



DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

109 EAST OLIVE STREET; BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2017 AT 12:00 PM

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment

(Each regular Task Force meeting shall have a public comment period not to exceed 30 minutes. Every speaker is entitled to speak for up to 3 minutes. To be considered for public comment, complete a public comment card at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. The Chairperson will randomly draw from the cards submitted. Public comment is a time to give comment. It is not a question and answer period, and the Task Force Committee does not respond to public comments. Speakers who engage in threatening or disorderly behavior will have their time ceased.)

4. Consideration, review and approval of Minutes from the October 17, 2017 meeting
5. Review, discussion and vote on the Downtown Task Force Final Report
6. Adjourn

DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEETING
SUMMARY MINUTES
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

109 EAST OLIVE STREET; BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2017 AT 12:00 PM

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Buragas called the meeting to order at **12:08 PM** and asked Ms. Hon to call the Roll.

2. **Roll Call**

List who was present of the Task Force:

Committee Member Kim Bray, Committee Member Jamie Mathy, Committee Member Carlo Robustelli, Committee Member Justin Boyd, Committee Member Mike Manna, and Chairperson Amelia Buragas

Staff Present:

Melissa Hon, Assistant to the City Manager; Tom Dabareiner, Community Development Director; David Hales, City Manager; Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager; Katie Simpson, City Planner; Izzy Rivera, Assistant City Planner; Jay Tetzloff, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Director; Robert Moews, Superintendent of Parks Maintenance; David Lamb, Assistant Superintendent of Parks Maintenance; and Jeanne Hamilton, Library Director;

3. **Public Comment:** Jim Pearson

4. **Minutes:** The Committee reviewed the October 10, 2017 minutes. Committee Member Robustelli moved to approve the minutes; Committee Member Boyd seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously by a voice vote.

5. **Presentation on downtown beautification (Presented by Robert Moews, Superintendent of Parks Maintenance and David Lamb, Assistant Superintendent of Parks Maintenance)**

- Mr. Tetzloff thanked the Task Force Committee for the invitation for Mr. Moews and Mr. Lamb to come and show what their team has done downtown.
- Mr. Moews stated he wanted to give a brief history of what their Department does. He stated they were primarily park maintenance and have about 20 full-time and 30 seasonal staff. He explained that they do a lot of different things such as trees, electrical and plumbing work, as well as being involved in many other projects. He then introduced Mr. David Lamb, the Assistant Park Superintendent, and also a former horticulturist.

- Mr. Lamb presented a small slide show to give an overview of what Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts does in downtown and to introduce a couple of ideas that the Committee might like moving forward.
- Chairperson Buragas commented that the downtown strategy plan talks about trees and downtown. Specifically, it calls out that we do not yet have a consistent spacing in the number of trees and there is capacity to add a lot of trees. She asked Mr. Lamb from his point of view, is there anything holding us back from accomplishing that goal.
- Mr. Lamb explained that one of the main reasons that there are not more trees downtown is the underground vault structures that are in the way of a lot of planting opportunities. He then asked Mr. Moews if our updated infrastructure in downtown allow for better placement of trees in the public right-of-way.
- Mr. Moews stated that there was a Downtown Streetscape plan that has actually been formed to come up Center, and there were some added trees in that drawing. Part of our trouble down there is electricity.
- Chairperson Buragas commented that one of the things that has come up and in a proposal that came from one of the Board or the Task Force members was the question of how do we empower the Parks Department. Clearly you already have a lot of responsibility in downtown, but how do we empower you to do more because this is an area where residents reach out to us and say it is very important. One of the ideas that came out was what if we designate all of downtown as a public park. Does that have value and increase your ability to do work in the area, or do you already have the ability and it is just a matter of funding.
- Mr. Tetzloff stated that if there was a downtown park, it would probably increase our prioritization of that area, but for us it comes to the budget.
- Committee Member Robustelli stated that he wanted to echo the amazing work that is done to beautify parks and the space here. Residents really love the work that is done. One of the things that we have talked about with our regional planner, Vasu, was sort of thinking about public space differently. He wondered if the downtown was designated a park, or the core was, would there be more opportunities to do more programming downtown.
- Mr. Tetzloff replied that he thought there was a great opportunity there. The only hesitation that I think of just standing here is again just the resources of staff to actually do that and do that programming and then have someone do the work. If we had a green space to actually program, we would love that.
- Committee Member Bray commented that Mr. Tetzloff had spoken about the public/private partnership that is already in place. She asked Mr. Tetzloff as we look at funding going forward and some things we would like to add or things we would like to maintain, what greater opportunities does he see for public/private partnership?

- Mr. Tetzloff replied that they were always open to the idea of partnerships. As he talked to other parks directors across the country, you hear it is a parasite relationship where the nonprofit gets everything and the city does the work. We want to make sure it is a win/win for everybody, the community and for our staff, as well and keep their morale going forward in a positive way. We are always open and looking for different partnerships.
- Committee Member Bray asked if there were any particular resource groups that have traditionally partnered with the Parks department, and stated that Mr. Tetzloff had made mention of Friends of Constitution Trail.
- Mr. Tetzloff stated that master naturalists and master gardeners have been good ones for them, as have some of the Rotary Clubs and Kiwanis Clubs. They have also done Eagle Scout projects throughout the parks and with the Audubon Society.
- Committee Member Bray commented that perhaps there could be a concept that would try to coordinate those various efforts and resource groups around certain initiatives.
- Chairperson Buragas asked about another partnership that the Parks department has engaged in with the County. She stated she had heard a lot of positive comments on the parking lot and how much better it looks after the City partnered with the County.
- Mr. Tetzloff responded that they were pleased that people notice the work that they do and that they see a lot more potential in that area. Mr. Lamb also commented there is a lot of opportunity there.
- Chairperson Buragas stated that if we are focusing on that plaza in front of the Law and Justice Center, it seems to me comparatively, the hardscape is already there so is it more a matter of the planting and landscaping?
- Mr. Lamb replied that the hardscape is there. The idea of a water feature was mentioned by a couple of people and they already have some lawn amenity areas down below, so yes, there is a lot of opportunity there to do some different things.
- Committee Member Manna commented on the issue of replacing an existing tree, when needed, with a tiny tree and asked what was involved in getting a tree that would make it look like it fits the consistent profile of downtown. He also asked about electrical outlets like those in downtown Normal and about a solution to watering.
- Mr. Lamb responded that any additional watering is really not a problem since they are there anyway and stated that if Committee Member Manna were to purchase some pots, plant them himself, then he believed they could pick up the watering. He stated there are going to be some restrictions on where they go based on the parking and distance from the curb and things like that, but we can coordinate that. He commented on one of the things that goes back to what

Chairperson Buragas said about the planting of trees. Normal's plan was designed so that they put plant beds and trees first and designed everything somewhat around that, whereas Bloomington designed the sidewalks and then decided to make cutouts for some trees.

- Committee Member Manna asked if he bought his own tree under the condition that he wanted to put lights in it and run it to the post right next to it, could he do that or what is involved in it?
- Mr. Tetzloff stated it would not be our decision as there are other Departments that would have to have some say in that, as well.
- Mr. Moews added that he would do every tree down there if we had the resources to get the lights for them.
- Committee Member Mathy stated that last year at Christmas time, the lights looked great, but there has been some concern that some of the wires have come down and asked how we put some consistent maintenance towards it.
- Mr. Lamb replied that it has been a learning curve for them. What we have learned is they are easily broken and explained the plan for this year to make them sturdy.
- Committee Member Mathy then asked about going bigger with the Christmas lights and having lines off the courthouse that went out to all the buildings as he had seen this in a presentation from another city.
- Mr. Moews commented that you have to get permission from everybody for what you are going to do and you would have to have a cable.
- Chairperson Buragas stated this highlights why it was so important to move Tricia Stiller into the City so this type of coordination could happen on a more organized basis. So hopefully we can work through those things, talk to the business owners, coordinate with staff to make progress in some of these areas because clearly there is desire to move forward on these types of projects.
- Committee Member Mathy stated that the Rotary clubs had been mentioned earlier, and there are going to be people reaching out because the Rotary International President put forward that one of our goals for this year is to plant a tree for every person in Rotary worldwide. There are 450 of us in Bloomington so we are going to be buying a bunch of trees, and I think that we will also supply some of the manpower to put them in.
- Mr. Lamb commented that they are aware and already have a project going with that.
- Committee Member Mathy stated that one of the Public Works projects in the next couple of years is going to be to repave Main Street and Center Street. It could be five years out or whatever that time frame might be, but if part of that project were to ask them to put in electrical to all those tree wells, is that something that Parks and Rec would be interested in working with.

- Committee Member Robustelli asked if they had few ideas or suggestions the committee should consider in terms of creating or enhancing downtown space, walkability, and beautification. We have been looking at a lot of different things, programming, and so we would love your feedback.
- Mr. Tetzloff replied that kind of leads into where we are. We are still kind of in the early stages of a Parks Master Plan. The findings of what they heard from the community and Aldermen and some staff will be presented at Monday's Council meeting.
- Chairperson Buragas stated the next item on the agenda is general discussion. Earlier this morning, she sent out a draft of a proposed final Task Force Report and asked for everyone to go through this and give feedback. She stated that optimistically she would like to take this up at next week's meeting for an action item. There are a couple of items in the report that are very pertinent to next year's budget and so the sooner we can get this to Council, the better. As an example, the suggestion that Kim had about really talking about resurfacing of Jefferson next year and what opportunities that might provide. That is something that we need to get to Council sooner rather than later to look at. Are we interested in doing a shared streets model where we have more of a public plaza feel in that area, do we want to make any changes to the parking structure on that street, so all those conversations need to happen sooner rather than later because this is a 3 to 5-year plan, so we need to get it to them.
- Committee Member Boyd stated that he did not know if it was brought up or not, but somewhere in this draft when we were talking about Main and Center and the possibility of changing around parking, he had thought of putting sharrows down on the road to help bring awareness that it is more pedestrian friendly.

6. Adjourn

10/24/2017

DOWNTOWN BLOOMINGTON TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT



OVERVIEW

The Downtown Bloomington Task Force was formed on May 8, 2017 in order to establish top priorities for Downtown Bloomington revitalization and development for the next three to five years. City Council requested that the Task Force focus on merging the contents of the city's various approved planning documents and to provide source notations in order to provide a "line of sight" between the Task Force recommendations and the comprehensive plans, which represent extensive public input. The Task Force also held a public listening session and actively encouraged public participation in its discussions. The Task Force submitted an interim report to City Council on August 31, 2017. The final report originally was anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2017. The Task Force is submitting its final report ahead of schedule in order to allow City Council time to incorporate these proposals into the FY2019 budget, if desired.

MEMBERS

Kim Bray, Bloomington City Council, Ward 9
Jamie Mathy, Bloomington City Council, Ward 1
Amelia Buragas, Bloomington City Council, Ward 4 (chair)
Carlo Robustelli, McLean County Board
Tricia Stiller, Director, Downtown Bloomington Association
Justin Boyd, Chair, Bloomington Planning Commission
Mike Manna, Downtown Business Owner
Bobby Varicella, Downtown Business Owner
Joe Haney, Downtown Business Owner

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Bring It On Bloomington! 2035 Comprehensive Plan (2015)
Downtown Strategy Plan (Farr Plan) (2013)
Main Street Transportation Feasibility Study (2012)
Downtown Streetscape Lighting Master Plan (2015)

PRESENTATIONS

- Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager, "Downtown Update."
- Tom Dabareiner, Director, Community Development Department, "Comprehensive Plan Overview," "Results of 2016 Downtown Stakeholder Meeting," and "Catalyst Project Overview."
- Greg Koos, Director Emeritus, McLean County History Museum and Lea Cline, Vice Chair, HPC, "Historic Preservation."
- Jim Karch, Director, Public Works, "Downtown Infrastructure."
- Vasu Pinnamaraju, Executive Director, McLean County Regional Planning Commission, "Public Places."
- Jay Tetzloff, Robert Moews and David Lamb, Parks and Recreation Department, "Downtown Beautification."
- Ken Bays, Assistant Chief of Police, "Downtown Crime Statistics."

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Downtown revitalization efforts can be divided into three general categories: Placemaking, Catalyst, and Supportive. The majority of the Task Force recommendations fall under placemaking and have been divided into the following two subcategories: Beautification/Public Art and Public Places/Walkability.

The Task Force recommendations focus on placemaking because this category offers simple, easy-to-achieve and comparatively inexpensive opportunities to improve and enhance the Downtown area with a high potential return on investment. The Task Force also makes recommendations in the supportive category related to improving availability of public parking. Finally, the Task Force notes that the Downtown Strategy recommends a catalyst project that will “attract visitors and increase retail, restaurant, and service business.” Catalyst projects are larger in nature and reflect a much more significant public investment. The Task Force recommendations for catalysts are based on the projects that are most likely to be successful based on current opportunities. They also reflect existing needs in the Downtown area. The Task Force recognizes that any catalyst projects will require significant public support in order to be feasible.

Please note that the Task Force has limited its recommendations to the Downtown “core,” or that area of Downtown roughly defined by Madison Street, East Street, Market Street, and Front Street. This approach is consistent with the Downtown Strategy Plan. The Task Force did not consider recommendations outside of this area, but notes that significant opportunities for development and revitalization exist in the expanded Downtown area, which includes the Warehouse District and surrounding transitional and residential areas.



SECTION 1: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART

Residents take great pride in the efforts made in recent years to increase the visual appeal of Downtown Bloomington. Residents report a strong desire to add additional trees for shade as well as to increase the amount of green space. There also is a desire to continue to support the work of local artists and to foster a unique identity through the integration of public art into Downtown spaces.

PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES

“Public art is a great way to beautify and add character to a Downtown.” *Downtown Strategy*, pg. 60.

“Street trees are indispensable to the attractiveness and safety of the Downtown core. Street trees make the street appear narrower to drivers and typically result in a decrease in traffic speed, making the environment more conducive to walking.” *Downtown Strategy*, pg. 59.

“A proper amount of street trees is vital to complement the proposed street lights and existing architecture of Downtown.” *Streetscape Master Plan*, pg. 27.

“A sophisticated public art program could complement tourism and branding efforts.” *Streetscape Master Plan*, pg. 28.

“[P]ublic art can transform the city’s gateways, corridors, and neighborhoods alike.” *Comprehensive Plan*, pg. 112.

N-2.3d Establish a program for public art. BCPA, short. *Comprehensive Plan*, pg. 57.

ACH-1.1e Increase visual arts in the public sphere Downtown. BCPA, ongoing. *Comprehensive Plan*, Pg. 114.

ACH-5. Encourage the use of public art to enhance neighborhoods and public spaces and foster engagement throughout the community. *Comprehensive Plan*, pg. 122.

CF-2.2b Emphasize use of native plants and trees on public grounds. City of Bloomington, ongoing. *Comprehensive Plan*, pg. 219.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DESIGNATE THE DOWNTOWN CORE AS A “PUBLIC PARK” OR “GREEN SPACE” TO EMPOWER THE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT TO ACTIVELY MAINTAIN AND PROGRAM IN PUBLIC SPACES IN A WAY THAT MAXIMIZES AESTHETIC APPEAL AND ADDS ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING. FOCUS ON ADDITIONAL SHADE TREES AS WELL AS PERENNIAL, DROUGHT-TOLERANT, NATIVE PLANTINGS, AND RAIN GARDENS.

SECTION 1: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART (CONTINUED)

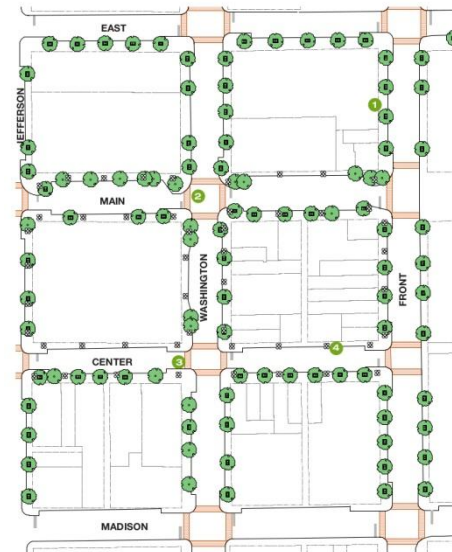
RECOMMENDATIONS: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART (CONTINUED)

2. SELECT AND MAKE AVAILABLE TO BUSINESS OWNERS SELF-WATERING PLANTERS THAT ARE UNIFORM IN APPEARANCE TO BE PURCHASED BY, PLACED IN FRONT OF, AND MAINTAINED BY DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES. USE PRIVATE SPONSORSHIPS TO INCREASE NUMBER OF PLANTINGS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA AND/OR FUND PLANTING OF LARGER TREES.
3. ENGAGE IN ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ART PROJECTS, SUCH AS DECORATIVE PAINTED CROSSWALKS OR SIDEWALK ART. EXPLORE THE USE OF TACTIAL URBANISM TO INCREASE ART IN THE PUBLIC SPACE.
4. INSTALL ADDITIONAL DECORATIVE LIGHTING DOWNTOWN (EX. CANOPY LIGHTING ACROSS THE STREET OR BETWEEN FAÇADE AND TREES/LIGHT POLES). INSTALL ADDITIONAL ELECTRICAL CONDUITS AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE.

EXAMPLES: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART



EX. 1A: CURRENT STREETSCAPE



EX. 1B: ENHANCED STREETSCAPE

EXAMPLES: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART (CONTINUED)



EX. 2: DECORATIVE PAINTED CROSSWALK



EX. 4: STREET ART



EX. 3: DECORATIVE LIGHTING



EX. 5: DECORATIVE LIGHTING

SECTION 2: PUBLIC SPACES / WALKABILITY

Many residents view Downtown as a central hub for our community and express a strong desire for additional public spaces in Downtown Bloomington. These spaces also are ideal for use in programming and special events to bring people into the Downtown area. Walkability is a key feature of downtowns and an area that poses tremendous opportunity to adopt innovative practices when it comes to utilization of the public right-of-way and integration of multi-modal transportation.

PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES

“Currently, parking lots and vacant parcels within Downtown create gaps in the built environment. Utilizing these spaces as patios, plazas, small parks, or other public spaces will help make the street more active and lively place.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 38.*

“To improve the safety of pedestrians walking around Downtown, it is recommended that special paving treatment, such as cobblestones or brick, be installed at a width of at least eight feet at key intersections as shown on Figure V-24.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 59.*

“Challenges within Downtown include restoring high levels of walkability that existed in Bloomington prior to World War II. In the last 50 years, modern traffic engineering and development patterns have emphasized automobile transportation over walkability. The resulting street grid is harsh and uninviting to pedestrians.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 54.*

D-5.2 Enhance the walkability and bikeability within and to Downtown and facilitate access to car-sharing and bike-sharing in the Downtown district. *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 108.*

RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC PLACES / WALKABILITY

1. PARTNER WITH MCLEAN COUNTY TO ENHANCE THE PUBLIC SPACES CURRENTLY LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE LAW & JUSTICE CENTER AND AROUND THE MCLEAN COUNTY MUSEUM OF HISTORY. PRIORITIZE MAINTENANCE, CLEANLINESS, AND INSTALLATION OF DROUGHT-RESISTANT, NATIVE PLANTINGS. MAKE THESE SPACES AVAILABLE FOR CITY PROGRAMMING (EX. LAWN GAMES DURING FARMER’S MARKET, PUBLIC SEATING, LIVE MUSIC DURING FIRST FRIDAYS, ETC.)
2. TRANSITION FROM A STREETS/SIDEWALKS MODEL TO A “SHARED SPACE” MODEL IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE. THIS ALLOWS FULL USE OF THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY BY ALL USERS, CREATES A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT, AND HONORS OUR HISTORIC PAST. EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY PROPOSED RESURFACING OF JEFFERSON STREET AND FRONT STREET IN 2018.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC SPACES / WALKABILITY (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

3. INSTALL BRICK OR STAMPED CONCRETE CROSSWALKS. ALTERNATIVE: DECORATIVE PAINTED CROSSWALKS.
4. REEXAMINE PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS FOR OUTSIDE SEATING AND SIDEWALK RETAIL TO ENCOURAGE GREATER USE OF THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY BY DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES WITHOUT BLOCKING PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT.

EXAMPLES: PUBLIC SPACES / WALKABILITY



EX. 1: SHARED ROAD MODEL



EX. 2: PUBLIC PLAZA

SECTION 3: PUBLIC PARKING

Residents continue to report the perception that Downtown lacks sufficient, convenient parking. In the short term, the Task Force recommends changes to increase the amount of on-street parking for visitors to Downtown. This will alleviate current frustrations as the city works to improve parking facilities and toward a long-term culture shift in parking expectations.

PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES

“Local parking consultants estimate that the distance people are willing to walk between parking and their downtown Bloomington destination ranges from between 500 feet for visitors and one-quarter mile for employees. Where willingness-to-walk range is this limited—vibrant downtowns can count on walking ranges that begin at ¼ mile—it is difficult for downtown destinations to rely on public parking supplies for their access needs. It is also a sign that parkers find the downtown environment less-stimulating than it should be.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 121-22.*

“Relieve pressure for surface parking lots by offering convenient spaces within public parking decks.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 50.*

“Require employees to park off-street in public parking decks or lots.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 52*

“One of the key recommendations includes the installation of parking meters in specified locations in Downtown. Currently on-street parking is free in all of Downtown, leading to congestion in several areas. Pricing on-street parking according to demand will help greatly in managing those spaces and also provide a revenue source.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 6.*

D-5. Continue to develop multi-modal transportation network in Downtown. *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 107.*

D-5.1. Improve parking conditions and access and encourage shared public and private parking supplies. *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 107.*

RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC PARKING

1. MOVE ALL CITY AND COUNTY OWNED VEHICLES INTO COVERED PARKING GARAGES TO MAKE SURFACE LOT SPACES AVAILABLE FOR DOWNTOWN VISITORS. EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED USE OF PRIVATE SURFACE PARKING LOTS TO MAXIMIZE USAGE.

SECTION 3: PUBLIC PARKING

RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC PARKING

2. REMOVE ONE LANE OF TRAFFIC ON BOTH MAIN AND CENTER STREETS WITHIN THE CORE OF DOWNTOWN BLOOMINGTON. CHANGE PARALLEL PARKING SPOTS ALONG MAIN AND CENTER TO DIAGONAL PARKING SPOTS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ON-STREET SPOTS. INSTALL LOADING ZONES TO PREVENT VEHICLE CONGESTION. INCLUDE ONE “SHORT TERM” PARKING SPOT ON EACH BLOCK OF MAIN STREET AND CENTER STREET (EX. 15 MINUTE PARKING). LENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT OF ON-STREET PARKING TIME LIMITS.
3. MOVE FORWARD WITH PARKING NEEDS STUDY, INCLUDE ANALYSIS OF FUTURE INSTALLATION OF PARKING METERS.



Figure 3.2c – Conceptual view looking west on Jefferson Street at Center Street. Letters correspond to amenities highlighted on Page 13.

SECTION 4: CATALYST PROJECT

There are 29 acres of developable land within the expanded Downtown area, which includes vacant and under-utilized properties. Examples of under-utilized properties include single-use parking garages and surface parking lots. This creates enormous potential for private and public sector investment in the Downtown area.

PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES

“Develop a catalyst project that can serve as an additional Downtown “anchor.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 64.*

“Attract and grow new anchors for Downtown Bloomington. It will be a number of years before a single large retail anchor exists or is viable. In the interim, other non-retail anchors can help to fill in the gaps in the Downtown streetscape and also draw more foot traffic and residents to the area. Such opportunities include a library, YMCA, or community college.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 22.*

“There are many surface parking lots within Downtown, many of which are not being utilized to their full potential. As Downtown’s market for housing and retail improves, demand to develop these parking lots will increase, particularly within the Madison-East couplet. Such redevelopment should be encouraged whenever possible.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 38.*

“Place a high priority on the development of a hotel in Downtown.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 22.*

“There is potential for a hotel to develop on [Butler/Elks Lot] due to its proximity to the U.S. Cellular Coliseum and other Downtown attractions.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 50.*

D-1 Continue to build a healthy Downtown that offers a range of employment, retail, housing, cultural, and entertainment opportunities for all. *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 101.*

D-1.1g Prioritize mixed-use development/redevelopment projects for the Downtown area. City of Bloomington, ongoing. *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 101.*

D-1.2 Pursue catalyst projects that can serve as additional Downtown anchors. *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 102.*

D-1.4 Develop a wide variety of Downtown housing options. *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 102.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

MARKET STREET GARAGE. The Market Street Parking Garage is owned by the City of Bloomington. It was built in 1974 and has 550 total parking spaces (492 are available for rent and 70 percent of those spaces currently are rented). In 2009, the structural condition of the garage was rated as “poor.” The city determined that structural repairs were necessary in order to extend the garage life span. Phase One of repairs was completed in 2010 at a cost of \$250,000. Phases Two and Three were completed in 2013 at a combined cost of \$750,000. Since 2013, only minor maintenance has been performed at the garage and additional structural repairs are needed. Staff reports that funds for an additional structural evaluation of the garage will be included in the draft FY2019 budget. The facilities department reports that additional structural repairs will keep the facility operational in the near term; however, “the rate of return exponentially decreases with the age of the structure.” City staff estimates that additional structural repairs may extend the life span of the garage up to an additional 10 years, at which time a replacement plan must be in place. The cost for these repairs likely will exceed \$1 million.

BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY. The Bloomington Public Library currently has 1,000 visitors per day and is in the feasibility phase of a major expansion proposal. The Library has provided conceptual sketches as well as preliminary cost estimates for expansion at its current location. (Appendix A). The Library’s cost estimates do not include the expense of moving all or part of the current Public Works facility, which would be necessary in order to accommodate expansion. The estimate also does not include a parking structure or any additional development that is shown in the conceptual drawings. The Community Development Department has not reviewed the Library’s plans for expansion at its current site for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan or Downtown Strategy.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. There is significant capacity for growth in residential housing in the Downtown area. The Community Development Department calculates that a fully revitalized Downtown area could accommodate an additional 950 units, which is nearly double the current number of units. New units should be phased-in over time to avoid having a negative impact on current occupancy rates.

CONNECT TRANSIT. The Front Street transfer station accommodates 1,300 Connect Transit riders per day, making it the second busiest transfer station in the community. Connect Transit reports that the current on-street location is inadequate and has expressed a strong desire to partner with the City to make a transfer station part of any catalyst project (they are not interested in partnering on any project outside the core of Downtown). Connect Transit notes that their involvement makes any project potentially eligible for state and federal grants and/or low interest loans. Public Works also reports that city streets are not built to accommodate the wear and tear of an on-street transfer site and that the current location is causing accelerated deterioration of Front Street. Connect Transit is conducting a site analysis of the Market Street garage location and will share the results with City Council.

SECTION 4: CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS: CATALYST PROJECT

The Task Force is recommending three areas for potential exploration of catalyst projects. These recommendations are ranked into tiers based on current opportunities, level of risk, availability of partnerships, and overall community need.

TIER 1

DEVELOP THE MARKET STREET GARAGE INTO A MIXED USE FACILITY INCLUDING PARKING, TRANSFER STATION, & PUBLIC LIBRARY.

This proposal is listed as a Tier 1 project because of the imminent need to address the Market Street garage, the relatively few barriers to development of this parcel, the size of the parcel available for development, and the ability to bring together multiple community needs into a single project, which could realize significant financial savings. A successful project at the Market Street block could transform an under-performing quadrant of the Downtown core into a vibrant area that brings new visitors Downtown. Partnering with Connect Transit creates alternative funding options as it would make the project eligible for federal low interest loans and grants. This also represents a “low risk” investment as there already is significant need both for expanded library facilities as well as a new transfer station. If inclusion of the library in this project is not feasible or desirable, the City could alternatively consider a mixed use facility including housing or office space.



SECTION 4: CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS: CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

ADDITIONAL PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES RELATED TO THE TIER 1 RECOMMENDATION

“*Attract and grow new anchors for Downtown Bloomington.* It will be a number of years before a single large retail anchor exists or is viable. In the interim, other non-retail anchors can help to fill the gaps in the Downtown streetscape and also draw more foot traffic and residents to the area. Such opportunities could include a library, YMCA, or community college.” *Downtown Strategy Plan, page 22.*

“The Market Street parking garage is a major public parking facility in Downtown Bloomington. The facility will either need substantive repairs or to be torn down in the near future.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 12.*

“The Market Street Parking Garage is in a state of disrepair and is slated for redevelopment by the City of Bloomington. This site represents one of the largest redevelopment parcels available in Downtown and is a great opportunity to kick start development in Downtown.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 24.*

“[Market Street] 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 development of the parking garage as an opportunity to support Downtown rather than simply replace an aging structure.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 64.*

“The evaluation of community facilities includes appropriate locations for diverse types of facilities. Those which serve the entire community, such as the Bloomington Public Library, should be located in the City core, preferably in the Downtown district. This area of Bloomington is accessible, and the concentrations of facilities intended for all community members increases their ease of use.” *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 212.*

“Concentrating community facilities serving the entire City, such as the library and City offices, in the Downtown serves the community well. This concentration is fiscally sustainable, helps keep the Downtown vibrant, and is accessible by public transit.” *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 17.*

“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.” *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 102.*

“D-5.3a—Upgrade Front Street transfer location. Connect Transit, short.” *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 108.*

CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS: CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

TIER 2

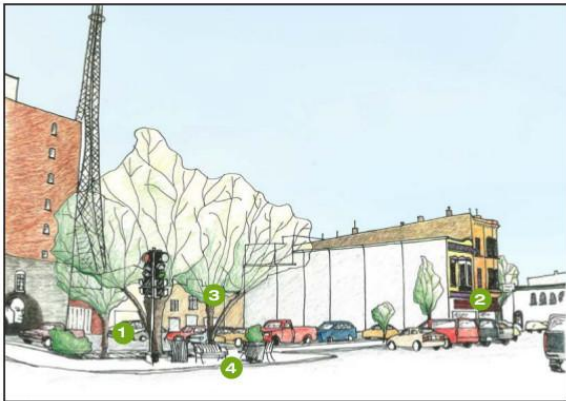
EXPLORE MORE AGGRESSIVE OPTIONS FOR ACQUISITION AND/OR DEVELOPMENT OF VACANT PROPERTIES IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA SUCH AS FRONT & CENTER AND CII EAST. CONTINUE TO PURSUE A HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER DEVELOPMENT NEAR THE ARENA.

This is listed as a Tier 2 priority because of the barriers to acquisition, the unknowns of adaptive re-use, unknown market conditions, and the lack of currently viable proposals for development of these sites.

TIER 3

INCENTIVIZE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF SURFACING PARKING LOTS INTO MIXED-USE PROJECTS, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON GROUND FLOOR RETAIL AND UPPER LEVEL RESIDENTIAL.

This is listed as a Tier 3 priority because it will be more successful as revitalization of Downtown matures. This will result in a need to offer fewer financial incentives because the private sector will be able to obtain a reasonable return on its investment without public assistance.



EX. 1: MARKET & MAIN (CURRENT)



EX. 2: MARKET & MAIN (REDEVELOPED)

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The following items have been identified as additional areas of opportunity. The Task Force recommends that the City Council continue to work with community partners to explore opportunities in these areas for potential short or mid-term improvement.

1. Partner with Town of Normal, Illinois Department of Transportation, and McLean County Economic Development Council to pursue state and federal funding for the Main Street Corridor Plan.
2. Install public restrooms.
3. Install permanent public recycling bins.
4. Support private efforts to address homelessness in the Downtown area. (Ex. *Change to Make a Change*).
5. Empower Historic Preservation Commission to evaluate buildings in Downtown for an S-4 designation.
6. Adopt zoning changes that support development consistent with a Downtown district.
7. Continue efforts to improve wayfinding in Downtown through additional signage.
8. Place a high priority on modernizing infrastructure in the Downtown area.

CONCLUSION

The Task Force thanks the Bloomington City Council for the opportunity to serve and hopes that this report will serve as a useful roadmap to accomplish some of the goals contained in the City's various planning documents over the next several years. The Task Force firmly believes that the opportunity exists for the City of Bloomington to build on prior revitalization efforts and to make meaningful improvements in Downtown in the short term. The Task Force notes that many of the identified areas of opportunity have relatively low barriers to moving forward and a high potential return on investment. However, there also remains a need to explore larger, catalytic projects in order to truly capture the untapped potential of Downtown.

Bloomington Public Library Expansion Costs

| | Conceptual Site Plan #1 | Conceptual Site Plan #4 |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Renovation of existing building (incl. mid-range furnishings) | \$9,975,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| New Construction (incl. mid-range furnishings) | \$12,600,000.00 | \$29,700,000.00 |
| Site Work and Other Construction (incl. a parking lot) | \$2,750,000.00 | \$3,000,000.00 |
| Contingency (7.5%) | \$1,899,375.00 | \$2,452,500.00 |
| Miscellaneous Costs (A/E fees, legal fees, etc. - 11.8%) | \$3,212,476.25 | \$4,147,995.00 |
| TOTAL: | \$30,436,851.25 | \$39,300,495.00 |
| BPL Contribution: | 17.58% | 13.62% |

***Note these are rough numbers based on 2017 Construction Season and not based on any schematic designs

"Band-aid approach" (i.e. minimum building maintenance needed) is at least \$2,000,000

Regarding the cost of a new parking deck: The Uptown Normal parking (which Farnsworth designed) was built in 2008/2009, at a cost of \$12.6M (construction cost only). It has 659 stalls, and a total square foot area of 275,852 (on 4 levels plus a "basement"). Farnsworth said they would assume that this cost would have to be adjusted upward by approximately 3% per year (compounded).

| <u>BPL Contribution</u> | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Capital Fund Balance As of 6/5/17 | \$2,420,569.85 |
| Approximate Monthly Interest | \$1,500.00 |
| Fixed Asset Fund Balance As of 6/5/17 | \$928,888.68 |
| Estimated Capacity for Donations, Grants, Additional Reserves | \$2,000,000.00 |
| Total: | \$5,350,958.53 |

| | Square Footage | Percentage of the building |
|------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Renovation | 57,000 | 57.58% |
| Addition | 42,000 | 42.42% |
| Full New | 99,000 | 100.00% |

