

10/24/2017

DOWNTOWN BLOOMINGTON TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT



OVERVIEW

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

MEMBERS

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

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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

PRESENTATIONS

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

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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



SECTION 1: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART

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

PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

SECTION 1: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART (CONTINUED)

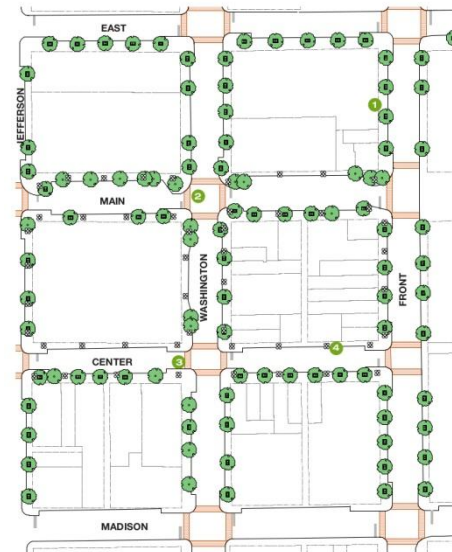
RECOMMENDATIONS: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART (CONTINUED)

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

EXAMPLES: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART



EX. 1A: CURRENT STREETScape



EX. 1B: ENHANCED STREETScape

EXAMPLES: BEAUTIFICATION / PUBLIC ART (CONTINUED)



EX. 2: DECORATIVE PAINTED CROSSWALK



EX. 4: STREET ART



EX. 3: DECORATIVE LIGHTING



EX. 5: DECORATIVE LIGHTING

SECTION 2: PUBLIC SPACES / WALKABILITY

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

PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC PLACES / WALKABILITY

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

SECTION 2: PUBLIC SPACES / WALKABILITY (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

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

EXAMPLES: PUBLIC SPACES / WALKABILITY



EX. 1: SHARED ROAD MODEL



EX. 2: PUBLIC PLAZA

SECTION 3: PUBLIC PARKING

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

PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC PARKING

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

SECTION 3: PUBLIC PARKING

RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC PARKING

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



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

SECTION 4: CATALYST PROJECT

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

PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

SECTION 4: CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS: CATALYST PROJECT

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

TIER 1

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

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



SECTION 4: CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS: CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

ADDITIONAL PLANNING DOCUMENT REFERENCES RELATED TO THE TIER 1 RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

“[Market Street] is one of the most promising sites for redevelopment: the existing parking garage has exceeded its design life span and is falling into disrepair, the site is well-positioned to build on the existing strength of nearby Main Street businesses, and the city already owns the site. The City must view development of the parking garage as an opportunity to support Downtown rather than simply replace an aging structure.” *Downtown Strategy, pg. 64.*

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

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

“D-1.2b—Consider other Downtown needs during the expansion of community facilities currently located in Downtown, such as the BCPA/Creativity Center and the Bloomington Public Library. City of Bloomington, short.” *Comprehensive Plan, pg. 102.*

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

CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS: CATALYST PROJECT (CONTINUED)

TIER 2

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

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

TIER 3

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

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



EX. 1: MARKET & MAIN (CURRENT)



EX. 2: MARKET & MAIN (REDEVELOPED)

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

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

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

CONCLUSION

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

Bloomington Public Library Expansion Costs

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

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

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

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

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

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



To: Amelia Buragas, Downtown Task Force Chair
From: Tom Dabareiner AICP, Community Development Director
Date: October 20, 2017
Subject: Review of DTF Recommendations

A number of people have asked for my opinion regarding the draft proposals under consideration by the Downtown Task Force (DTF). Also, I have had a chance to review the draft final report from the DTF.

At an earlier meeting of the DTF, I presented three categories of improvements. I will use those categories to organize my review. It is worth stating that the vast majority of DTF recommendations can find clear support in the City's Comprehensive Plan—exactly how the Plan should be used—and my professional role therefore leans heavily towards support, coupled with 35 years of experience.

Catalyst Projects

A catalyst project should be substantial enough to generate a respectable number of new users in the downtown. All three projects identified in the DTF draft Final Report as Catalyst Projects fit easily within the Catalyst Projects category and within the City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035.

The redevelopment of the *Market Street Parking Deck* as some kind of multi-use facility could become a significant catalyst. As a library / community center, it could generate more than 1,000 users per day. The City's financial participation in downtown redevelopment projects is likely expected *and* is also needed for the library—why not achieve both in a downtown library location? Importantly, the concept has specific support in the Comprehensive Plan. I also participated in the planning of a downtown many years ago which included adding a public library as an anchor, so am aware of and endorse the benefits of downtown libraries. Expansion of the library on its existing site does little, if anything, to boost the downtown and in some redevelopment scenarios could compete against the downtown. The distance and obstacles (e.g., crossing East Street, and walking passed a jail, parking deck, a parking lot and abandoned building, and bland government center) will deter pedestrians from visiting the library and the downtown.

A new office headquarters or apartment/condo unit complex in and adjacent to the downtown both fit the catalyst typology. With regard to new housing, eventual growth generating about 2,000 new residents (not all at once, which would have a negative market impact) was one example given. One could argue that any set of activities that daily contribute 2,000 potential downtown users should become a target for the DTF. This is not to say all 2,000 would visit businesses in the downtown on a daily basis, but instead would provide an adequate base from which to draw frequent visitors (in addition to others already visiting the downtown).

Both a new hotel / convention center at the Front and Center location and the proposal to establish multi-use development in and around the downtown are classic catalyst examples. It is important to acknowledge that a hotel / convention center needs regular use and consistently high occupancies to

contribute as a true catalyst. New residential, once occupied, provides a consistent base and should be encouraged. Both concepts are rooted in the Comprehensive Plan.

Placemaking

Façade improvements, streetscapes, public art and special events fall into this broad category. Much work in the past has been focused here and is also proposed by the DTF. These are largely design-oriented and make a location an attractive and more interesting place to visit. While some may attract more people to the downtown, the numbers are lower and less consistent than brought about with a catalyst project.

Shade trees, natural plantings, self-watering planters, painted/brick/stamped crosswalks, art and decorative lighting are part of the DTF draft proposal. S-4 zoning designation for historical structures can add to the list of attractions in a downtown. Keeping the downtown clean and installing decorative lighting also join the list, as well as events like First Fridays and the farmers market. Creating “shared space” by making street ROWs available for pedestrian and bicycle usage also fits this category, although if done right it can become an attraction generating new visitors for the downtown.

Some have mentioned the catalyst potential of the BCPA and the Arena, but they are more akin to *special events* based on event infrequency. Thus, they belong in the Placemaking category in my view.

Supportive

I would place sidewalks, parking and other infrastructure in the Supportive category. Well-managed systems are certainly essential to a successful downtown; however, they are necessary only because they serve the users of the downtown.

Ordinances to support first-floor retail may be unnecessary, as the marketplace would prefer this location too. However, when combined with true building design requirements or incentives, this may functionally move the topic into the Placemaking category.

Pc: Melissa Hon
Steve Rasmussen

To: Alderman Amelia Burgess, Downtown Task Force Committee Chair
From: Katie Simpson, City Planner
Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2017
Subject: Commentary on the Draft Final Recommendations Report

On Tuesday, October 17, 2017 the Downtown Task Force met to discuss a draft of the final report. The Task Force solicited additional commentary on the draft document. Below are my recommended edits/points of clarification.

Section 1: Beautification/Public Art

- Under the "Planning Document References" section, supporting material could be added from The Streetscape Master Plan. While never officially adopted by Council, the document also recognizes the need for Murals, Public Art and Street Trees (pg. 27-28) see section 6.2 "Opportunities" for supporting documentation .
- Under the "Recommendations" Section:
 - a). Expand the first recommendation to incorporate additional opportunities for incorporating rain gardens, biosoils, and other natural storm water treatment landscaping into the Downtown Streetscape. The Streetscape Plan calls for improving bump outs; bump outs may require additional storm inlets, but may also be an additional opportunity to improve the landscaping by adding rain gardens. Public Works, Parks, and Planning should coordinate on this if incorporated into the recommendations.
 - b). Expanding on Recommendation 4, the Streetscape Plan guides the installation of conduit and new service feeds. As the plan is implemented, the city should look for additional opportunities to add electrical outlets to tree wells and other areas that may lend themselves to future lighting installations. Additionally, this poses an opportunity to identify new locations for tree wells.
 - c). Consider adding an additional recommendation that encourages improved landscaping on private parking lots. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the need to screen and landscape parking lots in the Downtown. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the city to partner to improve landscaping and screening of existing surface lots, and to encourage owners to make small improvements by adding temporary planters or public art installations.

Section 2: Public Spaces/Walkability

Under "Recommendations" the Task Force may wish to consider adding an additional recommendation that the city look for pop-up opportunities before moving forward with the phased implementation of the Streetscape Plan. Resurfacing and implementing the Streetscape Plan, provides the city with an opportunity to carryout "pop-ups" and "pilot" programs, such as changes to parking orientation, temporary bump-outs, or parklet designations before making the actual improvements. Public Works, Parks, Planning, and the Downtown Development Division (DDD) should coordinate to capitalize on these opportunities.

Section 3: Public Parking

- Consider adding the following references to the “Planning Documents References” Section:
 - Goal D-5 Continue to develop a multi-modal transportation network in Downtown
 - D-51 Improve parking conditions, access, and encourage shared public and private parking spaces.
- Under the “Recommendations” section, the Task Force may wish to encourage shared parking of private lots with other businesses and residents, especially for businesses that have staggered hours. Some businesses are already renting lots to food trucks or shuttles, but there may be other opportunities.

Section 4: Catalyst Projects

Under “Additional Information” for the Market Street Garage, the Task Force may want to add that, although improvements, such as lighting and new gates, were installed or are proposed, these improvements can be reused in a new structure if/when the garage is torn down.

Under “Additional Information” for the Library, the Task Force may want to add that Planning Division never reviewed the proposal for expanding the Library in its existing location, which went to council earlier this year. Planning offers the following comments and identifies the following challenges associated with the Library Expansion proposal:

1). The Library site is difficult to access by car or walking. It is landlocked on the east side by US-51 and access is limited to the South by Oakland Ave and the Railroad Tracks. Business Highway 51/East Street creates a physical and visual barrier separating the Library (at its current location) from Downtown. Expanding at the existing location may be less effective for achieving downtown revitalization as well as improving walkability and access to public resources.

2). Option 1 shows the expansion of a library and the construction of a massive surface parking lot that stretches south to connect to the Constitution Trail and Railroad Tracks. Realizing Option 1 would require vacating E. Jackson Street between S. Prairie St. and East St. This disrupts the grid pattern and reduces connectivity in the area. Furthermore, it decreases access for the Public Works site west of the library, possibly limiting its future redevelopment potential.

2a). The Comprehensive Plan identifies Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) as a tool for improving the physical environment to enhance public safety. A large surface parking lot landlocked by a railroad track and Constitution Trail encourages a large volume of space with a low level of activity and contradicts the CPTED principals. Parking at this location should incorporate safe design and to encourage a more effective use of land. Nonetheless, the added surface parking would most likely increase the need for parking lot lighting and could negatively affect the surrounding property owners. The site development process should address these considerations/concerns.

3). Options 2 and 3 proposed to council also require vacating E. Jackson Street and create the same concerns as listed above. Additionally Options 2 and 3 incorporate retail into the redevelopment of the existing location. New retail at this library site competes with existing downtown businesses and revitalization efforts. The current zoning, S-2 Public Lands and Institutions, does not allow retail and would need to be amended. Staff is also concerned about the negative impacts new retail in the existing library location could have on the adjacent residential district.

4). The proposals should receive a more thorough review by the Public Works Department, Water Department, Fire Department, Parks Department, and Community Development Department for consistency with city codes and ordinances, comprehensive plans, circulation, and to ensure sewer and water are adequately sized at this location to accommodate the new development.