CITY OF Bloomington ILLINOIS

CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA ADDENDUM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
109 E. OLIVE STREET, BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701
MONDAY, MAY 8, 2017; 7:00 P.M.

ATTACHEMENT ADDITIONS:

Item 8D: Consideration of approving a Resolution establishing the creation of a Downtown Task Force Committee to assist with the planning and determination of the City's next steps in revitalizing Downtown Bloomington. *(Recommend that the Resolution Establishing a Downtown Task Force Committee be adopted and the Mayor and City Clerk authorized to execute the resolution.)* *(Presentation by Mayor Tari Renner 5 minutes, Council discussion 10 minutes.)*

NOTE: Action may be taken by the City Council on the agenda's action items (those items listed on the Consent Agenda and Regular Agenda) beyond the motions listed and/or staff recommendations. Ordinances and resolutions listed on the agenda may further be amended and/or revised prior to adoption by the City Council. No action will be taken if the agenda item is listed as only informational.

DOWNTOWN

Once the center for community and economic activity, Downtown Bloomington, like downtowns across the country, suffered the loss of retail and other business activities to shopping centers and commercial strips along Veterans Parkway. The vitality of a city's downtown is an important element in a community's overall economic health.

In 2008-2009, the City retained the services of Farr Associates to create a redevelopment strategy for Downtown. That report concluded that Bloomington's Downtown has immense potential that is yet to be realized. It also pointed out that revitalization of Downtown is threatened by failure of consensus on how to maintain, regulate, redevelop and generally manage this valuable and unique asset. The Downtown strategy report was officially adopted by the Council in 2014. While the City, in partnership with Downtown Bloomington Association and other key partners, is making inroads in Downtown redevelopment efforts, many recommended actions of that strategy are yet to be acted upon.

This section of the Economic Development chapter begins with an examination of the goals and objectives of the aforementioned Downtown Strategy, to avoid duplication of effort.

While efforts are currently underway by the Downtown Bloomington Association (DBA) and the City towards implementation of the adopted Downtown Strategy, many action items are yet to be addressed. This plan emphasizes the function of the Downtown as the core attraction for employment, specialty retail, innovative mixed uses, and cultural and entertainment should be preserved and expanded.

In addition, the outreach process made it clear that there is no clear understanding in the community about the boundaries of Downtown. Goals and Objectives to address this short fall include unified marketing and branding for the Downtown district, creation of signage and wayfinding installations promoting the brand, and support for cultural, entertainment and commercial ventures.

The Downtown district is particularly important as the core of historic Bloomington. The goals and objectives emphasize the need to maintain its historic features and character through careful preservation and thoughtful redevelopment where needed.

The support and expansion of attractions in the Downtown district is complemented by goals for furthering the public perception of Downtown as a safe and clean place while also instituting practices to ensure safety. Improving access and convenience is addressed through objectives for parking options, as well as car and bicycle sharing programs, and access to public transportation.

Downtown is a neighborhood as well as an economic center, and the plan guidance recognizes the interaction between these functions, and between the Downtown district and the adjacent neighborhoods. Developing and sustaining an active urban core that includes Downtown, Regeneration Area and the Preservation Area is vital to the longterm success of the community.
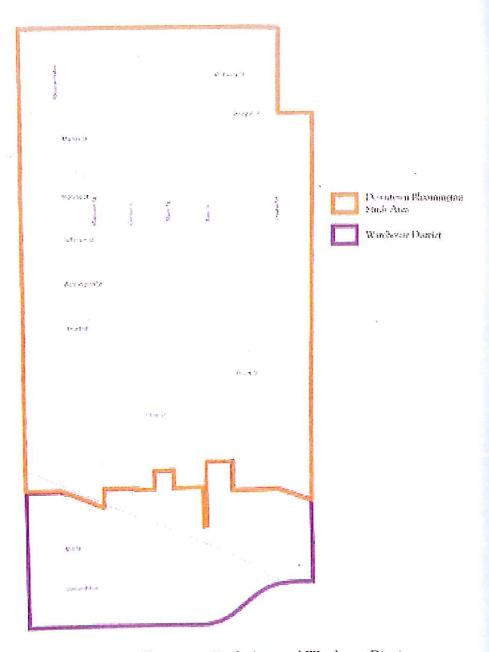

Figure 6-5. *Downtown Bloomington Study Area and Warehouse District*

D-1. Continue to build a healthy Downtown that offers a range of employment, retail, housing, cultural and entertainment opportunities for all.

D-1.1 Strengthen business recruitment and retention activities.

D-1.1a Identify and seek development and business opportunities appropriate for Downtown. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, ongoing*

D-1.1b Actively promote Downtown sites and buildings for business locations. *DBA Economic Restructuring Committee, ongoing*

D-1.1c Identify the needs of current and future employees to make Downtown attractive to employers. *DBA, short*

D-1.1d Create and maintain a current database of financial tools and other resources for existing, new and start-up businesses in Downtown. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short*

D-1.1e Create and maintain a current database inventory, coordinated with the City of Bloomington's proposed site certification program, of available sites and buildings in Downtown, as proposed in the Economic Development Strategy. *DBA Economic Restructuring Committee, short/ongoing*

D-1.1f Examine the feasibility of creating a small business incubator in Downtown. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short-medium*

D-1.1g Prioritize mixed-use development/redevelopment projects for the Downtown area. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

D-1.1h Continue to develop, promote and provide incentives for property owners or developers to reinvest in Downtown. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, ongoing*

D-1.1i Create an economic development staff position focused on Downtown business retention and recruitment. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-1.1j Leverage assets, such as the Constitution Trail, to encourage business retention and attraction. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

METRICS

- # of businesses in Downtown district ↑
- # of jobs in Downtown district ↑
- Commercial vacancy rate ↓
- # of start-up companies in Downtown district ↑
- # of resources available for Downtown business ↑
- Database of financial tools for business available for use
- Inventory of Downtown sites and buildings added to site certification database
- # of incentives provided to Downtown businesses ↑

PARTNER AGENCIES

DBA Economic Restructuring committee; EDC, MCRPC, U.S Cellular Coliseum, MCMH, Bloomington Public Library

D-1.2 Pursue catalyst projects that can serve as additional Downtown anchors.

D-1.2a Amend Coliseum management contract to involve its management in economic development projects compatible with Coliseum operations. *City of Bloomington, short*

- $ public & private investment in Downtown ↑
- Downtown equalized assessed value ↑
- # of catalyst projects ↑

D-1.2b Consider other Downtown needs during the expansion of community facilities currently located in Downtown, such as the BCPA/Creativity Center and the Bloomington Public Library. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-1.2c Encourage other community anchors, such as the YMCA, to expand in Downtown. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-1.2d Leverage Downtown assets, such as the Route 66 Visitors Center, to attract other catalyst projects. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-1.3 Reinvent the Warehouse District.

D-1.3a Investigate designation of a special use district, such as an Art or Innovation district, to bring a renewed focus to the warehouse district. *City of Bloomington, short*

- Equalized assessed value in Warehouse District ↑
- Number of businesses in Warehouse District ↑

D-1.3b Introduce and promote incentives for investment for property owners or developers in the Warehouse District. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short-medium*

D-1.3c Coordinate with local businesses and Constitution Trail advocates regarding trailside businesses development to boost economic development in the area. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short-medium*

D-1.3d Encourage and enable alternative business operations, such as pop-up businesses, in the Warehouse District. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short-medium*

EDC, DBA, Chamber of Commerce, local universities

D-1.4 Develop a wide variety of Downtown housing options.

D-1.4a Encourage the inclusion of residential units in mixed-use redevelopment. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short*

- # of housing units (ownership and rental units) ↑
- % vacancy rate ↓
- # of residential parking spaces ↑

D-1.4b Investigate creating an Employer Assisted Housing zone in and around Downtown. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short-medium*

D-1.4c Explore employer-based incentives for home ownership. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short-medium*

D-1.4d Encourage and support business development that serves Downtown residents, such as neighborhood scale grocery. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, ongoing*

D-1.4e Improve parking access/facilities for Downtown residents. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short-medium*

DBA, Downtown Property Owners Association

D-2. Market and promote the unique brand and image of Downtown Bloomington.

D-2.1 Identify and designate gateways to Downtown.

- Gateways identified
- Signage installed

D-2.1a Use City of Bloomington land or street r-o-w to create gateway features such as landscaping, artwork, pocket parks, etc. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-2.1b Install gateway signage. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short-medium*

D-2.1c Create and sustain consistent Downtown streetscape design, including gateway areas. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

DBA, EDC, CVB, MCRPC, Town of Normal

D-2.2 Expand the Downtown Bloomington Association's marketing efforts.

D-2.2a City of Bloomington continue to support DBA. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

D-2.2b Investigate regional and state funding sources. *DBA, ongoing*

D-2.2c Continue and expand the event programming activities. *DBA Promotions Committee, ongoing*

D-2.3 Improve wayfinding Downtown.

D-2.3a Install wayfinding signage for parking garages and attractions. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-2.3b Develop consistent branding and iconography for gateway and wayfinding signage. *DBA, ongoing*

D-2.3c Solicit cooperation from Downtown businesses in adopting and promoting consistent branded wayfinding. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-2.4 Develop and adopt a Downtown signage code appropriate to the area.

D-2.3a Review existing code for suitability to Downtown character. *City of Bloomington Economic Development staff, short*

D-2.3b Adapt code to encourage signs visible to pedestrians and bicyclists as well as auto traffic. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-2.3c Adapt code to discourage sign placements and sizes that detract from the Downtown character, while offering options to businesses. *City of Bloomington, short*

METRICS

- $ DBA funding ↑
- DBA programming and marketing activities ↑
- Adopted branding for Downtown
- Wayfinding signs installed

PARTNER AGENCIES

DBA, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Bloomington Public Library, Downtown property owners, contractors

D-2.5 Consolidate retail uses within in the Downtown core.

D-2.5a Ensure codes and regulations facilitate use of the area for retail locations. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-2.5b Modify street configuration and short-term street parking to promote access to retail locations. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-2.5c Encourage synergy in adjacent retail to promote multi-stop visits. *DBA, ongoing*

PARTNER AGENCIES

DBA, EDC

D-2.6 Encourage commercial and corporate uses along the U.S. 51 corridor surrounding the Downtown core.

D-2.6a Adopt access management policies on through routes in Downtown district. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-2.6b Coordinate parking deck access points and side street parking to support longer-term parking along couplet. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-2.7 Continue support and coordination efforts for the Farmers Market.

D-2.7a Provide assistance to the Farmers Market to resolve issues and continue to support the market's efforts in the future. *DBA, ongoing*

D-2.7b Make infrastructure changes or recommendations, including parking, streetscape, and signage. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-2.7c Investigate Downtown site/venue/street facilities for Farmers Market to allow for expanded market hours and seasons. *DBA Promotions Committee, short*

D-3. Protect Downtown's historic character and encourage appropriate new development.

D-3.1 Protect the scale and character of historic Downtown and provide appropriate parameters for new development that complements its historic character.

METRICS

- Adopt and implement Downtown Historic District zoning overlay
- # of façade improvements to Downtown properties ↑
- # of adaptive reuse projects ↑
- $ amount of public and private investment in historic properties ↑
- Equalized assessed value in Downtown district ↑

D-3.1a Implement the Downtown Bloomington Strategy recommendations for a zoning overlay ensuring that future developments are compatible with Downtown's historic character. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-3.1b Target façade rehabilitations to concentrated areas of the Downtown. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-3.1c Develop incentives for façade rehabilitation in mixed-use redevelopment projects. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-3.1d Continue educating property owners regarding other funding sources or tax benefits of rehabilitation. *DBA, ongoing*

PARTNER AGENCIES

DBA, Historic Preservation Commission

D-4. A clean and safe Downtown.

D-4.1 Improve and promote Downtown as a clean and safe place.

METRICS

- Adoption of Downtown district-wide trash/snow removal programs
- Adoption of code revisions as needed to implement trash/snow program
- # of crimes in Downtown ↓
- Infrastructure rating ↑

D-4.1a Task Public Works department to develop a Downtown district trash removal and street cleaning program in cooperation with private service providers. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-4.1b Streamline and standardize snow removal for Downtown district, in cooperation with businesses and private service providers, through Code revisions as needed. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-4.1c Establish landscaping standards for parking to manage stormwater, provide shade and aesthetic benefits. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-4.1d Address infrastructure issues. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

D-4.1e Work with the Bloomington Police Department to reduce crime and fear of crime in Downtown. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

PARTNER AGENCIES

Bloomington Police Department, DBA

D-5. Continue to develop a multi-modal transportation network in Downtown.

D-5.1 Improve parking conditions and access and encourage shared public and private parking supplies.

D-5.1a Ensure that public parking is positioned for access to multiple destinations. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

D-5.1b Evaluate parking ordinance standards and requirements. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-5.1c Investigate innovative parking solutions for effective parking management in Downtown. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

METRICS

- Adoption of Downtown district-wide trash/snow removal programs
- Adoption of code revisions as needed to implement trash/snow program
- # of crimes in Downtown ↓
- Infrastructure rating ↑

D-5.1d Allow developments to pay in-lieu fees for public facilities instead of on-site private parking. *City of Bloomington, short*

D-5.1e Consider appropriately designed street parking in core retail are bounded by Center, East, Locust and Front Streets. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-5.1f Adopt parking code revisions consistent with appropriate standards for Downtown district. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-5.1g Require screening of parking facilities from street right-of-way using landscaping. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-5.1h Encourage interior parking within building footprints. *City of Bloomington, medium*

D-5.1i Coordinate shared private parking arrangements. *DBA, short-medium*

D-5.1j Coordinate and manage shared parking, such as valet or parking broker, to serve multiple restaurants, stores, and drinking establishments. *DBA, short-medium*

PARTNER AGENCIES

DBA, Bloomington Public Works Department

D-5.1k Consider the installation of parking meters in designated locations. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

D-5.2 Enhance the walkability and bikability within and to Downtown and facilitate access to car-sharing and bicycle sharing services in the Downtown district.

- Implementation of shared parking policy
- Installation of parking meters in designated locations
- Downtown location selection for car/bicycle sharing program
- # of bicycle access routes to Downtown district installed ↑
- # of bike/pedestrian wayfinding signs installed ↑
- Bicycle LOS ↑
- Sidewalk ratings (in PASER) ↑
- Aggregate sidewalk length in Downtown district ↑

D-5.2a Use wayfinding signage to identify walking and cycling routes and connections. *City of Bloomington, short/ongoing*

D-5.2b Continue to expand the bike connections to Downtown Bloomington. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

D-5.2c Identify a Downtown location for transportation sharing services, including accessible office space and vehicle/bicycle parking. *DBA, short*

DBA, BikeBloNo, Friends of Constitution Trail, Connect Transit, City of Bloomington

D-5.3 Enhance the public transit access to Downtown.

- Completed Downtown public transit transfer center
- Transit usage at Downtown transfer point ↑

D-5.3a Upgrade Front Street transfer location. *Connect Transit, short*

D-5.3b Include transit signage and transit stop information in wayfinding installations. *Connect Transit, short*

City of Bloomington, MCRPC

D-6. Reinforce the connections between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

D-6.1 Encourage development on sites that will link Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods.

METRICS

- Development along the edge of the Downtown district ↑
- Equalized assessed value in regeneration and preservation areas ↑
- # owner-occupied housing units in the Regeneration and Preservation Areas ↑
- Vacancy rates in Regeneration and Preservation Areas ↓

D-6.1a Encourage development on opportunity sites on the outskirts of the area, especially as prioritized in the Downtown Master Plan. *DBA, ongoing*

D-6.1b Condemn properties that are not maintained. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

PARTNER AGENCIES

DBA, Local employers

D-6.2 Form organizational alliances between the DBA and organizations active in surrounding neighborhoods.

METRICS

- # of joint DBA neighborhood meetings and programs ↑

D-6.2a Establish and/or maintain close contact with organizations in surrounding neighborhoods. *DBA, ongoing*

D-6.2b Work with surrounding neighborhood organizations to help improve the surrounding area. *DBA, ongoing*

D-6.2c Explore opportunities for joint programs, particularly those that assist property owners with rehabilitation and development, and document projects developed. *DBA, ongoing*

PARTNER AGENCIES

DBA, Neighborhood organizations

D-6.3 Pursue public-private development opportunities with major employers seeking employee housing near offices.

METRICS

- # of employers participating in employer-assisted housing program ↑
- Employer-assisted housing zone established in Downtown Regeneration and Preservation areas

D-6.3a Identify major employers in and near Downtown Bloomington that desire improved and expanded housing options for their employees. *City of Bloomington, ongoing*

D-6.3b Establish employer-assisted housing zones in established and regeneration neighborhoods surrounding Downtown. *City of Bloomington, short-medium*

PARTNER AGENCIES

DBA, Local employers

VI. Implementation Strategy

Organizational/Procedural Goals & Actions

Using the goals and action items of the Downtown Bloomington Master Plan, this section proposes ways in which recommendations can be implemented. The Implementation Matrix (see Table VI-1) summarizes the implementation action items' priority levels, timeframes, funding sources, and responsible parties. Within the matrix, the following definitions apply:

- "Timing" takes into consideration both the priority and ability to fund each action item. Immediate items can and must commence immediately, Ongoing items require continuous effort to move them forward, Short-term items can occur within the next 1-2 years, Mid-term items within 2-4 years, and Long-term items will require a longer time horizon due to significant funding requirements.

- "Funding Source" identifies the primary funders of each action item.

- "Responsible Party" identifies the primary party to implement each action item, but the DBA will need to be an advocate for moving each item forward.

The following narrative then briefly defines each action, discusses how it moves the plan forward, and provides guidance on next steps to ensure effective execution of the action item. The memo identifies the entities primarily responsible for implementation of each action item, but the Downtown Bloomington Association must be the consistent and persistent advocate for ensuring that the actions are implemented.

The Goals and Action Items are divided into three major categories:

1. Organizational/Procedural
These items reorganize the structures of organizations and processes to better focus on plan implementation and continued, efficient funding

2. Business Development
These items improve the retail and/or office business environment in Downtown by driving additional customer traffic and providing business development services

3. Physical Environment
These items improve the physical environment of Downtown by addressing functional and aesthetic deficiencies that hinder growth of businesses, residents, and visitors by reducing overall perceptions and experiences of Downtown

Organizational/Procedural Goals & Actions

Goal 1: Consider Implementation of a New Tax Increment Financing District

The Tax Increment Financing ("TIF") District in Downtown Bloomington is a powerful tool for supporting economic and physical improvements; the City and DBA must vigorously pursue the creation of a new TIF District. The current combined sales and property tax-based TIF district has existed in Downtown since 1986 and is due to expire in 2010. Proceeds from the TIF District, which directs local increases in tax revenue toward local improvements, have been used to assist rehabilitation of vacant and blighted buildings, restore historic facades, make critical repairs to roofs, and fund DBA operations. The TIF funds have incentivized some of the most significant investments in Downtown and helped to maintain its valuable historic character.

Tax increment is a key funding source for implementation of the Downtown Master Plan, providing continued financial support for physical improvements and programs. The TIF District ensures that value increases in the Downtown tax base are reinvested in the area, thus aligning incentives for tax dollars to be spent locally and creating a cycle of continuous improvement that ultimately accelerates growth of the overall tax base. Downtown still faces challenges in resolving blighting factors – especially in the southern industrial portions – and assisting property owners facing extraordinary renovation costs for buildings often constructed 80 to 100 years ago, as demonstrated by the City's decisions in recent years to support nearly 25 percent of rehabilitation costs for several buildings that otherwise would not have been renovated. Finally, the TIF can provide a steady revenue stream for the DBA.

1.1: Negotiate a new tax increment financing structure with other taxing entities

The City, with DBA support, should create a new TIF District and include negotiated "pass-through agreements." In such an agreement a portion of the tax increment income is transferred to other taxing entities that overlap the TIF district; for example, it might be negotiated that twenty percent of tax increment proceeds are 'passed-through' to the school district rather than used for Downtown projects. In Bloomington, the negotiated pass-throughs must allocate an agreed-upon share of tax increment toward School District 87, which provides educational services for the Downtown and surrounding areas. The school district boundaries are very limited, and the district is therefore losing a significant share of its potential revenue to the existing TIF District. Furthermore, a premise of TIF is that the tax assessment increases are ultimately returned to the pre-existing taxing entities. It is also politically unlikely that a new TIF District will be viable in Downtown unless the needs of District 87 are met.

1.2: Improve the ease of applying for funds and transparency of how funds are used

Improvements should be made to publicizing the TIF District's grant programs, clarifying the application process and contact person among City staff, and tracking and distributing information regarding the use of TIF funds. Downtown property owners have expressed frustration with the difficulty of finding information about the façade and rehabilitation grant programs and determining whom they should contact with inquiries about their applications. Strategic Economics and the DBA have encountered difficulty in obtaining comprehensive and accessible information regarding use of TIF funds and the status of the program as a whole.

The City Manager's office can alleviate these concerns through relatively simple steps, such as creating a dedicated web page on the city website, further disseminating information through the DBA and its website, designating a consistent and accessible contact person on city staff, and publishing publicly accessible revenue and use data annually.

Business Development Goals & Actions

Goal 2: Develop a Catalyst Project that Can Serve as an Additional Downtown "Anchor"

The Downtown Master Plan emphasizes the importance of attracting additional "anchors" for Downtown that will attract visitors and increase retail, restaurant, and service business. Downtown is unlikely to attract a large retail anchor, but there are other public-private partnership opportunities that can develop visitor-generating anchors to better support local businesses and create a lively, urban environment. The Downtown Master Plan specifically identifies a number of high-priority opportunity sites.

2.1: Pursue public-private development partnership and assistance opportunities

In general, the City and DBA should identify potential sites for public-private development partnerships, and actively consider development opportunities that arise or are identified by the City. The Downtown area already contains a number of underutilized sites used for parking that are appropriate future development sites. The Downtown Master Plan also specifically identifies a number of high-priority opportunity sites that are both underutilized and positioned to catalyze further development.

A well-structured public-private partnership should be explored by the City for redevelopment of the Market Street parking garage at the southwest corner of Market and Center. This is one of the most promising sites for redevelopment: the existing parking garage has exceeded its design life span and is falling into disrepair, the site is well-positioned to build on the existing strength of nearby Main Street businesses, and the city already owns the site. The City must view redevelopment of the parking garage as an opportunity to support Downtown rather than simply replace an aging structure.

The nature of the Market Street partnership will vary based on circumstance, financing, and private offers. One example of such a partnership is a ground lease, in which the land is privately-developed but publicly-owned, and the developer pays a portion of operating income to the public agency; such an arrangement allows public control over the developer, type of development, and land ownership, while also generating public revenue and fulfilling public goals. Other possibilities revolve around public ownership or development of parking to help encourage private development.

Discussions related to the formation of the Downtown Master Plan also resulted in the promising idea of locating a new YMCA facility in Downtown Bloomington. The YMCA board has already written a letter of support for this concept. The City and DBA must assist in any way possible to work with the YMCA staff and board to identify development sites,

form mutually-agreeable catalytic development concepts in an appropriately urban format and, if necessary, explore a public-private joint development partnership. A YMCA facility would bring a steady flow of visitors to Downtown during a wide range of hours, provide incentive for current workers to stay in Downtown after normal office hours, increase street life since it would be easy to walk to the YMCA from Downtown and Downtown-adjacent homes and offices, and provide a family-friendly destination.

Goal 3: Strengthen Business Recruitment and Retention Activities

Downtown Bloomington competes with centrally-managed shopping centers and malls that include staff and capacity to focus on business recruitment, retention, ideal tenant mix, and management of relations with the city. Downtown will more effectively compete in the Bloomington-Normal region if it is well-managed, provides strong business assistance, and has an ombudsman with the city.

3.1: Employ or contract with an economic development specialist

The DBA should collaborate with the Economic Development Specialist hired by the City of Bloomington. This individual will spend a portion of their time focused on duties including recruitment and retention of businesses, consideration of tenanting mix and strategy (insofar as the DBA is able to make recommendations to property owners), site location assistance, general business development needs, and facilitation of contact between business owners and the City. The current DBA includes some capacity to carry out these duties, but staff attention is divided among competing, time-consuming duties such as event programming/coordination, general administration, and marketing. It is recognized that hiring such a specialist may incur significant additional costs, making this item a longer-term priority.

3.2: Provide assistance for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs

The DBA provides some limited assistance currently to start-up businesses, and should continue to point newcomers to resources that are available in the community that will help in interpreting regulations, permits, and bureaucracy and potentially acquiring financial assistance, business advice, and mentorship. Such resources appear to be strong in Bloomington, and include the Economic Development Council, Circles of Seven mentoring program, and Central Illinois SCORE.

Goal 4: Market and Promote the Unique Brand and Image of Downtown Bloomington

The DBA has done well in marketing Downtown and creating/promoting new events. Marketing the entire Downtown area helps to establish its unique identity within the region, encouraging people to explore the entire area rather than visit a single store. In addition, the wide reach of the DBA greatly exceeds the advertising capacity of most Downtown businesses.

4.1: Expand the Downtown Bloomington Association's marketing efforts

The centralized marketing for Downtown must continue and expand, taking into consideration the retail market study's findings that most Downtown businesses draw from throughout the region, that many restaurants and bars see increases in business from major events at the cultural/performance anchors in Downtown, that there is a cohesive artist community, and that Downtown competes based on its urban environment and unique agglomeration or clustering of independent retailers. Funding for marketing efforts can continue to come from current DBA funding sources.

4.2: Continue and expand the event programming activities of the Downtown Bloomington Association

The DBA continues to be successful in its efforts to coordinate events in the Downtown area. These events, such as the farmer's market, First Fridays, etc. have successfully drawn visitors to Downtown. The DBA can also heighten the sense of community among Downtown residents and business owners through special discount and event nights for residents in or near Downtown. Funding can continue to come from the variety of sources currently available to the DBA, including the Friends group for project and program funding.

4.3: Continue support and coordination efforts for the Farmers Market

The DBA should continue its support for the Farmers Market as an irreplaceable asset to Downtown. The Farmers Market currently faces logistical issues and complex coordination with property owners. The DBA should provide assistance to the Farmers Market to resolve these issues and continue to support the market's efforts in the future. In addition, the City should work with DBA and the market in making infrastructure changes or recommendations, such as those related to parking, streetscape, and signage.

Strategy	Reference Page(s)	Action #	Action	Timing*	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ORGANIZATIONAL/PROCEDURAL GOALS AND ACTIONS						
Implement a Revised Tax Increment Financing Mechanism						
	64	1.1	Negotiate a new TIF structure with other taxing entities	Immediate	n/a	City
	64	1.2	Improve the ease of applying for funds and transparency of how funds are used	Short-term	n/a	City
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ACTIONS						
Develop a Catalyst Project that Can Serve as an Additional Downtown "Anchor"						
	27-31, 64	2.1	Pursue public-private development partnership and assistance opportunities	Ongoing	Varies by opportunity	City, DBA
Strengthen Business Recruitment and Retention Activities						
	65	3.1	Employ or contract with an economic development specialist	Mid-term	City	City, DBA
	65	3.2	Provide assistance for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs	Ongoing	n/a	City, EDC, DBA, Chamber
Market and Promote the Unique Brand and Image of Downtown Bloomington						
	65	4.1	Expand the Downtown Bloomington Association's marketing efforts	Ongoing	TIF, BN Visitors Bureau	DBA
	65	4.2	Continue and expand the event programming activities of the DBA	Ongoing	TIF	DBA
	65	4.3	Continue support and coordination efforts for the Farmers Market	Ongoing	DBA	DBA
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT GOALS AND ACTIONS						
Protect Downtown's Historic Character and Encourage Appropriate New Development						
	38	5.1	Adopt a zoning overlay that captures the scale and character of historic Downtown buildings and provides appropriate parameters for new development	Short-term	DBA, City	City, DBA
Improve the Perception of Downtown as a Clean and Safe Place						
	66	6.1	Systematize cleaning and maintenance activities	Mid-term	TIF	DBA
	66	6.2	Streamline communication with the City regarding infrastructure concerns such as potholes, cracked sidewalks/curbs, lighting, etc.	Ongoing	n/a	DBA
	56-61	6.3	Implement streetscape recommendations per the Proposed Streetscape Improvements section of the master plan	Ongoing	City	City, DBA
	60	6.4	Create a Downtown Ambassador Program to assist residents and visitors	Short-term	City	DBA
Improve Parking Conditions						
	50-52	7.1	Enact policies to encourage and enhance public parking supplies	Short-term	City	City
	50-52	7.2	Encourage shared private parking supplies through valets and private agreements	Ongoing	Businesses	DBA, Businesses
	52	7.3	Establish a parking broker	Ongoing	Varies	DBA
	51	7.4	Install parking meters in designated locations	Short-term	City	City
Improve Street Circulation and Access to Downtown						
	60	8.1	Install wayfinding signage for parking garages and attractions	Short-term	City/TIF	City, DBA
Connect Downtown to the Constitution Trail						
	55	9.1	Advocate for the connection of the Constitutional Trail to Downtown Bloomington	Ongoing	City, State	DBA, City
Stabilize the Condition of Buildings in the Warehouse District						
	40-41	10.1	Introduce and promote a targeted loan or grant program for the Warehouse District	Mid-term	TIF	City
	40-41	10.2	Educate property owners regarding other funding sources or tax benefits of rehabilitation that Warehouse District property-owners can use	Short-term	TIF	DBA
Continue Façade and Roof Improvement Grants						
	67	11.1	Continue to use TIF funds for façade and roof improvements	Ongoing	TIF	City
Reinforce the Connections Between Downtown and Adjacent Neighborhoods						
	27-31	12.1	Encourage development on sites that will link Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods	Ongoing	City	DBA, City
	67	12.2	Form organizational alliances between the DBA and organizations active in surrounding neighborhoods	Ongoing	DBA	DBA
	67	12.3	Pursue public-private development opportunities with major employers seeking employee housing near offices	Ongoing	City, Employers	DBA, City

*Short-term = 1-2 years, Mid-term = 2-4 years, Long-term = 5+ years; Immediate items must commence immediately, Ongoing items require continuous effort to move them forward

Table VI-1. Implementation Matrix.

VI. Implementation Strategy
Physical Environment Goals & Actions

Goal 5: Protect Downtown's Historic Character and Encourage Appropriate New Development

Downtown's historic building stock and small scale combine to create a unique look and feel that is unmatched anywhere else within the region. This character is a major competitive advantage, differentiating Downtown from other locations and providing an appeal for certain demographics of shoppers, business owners, and residents. Despite this value, Downtown has suffered from a history of teardowns that has left gaps in the street environment, and new developments that fail to integrate well with the existing buildings.

5.1: Adopt a zoning overlay that captures the scale and character of historic Downtown buildings and provides appropriate parameters for new development

The City should adopt the Downtown Master Plan's recommendations for a zoning overlay ensuring that future developments are compatible with Downtown's existing historic character. The Master Plan provides a detailed breakdown of the appropriate requirements and regulations for a zoning overlay; adoption can therefore be inexpensive, provided that property owners and the City are receptive to such a change. If not, the DBA must advocate for adoption by educating stakeholders as to the benefits of the changes. Upon adoption, planning staff will need to be vigilant in consistently and fairly reviewing new development proposals subject to the new overlay.

Goal 6: Improve the Perception of Downtown as a Clean and Safe Place

Downtown Bloomington continues to suffer from a regional perception as being unsafe, and residents of Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods have frequently complained of trash-strewn streets. As with any place, basic cleanliness, infrastructure, and safety issues and perceptions must be resolved before economic development activities will have maximum impact. Beyond these concerns, an improved street environment will further encourage pedestrian activity and the overall visitor, resident, and worker experience.

6.1: Systematize cleaning and maintenance activities

The DBA should pursue a more consistent approach for trash removal, and consider contracting out for additional sidewalk and street cleaning services. In particular, this could help address debris from revelers visiting Downtown's drinking establishments (a major complaint by business owners and

residents alike) – is cleaned up quickly and that the costs are borne by the same Downtown businesses that benefit from the cleaner street environment. In addition, an effort to streamline and standardize trash removal for Downtown businesses could alleviate concerns raised by property owners regarding pickup days and inability to accommodate on-site dumpsters, etc. A similar approach can be taken to efficiently streamline snow removal.

6.2: Streamline communication with the City regarding infrastructure concerns such as potholes, cracked sidewalks/curbs, lighting, etc.

The DBA and City should work to identify consistent contact persons within city staff for addressing infrastructure concerns quickly and efficiently. Addressing infrastructure concerns is particularly important in the urban environment of Downtown, since the heavier pedestrian traffic results in greater notice of sidewalk and curb conditions, greater potential for injuries due to gaps and cracks, and increased need for effective, functional lighting.

6.3: Implement streetscape recommendations per Proposed Streetscape Improvements section of the master plan

The Proposed Streetscape Improvements section of this report recommends short-term street improvements, including the installation of street trees, expansion of distinctive lighting, installation of pedestrian crosswalk treatments, and other streetscape improvements. Such improvements will increase the pedestrian orientation of Downtown and encourage walking between locations. The DBA should advocate strongly for these improvements.

Goal 7: Improve Parking Conditions

Although Downtown Bloomington currently has sufficient parking space to meet needs, several parking management concerns must be addressed. Specifically, the consultant team heard complaints revolving around residents, customers, and employees competing for on-street spaces, unclear parking regulations, ineffective regulations that result in reshuffling of automobiles among spaces, and unclear direction to off-street parking options. The Downtown Bloomington Master Plan recommends a "park once" strategy that encourages a single automobile trip into and out of Downtown, with internal Downtown trips accomplished on foot. Implementation of this strategy requires the following action items, but the

general emphasis is again on holistic management rather than a piecemeal approach.

7.1: Enact policies to encourage and enhance public parking supplies

The City should enact the Master Plan's policy changes regarding the provision and management of public parking supplies, including ensuring that public parking is positioned for access to multiple destinations, parking maximums are put in place, and that developments can pay in-lieu fees for development of public facilities rather than on-site private parking. The City will need to create firm parking regulations for the Downtown area, and follow-through will require collaboration by the departments of the City Manager, Planning, and Public Works.

7.2: Encourage shared private parking supplies through valets and private agreements

The DBA should proactively coordinate shared private parking arrangements, including the possible implementation of a valet. A shared valet service can serve multiple restaurants, stores, and drinking establishments along the Main Street commercial area; the DBA can coordinate and manage such a valet for the multiple stakeholders along these blocks. The DBA can also connect private parking owners with businesses to arrange specific agreements for sharing spaces.

7.3: Establish a parking broker

The DBA is the most logical organization to host a parking broker responsible for parking management duties in Downtown. This role could possibly be combined with the duties of the economic development specialist recommended in Action 4.1.

7.4: Consider the installation of parking meters in designated locations

The Downtown Master Plan's recommendations for parking meters and availability- and price-based demand management techniques are on the forefront of modern parking planning and will alleviate concerns over availability of parking or over-use by specific groups of users. Implementation will require up-front and ongoing maintenance investments by the City, but will also generate revenue that can be used to repay initial outlays and fund future parking improvements.

Goal 8: Improve Wayfinding Downtown

8.1: Install wayfinding signage for parking garages and attractions

The DBA and City should collaborate to provide wayfinding signage directing pedestrians and automobiles to attractions and parking garages within Downtown. Downtown Bloomington features sufficient parking and several attractions that draw visitors from throughout the region, yet is very confusing to drivers and pedestrians trying to find these attractions. The DBA should advocate for implementation, but primary funding and implementation should come from the City, with possible funding by some of the major attractions. The attractions in Downtown Bloomington draw both city residents and visitors from a wide area, and therefore bring money into the City; it is worth investing in their success by making them accessible, encouraging exploration of other attractions, and generally improving the visitor experience.

Goal 9: Connect Downtown to the Constitution Trail

The Constitution Trail currently consists of over 24 miles of paved trails throughout the Bloomington-Normal region. It began as a joint venture between Bloomington and Normal in the mid-1980s, and recent expansions have been partly funded by grants from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The trail currently bypasses Downtown Bloomington. A more robust connection will benefit Downtown by increasing recreational opportunities and alternative transportation modes. Strategic Economics' psychographic analysis of households in Downtown and adjacent areas found a sizable share of households that seek out "urban" lifestyles; such households are typically interested in recreational opportunities and are more willing to use transportation alternatives to the private automobile.

Connecting the Constitution Trail to Downtown, whether through comfortable on-street bicycle lanes or an actual trail extension, will help satisfy recreational demand, provide an inexpensive transportation alternative for households unable to afford an automobile, and transform Downtown into a weekend destination for trail users.

9.1: Advocate for the connection of the Constitutional Trail to Downtown Bloomington

The DBA should remain focused on advocating for the connection of the Constitution Trail to Downtown, with the City ultimately responsible for implementing the connection.

Funding can come from additional Illinois Department of Natural Resources grants, the City of Bloomington, and possibly the DBA and other large Downtown organizations.

Goal 10: Stabilize the Condition of the Buildings in the Warehouse District

The Warehouse District in the southern portion of the Study Area contains a number of warehouse buildings dating from the mid-19th to early-20th century, many of which have valuable historic character. Most of these buildings are still in active use, but suffer from maintenance concerns related to their age and the high cost of maintaining them relative to achievable rents. Just as historic preservation in the Downtown Core has maintained a unique and attractive stock of historic buildings that are now appealing to visitors and new residents, it is in the City's interest to preserve the historic warehouse buildings for future uses.

10.1: Introduce and promote a targeted loan or grant program for the Warehouse District
Assuming that a new TIF District is created in the future, the City should focus use of funds to stabilize the condition of buildings in the Warehouse District. Such a program should concentrate on maintaining the basic soundness and historic character of the structures, such as roof repair/replacement, structural reinforcement, and brick repointing. It is not envisioned that this program would cover all costs, but instead provide additional incentive for the property owners to reinvest in the properties. The intent and use of this program would be somewhat similar to the current Harriett Fuller Rust Grant (recommended for continuation in Action 12.1 below), and can possibly be administered under that program.

10.2: Educate property owners regarding other funding sources or tax benefits of rehabilitation that Downtown property-owners can use
The DBA should gather information about alternative funding sources and tax credits, and focus on educating Downtown property owners of these benefits. Doing so would incur little expense to the DBA, but possibly facilitate rehabilitation of these properties by allowing them to access tax credits and other grants.

Goal 11: Continue Façade and Roof Improvement Grants

11.1: Continue to use tax increment financing funds for façade and roof improvements
Assuming the creation of a new TIF District, tax increment proceeds should continue to be used for façade and roof improvement grants, as has been carried out in the past through the Harriett Fuller Rust Grant. The façade rehabilitations are critical to ensuring the removal of visual blight in the pedestrian-oriented portions of Downtown. For maximum effectiveness, it is recommended that façade rehabilitations are targeted to concentrated areas of the Downtown, such as along Main, Center, and East Front Streets, since scattered rehabilitation will have little impact on the overall appearance of any particular block.

Goal 12: Reinforce the Connections between Downtown and Adjacent Neighborhoods

A key economic development strategy requires strengthening the physical and conceptual connections between Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods, particularly those to the immediate east and west. The fates of Downtown and these neighborhoods are intertwined: each contributes to the other's historic character and overall environment, overlapping household psychographic characteristics imply potential demand for Downtown housing and retail, and there are a number of high-potential opportunity sites ripe for development that will fill in gaps and naturally encourage greater interaction between the areas.

The need to connect Downtown with its surrounding neighborhoods was of less importance in the recent past, when Downtown primarily served as a regionally-focused employment, retail, dining, and entertainment center. However, Downtown is again becoming a residential neighborhood in its own right. This process strengthens Downtown, and will be accelerated if local-serving amenities and retail exist. Such retail and amenities will be developed more quickly if strengthened neighborhood connections increase the potential customer and local visitor base, resulting in a self-reinforcing cycle of amenity growth and residential growth that ultimately creates a more vibrant Downtown.

The needed "connections" between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods are both physical and conceptual.

The physical connections are straightforward, requiring attractive development that will encourage a sense of continuity between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods from both automobile and pedestrian perspectives, and a linkage between physical property improvements in both areas. The conceptual connection requires a cultural shift in the perceived context of Downtown's location, with an acknowledgment that Downtown is the integral core of a larger community of residential neighborhoods. It takes time and tremendous effort to change firmly-held perceptions of a place.

12.1: Encourage development on sites that will link Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods
Similar to Action 3.1, development should be encouraged on opportunity sites that lie on the outskirts of the Study Area, especially the opportunity sites identified in the Downtown Master Plan. Many of these sites consist of large parking lots, and would therefore be relatively inexpensive and easy for willing owners to develop. Housing is the most logical use for these sites, with mixed-use construction making more sense closer to existing mixed-use buildings.

The City should encourage development by ensuring adequate, affordable public parking availability (precluding the need for parking on surface lots), entering public-private partnerships for surplus City-owned land, and staying vigilant in condemning properties that are not maintained. The DBA should help by connecting interested property owners and developers.

12.2: Form organizational alliances between the DBA and organizations active in surrounding neighborhoods
Perceived linkages between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods can be brought about through better organizational connections between the DBA and other organizations operating in those neighborhoods. Open dialog and coordinated actions between these organizations will help align the activities of the DBA with those of community development corporations and neighborhood associations operating nearby.

Strategic Economics was unable to find previous instances in which local economic development activities specifically emphasized building connections between commercial districts and surrounding residential districts. Though most economic development strategies recognize the importance of the

relationship between commercial and residential districts, the existing context informs whether economic development efforts are inclusive of both. For example, in the Broad Ripple neighborhood of Indianapolis, the Broad Ripple Village Association includes the residential and commercial components of the neighborhood since they were already perceived as being inter-related despite their different functions (see the case study for more details). Conversely, organizations in big-city downtowns typically include a variety of organizations that focus on just the Downtown itself or on smaller neighborhoods of Downtown.

Downtown Bloomington is large enough that the DBA should continue to operate solely within Downtown, yet it is small enough that the DBA should work with surrounding organizations to help improve the surrounding area. This strategy makes sense given that Downtown Bloomington is indeed a central hub of the region, yet the region and Downtown are too small to ignore the economic development opportunities of better organizational cooperation.

The DBA should establish and/or maintain close contact with organizations operating in surrounding neighborhoods and explore opportunities for joint programs, particularly those that assist property owners with rehabilitation and development. Prominent organizations include Mid Central Community Action, and the Old House Society, plus local neighborhood associations.

12.3: Pursue public-private development opportunities with major employers seeking employee housing near offices
The DBA should seek to identify major employers in and near Downtown Bloomington that desire improved and expanded housing options for their employees. These employers, such as State Farm Insurance and Advocate BroMenn Regional Medical Center, may be interested in opportunities to assist with the development and rehabilitation of local housing, or perhaps participating in a mortgage assistance program for employees who choose to live within nearby neighborhoods. The latter tool is a common enticement employed by large employers wishing to contribute to the revitalization of their communities.

VI. Implementation Strategy

Case Study: Broad Ripple, Indianapolis

CASE STUDY: BROAD RIPPLE, INDIANAPOLIS

Broad Ripple Village is a neighborhood and commercial district in Indianapolis, Indiana, located about six miles north of Downtown. It is centered on Broad Ripple Avenue, a major commercial corridor. Broad Ripple Avenue has evening and nighttime entertainment venues such as restaurants, bars, and live music venues. It also has clothing and specialty stores, and is distinguished by a concentration of artists and public art. This mix of retail, entertainment, and art contributes to a lively atmosphere during both the day and night.

Broad Ripple's commercial district declined during the 1960s and 1970s as the population shifted to the suburbs. The commercial district began to improve in the following decades, with its early improvement attributed to Butler University students patronizing the district's bars. The customer base currently consists of three major users: shoppers from outside the district during the day, local and regional families/couples/groups patronizing restaurants in the evening, and bar patrons from throughout the region at night.

The residential portions of Broad Ripple always remained stable compared to the commercial district, contributing to positive perceptions of the area. Today the neighborhood around the commercial district is relatively affluent, with a median household income of approximately $53,836 compared to a Marion County median household income of $40,421 .

The neighborhood and commercial district is served by the Broad Ripple Village Association (BRVA), a volunteer non-profit organization comprised of both residents and businesses located in the area. The organization tries to work with and serve both the interests of residents and businesses. One of their primary program areas is beautification, which includes planting trees and flowers and administering a cleaning partnership with business owners. BRVA also set up a foundation to raise money to pay for a new streetscape design and pedestrian improvements on Broad Ripple Avenue.

Another primary goal of the BRVA is to act as a liaison to the City of Indianapolis. This includes informing business owners about the City's façade improvement program and trying to get more City investment in the neighborhood. They also do marketing of the neighborhood, such as planning and advertising events such as the "Historic Home Tour," and

creating an annual directory of businesses that is distributed to downtown hotels.

Conclusions

Downtown Bloomington is the central downtown for its entire region, whereas Broad Ripple is a neighborhood within a much larger city. Despite this, Broad Ripple holds valuable lessons for Downtown Bloomington, given that Downtown Bloomington is the hub of a relatively small region and in many ways functions as a smaller-scale commercial district.

Broad Ripple has succeeded in attracting a more stable and continuous customer base throughout the day and night thanks to the positive perceptions driven by the surrounding residential neighborhood; this lends support to actions aimed at improving and connecting surrounding neighborhoods to Downtown Bloomington. Like Downtown Bloomington, economic trends have forced Broad Ripple to compete as a specialty district with a unique, progressive, and artistic identity. Unlike Downtown Bloomington, the area attracts a more consistent volume of business throughout the day, evening, and night. Much of this is due to the strong neighborhood that surrounds the commercial district, resulting in positive regional perceptions of the area and a stable and family-oriented local customer base. In addition, the proximity of active homeowners ensures a base of concerned stakeholders that seek to monitor and rectify problems in the commercial district.

Given this linkage between residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, the Broad Ripple example also suggests that organizational structure is key to resolving diverse stakeholder concerns and successfully linking the economic development of neighborhoods. The Broad Ripple Village Association includes both the commercial and residential portions of Broad Ripple since they are perceived as being inextricably linked and interdependent. As a result, the BRVA is better able to comprehensively address issues that impact homeowners and business owners while balancing the concerns of each group. Downtown Bloomington requires its own standalone organization (the current DBA, for example) given its larger size and unique, diverse mix of uses compared to surrounding neighborhoods, but the Broad Ripple example suggests the value of creating organizational bridges and shared programs with entities operating in surrounding neighborhoods.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT: SPECIAL SERVICE AREAS (SSAs)

The Special Service Area (SSA) is an economic development tool that can be created to implement many of the plan's recommendations. An SSA is a taxing district that is created by state statute and city ordinance. It works by levying an additional real estate property tax on properties within a designated district to fund services desired by those in the district and beyond those provided by a municipality. Examples of services include: public way maintenance and beautification; district marketing and advertising; business retention/attraction, special events and promotional activities; auto and bike transit; security; façade improvements; and other commercial and economic development initiatives.

An SSA provides a dedicated funding stream for desired improvements without incurring debt or levying a tax on the entire municipality. In short, an SSA allows local governments to tax for and deliver services to limited geographic areas within their jurisdictions for services desired by those within the district.