of the City of Lowell will be met.

Remarks: This may be addressed as a condition of approval.

- F. The general purposes and spirit of this ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Lowell shall be maintained.

Remarks: The Master Plan indicates that the subject property, meaning the addition of the three-parcel property where the building is proposed, is located within the "Single Family 2" future land use designation. According to the Master Plan, "The Single Family 2 land use category is intended to correspond to the existing R-2 Zoning District, and permits up to 4.5 dwelling units per acre. Appropriate land uses in Single Family 2 areas are detached single family residential dwelling units and uses that may be compatible with single family dwelling units such as schools, churches, and municipal and civic buildings." It should be noted that the three-parcels are located adjacent to, and surrounded on three sides by, the "Multiple Family Residential" future land use designation. According to the Master Plan, "The Multiple Family Residential land use area is intended to correspond with the existing R-3 zoning district, which permits 10 dwelling units per acre." While the future land use boundaries and description of the category in the Master Plan do not strictly support the project, it is reasonable to consider the project location given the general development pattern and proximity to the Multiple Family Residential designation. It is likely that the project maintains the general purposes and spirit of the zoning ordinance of the master plan.

As a general note, the proposed improvements appear well-designed and should logically fit relatively seamlessly into the rest of the Schnieder Manor development.

Recommendation

At the November 13 meeting, the Planning Commission should discuss the site and consider comments from the applicant and public, if any. It is our recommendation that the Planning Commission approve the request, subject to the following conditions, along with any others deemed necessary:

1. No demolition or earthwork shall be undertaken on the site until a building permit has been issued consistent with this site plan approval.
2. Prior to issuance of any City permits, the applicant shall have paid all application, permit, reimbursable escrow, and other fees related to the request.
3. The applicant shall maintain all required state, federal, and local permits and approvals.
4. The applicant shall comply with the stipulations of the City Fire Department and any other applicable emergency personnel regarding emergency access to the new structure.
5. If additional lighting is proposed, the applicant shall submit lighting details to be reviewed and approved by the City Zoning Enforcement Officer.
6. The applicant shall comply with the stipulations of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Lowell City Engineer and Attorney regarding the required floodplain compensating cut. If the compensating cut is to take place on City property, approval from the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission and Lowell City Council will be required. A copy of the approved permit and materials shall be submitted to the City.
7. The applicant shall comply with any additional requirements of the City Engineer.
8. The applicant shall provide an additional sidewalk connection near the Bowes Road/Pleasant Avenue intersection.
9. The Planning Commission may require landscaping in the space between the proposed expanded parking area at the southwest portion of the site and Bowes Road.
10. The applicant shall join the three subject parcels (199 S Pleasant, 203 S Pleasant, and 205 S Pleasant) and combine them with the primary parcel located at 725 Bowes Road.

As always, please feel free to contact us if there are additional questions or comments.



ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS

3800 W River Drive NE, Ste. A
Comstock Park, MI 49321
T: 616.301.7888
F: 616.784.0737
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October 18, 2017

Mr. Michael Burns
City Manager
City of Lowell
301 East Main Street
Lowell, MI 49331

**Re: Schneider Manor Site Plan Application
725 Bowes Street, Lowell, MI**

Dear Mr. Burns:

We are writing on behalf of Schneider Manor to request your review and consideration of the enclosed site plan application for the proposed buildings and site improvements located at 725 Bowes Street, Lowell, Michigan.

Background: The Schneider Manor Campus is approximately 15 acres in size and located near the northeast corner of Pleasant Avenue and Bowes Street in the City of Lowell. Schneider Manor has numerous buildings (92 units), car ports and parking lots (185 spaces) on site. The existing residential house and garage off Pleasant Avenue is being relocated. The property is zoned R-2 and R-3 residential and the surrounding properties are also zoned residential.

Proposed Development: Schneider Manor is proposing to construct a 12 unit building approximately 12,500 square feet in size, carports / garages for 16 vehicles, and associated site improvements. Twenty-three additional parking spaces are proposed for a total of 208 parking spaces provided, which meets the required number of parking spaces.

Both fire protection and domestic water are proposed for the building with a connection to the existing watermain on the north side of Bowes Street. The sanitary sewer lateral will connect into an existing sanitary manhole on-site.

The proposed storm water management is separated into two areas. The proposed building and sidewalks on the east side of the property will collect stormwater in a detention basin between Bowes Street and the proposed building. The detention basin is sized for the 25-year storm event, according to the Kent County Drain Commissioner's Drainage Rules, and outlets to the existing catchbasin in Pleasant Ave. The additional parking and carports drain to the large low field to the east. This area is much larger than the back to back 100-year storm water volume required and will infiltrate within 72 hours assuming the minimum infiltration rate of 0.52 inches per hour.

The proposed work is within the 100-year floodplain of the Grand River (Elevation 634.06 NAVD 88). Through the attached email correspondence with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) a floodplain permit will be required. The proposed improvements require approximately 3,000 to 4,000 cubic yards of floodplain fill. Compensating cut equal to the amount of floodplain fill is also required according to the MDEQ. The Schneider Manor property does not have this amount of compensating cut on site; therefore, they are looking for compensating cut off-site but within the floodplain. We request that this site plan be reviewed and approved contingent upon securing a compensating cut location and obtaining an MDEQ permit.

We have included the following documents in accordance with the City of Lowell submittal requirements for your consideration at the November 13 Planning Commission Meeting:

1. Site Plan Application.
2. Stormwater Calculations.
3. MDEQ Email on Floodplain Permitting Requirements.
4. \$100 Application Fee & \$1,000 Escrow will be submitted on separate cover.
5. Fifteen (15) sets of 24"x36" site plans.

Please review the enclosed information and contact our office if there are any questions or comments. We look forward to working with you through the course of this project.

Sincerely,

Land & Resource Engineering



Kyle J. Visker, P.E.
Project Manager

Request Number: _____

Filing Fee: _____



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

APPLICATION FOR SITE PLAN REVIEW

- All drawings must be sealed by an architect, engineer or surveyor unless waived by the Zoning Administrator.
- 15 copies of the site plan must be submitted to the City Manager's office no later than three weeks before the Planning Commission meeting to allow adequate staff review.
- The Planning Commission meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. where plans are approved, rejected or modified.
- Preliminary plans may be presented for Planning Commission comment, but no final approval is given until all required conditions are met.
- After approval, public works and building permits must be secured before construction may commence.

1. Street Address and/or Location of Request: 725 BOWS
2. Parcel Identification Number (Tax I.D. No.): #41-20-02-382-011, 41-20-02-356-012, -013
3. Applicant's Name: Schneider Manor Phone Number 616-897-8908
Address: 725 BOWS Rd. Lowell MI 49331
Street City State Zip
Fax Number _____ Email Address _____
4. Are You: ☐ Property Owner ☒ Owner's Agent ☐ Contract Purchaser ☐ Option Holder
5. Applicant is being represented by: Post Associates Phone Number 616-451-3041
Address: 40 Pearl St., Ste. 900 Grand Rapids MI 49503
6. Present Zoning of Parcel R-3 Present Use of Parcel Residential (multi-family apts.)
7. Description of proposed development (attach additional materials if needed):
New 12 unit, single story, wood framed apartment bldg. with brick exterior and sloped roof, located in S.W. corner of exist. property. 8 open air parking spaces will be added as well (16) parking spaces in new Carport structure(s). Future expansion to maintenance bldg is shown.

The facts presented above are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Type or Print Your Name Here: _____

Property Owner Approval: As owner, I hereby authorize the submittal of this application and agree to abide by any decision made in response to it.

Owner

ROBERT PFALLER

Date

1. Date, north arrow and scale (not more than 1" = 100', supplementary site plans at a 1" = 50' or larger scale are encouraged)
2. A city locational sketch
3. Legal description and City address of the subject property
4. The size in acres or square feet of the subject property
5. All lot and/or property lines with dimensions, including building setback lines
6. The location of all existing structures within one hundred (100) feet of the subject property's boundary
7. The location and dimensions of all existing and proposed structures on the subject property
8. The location and dimensions of all existing and proposed:
 - Drives
 - curb openings (NOTE: all new openings onto M-21 (Main Street) must receive State Transportation Department approval)
 - sidewalks
 - exterior lighting
 - curbing
 - parking areas (include and delineate the total number of parking spaces showing dimensions of a typical space)
 - unloading areas
 - recreation areas
 - common use areas
 - areas to be conveyed for public use and purpose
9. The location, pavement width and right-of-way width of abutting roads, alleys or easements
10. The existing zoning of all properties abutting the subject project
11. The location of all existing and proposed:
 - landscaping and vegetation
 - location, height and type of existing and proposed fences and walls
12. Proposed cost estimates of all site improvements
13. Size and location of existing and proposed hydrants and utilities including proposed connections to public sewer or water supply systems
14. The location and size of septic and drain fields
15. Contour intervals shown at five (5) foot intervals
16. **FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**, the following information is required (affixed to the drawing):
 - Net developable area, in acres or in square feet, defined as all areas that could be developed subtracted by lands used or dedicated for existing easements and rights of way
 - The number of dwelling units proposed (by type), including typical floor plans for each type of dwelling
 - The number and location of efficiency and one or more bedroom units
 - Typical elevation views of the front, side and rear of each type of building
 - Dwelling unit density of the site (total number of dwellings / net developable area)

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[Signature]

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Determination of Required Detention Basin Storage
Schneider Manor - West Detention Basin
City of Lowell, MI

Developed C factor Calculations

Proposed Conditions

Drain Area	SF	Acre	C factor
Pervious	31041	0.71	0.20
Impervious	20959	0.48	0.90

$$\text{Total Proposed Site Area} = 52,000 \text{ s.f.} \\ = 1.19 \text{ acre}$$

$$C_{\text{developed}} = 0.48 \\ C * A_{\text{developed}} = 0.58$$

$$Q_{\text{out}} = 0.13 \text{ cfs} * \text{Area} = 0.16 \text{ cfs}$$

$$\text{Volume of First 1/2" of runoff} = 2,167 \text{ c.f.}$$

Detention Basin Sizing

$$\text{25-yr Required Basin Storage Volume Per Table 5 KCDC Storm Water Design Criteria} = 4244 \text{ c.f.}$$

Detention Pond Sizing

Elevation ft	Area sf	Avg. Area sf	Height ft	Volume cf	Cumulative Volume cf
628.5	0			0	
629	707	354	0.5	177	177
630	3038	1873	1.0	1873	2049
631	5931	4485	1.0	4485	6357

$$\text{Volume (c.f.)} = 6,534 \\ \text{Volume Required (c.f.)} = 4,244$$

$$\text{Bottom of Pond elevation (X}_0\text{)} = 628.50 \\ \text{Water Quality Elevation (X}_{wq}\text{)} = 630.03 \\ \text{25-year Storm Elevation (X}_{25}\text{)} = 630.51$$

Water Quality Control

$$\text{Max Allowable Outflow, } Q_{wq} = \text{volume} / 24 \text{ hr} * 3600 \text{ sec}$$

$$H = X_{wq} - X_0 \\ A = Q_a / 0.62 * \sqrt{2 * 32.2 * h} \\ \text{The Area of 1.0" Hole} \\ \text{Number of Orifice Holes}$$

$$Q_{wq} = 0.03 \text{ cfs} \\ H = 1.53 \text{ ft.} \\ A = 0.004 \text{ s.f.} \\ = 0.005 \text{ s.f.} \\ = 1$$

$$Q_{wq} \text{ Design} = 0.03 \text{ cfs}$$

$$\text{Time To Discharge} = 17.9 \text{ hr.}$$

Flood Control

$$\text{Orifice equation}$$

$$A = Q_a / 0.62 * \sqrt{2 * 32.2 * h}$$

$$\text{where, } h = 0.48 \text{ ft. (25-yr. storm elevation - Water Quality Elev.)} \\ Q_a = 0.16 \text{ cfs (0.13 cfs/acre)} \\ A_{\text{max}} = 0.045 \text{ s.f.} \\ \text{Max Orifice Size} = 2.87 \text{ in.} \\ \text{Actual Orifice Size} = 2.50 \text{ in.} \\ \text{Actual } Q_{\text{out}} = 0.15 \text{ cfs (Flood Control + } W_q\text{)}$$

Emergency Overflow

$$\text{where, } Q_{10\text{-yr peak}} = 2.19 \text{ cfs}$$

$$\text{Orifice equation}$$

$$A = Q_a / 0.62 * \sqrt{2 * 32.2 * h}$$

$$\text{where, } h = 1.00 \text{ ft. (831.50-830.50)} \\ \text{Orifice Size} = 185.00 \text{ sq. in. opening for EJIW 1040 Type 02 beehive Grate} \\ \text{Actual } Q_{\text{out}} = 6.39 \text{ cfs}$$

Determination of Required Infiltration Basin Storage

Schneider Manor - East Infiltration Area

City of Lowell, MI

Developed C factor Calculations

Proposed Conditions

Drain Area	SF	Acre	C factor
Pervious	0	0.00	0.20
Impervious	8412	0.19	0.90

Total Proposed Site Area = 8,412 s.f.
0.19 acre

$C_{developed} = 0.90$

$C * A_{developed} = 0.17$

$Q_{out} = 0.13 \text{ cfs} * \text{Area} = 0.03 \text{ cfs}$

Detention Basin Sizing

100-yr Required Basin Storage Volume Per Table 5 KCDC Storm Water Design Criteria = 2342 c.f.

Back to Back 100-year volume = 4684 c.f.

Detention Pond Sizing

Elevation ft	Area sf	Avg. Area sf	Height ft	Volume cf	Cumulative Volume cf
626.28	0			0	
627	8678	4339	0.7	3124	3124
628	20609	14644	1.0	14644	17768

Volume (c.f.) = 17,768

Volume Required (c.f.) = 4,684

Bottom of Pond elevation (X_0) = 626.28

Back to Back 100-year Storm Elevation (X_{100x2}) = 627.11

Infiltration Rate/Allowable Outflow

Wasepi Loamy Sand (1.98 to 5.95 in/hr)

From Soil Survey

Infiltration area = 8678 sf

Convert to Acres = 0.199 acres

Min. Permeability = 0.52 in/hr

Convert to feet/second = 1.204E-05 ft/sec

Infiltration Rate = 0.10 cfs

Time to Drain

Maximum Allowable Drain Time

$72 > 12D/I$

$D = 0.83 \text{ ft.}$

$I = 0.52 \text{ in/hr}$

Actual Drain Time = 19.1 hours

Schneider Manor
Storm Sewer Sizing
Project #: 17-074

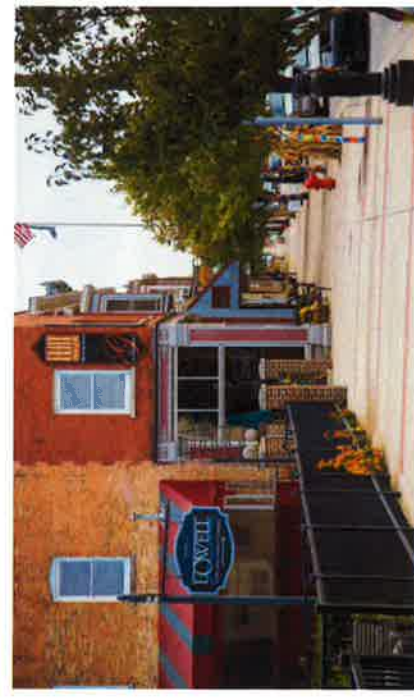
Pipe Type:	PE
Mannings Coeff:	n = 0.12
Min. Cover:	1.50 ft

FROM M.H.	TO M.H.	Pervious Area C=0.20	Impervious Area C=0.9	AREA Acres	C	C X A	SUM C X A	Intensity I10 in/hr	FLOW Q cfs	LENGTH OF PIPE ft	PIPE SIZE in	SLOPE %	FALL ft	M.H. DROP ft	INV. UP STREAM Elev	INV. DOWN STREAM Elev	RIM Elev	COVER ft	ACTUAL CAP. cfs	VEL. ft/sec	TIME	TOTAL TIME min.
CB #2	MH #1	31041	20959	1.19	0.48	0.58	0.58	3.80	2.19	194	12	0.33	0.64	0.00	627.98	627.34	630.50	1.52	2.22	2.82	1.15	16.15
MH #1	Ex CB	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.80	2.19	42	12	0.33	0.14	0.00	627.34	627.20	631.50	3.16	2.22	2.82	0.25	16.39



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.*

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.*

SOURCE: PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC SPACES

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.

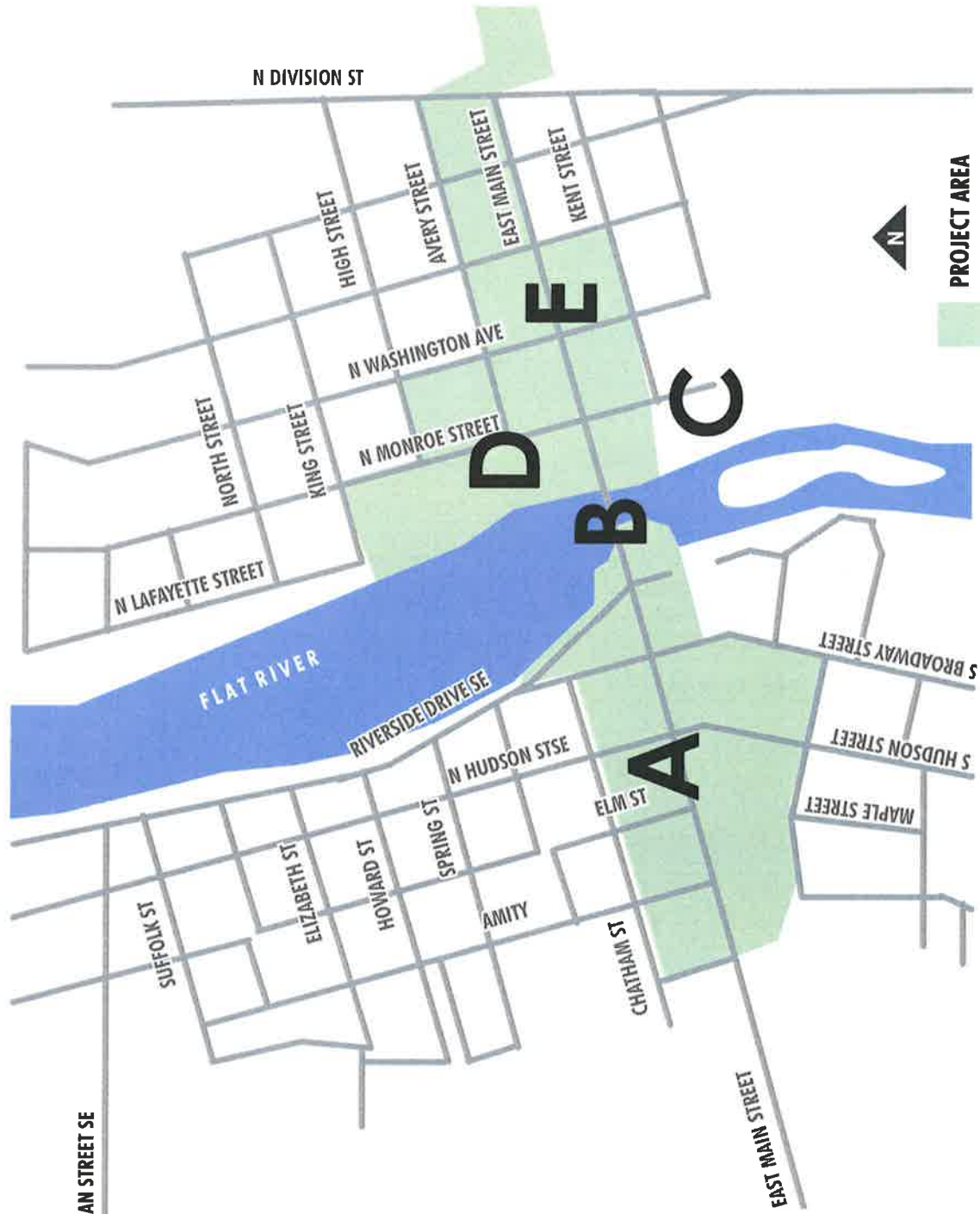
Smart Growth

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.

	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

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

AESTHETICS



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.

RECREATION



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

BUSINESS

ACCESS/PARKING

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

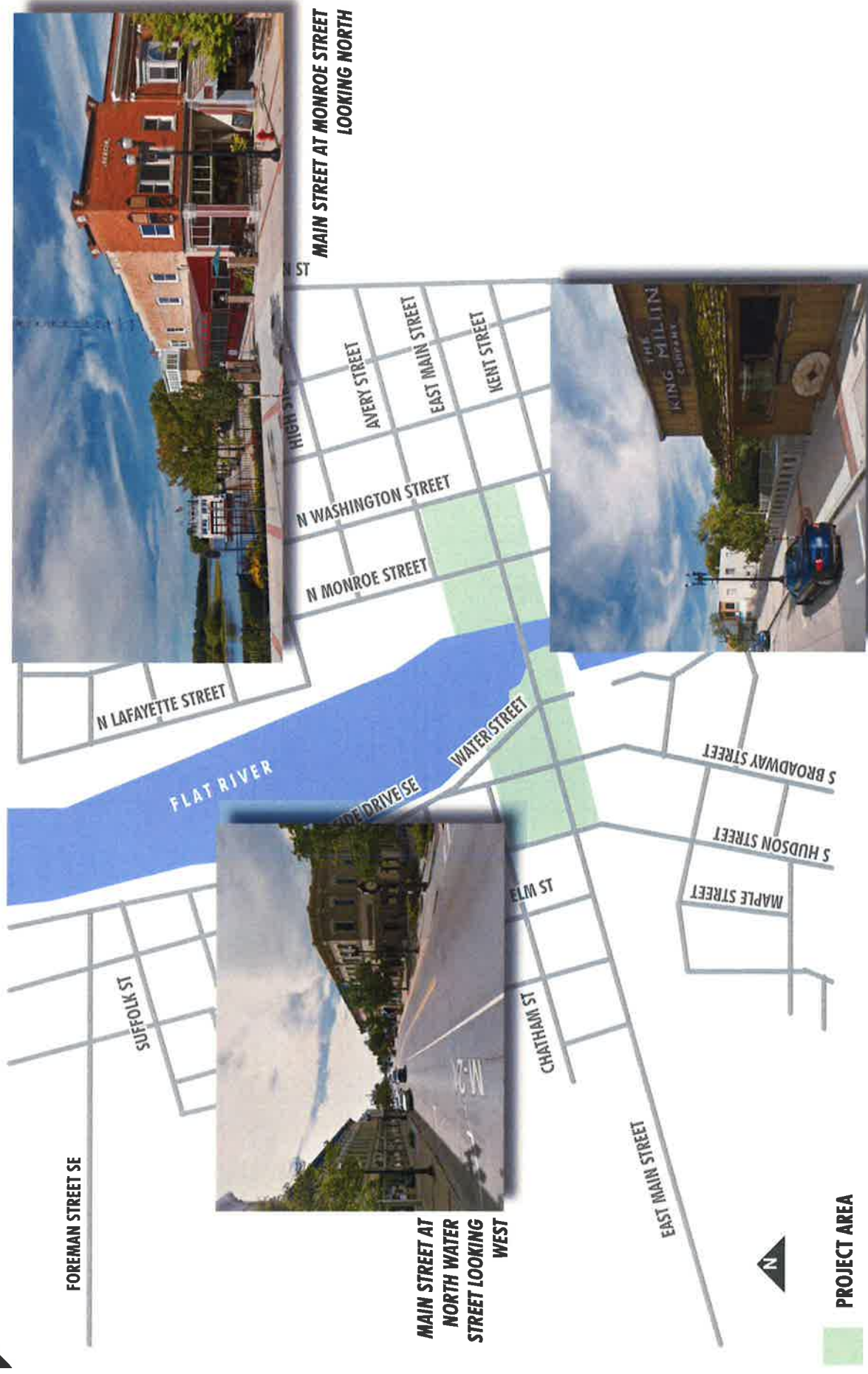
Streetscape improvements will add on-street parking spaces to the downtown to serve businesses, and additional parking will be accommodated within the existing framework of the downtown

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

Community Defined Priority Key

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



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 shareway, 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.

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

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.



LEGEND

► Downtown Core Placemaking Plan



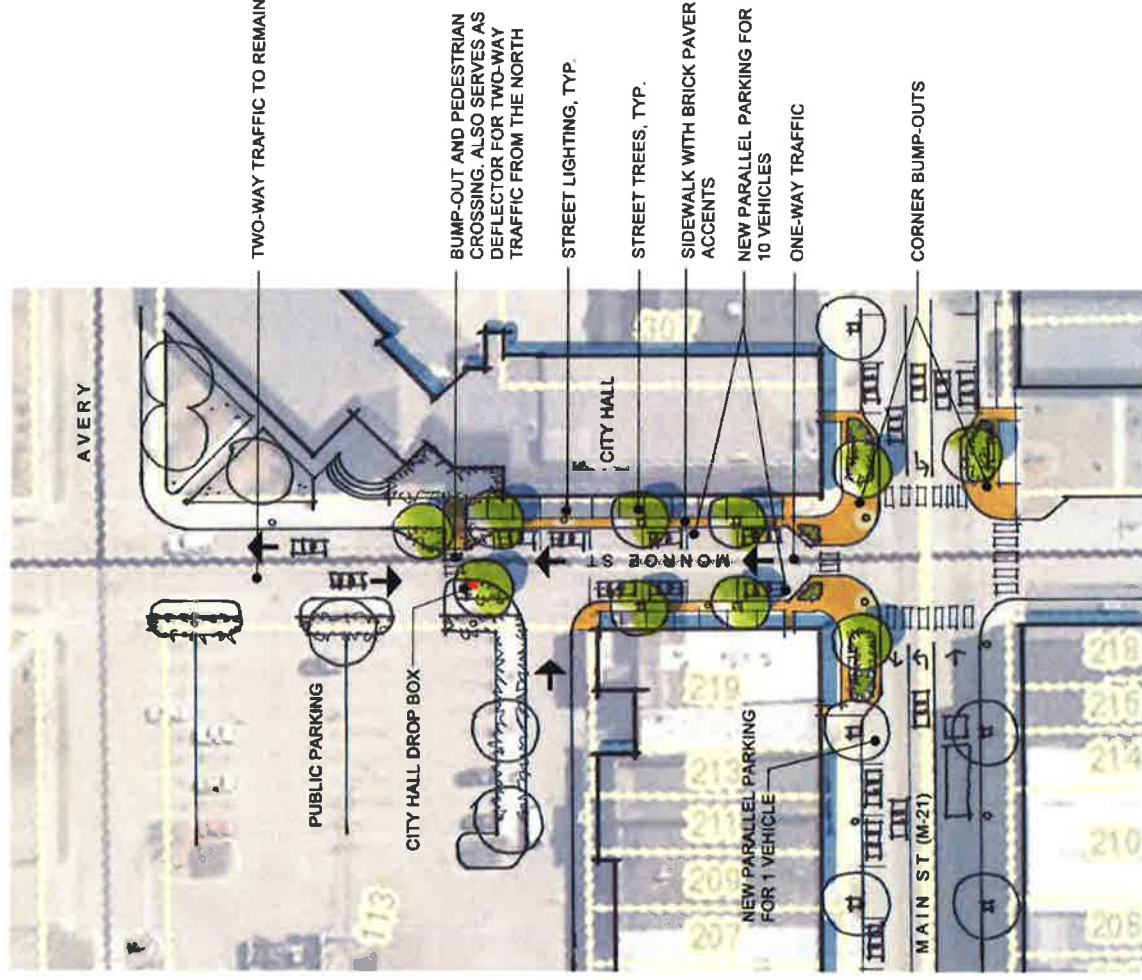
Monroe Street Placemaking Plan

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

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



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



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.

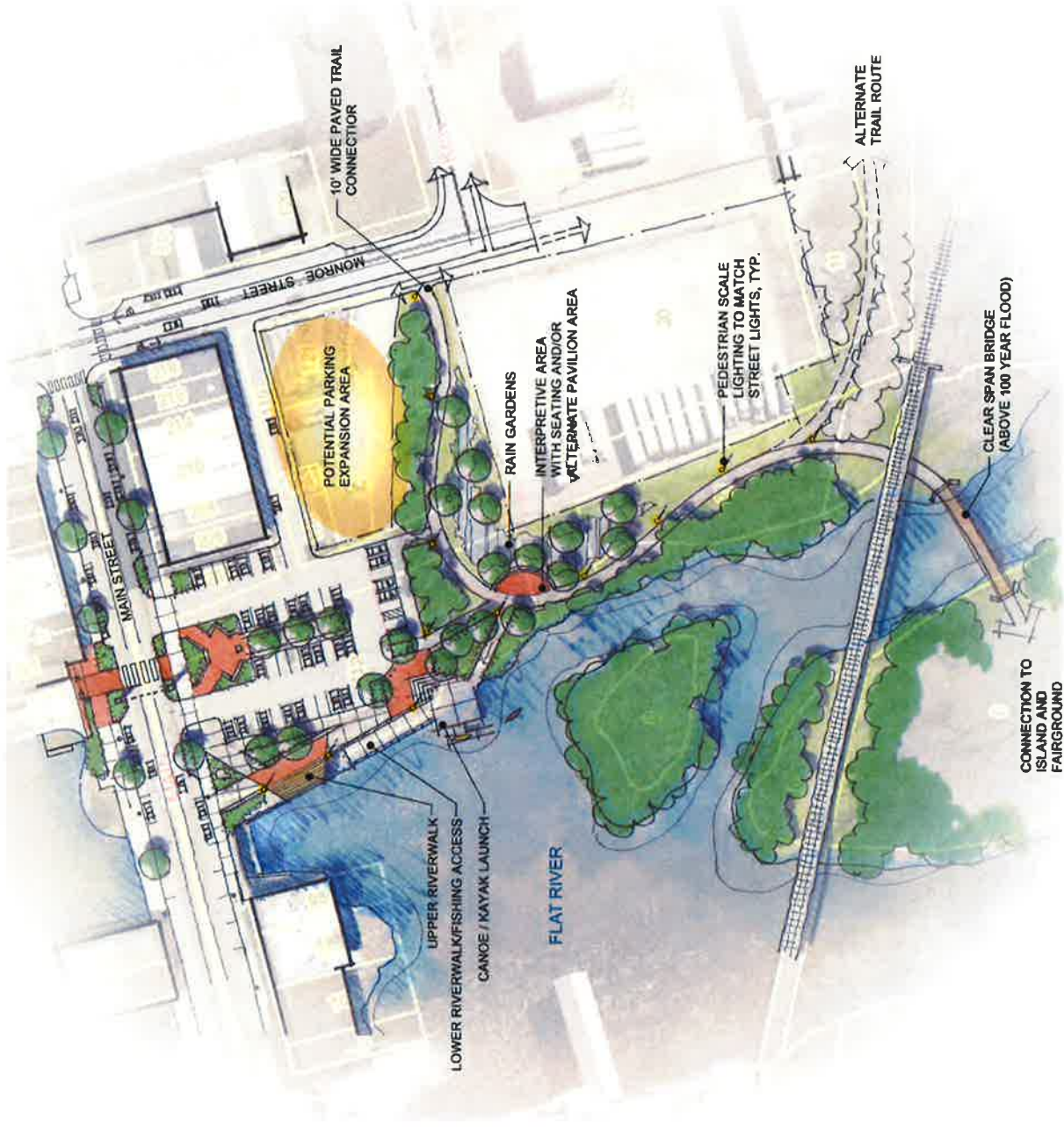
River South Placemaking Plan

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 CROSSEWALKS 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

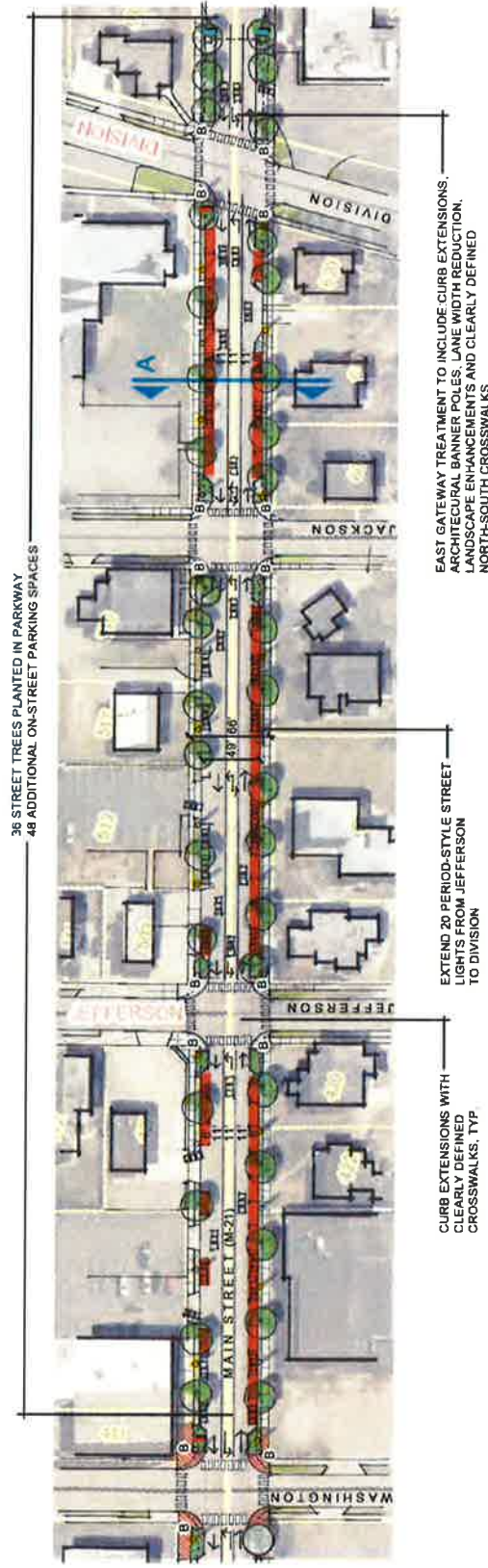
The Downtown East Sub Area features ample existing road width to propose multiple lane configuration options, including: lane width reduction, on-street parking, center boulevard, sharrow markings and possible bike lanes if desired.

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
- 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)

PROPOSED TREES WITHIN THIS SECTION WOULD BE PLANTED IN LAWN PARKWAYS

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

Downtown East Placemaking Plan



EXISTING



PROPOSED

The rendering shows before (above) and after (at-right) sketches of Downtown East with bump-outs with 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

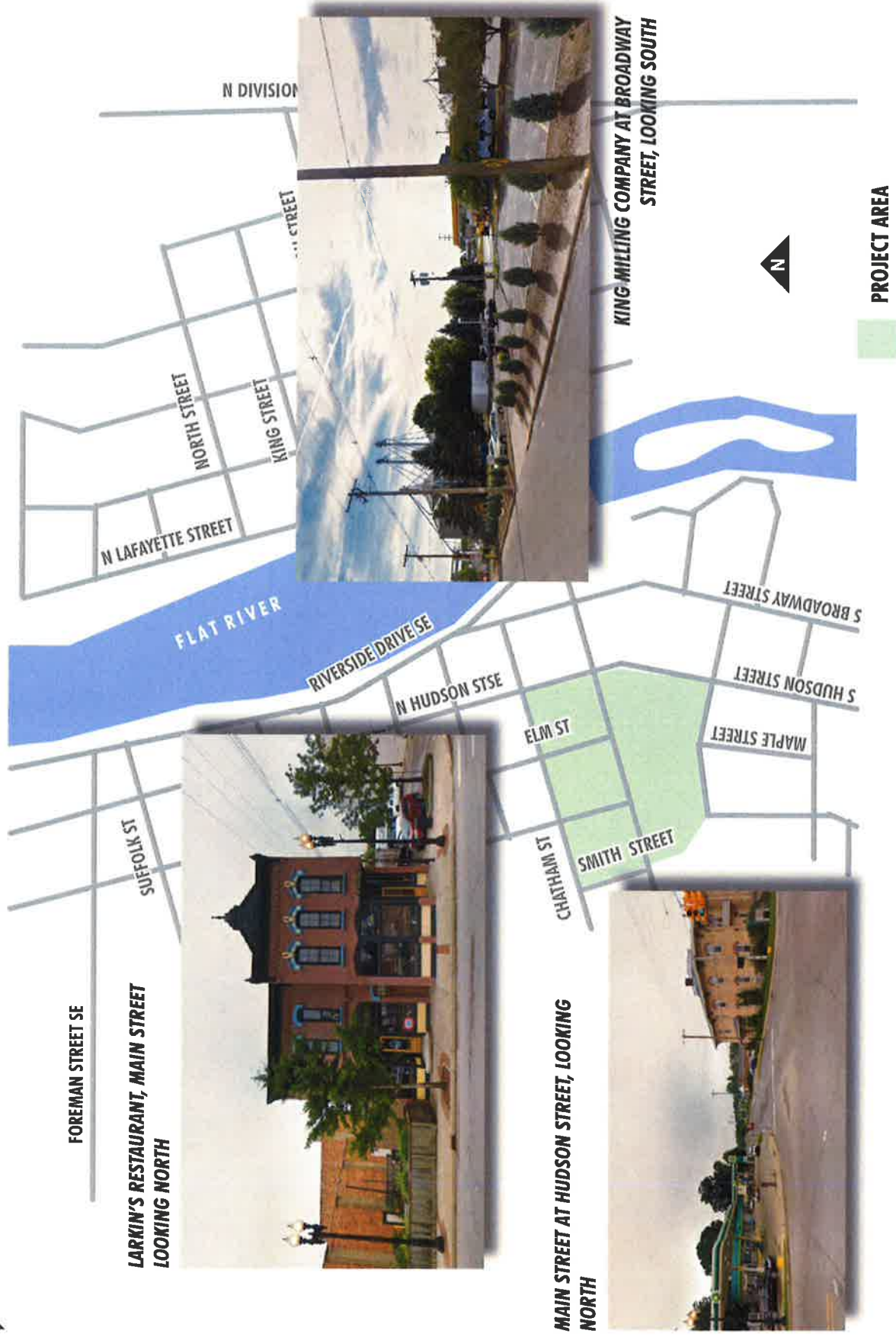
Bump-outs with attractive flower beds provide a buffer between vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and can be maintained seasonally by area garden groups.

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.

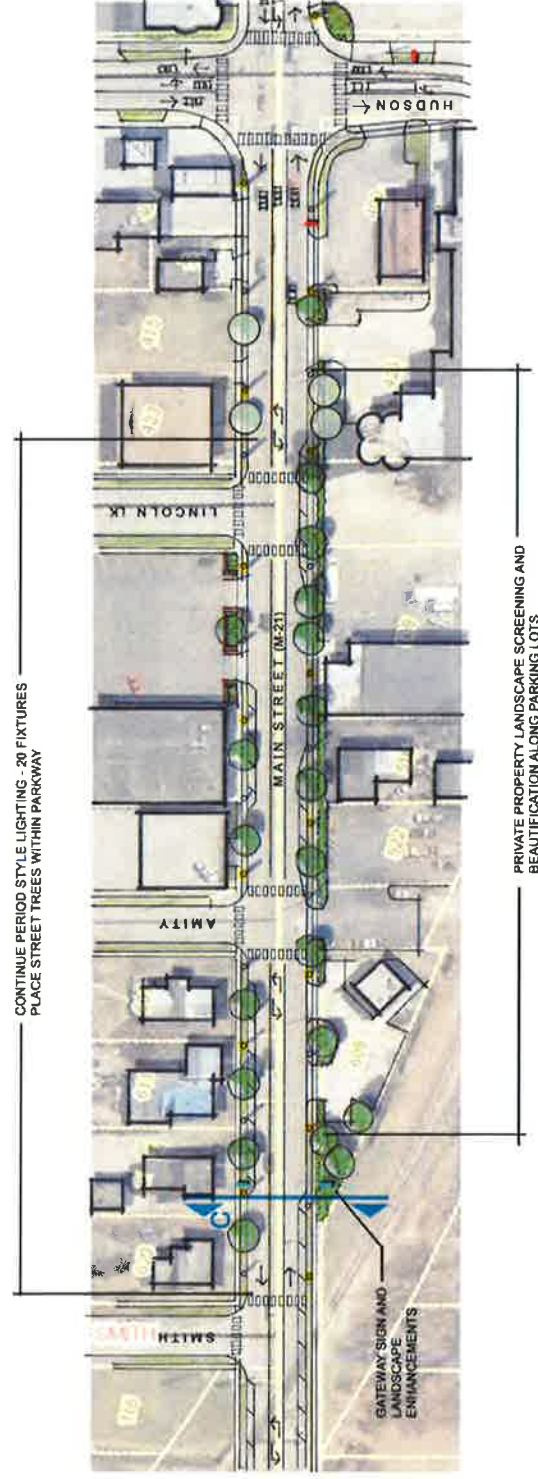
A lack of trees and ornamental lighting (vertical elements) reinforces the openness of the corridor, resulting in higher vehicular speeds and a general trunkline aesthetic. The blue circle shown on the map above notes the Blue Ribbon Feed property which is identified as having redevelopment potential.

ANALYSIS AND PLANS



Downtown West Placemaking Plan

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 ENLARGEMENT 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

- AESTHETICS
- RECREATION
- PARKING / ACCESS
- OTHER (BIKE 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

Community Defined Priority Key

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



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.

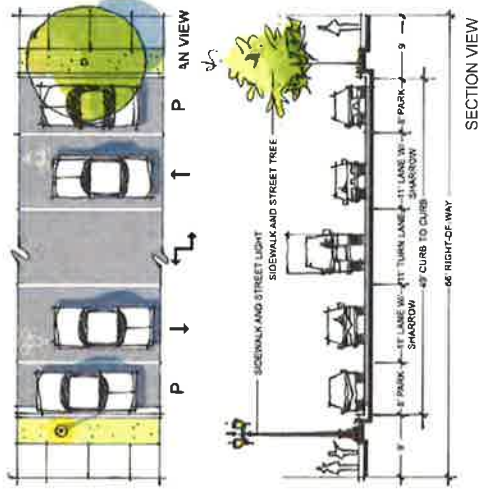
Below is a description of some of the streetscape modifications that are included in this plan.

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)

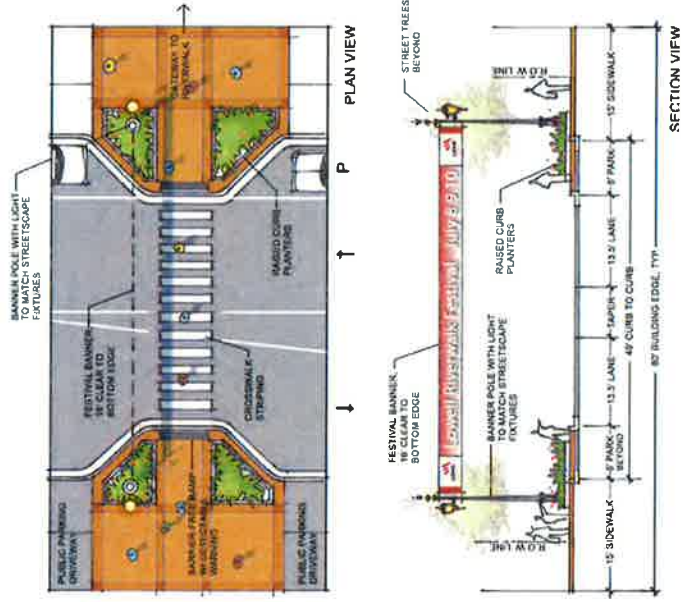
A shared-lane marking or sharrow is a street marking installed on existing roadways. This marking is placed in the center of a travel lane to indicate that a cyclist may use the full lane. Shared-lane markings are used to: alert motorists of the location bicyclists are likely to occupy within the traveled 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.



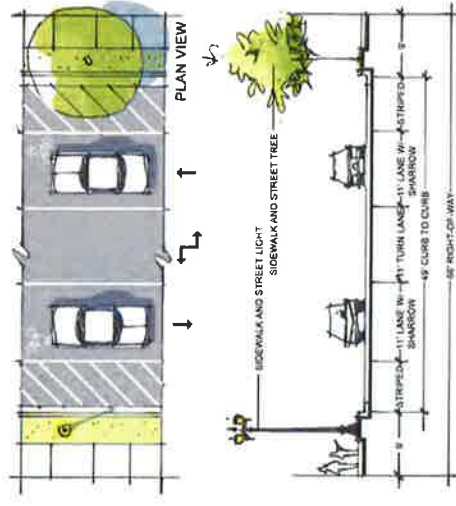
Downtown East Street Section A
(See page 23 for reference)



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



Downtown Core Street Section B
(See page 13 for reference)

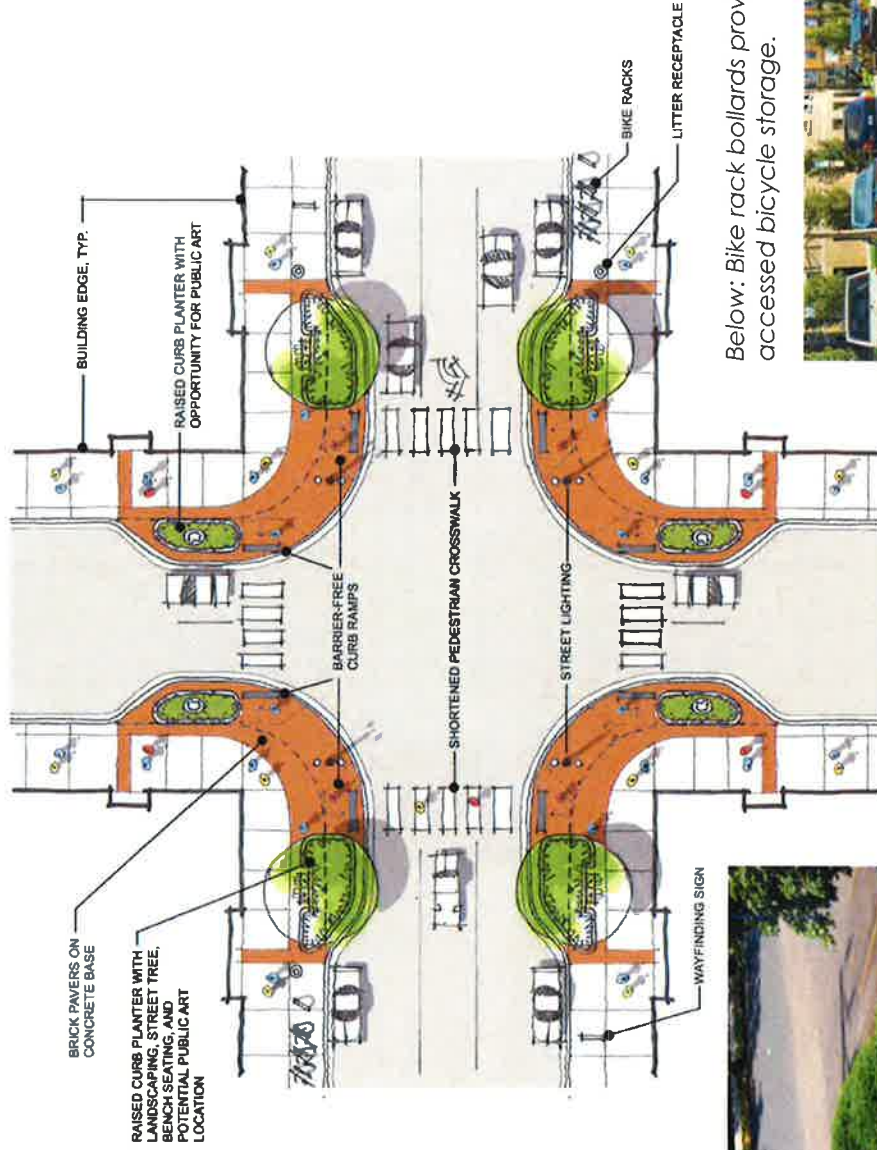


Striped pavement markings allow for traffic calming without extensive infrastructure changes.



Downtown West Street Section C
(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.



ANALYSIS AND PLANS

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 TRAILBLAZER/WAYFINDING 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

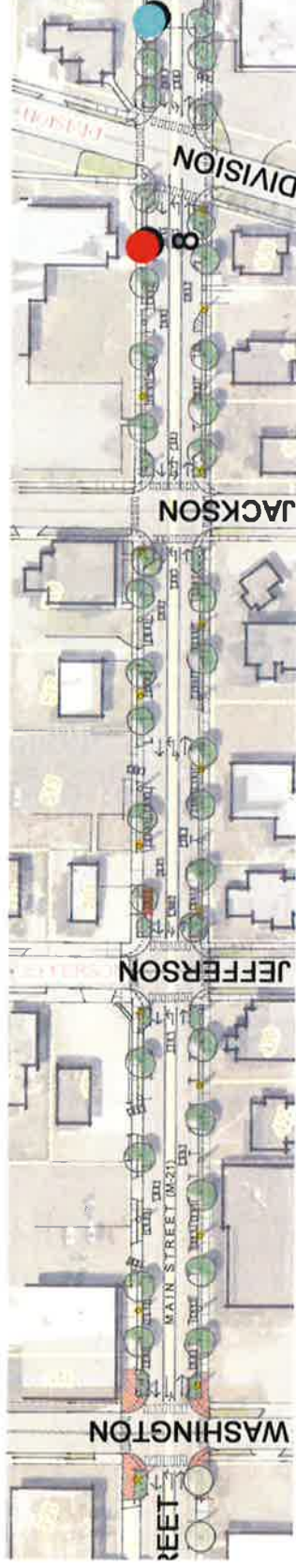
DOWNTOWN WEST



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

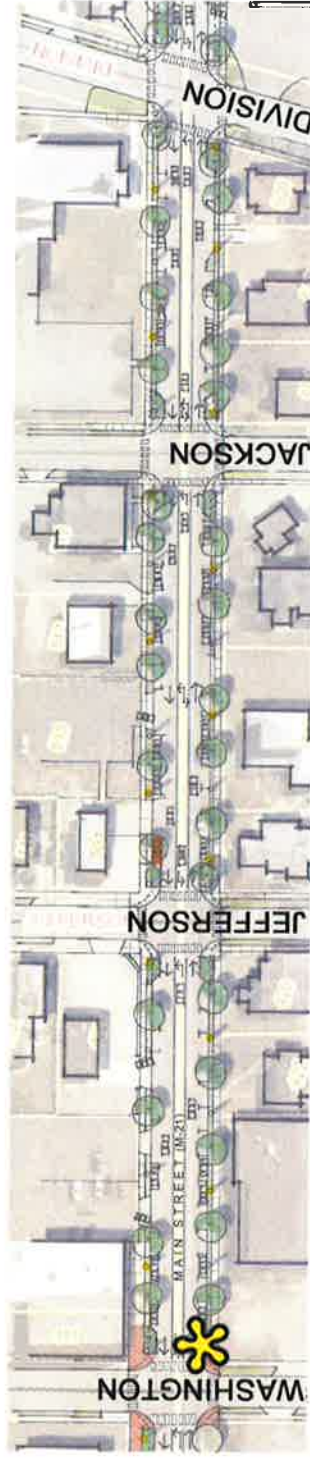
DOWNTOWN WEST



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

