



DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN ZEELAND, MICHIGAN

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.

November 2018 Update



DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN ZEELAND, MICHIGAN

Adopted by Zeeland City Council: July 6, 2020

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Foreword

Since 2009, the original Downtown Vision Plan for Zeeland has served City Council, City staff, downtown business and landowners, and the general public as the key reference document to guide private and public development decisions about physical projects within downtown Zeeland. The Vision Plan has been an effective inspirational guide for its various users.

During the past several years, due to the 1.) successful implementation of several key projects outlined in the Downtown Vision Plan; 2.) changes to previous downtown Zeeland priorities and opportunities, and 3.) emerging new opportunities, it was determined that an Update to the Vision Plan should be undertaken. This Update document is the result of that decision and is designed to:

1. Emphasize areas of Downtown where new growth can occur
2. Differentiate the intention of public vs. private-led projects
3. Identify completed projects and initiatives
4. Remove projects that are no longer relevant, and
5. Add new opportunities to the Vision Plan

Updating the Downtown Vision Plan – Process and Participants

In many ways, the original Vision Plan (VP) remains very relevant to downtown decisions and it was felt that the vast majority of the previous Plan should be incorporated into the updated version. It was also noted that the original VP was forged during nearly a year of meetings with the Steering Committee, City staff and City Council, and over one hundred citizen participants. Such an extensive (new) process was not considered prudent or necessary to update the VP. Thus, the overall goal of this process was to “preserve the best of the Plan and add new opportunities” to the Update document. That overall update approach has been taken by the City, the Update focus group, and its consultants.

A representative group of downtown property and business owners and City leaders (see sidebar) were selected to review and discuss the original VP and to participate in a daylong workshop with City officials and planning consultants and to follow-up reviews of the update document.

This update process prompted participants to encourage future, more frequent “cycling” of Downtown planning sessions. These sessions should include Downtown Stakeholders and the general public.

User Guide

This Vision Document is designed to help all Downtown stakeholders and private and public decision makers imagine an even better and more vibrant Downtown Zeeland. And, perhaps see a project they would like to pursue or advocate. This document should encourage both private business persons and public officials.

The Update includes this dynamic “Six Circles” Vision diagram that illustrates the information-gathering and creative steps that can help develop a Vision and related action steps; the full diagram can be found on page 26. Also, on page 4, the “Two Arrows” Sketch shows the Private/Public interactions that can lead to successful project plans and projects. Both of these sketches show dynamic, interactive processes designed to be creative and collaborative between multiple stakeholders.

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01

INTRODUCTION



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, outdoor recreational facilities, better pedestrian connections, new art and sculptures, and landscape and infrastructure improvements that will attract and serve local community members and visitors.
- Attract new and retain/strengthen existing private businesses.
- New and upgraded personal service and general office spaces in non-retail locations.
- New and revitalized upper floor residential options.
- A small hotel property within walking distance of Downtown.
- Strengthened gateway entrances from I-196 and other regional arterial roads, and more obvious links from Downtown to nearby residential neighborhoods and industrial areas.
- Transit station for potential future regional bus/rail services.
- 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 thoughtful and compatible design, choice of durable construction materials (including brick, stone, and glass) and careful 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.
- Reflect the rich heritage and current personality of Downtown Zeeland.

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 private 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 industrial and commercial corporations, churches, families, as well as the Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland area, the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce, the Holland Area Arts Council, and Lakeshore Advantage.

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. The creation of the Heritage Square splash park and the revitalization of nearby private properties illustrate this public/private dynamic.

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). One of the primary advantages of patient capital is that the outcomes of long-term investments have the chance of well exceeding the typical cumulative outcome of short-term investments. 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.



Downtown Zeeland Vision Plan

Key Observations & Insights from Tours, Meetings & Previous Efforts:

Downtown Zeeland is the **heart and soul** of the City of Zeeland and the immediate surrounding area. This vital center contains unique and/or very important community buildings and functions: City Hall, Howard Miller Library/Community Center, Post Office, one of two public Middle Schools, the Community Recreation Building and Pool, all major founding churches, banking/financial/legal services, homegrown retail, restaurants and service businesses, traditional residential neighborhoods... Downtown is where the community of Zeeland has always focused and come together to celebrate the most important community events...to pray and marry, to buy and sell goods and services... It is the physical center of the community and the hub around which the rest of the community rotates.

Downtown Zeeland is compact, walkable, knowable, and manageable. The center is safe, well lighted, and friendly. Public and private sector officials, leaders, and everyday citizens feel comfortable in Downtown and sense that improvements can be made through concerted action. Almost all of Downtown Zeeland's businesses and activities are homegrown and owner-operated – allowing customers to know business owners and develop friendly relationships with these proprietors...

02 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. Each year, the Zeeland City Council conducts visioning and goal-setting sessions which emphasize the core values of the community, namely: integrity, diversity, service, responsibility, health, safety, fun/inviting, cooperation and teamwork. Over the past 15 years, City Council has 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.

ZEEL \zēl [n]

1: abundant enthusiasm that is unique to those living in the City of Zeeland.

2: a passionate and spirited pursuit to be part of a big small town full of everyday good living and unmatched enterprise.

In 2012, the City Marketing department shifted to two part-time employees with Marketing Director Abby deRoo and Events Coordinator Kerri Van Dorp preparing and implementing all marketing activities for Downtown Zeeland and the rest of the city.

SARB Vision. In 2008, 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 difference.

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 Mayors Klynstra and Hoogland and City Manager Klunder, the City Council has very consistently supported Downtown initiatives and improvement projects. Over the past 15+ years, Downtown Zeeland has benefited from a major Streetscape facelift project which removed the sidewalk canopies of the “Main Place” era, reconfigured Main Avenue, added significant onstreet parking, new sidewalks with custom pavers, new street lighting and banner poles, bollards, and landscaping/flower baskets. Main Avenue to the east and west, respectively, has been completely reconstructed to create brand new street entrances into the Downtown area.

In recent years, Heritage Square and Elm Street between Main and Cherry have been transformed into a vibrant gathering place with a family-friendly splash park, performing stage, public restrooms, fireplace, and ice skating park, all connected together with an innovative European-style Woonerf, that is also snow-melted to provide a snow-free winter gathering venue.

IF YOU WANT TO **FEEL THE “ZEEL,”** THEN TAKE A STROLL DOWN MAIN STREET AND VISIT **ANY SHOP OR DINER WHERE STORIES ARE MADE AND SHARED.** VISIT ANY NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE **FRONT PORCHES ARE MEMORY CATCHERS** AND SIDEWALKS ARE POPULAR. TAKE A LOOK AT **FLOURISHING INNOVATION,** FROM **HOME-GROWN FLOWER SHOPS TO FORTUNE 500'S.** FIND YOUR FAVORITE CURB AND SETTLE IN FOR ANY ONE OF OUR **ANNUAL PARADES.** AND JOIN THE **STANDS FULL OF FANS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY** THAT **SUPPORT OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS** LIKE EACH STUDENT IS ONE OF THEIR OWN. **THE ZEEL IS CONTAGIOUS AND CELEBRATED.** AND IT'S ONE-OF-A-KIND HERE IN ZEELAND. **FEEL THE ZEEL!**

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, art and other 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.

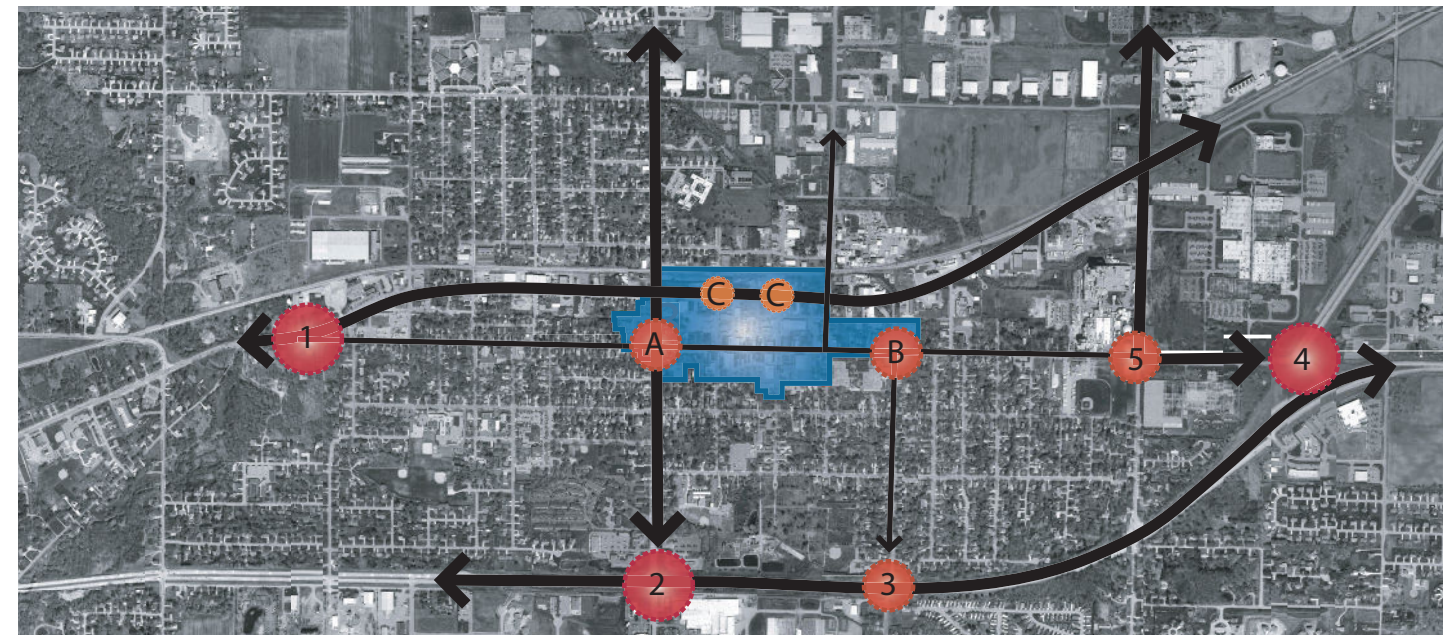
Incorporate strong landscaping, sculptures and artistic elements when/ wherever possible.

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 - Update Notes

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. **Roundabout planned for 2019.**
2. Chicago Drive/State Street. This is the primary street used by motorists to access the downtown from the south. **Brick Zeeland sign installed.**
3. Chicago Drive/Maple. An important intersection for directing Chicago Drive motorists to the downtown area. **Way finding sign installed.**
4. I-196 Business Route/Chicago Drive. A major eastern gateway to downtown requiring additional introductory signage and plantings to welcome and direct motorists. **Brick Zeeland sign installed.** In 2018, a multi-jurisdictional \$5.8 million project is planned to relieve congestion and improve circulation in this intersection.
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. **Fresh priority.**
- 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.
 - **Banners/lights have been extended up N. Elm.**
 - **New wayfinding signs at Elm/Washington.**





Downtown Vision Planning Process

Original 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 stakeholder 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.

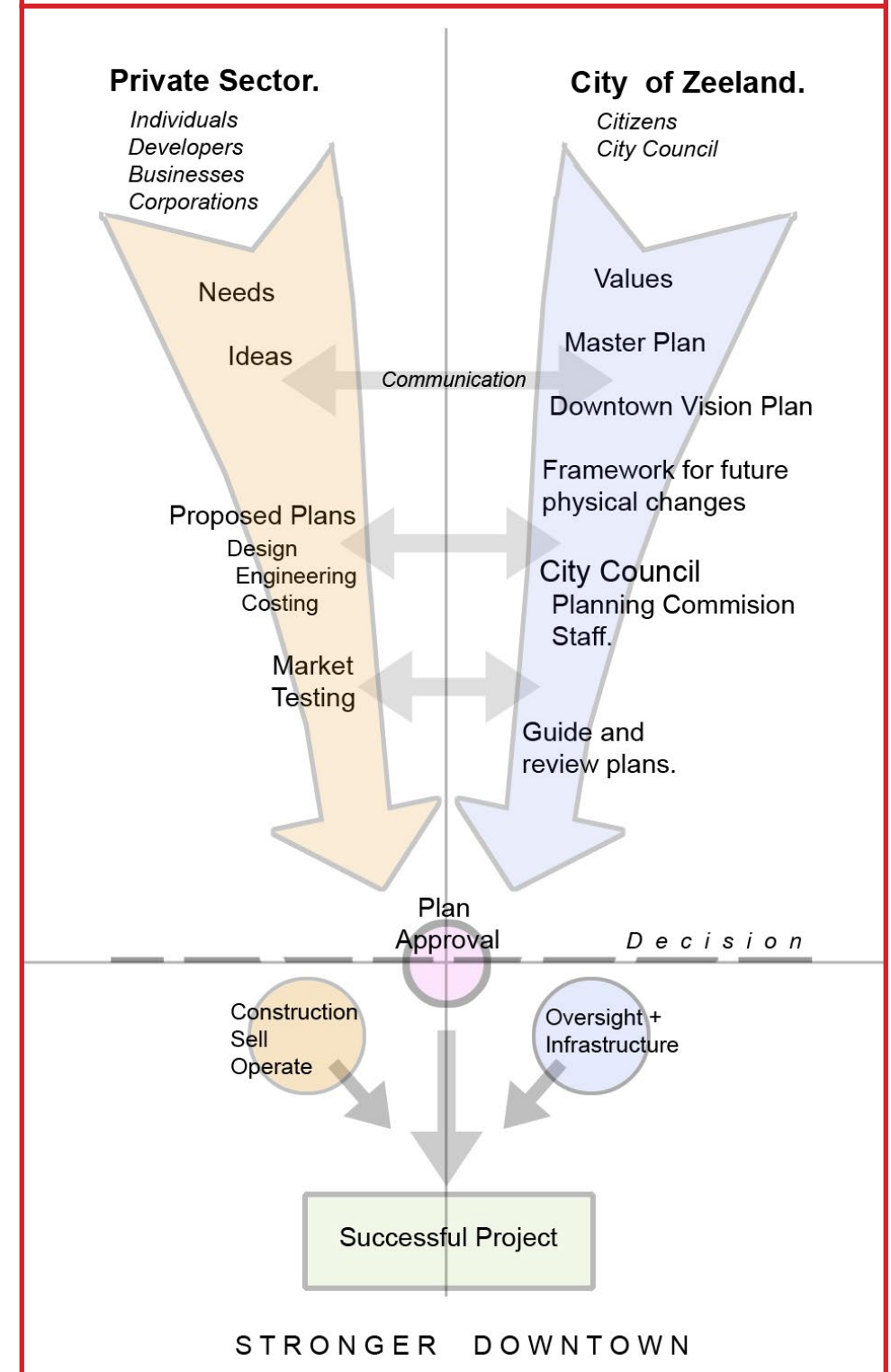
Update Process: May-October 2018

The current update process involved a thorough review of the Downtown Vision Plan by the Update Committee prior to the Workshop. During the Workshop, committee members did a walking tour of Downtown, then reviewed and discussed the original plan and proposed changes and additions to the updated Vision Plan.



Public/Private Roles in Community Revitalization

This conceptual sketch outlines the dynamic interactions between public and private parties as community development projects are conceived, processed, and ultimately approved and constructed. These are symbiotic relationships and interactions, that is, neither party can be entirely successful without fruitful cooperation and the coordination of mutual efforts. In the best of these situations, the public and private parties creatively interact, are inspired by a common Vision, build on each other's strengths, and work toward shared goals and objectives.



04

PLANNING FRAMEWORK



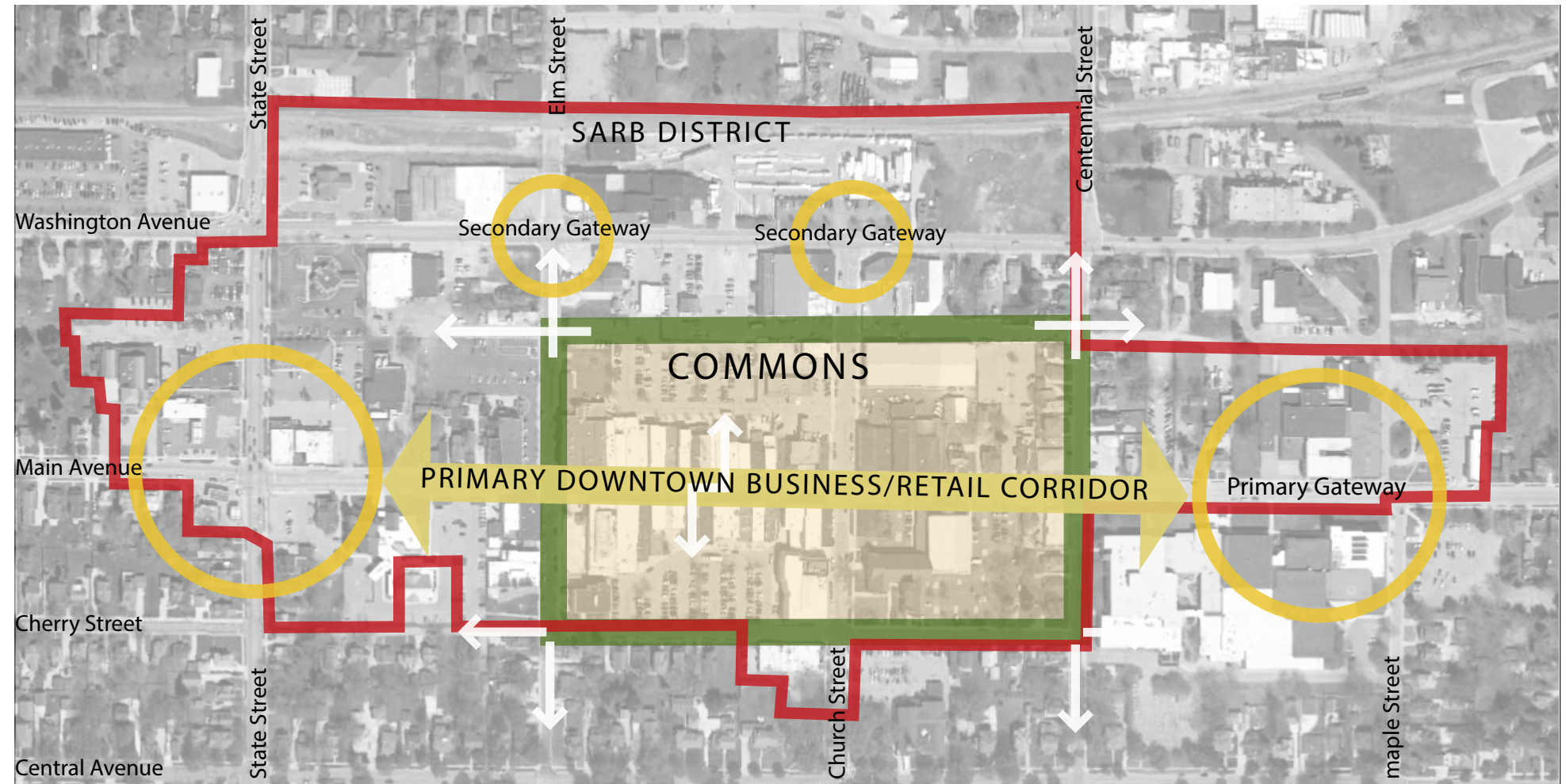
Planning Framework: SARB and the Commons

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 addressed and improved first in order 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 major outstanding manufacturers with over 10,000 employees (Herman Miller, Howard Miller, Gentex, Mead Johnson, ODL, and others). In recent years, as Downtown has been revitalized, more and more of these employees are taking advantage of new dining, shopping, residential options, and entertainment activities. This trend should be encouraged.

Also, importantly, there are efforts underway to encourage private sector leaders to become more involved in emerging investment and development opportunities in Downtown Zeeland.





Key Projects and Recommendations

Overall Goals - Making progress everywhere!

- Revitalize underutilized buildings and properties to achieve their highest and best current use. **Ongoing, major successes.**
- Enhance Downtown landscape features, artistic elements, gathering spaces, and other public amenities to make them more attractive and useful for community members and visitors. **Ongoing, major successes.**
- ★ • Encourage the establishment of “Patient Capital” funds.

West Zone: Pages 10-11

Main Avenue from State to Elm Streets

Goals

- Strengthen/encourage existing institutions – Dekker Huis, North Street CRC. **North Street CRC has been strengthened.**
- Recognize and pursue new projects in underutilized properties.

Projects

Northside:

1. Explore enhancement of 911 E. Main Avenue property. **Ongoing.**
2. Encourage redevelopment of 47 E. Main. **Renovated commercial, 2 new apartments.**

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. **Completed.**

Commons: Pages 12-19

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. **Progress.**
3. Examine and encourage the rehabilitation of every building on Main Avenue. **Progress.**
- ★ 4. Improve public passageways between Main and the parking lots behind storefronts. **Considering exploration.**
5. Improve sidewalks and service drive near the Howard Miller Library/Community Center. **Considering exploration.**
6. Install new public restrooms – ideally, in conjunction with another public project. **Complete.**
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. **Complete.**
8. Create more formal public gathering spaces in Heritage Square or other public parking lot areas. **Complete.**

9. Respond to interest by large property owners in relocating or repositioning their businesses or in redevelopment of their property to new use.
10. Support/assure Post Office viability/commitment to its present location.
- ★ 11. Encourage redevelopment of the medical office building site at Church/Cherry to create a mixed-use project, shared parking spaces, and a new public square. **Making progress.**
12. Encourage the improved use of 1st CRC corner property, eg, mini park, benches...
13. Support the youth ministry at The Bridge as a teen-friendly anchor to Downtown.
14. Facilitate the redevelopment of the two residential properties east of Don’s Flowers for complementary commercial uses including B&B/ residential uses. **1 completed, 1 to go.**

East Zone: Pages 20-22

Main Avenue from Church/Centennial to Maple Streets

Goals

- Strengthen Main/Maple gateway.
- Pursue potential redevelopment of former Sligh building. **Ongoing.**
- 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, Bed & Breakfast.
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. Recruit new B&B or small hotel/residential building to provide overnight lodging and/or alternative residential options; and other locations have been identified.
4. Enhance the Main/Maple intersection as the eastern gateway to Downtown at Maple with improvements. **New Generational Wealth building and another new building is under consideration.**
5. Create improved student drop-off and pick-up spaces near the main Cityside entrance.

★ State/Main Intersection: Pages 10-11

Goals

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

Projects

Short Term

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

Long Term

1. Add new buildings to NE and SE corners to frame entrance; over time, enhance gas station properties.

Washington Avenue:

Goals

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

Projects

1. Improved/enlarged wayfinding signs directing motorists to Main Avenue. **All text was updated.**
2. State/Washington Site – redevelop site into new commercial development for larger footprint office/retail businesses. **Complete.**
3. Identify possible locations for future regional bus/rail passenger station - if these services are developed between Holland, Zeeland, Hudsonville, Grandville, and Grand Rapids.

Public Goals & Projects Related to Emerging Trends, Issues & Opportunities: Pages 23-25

★ Parking and Emerging Transportation Trends

1. Improve Downtown Zeeland public parking capacity.
2. Retain parking consultant.
3. Track innovations in parking and vehicle/curb management.

Living Downtown: Residential Life and Housing Opportunities

1. Engage with local housing organizations to understand the opportunities and challenges of developing new downtown residential units.

First Floor Priority

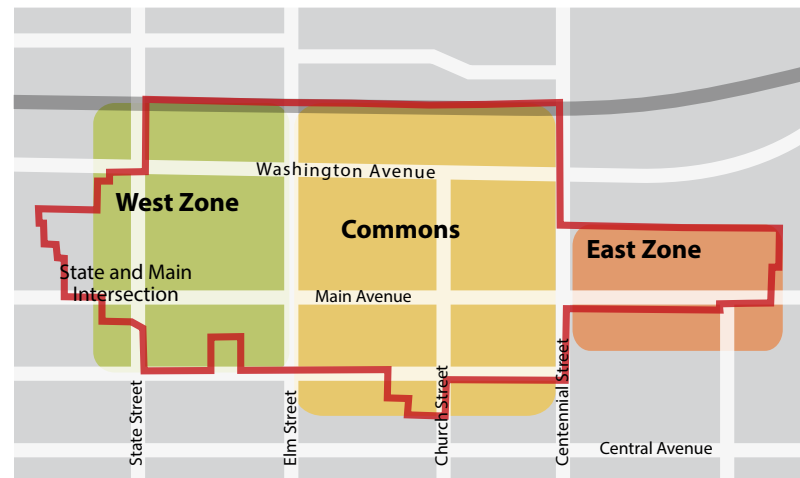
1. Continue to monitor the existing and emerging ground floor business uses to encourage a more synergistic mix which will generate and serve a stronger customer base.

Downtown Event Staging and Management

1. Continue support by City leadership of Downtown events management and building/business encouragement efforts.
2. Continued support and encouragement of SARB.

West Michigan Express

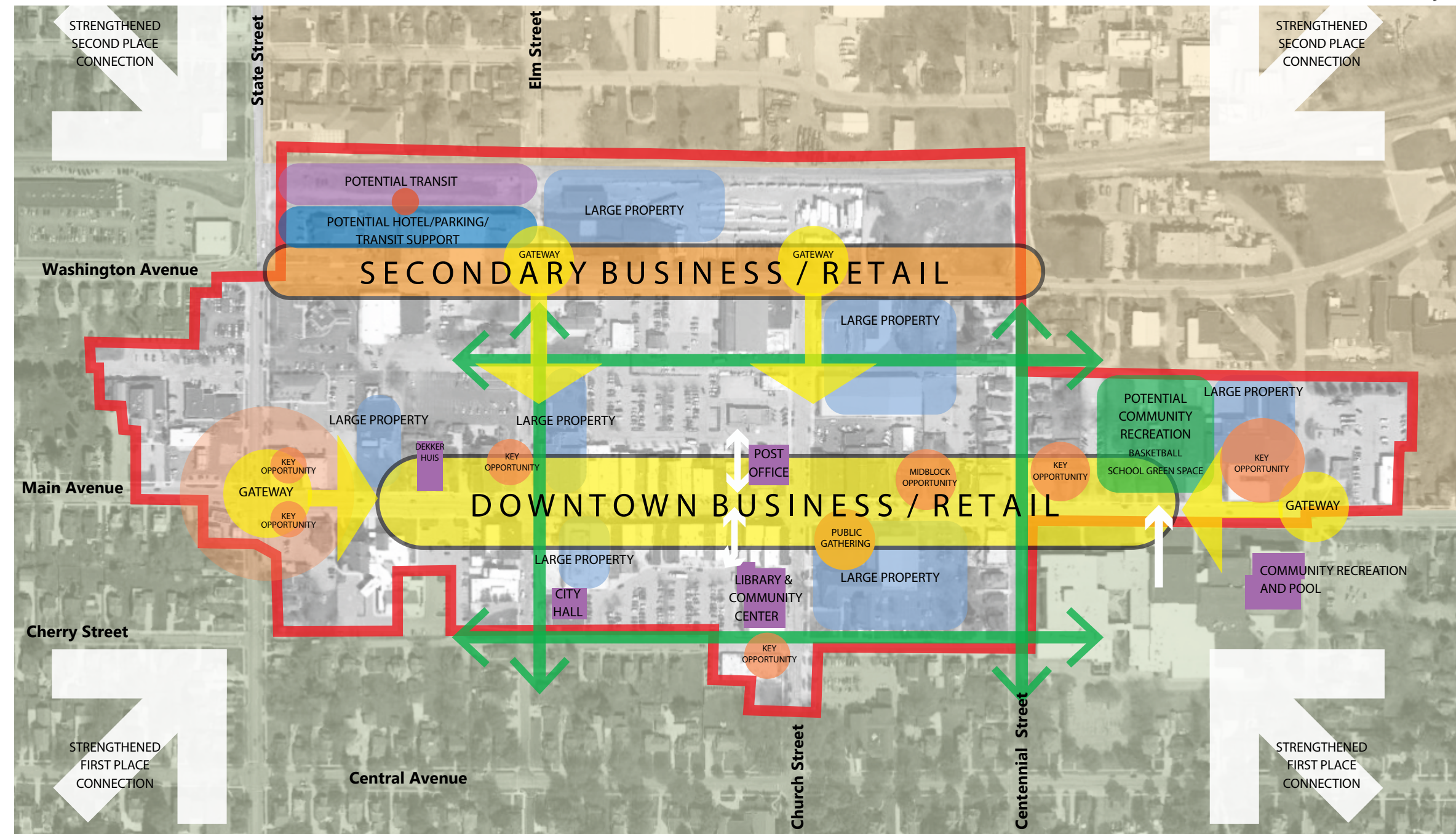
1. Stay actively involved in WMX regional transit dialogue and planning efforts.
2. As WMX progresses, evaluate potential Downtown transit station locations.



Key Projects and Opportunities

This schematic sketch illustrates several key projects and opportunity areas in Downtown Zeeland, as explained further on page 6.

Vision Plan Summary



Larger Properties

There are several larger properties (under single, unified ownership) in downtown Zeeland that have a significant direct and indirect impact on downtown's customer base and traffic, attractiveness, and vitality. These properties include: Zeeland Lumber, Huntington Bank, AT&T, Debruyn Seed Store, Sligh Building, the US Post Office, and First CRC Church.

It is important that the City maintain an "open door" policy with all property owners and business owners but these larger properties have an outside effect (positive and negative) when they undertake major expansions or contractions to their properties/facilities. As should be done with all downtown stakeholders, the City should be prepared to dialogue with and then support/assist these owners with their future plans.

Downtown Zeeland Vision Plan Summary: Key Projects and Recommendations



Downtown Accomplishments since 2009

Downtown Zeeland has made very significant progress since 2009 in achieving projects outlined in the original Downtown Vision Plan. These include several catalytic public projects as well as numerous private building restoration and new projects. These projects are illustrated and annotated here.

Heritage Square

Overview

In the original Vision Plan, Heritage Square (at Main/Elm) and the adjacent public parking lot were identified as a “keystone project” opportunity that, if achieved, would have very positive ripple effects throughout Downtown. Heritage Square and this key City-owned corner parcel & parking lot encompassed a particularly important redevelopment opportunity. At that time, Heritage Square displayed several historical plaques and contained benches and the Howard Miller monumental clock display.

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.

Potential projects

- Small or larger public gathering spaces – plazas and 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.

2018 Update

Between 2013-2017, Zeeland City Council and Staff enthusiastically embraced and led these opportunities to achieve truly important projects at Heritage Square/ Elm including the splash pad park, public restrooms, performance stage, fireplace, and subsequently, the Elm Street park and ice rink, and the reconstructed and snowmelted Elm Street Woonerf (a narrowed street which functions as a large sidewalk that can be closed to traffic easily, as needed).



Maximum plaza including performance stage and outdoor/cafe seating



Elm Street Woonerf



Heritage Square today, with splash park, performing stage, restrooms, and fireplace, fronted by reconstructed Elm Street Woonerf.



Downtown Accomplishments since 2009:

At a high strategic level, downtown Zeeland has been significantly improved since 2009 by a remarkable array of vibrant public projects and new businesses, park and infrastructure improvements, community events, and an ongoing public/private collaboration of business and property owners and City of Zeeland officials. Many of these actions are illustrated and listed below.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Heritage Square and Elm Street transformations

into very significant gathering spaces and specific public amenities/projects...

- Splash pad
- Public Restrooms
- Outdoor Fireplace
- Play areas, safety fencing
- Woonerf on Elm – snowmelted, brickpaved
- Ice Skate Park and Gathering spaces

New Restaurants

- Mainstreet Beanery
- Public
- Tripelroot
- Fuzzy Peach (Becoming La Crème Creamery and Crepes December 2018)
- Drip
- Elbo Room

New Buildings

- West Michigan Community Bank
- Generational Wealth

Larger Community Context

- New gateways and signage
- Street improvements
- Marketing campaigns
- Downtown Dumpster enclosures
- Northstreet CRC expansion
- Second Reformed Church expansion
- HMCC expansion

New Events and Activities

- Faces of Zeeland public art initiative
- Pumpkinfest sculptures
- Think the Zeel public art initiative
- Zeeland Peddlers' Markets
- Main Street Trick or Treat
- Plaiderday Chili Crawl
- Sweet Summer Night
- Zeeland Zoom 5k
- Zeeland Twilight Criterium
- Zeelmania

New Buildings

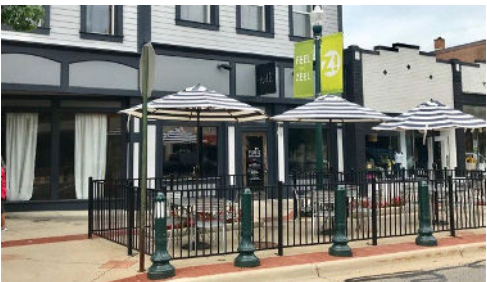


Generational Wealth



West Michigan Community Bank

New Restaurants



Public



Tripelroot



Drip



Mainstreet Beanery



Fuzzy Peach (Becoming La Crème Creamery and Crepes December 2018)



Elbo Room

Activities and Events



Mixed Use and Other Projects



06

POTENTIAL PROJECTS

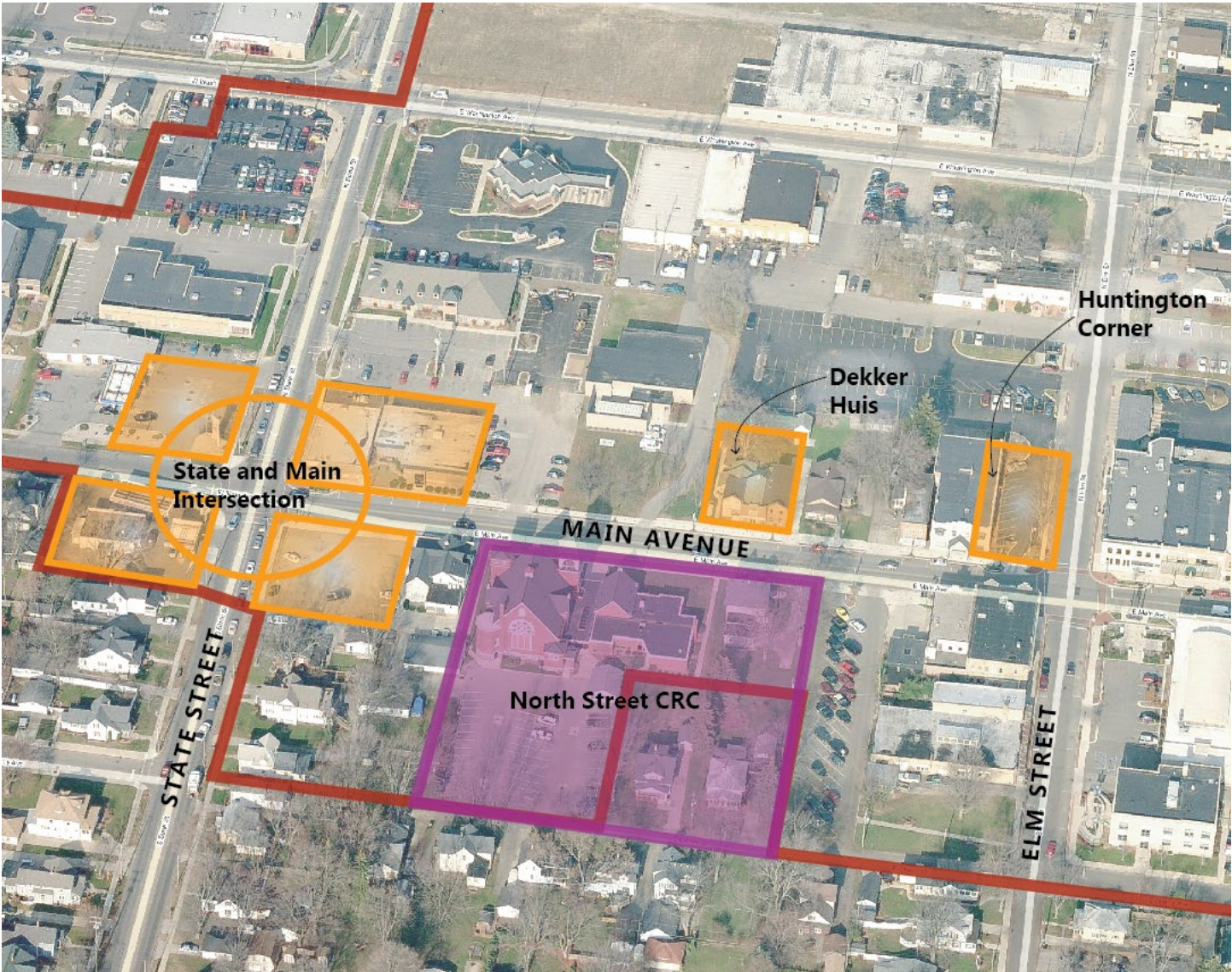


WEST ZONE

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.



Northeast Corner of Main St. and State St. Project Opportunity



Aerial photograph of West Zone showing potential project opportunities

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 Bicycle Company 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.

Project Opportunities

- State – all four corners, with the Northeast corner as the top redevelopment priority and the Southeast corner for signage and landscaping improvements.
- Elm – Heritage Square. **Complete.**
- Church – Five Star building rehab; **Complete.**
- Centennial – Main Street Auto conversion.
- Maple – Sligh rehab; restaurant refurbishment over time.



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



911 East Main Project Opportunity



47 East Main, Recent Renovation (Former Tuls Realty)

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 enhancing the museum and expanding its operating hours was mentioned during the vision workshop and that these possibilities are being explored.

Hotel B&B

Overview

The idea of encouraging a Bed & Breakfast Inn or small/special hotel within walking distance of 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 walking distance of Downtown.

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

- Sligh Building
- State/Main
- Washington/Elm
- Outside the SARB district

3 East Main Avenue Project

Overview

This project opportunity has attracted the attention of the City of Zealand due to its prominent visibility, present underutilized condition, and strong potential for re-development.

These factors prompted the City to purchase the property recently and to initiate a planning workshop in July 2019. An overall goal of this workshop was to address this property by considering its potential revitalization and preparing for its eventual redevelopment through a near-term "request for proposals" (RFP) to private developers.

Vision

Improve this key gateway entrance to Downtown by removing the present structure and initiating a process to create a new quality building at this location.

Goals

Context: State & Main intersection

- Begin to revitalize this important gateway and one of its four corners
- Illustrate potential building development and gateway opportunities for this property and adjacent properties.

Site: 3 East Main Avenue

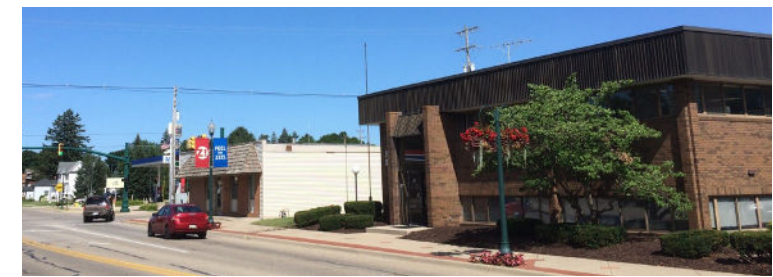
- Remove the existing building.
- Articulate and illustrate a more attractive site and safer "building envelope" for the future potential building.
- Initiate a Request for Proposal process intended to attract private developers to build a new quality facility at this location.
- Encourage a mix of uses in the new building including residential units and office/service businesses.

Potential Actions

- Demolish the existing building at this location.
- Describe the desired site and building guidelines (setbacks) for the site's future building.
- Prepare a Request for Proposal to solicit interest by real estate developers in the revitalization of this site. The RFP would outline City goals and redevelopment guidelines for the site.
- Contact adjacent property owners to inform them of City plans, gateway opportunities, and to encourage potential joint development with this property.

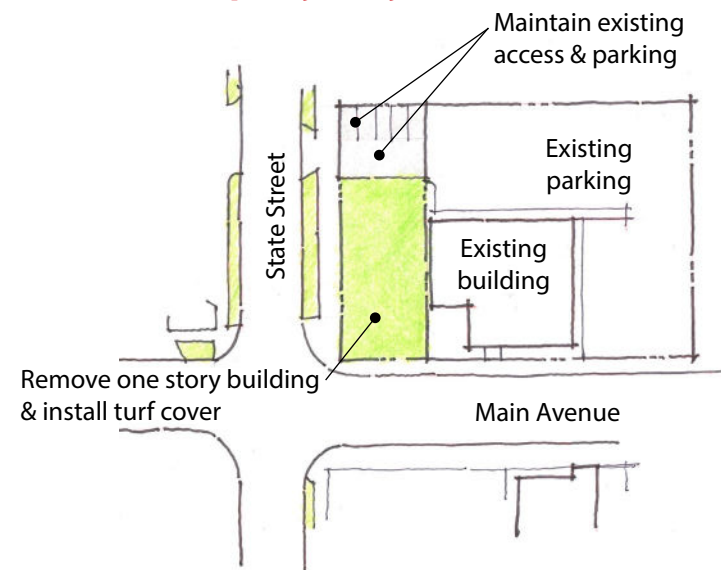


Existing conditions; 3 East Main, State & Main Intersection

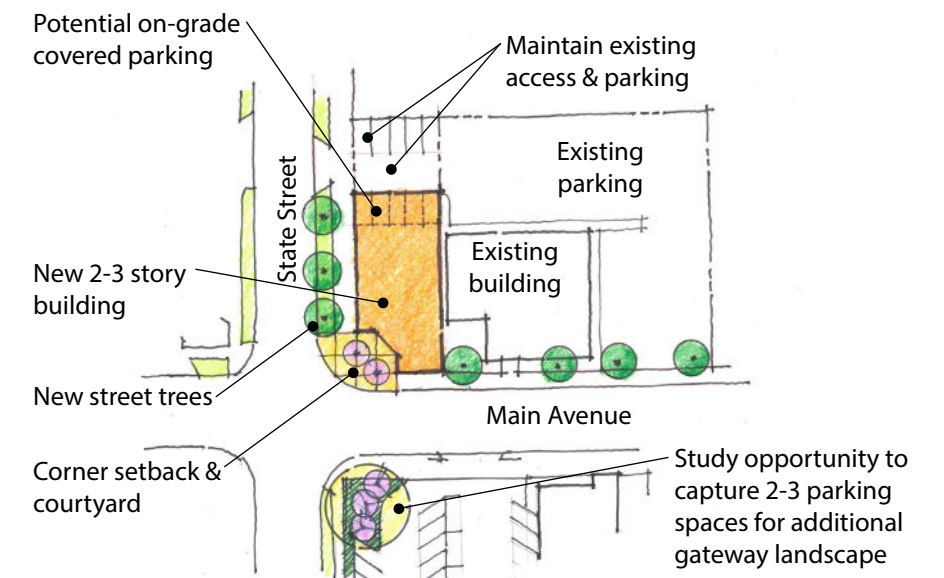


3 East Main, 9/11 East Main

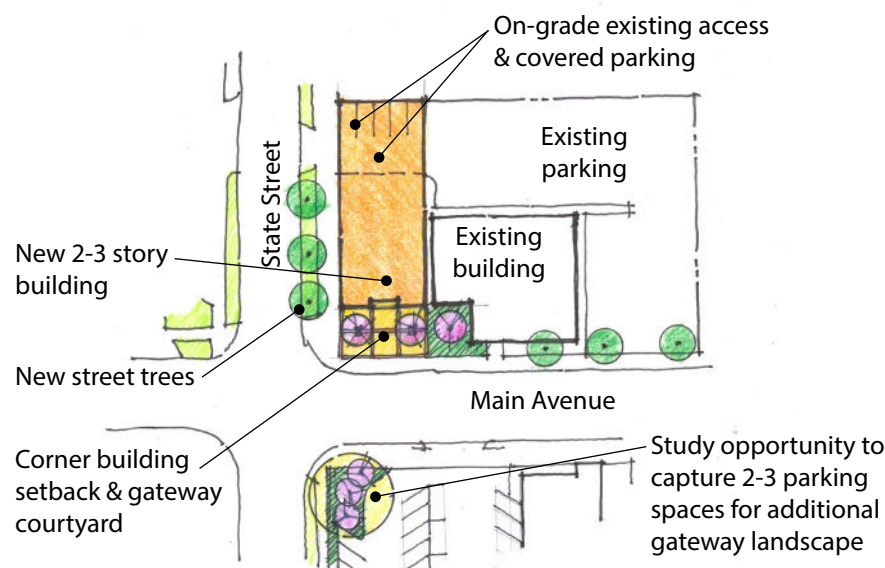
3 East Main Property Only



Recommended Initial Phase



Potential New Building with Minimal Setback



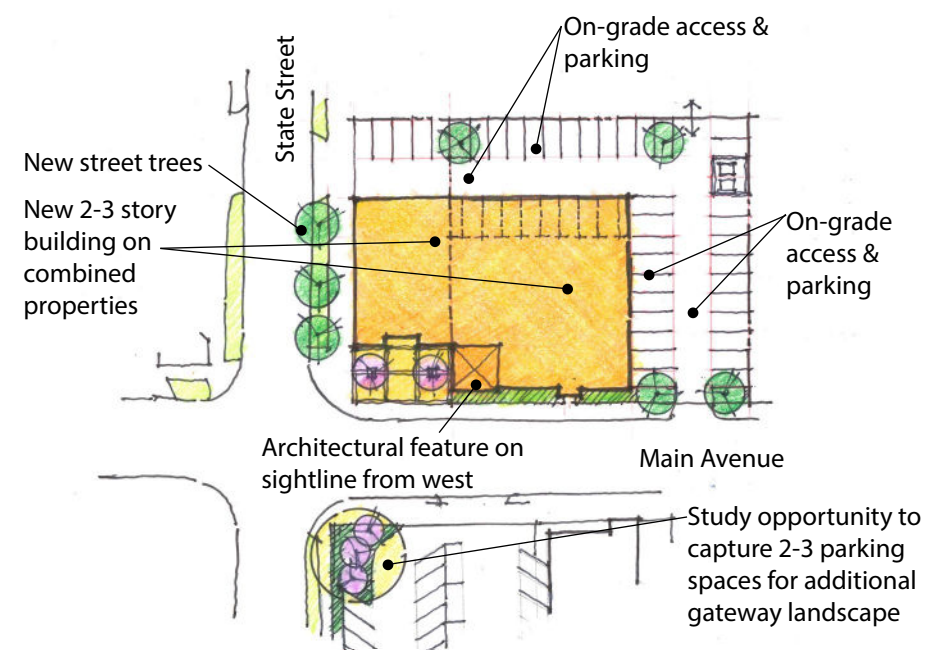
Potential New Larger Building with Larger Setback



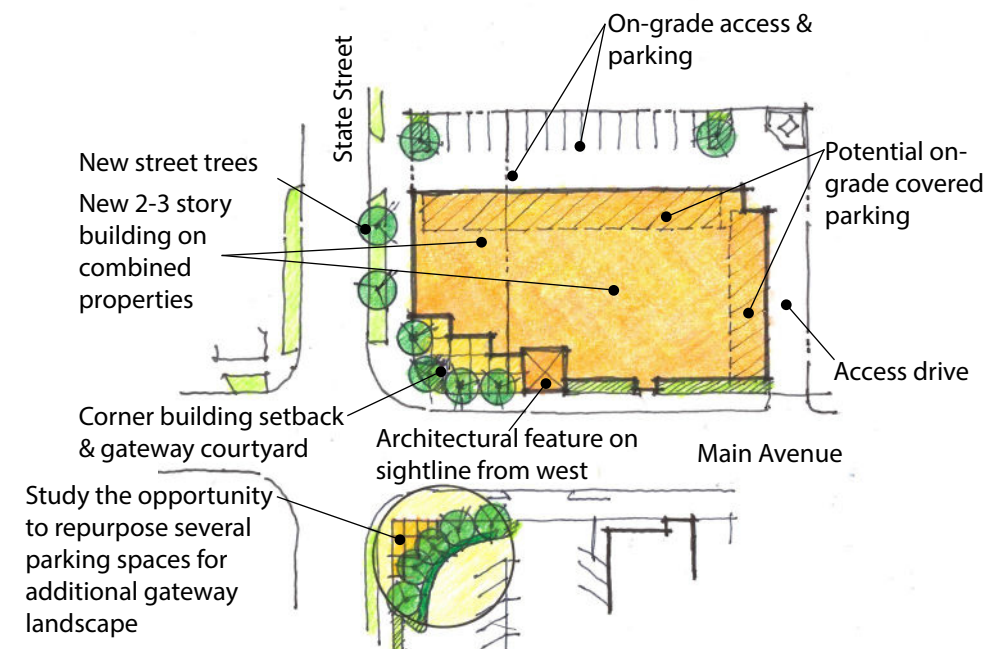
Potential New 2-3 Story Building with Corner Setback

Combined Site Options - 3 East Main and 9/11 East Main Properties

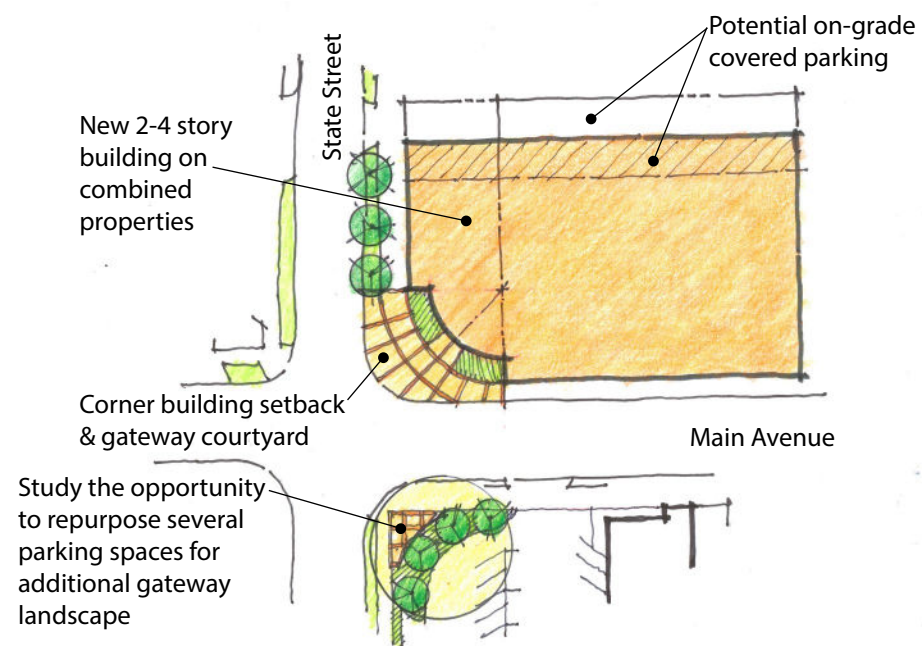
These options indicate designs that could be phased over time.



New Potential Building, Retaining Maximum Existing Parking



New Potential Building with Larger Footprint



New Potential Building with Maximum Footprint



Conceptual Sketches of New Buildings at State/Main Gateway

Related Considerations

Dialogue with Neighbors and SARB

It is recommended that the City utilize these new Vision pages to meet and communicate with property and business owners located near these properties. Specifically, at least, the City should contact these property and business owners:

- 3 E. Main: 9/11 E. Main owners and businesses, Meyer Tolman VanLet accountants, gas station owners, other nearby businesses
- 135/137 E. Main: Public restaurant, the Porch, other nearby businesses

It will be important to explain the vision and working plans for these projects in order to gather feedback and new insights into their potential future uses and facilities.

The City's role in these property activities

Over the past decade, the City has played the appropriate lead role in improving Downtown public infrastructure and amenities – including the splash pad, Elm woonerf/streets, skating park, improved sidewalks, snowmelt improvements. This is the traditional and necessary role that the “municipality” must play to improve the “public commons”.

The actions that are proposed in these new Vision Plan pages concerning 3 E. Main and 135-137 E. Main properties suggest a strategic, short-term, and slightly-enlarged role for the City by purchasing these properties in order to:

- immediately improve public safety and create other public amenities/benefits; and
- prepare for the properties' re-sale to private sector developer for long-term revitalization.

In essence, the recommended City strategy is to gain short term control over the properties to make positive public changes, then “set the table” for private-sector reinvestments.

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 program-matically 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 busi-nesses.

In order to further define and emphasize the Commons, it is recommended that additional landscape elements – trees, shrubs, 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.

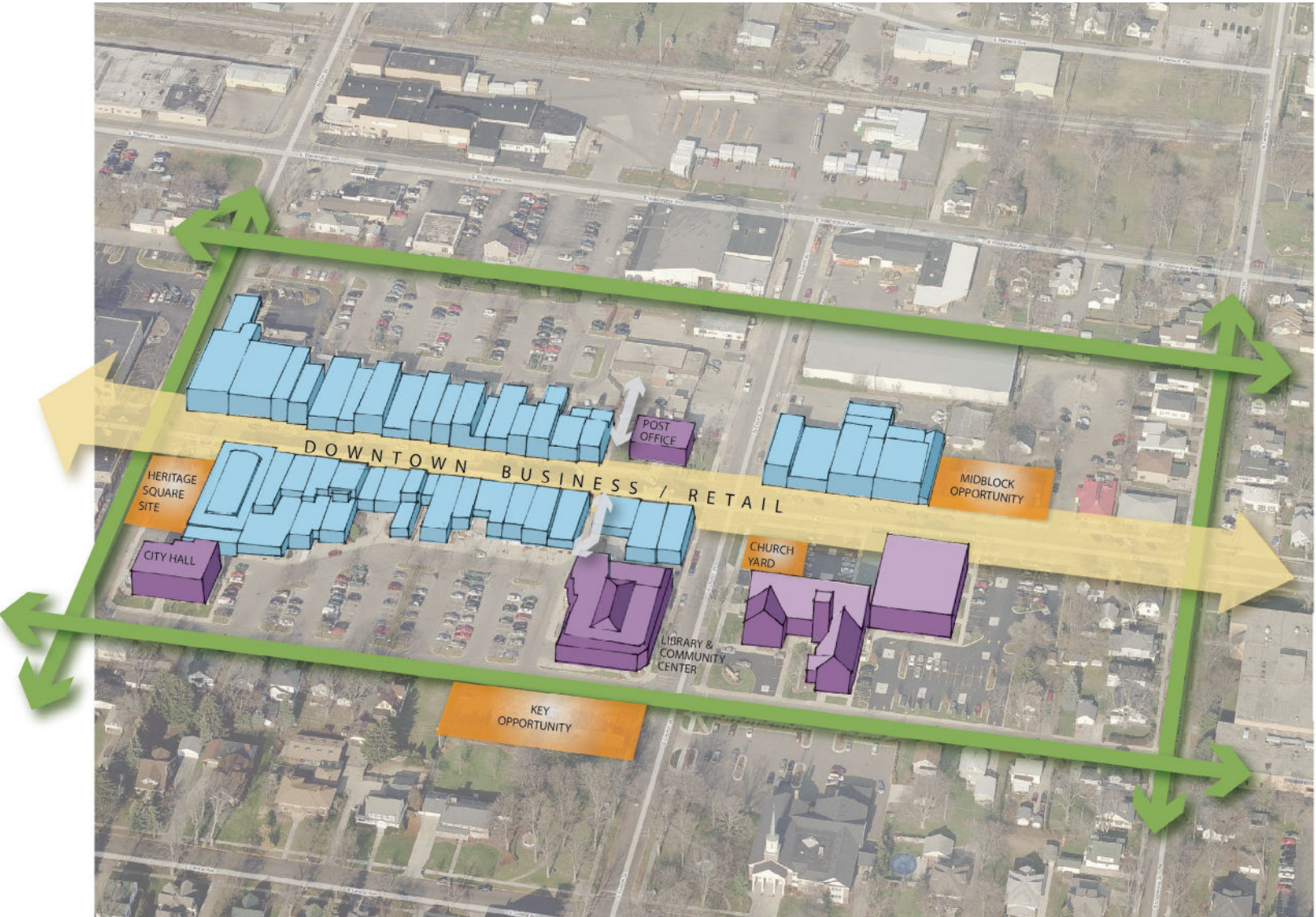
The Commons area embraces many key project opportunities that were identified during the workshop sessions, and are explained in the following:

Completed Projects:

- Splash Pad
- Restrooms
- Fireplace
- Skate Rink/Park
- Woonerf

Opportunities:

- Public Gathering spaces
- Passageways between Main & Parking lots
- Infill Opportunities

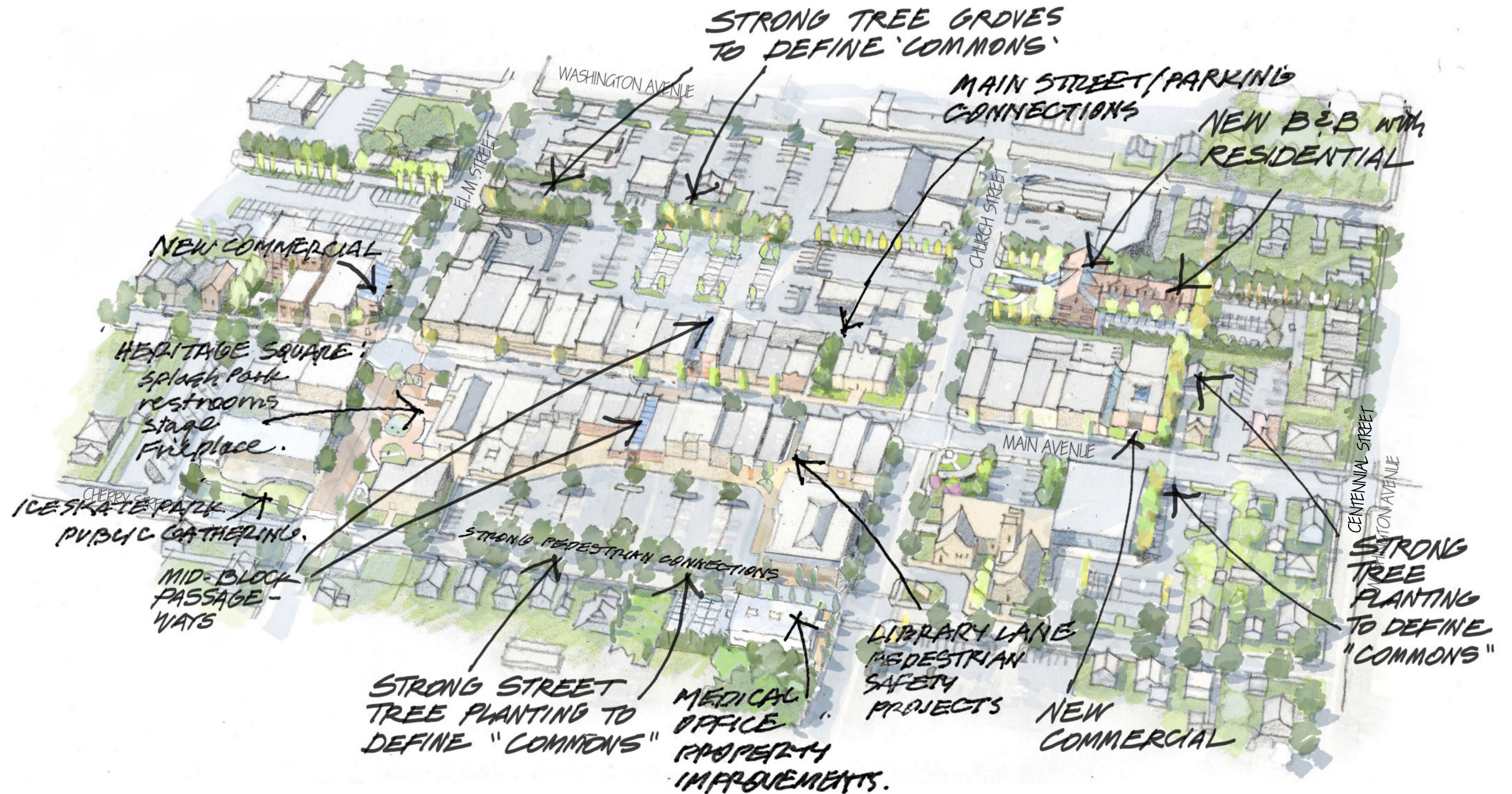


Commons diagram showing potential project opportunities



Downtown Zeeland - September 2018

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



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.

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. ***Making Significant Progress.***

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. Identifying the key obstacles to a building's redevelopment is an essential task.
- Coordinate state grants to property and business owners when available.
- Offer building improvement assistance in the form of grants or loans for design services and rehabilitation efforts. The City offers Act 210 and Act 255 tax abatement and sign grants.
- **2016 - 2018 Actions: 5 properties utilized state grants to renovate buildings and build new commercial/residential units.**

Infill Opportunities

Overview

A wide variety of infill opportunities exist in Downtown Zeeland. This includes sporadic 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 and vacant properties 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 re-purposing efforts. ***Progress.***
- Encourage the development of new multi-use buildings which would have ground floor shops, restaurants, and personal service businesses plus upper floor residences and offices. ***Progress.***

Policies

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

Improved Passageways and Connections to Parking

Overview

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.

Vision

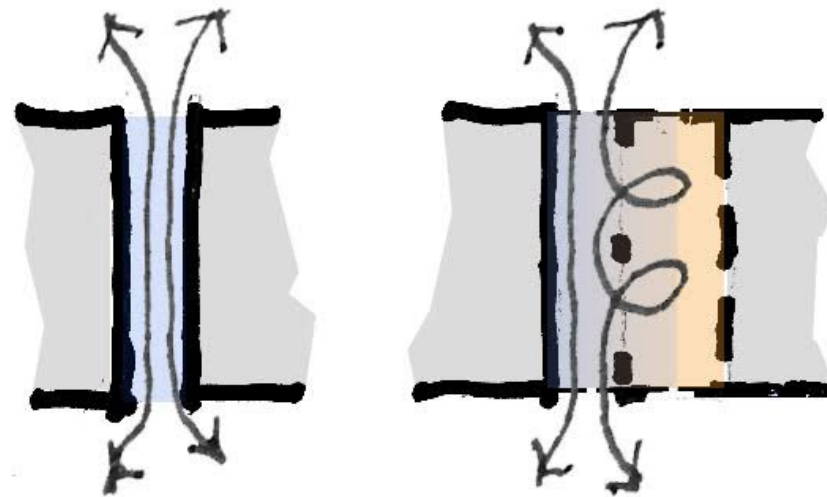
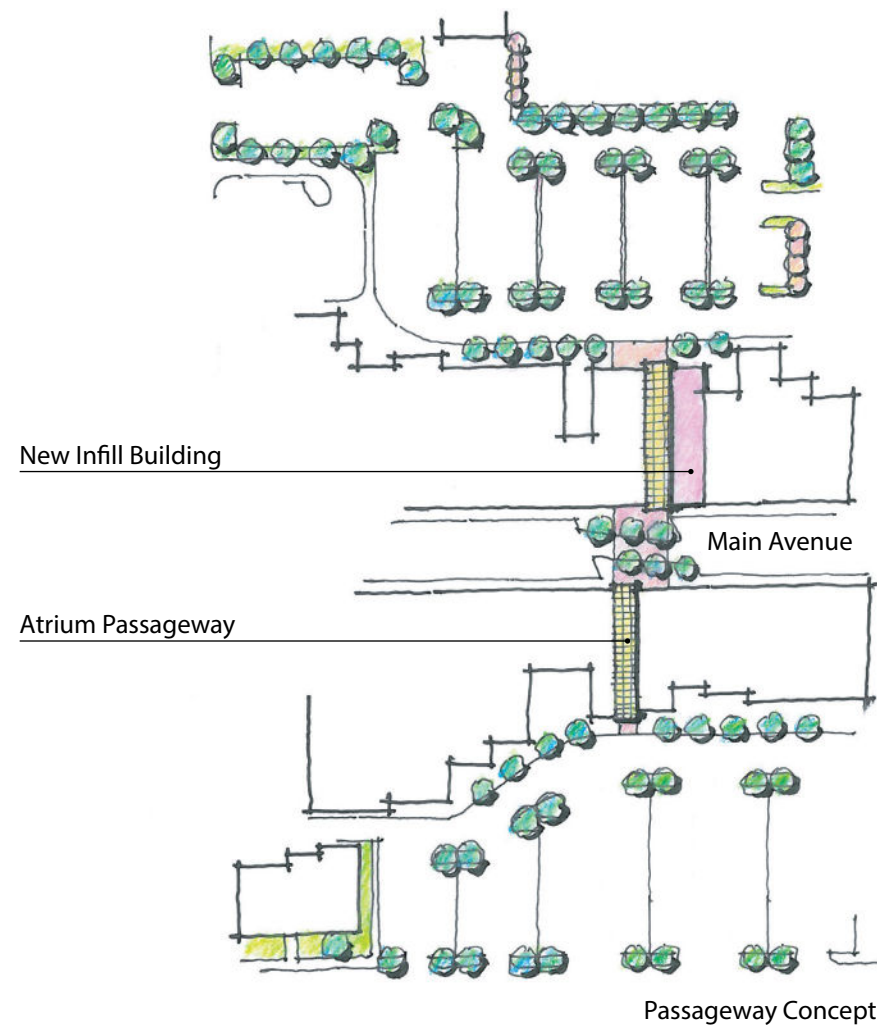
Improved access and passageways between existing parking lots and Main Avenue shops, restaurants, and other services. Strengthening these connections will enhance patrons' shopping experience and take best advantage of existing parking spaces and underutilized rear entrances to businesses.

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.

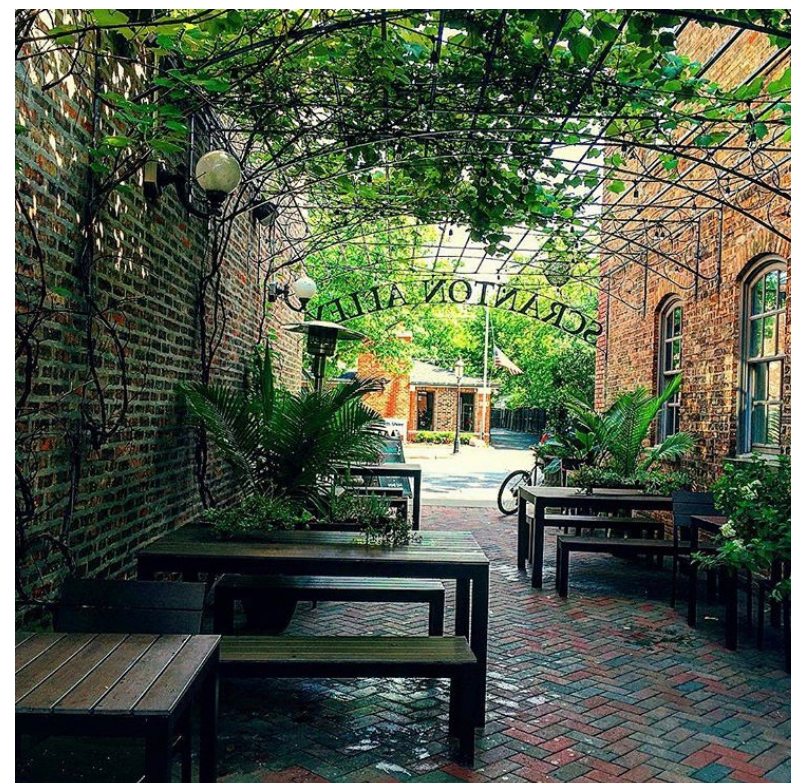


This sketch illustrates two ways in which mid block pedestrian passageways can be achieved:

- 1) As a simple pedestrian flow-through
- 2) Pedestrian flow with adjacent commercial activities



Update Committee Walking Tour



Passageway Through Restaurant - Lake Bluff, IL



Passageway with Adjacent Cafe - New York City

135/137 East Main Avenue Project: Passageway and Infill Opportunities

Overview

These properties have attracted the attention of the City of Zeeland due to these buildings' key position between the north parking lot and Main, the present physical condition, and strong potential for re-development.

These factors may be sufficient to encourage the City to purchase one or both properties in order to: 1) Create a public passageway and 2) Promote the infill re-development of the property. This passageway would address the "missing link" between the north parking lot and Main Avenue businesses and activities.

These factors also prompted the City to initiate a planning workshop in July 2019. An overall goal of this workshop was to address various properties by considering its potential revitalization and preparing for their eventual redevelopment through a near-term "request for proposals" (RFP) to private developers.

Vision

Create a public passageway between the north parking lot and Main Avenue entrances. Consider initiating a process to create 1 or 2 new quality infill buildings on these properties.

Goals

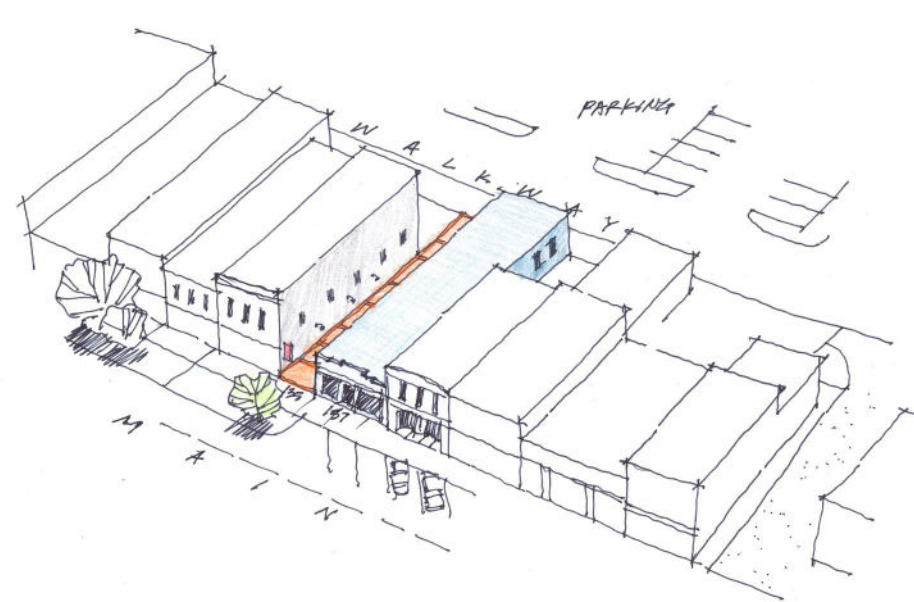
- Remove the existing building at 135 East Main
- Create a public mid-block passageway between the north parking lot and Main Avenue
- Initiate a Request for Proposal process intended to attract private developers to build quality infill facility/facilities at these locations.
- Encourage a mix of uses in the new building(s) including ground floor retail, restaurant, and services, with upper floor residential units and office/service businesses.
- Eventually improve/remove/replace 137 East Main building.

Potential Actions

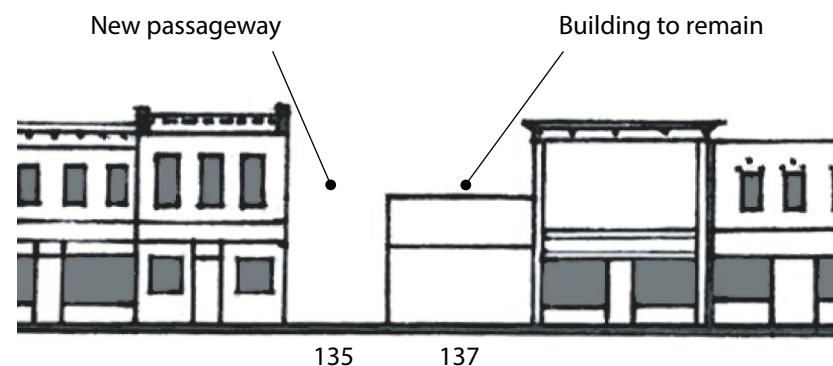
- Purchase and demolish the existing building at 135 East Main.
- Create a mid-block passageway between the north parking lot and Main Ave. with safe paving surfaces, lighting, and directional signage...
- Purchase 137 East Main and work with tenant to build new space; ensure that tenant is not permanently displaced.
- Over time, consider a Request for Proposal to solicit interest by real estate developers in the revitalization of 1 or both sites. The RFP would outline City goals and infill redevelopment guidelines for the site.
- Contact adjacent property owners to inform them of City plans and to encourage potential joint development with these properties.



Existing Conditions; 135 & 137 East Main Properties



Initial Phase: Removal of Building at 135 to Create Passageway



135 137



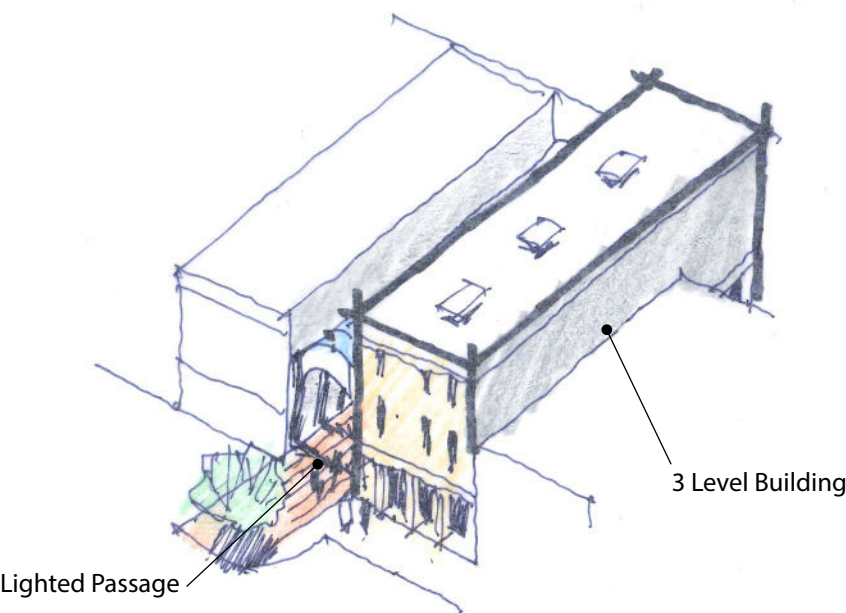
Front view of 135/137 East Main Avenue



Rear view of 135/137 East Main Avenue



New Passageway and Infill Development Options



Mid-block Passageway and Infill Development Possibilities



More Intense Redevelopment Opportunities with Multi-story Buildings at Both Properties while Maintaining Mid-block Passageway.



Mid-block Passageway and Infill Development Possibilities



More Intense Redevelopment Opportunities with Multi-story Buildings at Both Properties while Maintaining Mid-block Passageway.

Related Considerations

Snowmelt considerations to improve Downtown Zeeland’s connectivity and walkability.
Based on this property workshop recommendations, it is possible that the 135-137 East Main properties will lead to a new “parking connector” and new mixed-use facilities for these properties. Snowmelt could be used for the parking connector to enhance safety for this new public sidewalk.

North parking lot curbside parking use
During the workshop, participants noticed that due to the width of the access lane in this area, it might be possible to permit additional short term/delivery-style parking along the curb to enhance safety, convenience, and capacity of the north parking lot. It is recommended that City staff review this situation, and if a positive determination is made, that new signage be added to indicate these new parking spaces.



North Lot Photo with Wide Access Drive



Workshop Team Review



Cherry Street

Overview

New attention has been focused on the Commons recently as the City has addressed and made improvements in and around Cherry Street. This includes the Skate Park/Woonerf improvements at Cherry/Elm in 2017.

Those key City projects were informed by this 2016 sketch that shows the important role that Cherry Street plays in the Commons concept by serving the south edge of Downtown Zeeland and by connecting Heritage Square/Elm to the Historic center of the City. Cherry is a wonderful east-west “support” street, an “urban lane” connecting together Elm with Church, as well as City Hall, vital parking spaces, and the Howard Miller Library/Community Center. The cross-section sketch shows the north-south connection between Main Street, the Library/Community Center, Cherry, the Medical Office building, and the historic Vander Luyster Square.

Vision

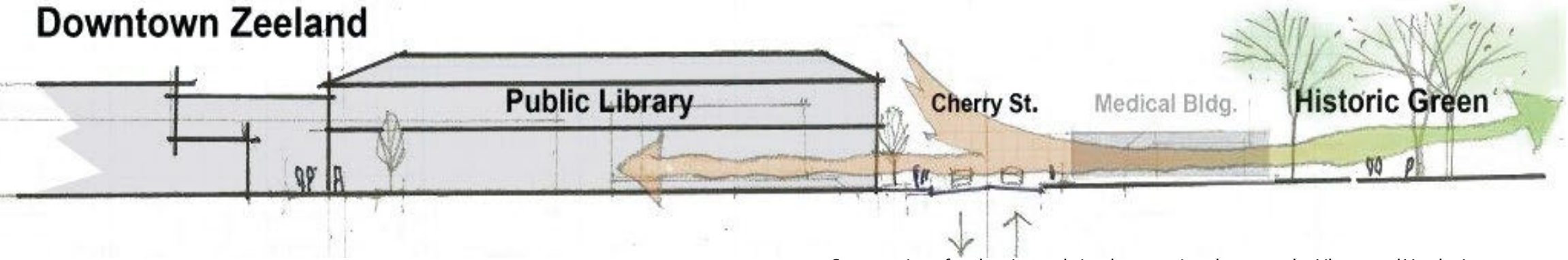
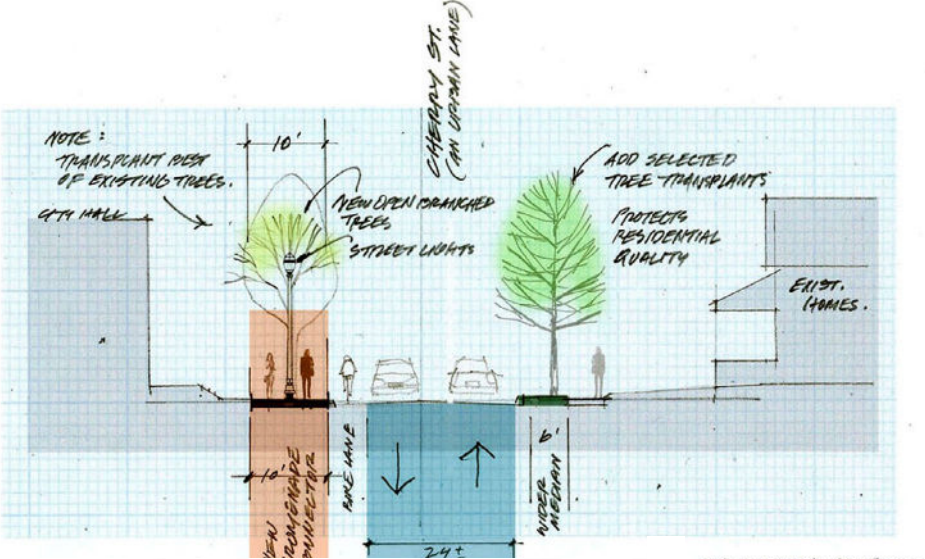
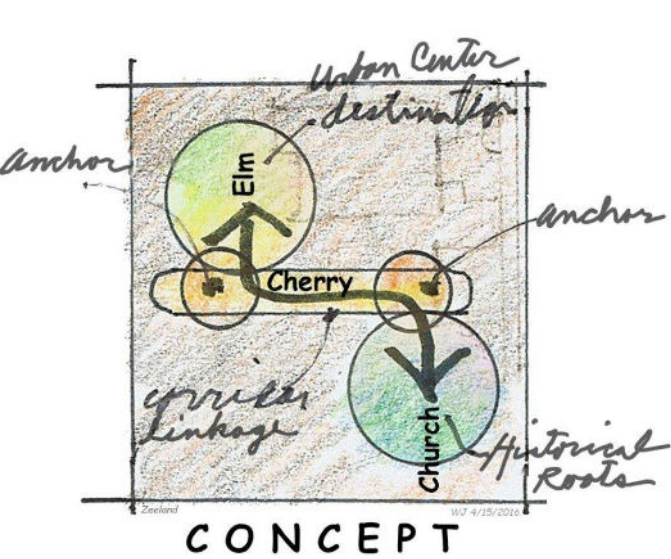
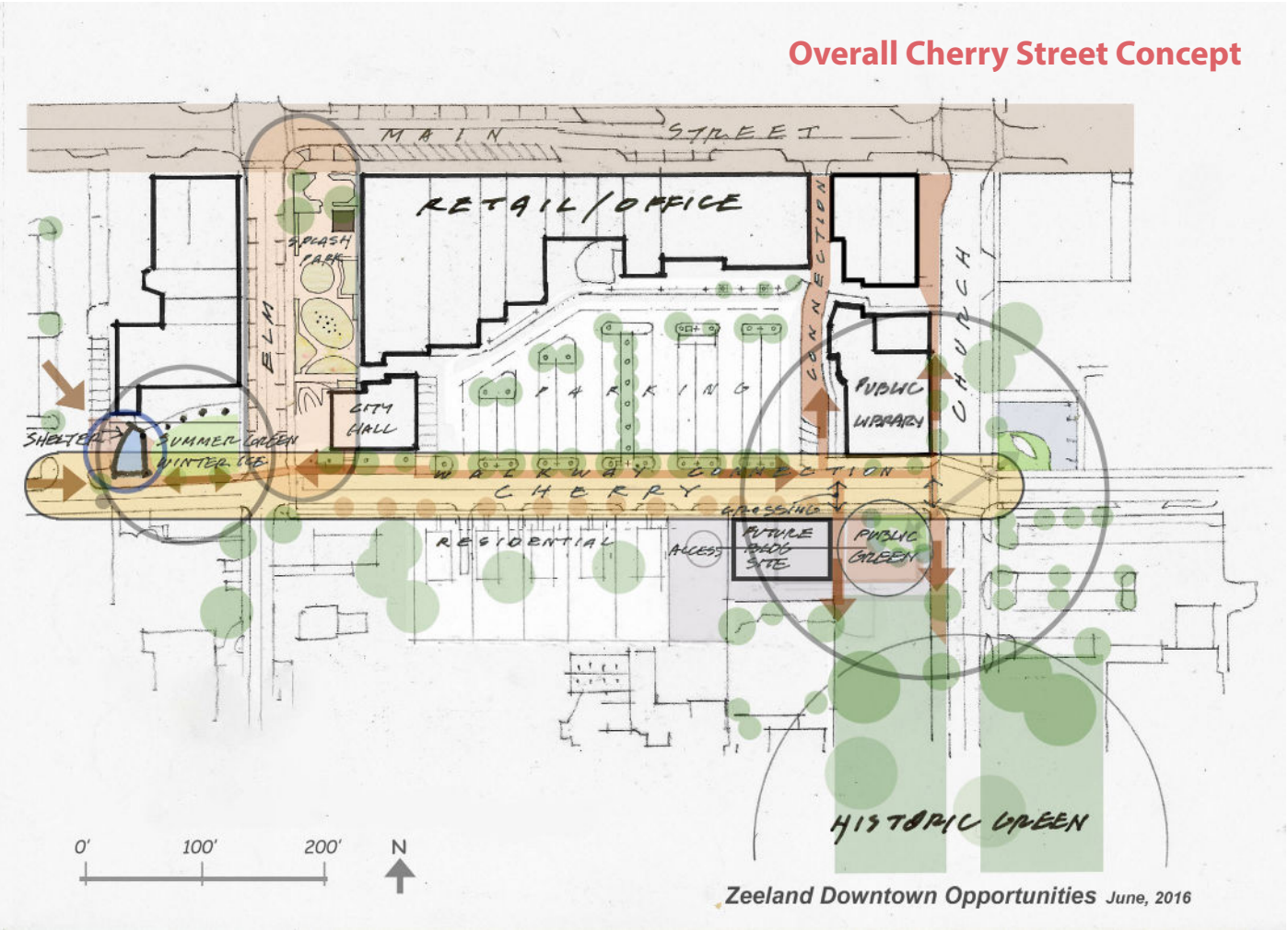
Continued enhancement of the Commons along Cherry Street to strengthen this southern edge of downtown.

Goals

Improve the pedestrian and landscaped environment along Cherry Street. Strengthen connections between City Hall and the Library/Community Center.

Potential Projects

- Install new sidewalk along the northern edge of Cherry to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility to all Cherry street activities.
- Plant new trees along the southern edge of Cherry to improve the attractiveness of the street for pedestrians, residents, and motorists.
- Consider additional landscape/park changes at Cherry/Church in conjunction with possible changes to the Medical Office building property.



Cross-section of pedestrian and visual connections between the Library and Vander Luyster square

Medical Office Building at Cherry/Church

Overview

This medical office building has been underutilized for many years. It is now in some disrepair and has low occupancy. To the south of this property is Vander Luyster Square, a historically-important 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

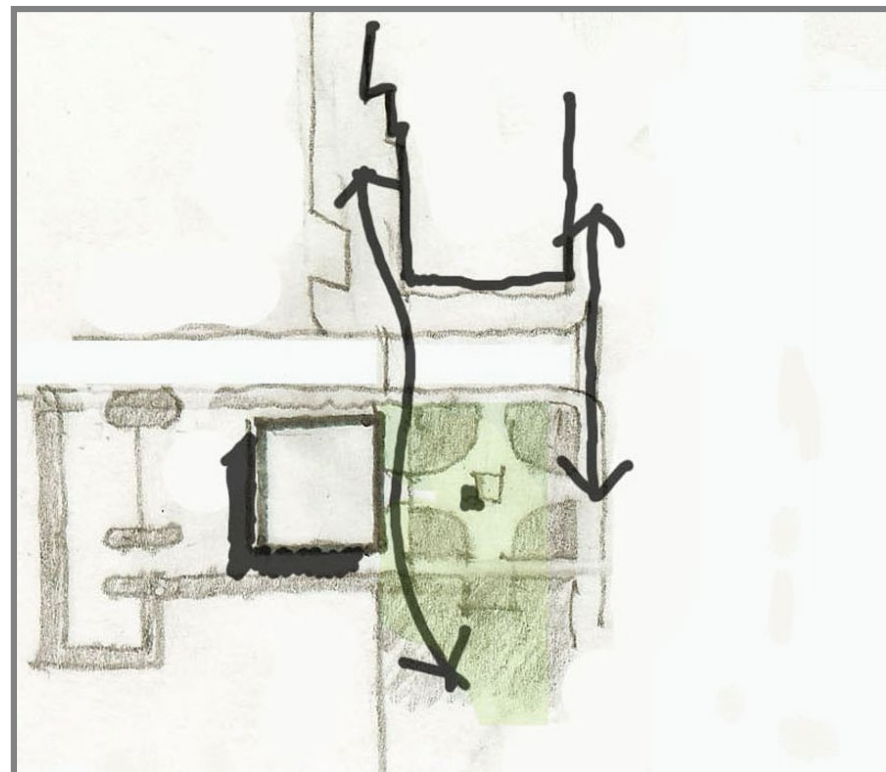
The renovation/removal of this building and the creation of a mixed-use project containing new residences, a new public park as well as additional parking. The theme and key components of this new public green space could be inspired by activities at the library/community center and from the adjacent Central Avenue neighborhood.

Goals

Create renovated or new mixed-use building, public green space and parking between Downtown and the adjacent neighboring institutions and residential properties.

Policies

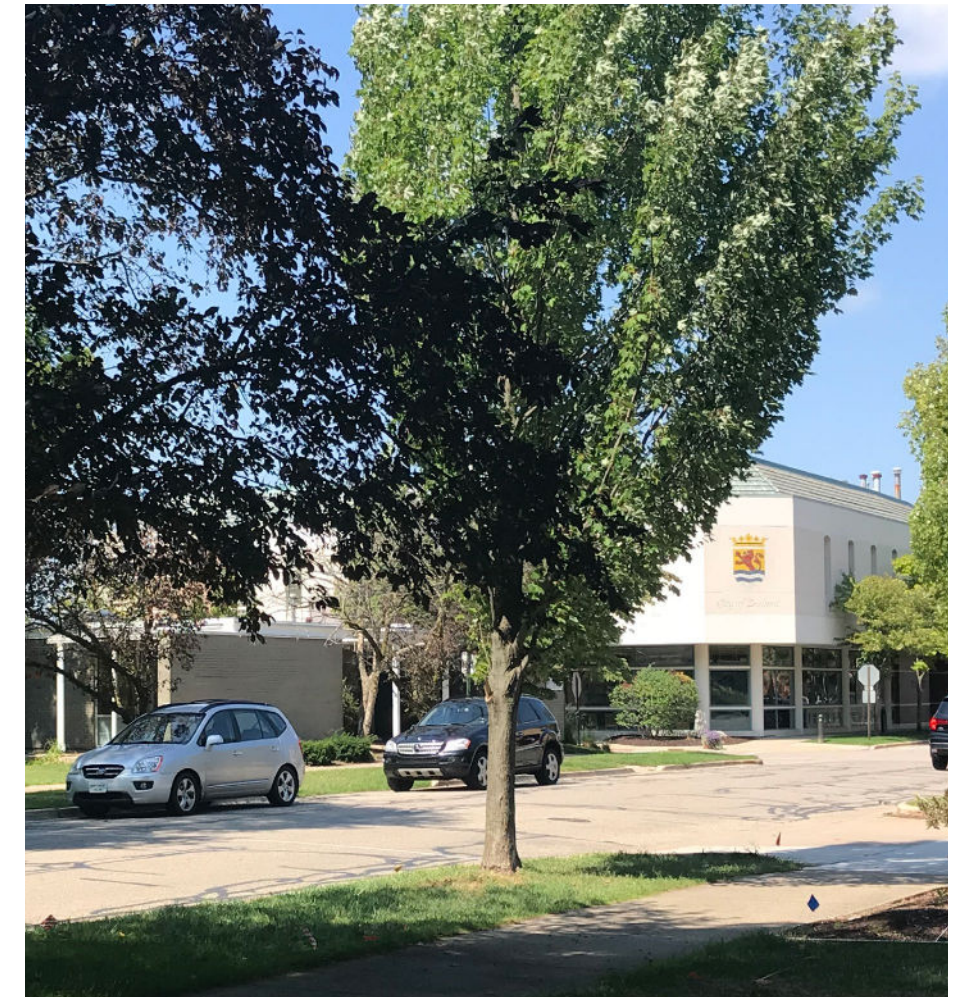
Work with the property owner or private developer to negotiate the acquisition of the property. Begin the creative planning process for the mixed-use building, new park and parking spaces.



Medical Office Building concept showing improvements to pedestrian connections, public gathering spaces, and new building opportunities.



Vander Luyster Square



View along Church Street toward Library



View from Vander Luyster Square to Library & Community Center



Medical Office Building

Library Lane

Overview

For several years, the sidewalks to the north of the Howard Miller Library/Community Center have been identified as inadequate for pedestrian and vehicular use, particularly during snowy months. The public sidewalk between Tripelroot and Drip and Main is particularly worthy of improvement. Also, pedestrian traffic along this passageway has increased dramatically between the southern parking lot and Main Avenue due to the proximity of Tripelroot and Public, new restaurants with growing and enthusiastic customer bases. Other new and existing businesses along Main have also been thriving, and it has become clear to City and business officials that sidewalk improvements are needed in this area. Preliminary plans for this area are shown here.

Vision

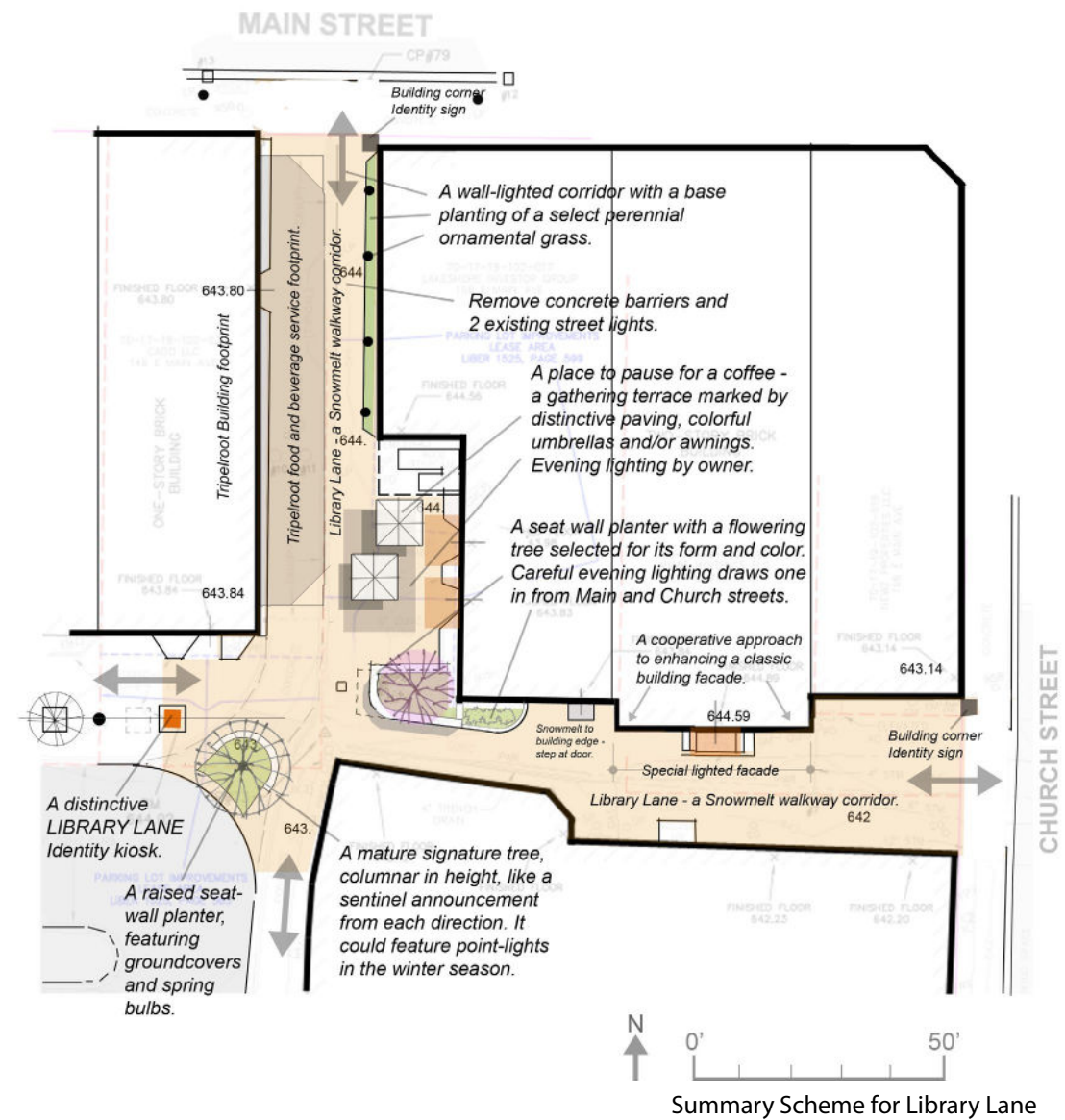
Improved pedestrian and vehicular safety and connections in and around the Howard Miller Library/Community Center

Goals

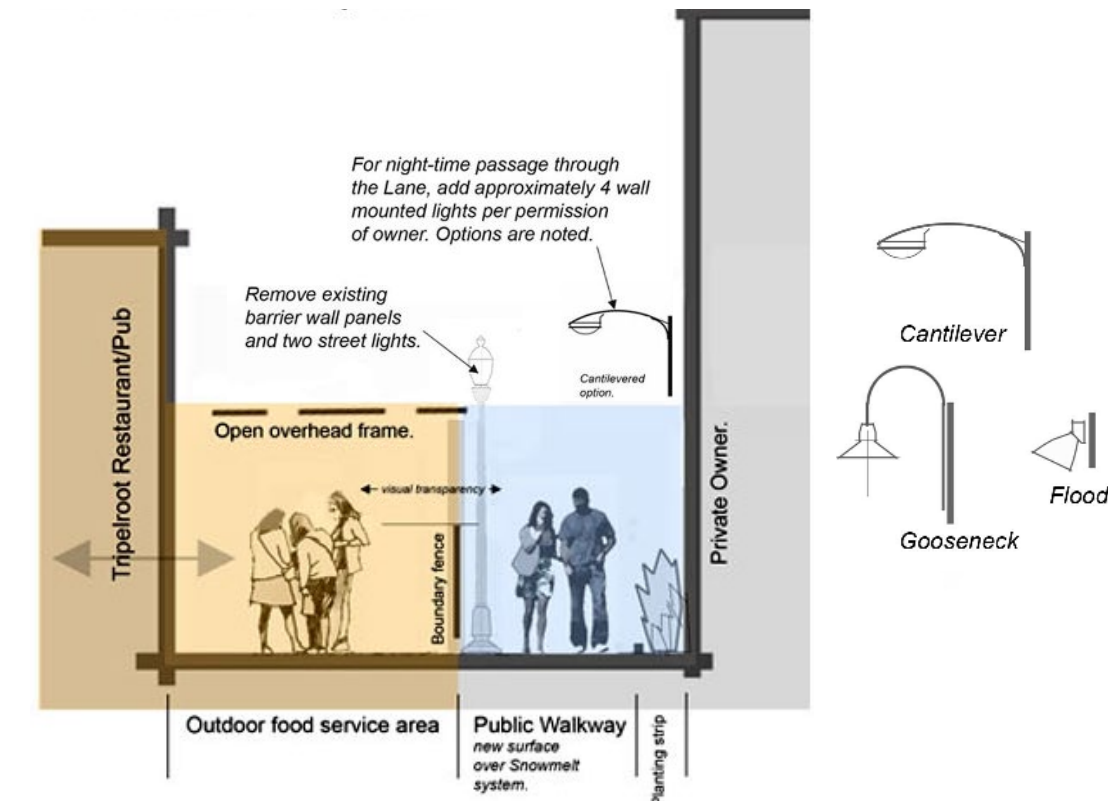
- Safer, more convenient sidewalks between the Library and Main & Church Streets.
- More attractive gathering spaces around the Library and nearby businesses.
- Improved year-round access in this area for all pedestrians and authorized vehicles.
- More convenient connections between Main and the Cherry Street Parking lot which serves the Library, City Hall, and business and residential entrances.

Potential Projects

- New snowmelted paving. New, smooth, consistent, and attractive paving for safe year-round pedestrian and vehicular use (similar to the re-paving of Elm Street).
- Additional Lighting. With adjacent private owners, provide additional lighting along these sidewalks to make them safer and more attractive to users.
- New Signage for directional and place/identity of "Library Lane" to:
 - 1) help pedestrians and delivery vehicles navigate around the library/community center and
 - 2) find public restrooms within the Library/Community Center.
- New public gathering space immediately north of the library for adjacent businesses and provide an attractive seating area for downtown visitors.
- Opportunities for a signature identity tree, a colorful sculpture/art, new casual seating and potential food/café spaces, and overall attractiveness.



Summary Scheme for Library Lane



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions

Library Lane Concept



Bird's Eye View of Summary Scheme for Library Lane



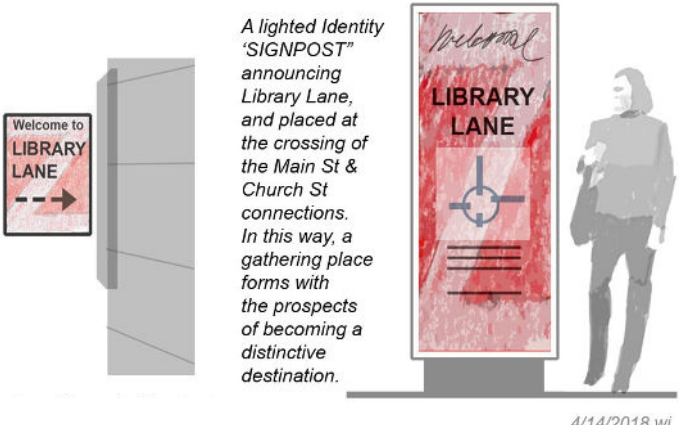
Evening View



Church Street Entry



Entry Enhancements



A lighted Identity "SIGNPOST" announcing Library Lane, and placed at the crossing of the Main St & Church St connections. In this way, a gathering place forms with the prospects of becoming a distinctive destination.



Existing planter - note awkward grade change.



New planter with small tree or optional sculpture.

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. Other needs in this area include a review of traffic patterns.



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 Zealand. The building is currently being used for furniture storage. The remainder of the block contains the following: an empty commercial building (formerly Vitale's), 3 homes, a Zealand Public School parking lot, and Main Street Auto.

Vision

Rehabilitation of the former Sligh Building into one or more of the following potential uses: residential lofts; commercial office/incubator space; Zealand 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 program.
- Explore potential complimentary community recreation facilities in this area.
- Improve student drop-off and pickup zone for Cityside students and their parents.

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.

Zealand Public Schools program. The Zealand 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.

Bed & Breakfast/Small Hotel. A portion of the Sligh building could be refurbished into a "Bed & Breakfast Inn" or a small business-oriented Hotel (as outlined on Page 9). Such overnight lodging would complement other potential uses in the building and be a support business in downtown and for the larger business community.

Cityside Traffic and Student Drop-Off/Pick-up Zone. There is renewed interest in studying traffic patterns in this area to include vehicle movements, school bus loading, and pedestrian crossings.

Community Recreation

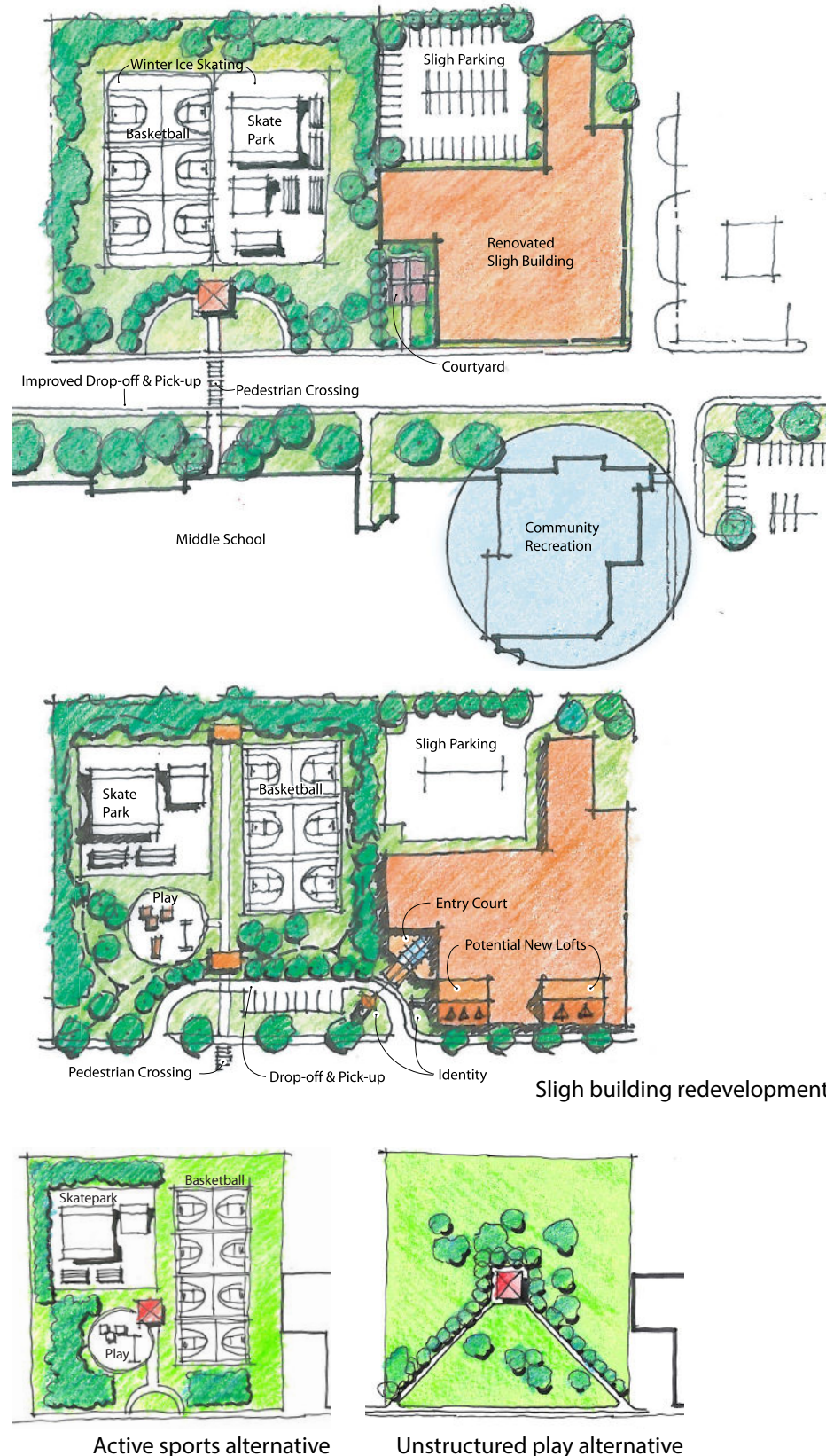
Potential Project Opportunities

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:

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.

Zealand 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.





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

Emerging Downtown Trends, Issues and Opportunities

Parking and Emerging Transportation Trends

Overview

Downtown Zeeland is busier than ever and both new parking and transportation issues and opportunities are emerging as a result. Downtown is more attractive for many reasons. In particular, several new restaurants – Public, Tripelroot, Mainstreet Beanery, Elbo Room, Drip, and La Crème Creamery and Crepes (formally Fuzzy Peach)– have brought new and more existing customers to downtown, particularly during lunchtime and evening hours. Finding parking and maintaining good access to downtown has become a challenge for businesses and the City.

In addition, due to emerging trends in automobile innovation (connected and autonomous vehicles – CAV) and recent discussions about a new regional transit initiative, it is important for City and business leaders to stay aware of and be involved in these contemporary activities.

Vision

Maintain and improve downtown public parking.
Be informed of innovations in vehicle developments that could affect downtown parking and access needs.
Stay actively engaged with regional leaders to improve transportation options for Zeeland and West Michigan.

Goals and Policies

Improve downtown Zeeland public parking capacity in on-street spaces and off-street lots to support businesses, community events, and other downtown activities.

Improve access and availability of ADA accessible parking spaces.

Maintain a working level understanding of innovations in vehicle development that could affect downtown access, public parking capacity and design, curb management, and possibly development trends.

Stay informed and involved in discussions about new regional transportation services that could serve downtown Zeeland businesses and residents, Zeeland citizens and visitors, and the larger West Michigan community.

Projects and Activities

- Study and understand current downtown public parking capacities and service levels. This analysis should be done by a professional parking consultant.
- Continue to engage large downtown property owners – having excess parking capacity - to explore possible “parking partnerships” whereby lots are made available for public parking in return for payment, snow removal, lighting improvements, tax credits, etc, or a combination of factors. Several such agreements are in place and should be retained.

- Explore potential public parking lot expansions through the acquisition and improvement of adjacent parcels.
- Consider parking lot changes to prioritize customer parking and to shift employee parking to edge parking areas; use improved signage to advertise/encourage new practices.
- Encourage all downtown users to consider walking and biking into downtown, carpooling, or being dropped off/picked up in downtown by family members/Uber/Lyft/ etc. in order to expand “downtown capacity” without adding costly parking spaces...
- Publish parking maps to educate and encourage the use of all public and shared parking lots.

Living Downtown: Residential Life and Housing Opportunities

Overview

Throughout West Michigan and other parts of Michigan and the country, there is a strong and growing need for additional housing, particularly residences for low-moderate income workers. The need for “workforce housing” has been carefully studied by the United Way social service funding organization and by Housing Next, a relatively new West Michigan non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the supply and affordability of new housing stock.

In general, Downtown Zeeland is well positioned to accommodate additional new housing units within new buildings or renovated downtown structures. These include underutilized upper floor spaces above storefronts (though there are fewer undeveloped spaces available now compared to 2009) as well as in standalone buildings (for example, the Sligh building, a potential second story of the medical office building, or empty lots within downtown). In conjunction with transit-oriented development (TOD) strategies described on page 25, downtown Zeeland could take advantage of this emerging market to position itself for more development involving residential uses -- in multi-tenant condominium buildings, as rental apartments, or as standalone homes or duplexes.

Vision

Additional quality housing units of all types and sizes for new and existing residents.

Goals and Policies

Engage with local housing organizations to understand the opportunity and challenges related to encouraging new residential units.

Projects and Activities

Identify potential buildings and locations for additional renovations and the construction of new residential units in downtown Zeeland.

First Floor Priority

Overview

There is an ongoing discussion about the preferred and allowable uses of ground floor square footage in downtown Zeeland. Technically, there is a moratorium on the use of ground floor spaces for new general office uses (real estate, finance, legal, etc.) but requests for such uses in recent years have been approved. And, pre-existing downtown office uses have been grandfathered/allowed to continue in their present uses.

The aspirational argument for focusing ground floor uses toward retail, personal services, and restaurants/dining is that these functions and uses add more vitality and value to “main street” because they are walk-in, customer-driven businesses that have synergistic effects on neighboring businesses and activities. There is a positive interaction between retail businesses, restaurants, and personal services whereby persons/customers can visit downtown Zeeland and can conduct many different shopping, dining, service transactions in a short time among walkable locations. Such businesses typically operate during evening and weekend hours -- making downtown inviting at all times of day. These are efficient, reinforcing business activities.

Vision

Additional quality retail, restaurant/dining, personal service businesses for first floor locations throughout downtown.

Goals and Policies

Continue to monitor the existing and emerging ground floor business uses to encourage a more synergistic mix which will generate and serve a stronger customer base.

Projects and Activities

Work with the property owners/landlords to encourage retail, restaurant/dining, and personal services businesses in ground floor locations.
Work with the West Coast Chamber, Lakeshore Advantage, and other business organizations to explain Zeeland’s Downtown Vision Plan and encourage entrepreneurs to consider locating in downtown Zeeland, particularly those businesses which would benefit from Zeeland’s friendly and more affordable ground floor commercial spaces.



Emerging Downtown Trends, Issues and Opportunities

Business Enhancements and Event Management City of Zeeland Initiatives

Overview

Zeeland has witnessed many new businesses open since 2008, and unfortunately, has also seen many of these small businesses close as well. Part of this high business turnover is due to the cyclical economic climate, partly to low traffic counts, and partly to below market rent values, a reflection of poor building stock – which attracts tenants that might lack a solid business plan or resilient budget. Economic climate and market trends will always be difficult for retail everywhere...and now, with online/Internet-based competition, operating a bricks and mortar retail business is even more challenging. But downtown businesses offer qualities that the Internet cannot match – direct personal service and local nimble market knowledge. Over the past ten years, the City of Zeeland, downtown business owners and property owners have worked very hard, collectively, to improve the other factors that were jeopardizing the downtown Zeeland business environment: traffic counts and building stock.

Community Events

Zeeland has seen incredible growth in the quantity, quality and size of the community events that are held downtown. Over two dozen events take place annually, on Main, Elm or Church Street, many drawing crowds upwards of 2,000 guests each. Though event attendees may not generate direct sales for downtown businesses the day of the event, there is no doubt that the frequency and size of these events are creating repeat exposure opportunities for Zeeland’s downtown business community.

Zeeland’s full event calendar has created an invitation for families to visit downtown for the first time or to become reacquainted with the Main Street that they once knew. In time, this translates into a community that appreciates its downtown district and visits regularly for shopping, dining and business transactions – ultimately increasing traffic counts not just during events, but on a regular business basis.

Building Improvements and Business Enhancement

Another noteworthy improvement has been the engagement of downtown property owners over the past ten years. Significant private investment has been put into the rehabilitation of the downtown building stock, including exterior, first floor and second floor renovations. These improvements not only prolong the life of Zeeland’s historic buildings but they also create attractive spaces to do business or live downtown. The goal of these updated buildings is that they will allow property owners to increase rental rates, thus attracting business and residential tenants with stronger business plans and portfolios and that can afford to sign a long-term lease – reducing the high turnover culture.

As with any long-term vision, not all goals are achieved immediately, therefore, the City relies on zoning requirements to assist in managing the types of businesses that are allowed in prime retail spaces along Main (note – first floor ordinance.) When property owners share the vision of downtown and make the decision to be selective of their tenants, holding out for strong candidates that complement the greater district, we further decrease the rate of turnover. Some of the greatest recent successes downtown include the introduction of new restaurants, coffee shops, a frozen yogurt shop, and large, long-standing retail businesses like Out of the Box and Mom and Baby Again. These businesses all required significant investment and build outs. These new businesses were established with solid business plans and wide-ranging hours of operation – making them immediately popular, easy to access and prominent contributors to downtown Zeeland’s nightlife and overall growth.

Continued Vitality Efforts

As we continue to pursue improvements downtown, we acknowledge additional opportunities for growth – private investment via event sponsorship, property rehabilitation and business expansions and/or additions.

It is the City’s sincere hope that the downtown community will share in this vision and continue to pledge their support for downtown – and actively seek ways to continue to invest. SARB (Shopping Area Redevelopment Board) - the City’s vehicle to oversee downtown development – has been part of significant growth over the past decade, thanks to their dedication to the original Downtown Vision Plan, the establishment of the first floor ordinance, alcohol district zoning amendments, creation of the splash pad and woonerf and numerous policy, event, marketing and infrastructure projects that have achieved through their agendas.

Moving forward, City leadership in general, and Marketing Director deRoo, specifically, hopes that SARB will take an even more active role in aggressively addressing the goals of the updated Vision Plan, leading by example to their downtown peers and publicly communicating opportunities for growth and private investment.

Vision

- Continued growth and vitality in downtown events
- Continued downtown building/property enhancements
- Growth opportunities for existing and new downtown businesses

Goals and Policies

- Continued support by City leadership of downtown events management and building/business encouragement efforts
- Continued support and encouragement of SARB

Projects and Activities

- Continued close working relationships with all downtown businesses, property owners, and other organizations and individuals seeking to achieve their own goals and community aspirations.



How do you think the Zeel? - A think local public art initiative.



Christmas Tree at Heritage Square

West Michigan Express (WMX)

Overview

In October 2017, a new planning initiative was started among 20+ public and private West Michigan leaders, including City of Zeeland officials and Zeeland business leaders. The basic idea is to begin regional transportation services in the Chicago Drive Corridor that presently links Holland, Zeeland, Hudsonville, Grandville, Wyoming, and Grand Rapids together. The larger “framework idea” that is exciting these leaders is imagining the Chicago Drive corridor as a “Prosperity Corridor” which would align with the Governor’s Statewide initiative to take advantage of innovative regional collaborations that enhance economic growth and quality of life in cooperating communities. These activities are summarized on the WMX brochure page.

Current Status

Today, Amtrak operates the daily passenger Pere Marquette service between Grand Rapids and Chicago, with a stop in Holland, with morning service into Chicago and evening service back to Grand Rapids. The CSX Railroad track that accommodates Amtrak services is located immediately north of Washington Avenue. Also, Indian Trails operates two daily bus trips between Holland and Grand Rapids, but without intermediate stops in Zeeland or other communities.

Future Opportunities

Passenger Station. If daily commuter bus or rail passenger services between Holland and Grand Rapids are re-established in this “Chicago Drive” corridor, it is likely that a passenger station would be located in downtown Zeeland along Washington Avenue in the vicinity between State Street and Centennial Street. This potential future transportation facility would, by definition, become an important, valuable location and a center of transportation and business activities. City and business officials need to remain involved in this initiative and consider the many ways that such new regional transportation services will affect downtown.

Transit-oriented Development. Another dimension of the West Michigan Express initiative is to encourage and support the establishment of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in partner communities. Basically, TOD efforts often involve the creation of mixed use projects that contain ground-level retail and services with upper floor residences or offices. “TOD projects” take advantage of the benefits of transportation improvements (improved walkability, easy access to regional transit, less driving, less required parking, new housing opportunities, air quality improvements, etc.) to create more valuable, often-denser development.

WEST MICHIGAN EXPRESS

Creating the Chicago Drive Prosperity Corridor

Holland + Zeeland + Hudsonville + Jenison + Grandville + Wyoming + Grand Rapids

The **West Michigan Express** initiative is a collaborative effort to link the seven West Michigan communities along the Chicago Drive corridor with express public transportation options beginning with bus service and leading to commuter rail for the purpose of enhancing economic growth and quality of life in the region.

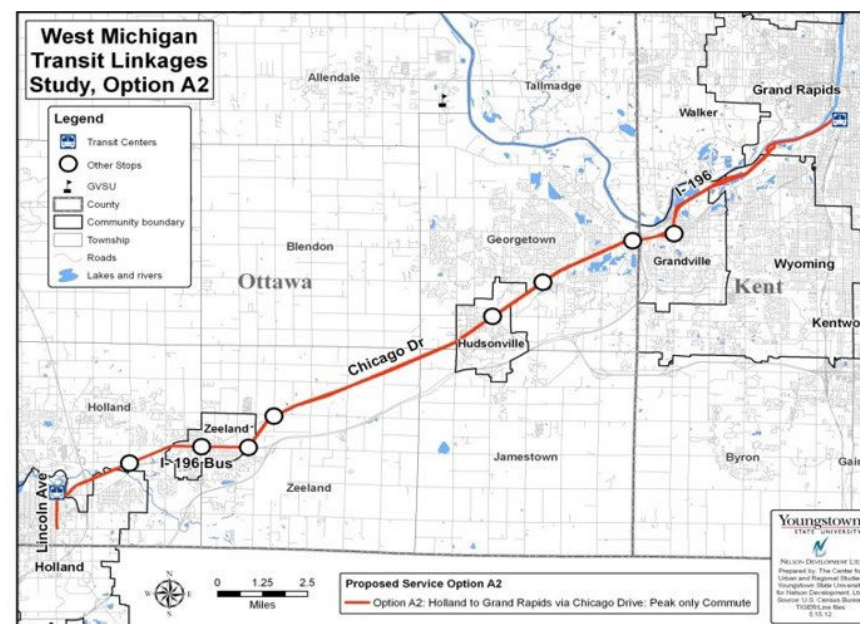
OUR VISION

The Chicago Drive “Prosperity Corridor” between Grand Rapids and Holland is nationally recognized as a desirable area in which to live, work, and run a business thanks to its access to express public transportation, affordable housing, and skilled workforce.

OUR MISSION

To establish phased express public transportation that runs between Grand Rapids and Holland beginning with bus service and leading to commuter rail.

OUR ROADMAP



08

CLOSING THOUGHTS

As stated in the Foreword, this updated Vision Plan is designed to help Downtown stakeholders and decision makers imagine and build a better and more vibrant Downtown Zeeland. And, perhaps see a project they would like to pursue or advocate.

The Vision Plan is different from the City’s Master Plan and Master Land Use Plan, and intentionally so. The Vision Plan is meant to be used alongside these traditional/official documents as complementary tools to assist revitalization efforts. With the following distinctions, the Vision Plan is meant to:

- emphasize the ‘Overview’...the Vision, and overall aspirations.
- focus on the importance of Context and Connections
- encourage the role of easy, frequent Dialogue in exchanging Ideas.

As a reminder, this Vision Plan includes these two adjacent sketches:

- the dynamic “Six Circles” Vision diagram that illustrates the information-gathering and creative steps that can help develop a Vision and related action steps; see inside cover.
- the “Two Arrows” sketch outlines Private/Public interactions that can lead to successful project plans and completed projects; see page 4.

Both of these sketches show dynamic, interactive processes designed to foster creative and robust collaborative between all involved downtown stakeholders.

In Conclusion, we hope this Vision Plan “tool” enables Downtown Zeeland and its many customers; business and property owners; community leaders, supporters and advocates; and all other stakeholders to creatively pursue their dreams and aspirations for an even better Community Center.

This Vision Plan should be used easily and often... as a “creative spark” generator, as a brainstorming tool, and as a “comfortable sofa” to discuss and advance Downtown ideas.



VISIONING AS A PROCESS, BY WILLIAM JOHNSON

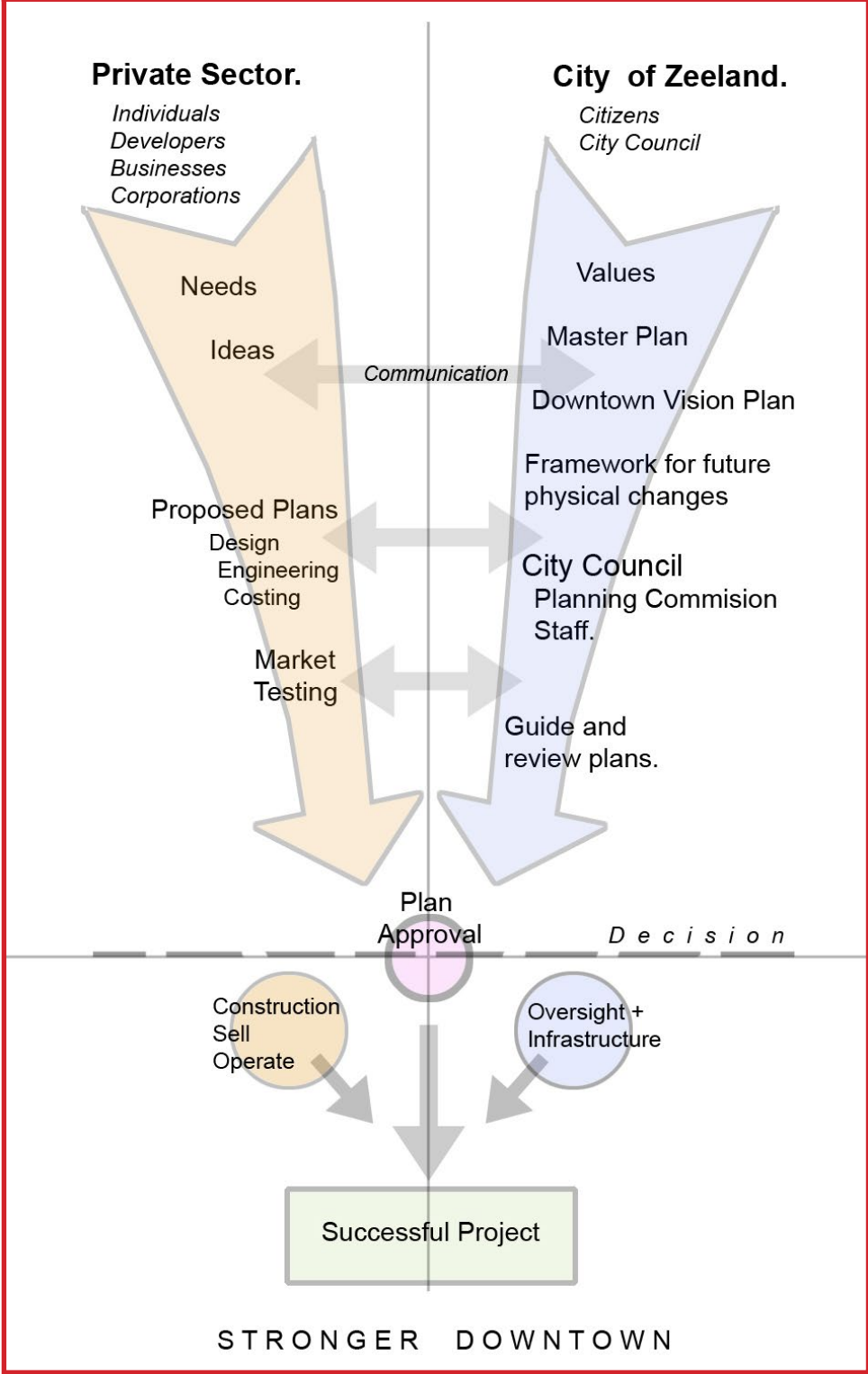
“A Vision is not meant to be precise, but rather directional in nature. Its purpose is to help prioritize future occurrences and opportunities so that, for example, when an underutilized defunct Downtown property suddenly becomes available, it is relatively easy to refer to the Vision and have a good 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.

Public/Private Roles in Community Revitalization

This conceptual sketch outlines the dynamic interactions between public and private parties as community development projects are conceived, processed, and ultimately approved and constructed. These are symbiotic relationships and interactions, that is, neither party can be entirely successful without fruitful cooperation and the coordination of mutual efforts. In the best of these situations, the public and private parties creatively interact, are inspired by a common Vision, build on each other’s strengths, and work toward shared goals and objectives.



09

APPENDIX

Downtown Zeeland Vision Plan - Update

November 5, 2018 draft

“Downtown Metrics” - Measured for SARB District

Items	2008/2009	2018	2019	2020
Tax Base – property value changes				
Downtown SEV - roughly 1/2 market value	\$6,395,600	\$8,274,400		
Downtown taxable value	\$4,886,994	\$6,574,376		
Downtown Property taxes paid (not special assessment)				
Downtown square footage		308,246		
City of Zeeland SEV	\$578,000,000	\$583,261,700		
City of Zeeland taxable value	\$554,000,000	\$533,139,467		
Property taxes paid (not special assessment)				

2009 - 2018	
Projects & Permits information from 2009-2018	
Number of Downtown Projects/Permits between 2009 – 2018 *	135
Investment: Permit value of Downtown Projects: 2009-2018	\$7,771,600
New/renovated Residential units	16
New/renovated Commercial projects	Numerous
New/renovated Restaurants projects	6
New/renovated Office/Service projects	Numerous

Investment in Public Amenities and Infrastructure Projects: 2009-2018	
Public restrooms	
Public Streets/Sidewalks	
Special Public Projects	

- * These projects/permits concern the following:
- Renovation/Repurposing of Downtown buildings with extensive interior and exterior improvements for retail/office/service and restaurant projects.
 - Signs, awnings, and other exterior improvements.
 - Public infrastructure projects at Heritage Square and along Elm Street: splash park, restrooms, fireplace, performance stage and woonerf.

