

Visions, Goals, and Policies for Strengthening Downtown Zeeland The Heart and Soul of the Greater Zeeland Community This area defines the most densely developed area of Downtown, and serves as a nucleus and inspiration for adjacent, connected commercial/institutional areas and residential neighborhoods.

DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN ZEELAND, MICHIGAN

Adopted by Zeeland City Council: June 15, 2009

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00TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 INTRODUCTION

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02	BACKGROUND	2
03	COMMUNITY CONTEXT	4
04	PLANNING FRAMEWORK	5
05	VISION PLAN SUMMARY	6
06	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	8
	West Zone	8
	• Strong Corners	8
	• Hotel/B&B	9
	Commons	10
	• Heritage Square	12
	• Infill Opportunities	13
	• The Use of Upper Floor Spaces	13
	• Improved Passageways	14
	Parking Lots: Joint Usage Opportunities	15
	Medical Office Building at Cherry/Church	16
	• Other Opportunities	16
	East Zone	17
	Sligh Furniture Building and Block	18
07	STRATEGIC WORK PROGRAM MATRIX	20



01INTRODUCTION

The Vision for Downtown Zeeland is to:

Revitalize the heart of the community and encourage a Downtown that is financially affordable and competitive, physically attractive, fun and energetic. This Vision Plan includes an exciting mix of public and private initiatives which can be achieved soon and during the next decade:

- New public gathering spaces, relocated or expanded farmers market, outdoor recreational facilities, and landscape improvements that will attract and serve local community members and visitors.
- Attract new and retain/strengthen existing businesses.
- New and upgraded personal service and general office locations.
- New and revitalized upper floor residential options.
- A new "Zeel Center" showcasing Zeeland's creativity and innovation.
- A small Bed & Breakfast or hotel property.
- Strengthened gateway entrances from I-196 and other regional arterial roads, and more obvious links from Downtown to nearby residential neighborhoods and industrial areas.
- · Additional programming and networking opportunities.

In so doing, the Vision Plan will help Downtown Zeeland become an even stronger center and meaningful heart and soul of the greater Zeeland community.



Purpose

The Vision Plan is designed to be the framework for future physical changes to Downtown Zeeland, specifically the Shopping Area Redevelopment Board (SARB) district. The Vision will also be considered and integrated into the City's updated Master Plan, and be the blueprint for ongoing Downtown planning efforts and future development projects. These future projects will be carried out by a diverse array of public and private parties including the City of Zeeland, civic organizations, property and business owners, developers, and future entities which will be attracted to this strong and dynamic city.

This Vision Plan is designed to appeal to local residents and visitors to the community, and will be anchored by improvements within the "Heart of the Heart" of Downtown Zeeland which encompasses Main Avenue and the core walkable business center, the principal gateways into Downtown, and in transitional areas leading to nearby residential neighborhoods and industrial businesses.

Project Qualities

The Vision Plan encourages projects with the following qualities and characteristics:

Quality Outcomes

Downtown should foster and encourage quality developments that provide long-term stability and lasting value to the community as reflected in their design, choice of construction materials, and integration with the rest of Downtown.

Family Focus

Downtown and its events should be attractive to both local and visiting families. Changes to Downtown Zeeland should be personal and intimate in scale and provide enjoyable experiences and safe, walkable conditions.

True Zeel

Projects should:

- Build on the City's Feel the Zeel campaign and "fit" Downtown Zeeland with unique and dynamic solutions for particular building and marketing opportunities.
- Celebrate and build upon the community's authentic innovative and entrepreneurial roots.
- Have synergistic qualities that strengthen and complement the Downtown as a whole.
- Build upon and encourage an overall healthy mix of businesses and activities.

Specific Goals of This Vision Plan Are to:

- Inform the general public of the Downtown Vision Plan and encourage their participation and support of Downtown businesses, civic organizations, and community activities.
- Guide elected and appointed officials in evaluating and checking the "fit" of potential public and private projects in the core Downtown area.
- Inform, guide, and inspire property and business owners, as well as
 prospective property owners and developers, as to what is needed,
 desired, and likely to be approved by City Council and the Planning
 Commission, as supported by City staff.
- Measure progress and effectiveness in the revitalization of Downtown Zeeland. While the Vision is broad and general in character, many specific projects and opportunities have been identified in the Plan. These can be used as a checklist to measure effectiveness and tax base improvements.

Public Private Partnership and Patient Capital

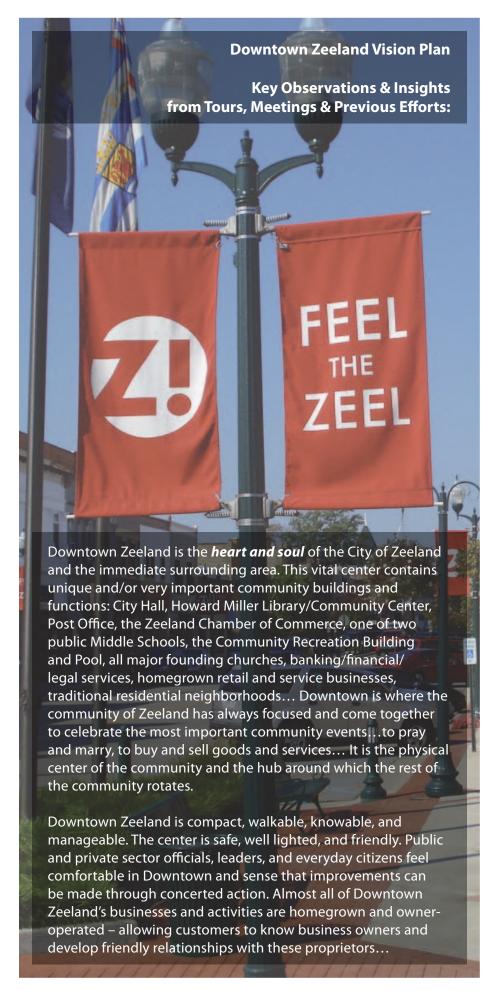
Throughout its history, Zeeland has benefited from close cooperation between public organizations and private parties. These parties include the City of Zeeland, Zeeland Public Schools, the Zeeland BPW and major industry, commercial corporations, churches, families and citizens, respectively.

Working together on shared goals and objectives, in various creative ways, these public/private partnerships have achieved a very high quality of life, steadily increasing tax base, and a powerful dynamic capacity to address community issues and opportunities.

It is expected that this PPP Capacity will be brought to bear on the various opportunities identified in this Vision Plan.

Patient Capital

One key dimension of the recent revitalization of Downtown Grand Rapids and Holland has involved "patient capital". In brief, patient capital is investment capital which does not need an immediate return (compared to typical investments seeking short term returns). In general, such patient capital is raised/invested by entrepreneurs who have a longer range perspective and/or realize community benefits from certain projects and efforts in ways that can not simply be measured in dollars and cents. Patient capitalists see value in an attractive community center, key businesses, interesting residential options, and, under some circumstances, it is more important to "prime the right pumps" for these larger community purposes than to earn immediate return on investments.



BACKGROUND

How the Vision Plan was initiated

During the past several years, the City of Zeeland has very actively worked to develop future visions and plans for the entire community, including Downtown Zeeland, where the Shopping Area Redevelopment Board (SARB) has led these efforts. This Downtown Vision Plan has been informed by and is built upon significant prior efforts, as summarized in the following:

City Council Vision Sessions. In 2006 and 2008, Zeeland City Council conducted visioning and goal-setting sessions which emphasized the core values of the community, namely: integrity, diversity, service, responsibility/health/safety, fun/inviting, and cooperation/teamwork. Both of these recent sessions also expressed strong support for a "vital Downtown" which would include an increase in restaurants, unusual/ unique retailers, downtown lofts/living opportunities, and a strong merchant organization.

Marketing Program. A direct outcome of the 2006 City Council Vision session was the 2007 hiring of a new city employee, Abby deRoo, to create and implement a marketing program for the entire City of Zeeland. The marketing program, called Feel the Zeel, has been used very effectively to raise community awareness and promote existing and new activities & programs within the City of Zeeland and the broader Zeeland community. This Downtown Vision Plan is meant to be used hand-in-hand with the Feel the Zeel program to foster Downtown's physical changes and to provide additional attractions and features which will be promoted by the program.

SARB Vision. For Downtown, SARB developed the following working Vision Statement, which keynoted its "BAIT" ("Bringing all of it Together") marketing and recruiting program:

A colorful, friendly and comprehensive Downtown that offers a walkable Main Street filled with impulse businesses on the ground level where you can spend hours at a time browsing through a variety of retail shops; where you can have your choice of a light lunch or formal sit-down dinner; and a place that maintains a strong balance of professional and personal services above the Main Street ground floor or on side streets of Downtown.

A Downtown that welcomes industry leaders entertaining customers, families gather with one another to appreciate their community and friends meeting often to socialize, dine, and shop; a place that is accommodating to all people morning, noon, and night.

An active, clean, safe Downtown that is an encouraging place to start a business, rehab a condo, volunteer on a board or committee, make a

Downtown Action Agenda. An earlier effort in 2003 plan was called the Downtown Action Agenda. This plan focused on the community's overall economic/retail sales potential and provided several lists of potential businesses and activities that these demographic and statistical analyses were deemed viable for Downtown Zeeland; many of these potential businesses are being pursued through the Downtown recruitment initiative.

Current Downtown Vision Plan. In mid-2008, the City of Zeeland retained Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio of Ann Arbor and Urban Innovations of Holland to undertake the Downtown Vision Plan efforts, specifically to create physical/visual designs and depictions of future redevelopment opportunities for the near- and long-term revitalization of Downtown Zeeland.

City Support for Downtown Projects. More generally, especially under the leadership of Mayor Hoogland and City Manager Klunder, the City Council has very consistently supported Downtown initiatives and improvement projects. During the past six years, Downtown Zeeland has benefited from a major Streetscape facelift project which removed the sidewalk canopies of the "Main Place" era, and reconfigured Main Avenue, added significant onstreet parking, new sidewalks with custom pavers, new street lighting and banner poles, bollards, and landscaping/flower baskets. During both summers 2007 and 2008, Main Avenue to the east and west, respectively, has been completely reconstructed to create brand new street entrances into the Downtown area.

While all of these physical improvements have very significantly enhanced the community, they have also disrupted vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycling traffic to and through Downtown. It is expected that in 2009, Downtown business owners and nearby residents will enjoy constructionfree roadways and sidewalks.





Downtown Vision Planning Process

Workshop Overview: October 21-23, 2008

The Downtown Vision Planning process involved a series of creative and engaging meetings with elected and appointed City of Zeeland officials and staff, and numerous key Downtown stakeholders. These included representatives/leaders of many community organizations, businesses, schools, and residential areas.

The Downtown Vision Planning Workshop and stakeholder sessions were designed to engage the community in the planning process so that future opportunities for change in Downtown Zeeland could be openly and creatively discussed.

The planning sessions involved the active participation of over 150 local citizens/stakeholders:

- A total of 16 stakeholders meetings were held October December.
- A Public Workshop was held on October 22.
- The majority of the stakeholder meetings were held at the Howard Miller Library and Community Center, and each was facilitated by City Staff and the Johnson Hill/Urban Innovations consulting team.

Enthusiastic Interest and Support

During each of these sessions, participants were encouraged to offer inputs, ideas, critiques, and feedback to the planning team for further consideration. In general, community members were enthusiastic and supportive of the overall direction of the previous City efforts and the Vision Plan intentions.











VISIONING AS A PROCESS. BY WILLIAM JOHNSON

"A Vision is not meant to be precise, but rather directional in nature. Its purpose is to help prioritize future occurrences and opportunities so that, for example, when an underutilized defunct Downtown property suddenly becomes available, it is relatively easy to refer to the Vision and have a good sense of what belongs (and what does not) and how development concepts might be shaped to best fit the property into the overall Vision."



The visioning process is a logical progression of steps which taken together will establish the future goals and direction for a community. This diagram was devised by William Johnson to graphically define the process.

03

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Downtown Zeeland – the Community's "Third Place"

Geographers and other social scientists refer to three general kinds of community spaces: "First Places" are where people LIVE, while "Second Places" are where people WORK. "Third Places" are where people gather together as a Community. "Third Places" are where we run into friends or meet total strangers, where we buy lunch or have coffee and donuts, where we stroll with our spouses and children, or date a new friend. The best Downtowns are often cited as everyone's "Third Place" because they welcome locals and visitors alike with a broad array of shops and services, civic activity and amenity, opportunities for creativity and reflection. The best "Third Places" appeal to people of all ages and outlook.

For the City to grow and prosper, it is important that the Downtown area be vibrant and strong. In addition, it is important that the roadway and pedestrian connections between places where people live and work to the Downtown area be very strong as well.

Improved Gateways

Overview

Gateways into Downtown are the predominant vehicular entrances which should welcome and inform visitors and effectively direct users to various and specific locations.

Vision

The Vision for these gateways leading into Downtown Zeeland is that these entries will do a better job of welcoming and guiding local citizens and visitors into the Downtown. There should be design consistency among these gateways to integrate with existing Downtown themes and patterns, such as the new street light poles, banners, and amenities. Gateway improvements could build upon the existing entrance treatments and the wayfinding signage system.

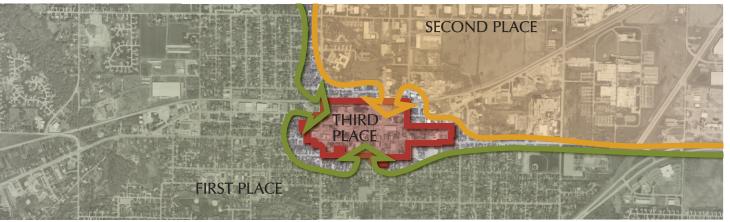
Goals

Redesign key entrances to Downtown Zeeland using professional assistance while working with local citizens and nearby businesses to determine appropriate design treatments. In some cases, this improvement might involve simple increases in the size of signs and text to improve legibility and impact. In other cases, new and larger signs as well as stronger landscaping treatments may be required to have a meaningful impact.

These gateway projects are recommended to be undertaken within the next two years.

Policies

Prioritize gateways and allocate funds to undertake a detailed survey of gateways in other communities, prepare a preliminary improvement program, and budget for project implementation in 2009 or 2010.



Downtown Zeeland - the community's "Third Place" embraced by First Place residences and Second Place work location









Gateways into Zeeland and Downtown

Gateway Project Opportunities

Community

- 1. Main/Washington intersection. A major gateway to the downtown for those traveling from the west. An excellent opportunity to provide a flavor of the downtown district through the introduction of banners/lighting/plantings.
- 2. Chicago Drive/State Street. This is the primary street used by motorists to access the downtown from the south.
- 3. Chicago Drive/Maple. An important intersection for directing Chicago Drive motorists to the downtown area.
- 4. I-196 Business Route/Chicago Drive. A major eastern gateway to the downtown where confusing traffic patterns require carefully considered introductory signage that welcomes and directs. Plantings must be large, bold, and strong to respond appropriately to the open character of this space.
- 5. Main/Fairview intersection. A key decision making intersection for directing motorists to the downtown area. An excellent opportunity to provide a flavor of the downtown district through the introduction of banners/lighting/plantings.

Downtown

- A. Main/State intersection. This intersection serves as the western entrance to the downtown. As such, it is important that it includes distinctive signage, landscape improvements, and, over time, increased building mass. Further discussion can be found on pages 8 and 9.
- B. Main/Maple intersection. This intersection serves as the eastern entrance to the downtown. It too, should include distinctive signage and landscape improvements. Further discussion can be found on page 17.
- C. Washington/Elm and Washington/Centennial intersections. These intersections are important due to the volume of Washington Avenue traffic and their immediate proximity to the downtown area. Given the secondary nature of these gateways, existing signage should be more prominent but not overpowering. Extending the Main Street improvements (banners, lights) up these two streets might be considered.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

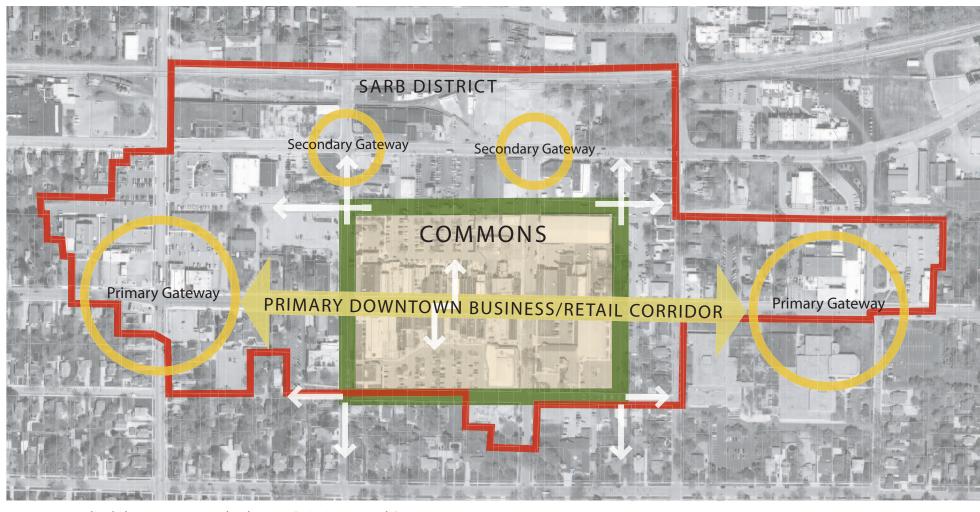
Planning Framework: SARB and the Commons

The overall focus of this Downtown Vision Plan is, roughly, the SARB (Shopping Area Redevelopment District), which is also the city's Principal Shopping District (PSD), as shown as the red polygon in the drawing to the right. The SARB district covers an extended area along Main Avenue with a wide range of buildings and urban amenities and qualities stretched along the community's thoroughfare. Within the SARB district, there is an inner zone that has emerged during planning sessions; we refer to this area as the "Commons" area.

This Commons area defines the most densely developed area of Downtown and is recognized as the most vital retail/business zone. The most important planning concept in this Plan is to reinforce and strengthen this inner core with specific complementary projects, and in so doing, serve as a nucleus and inspiration for adjacent, connected commercial/institutional areas and residential neighborhoods.

We view this Commons area as the gravity center of the community and several key potential projects are within or adjacent to this conceptual commons. It is recommended that these particular projects be given early attention, priority, and funding whenever possible.

We also acknowledge that other commercial/retail areas within and outside the SARB district that are important and deserve attention. But, in our judgment, it is critical that the Commons area be provided early and focused attention to anchor the revitalization of the Downtown area.



Downtown Zeeland Planning Framework - showing SARB District and Commons









Industrial Leadership/Powerhouses

Downtown is located in close proximity to outstanding manufacturers with over 10,000 employees (Herman Miller, Howard Miller, ODL, Gentex, Mead Johnson...), but there appears to be little interaction between these businesses/employees with Downtown businesses. It will be important to pursue new strategies to connect with these businesses and their employees through new and enhanced services and products. It is also possible that these employees might become Downtown residents in refurbished upper floor residences.





VISION PLAN SUMMARY

Key Projects and Recommendations

Overall Goals

- · Revitalize underutilized buildings and properties to achieve their highest and best current use.
- Enhance Downtown landscape features, gathering spaces, and other public amenities to make them more attractive and useful for community members and visitors.

West Zone:

Main Avenue from State to Elm Streets

Goals

- Strengthen/encourage existing institutions Dekker Huis, North Street
- · Recognize and pursue new projects in underutilized properties.

Projects

Northside:

- 1. Explore the expansion of the Dekker Huis.
- 2. Build new B&B or small hotel/residential building to provide overnight lodging and/or alternative residential options.

Southside:

1. North Street CRC – support the church's plan to improve its campus through building additions and site enhancements; utilize the Vision Plan to provide examples of possible changes which would enhance both the Church and Downtown through their expansion process: flowers, mini-parks, etc.

Commons:

Main Avenue from Elm to Church toward Centennial Streets Goals

See Overall Goals

Projects

- 1. "Commons" Install landscaped "frame" around core Downtown business/civic center using trees, flowers, mini-parks, etc.
- 2. Fill storefronts/spaces with retail shops and restaurants through continued marketing/recruitment efforts.
- 3. Examine and encourage the rehabilitation of every building on Main Avenue.
- 4. Create public passageways between Main and the parking lots behind
- 5. Install new public restrooms ideally, in conjunction with another public project.
- 6. Create new "Zeel Center" to showcase the community's creativity & innovation.
- 7. Explore the transformation of the Heritage Square property with public gathering spaces, other new public facilities, joint development with the Brummel's property. Add public and private uses to revive this important corner.

- 8. Create more formal public gathering spaces in Heritage Square or other public parking lot areas.
- 9. Relocate and expand the Farmers Market if needed.
- 10. Encourage the relocation of certain Zeeland Lumber functions to Washington Avenue – thus opening up a significant opportunity to redevelop the property into a modest B&B/hotel, alternative residential building, or other commercial operation.
- 11. Support/assure Post Office viability/commitment to its present location.
- 12. Consider acquisition of the medical office building site at Church/ Cherry to create public amenities such as: future parking spaces, community park/gardens, and neighborhood-scale/modest playground.
- 13. Encourage the improved use of 1st CRC corner property, eg, mini park, benches...
- 14. Support the youth ministry at The Bridge as a teen-friendly anchor to Downtown.
- 15. Facilitate the redevelopment of the two residential properties east of Don's Flowers for complementary commercial uses including B&B/ residential uses.

East Zone:

Main Avenue from Church/Centennial to Maple Streets

Goals

- Strengthen Main/Maple gateway.
- Pursue potential redevelopment of former Sligh building.
- Consider/pursue community recreational opportunities in Sligh block. **Projects**
- 1. Convert the former Sligh Furniture building into one or more fresh community uses.
 - Carefully study and evaluate the Sligh building for possible reuse into residential, commercial, office/incubator, and/or Zeeland Public Schools programs.
- 2. Leverage and build on the community recreational assets in Cityside Middle School and redevelop underutilized properties into new school and/or community recreational uses.
 - Evaluate the feasibility of creating new Community Recreational facilities/spaces in the "Sligh block" that might compliment existing community recreation facilities and the potential reuses which might emerge from the Sligh Building rehab.
- 3. Enhance the Main/Maple intersection as the eastern gateway to Downtown at Maple with improvements.
- 4. Create improved student drop-off and pick-up spaces near the main Cityside entrance.

State/Main Intersection

Goals

- Bring attention to this area as the western entrance to Downtown Zeeland.
- Build substantive buildings and uses as these corners are transformed

Projects

Short Term

1. Improve gateways with distinctive/larger signs, sculptural elements, and landscape improvements such as decorative walls, plantings, etc.

1. Add new buildings to NE and SE corners to frame entrance; over time, relocate the gas stations and replace with new buildings and uses.

Washington Avenue

Goals

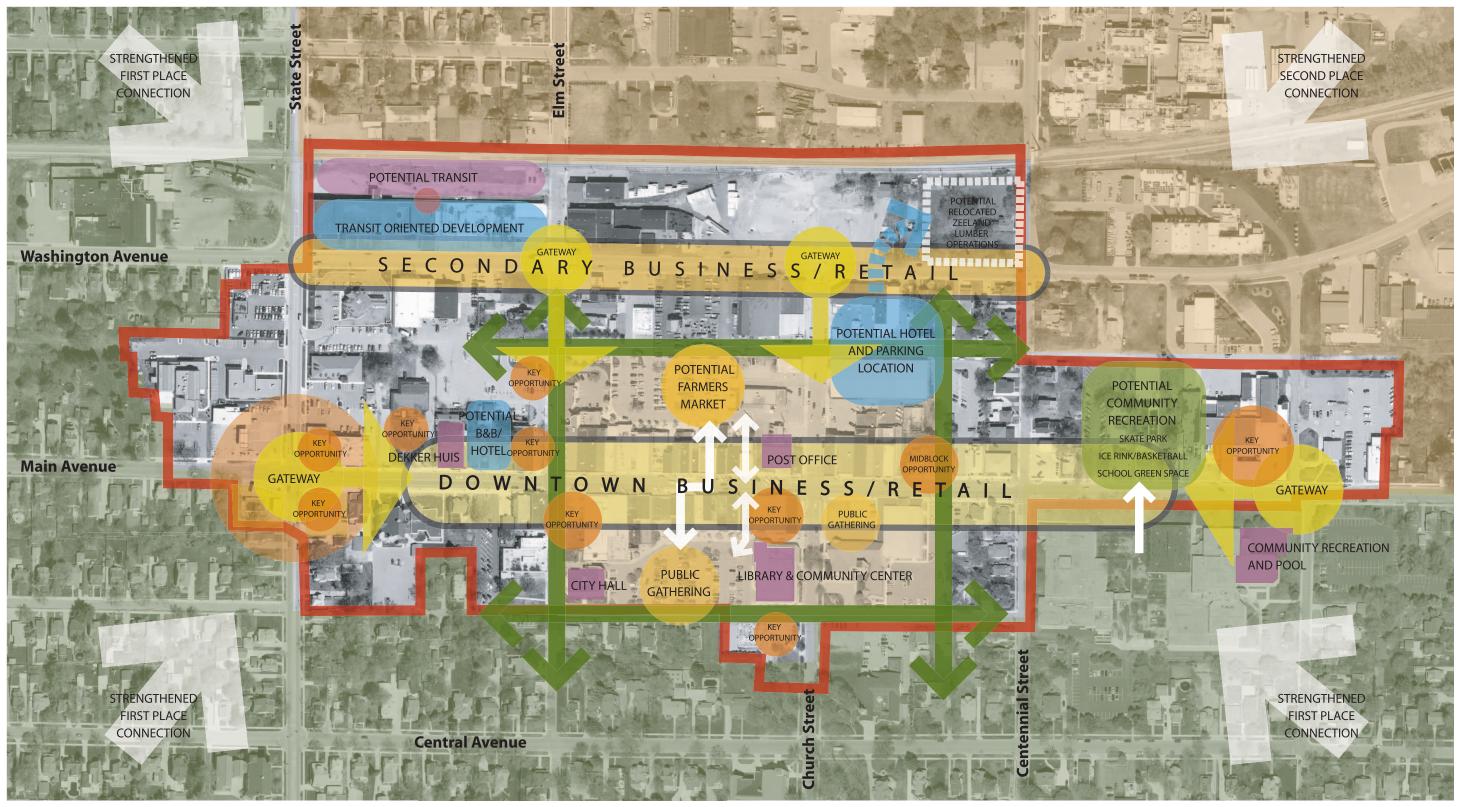
- Encourage appropriate redevelopment of underutilized properties.
- Develop stronger connections between Washington traffic and Main Avenue.

Projects

- 1. Improved/enlarged wayfinding signs directing motorists to Main Avenue.
- 2. State/Washington Site redevelop site into new commercial development for larger footprint office/retail businesses or modest hotel project; in its redevelopment, highlight its potential as a future rail transit station location (if such a system is ever developed between Holland, Zeeland, Hudsonville, and Grand Rapids).



Vision Plan Summary



Downtown Zeeland Vision Plan Summary: Key Projects and Recommendations

06

POTENTIAL PROJECTS

WEST ZONE

The western zone of Downtown Zeeland (and the SARB district) is bracketed by the Main/State intersection and by Elm Street on the east. This prominent Downtown gateway intersection draws vehicular traffic and patrons from northern, southern, and western areas of the greater Zeeland/Holland community. It is a vital entrance that presently contains two active gasoline stations on its western corners and a sparsely-used parking lot and an empty one-story building on its eastern corners. It would be very helpful to Downtown Zeeland if this key gateway intersection was enhanced as described on the following pages.













Strong Corners

Overview

Downtown corner properties that contain solid buildings and strong retail or civic functions strengthen the other intersection corners as well as adjacent properties in the block. Good examples include the Huntington Bank/Pure Serenity Salon at Main/Elm and the Post Office and Zeeland Schwinn Shop at Main/Church Street. These are attractive, inviting buildings with strong activities or uses. In this way, corners exert an extra influence on Downtown – for better or worse.

Vision

Strong corners at every intersection along Main Avenue from State Street to Maple Street.

Goals

Improve every corner property so that it is functioning at its highest potential use – with new or refurbished buildings, fresh vibrant tenants, or, if the corner is not developed, improved landscaping should be encouraged until a more significant improvement can be achieved.

Policies

Encourage improvements at corner properties by contacting property owners and by offering assistance by City of Zeeland marketing and planning offices. Financial advice and assistance might also be available for such improvements.

Project Opportunities

- State all four corners.
- Elm Heritage Square and Hoesch corner.
- Church Five Star building rehab; 1st CRC corner to mini-park.
- Centennial Kuips Muffler conversion.
- Maple Sligh rehab; restaurant refurbishment over time.



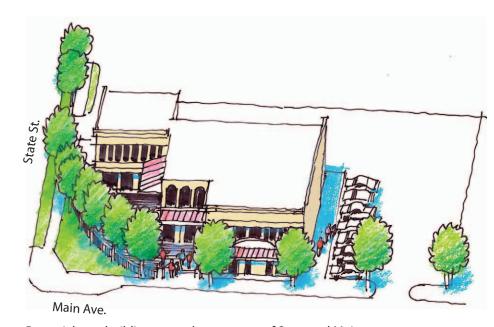
Potential enhancement of Main/Church corner property

Potential State/Main Redevelopment

Sketch of long range potential redevelopment with new 2-story buildings and improved landscaping. The southeast corner landscaping concept could be implemented early in this process, while other building programs can be completed over time.



Potential building and corner enhancements at State and Main intersection



Potential new building at northeast corner of State and Main

Hotel/B&B

Overview

The idea of locating a Bed & Breakfast Inn or small/special hotel in or near Downtown Zeeland was mentioned during several stakeholder meetings, especially by businesspersons who typically house visitors in Holland or Grand Rapids area hotels. Such a facility might contain 10-25 guest rooms and be located in a retrofitted home, the upper floors above one or more storefronts, or in a new custom-built facility. This latter new facility might also utilize the rooms or suites as overnight rooms and/or as alternative residential units.

Vision

A new, creatively designed B&B, small hotel, and/or special residential building in or near Downtown.

Goals

The development of at least one such facility within the next five years.

Policies

- Encourage + explore the possibility of developing such a facility with area developers.
- Research area and regional hotel owners/managers to assess the feasibility and probability of such a facility.

Potential Project Locations

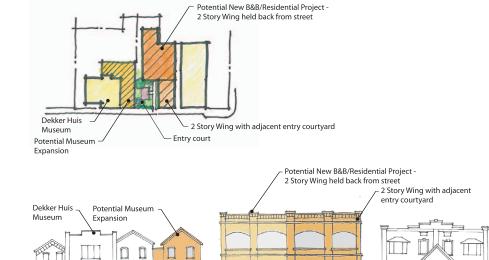
- Tuls Realty and Cook properties east of Dekker Huis property. See sketches at right.
- Zeeland Lumber property in the present location of the lumber shed facility east of Church Street (relocate shed).
- Washington Avenue at State Street (northeast corner along railroad tracks).
- Outside the SARB district, this project could also be achieved in the Central Avenue neighborhood.

Dekker Huis

A key community asset in this Western zone is the Dekker Huis Museum. The museum is the epicenter of Zeeland's significant heritage traditions, and the keeper of the community's substantive historical artifacts and documents. The idea of expanding the museum was mentioned during the vision workshops and it is recommended that this possibility be explored in coming years. A possible addition is shown in the conceptual sketches to the right.



Potential B&B at full buildout



Potential B&B with courtyard

Conceptual sketches showing storefront expansion of Dekker Huis Museum and a potential 2-3 story B&B/Inn in the space between the Dekker Huis and the Hoesch building.

COMMONS

The central portion of Downtown Zeeland was conceptually described as the "Commons" (in Section 04 on page 5) for planning purposes and to bring special attention to this important area. In fact, this area is truly the "heart of the heart" of the Downtown - both geographically and programmatically because it is located in the center of the community and contains so many key buildings and functions as well as vital retail and service businesses.

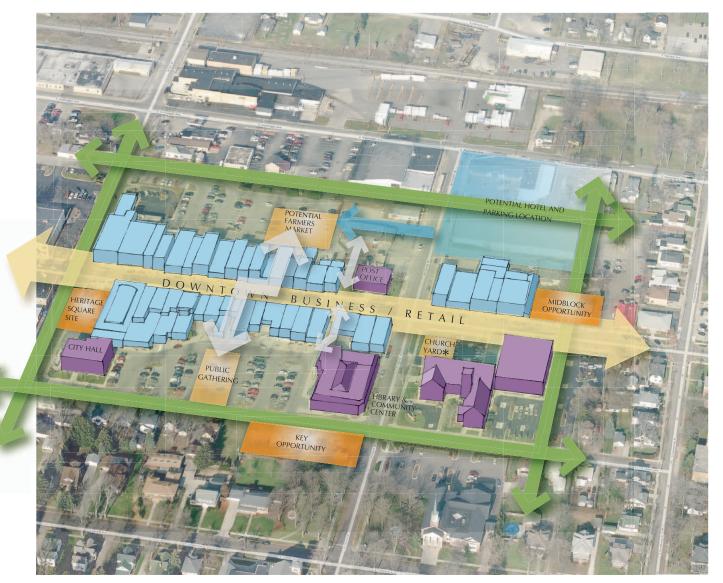
In order to further define and emphasize the Commons, it is recommended that additional landscape elements – trees, bushes, flowers, mini-parks – be installed along the perimeter of the designated Commons area. These plantings would both further beautify Downtown Zeeland and draw special attention to its center.

The Commons area embraces many key project opportunities that were identified during the workshop sessions, and are explained in the following:

- Heritage Square
- Farmers Market
- Zeel Center
- Public Gathering spaces
- Passageways between Main & Parking lots
- Infill Opportunities
- Public Restrooms

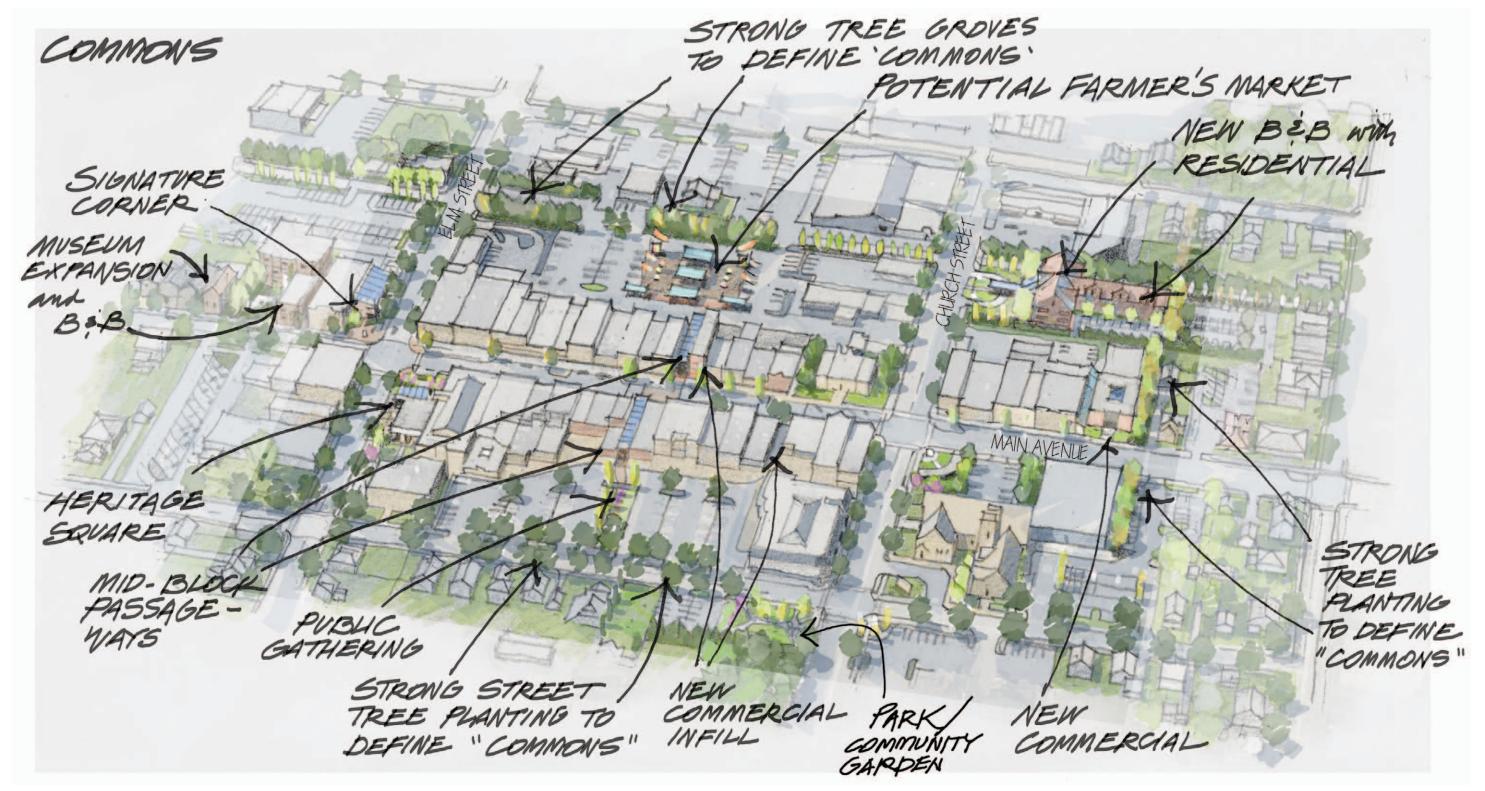


Aerial photograph of Commons showing potential project opportunities



Commons diagram showing potential project opportunities

This Commons area defines the most densely developed area of Downtown and is recognized as the most vital retail/business zone. The most important planning concept in this Plan is to reinforce and strengthen this inner core with specific complementary projects, and in so doing, serve as a nucleus and inspiration for adjacent, connected commercial/institutional areas and residential neighborhoods.



Illustrative sketch of Commons showing potential project opportunities

Heritage Square

Overview

Heritage Square and this key City-owned corner parcel & parking lot encompasses a particularly important redevelopment opportunity. At present, Heritage Square displays several historical plaques and contains benches and the Howard Miller monumental clock display. The parking lot is used rather infrequently, but does accommodate the city's Farmers Market on Fridays during the summer; the market is managed by the Chamber of Commerce.

Vision

A refreshed gathering space for public events and celebrations, and potential new private facilities - such as a restaurant, commercial office, or residential uses - that complement Downtown.

Goals

Improve the Heritage Square area with additional public facilities to serve existing and future community events and celebrations that can build on existing assets (e.g. City Hall) and encourage/leverage private investment in this area. (The Vision Plan assumes that the Farmers Market will eventually be relocated to the north parking lot.)

Policies

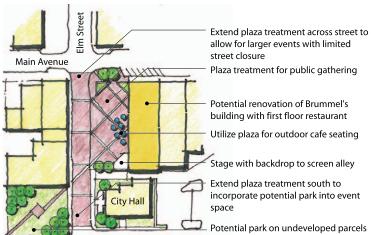
Carefully investigate potential public improvement opportunities in this area. Contact and discuss potential redevelopment opportunities with neighboring property owners...

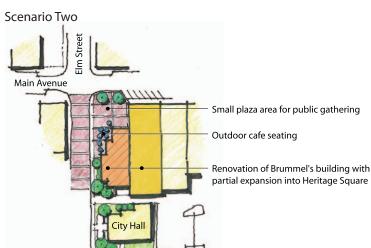
Potential projects

- Small or larger public gathering spaces plazas, stage, informal seating.
- Maximum public gathering potential (into streets, etc.)
- Partial building (public or private) with outdoor and indoor gathering spaces. For example, public restrooms or a restaurant/café.
- Joint development with Brummels building/property to enhance both parcels.



Scenario One

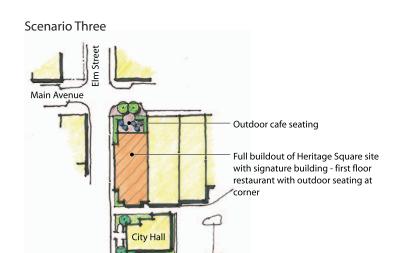




Maximum plaza including performance stage and outdoor/cafe seating



New building with modest plaza and outdoor/cafe seating









Infill development possibilities and passageway

The Use of Upper Floor Spaces

Overview

Residential use: The predominant use of the upper floor building spaces within the Commons zone is residential apartment use. There are approximately 40 apartments in this area. These upper floor apartments or condominiums offer interesting residential options, residents' eyes on the street during off-hours, and additional revenue (rent) to building owners to improve the financial viability of the building. Some of these units are in superb condition, while others are modest units which could be enhanced.

Office/Service Use: In many downtowns, upper floor locations offer fine and lower cost spaces for office/service businesses. Most such offices accommodate employees and do not entertain spontaneous or unplanned visits by their customers, nor do they rely on window shopping. However, upper floor offices, in order to meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) codes, usually require elevator access. In Downtown Zeeland today, the two Huntington Bank buildings at 101 East Main (A & B) provide the only elevator-accessible upper floor office space to its customers and employees. In order to provide additional office space in upper floors, it will be necessary to add elevators to one or more buildings and potentially interconnect adjacent buildings to take best advantage of the expense of elevator installation.

Vision

- Fine residential units in the upper floors of Downtown buildings that can offer strong alternative housing opportunities to residents.
- · Additional high quality office facilities in upper floor spaces for commercial office/service businesses which can thrive in these locations (vs. ground floor locations).

Goals

Upgrade all upper floor spaces throughout Downtown to improve their lease or sale value to potential tenants or purchasers.

Policies

Work with all property owners to evaluate existing upper floor building conditions and assess the cost and value of upgrading building systems and spaces for both residential and office uses.

Offer building improvement assistance in the form of grants or loans for design services and rehabilitation efforts.



Conceptual new infill building and passageway from Main to north parking lot

Infill Opportunities

Overview

A wide variety of infill opportunities exist in Downtown Zeeland. This includes several empty storefronts, one story buildings, and occasional underutilized or vacant properties. Great potential exists for additional vitality by encouraging increased use of upper floor spaces for residential and/or office uses. New space might also be made available by adding floors to existing one-story buildings or by replacing underutilized buildings with new structures.

Vision

A vibrant retail business district characterized by full storefronts and complementary restaurants and personal service businesses. A vital upper floor environment – including service businesses and residences – which adds depth, market opportunities, and higher building values to the entire district.

Goals

- Full occupancy of all existing buildings through revitalization and repurposing efforts.
- Additional square footage added where physically appropriate and financially feasible.

Policies

- Encourage one-story building and empty lot owners to consider the development of additional floors or new multi-story buildings.
- Foster the reuse of existing vacant space through design incentive grants and low-interest building improvement loans.

Improved Passageways

Overview

Abundant and free parking is located behind most of the Main Avenue stores and offices. However, access to certain businesses and/or Main is not obvious or easy to recognize. Also, it is recommended in this Downtown Vision Plan that these parking lots might also become more organized public gathering spaces for events, the Farmers Market, concerts, etc.

Vision

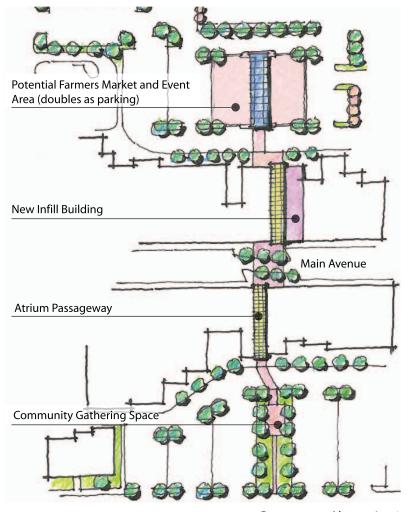
Improved access and passageways between existing parking lots and Main Avenue shops, restaurants, and other services. Strengthening these connections will enhance patrons' shopping experience and take best advantage of existing parking spaces and underutilized rear entrances to businesses.

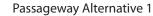
Goals

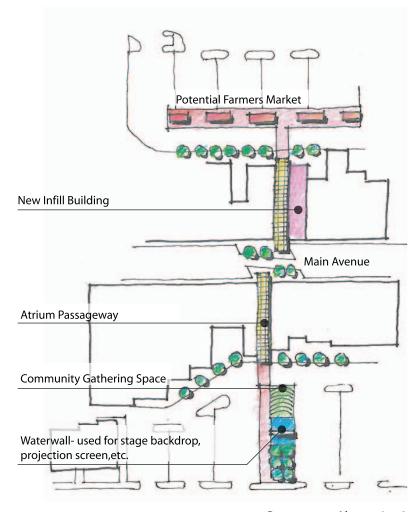
- Improve building signage both to identify businesses and to indicate passages from parking lots to Main Avenue (and vice versa).
- Improve interior building configurations to allow access into and passage through businesses.
- Enhance an existing (but vacant) building with a new passageway dedicated to connecting parking lots and Main Avenue.

Policies

- Encourage building owners both to improve existing building signage and to improve access/connection/passages through ground floor spaces adjacent to parking.
- Explore the possibility of providing modest/leveraged design incentive grants and low-interest building improvement loans for these projects.







Passageway Alternative 2









Potential Farmers Market in north parking lot



Potential public gathering space in south parking lot, with possible feature element

Parking Lots: Joint Usage Opportunities

Farmers Market

The Farmers Market is managed by the Zeeland Chamber of Commerce and operates on summer Fridays at Heritage Square from 9am – 1pm. Consisting of several vegetable/fruit/flower sellers as well as varying other merchants with goods or services, the market is a downtown asset. Many stakeholder comments were made during the workshop supporting a larger and more active Farmers Market.

In the event that the Farmers Market outgrows its current location or Heritage Square is redeveloped, it is recommended that the market be thoughtfully reviewed, then possibly expanded and relocated to a future site, for example, the north parking lot. It is believed that this relocation would allow the market to gain more working space, visibility to Washington Avenue traffic, and hopefully, prosper and grow in popularity. Other locations should also be considered for this relocation, including the Sligh block, Hoesch block, and other properties downtown.

Public Gathering Places

Presently, there are no formally designed public gathering spaces for events and organized celebrations in Downtown Zeeland. While Zeeland stages wonderful parades and other great public events, they generally require closing Main Avenue or informally using parking lots in makeshift arrangements.

It is recommended – and illustrated here – that the City consider creating public gathering spaces for civic events and celebrations through modest modifications to the south parking lot. Also, some or all of Heritage Square also could be improved into these public gathering places (see page 12).

Medical Office Building at Cherry/Church

Overview

This medical office building has been underutilized for many years and now has very low occupancy. To the south of this property is a public park; to the west is a City-owned lot, and to the east, across Church Street are 1st CRC and 2nd RCA churches.

Vision

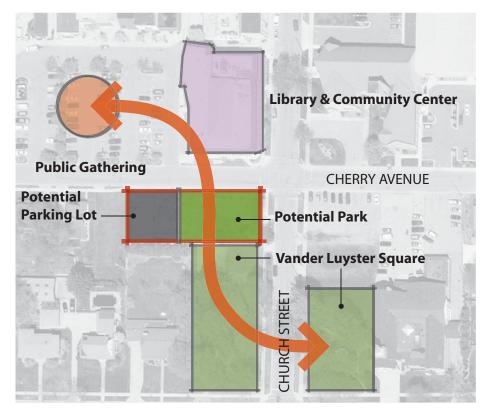
The removal of this building and the creation of a new park/community garden as well as convenient public parking. The theme and key components of this new public green space could be inspired by activities at the library/community center, the adjacent churches, and the Central Avenue neighborhood.

Goals

Create new public green space and parking as transition space between Downtown and the adjacent neighboring institutions and residential properties.

Policies

Work with the property owner to negotiate the acquisition of the property. Begin the creative planning process for the new park/garden and possible parking spaces.



Opportunity for important civic connections via the Medical Office Building Site





View from Vander Luyster Square to Library & Community Center

Other Opportunities

Zeel Center

The Zeel Center is a project conceived to showcase Zeeland's authentic and deep creativity roots and innovative spirit. Through various conversations and inputs, the team conceptualized a storefront facility combining some/ all of the following Zeeland elements:

- Exceptional creative Zeelanders: designers, artist, engineers,
- Outstanding Zeeland products: chairs, clocks, vehicle components.
- Community arts and crafts: drawings, paintings, sculpture...
- A Feel the Zeel presence/showcase.

It is suggested that officials from the City, Chamber of Commerce, Lakeshore Advantage, Zeeland Public and Christian schools gather together to brainstorm and discuss if there is interest in such a Center and begin to organize a task force to determine its feasibility and possible implementation.

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms provide needed service/comfort for patrons visiting various businesses and civic facilities. In significant measure, public restrooms allow people to linger in Downtown Zeeland for longer visits. This is especially true for families with young children in tow.

In Downtown Zeeland, public restrooms are available during weekday business hours at City Hall and in the Howard Miller Community Center and Library. However, these facilities are neither obviously available while walking Downtown nor publicized widely. At least, these facilities should be "advertised" more effectively. In addition, it is recommended that additional public restrooms be constructed in Downtown and that these facilities be open on a daily basis for extended hours (8am-8pm?).

These new facilities could be standalone facilities (as seen in Grand Haven, Holland, Ludington...) but it might be more cost effective and timely if such restrooms could be built in conjunction with another public project - for example - with the passageway project, the Zeel Center, the Heritage Square revitalization, Farmers Market, etc...

It is recommended that drinking fountains be installed with these restrooms; also, due to the popularity of pet owners visiting Downtown, we recommend a down-low drinking bowl also be installed if practical.

EAST ZONE

The Eastern zone of the SARB district in Downtown begins at Main/Maple, and encompasses the blocks containing the Cityside Middle School and the former Sligh Furniture building, and several homes as it stretches westward past Centennial Street up to the Commons zone. Improvement opportunities in this area include revitalization of the Sligh building and fresh re-utilization of various underutilized properties, particularly the residential properties west of the Sligh building. Another particular need in this area is an improved student dropoff and pickup zone for Cityside students and their parents.















Aerial photograph of East Zone showing potential project opportunities

Sligh Furniture Building and Block

Overview

The former Sligh Furniture Building located on east Main Avenue at Maple Street offers very significant opportunities to revitalize the eastern entrance to Downtown Zeeland. The building is currently being used for furniture storage. The remainder of the block contains the following: an empty commercial building (formerly Vitale's), 4 homes, a Zeeland Public School parking lot, and Kuips Muffler Shop.

Vision

Rehabilitation of the former Sligh Building into one or more of the following potential uses: residential lofts; commercial office/incubator space; Zeeland Public Schools (ZPS) program related to Cityside Middle School or other ZPS program.

New community recreation facilities which strengthen Downtown and the community by complimenting the potential Sligh Building renovation and existing Cityside/Community Recreation/Pool facilities.

Goals

Upgrade the former Sligh Building with an appropriate rehabilitation

Explore potential complimentary community recreation facilities in this area.

Policies

Work with existing property owners and/or tenants and other potential project stakeholders to explore these rehabilitation and new projects.

Potential Project Opportunities

Within the former Sligh Building, there are a number of potential reuses, as outlined in the following:

Residential/lofts/condominiums. The building's high ceilings, historic post and beam brick-clad structure offer wonderful residential ambiance as seen in the Colonial Clock apartments and in several Holland-area rehabilitated buildings. These include Baker Lofts and Scrapyard Lofts, as well as numerous buildings in Downtown Grand Rapids' former furniture buildings.

Office/Incubator. ("Colonial Clock II"). Similarly, the Sligh building qualities mimic the Colonial Clock building which is currently accommodating high tech startup incubator companies, newly-hatched firms, as well as expanding well-established businesses. These activities might be housed here as well, and perhaps, could be combined with residential uses. This combination approach would create a significant mixed use building, strengthen the eastern edge of Downtown, and could spark additional rehabilitation (new construction) in this area.

Zeeland Public Schools program. The Zeeland Public School (ZPS) system is a very dynamic, progressive district, and with the Cityside Middle School located directly across the street, it is possible that an existing or future ZPS program could be located in a portion of the Sligh Building. Again, such a program or activity could be compatible with the previous residential and/or office uses.

Community Recreation

Potential Project Opportunities

Within the center of this block, additional community recreational facilities could build upon existing community assets to create a truly great combination of civic uses. Already nearby are both the newly-opened Community Recreation Facility, a tremendous community/school asset and the community pool complex within Cityside Middle School. Additional potential facilities include the following:

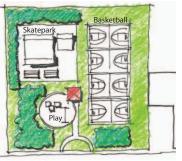
Ice Skating Rink. At present, there are no open air ice skating rinks in the greater Zeeland community. This area could certainly accommodate an open-air ice rink (most useful if it is refrigerated) and would become a new and unique asset to the community. The rink could provide free skating or organized skating opportunities for families, youth, exercise/ conditioning groups, and hockey competitors.

Playground/Sports/Play area. Currently, Cityside students utilize a large ZPS-owned site on East Main Avenue at Fairview/88th Avenue for outdoor recreational activities such as soccer, baseball/softball, etc.... It is possible to use a portion of this Sligh block area for some of these school recreational activities which would also be available to the community at large.

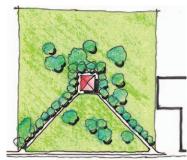
Zeeland Public Schools Program. Depending on possible reuse of the Sligh Building, including ZPS activities, some of this area might also accommodate related recreational activities such as open play, basketball hoops (1/2 court), beach volleyball, practice soccer goals, and fitness stations.

Children's play equipment: these improvements could be, essentially, neighborhood-scale jungle-gym equipment for families from the community and strolling residents from nearby neighborhoods.









Unstructured play alternative



BEFORE: Existing condition at southwest corner of Sligh building



AFTER: Potential renovated Sligh building with new drop-off, building entry, loft additions and landscaping



BEFORE: Existing condition with homes and Sligh building



AFTER: Potential redeveloped Sligh block with drop-off/pick-up, shelter improvements and community recreation facilities

STRATEGIC WORK MATRIX

June 2009

Public and Private Project Opportunities

Public Initiatives

- 1. Better Gateways and Connections to and within Downtown
 - 1-1. Stronger gateways from regional road network
 - 1-2. Enhanced Downtown gateways at Main/State and Main/Maple
 - 1-3. Better signage to and around Downtown
- 2. Additional/improved landscaping and public green and open spaces
 - 2-1. Install landscaping elements to define "Commons" zone
 - 2-2. Public meeting space for celebration/events: Heritage Sq; south pkg. lot.
 - 2-3. Expand and relocate Farmers Market
 - 2-4. Mini-parks/play areas for children: 1st CRC; North CRC; Sligh; Cherry/Church.
 - 2-5. Community/neighborhood gardens: Cherry/Church property
- 3. Expand focus on community health & recreation; building on new RecCtr
 - 3-1. Play areas near Cityside for students and general public
 - 3-2. Basketball, soccer net, roller skate areas/ice rink; other court games.
- 4. New "Zeel" Center to feature the following potential ideas:
 - 4-1. Children's Museum/Hands-on Center; Art Center; leading designers/ innovators; outstanding Zeeland "products"...
- 5. Expand Dekker Huis explore the possibilty of expanding the Museum.
- 6. Explore and assure long term viability of US Post Office
- 7. Passageways between Main Avenue and parking lots
- 8. Public restrooms (with drinking fountains for people and pets)

Private Sector Initiatives

- 9. Evaluate/improve every Downtown building for highest and best uses
- 10. Review and Rehabilitate retail/restaurant spaces
- 11. New residential options for "pre-nesters" and empty nesters
 - 11-1. Upgrade existing apartments or add new
- 12. Create additional options for offices/services on upper floors & cross streets.
- 13. Evaluate and renovate former Sligh Furniture building
- 14. Create more incubator spaces such as the Colonial Clock rehabilitation
- 15. Explore new building opportunities at these sites: Main/State; Heritage Square;
 - 15-1. Huntington/Hoesch corner; Wash/Elm; Wash/State; parcels east of Don's.
- 16. Build new small hotel or boutique B&B (10-25 rooms) in/near Downtown

Community Priority

Project Qualities

Project Responsibilities

Project	Tir	meframe	Family	TRUE	Tradition		SARB/	Other/	Private/	Other/
Importance	Plan	Imple.	Focus	ZEEL	& Quality	City	PSD	Public	Entrepre	Private
	On	Ongoing						ZSchools		Chamber
Catalytic	1 2	Now Soon 1-2		Direct/Full Support			Lead	ZBPW		Churches
Very Imp	3	3-5 yrs		Partial			Support	ZHospital		Industry
Import.	4	5-10 yrs		Minimal				Other		Develop.
		1								
$\overline{}$		3		$\overline{}$						
		2		$\overline{}$						
	1	2								
	2,3	4								
	3	3	0			$\overline{}$				Chamber
	On	2,3								Owners
$\overline{}$		3								Neighbors
	1,2	3						ZPS,BPW		
	2	3						ZPS		
	3	4						ZPS		
	2	2,3						ZPS	Various	Various
	1,2	3						Hist. Society		
	1	2						US.P.O.		
	2	3		<u> </u>	\bigcirc				Owners	
	2	4								
	On	On							Owners	
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	1,2	2,3							Owners	
						HS			Owners	
	1,2	2,3				ПЭ			Owners	
									Developers	
	1,2	2,3							Developers	

Community Priority

Project Qualities

Project Responsibilities

Project	Ti	meframe	Family	TRUE	Tradition	City	SARB/	Other/	Private/	Other/
Importance	Plan	Imple.	Focus	ZEEL	& Quality		PSD	Public	Entrepre	Private
Catalytic Very Imp Import.	On 1 2 3 4	Ongoing Now Soon 1-2 3-5 yrs 5-10 yrs		Direct/Full Support Partial Minimal		•	Lead Support	ZSchools ZBPW ZHospital Other		Chamber Churches Industry Develop.

Marketing Initiatives

- 17. Continue Marketing for additional retail, dining, and personal services
 - 17-1. Fine, fun, friendly restaurants
 - 17-2. Specialty retail stores
 - 17-3. Others that have been identified through Downtown recruitment initiative
 - 17-4. Scaled-down version of a national chain store

	On	On				
	On	On				
	On	On				

New Community & Service Facilities & Networks

- A. Downtown wireless network
- B. Bike lanes along major and neighborhood streets
- C. Mobile/portable stores or carts for festivals and events

	2	2		<u> </u>		ZBPW/ZPS	Various	Various
	On	On						
	2	2.3					Various	

Programming/Organizing/Principles; Other ideas to encourage

- D. Continue/intensify "Feel the Zeel" marketing programs and presence
- E. Four-season activities
- F. More concerts, street performers,
- G. Store hours more consistent, publicized
- H. More advertising: keep examining the best methods to advertise Downtown.
- I. Fill empty storefronts with artistic and community displays
- J. Encourage environmentally friendly approaches (green and LEED...)
- K. Establish a Downtown Development Authority
- L. Form Young Professionals organization formal Zeeland branch?
- M. Seek Patient capital to help with building projects & business startups.

On	On		$\overline{}$			Owners	Chamber
On	On				Various	Various	Various
1,2	2,3					Various	
On	On						
On	On						
1	2						Chamber
On	On				ZBPW	Various	
1	1,2						
2	2,3					Various	Chamber
1	1,2					Various	

