The image features a photograph of a brick building with two arched windows, each with a decorative stone surround. A film strip graphic runs vertically along the left edge of the image. A vertical band of blue dots is positioned in the center-left area. The text 'downtown Midland' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

*downtown*  
**Midland**

a redevelopment and design plan for downtown midland, michigan • november, 2007



# Acknowledgements



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# Acknowledgements



This redevelopment plan was created through the combined efforts and perseverance of a number of individuals and organizations that share a strong desire to guide future development in downtown Midland, appropriately plan for urban living, and enhance the things that make downtown Midland a great place. In addition to the many members of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), this plan was also influenced by city officials, staff, business owners, and interested citizens who contributed their time and input at the public workshops.

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Sue Rabbage, Branch Manager - Comerica Bank

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# downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

*As new generations of home buyers are entering the market, there is a decided shift to fewer people per household and more interest in downtown living. This redevelopment plan recognizes this trend and will identify opportunities for new housing within the downtown and methods for improving the pedestrian environment connecting the downtown to existing neighborhoods.*



Existing storefronts on Main Street

#### **Why Plan?**

Riding on the success of Downtown Midland’s local merchants, the Farmers Market, and the recently completed Dow Diamond, the Midland Downtown Development Authority (DDA) commissioned a Redevelopment and Design Plan (the plan) to explore new potential development opportunities and define projects that enhance the downtown. As new generations of home buyers are entering the market, there is a decided shift to fewer people per household and more interest in downtown living. This redevelopment plan recognizes this trend and identifies opportunities for new housing within the downtown and methods for improving the pedestrian environment connecting the downtown to existing neighborhoods.

As downtowns across the country continue to evolve into premiere destinations, the importance of neighborhoods cannot be overlooked. Housing aids in the creation of a “24-hour” downtown, offering activity around the clock.



**Midland residents check out the local nursery stock at the downtown Farmer's Market**

Downtown residents create a built-in market for downtown businesses, reinforcing investments already in the district. The purpose of the redevelopment plan is to set a framework for action that illustrates design opportunities. Downtown living opportunities can reduce sprawl and possibly improve a city's tax base. To take advantage of these benefits, several housing opportunities are presented in the plan.

#### **The Process**

A plan that incorporates the public's goals is more likely to have a lasting and stable constituency. Understanding the importance of public participation, the DDA organized a two-day series of workshops and design sessions in May of 2007 to provide the DDA, business owners, and the community the opportunity to provide direct input into the plan. Recent successes were identified along with ideas and priorities for

change. Discussion topics included: urban living and housing; infill development compatible with adjoining neighborhoods and businesses; the pedestrian environment including connections to the river, parks, farmer's market, ball park, and other landmarks; downtown building location, height and architectural style; existing streets and circulation; parking; and public spaces.

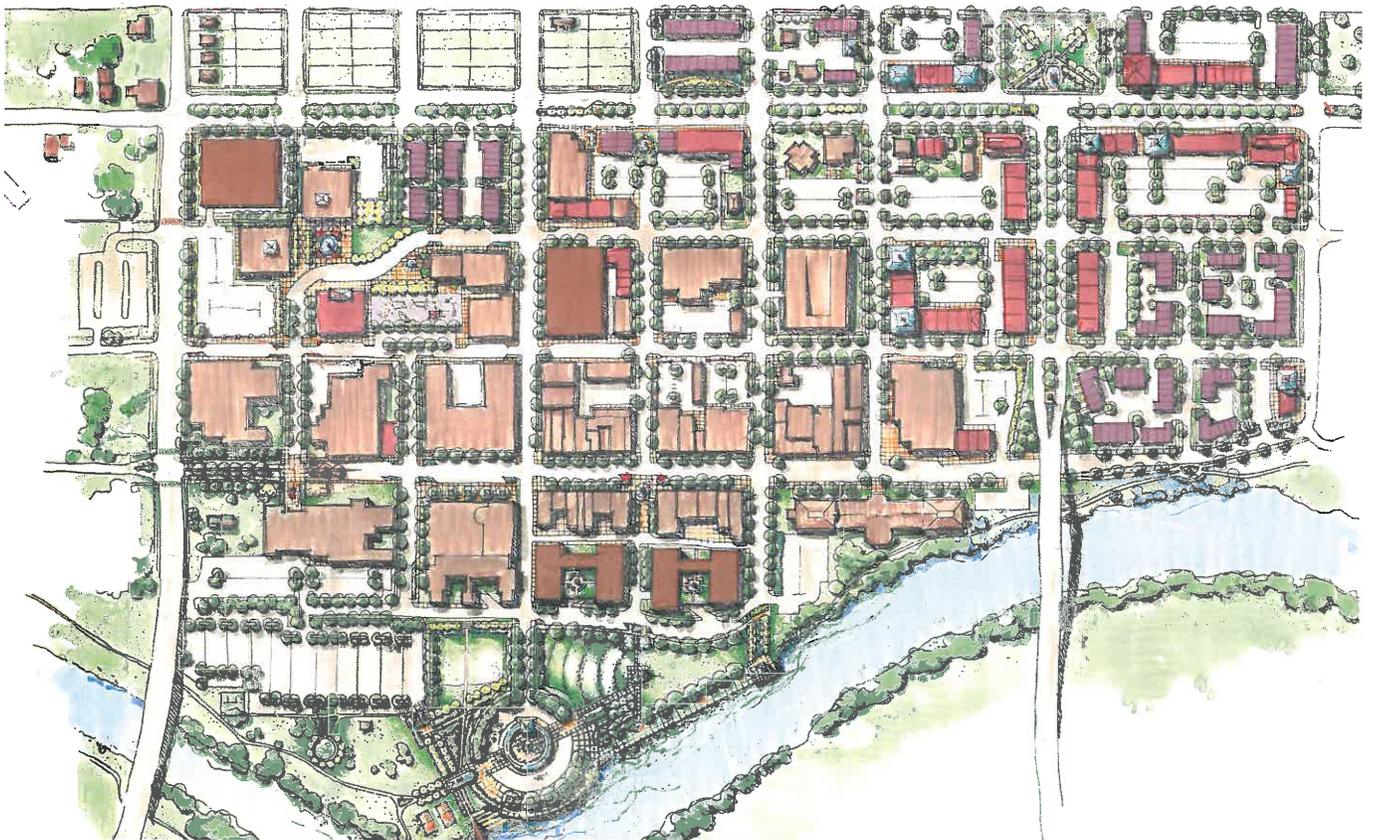
To gain input on the expressed desire for more downtown living, focus group discussions were held with seniors living in or near the downtown, professionals who have been transferred to Midland, local merchants who own property or run a business in the downtown, students from nearby colleges or universities, and local and regional developers. This feedback and a separate housing market study helped form some of the recommendations in the Redevelopment Plan.

### The Plan

Recommendations in the plan strive to preserve and enhance Midland's existing assets and provide additional amenities for its current residents. The plan also explores the potential for improved economic and social vitality of the downtown through new housing and mixed-use developments. The concepts found in the plan reflect the ideas and objectives determined by Midland's residents, business owners, and civic representatives and is crafted to appeal to a wide variety of developers. The plan sets a path for public and private investment and supports the following goals:

### Goals of the Redevelopment Plan

- Stimulate economic development in the downtown.
- Create a dynamic environment for people to live and work.
- Provide a unique, exciting and urban living community.
- Continue efforts to create a successful business environment for existing and future merchants in the downtown.
- Protect existing amenities in the downtown such as the farmer's market, Tridge, historic buildings, and the waterfront.
- Provide efficient transportation to and through the downtown that does not sacrifice the quality of a pleasant walkable environment.



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

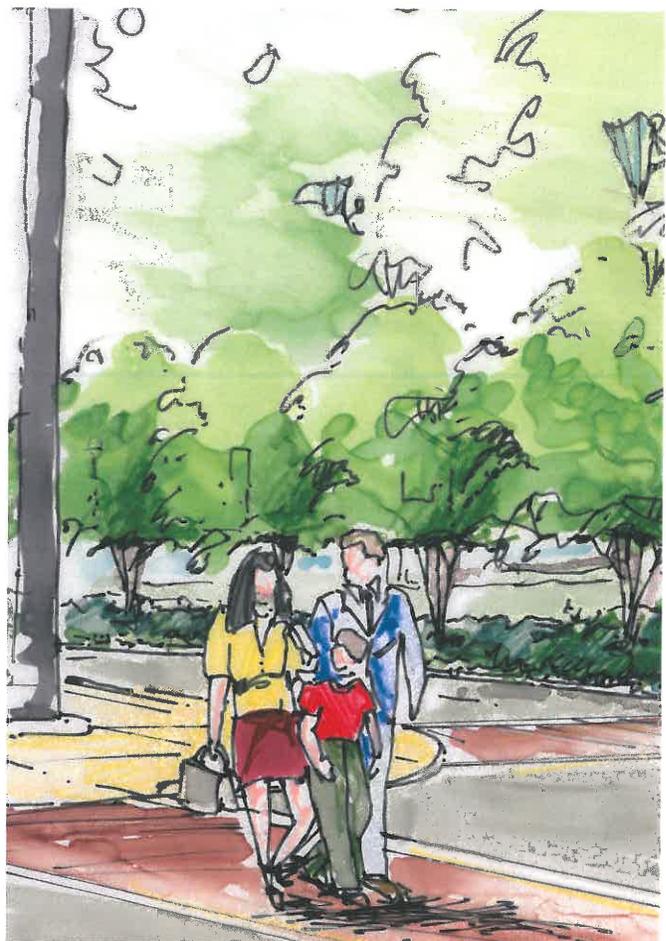
Within the redevelopment plan, three possible locations for new residential infill are proposed. The first location includes land surrounding City Hall and County Services Building necessitating future consolidation of parking using a parking deck with possible mixed-use development on the first floor. The second location proposes land east of the Mark T. Putnam Bridge with connections to the downtown via a modified bridge alignment. The final location proposes mixed-use buildings northeast of Ann Street adjacent to the Ashman Court Hotel featuring parking on the first floors and condominiums and possible office space above offering views to the river and farmers market. In an effort to improve the existing single family neighborhoods near downtown, the plan proposes that the one-way alignment of the Indian Street and Buttles Street pairs be evaluated to determine if two-way traffic would improve the environment for pedestrians. An improved pedestrian environment could enhance the existing neighborhoods to the north.

In addition to residential units, the redevelopment plan depicts several public improvements to the waterfront. Improvements include a refurbished riverfront with a formal civic space at the river's edge, new lighting, seating, and a public comfort station. These improvements originate with the relocation of the majority of surface parking. This parking is mitigated to the two proposed parking decks in the residential development for office workers and business employees who park in the area for more than a few hours a day. The remainder of the parking is accommodated by an expanded and reorganized surface lot south of the courthouse. The surface lot will also be available to hotel guests and those who will be visiting the waterfront for a short period of time.

### Implementation

Similar to the city as a whole, Midland's downtown area has undergone significant changes throughout the last 100 years. Currently, the downtown stands at a crossroads, with key choices to be made that will guide it through future decades. Implementation will be gradual, through incremental steps, driven by both public capital investment and private development and often through collaboration or partnerships of the public and private sectors.

The vision of a 24-hour downtown can only be achieved by a public-private partnership, one side cannot do it alone. City officials and private developers are realizing that such partnerships can offer a way to develop



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

projects that would not otherwise be feasible using separate resources. To protect the investment made by public-private partnerships, the redevelopment plan recommends the improvement of existing segments of the downtown including continued streetscape enhancements, mixed-use infill development, and realigned roadway networks that promote a walkable district.

Implementation will be accomplished through a variety of means, including public capital improvements such as riverfront infrastructure or roadway realignments. While some public investment may be necessary to act as a catalyst for development, many projects can be accomplished through public/private partnerships as

improvements and redevelopment of the downtown occurs. Coordination will also be required to facilitate the complicated processes of land assembly and cooperation between adjacent landowners necessary for development of concepts portrayed in the plan.

Once implemented, the plan will guide future growth in the downtown. It will ensure that the downtown continues to evolve into an exciting district featuring entertainment, culture, recreational opportunities, places of business, and residential neighborhoods while preserving its historic charm. This plan is the first step by the Downtown Development Authority to plan for an evolving downtown that will become an asset to the city of Midland for generations to come.





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downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

## Project Overview

*The mission of Midland's Downtown Development Authority is to provide a vibrant and diverse center of business, cultural and recreational activity that attracts both Midland residents and visitors throughout Michigan and beyond.*

*-Midland Downtown Development Authority*



Residents check out the nursery stock at the local Farmer's Market

### **Introduction.**

Midland, Michigan is located in mid-Michigan in the heart of Midland County and serves as the county seat. Midland is located on US Highway 10 just west of Bay City. Together, Saginaw, Midland, and Bay City make up the area commonly referred to as the "Tri-Cities."

Midland was settled by the Chippewa Indians who cherished the banks of the Tittabawassee River for its fertile soils and ample hunting and fishing opportunities. European fur-traders and farmers, then American farmers followed the Chippewa. Present day Main Street in downtown Midland began as a series of businesses along a dirt road which were constructed of timber cut from the surrounding woods.

Midland County was organized in 1850. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, railroads made their way through the heart of downtown Midland. The City of Midland was officially incorporated in 1887.

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

As the Midland area grew, the downtown remained the hub for commerce and trade. Some of the important influences on the evolution of the downtown were the success of the Dow Chemical Company. The Dow Chemical Company's success aided Midland's survival while other surrounding cities were struggling at the end of the logging industry. Midland is now the global headquarters of two Fortune 500 companies, Dow Chemical and Dow Corning Corporation, and home to the Midland Cogeneration Venture, a gas-fired steam recovery power plant. The plant is responsible for about 10% of the electricity used in Michigan's lower peninsula.

Other influences on the downtown included the construction of US-10, a key US highway in Michigan. This route became important for commerce as it traversed from downtown Detroit through Pontiac, Flint, Saginaw and Midland, to Ludington, where the route continued across Lake Michigan via the ferry to Manitowoc, Wisconsin and eventually landed in Seattle, Washington.

Midland offers quality education programs such as Northwood and Davenport Universities. Cultural opportunities include the Midland Center for the Arts, the Midland Symphony, and the Midland Theatre Guild. Midland has 80 city parks covering 3,000 acres of which Emerson and Plymouth Parks are the largest. The 100-acre Dow Gardens, garden and arboretum, were originally the private gardens of the Dow family and are now open to the public.

Midland's neighbor, Bay City is acknowledged as a regional entertainment and seasonal destination. In contrast, Midland has long been recognized as a bedroom community to the Tri-Cities major employers and quality place to live and work. Midland's property values have remained stable due to the proximity of these corporations and their ability to recruit employees from around the world.

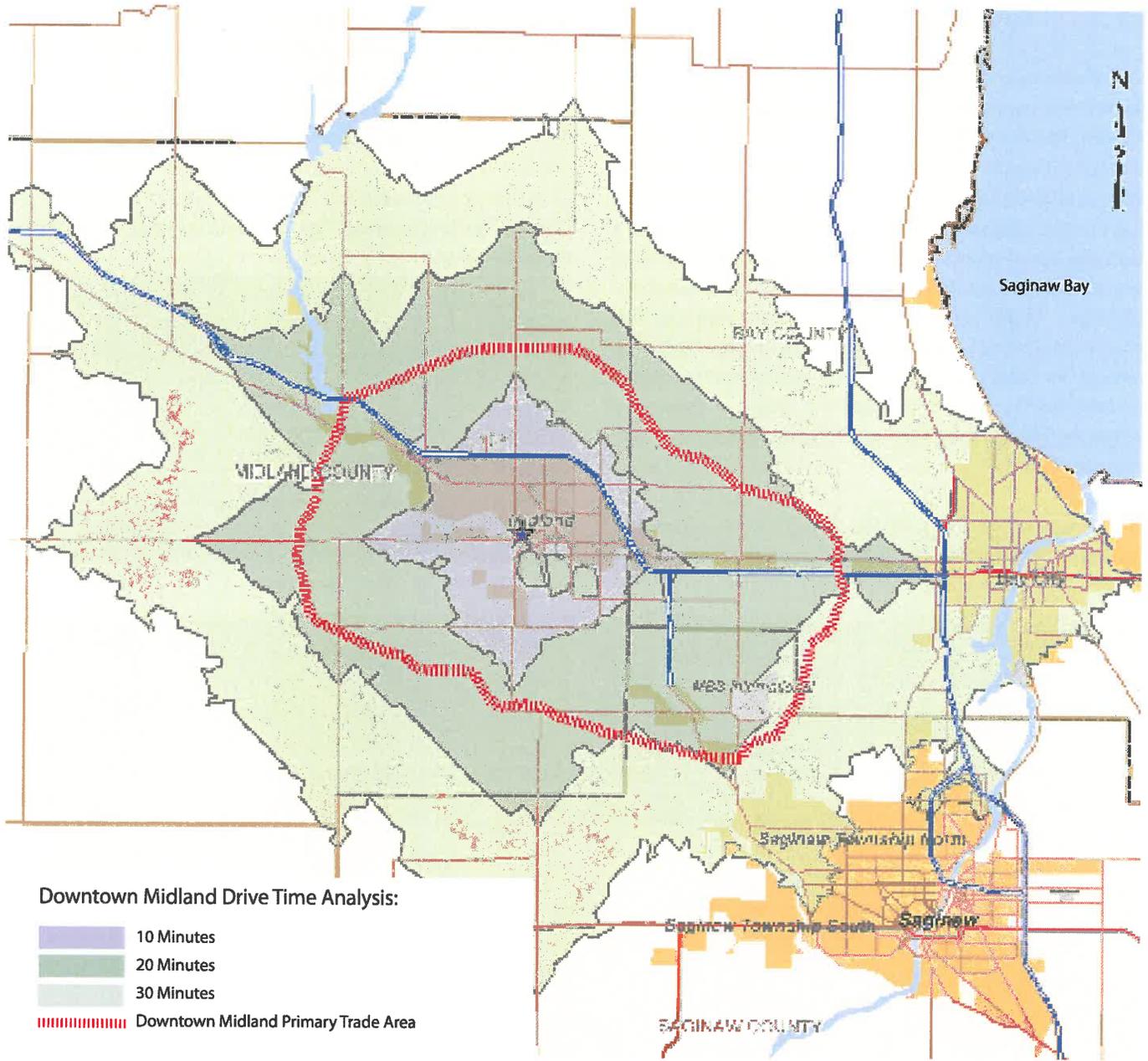


A view from the riverfront to the historic court house building



A typical view of the shopping that can be found on Main Street

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# downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

## Existing Character and Land Use.

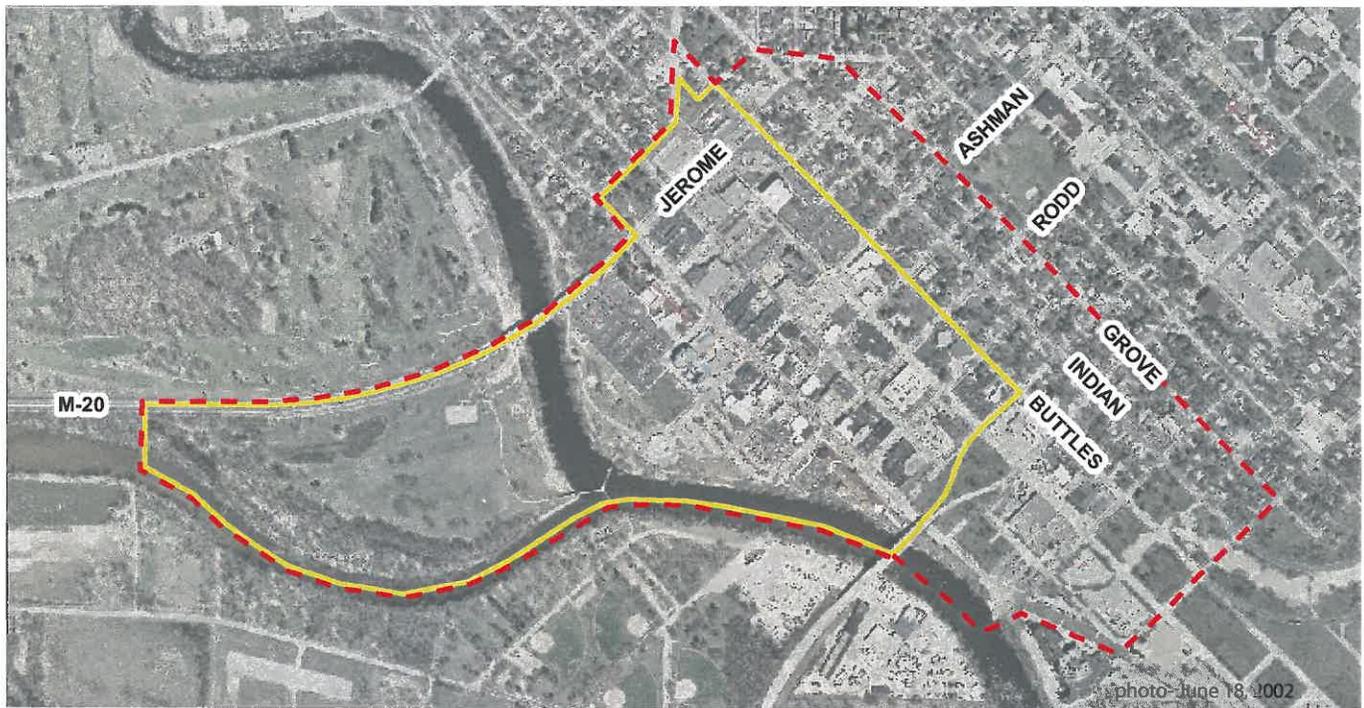
Downtown Midland is roughly bounded by the confluence of the business routes for US Highway 10 and M-20 (also known as Indian Street and Buttles Street) to the north, Cronkright Street and Bridge to the east, the Chippeswassee Park to the south, and M-20 (also known as Jerome Street) and Ripley Street to the west (see map below). The downtown offers a charming mix of retail stores, restaurants, places of worship, personal service, and offices ranging from one to five story buildings. Major attractions in the downtown are the Ashman Court Hotel; the recently completed Dow Diamond, home of the Great Lakes Loons minor league baseball team; The Midland farmers market; and the Tridge, a three-way bridge that spans the meeting of the Tittabawassee and Chippewa Rivers.

For the purposes of this plan, the downtown was classified into eight character districts to better evaluate the uses and

personality of particular segments of the downtown. Specific districts were observed and delineated by their location within the downtown and concentration of similar uses. These districts are discussed here to understand current uses and how they can be elevated in a redeveloped downtown. The districts are observed as follows: The West Gateway, The Civic Center, The Riverfront, The Downtown Core, The Service District, The East Gateway, The Stadium District, and The Near Neighborhood.



View of the pedestrian space on Main Street



- Red dashed line: Redevelopment and Design Plan Boundaries
- Yellow solid line: Downtown Midland Development Authority Boundaries



north • drawing not to scale

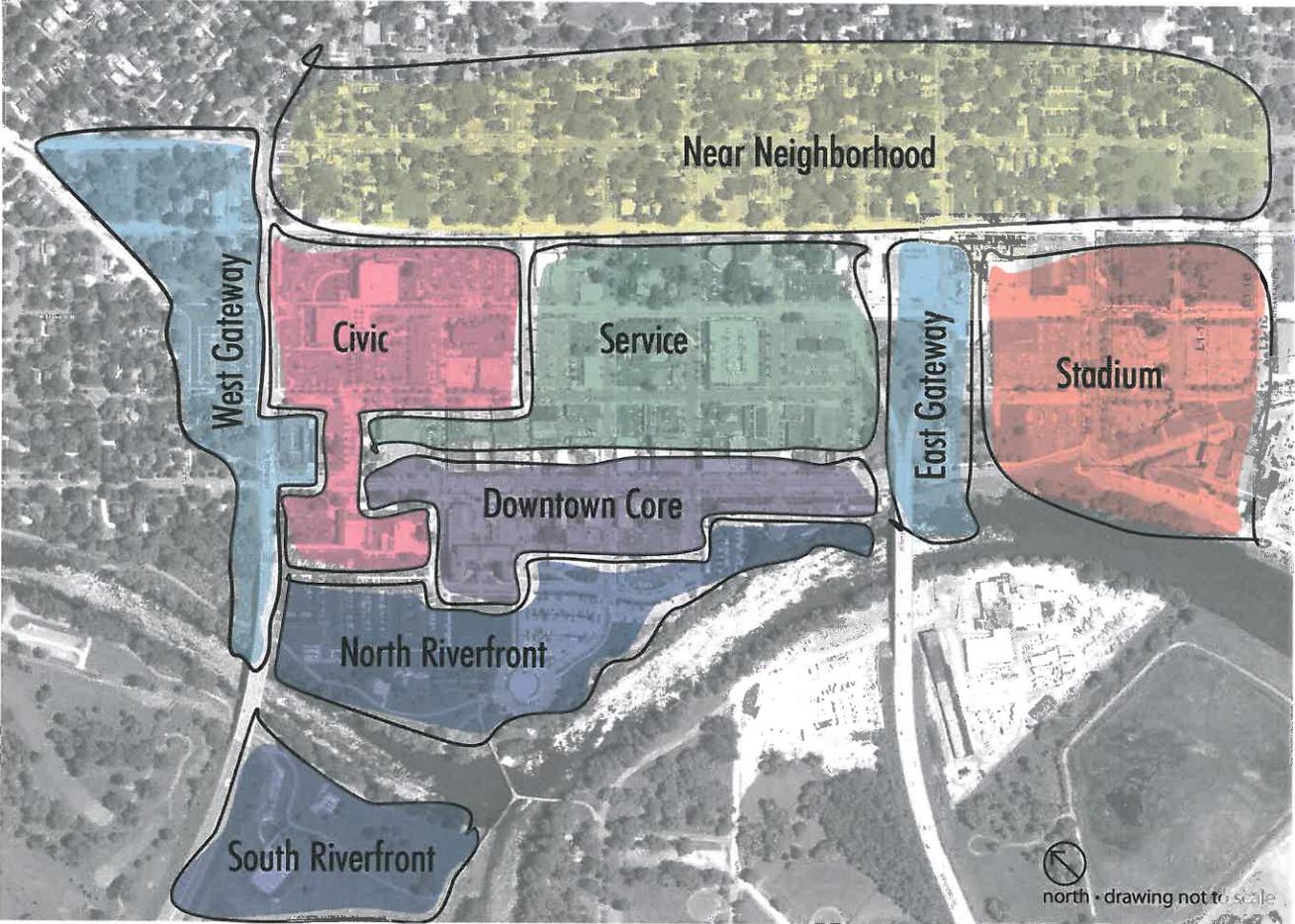


Diagram indicating the different character districts observed in Downtown Midland

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

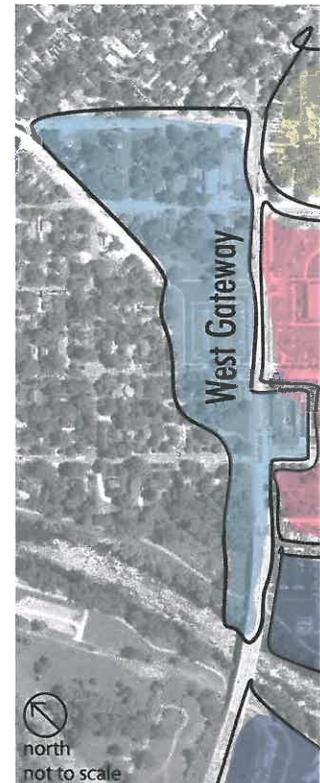


A view from the Ned S. Arbury Centennial Park with Midland's Main Street beyond

**The West Gateway.** This district serves as the gateway to the downtown from northbound M-20 (Jerome Street) and from points west via Eastman Avenue. Jerome Street carries a moderate volume of traffic such as daily commuters and regional traffic traveling through Midland. Jerome Street becomes M-20 at the Karl Robertson Bridge where the route crosses the Tittabawassee River. This bridge has no architectural detail and limited lighting.

At the northwest corner of this intersection is Ned S. Arbury Centennial Park. Centennial Park is a pocket park designed for passive recreation. A bronze sculpture of 100 linked hexagons symbolizes molecules that depend on one another for stability, as do the people and businesses of Midland. The First United Methodist Church anchors the northeast corner of the intersection. Setback from the southeast corner, sometimes missed by motorists, is the famous Santa House. The Santa House is a stucco and fieldstone building with a working glockenspiel whose moving characters entertain passers-by on the hour. An attractive historic residential district lies west of Jerome Street, a comfortable, walkable distance to the downtown.

Jerome Street terminates at West Indian Street, a confusing and disorienting intersection outside of the downtown. West Indian Street is the east-bound half and Buttles Street is the west-bound half of a one-way pair that serves as the north border of the downtown. The one-way pairs will be discussed later in this chapter.



View from the Ned S. Arbury Centennial Park to historic homes just west of Midland's downtown



View looking south to the Karl Robertson Bridge over the Tittabawassee River



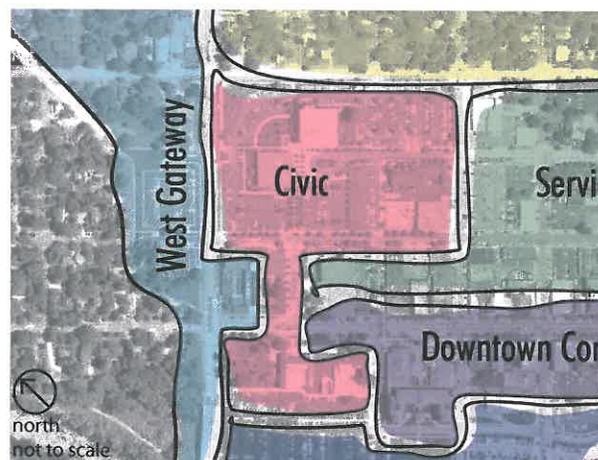
## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**The Civic Center.** The Civic Center consists of the Midland County Administration Building, Midland City Hall, Saint Brigid Catholic Church and associated school, and the Midland County Court House.

The four story Midland County Administration Building and the two story Midland City Hall appear to be designed for a suburban corporate campus, disrupting the historic grid of the downtown. The parking needs for the office space is accommodated by four surface lots surrounding these buildings. These lots can be easily viewed from both Jerome Street and East Buttles, providing an unattractive welcome to the outskirts of downtown. The current Saint Brigid Catholic Church is a tudor-gothic building constructed in the 1940s. Because of the disruption to the street grid, the church's beautiful entrance can only be seen from an interior parking lot. The Saint Brigid K-6 school adjacent to the church requires parking for faculty and staff, space for bus pick-up and drop-off, and a playground for the students. The county and city buildings with their large surface lots and church and school amenities comprise one "super block," the same land size as six blocks in the downtown.

The historic Midland County Courthouse is the south anchor of the Civic Center. This building is an important feature along downtown's Main Street. Currently the front facade of the courthouse is not active or inviting due to the closure of all entrances from Main Street. Access to the courthouse is gained from the rear which faces the Tittabawassee River. Parking for the courthouse is a surface lot shared with the adjacent Ashman Court Hotel. The rear entrances to the courthouse are disorganized and poorly marked. The courthouse is connected to other buildings within the Civic Center via Fitzhugh Street. Fitzhugh is a rarely utilized street since it no longer connects to East Buttles Street. Looking southbound, Fitzhugh Street provides an attractive view of the courthouse from the civic parking lots.

*The four story Midland County Administration Building and the two story Midland City Hall appear to have been designed for a corporate campus.*



View of the two-story Midland City Hall and surrounding parking lot



The front of the Saint Brigid Catholic Church can be seen only from an interior parking lot



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**The Riverfront.** The banks of the Tittabawassee River offer many amenities for Midland’s residents: including the popular farmers market; the Gerstacker Spray Ground; access to the 28-mile Pere Marquette Rail-Trail; and the Tridge, a three-way footbridge that spans the junction of the Chippewa and Tittabawassee rivers. Buildings that make up the riverfront include the Ashman Court Hotel, a distribution center for the Midland Daily News and the Riverside Place Senior Housing Facility. The Tittabawassee River is known to flood, resulting in limited development upland from the river’s edge.

The Ashman Court Hotel is currently completing a \$25 million renovation and expansion. The renovation will include construction of the H.H. Dow Academy, a European style bistro, a pub, and a five-star restaurant. The hotel provides two entrances; one is accessible from Main Street where the hotel blends with other downtown businesses, the second entrance faces the riverfront with a porte-cochere for valet and guest drop off. It is important to note that the hotel is the only building with an entrance from the riverfront. In response to the river’s variable water level, the hotel has no habitable space within the 100-year flood plain. Another major building on the riverfront is the four-story Riverside Place Senior Housing Facility. Riverside Place is a four-story, 150-unit housing development offering semi-independent living for Midland’s seniors. The rear of the facility affords beautiful views to the river and Tridge. The final building on the riverfront is the Midland Daily News building. This building serves as a distribution center for the city’s newspaper.

With the many amenities and activities on Midland’s waterfront, it is surprising that few buildings take advantage of its views. Much of the waterfront land is currently a sea of disconnected asphalt parking lots. A portion of this parking is covered by the shelter for the downtown’s popular farmers market. While this shelter provides an important function for the market’s vendors, it does little to enhance the views to the river. The quaint commercial buildings on the south side of the commercial core are attractive with entrances on Main Street enhancing the character to the downtown. The waterside of these buildings, however, are relegated to service uses such as deliveries and refuse storage and pickup.

*With the many active amenities and activities on Midland’s waterfront, it is surprising that few buildings take advantage of its views.*



View of the Midland Farmer's Market when not in use

The Market operates on Wednesdays and Saturdays from early May through late October



left: Midland residents using the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail

top right: The service entrances and refuse storage of Main Street's commercial building can easily be seen from the riverfront

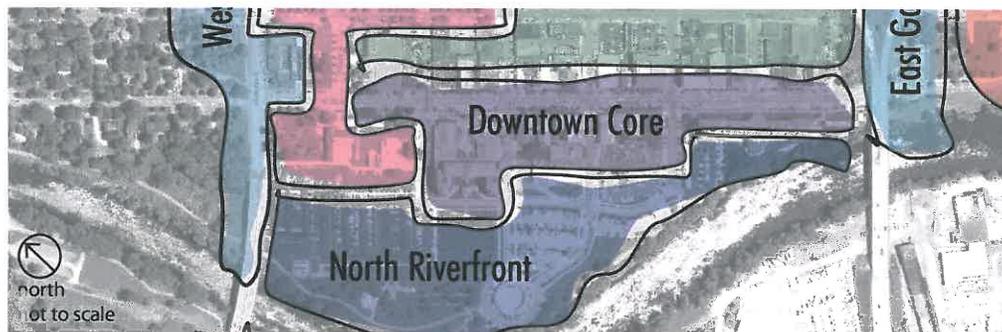
bottom right: View of the Midland Daily News Building surrounded by miscellaneous parking



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**The Downtown Core.** The Downtown Core is an attractive commercial district on Main Street with extensions north on Ashman and McDonald Streets offering unique boutiques, casual dining, local services, and professional buildings. Business owners have taken pride in their establishments by renovating facades and attractively appointing shop windows. Buildings such as the Larkin Building serve as excellent examples of historic downtown scale. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings such as The Chemical Bank are the appropriate scale for Main Street, but the lack of openings and pedestrian amenities detract from the downtown’s visual interest.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) together with the City of Midland has invested heavily in the downtown’s streetscape with the addition of decorative paving, pedestrian scale lighting, benches, and a commitment to annual plantings. Recently installed directional signage surrounding and within the downtown aid residents and visitors in locating businesses and attractions. Head-in angled parking was introduced on Main Street in an effort to provide more parking opportunities where the demand is highest. While angled parking increases the supply of valuable spaces, it detracts from attractive facades, gives motorists views of the tail end of cars, and reduces the opportunity for outdoor dining and sidewalk merchandising.



*The Downtown core is an attractive commercial district on Main Street with extensions north on Ashman and McDonald Streets.*

downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

all images: Various views of the eclectic buildings and businesses offered in downtown Midland



Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century designed buildings are the appropriate scale for Main Street but the lack of pedestrian amenities detract from the visual interest of the downtown

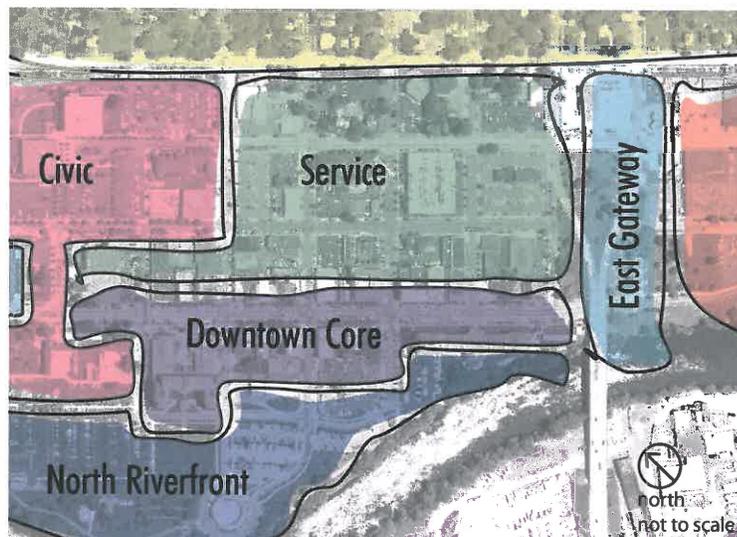


## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**The Service District.** This district is a suburban style, auto-focused portion of the downtown offering few of the pedestrian-scaled buildings and shops found on Main Street. A predominant amount of the surface parking available in the downtown can be found within the service district.

Buildings such as the Carl A. Gerstacker Commerce Center promote the priority of surface parking with no pedestrian entrance from East Buttes. Attractive single family residences remaining in the service district have succumbed to office conversions and many of the city blocks have been transformed into “strip plazas”. In addition to the numerous surface parking lots in this district, a three-story parking deck sits on an entire city block offering reserved spaces for nearby offices and metered parking for patrons of the businesses downtown.

**The East Gateway.** The East Gateway is named solely for the *opportunities* that exist to welcome visitors to downtown Midland. The existing Mark T. Putnam Bridge is essentially a four-lane divided highway that moves motorists over the Tittabawassee River from Midland to the Chippewa Nature Center, Bullock Creek, Lockport and other cities southeast of downtown. The earlier mentioned Karl Robertson Bridge connects motorists to cities and destinations southwest of Midland. Similar to the Robertson Bridge, the Putnam Bridge lacks architectural detail or pedestrian scale lighting. Unlike the Robertson Bridge, the Putnam Bridge is elevated for three city blocks over downtown Midland. While suspended, the bridge veers into a “wishbone” shape to prepare for the series of one-way intersections the motorists will encounter once in Midland. The wishbone shape of the elevated bridge creates an inaccessible and undevelopable piece of land currently marked as Putnam Park. Once in the downtown, a used car sales lot is the first glimpse motorists get of the district.



*The east gateway is named solely for the “opportunities” that exist to welcome visitors to downtown Midland.*

downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

A typical "strip plaza" on East Larkin Street within the service district



left: The rarely used Putnam Park with the elevated Mark T. Putnam Bridge in the background



top right: The gauntlet of one-way streets visitors must navigate once in the downtown from the Putnam Bridge



bottom right: A used car lot is the first glimpse visitors see of downtown



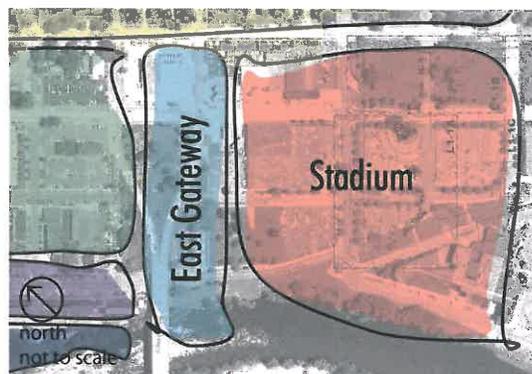
## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**The Stadium District.** The Stadium District features Dow Diamond, the recently completed home of the Great Lakes Loons minor league baseball team. The April 13, 2007 opening day brought a vitality and, most importantly, new visitors to downtown Midland. The baseball season runs from early April to early September with most games occurring in the evenings. The baseball operation is estimated to bring over 320,000 visitors downtown, with 75-80% from out of town. In addition to bringing new visitors to the downtown, evening games add a much needed nightlife for local businesses.

Approximately 700 on-site parking spaces were created when Dow Diamond was constructed. Rather than developing a larger sea of surface parking surrounding the new stadium, the city wisely decided to supplement the on-site parking with access to parking in the downtown. Not only are most downtown parking spaces available in the evening, but baseball fans have the opportunity to walk through downtown, stop for a meal, and “window shop.” With the exception of restaurants, many downtown business keep “bankers hours”, or are only open until 6 pm. By closing at 6 pm, those businesses miss the opportunity to sell to thousands of patrons who may not otherwise visit the downtown.

West of Dow Diamond and east of the Mark T. Putnam Bridge are a printing business, a used car lot operating in a former gas station, a gas station, and an auto dealership and body shop. The printing business is a multimedia print and graphic design business with over 150 employees. The building that houses the press is clean and functional but has masonry walls the length of a city block with no windows or visual interest. The auto dealership has been a successful staple of downtown for many years, but the functional needs of a car dealership lack a friendly, pedestrian-oriented environment. The dealership’s location predates the implementation of the one-way pairs which removed half of the local traffic passing by the dealership. The dealership is now visible only to eastbound motorists.

*Not only are most parking spaces readily available in the evening, but baseball fans get the opportunity to walk through downtown and either stop for a meal or make plans to buy something they see in a store window.*



View to the recently completed Dow Diamond Baseball Stadium home of the Great Lakes Loons



left: The pedestrian experience on East Buttes Street in front of the auto dealership



top right: a view down East Elsworth Street viewing the body shop to the left, the printing press to the right and Dow Diamond in the distance



bottom right: The main entrance to the printing press on East Buttes Street

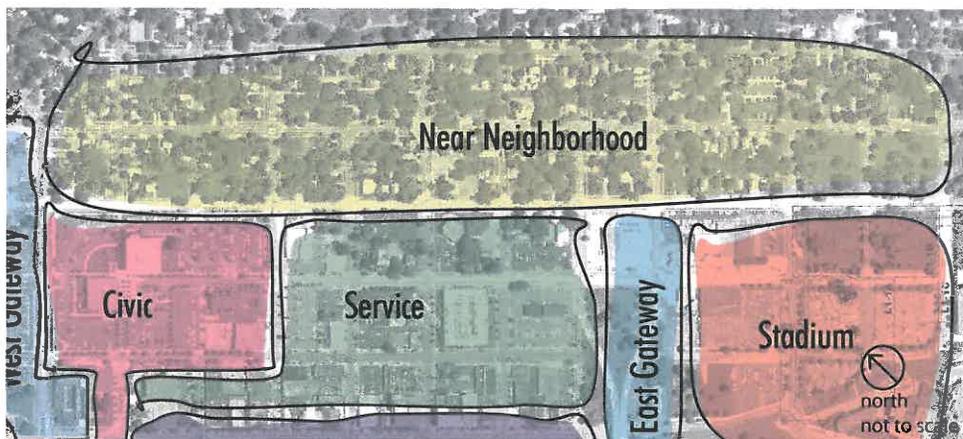


## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**The Near Neighborhood.** Perhaps the hardest hit by transportation “improvements” around downtown Midland are the single family residences located between Buttles and Indian Streets. In 1963 the Michigan Department of Transportation, in an effort to more efficiently move traffic, converted Indian and Buttles Streets into one-way pairs; Indian Street became west-bound and Buttles become east-bound. The resulting allowable speeds may have influenced the conversion of the once single-family homes along these streets into businesses and subdivision to rental units.

In addition to the effects on the residential community, the one-way pairs have made pedestrian crossings an unpleasant activity. The swiftly moving traffic has also negatively affected the downtown business community to the south. One reason may be the reduced visibility of outlying commercial businesses that are now exposed only to east-bound traffic on Buttles Street. West-bound motorists are unaware that a thriving downtown exists to their left.

The Indian - Buttles pair affects not only the downtown but the whole city. Ultimate routes and volumes cannot be prescribed in this plan, but the current system of one-way pairs does not promote the ideals of a social, walkable downtown. Comments made during the plan process suggest that traffic volumes on the pairs have declined at peak hours. It appears the current volumes could be accommodated by two-way streets. Since two-way streets have a host of advantages for downtown revitalization, such as more visibility for businesses and reduced speeds to improve pedestrian connections, a conversion should be evaluated.



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

left. A by-product of single family to business conversions; the need for additional parking in spaces that were designed for lawns

top right. What was once a residential neighborhood now requires highway-sized signage and directional markings

bottom right. Three lanes of one-way traffic traveling east on Buttles



Single-family homes look out of place surrounded by surface parking and lawns converted to asphalt



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

### **Existing Document Review.**

In addition to the physical analysis of the downtown area, the team also reviewed previously prepared studies and documents that relate to the downtown. Following is a brief synopsis of this review:

#### *Downtown Evaluation and Strategic Position Study*

Prepared By: Market Institute Group and McKenna Associates,  
October 24, 2002

A field evaluation of retailers and office space was conducted. It was determined that downtown Midland is a destination for “niche” retail but has several voids that, if filled, would increase downtown visits. The existing downtown district was found to be in good physical condition. Additional retail and restaurant space along with a Clustering Plan was recommended. It was also recommended to utilize the Tittabawassee Riverfront in future development.

#### *2006 Downtown Development Authority Facade Program and Design Guidelines*

Effective May 10, 2006

This facade program is funded by a gift from local foundations and has been converted from a grant program to a no-interest loan program with the goal of becoming self-funding. Business owners, tenants, and property owners are eligible to borrow up to \$15,000 payable over seven years. In order to be approved, projects must support the DDA’s Design Guidelines, comply with all codes and ordinances, and are subject to review by a DDA-appointed Design Review Team.

#### *Downtown Midland Market Study*

Prepared By: Downtown Professionals Network,  
July 2006

More than 400 people representing various sectors of the Midland area participated in the planning and research activities. Consumer and business surveys were conducted to explore the market area and possibilities for the future of downtown Midland. The document identified conditions

impacting Main Street’s economic performance, defined the downtown’s geographic trade area, and profiled the trade area’s major consumer market segments. The market evaluation was based on population and market trends in relation to potential business development and marketing strategies. Potential business development opportunities, with an emphasis on downtown business retention, expansion, and recruitment strategies were identified including the potential for downtown housing opportunities.

#### *Downtown Midland Design Guidelines*

August 8, 2007

The design guidelines describe how to rehabilitate and repair facades, windows, and storefronts of existing buildings in the downtown area to period-specific standards. These design guidelines are consistent with the goals of this redevelopment plan and should remain in place. The guidelines do not apply to new construction; however, the recommendations regarding windows, doors, storefronts, and signage should be taken into consideration when constructing new buildings in the downtown area to maintain facade continuity.





## Planning Process

*The Midland Downtown Development Authority commissioned a Redevelopment and Design Plan to explore new potential development opportunities and define physical enhancement projects within the downtown.*



View south down Fitzhugh Street to the Midland County Courthouse

**The Purpose of this Plan.** With the success of Downtown Midland's local merchants, the farmers market, and the recently completed Dow Diamond, the Midland Downtown Development Authority (the DDA) commissioned a Redevelopment and Design Plan (the plan) to explore new potential development opportunities and define physical enhancement projects within the downtown.

As new generations of home buyers are entering the market, there is a decided shift to fewer people per household and more interest in downtown living.

The combination of downtown Midland's convenient location within the county, proximity to Fortune 500 companies, and a wealth of attractive homes within walking distance has placed a high demand on the downtown's continued success. Part of this success should include housing in the downtown to create an appropriate environment for reinvestment in the greater community.

The Midland Downtown Development Authority identified several goals at the onset of this plan; some of these goals are outlined below:

- Develop a coherent vision for the future of the downtown;
- Provide a framework for appropriate growth and development for the downtown;
- Protect the integrity of existing residential and business districts of the downtown;
- Protect but enhance the current natural setting and existing landmarks such as the Farmer’s Market, the river, and the Tridge;
- Improve the economic and social vitality of the downtown by encouraging diversity of use and opportunities for a variety of experiences;
- Improve the pedestrian orientation of the downtown by providing for increased comfort, convenience, safety, and enjoyment of the pedestrian environment including open space;
- Facilitate efficient access, circulation, and parking while maintaining a positive balance between vehicular and pedestrian needs;
- Improve the visual appearance of the downtown – its streets, alleys, public spaces, and its buildings;
- Identify housing opportunities within the downtown for both “for-sale” as well as rental communities;
- Identify market support within the downtown for various land use types and development densities;
- Strategize to attract new desired uses for the downtown including action steps to take advantage of development and redevelopment opportunities;
- Identify improvements to the existing roadway network, pedestrian and parking facilities based upon future needs.

*Develop a coherent vision for the future of the downtown.*

*The “public” in public participation refers to people—citizens of all walks of life who will be affected, either positively or negatively, by a decision made in the planning process.*



Local residents participate in a focus group discussion

### **Public Participation.**

The civic infrastructure of a town is equally as important as the physical infrastructure. How well the community is involved in future planning for their city is directly proportionate to the success and longevity of a specific improvement or project.

The “public” in public participation refers to the community—citizens of all walks of life who will likely be affected, either positively or negatively, by a decision made in the planning process. Public participation involves people who have a stake in the success of their community; consequently, the term “stakeholder” is used when discussing public participation. Stakeholders are more than owners of businesses or corporations.

A market study is an important component when weighing options for the redevelopment of a downtown. It strives to determine what features people want in a housing product and at what price, but it cannot be the only deciding factor. Market results and consultant recommendations should always be weighed with public opinion to accommodate growth and efforts to make neighborhoods more livable. The goals of the public participation component of this plan are as follows:

- Understand the values and goals the public has for the downtown.
- Provide the public with the facts so they understand the process and participate effectively.
- Provide opportunities for the public to share opinions and to influence the outcome.
- Build public consensus and support for the plan and those charged with its ultimate implementation.

Finally, the best laid plans can lose momentum over time as city officials, staff and DDA leaders come and go. A plan that incorporates the public’s goals is more likely to have a lasting and stable constituency. The following pages give a brief description of the public process for this redevelopment plan.

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

Understanding the importance of public participation, the DDA organized a two-day series of workshops and design sessions in May of 2007 to provide the DDA, business owners, and the community the opportunity to provide direct input into the plan.

Discussion topics for the workshop included: urban living and housing; infill development compatible with adjoining neighborhoods and businesses; the pedestrian environment including connections to the river, parks, farmers market, ball park, and other landmarks; downtown building location, height and architectural style; existing streets, streetscape, parking, public plazas, and green space.

Members of the community participated in various aspects of the workshops including focus groups, site walks, identification of priorities for change, identification of recent success, review of preliminary concepts of the downtown, and general discussions regarding the future of the community.

Over 500 invitations to the workshops were mailed along with over 1,000 email invitations, and advertisements were placed in the Midland Daily News and on community websites.

Please join us for any or all of the workshop events.  
Your participation is an important part of our downtown's future!

# downtown Midland

Join us for a two-day public workshop focused on creating a vision for the future of Downtown Midland.

With the success of our local merchants, the Farmer's Market, and the recently completed Dow Diamond, we look to the future of downtown. Let's explore potential development opportunities that enhance our existing amenities.

Please come share your thoughts with the Downtown Development Authority as we envision a plan that will improve the economic and social vitality of our downtown.

**Public Input Opportunities:**

**Tuesday May 22nd**

Downtown Site Walk.....3:00-4:30pm  
Meet at the main entrance of Riverside Place at 3:00. We will walk our downtown and discuss ideas for its future. Rain or shine.

Public Presentation.....6:00-6:30pm  
Our consultants will present ideas for downtown spaces, discuss the purpose of the re-development plan and goals for implementation.

Public Design.....6:30-9:00pm  
Come share your opinions and suggestions for the downtown and assist in identifying opportunities for development.

**Wednesday May 23rd**

"Drop-in Design".....11:00am-3:00pm & 3:30-5:30pm  
Drop-in for five minutes or stay all day to give input or simply observe the design of the downtown as it evolves.

Public Presentation.....6:30-7:30pm  
Our consultants will present the data gathered during the public input session and possible concepts for the downtown.

Public Q&A.....7:30-8:30pm

All activities will be held at **Riverside Place** at 400 E. Main St. Midland, MI 48640. On-street parking is on Main, Townsend, Rodd or Cronkright. Please contact us if you have questions or will require special assistance during the workshop.

Questions? Christin O'Callaghan, Midland DDA  
(989) 839-8433  
cocallag@midland-mi.org

City of Midland Downtown Development Authority  
300 Rodd Street • Suite 201 • Midland, Michigan 48640 • 989.839.8433  
www.downtownmidland.com

public workshop - May 22 & 23, 2007

Local residents participate in a focus group discussion



**Focus Groups.** To better understand the market climate and potential need for urban living in the downtown, focus group discussions were conducted.

Each focus group contained up to six participants led by a facilitator, and a range of topics relative to their downtown experience was discussed. The focus groups were delineated in the following categories:

- Seniors living in or near the downtown,
- Professionals who have been transferred to Midland from another city or state,
- Local merchants who own property or run a business in the downtown,
- Students from a near-by college or university,
- Local and regional developers gathered to gain input on a favorable development environment.

The purpose of focus groups is to encourage participants to share their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and ideas on subjects relevant to the downtown. The output from these discussions led to design decisions and contributed to the foundation of strategy and phasing decisions for the downtown.

It is important to note that the participants were asked to give feedback as it relates to “for sale” downtown units. Responses were given based on the groups individual likelihood to purchase a new unit and the criteria that should be in place before a purchase is made. Rental units were identified as a small component of the future need for housing in the downtown, but rentals were not discussed in the May 2007 focus group discussions.

Following is a summary of the focus group discussions and each groups unique criteria for their preferences in downtown living.

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

### Focus Group A: Seniors

#### Living Downtown:

- Dumbwaiter
- Low maintenance
- Close to parks
- Convenience shopping

#### Community Center:

- Gathering room
- Exercise
- Card games
- Space for family gatherings

#### Housing Criteria Priority:

- Overall pride of community
- Location
- Quality of construction – not fancy
- Size and right bedroom and bath location
- General style and appeal

#### Infill Style:

- 3 bedrooms/2.5 bath
- 1-2 car parking
- 1 formal room, patio
- Split opinion: open vs traditional floor plan

#### Amenities:

- Churches, grocery store, general store, drug store
- Public transportation
- Medical center
- Pocket parks

#### Design:

- Master bedroom, bath and laundry on first floor
- Access without steps on first floor
- Screened porch and small patio

Seniors. The senior focus group was by far the most eager to consider housing in the downtown. Due to senior's fixed budgets, price will be the primary factor in determining where to live. Additional determining factors in choice include; unit layout, quality of construction, availability of a community center for entertaining, and proximity to walkable attractions in the downtown.

### Focus Group B: Merchants

#### Living Downtown:

- No maintenance
- Close to activity
- Adjacent historic neighborhood
- No children

#### Demographics:

- Low maintenance second residence, convenience main issue
- Recent graduates: strong desire for downtown living, cost main issue

#### Commercial Mix:

- Destination shopping and entertainment
- Active street frontage to engage pedestrians
- Create reasons to come Downtown

#### Infill Style:

- Historic/compatible context
- 4-6 stories max
- 3 bed/2 bath for mid- to high-end homes, less for young professionals homes
- 2 car parking essential

#### Amenities:

- Bike lanes/facilities
- Spaces/gathering places with permanent infrastructure
- Plan events for year-round activity
- Streetscape modifications for larger sidewalk space

#### Design:

- Redesign office/unused storefronts to include small retail uses
- Modify senior facility frontage to orient units to street
- Event facility close to core
- Small, intimate activity areas

Merchants. While the merchants were asked about their specific retail climate, discussions also lead to their opinion of downtown housing. The merchants felt that the typical DINK (Double Income No Kids) couple would be interested in downtown housing. This group felt that the downtown could be improved by increased sidewalk space for merchandising and pedestrian activities and by creating more activities to bring residents downtown.

### Focus Group C: Students

Students. The type of "for sale" housing proposed in this plan will probably be available to students whose parents purchase a unit for their children to live in with roommates as an investment. Students are mostly interested in a location with close proximity to entertainment and units that have several private spaces for roommates.

#### Living Downtown:

- High potential
- High energy

#### Demographics:

- Fresh out of college or Jr/Sr
- Will have 2-3 roommates
- Parents may actually own/invest
- Affordable ownership
- Opportunity to rent to others

#### Commercial Mix:

- Need more 'hip' pubs, etc.
- Nightclubs
- Take out food
- Bookstore with coffee shop
- Shopping-national retailers

#### Infill Style:

- Townhouses or loft
- 1.5-2.5 car parking w/ garage/assigned spaces
- 3 bedrooms/2-2.5 bath
- Several private spaces for roommates
- Pet friendly

#### Amenities:

- None specified

#### Design:

- Thick walls
- Wired for present and future technology needs
- Modern design

### Focus Group D: Young Professionals

Young Professionals. The young professional focus group was the second most likely group to consider downtown housing; however, their focus was less on the housing unit itself and more about whether or not it can be offered in a vibrant downtown. This group placed a heavy emphasis on shopping for groceries in the downtown and access to public transportation.

#### Living Downtown:

- High potential
- Needs to be diverse now- cultural and racial
- Downtown should be active
- Child friendly

#### Demographics:

- Moved from big city or college town
- Disposable income
- Newlyweds

#### Commercial Mix:

- Restaurants w/ eclectic menus
- Bars / pubs
- European style market
- Bookstore with coffee shop
- Shopping and boutiques

#### Infill Style:

##### Townhouses

- 1.5-2.5 car parking w/ garage
- 3 bedrooms/2-2.5 bath
- Open concept/large kitchen
- Outdoor entertaining space
- Pet friendly

#### Amenities:

- Cleaning service in development
- Close to parks and trails
- Close to baseball stadium
- Public transportation

#### Design:

- Wired for present and future technology needs
- "Brownstone" appearance

### Focus Group E: Developers

The conversations with local developers were conducted in a different manner to accommodate a variety of schedules. Over a period of two weeks, three local developers who have completed multi-million dollar commercial and mixed-use development within the state were contacted for a series of phone interviews. The interview questions were simple; "Would you develop mixed-use and residential housing in downtown Midland?" And, "What elements must be in place before you would make a financial commitment?"

In short, the responses were very favorable. Most were primarily interested in the potential for waterfront development. The developers were careful to point out that they would want to see physical improvement on the waterfront before a commitment to development is made. These improvements would include creation of a formal civic space at the waterfront, relocation of many parking lots in direct sight lines to the river's edge, and construction of more public amenities.

Floodplain issues did not concern the developers when paired with the understanding that all development on the waterfront would be constructed north of Ann Street and that the first one-to-two floors would be dedicated to parking (or non-inhabitable space) in any waterfront development.

Residential units in other areas of the downtown were also of interest to the developers. Units that do not have water views are feasible as indicated by the market study, but the economics of each unit is more critical in this type of development. Acquisition costs would greatly impact the perceived financial success or failure of this type of project.

*In short, the responses were very favorable. The developers were careful to point out that they would like to see physical improvements on the waterfront before a commitment is made.*

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**Site Walks.** Many times in public workshops, when feasible, it is important to leave the public venue and actually walk the project site. Frequently the community is reminded of particular issues when they are physically present. The consultants also have the opportunity to better understand public comments when issues and locations can be experienced. Due to the size of the downtown and time constraints, the project area was divided into three walking groups. The groups were delineated as follows: 1. Center/Main Street/West Gateway, 2. Service/Near Neighborhood/East Gateway/Stadium, 3. Riverfront. Specific questions were asked in each area, and the group responses were recorded and applied to the final plan. Following is a synopsis of the public comments during the site walks.

### **Civic Center/Main Street/West Gateway**

*1. Is the intersection at Main Street and Isabella Road/Jerome Street an enticing gateway to the downtown? Is it noticeable from the street? What do you want to say about your downtown here?*

- New wayfinding sign on Isabella Road reads "Main St." but doesn't announce downtown. Nothing in this area announces the downtown, especially the architecture. Issues are of maintaining "clear view" intersection versus planting trees in area to buffer pedestrians from busy highway. There are rules/lease agreement on "Santa House" that limit its use to Holiday Season themes only, hence underutilized for most of time; hence the evergreens are now overgrown on grounds. Little park is nice but underutilized.

*2. Is the courthouse entrance well utilized? Should it connect visually to other civic amenities?*

- Is there a way to open this entrance and satisfy the Homeland Security issues? View axis along Fitzhugh to city/county buildings provides connection. Wouldn't this place make a great historical museum?

*3. What is the overall character of Larkin Street? How can it be improved?*

- Overall character is a service access for Main Street buildings, and this is OK. There is a monoculture of ash trees. It's expected the trees along Larkin will die in the next two years, evidenced by dying ash trees spreading from river's edge inland. Catholic church is planning expansion of classroom space, first by erecting trailers and then with new construction. Due to light traffic, this would be a great street to close off for street carnivals, etc. rather than closing off Main Street. Doing so better connects visitors/community to downtown vs. using larger space to the northeast past Indian.

*4. Are the various uses in the super block of the county building space well defined? How can this space be improved?*

- No! Which building is for the city? Which is for the county? Intersection of visual axis looks toward church steeple and courthouse entrance. Makes excellent park space.

*5. What does the intersection at Jerome Street and Buttles Street say about the downtown?*

- This intersection says nothing about downtown.

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

### **Service/Near Neighborhood/East Gateway/Stadium**

1. *Do you think the Poseyville Bridge bisects the stadium district from the downtown? Why? How can it be improved?*

- Yes, but what can be done about it? Murals, lighting, and signage can make it more appealing.

2. *What opportunities are there west of the stadium? Can you envision residential units here?*

- Mixed-use residential+markets+retail+restaurant.
- Townhomes not as good – first floor retail, at least on Main
- Foliage really shields Dow in summer downstream.

3. *How do you feel about the entrance to Dow Diamond? How can connections to the downtown be improved?*

- I like the stadium, but it needs better sidewalks and better pedestrian orientation; it's a little confusing when you are walking.
- Infill block between stadium and State if other residential is successful

4. *What is the overall character of Ellsworth Street? How can it be improved?*

- This street is extra wide and angled parking would be a better fit here. Sidewalks are too narrow - can't walk two abreast. This street has the best view to Dow Diamond – even the scoreboard is visible.
- Excellent development potential at intersection of Ellsworth and Ashman.
- The large AT&T telephone switch center is fixed as millions of circuits go in and out of the building, moving it most likely would be costly and disruptive.

5. *How do you feel about the residential and office uses between Indian and Buttles? Do you feel that the one-way pairs enhance or hinder future development in this area?*

- One way pairs don't hurt future development opportunities.
- Better use of space between pairs would be greenspace. Streets better suited as two-way with bike lanes. One-way pairs had their benefit when there were 6,000+ workers going to and from Dow plant, now use is obsolete. Also explains why Ellsworth Street is as wide as it was, when it was part of this old traffic pattern.

6. *What does the intersection at Poseyville Road and Ellsworth Street say about the downtown? Is the park usable or enjoyable? Do you feel comfortable as a pedestrian in this area? How can this space be improved?*

- Project for Public Spaces (PPS) recommended– flowers/improvements.
- Major intersection says: "We're abandoned!" I have never used that park, I have never seen anyone else using it either.
- If no Poseyville realign, enhance two Ellsworth intersections: bump-outs, etc.

**Riverfront**

1. *What is your overall opinion of the Downtown Midland's Riverfront? Do you think this is an appropriate use of space? When do you use this space?*

- We use the riverfront to park our cars and then take our bikes on the trail. We sometimes go to the Farmer's Market.
- It is important that the riverfront continue to be available for the use of all residents not just people who have enough money to buy a fancy loft. The riverfront is not especially attractive, but at least it's ours.
- It's just a bunch of parking lots. The Tridge is nice.

2. *What opportunities are there for the Midland Daily News building? Can you envision residential units here? Can you envision a waterfront restaurant? What else do you envision?*

- A waterfront restaurant would be nice, but I can't envision it. It would just overlook the parking lot.
- Opportunities in the area? There must be something that can be done here, this area is really ugly.

3. *From your experience, is this an appropriate amount of parking? When is it too much? When is it too little?*

- During the week, this lot is never full. It is nice to have the parking close to the trail and spray park, especially when you include kids.
- I have seen the parking lots full for "Tunes at the Tridge"

4. *Is the Farmer's Market an appropriate use of this space? What types of improvements (if any) should be made?*

- The Farmer's Market is great. It really brings the community together.
- The bathrooms are nice to have, but they need to be better maintained.
- An ice rink in the winter would be nice.
- Bathrooms are needed but block the views, and they are ugly!

5. *What is your opinion of the river's edge? Do you use the walking path? What types of improvements (if any) should be made?*

- The edge along the river is messy, but I think there are major DEQ regulations.
- I like the naturalized edge.
- People do not know the path continues behind the senior center.
- It's hard to get to the edge, I won't let my kids near it.

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**Additional Public Input.** After the focus group discussions and site walks, the group reconvened at the senior center for more discussion including a presentation of the project goals, SWOT session exercise, and presentation of the work compiled to date by the consultants.

The presentation of the project goals began with a recap of the day's events including results and comments generated from the focus group discussion and the site walks. A brief overview of the goals of the downtown redevelopment plan and a general assessment of the downtown by the consultants were also presented. The assessment from the consultants included praise for the success of downtown merchants, the inclusion of the baseball stadium, and the magnitude of scheduled events. Constructive criticism was also given. Some

of the criticism included lack of gateways or entrances to the downtown, high percentage of buildings that are not accessible or welcoming from Main Street, and large amount of surface parking that is poorly utilized throughout the downtown.

The public then participated in a SWOT session. A SWOT session is a commonly used planning strategy that assists the community and its consultants in identifying its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). The resulting analysis is an analytical framework that can assist the community in identifying priorities for change. The SWOT session also enables a community to leverage its strengths in exploring new opportunities for the future. The results of the session were used to plan potential new developments and identify land use that these new developments may replace. A summary of the SWOT analysis can be found in the tables below.

At the end of Day-One, the public had the opportunity to view the work compiled to date by the consultants including a comprehensive site analysis, an existing character zone diagram, and a proposed land use diagram.

### Strengths

- Historic buildings – ex.: Larkin Building
- Tridge
- Santa House – “Santa School”
- Riverfront
- Dow Diamond
- Market/Restaurants/Hardware
- Spray Park
- Hotel/Chemical Bank/Civic jobs
- Walkable
- Greenspace parks
- Trail
- Riverside Place: relationships, service
- Unique buildings
- Churches

### Weaknesses

- Lack of merchant opportunities – not good variety
- Underutilized space
- TV repair/appliance shops- not appropriate use
- Entrance to downtown is “hidden”
- Missed opportunity for gateway
- Traffic moves through/no stop
- US-10/M-20 and one-way pairs are barriers
- Views from the Tridge could be enhanced

### Opportunities

- Riverfront
- Trail system – marketing – spur path
- The people and Midland attractions
- Things to do across the Tridge
- Land to be developed
- Midland is the center of activity
- Athletic events
- Fairground/antique shows bring business downtown
- Regional draw

### Threats

- State economy
- Flood plain regulations
- Mall & Large chain stores that work against downtown businesses

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

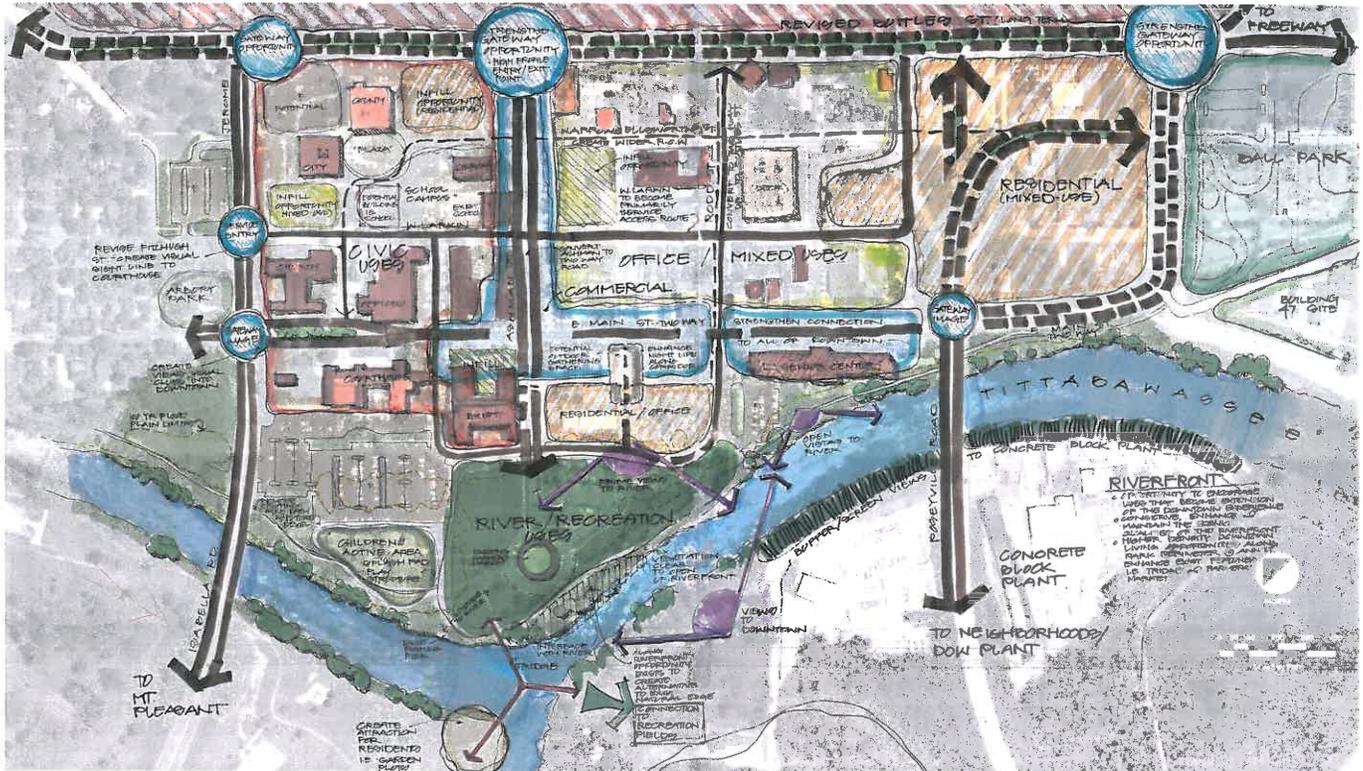
The community participates in a SWOT session. A SWOT session is a commonly used planning strategy that assists the community and its consultants in identifying its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)



The consultants end Day-One by graphically compiling the data gathered from the day's events



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



**Initial Proposed land use diagram.** The diagram begins to combine the identification of particular character zones in the downtown with possible land that could be used to serve the goals of the future for downtown such as residential development and increased visibility of the downtown to regional traffic.

“Drop-in Design” was the title for Day-Two activities. Unlike the structured discussions in the previous day, the public had the opportunity to “drop-in” at any time to give feedback while the draft plan was in process. This feedback resulted in lively debate as residential developments began to appear on the proposed drawings of downtown. The consultants used the information gathered during the Day-One sessions to draft ideas for future land use in the downtown and to draft a preliminary plan for redevelopment.

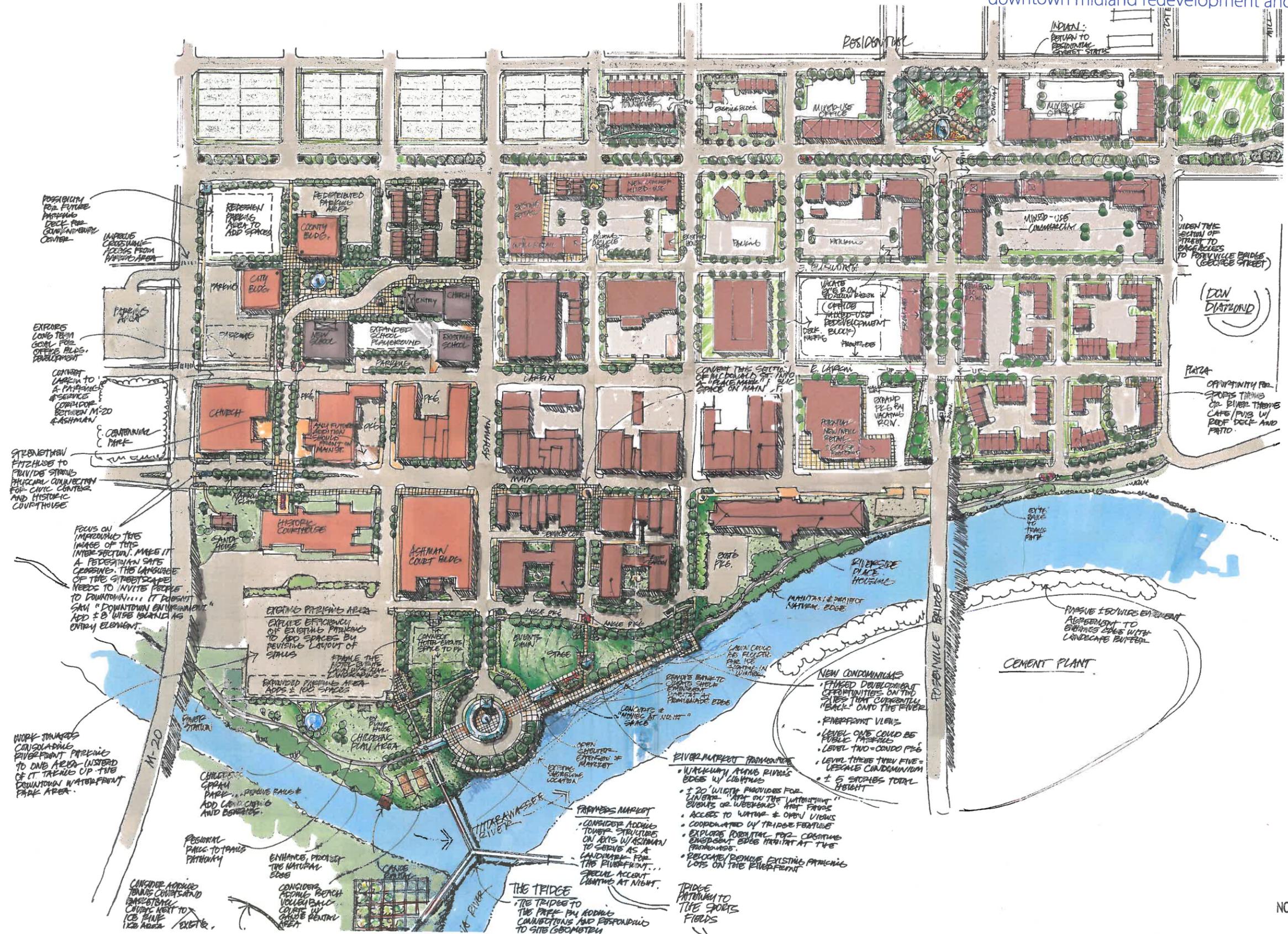
**Preliminary Conclusions.** At the end of Day-Two, the public was invited to reconvene for a formal presentation where the preliminary plan was unveiled. The most drastic changes proposed in the preliminary plan were changes to the Civic Center, Riverfront, and Stadium District. Proposed changes to the Civic Center included the addition of a residential development, a civic park, space for an expanded elementary school

building, and a parking deck to serve not only the city and county buildings but overflow parking for nearby churches and businesses. Ideas for the Riverfront included a formal river’s edge with railings, a boardwalk, lighting, a renovated Farmer’s Market, the relocation of public parking to provide passive green space, and the addition of residential loft style housing with river views. Concepts for the Stadium District included a new Poseyville Road and the relocation of businesses in this district to accommodate a new townhome community.

The concepts that garnered the largest positive reaction from the public were improvements to the riverfront and the variety of housing proposed in the downtown. The concept that attracted negative comments was the proposed alignment of a new Poseyville Road. The final redevelopment plan readdressed these concerns and offers an alignment that better suits the needs of business owners and motorists alike.







Preliminary Redevelopment Concept B



## Residential Market Analysis

*The purpose of the residential market analysis is to analyze the opportunity for new residential units in the downtown and develop an achievable but optimal strategy for new housing development.*



Examples of stacked flats over street-level retail space. Photo-Anderson Economic Group.

Previous market studies prepared for the DDA identified a potential need for additional retail and entertainment uses downtown. These needs will continue to be examined by the DDA. The market study prepared for this plan focused on the potential for urban living that would bring built-in users for the downtown.

### **Residential Market Analysis.**

While some types of housing already exist in the downtown, there is interest in creating a wider variety and larger number of housing options. The purpose of the residential market analysis is to analyze the opportunity for new residential units in the downtown and develop an achievable but optimal strategy for new housing development. New residential options in the downtown can serve two purposes of providing a greater range housing options to residents in the city and to create a greater sense of liveliness in the downtown.

### **Development Strategy Overview.**

The development strategy focuses on three areas that present the best opportunities for new residential development in downtown Midland. These areas are all currently underutilized and are within proximity to key community amenities like the riverfront, Farmer's Market, baseball stadium, parks, and bike paths that appeal to residents seeking an urban setting.

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

### **Redevelopment Area 1**

Area 1 is located in the Stadium District. These units should be a mix of owner and renter occupancies with a majority owner-occupied.

- Units should range in size from 1,000 to 1,800 square feet in a price range from \$190,000 to \$290,000.
- These units can command a premium price per square foot due to their location adjacent to downtown, city parks, and Dow Diamond.
- These units should offer two to three bedrooms, 1.5 to 2.5 bathrooms, and one or two garage stalls depending upon the size.

### **Redevelopment Area 2**

Area 2 is located near Buttles and Ashman Streets (the near neighborhood and the civic center). Townhouses are recommended for this area but at more moderate sizes and prices than Area 1 and with a larger number of rental units mixed in.

- Units should range in size from 800 to 1,600 square feet in a price range from \$120,000 to \$240,000.
- These units should offer two to three bedrooms, 1.5 to 2.5 bathrooms, and one or two garage stalls depending upon the size of the unit.

### **Redevelopment Area 3**

Area 3 is located near Ann Street and the Farmer's Market (the riverfront). Stacked flats and apartments are recommended for this area with some space on the ground level reserved for seasonal venues and public space.

- Units should range in size from 1,000 to 1,800 square feet in a price range from \$190,000 to \$290,000.
- These units should offer two to three bedrooms and 1.5 to 2.5 bathrooms depending upon the size of the unit.
- The target household for this development is more mature than those for Areas 1 and 2, and includes those who desire to be within walking distance of downtown but prefer to be away from the traffic and enjoy the riverside.

### **Primary Data Analysis**

As a basis of the recommendations and strategy, an analysis of for-sale units and for-rent units currently on the market was conducted. The results are as follows:

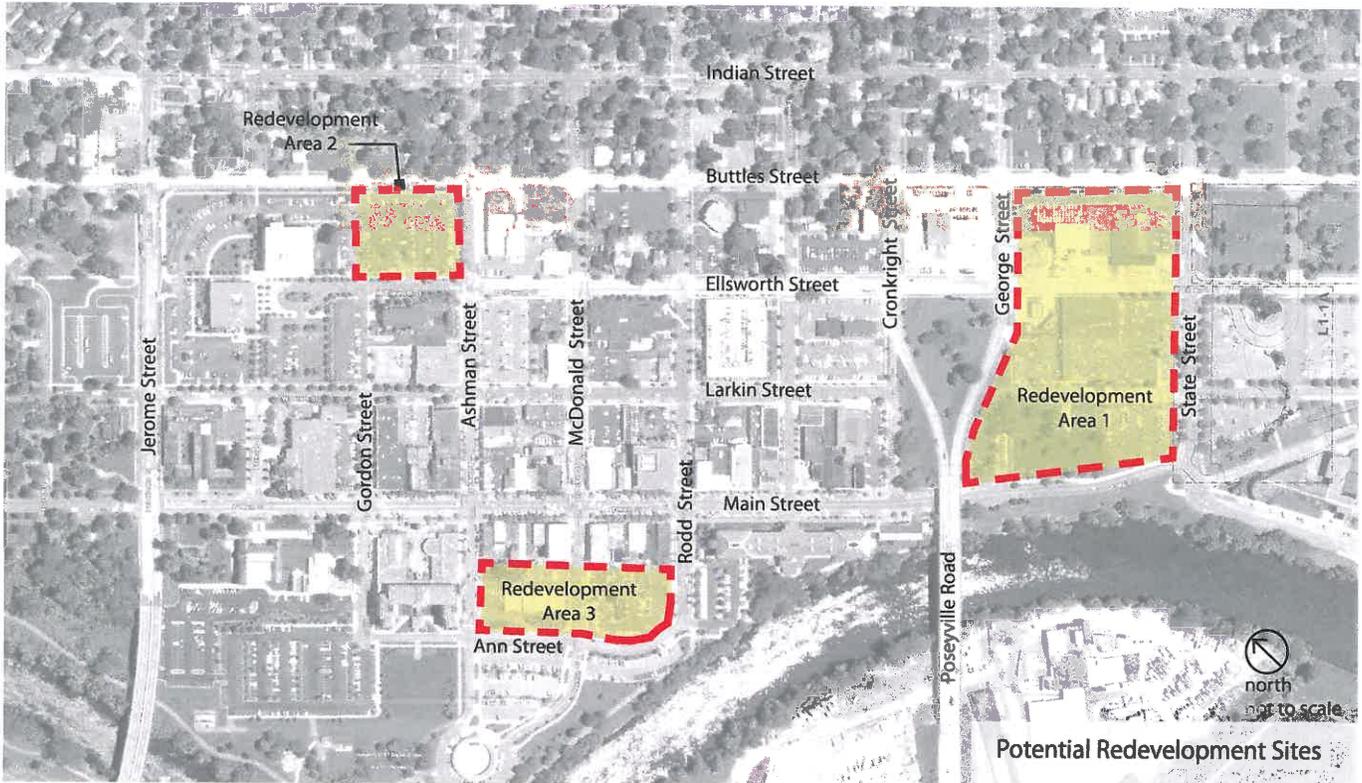
#### **Owner-Occupied Units**

- Single-family units were dispersed throughout the price brackets.
- Prices for condo units clustered closely around \$100,000 to \$200,000.
- Nearly 40% of condominiums are priced between \$150,000 and \$200,000.
- All for-sale single-family units were built from 1950 through today with the largest percentage built after 2000 at 19.1%.
- All for-sale condo units were built since 1960; over 49% have been constructed since 2000.

# downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

left: Example of Optimal Unit Type for Area 1  
Photo-Anderson Economic Group.

right: Example of Optimal Unit Type for Area 2  
Photo-Anderson Economic Group.



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

### **Rental Units**

- Current for-rent units in Midland range from \$300 to \$800 a month, compared to a range of \$300 to over \$1,000 for surrounding communities.
- Over 88% of the units rent from \$400 to \$700 a month, compared to 71% for surrounding communities with 27% of units renting above \$700 a month.
- Rental units in Midland and surrounding communities range in size from 400 to 1,700 square feet with most units clustered between 500 and 1,200 square feet.

### **Supply - Demand Analysis**

The model is designed to determine the best opportunity to build new housing units within a particular market. However, while the model may indicate zero “gap” in some price brackets, some savvy developers could try to compete for buyers in these price points. The results are as follows:

### **Owner-Occupied Units**

- The strongest opportunity is in the \$200,000 to \$299,999 price bracket.
- There is also growing opportunity in the \$50,000 to \$125,000 price bracket.

### **Rental Units**

- The strongest opportunity is in the \$800 to \$999 monthly rental bracket followed by higher price brackets.
- Overall, the opportunity declines in 2020 to a third of the opportunity in 2007. This is due to current trends in demographics and unit supply, which may shift in future years.

### **Methodology and Approach**

The methodology and approach begins with an examination of the overall vitality of the Midland housing market. A trade area for the downtown to serve as a base geography for further analysis was delineated. Using the trade area, data was collected and analyzed on for-sale units, a supply / demand analysis was conducted, rental rates in Midland and surrounding communities were studied. The results from the analysis during the site assessment were qualified and market tour to refine the recommendations.

The preceding text is a summary of the residential market analysis. The full document can be found under separate cover.

Summary of Residential Opportunity in Downtown Midland Michigan -  
Owner Occupied Units

Price Bracket	Year					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2015	2020
\$0 - \$49,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$50,000 - \$79,999	10	10	10	10	15	15
\$80,000 - \$124,999	15	50	80	105	240	370
\$125,000 - \$149,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$150,000 - \$174,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$175,000 - \$199,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$200,000 - \$299,999	200	220	240	265	340	420
\$300,000 - \$399,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$400,000 - \$499,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$500,000 - \$749,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$750,000 - \$999,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$1,000,000 +	-	-	-	-	-	-
Summation	225	280	330	380	595	805

Source: Proprietary Supply-Demand Model  
Anderson Economic Group, LLC 2006.

downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

## Redevelopment Concepts

*The concepts found in the plan reflect the ideas and objectives determined by Midland's residents, business owners, and civic representatives and is crafted to appeal to a wide variety of developers.*

### **Key Goals of the redevelopment plan:**

- Stimulate economic development
- Create a dynamic environment
- Provide unique housing
- Create a successful business environment
- Protect existing amenities
- Provide transportation that does not sacrifice the quality of the downtown

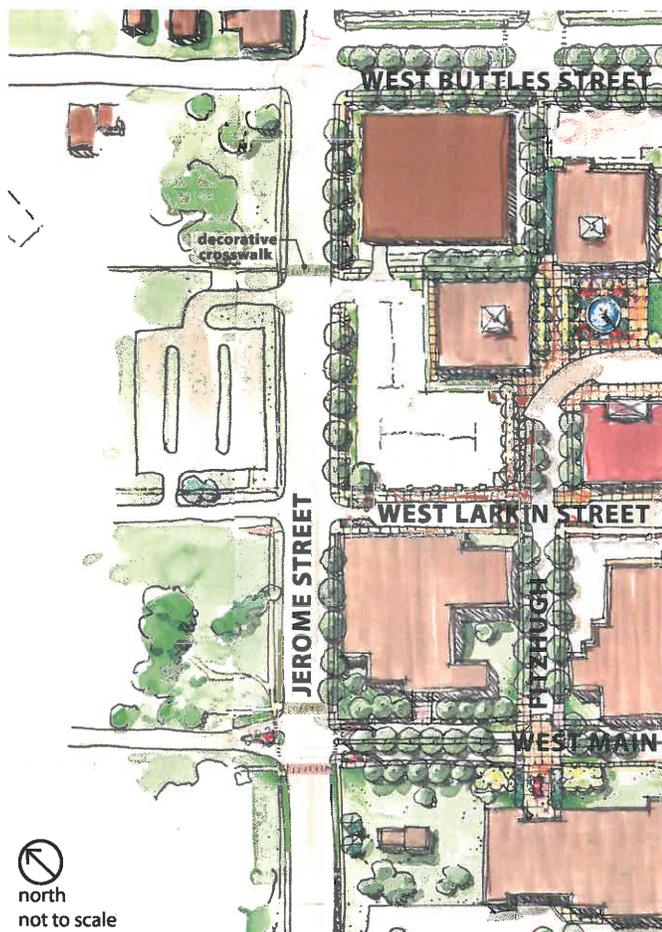
### **Redevelopment Approach**

The purpose of the redevelopment plan is to set a framework for action that illustrates design opportunities. The concepts found in the plan reflect the ideas and objectives determined by Midland's residents, business owners, and civic representatives and is crafted to appeal to a wide variety of developers. The plan sets a path for public and private investment and supports the following goals:

- Stimulate economic development in the downtown.
- Create a dynamic environment for people to live and work.
- Provide a unique, exciting and urban housing community.
- Continue efforts to create a successful business environment for existing and future merchants in the downtown.
- Protect existing amenities in the downtown such as the Farmer's Market, Tridge, historic buildings and waterfront.
- Provide efficient transportation to and through the downtown that does not sacrifice the quality of a pleasant walkable environment.

The redevelopment concepts are presented by district and include opportunities for commercial and residential development and public space improvements.

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



above: Example of a landscaped median within a mixed use corridor

**West Gateway.** Currently Jerome Street and the Karl Robertson Bridge is simply a means to “get somewhere else”. They do not serve as a special entrance to the downtown. A major improvement to the overall visibility and marketability of the downtown can be made with a small investment by adding entrance features to the Main Street - Jerome Street intersection.

By adding a median to Main Street, several opportunities to present a grand entrance to downtown Midland are capable. The median can be filled with landscaping, intensely-colored annual plantings, a sculpture and “Welcome to Midland” signage. The median could also serve as a pedestrian refuge across Main Street and should be accessed by crosswalks delineated with

decorative paving similar to the crosswalks located elsewhere in the downtown.

The Karl Robertson Bridge is a missed opportunity to provide a welcome to downtown Midland. A median, welcome signage, pedestrian scale lighting, and site amenities will enhance this utilitarian bridge. Site amenities are discussed later in this chapter.

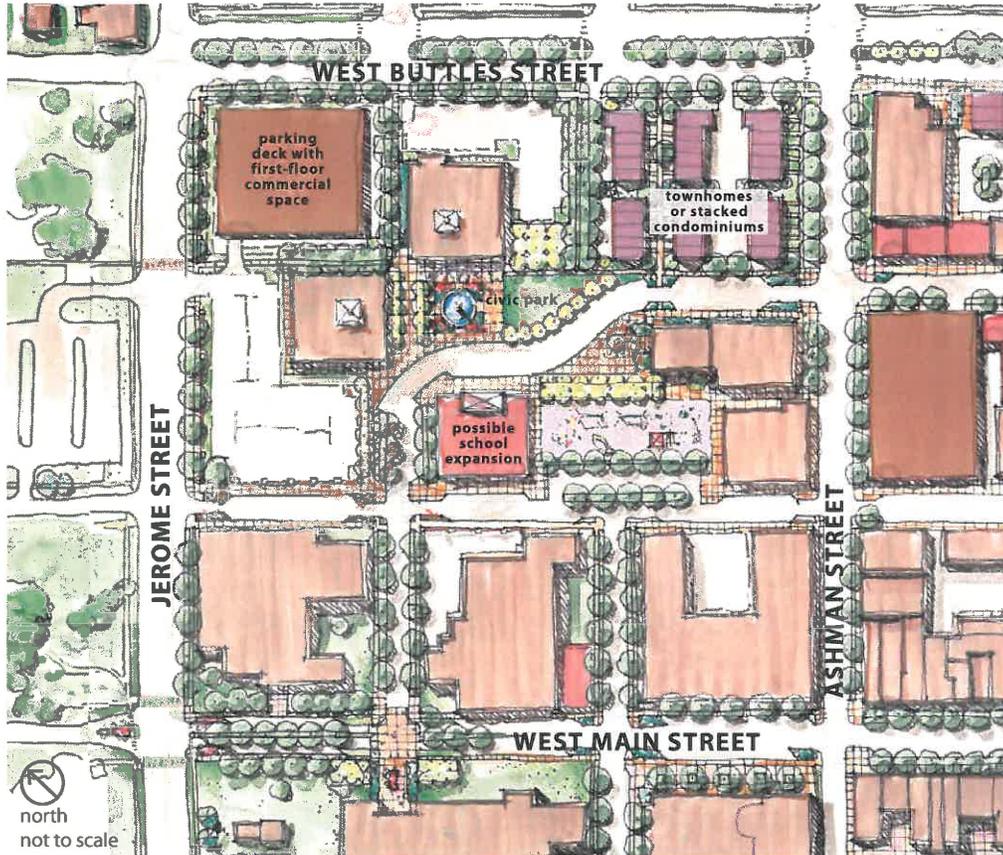
right: Existing view from Centennial Park looking to the current entrance to the downtown



below: Image of proposed view to the entrance to the downtown with a landscaped median and welcome signage



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



Future development opportunities in the plan include townhomes or stacked condominiums, a possible Saint Brigid school expansion, a public pocket park, and a formal entrance drive to the Civic Center

**Civic Center.** Currently the Civic Center is a composite of suburban-style buildings surrounded by a series of disconnected parking lots. The city and county buildings have little pedestrian scale. The lack of orientation to the street grid creates a confusing environment.

The redevelopment plan calls for a parking deck at the southeast corner of Jerome Street and West Buttles Street to provide an anchor to the downtown. This deck should be designed to resemble other occupied buildings in the downtown with a masonry veneer and openings dimensionally consistent with windows and doors found throughout the downtown. The first floor should be reserved for commercial space to serve the municipal buildings and the neighborhoods to the north and west. The financial feasibility of parking decks must be studied before development can be planned.

In the Civic Center the parking deck must be capable of replacing the existing municipal surface parking opening several parcels of land for new development.

Other development opportunities in the Civic Center include townhomes or stacked condominiums on the southwest corner of Ashman Street and West Buttles. These units provide an opportunity for downtown living at perhaps a lower cost than other proposed residential developments. The orientation of the complex is designed to take advantage of views to Saint Brigid Church.

The plan also suggests a possible Saint Brigid school expansion, a public pocket park, and a formal entrance drive to the Civic Center.

downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**top left: Example of residential housing featuring a pedestrian promenade**



**top right: Example of residential housing facing a commercial street**



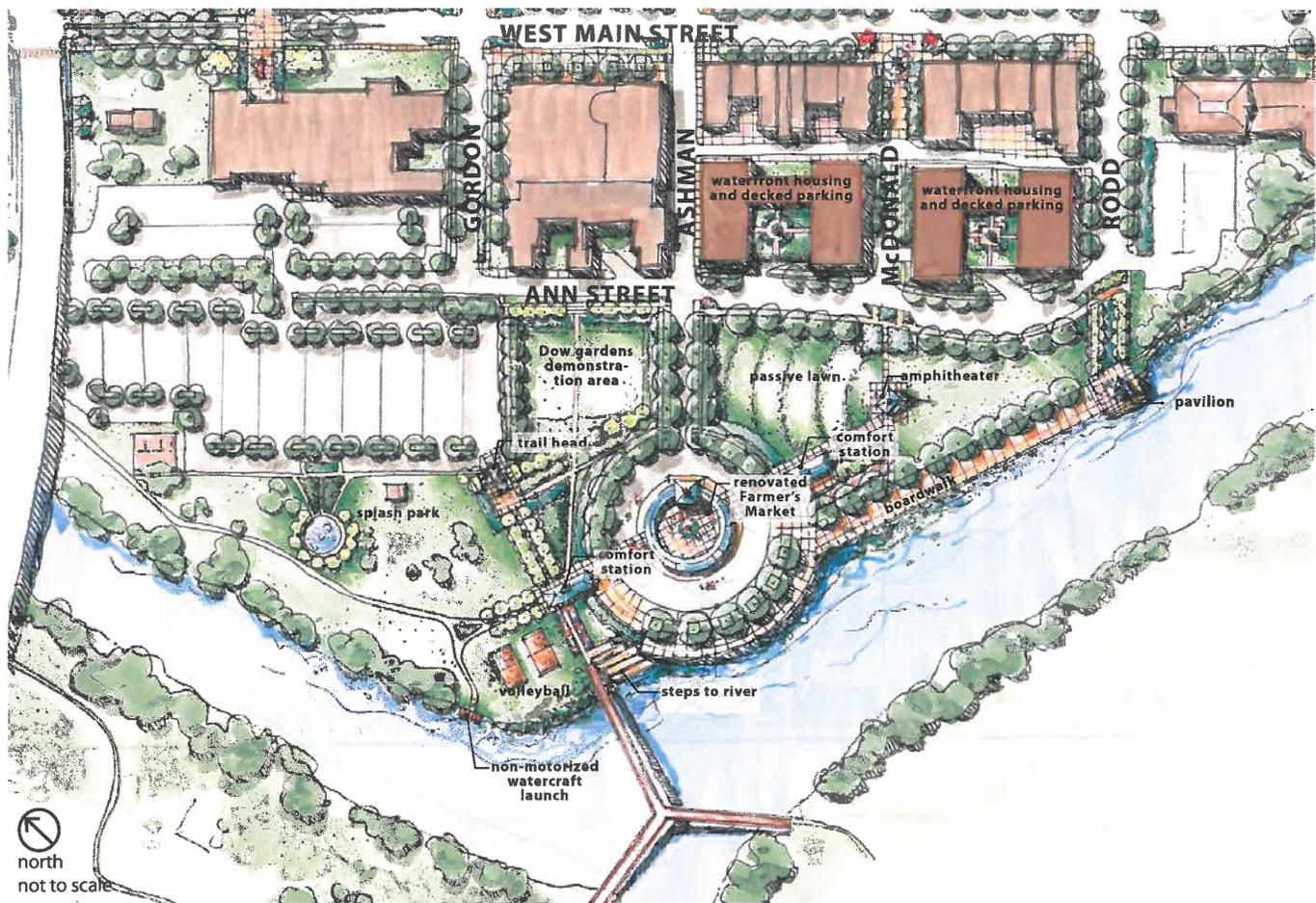
**bottom left: Existing view of parking lots on West Buttrick with Saint Brigid Church beyond**



**below: Image of proposed townhomes on West Buttrick featuring a pedestrian promenade leading to the Saint Brigid Church entrance**



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



**The Riverfront.** Possibly the most exciting of the proposed improvements to Midland's downtown are the opportunities that exist on the banks of the Tittabawassee River. Waterfronts in most urban towns and cities have been dedicated to industrial uses over the last century. In Midland, the past industrial uses combined with a precarious floodplain have resulted in a waterfront that is primarily a parking lot. The redevelopment plan calls for two major improvements to the riverfront; first the addition of housing, and second a renovation of the existing public spaces. No redevelopment recommendations for the south side of the river are proposed at this time.

Waterfront housing was identified as a feasible addition

to the Midland real estate market. The sketch above illustrates potential locations for waterfront housing. Mixed-use residential developments are proposed north of Ann Street featuring two levels of parking and three levels of residential. Parking on the first floor would be dedicated to public parking with the second floor for the residential units above. Floodplain restrictions and design criteria will be the primary factors in determining the layout of these units as further architectural studies move forward.

The redevelopment plan depicts several public improvements to the waterfront that originate with the relocation of the majority of surface parking. This parking can be mitigated to the two proposed parking

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

decks in the residential development for office workers and business employees who park in the area for more than a few hours a day. The remainder of the parking can be accommodated by an expanded and reorganized surface lot south of the courthouse. The surface lot can also be used by hotel guests and those who will be visiting the waterfront for a short period of time.

Focal points of the waterfront improvements are the renovated Farmer's Market and the pedestrian boardwalk. The famous "round" structure of the Farmer's Market should remain, but the existing public rest rooms should be removed to open views from Ashman Street to the river and Tridge. Male and female comfort stations can replace the demolished rest rooms and feature changing rooms and seasonal concessions. The proposed pedestrian boardwalk begins with a radial form that mimics the Farmer's Market and continues east to a "lookout" and small pier at Rodd Street. The boardwalk, or promenade, could offer a handrail for leaning and safety, seating, lighting, and possibly interpretive signage depicting the history of the river.

The existing lawn south of the Ashman Court Hotel, while used occasionally for weddings, is generally unused. A formal demonstration area for Dow Gardens with a central path connecting to other waterfront

amenities would be an excellent use of the space and would improve views from inside the hotel restaurant and guest rooms.

Once parking is mitigated, the redevelopment plan calls for the parking lots south of Ann Street to be reused as a passive green space and possible amphitheater. A lawn could be used for tossing a frisbee, sunbathing, or the perfect picnic spot during an outdoor concert.

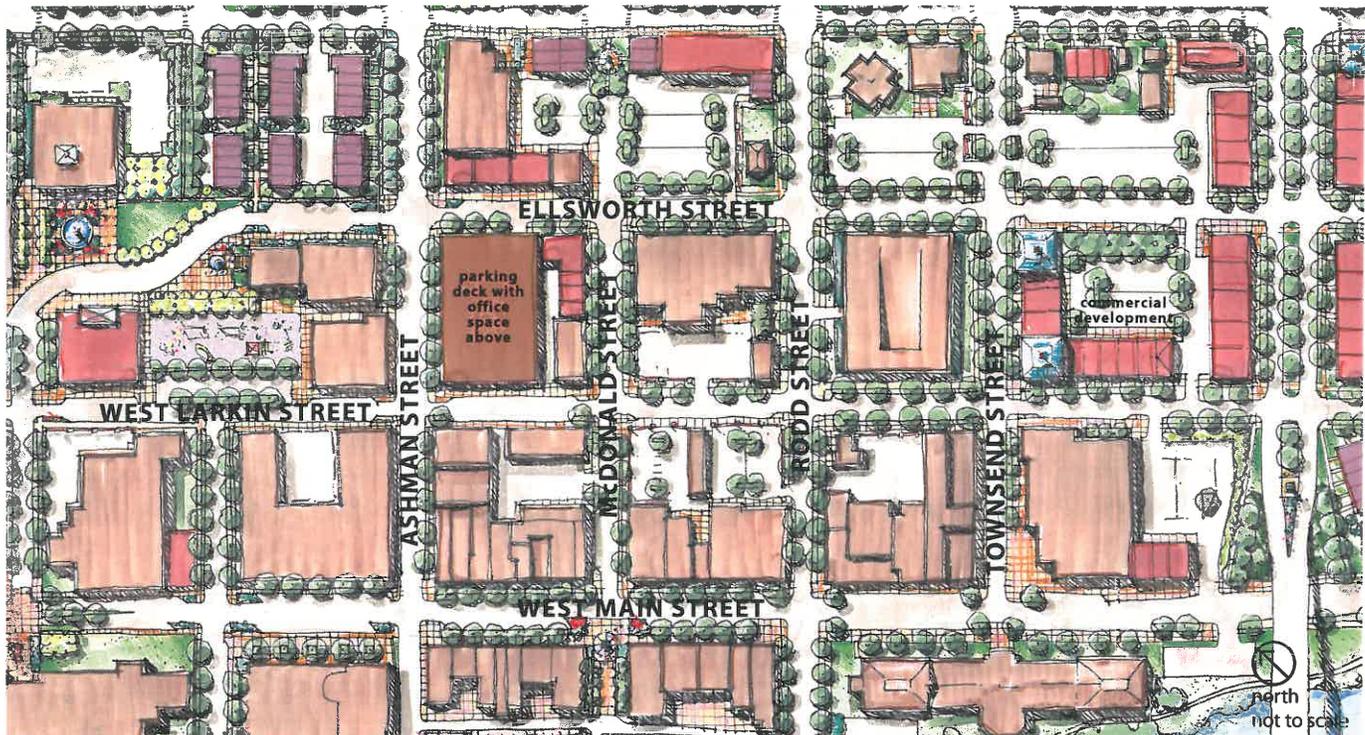
Other proposed waterfront amenities include a renovated non-motorized boat launch, volleyball courts, and a segment of wide formal steps, west of the boardwalk that allows a graceful access to the water's edge. A trail head leading from the surface parking lot to the waterfront park could provide an excellent opportunity to welcome visitors, post community bulletins, and offer directional information for the Pere Marquette Rail Trail.

As is the case for the residential developments, the floodplain will be the primary consideration in determining the final design and form for public amenities on the waterfront. The health of the river and its inhabitants as well as the function of the Saginaw Bay Watershed should be the primary focus as the design of public amenities move forward.

**The sketch below depicts a residential development proposed north of Ann Street featuring two levels of parking followed by three levels of residential. Parking on the first floor should be dedicated to public parking with the second floor open for the residential units above.**



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



**The Downtown Core.** The Downtown Core has enjoyed several upgrades and amenities over the past two decades from streetscape improvements to historic facade renovations. These improvements have resulted in an attractive and inviting Main Street that serves as the focal point of downtown.

No significant developments are proposed in the Downtown Core. Future development should be built to the right-of-way line, and pedestrian entrances should be encouraged on Main Street promoting an active streetscape. Existing DDA facade guidelines should be followed for renovations and encouraged for new buildings.

There are a wide variety of light fixtures, benches, planters, signage, paving, and fountains tucked neatly into the sidewalk. Such site amenities play an important role in the appearance of a streetscape, but they should not become a dominant feature. Site amenities are

discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

**The Service District.** Like the downtown core, there are few major developments proposed in the Service District. West Larkin Street and Ellsworth Street will continue to serve primarily as office space with parking opportunities for baseball games and downtown events. Infill development should be built to the right-of-way line and entrances should be encouraged on the north/south streets. Where surface parking lots are unavoidable, high-quality masonry knee-walls and landscaping should be required to screen views from the street. The number of driveways should be limited to improve pedestrian flow, reduce vehicular conflicts, and provide additional space for on-street parking.

As the downtown continues to evolve, Ashman Street will become a dominant collector to the Downtown Core. To establish a consistent street edge and provide additional opportunities for development, a parking

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



**far left:** Example of simple facades and paving drawing attention to the contents of the shop windows



**top left:** Example of district consistency through the use of light fixtures



**bottom left:** Simple decorative paving used to highlight pedestrian crosswalks

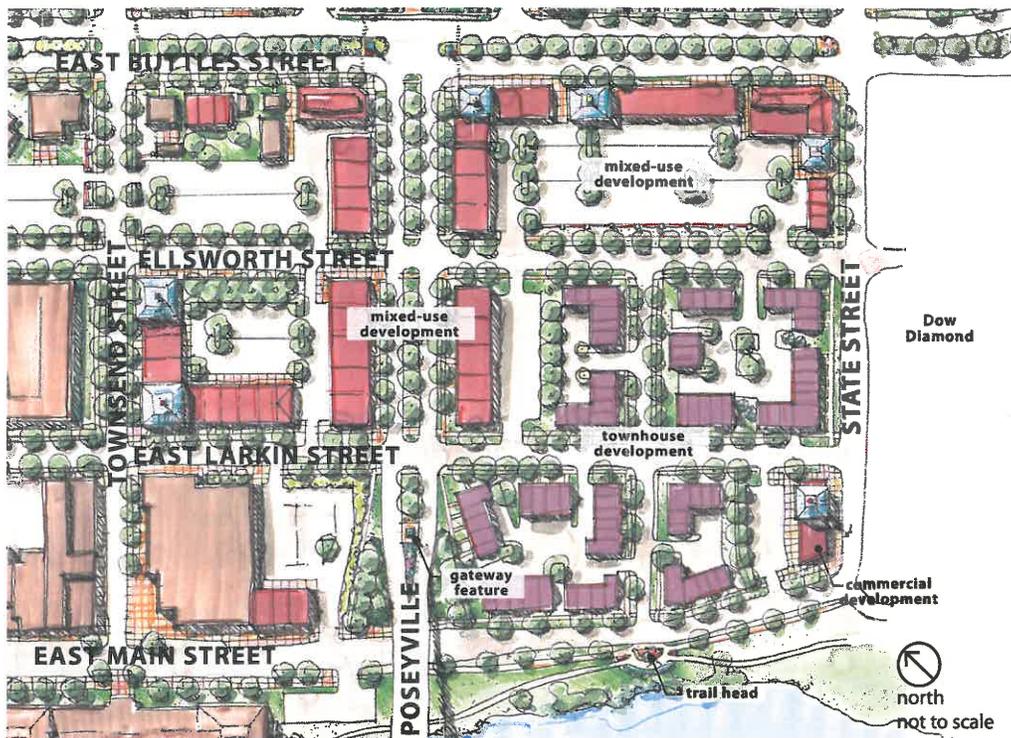
**below:** Example of brick paving laid in a simple pattern

deck is proposed with office space above on the corner of Ashman Street and Larkin Street.

Responding to the proposed development on the realigned Poseyville Road, an additional infill development is proposed on the corner of West Larkin Street and Townsend Street. Whole-block development has few construction constraints and should be held to a higher design standard than developments with existing infrastructure and adjacent buildings. Build-to lines should be respected, adjacent building heights should dictate proposed heights, and little to no surface parking should be visible from the street.



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



**The Stadium District and East Gateway.** This area provides the largest opportunity for whole-scale change within the downtown. Currently there are two major landowners within the district who operate successful businesses. While any successful business is an asset to a community, its individual land use may not be beneficial to the goals of a downtown. Should these businesses be relocated to a suitable location, a large amount of land could be opened to redevelopment.

A catalyst for this redevelopment would be the re-configuration of the Mark T. Putnam Bridge. The existing elevated wishbone shape bisects the downtown and renders two city blocks useless to development. By "pinching" the wishbone to a boulevard and lowering the elevation, an attractive, walkable entrance to the downtown can be achieved. Future traffic volumes, soil engineering, and size of watercraft passing under the bridge will all have a bearing on the ultimate redesign of the bridge. Regardless of the ultimate engineering

criteria, future design must include the sociability of the downtown and marketability of the surrounding land not just the efficiency of traffic movement.

Mixed-use development is proposed lining the proposed Poseyville Road boulevard. This development may include commercial and office spaces on the first floors, with the potential for rental units above. Rental opportunities were cited as a minor opportunity in the housing market but an opportunity nonetheless. A commercial development is proposed on East Larkin Street between Poseyville Road and State Street. This development may appeal to national retailers who may prefer a location adjacent higher traffic volumes.

Finally, land between the new Poseyville Road and State Street south of Ellsworth provides the perfect enclave for high quality townhomes. These townhomes would offer walking distance to Dow Diamond, downtown businesses and the renovated waterfront park.

downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

top left: Example of townhomes



top right: Example of townhomes with varying facades



bottom left: Existing view of Main Street with the Mark T. Putnam bridge beyond



below: Image of proposed townhomes within the Stadium District facing Main Street and the Tittabawassee River





**The Near Neighborhood.** As indicated earlier, the single-family residences between the Buttles Street and Indian Street one-way pairs are struggling. The businesses that once had prominent addresses along a well-traveled street are now exposed to half the traffic as motorists travel only east bound past their establishments. The solution for this land between Business State Route 10 and State Route 20 east of the downtown has historically been to create greenspace. While greenspace is attractive scenery, it serves limited public benefit when constantly bisected by streets and highways.

The proposed plan calls for the widening of East and West Buttles Street to accommodate the return of two-way traffic and a narrow boulevard featuring convenient crossing locations for pedestrians. The terminus of the proposed Poseyville Road at the improved Buttles Street offers an excellent opportunity for a public park. The proposed park is approximately 1.5 acres of usable public space that can be accessed by residents of the neighborhoods to the north and downtown patrons. This active park would replace the unused 1.2 acre Putman Park, serve as a catalyst for additional commercial development, and announce the downtown to motorists who normally bypass the district.

With the exception of a local “Dial a Ride” program offered by Midland’s Department of Public Services, there is no public transportation accessible within the downtown. Participants in the focus group discussions indicated a desire for public transit to serve the downtown. Future transit needs for a growing community should be studied and anticipated with future development. The redesigned Buttles boulevard would be an excellent host for future public transportation. Subsequently, the proposed public park and fronting development would serve as a transit hub link to the downtown.

Indian Street would also revert to two-way traffic but at a greatly reduced volume. Reduced traffic volumes would allow for on-street parking and a more walkable environment allowing the neighborhood to the north to heal, possibly increasing property values with its new proximity to an attractive downtown edge. Bike lanes could also be considered for this and other streets.

The land between Indian Street and the improved Buttles boulevard provides an excellent opportunity for more modest attached housing and neighborhood retail serving the single-family residential to the north.

downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



**above:** Example of boulevards in a residential neighborhood with commercial uses along the main road



**top right:** Example of a boulevard in a commercial district.

**bottom right:** Example of a public plaza within a commercial development



**below:** Example of a simple median in a high traffic commercial district





The beautiful annual plantings that can be found on Main Street in the summer months.

**Site Amenities.** The previous pages have described various redevelopment efforts in separate districts. It is important, however, that the downtown function as more than a series of separate districts. Currently there is a wide variety of light fixtures, benches, and decorative paving in the downtown. Appropriately designed, site amenities should serve as a unifying element within the downtown.

Site amenities are more effective when used consistently and should also enhance and support the architectural features of the downtown. Existing amenities such as lighting, trash receptacles, benches, and decorative paving each with their own design and color palette can be distracting when the focus should be on the business facades. Future choices in site amenities should be made with the goal of timelessness and consistency.

Landscaping in a downtown typically includes street trees and planters. Street trees provide a comfortable environment on roads with less pedestrian traffic. In future construction, street trees should be planted

every thirty feet to ensure a proper canopy cover. The existing annual plantings on Main Street promote a high-quality district and should be continued.

An attractive wayfinding system is a vital component in any downtown. Gateway signs, directional systems, and street identification signs all enhance visitor experience and civic pride. Midland recently completed the design and installation of a wayfinding system. Future gateway and directional signage should be designed to complement and coordinate with this system.

Gateways to the downtown such as bridges and highways can also be improved with site amenities. These gateways should be treated as an extension of the downtown. The addition of pedestrian scale lighting, signage and possibly overhead elements that are part of the downtown site amenity package not only extend the downtown but may slow traffic creating a more comfortable pedestrian environment.

# downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

**top left: Recently designed and installed wayfinding signage**



**top right: Recently installed pedestrian scale lighting**



**bottom left: Existing trash receptacles on Main Street**



**bottom right: Existing traffic signal mast arms and attached street lighting on Main Street**



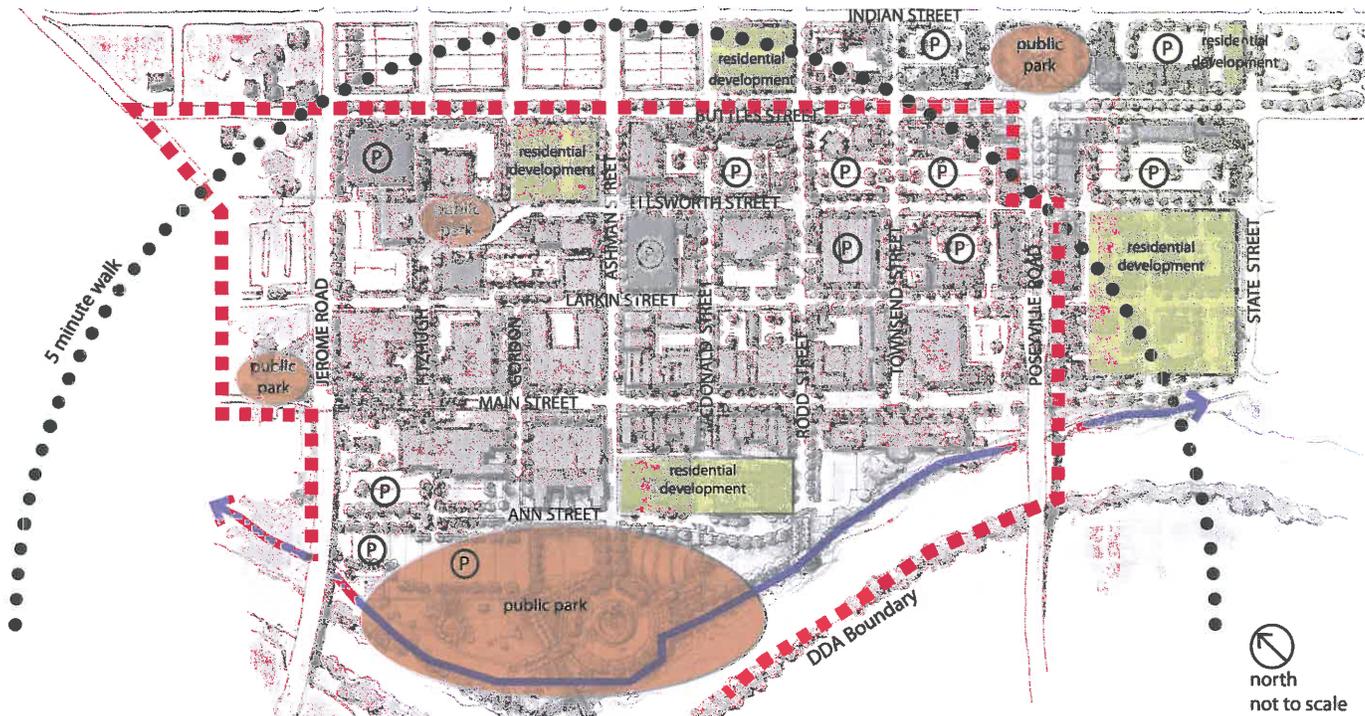
**top right: An existing utilitarian bridge in a Michigan community**



**bottom right: A vision of possible future pedestrian amenities added to the existing bridge**



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan



**Sociability diagram.** The diagram above identifies proposed residential, recreational and cultural opportunities within a comfortable walking distance in the downtown.

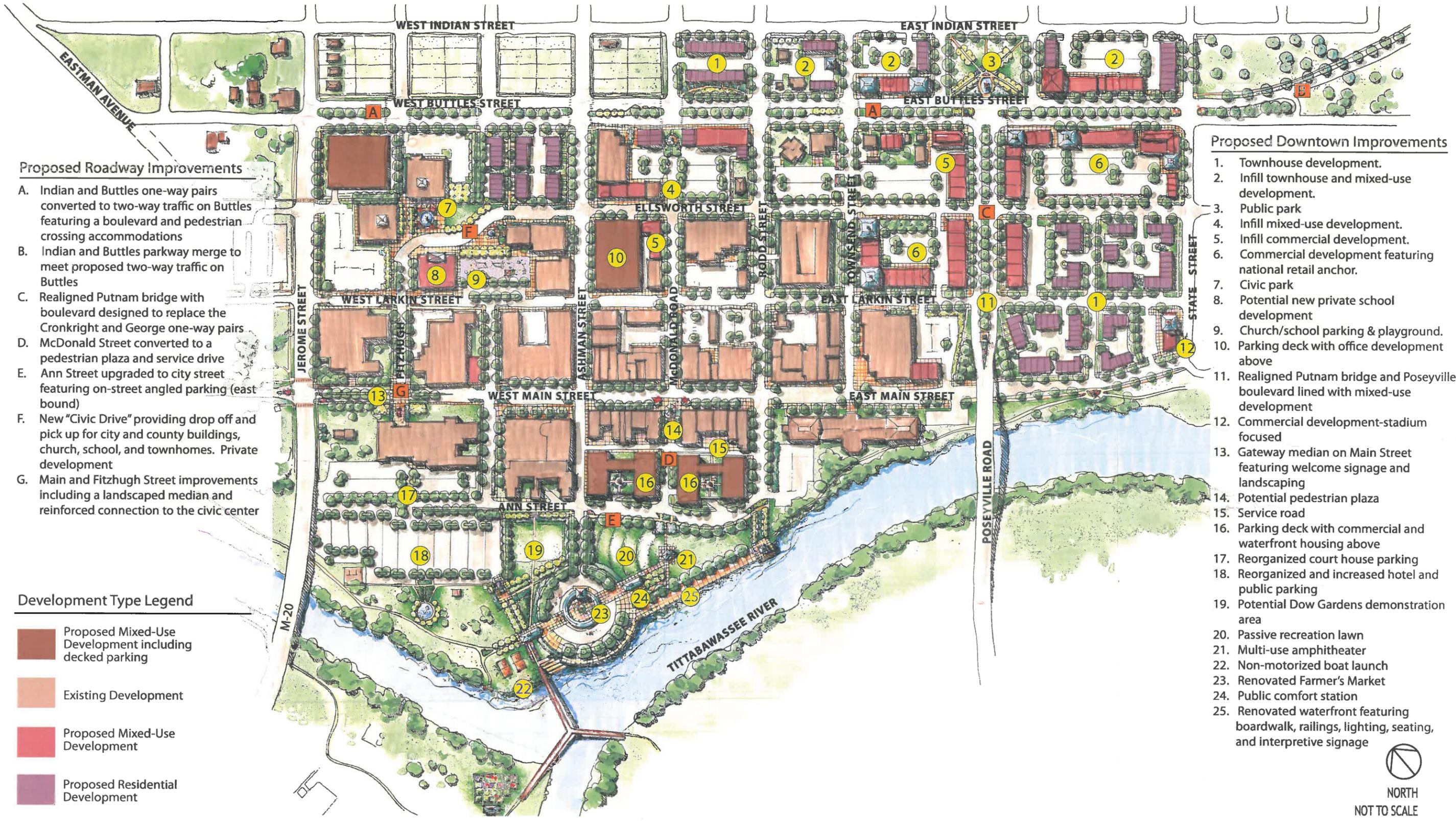
**Proposed Redevelopment Plan.** Historically, the downtown served as the epicenter for commerce, culture, and general sociability. After the flight to the suburbs, many found that long commutes, complete reliance on their automobiles, and detachment from the greater community did not provide the lifestyle they had envisioned.

For some, downtown and urban living provides the intact, social and walkable community many suburbs lack. The addition of residential development within downtowns can play a major role in resurgence as a preferred place to be. Downtowns that successfully reinvent themselves do so not by trying to recreate history but by recognizing they can play a unique but not necessarily dominant role in the regional economy.

As discovered in the market study, gaps in housing choices can be partially filled with housing choices in the downtown. Downtown Midland will compete by offering a bundle of services and a lifestyle that is distinct

from alternatives in the suburbs and other nearby communities. To be truly successful, this urban housing must become a “real neighborhood” where singles, families, and seniors make long-term investments in where they live. The existing historic street grid, intact commercial buildings, and recreational opportunities on the riverfront are an excellent start.

The redevelopment plan serves as a composite of the independent development initiatives recommended earlier in this chapter. Some proposed developments are outside of the existing DDA boundary. The existing boundary includes commercial and service businesses that are traditionally found in today’s downtowns. It is recommended that the current boundary remain in place until new economic and development opportunities become available. Once new development projects that include commercial and residential components commence, the DDA boundaries should be reexamined to include these projects and determine the benefits to its members.



**Proposed Roadway Improvements**

- A. Indian and Buttes one-way pairs converted to two-way traffic on Buttes featuring a boulevard and pedestrian crossing accommodations
- B. Indian and Buttes parkway merge to meet proposed two-way traffic on Buttes
- C. Realigned Putnam bridge with boulevard designed to replace the Cronkright and George one-way pairs
- D. McDonald Street converted to a pedestrian plaza and service drive
- E. Ann Street upgraded to city street featuring on-street angled parking (east bound)
- F. New "Civic Drive" providing drop off and pick up for city and county buildings, church, school, and townhomes. Private development
- G. Main and Fitzhugh Street improvements including a landscaped median and reinforced connection to the civic center

**Development Type Legend**

- Proposed Mixed-Use Development including decked parking
- Existing Development
- Proposed Mixed-Use Development
- Proposed Residential Development

**Proposed Downtown Improvements**

1. Townhouse development.
2. Infill townhouse and mixed-use development.
3. Public park
4. Infill mixed-use development.
5. Infill commercial development.
6. Commercial development featuring national retail anchor.
7. Civic park
8. Potential new private school development
9. Church/school parking & playground.
10. Parking deck with office development above
11. Realigned Putnam bridge and Poseyville boulevard lined with mixed-use development
12. Commercial development-stadium focused
13. Gateway median on Main Street featuring welcome signage and landscaping
14. Potential pedestrian plaza
15. Service road
16. Parking deck with commercial and waterfront housing above
17. Reorganized court house parking
18. Reorganized and increased hotel and public parking
19. Potential Dow Gardens demonstration area
20. Passive recreation lawn
21. Multi-use amphitheater
22. Non-motorized boat launch
23. Renovated Farmer's Market
24. Public comfort station
25. Renovated waterfront featuring boardwalk, railings, lighting, seating, and interpretive signage



NORTH  
NOT TO SCALE



## Parking and Circulation

*Streets in the redevelopment plan in combination with the location of infill development have been deliberately designed to foster safe pedestrian activity and promote a sense of community.*



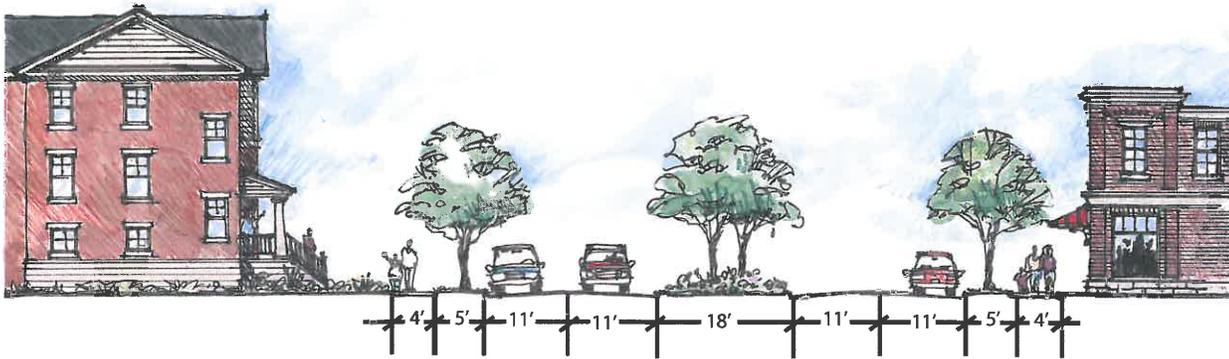
Streets should be designed with more than the car in mind.

### **Downtown circulation strategy.**

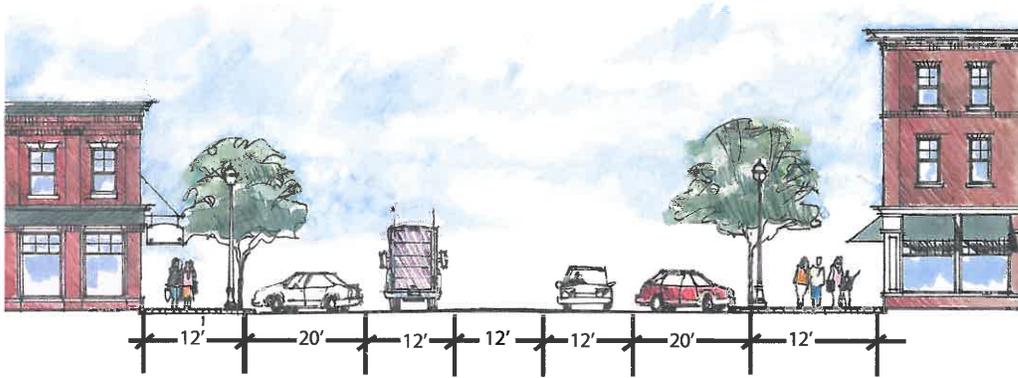
Downtown Midland has an integrated system of local public streets to connect with the residential neighborhoods to the north and west into the downtown, as well as highways to carry motorists through the downtown. Some issues regarding existing circulation are as follows: routes are confusing to visitors, traffic volumes on most streets are low resulting in excess capacity, downtown auto speeds are perceived to be too high, and street design and traffic control favors autos over pedestrians and bicyclists.

In keeping with the design principles of the original city grid, the redevelopment plan proposes a set of standards for pedestrian-scale, traditional downtown streets. Wide street and lane widths can contribute to excessive speeds. Reduced width for travel lanes or the number of travel lanes in combination with the location of infill development have been designed to foster safe pedestrian activity and promote a sense of community.

downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

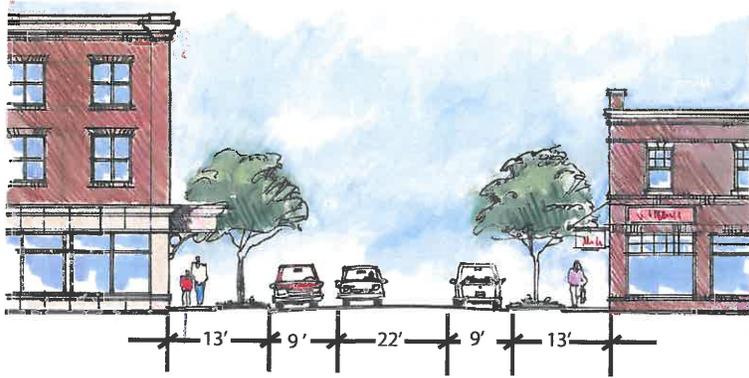


**East/West Buttles and Poseyville Road.** The proposed two-way boulevards are estimated at an 80' right-of-way allowing for 9 feet of public space each side, two 11-foot travel lanes in one direction each side, and an 18-foot boulevard with left turn pockets at appropriate intersections. It should be noted that an 18-foot wide boulevard can not support the necessary space for U-turn movements. If land can be acquired to achieve a 100-foot right-of-way, a 9-foot parallel parking lane should be added on each side.



**Main Street.** Main Street's existing 100-foot right-of-way is distributed with public space, on-street angled parking, one travel lane in each direction, and a turning lane. The existing configuration works well for downtown merchants and their patrons. If parking demands are lowered by other development projects in the future, the conversion of angled to parallel parking and the addition of a boulevard should be considered to add more visual appeal to the downtown.

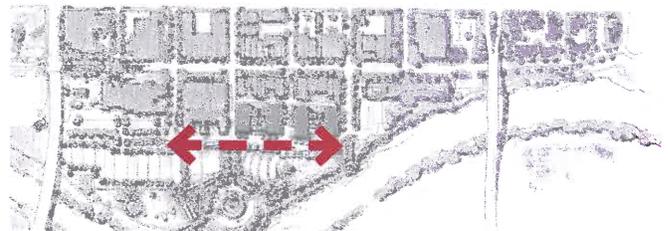




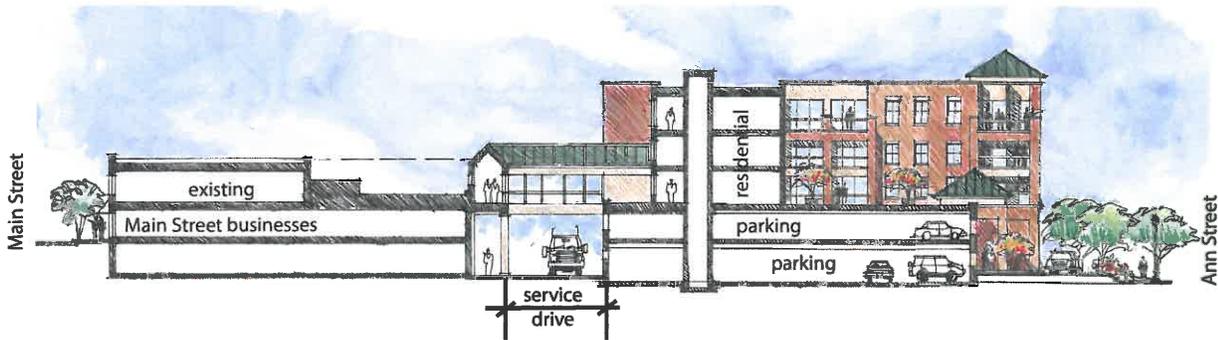
**Standard Downtown Streets.** Standard streets in the downtown have a 66-foot right-of-way distributed as follows; 13 feet of public space each side, 9 feet of parallel parking each side, and two 11-foot travel lanes in each direction. Where possible, on-street parking should include bump-outs at key intersections. Currently Ashman Street follows this pattern with two 12-foot travel lanes in the same direction. To improve exposure to existing businesses, a conversion of one-way streets to two-way should be evaluated.



**Ann Street.** The proposed “riverfront drive” hosting the Ashman Court Hotel and new residential development is estimated at a 66-foot right -of-way allowing for 12 feet of public space, two 11-foot travel lanes in each direction, 20 feet for angled on-street parking, and 12 additional feet of public space for pedestrians and water views.



## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

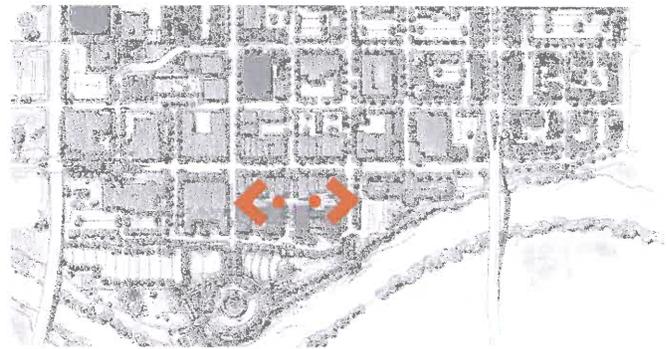


**Proposed service drives.** Service access to the existing businesses on the south side of Main Street will be a primary concern as infill development is designed north of Ann Street. Infill development should include a service drive between existing and proposed buildings featuring space for large truck deliveries, refuse storage and pick up, as well as a convenient connection to the proposed parking structure.

### **Downtown Parking Strategy.**

How parking is supplied can influence the application of other components of the Downtown Plan. Large surface lots create gaps in the built environment that are less inviting to pedestrians and discourage walking. In addition, they consume a large area, are inefficiently used, and contribute to an automobile-dominated character.

Based on recent observations during several consecutive days, many prime spaces were occupied before adjacent businesses were open which indicates some employees are parking in those prime spaces. Methods such as decks, time limits, and variable pricing of parking may greatly reduce problems with employees and non-convenience users occupying the most convenient spaces. Thus, how parking is priced (meters) should be directly tied to convenience and turnover (how long each car should be parked before moving); on-street parking should be most expensive (especially in the retail core), and deck parking or surface lots located on the edges of downtown should be the least expensive.



Although there is typically opposition to more expensive on-street spaces, higher pricing is very successful in freeing up these coveted spaces for the customer who may not park elsewhere.

**Current Downtown Parking Supply.** Parking demand in the downtown varies significantly by the time-of-day and day-of-the-week. The average demand for on-street parking is the highest in the commercial core, most notably along Main Street. Special events, including the Farmer's Market and Dow Diamond events, require significant parking, usually during off-peak hours (nights and weekends). In particular, Dow Diamond attendees frequently park throughout the Downtown and walk to and from the ballpark, presenting a need to coordinate lot locations and way finding and an opportunity to make a positive impression of the Downtown on a captive audience.

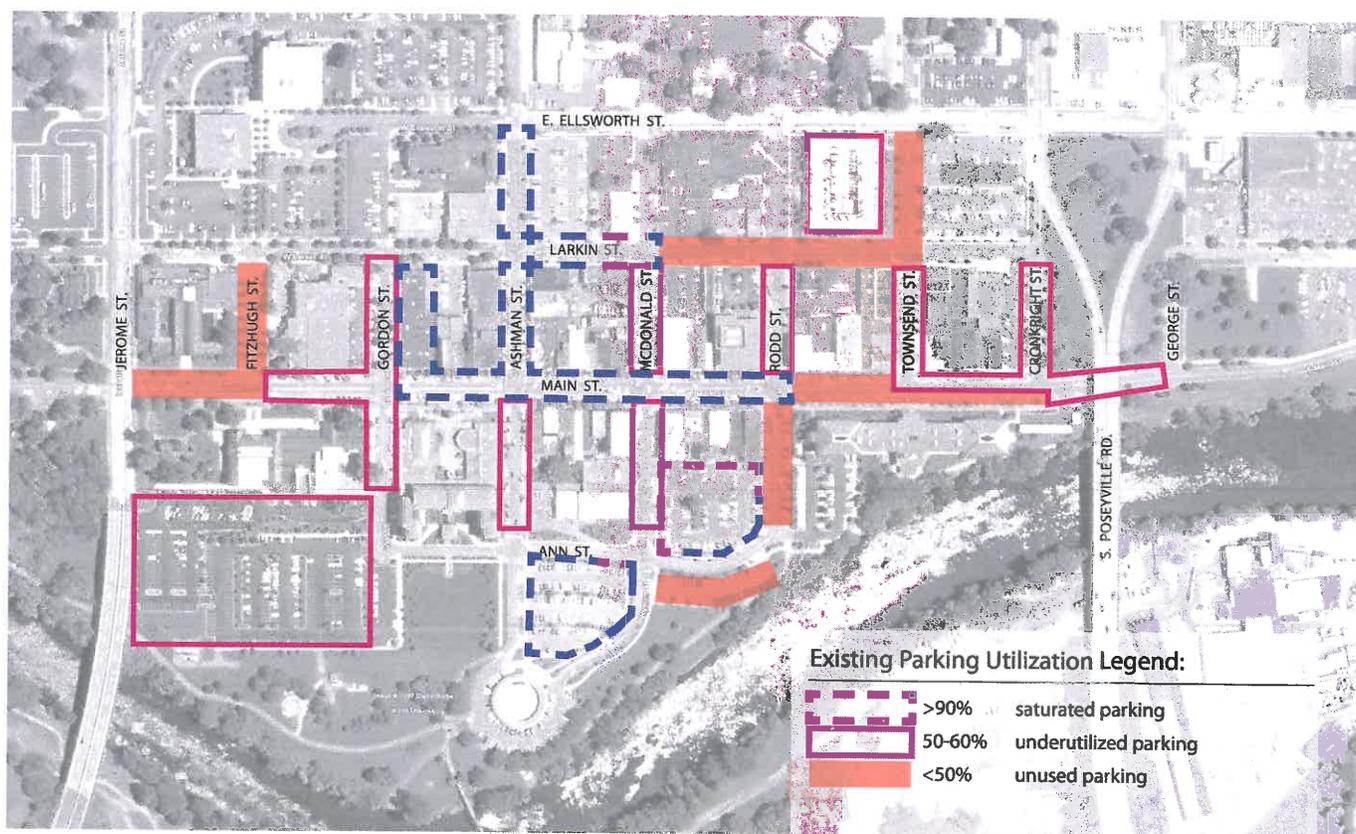
## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

Overall, there is an adequate supply of surface parking in the downtown, with approximately 3,000 public parking spaces throughout the district both on-street and off. The number of parking spaces is sufficient to meet the demand for current customer and employees with some capacity left for new development. However, these spaces are located throughout the downtown and not always convenient to prime destinations where demand is the highest. This promotes a perceived parking problem among merchants.

Issues related to public parking in the downtown have been identified as: high use of angled parking on Main Street, difficulty of using parallel parking spaces, deficient pavement markings, and underutilized parking lots. Additionally, observed issues include the saturation of some lots and underutilization of others, difficulty finding available spaces, lack of signage denoting public versus private lots, and employees

using the prime parking spaces for major sections of the day.

Based on experience in Downtowns across the country, there are several trends and behavioral observations to consider when evaluating the current parking situation and making recommendations for future upgrades. If the parking supply is saturated, many visitors will cruise around their destination waiting for a space to open rather than finding one a few blocks away, or worse, will go elsewhere. Furthermore, motorists who live and work in a suburban environment expect parking within sight of their destination, or within 200-300' walking distance. Employees and visitors at peak hour are willing to walk 5 minutes, or about 1000'. Healthy parking is 80-85% of spaces occupied at peak times—if there is regularly more than 85% occupied, additional parking or a more assertive management approach should be considered.



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Some parking enhancement options that are typically evaluated and often implemented for downtowns include:

- a public parking deck(s)
- more restrictions/enforcement (to ensure on-street spaces turn over)
- variable pricing to charge more for convenient spaces
- improve signage and walking environment between surface lots and high-use destinations
- relocate parking to the edges of downtown as redevelopment occurs closer to the retail core
- encouraging employers to monitor employee parking
- consolidation of private lots to allow reconfiguration and more spaces
- replace travel lanes with on-street parking, where appropriate

Downtown area parking needs to be provided more efficiently than the current configuration of disjointed surface parking lots. Based on the current supply and demand and the development suggested by this plan,

the experiences from other successful downtowns across the country were combined with local knowledge to form the future downtown parking strategy. In addition to improvements initiated by the DDA, City, and other groups, new development or redevelopment should incorporate parking structures when necessary and maximize the use of on-street parking. More efficient use of shared parking facilities, detailed in the following paragraphs, will allow for redevelopment that is more pedestrian oriented and less dominated by parking lots.

**Surface Lots.** A shared parking management system, consolidated lots, attractive pedestrian paths within the lots, and connections to destinations will provide more convenient parking that the public is more likely to use. Utilizing and expanding the existing wayfinding system will promote a successful parking strategy. Furthering the efforts associated with Dow Diamond parking related to shared parking agreements, coordinated public awareness of lot locations and directions to the events, and coordinated parking organization will all improve parking convenience and organization in the downtown area.

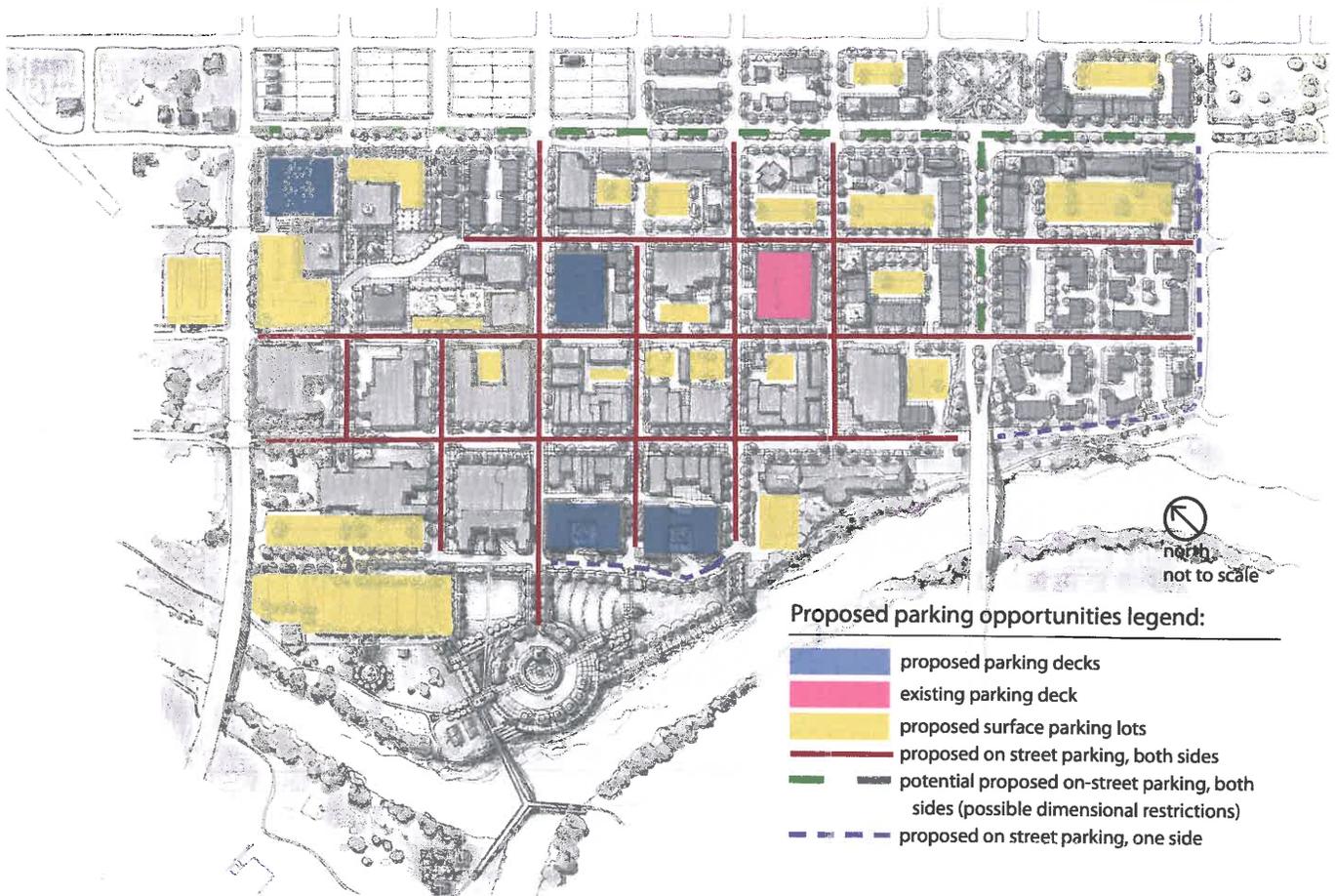
**top left: The absence of public access from Main Street diminishes activity on the streetscape**

**right: Another example of restricted access from Main Street**

**bottom left: example of an underutilized surface lot within the district**



**On-Street Parking.** To complement an upgraded system of surface lots, on-street parking should be available on all public streets. In addition to offering convenient parking, on-street parking provides a buffer between travel lanes and sidewalks, slows traffic, and promotes a sense of activity on the streetscape. The DDA and City should enhance the effectiveness of shared parking arrangements by educating and encouraging new development to include a range of different users who have different peak parking demands. All on-street parking should be priced/metered and enforced to ensure turnover. Time of day restrictions should also be considered to prevent employees from taking up key convenient spots before and during regular business hours.



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A method to address difficulty of maneuvering in and out of parallel spaces is to re-stripe the spaces to include extra space every other space for easy access. Closing or consolidating excess driveways throughout the downtown would increase the number of on- and off-street parking spaces and reduce the number of conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians.

**Parking Decks.** Parking decks are proposed in the redevelopment plan to offer relief from future development pressures. Structured parking facilities are costly to build, so their placement must be carefully considered to provide the highest use potential before the investment is made. The location of the deck should be convenient to a variety of users at all times of day. Small commercial “flex spaces” should be included on the ground floor to promote street activity.

**Parking Requirements.** Although the Downtown District zoning classification is currently exempt from parking, this standard was developed before this DDA Plan and before market studies suggesting a real demand for residential in the downtown. To ensure that convenient parking is available to new residential developments without occupying existing spaces, the zoning ordinance should be amended to require 1.5 parking spaces for every residential unit in new developments. In addition, the Downtown District should require 2 spaces for every 3 hotel rooms, plus 1 space for every 2 employees of a hotel in any new development.

Finally, perceived parking needs should not dictate the design of the downtown. An ample supply of parking alone will not lead to a revitalized district. Suburban shopping malls surrounded with a sea of parking are struggling to keep their customer base-not due to a lack of parking but a lack of real social interaction and energy that only downtowns can provide.

As the downtown redevelops, this plan recommends a managed parking system with a combination of on-street parking, parking decks, and consolidated, upgraded surface lots. A high demand for parking is an indicator of a successful downtown district. Parking should be a tool to help make downtown businesses easier to patronize, it is not the main attraction.



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## Implementation

*Implementation will be gradual, through incremental steps over time, driven by both public capital investment and private development, and often through collaboration or partnerships of the public and private sectors.*



Exciting additions to the downtown such as the Farmer's Market began with an idea

### **Framework for change.**

Similar to the City as a whole, Midland's Downtown area has undergone significant changes throughout the last 100 years. Currently, the Downtown stands at a crossroads, with key choices to be made that will guide it through future decades. This Plan presents a variety of recommendations to provide opportunity for changes, including additional residential, expanded riverfront facilities and parking, and various transportation upgrades to safety, aesthetics, and circulation. Implementation will be gradual, through incremental steps over time, driven by both public capital investment and private development, and often through collaboration or partnerships of the public and private sectors.

Each year, work can be initiated by the DDA and/or other agencies (City, MDOT) for the Downtown Area and implemented based on the priority of the recommendation, cost and funding availability. This chapter outlines steps to begin the implementation

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

process, such as infrastructure improvements and supporting regulations.

Implementation of the Midland DDA Plan will be accomplished through a variety of means, including public capital improvements such as riverfront infrastructure or roadway realignments. While some public investment may be necessary to act as a catalyst for development, many projects can be accomplished through public/private partnerships as improvements and redevelopment of the Downtown occurs. Coordination will also be required to facilitate the complicated processes of land assembly and cooperation between adjacent landowners necessary for development of concepts portrayed in the plan.

### **Regulatory changes.**

While most of the plan recommendations are consistent with current regulations, there are a few changes that would help implement the plan, including a form-based Downtown overlay zoning district. "Form-Based Codes," as they are commonly called, are more flexible in use, but include additional standards related to mass, character, and form of the buildings, with the intent to develop a fully integrated, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented environment. Unlike design standards, form-based codes focus on the form of the building and its relationship to the street, as opposed to architectural styles. Because buildings are the primary defining feature to the streetscape, a form-based code would ensure that buildings are designed to provide a proper relationship to the streetscape and other adjacent buildings to define the streetscape and maintain a pedestrian oriented downtown form. This approach regulates building lines, setbacks, building height and parking lot location to achieve appropriate scale along streetscapes. The regulations can also include standards for street design, including sidewalks, street trees, street lights, street furniture, alleys, and even bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

A form-based code would allow a greater mixture of uses, but tie the use to the required building form. Buildings would contain the Downtown's traditional commercial and office uses, while also providing opportunity for infill and conversion residential units. It is also well suited in ensuring a proper transition from the Downtown core to nearby residential neighborhoods.

Consideration should also be given to the zoning regulations for the near-neighborhood zone of the study area (includes single- and multiple-family residential and office/service uses) that is outside of the area currently zoned D – Downtown District. The plan recommends some road realignments and redevelopment to help strengthen this neighborhood. One method to encourage neighborhood reinvestment would be to relax some of the dimensional requirements and encourage a mixture of uses that would support the Downtown.

### **Phasing**

The phasing strategy is divided into prioritized phased projects and ongoing project efforts. Since the plan is intended to go beyond a 10-year time frame, not all actions will be implemented immediately. The schedule should be adjusted as projects occur, since their success may shorten or lengthen the timeframe for future phases. The priority of each action for phased projects is listed below (in chronological order), and the on-going projects area given a priority of low, medium, or high. Priorities will need adjustment over time as the plan evolves and each set of implementation strategies is refined or modified. The following table offers an overview of both the phased and ongoing improvements:

**Riverfront Infrastructure.** The keystone improvements to begin the transformation of Downtown Midland are focused along the riverfront, and include an expanded parking area behind the courthouse, Farmer's Market improvements, and a riverfront promenade stretching

Phased Projects	
Priority	Project
1	Riverfront Infrastructure
2	Jerome (M-20) / Main Gateway Enhancements
3	Riverfront Residential Developments
4	Poseyville Road Boulevard Alignment
5	Poseyville Area Development
6	Civic Center Realignment/Road Extension
Ongoing Projects	
Priority	Project
High	Indian/Buttles (M-20/US-10BUS) Conversion to two-way boulevard
High	Upgrade Downtown Parking System
Medium	Gateway Enhancements
Medium	Expansion of Streetscape Improvements
Low	Infill Parking Deck at Civic Center
Low	Other Conceptual Projects

from the Farmer’s Market on Ashman Street southeast to Rodd Street. Since parking will be displaced in Phase 3, the completion of the expanded parking area is a critical preparatory step for the development of the two residential blocks along Ann Street. This project has a very high priority, and should be completed by 2010.

**Jerome (M-20)/Main Street Gateway Enhancements.** Located adjacent to the County Courthouse and the M-20/Main Street Intersection, these enhancements will span a two block section of Main Street and include the M-20 and Fitzhugh Street intersections. Proposed enhancements include a narrow median island running from M-20 past Fitzhugh, a textured pavement in the Fitzhugh intersection linking Fitzhugh across to the Courthouse entrance, and enhancements targeted to slowing traffic on the Karl Robertson Bridge. These enhancements have a very high priority, and should be completed by 2010.

**Riverfront Residential Developments.** With the expanded parking area and riverfront infrastructure in place, the river half of the two blocks north of Ann Street, between Ashman and Rodd, will be poised for development. Phase 3 of the DDA Plan envisions the easternmost block, between Rodd and McDonald, to be developed first with parking on the lower floors and residential on the upper floors. The first development should be underway in 2010, once Phase 1 has been completed. The success of this first major Downtown residential project should be used as a gauge for the timing of the second block’s redevelopment, which will follow a similar configuration. The second block may built several years later to allow full occupancy of the first building and other residential developments around Downtown.

Pedestrian and bicyclist oriented design enhancements on McDonald between Main and Ann Streets, including the eventual closure to through vehicular traffic, should coincide with the development of these blocks. In addition, the mid-block alley running parallel to Main Street should also be enhanced as a service corridor and alternate pedestrian access to Main Street businesses, as each block develops. A reconfigured McDonald Street would still provide vehicular access from Ann Street to the alley for deliveries and employee access. Finally, streetscape improvements to Ann Street, between Ashman and Rodd, should also coincide with these developments.

**Poseyville Road Boulevard Alignment.** Phase 4 focuses on preparing the eastern end of Downtown for mixed-use commercial and residential redevelopment. Cronkright and George Streets, from Poseyville to Buttles, will be removed and replaced with a single Poseyville Boulevard aligned with the bridge connecting to Indian and Buttles. In addition, this Phase will include the reconnection of Larkin Street as a through, two-way street with a main intersection at the new Poseyville Boulevard. Significant development area

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both along and to the east of this new boulevard will be delayed until these improvements can be completed. To maximize the City's roadway investments, the timing of this project could coincide with the next planned reconstruction project of George and Cronkright Streets for these blocks, but should be completed within the next 5-7 years.

**Poseyville Area Development.** With the extended Poseyville Road Boulevard in place and several blocks prepared for development, the eastern end of Downtown can begin developing a variety of commercial and residential offerings. Phase 5 will include an incremental approach to developing this large area, with each sub-phase of the development containing a cross-section of the residential unit types and commercial spaces. At build-out, this ten block area will fill in the gap between the core of Downtown and the Dow Diamond. When the M-20 one-way pairs are converted to a boulevard, the block between Cronkright and George Streets at the terminus of Poseyville Road will be converted into a park space to anchor commercial and residential mixed-use in the adjacent blocks and serve as a focal point to this new eastern gateway into Downtown. The project should begin within 2 years of the completion of Phase 4, or in approximately 8-10 years.

**Civic Center Realignment/Road Extension.** As density increases throughout the Downtown with additional commercial and residential options, the Civic Center area will see an increase in pedestrian traffic and will benefit from a curvilinear through street connecting Fitzhugh and Ellsworth Streets. This project may be undertaken earlier if the church and school currently located at Larkin and Ashman expands its facility into the new building shown on the concept plan at the intersection of Fitzhugh and Larkin. In addition to extending the street and enhancing the public spaces, commercial and residential infill opportunities for the remaining surface parking should be explored throughout this Phase to strengthen the urban scale of this corner of Downtown. This Phase is likely to be completed in the next 15 years.

### Ongoing Projects

**Indian/Buttles (M-20/US-10BUS): Study the Conversion to Two-Way Boulevard (High Priority).** For this extensive undertaking, the City will need to quickly initiate the potentially lengthy process of adding this project to the project list with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Midland Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This process will require



close coordination with MDOT, the Midland area MPO, the County, the City, and especially local residents and business owners in the area. The first critical step to advancing this project is to conduct an advanced traffic study of the project, including modeling with OHM (City Engineer) and the MPO to ensure that the project can adequately handle traffic. Because the pre-construction process for this project will likely take several years, starting the process is a high priority and should begin in the next six months.

The current and projected traffic for the roadway will need to be analyzed to determine the capacity needed along the new roadway. Once the cross-section is established, an accurate alignment and required right-of-way will be established and must be available before construction could begin. Regardless of the cross-section, the future right-of-way will require the demolition or relocation of some homes and businesses along the north side of Buttles and some reconfiguration of intersections and US-10 BUS, west of Jerome, before it turns onto Eastman Avenue. Before any development takes place in the property located in between Indian and Buttles, the City should encourage right-of-way preservation and expansion by shifting the density of the proposed development onto a smaller area of the property outside of the needed future right-of-way. Over time, this technique can reduce the project cost and the need to relocate residents and businesses by pushing any new development buildings outside of the future right-of-way area needed.

Continuation of the existing way-finding system will be essential to the success of a new configuration for both local and out-of-town motorists. Once the boulevard is completed, the blocks on the north side of Buttles should be targeted for planned unit redevelopment with access points located on side streets only.

**Upgrade Downtown Parking System (High Priority).** Downtown Midland currently has a large number of public and private surface parking lots and on-

street parking spaces that are often fragmented and broken up along property lines. The DDA should lead an effort to improve the aesthetics of all parking areas and coordinate access and circulation between adjacent parking areas as the facilities are resurfaced or redesigned. In the near-term, the effort should include a more detailed evaluation of parking than the “snapshot” surveys conducted during this survey, to look at utilization at various times of day, turnover, potential demand of DDA Plan “buildout”, parking management changes, and variable pricing for on- and off-street parking. The study could evaluate the actual traffic and pedestrian flows during Dow Diamond events and identify additional opportunities for off-peak utilization of parking supply. In addition, the DDA and the City should regularly consider meters and parking pricing to appropriately align price with parking convenience. Longer-term steps include gradual upgrades to parking aesthetics and a coordinated parking wayfinding program with maps and directions to the various parking facilities around the Downtown (which should be evaluated in the detailed parking study).

**Gateway Enhancements (Medium Priority).** As projects such as the M-20 Boulevard, Poseyville Boulevard, and other developments occur, gateway enhancements to Downtown’s main entry points should be encouraged. These gateways include Eastman Avenue, Ashman Street, Rodd Street, Poseyville Road, Indian/Buttles, West Main Street, and Jerome Street.

**Expansion of Streetscape Improvements (Medium Priority).** With any development projects in the Downtown Study Area, a plan for coinciding streetscape upgrades should be implemented to incrementally upgrade the streetscape so it matches the amenities currently in place on Main Street and Ashman Street. These improvements can also be tied to street reconstruction or realignment/boulevard projects.

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### **Infill Parking Deck at Civic Center (Low Priority).**

As the surface parking lots around the City/County buildings are transformed into other uses, the City should regularly evaluate the feasibility of constructing an infill parking deck in the area northwest of the City/County buildings. This would provide convenient parking for employees and visitors while keeping on-street and surface parking spaces available for short-term users.

**Other Conceptual Projects.** In addition to the phased and ongoing projects detailed above, there are also several smaller projects suggested by the concept plan that would require minimal external infrastructure improvements, but would benefit from a public-private partnership to assist in land assembly and successful project design. This category also includes on-going property acquisition by the City and DDA to aid in the development and redevelopment process for this Plan (see acquisition map). The following projects fall under this ongoing projects group:

- a. Townhouse development at the southwest corner of Ashman and Buttles
- b. Parking lot redevelopment into office building with first floor parking area on the east side of Ashman Street, between Ellsworth and Larkin Streets
- c. Main Street infill retail spaces on the northwest corner of Main and Gordon Streets, and on the northwest corner of Main and Cronkright Streets
- d. Infill commercial space on the north side of Ellsworth Street, between Ashman & McDonald Streets
- e. Redevelopment of block north of Ellsworth Street, between McDonald and Rodd Streets, with commercial and residential space and a public gathering place created by closing McDonald on the south side of Buttles

The DDA must lead the future completion of the concepts outlined in this plan. The background and vision established in this plan provide the appropriate base to make this Plan a reality.

### **Funding sources**

Financing and implementing the recommendations of the Midland DDA Plan could be assisted by a host of public, private, local, state, county and federal funding sources. The recommended strategy is to establish a public-private partnership to pursue a coordinated direction and to prioritize comprehensive funding. Some programs aim at capital improvement projects, while other programs offer loans or grants to encourage new development. There are several City, State, and Federal programs, such as the Federal Transportation Appropriations Act (currently SAFETEA-LU), Highway Improvement Act, State Recreation Funds, Corridor Improvement Act, and DDA, available to assist in these projects, especially along a state trunk line or where significant jobs will be created. Because the qualifications and structure of these programs change frequently, regular discussion with local representatives from MDNR, MDOT, FHWA, and other State and Federal funding agencies is important.

**Local Authorities.** The City currently has a Downtown Development Authority and a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority that can serve as financing authorities for many of the projects identified in this plan.

**Downtown Development Authority/Tax Increment Financing.** The City currently has a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) formed under the Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1974). The DDA creates a source of financing for public improvement projects including the ability an ad-valorem tax of up to 2 mills on property within the district boundaries and tax increment financing (TIF) within a development area. All revenue collection is subject to City Council approval through the approval

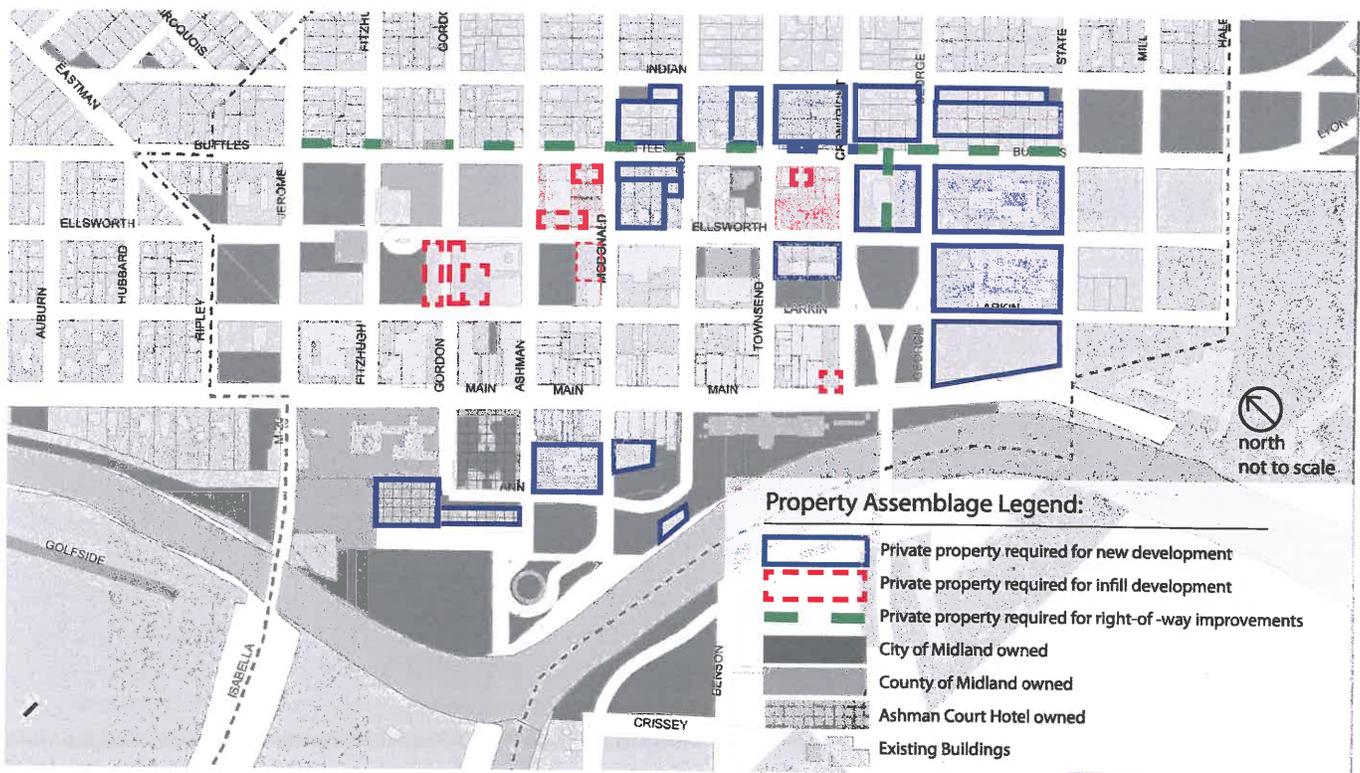
of the DDA's finance plans and annual budget.

The DDA provides funds to finance public sector projects using tax increment revenues. It is an effective method by which new ideas and projects can be planned, financed and implemented for the DDA district. Tax increment financing is the process of expending new property tax dollars for improvements that benefit the sources of those taxes. New tax dollars are those generated from new private developments, improvements to existing private property and appreciation in value.

New tax dollars are "captured" and utilized by the DDA to finance public improvements within the development area. The captured assessed value is the amount, in any one year, by which the current assessed value of the development area exceeds the initial assessed value at the time the ordinance establishing the TIF plan is approved.

**Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.** The City has established a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority under the Brownfield Redevelopment Act (1996 PA 381, as amended) to develop and implement brownfield projects. The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority is a resource that may use TIF, similar to a DDA, and allow developers to apply for Single Business Tax (SBT) Credit incentives. A Brownfield Redevelopment Authority provides the City with the opportunity to create a local brownfield financing resource, enhance local economic development capacities and market difficult sites based on the private investment incentives.

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority reviews proposals for the redevelopment of eligible property and determines what financial incentives are necessary to assist the redevelopment. The Authority prepares a plan that identifies the brownfield projects. Each project section of the plan includes the description of



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the eligible property, the eligible activities, the TIF and SBT approaches to be taken and other issues related to the subject parcels. The Authority then recommends to the City Council that they hold a public hearing regarding the plan and subsequently act to approve with modifications or deny the plan. The Authority would recommend revisions to the plan as new projects are submitted or revisions are requested on existing plan projects.

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority may utilize tax increment financing to implement brownfield redevelopment projects. The incremental increases to property tax revenues can be used to finance eligible activities on the site, including baseline environmental assessments, due care activities and additional response activities. Tax increment financing can also be used to fund demolition, public infrastructure, site preparation and lead and asbestos abatement. Unlike other Michigan tax increment financing tools (DDA's, LDFA's, etc...), the brownfield program allows for the capture of both local and school taxes. In order to capture school tax levies, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and/or Michigan Economic Growth Authority (MEGA) approval is required.

**Grants.** There are also a variety of State and Federal grants that many of the projects identified in this plan could qualify. These grant programs are described below:

Michigan Brownfield Redevelopment and Site Reclamation Grants. Brownfield Redevelopment and Site Reclamation Grants provide funding to local units of government and other public bodies to investigate and remediate known sites of environmental contamination, which will be used for identified economic redevelopment projects. The goals of the program are to ensure safe reuse of abandoned, vacant, or underutilized properties that are known to be contaminated, and to promote redevelopment of brownfields.

To be eligible for a grant, a proposed project must result in economic benefit for the City through job creation, private investment, and/or property tax increase. The property must meet the definition of a facility under Part 201 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. Eligible activities include environmental investigations and assessments, interim response, and due care response activities necessary for the proposed development.

**Clean Michigan Initiative Brownfield Redevelopment Loans and Revitalization Revolving Loans.** Clean Michigan Initiative Brownfield Redevelopment Loans (CMIBRL) and Revitalization Revolving Loans (RRL) are designed to support the redevelopment of brownfield properties by providing low-interest loans to local units of government and other public bodies to investigate and remediate sites of known or suspected environmental contamination. The goals of the program are to promote the economic redevelopment and safe reuse of abandoned, vacant, or underutilized brownfield properties where contamination is known to exist or believed to have occurred based on current or historic use. Eligible activities include environmental investigations and assessments, interim response activities, and in some cases demolition.

To be eligible, a proposed project must have economic development potential. The City must pledge its full faith and credit to secure the loan. The Michigan Department of Treasury will approve the applicant's ability to incur the debt. Loans are offered at an interest rate of no more than 50% of prime. There are no payments or interest due for the first five years after a loan is awarded. Annual payments begin in the fifth year of the loan. The full amount must be repaid within 15 years of the loan award. This arrangement provides an excellent opportunity for the City to use TIF under the provisions of the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act, 1996 PA 381, as amended, to capture future taxes generated from the redevelopment of the property, to repay the loan. Often, through this approach, the City is

able to capture additional tax dollars after having repaid their loan, to use for future brownfield redevelopment activities.

**Michigan Site Assessment Fund.** The Site Assessment Fund provides grants up to \$1 million to eligible local units of government to assess the nature and extent of contamination at properties with economic development potential. The goals of the program are to ensure safe reuse of abandoned, vacant, or underutilized properties that are known to be contaminated, and to promote redevelopment of brownfields.

The property must have economic development potential and result in both environmental and economic benefit. The funding request must be to conduct a Baseline Environmental Assessment, evaluate due care requirements, or remedial investigation, in compliance with Part 201 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, and proposed response activities will allow the applicant to market the property for sale to a new user.

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grants.** Housing and Urban Development (HUD) distributes Community Development Block Grants (CDBG's) directly to entitlement communities and to states for distribution to non-entitlement communities. While Midland is not eligible to directly apply or receive state CDBG funds, Midland County may apply to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) for CDBG funds for projects located in the city. Projects funded by CDBG must either benefit lower income people or help prevent or eliminate "slums and blight." Funds may be used for many kinds of community development activities including, but not limited to:

- Acquisition of property for public purposes
- Construction or reconstruction of streets, water and sewer facilities, neighborhood centers, recreation facilities, and other public works

- Demolition
- Rehabilitation of public and private buildings
- Public services
- Planning activities
- Assistance to nonprofit entities for community development activities
- Assistance to private, for profit entities to carry out economic development activities (including assistance to micro-enterprises)

MSHDA offers CDBG for the following programs:

- **Economic Development Planning.** Grants are available to help communities accomplish project-specific, public planning and design work that is likely to lead to an eligible economic development implementation project. Local matching funds are typically required to show that there is local commitment for the project.

- **Downtowns and Gateways.** Communities may request grants to provide public infrastructure improvements necessary for the location, expansion, and growth of specific for-profit businesses, which are or will locate in a downtown or a significant gateway to a downtown area. Public infrastructure could include such items as: public water or sanitary sewer lines and related facilities, streets, bridges, and public utilities.

- **Economic Development Infrastructure.** Communities may request grants to provide public infrastructure improvements necessary for the location, expansion, and/or retention of a specific for-profit business firm(s) which are engaged in an economic base activity (e.g. manufacturing, point-of-destination tourism, headquarter operations, major multi-state distribution facility). Public infrastructure includes items such as: public water or sanitary sewer lines and related facilities, streets, roads, bridges and public utilities.

- **Public Works.** The MEDC will provide funds for public works activities as CDBG funds are available.

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Preferred public works projects are projects that upgrade existing public infrastructure systems either by replacing deteriorating or obsolete systems or by adding needed capacity to existing systems. In addition, funds under this program can be utilized for public facilities which will have significant impact throughout the community. Projects must benefit low and moderate income households.

- **Unique and Innovative Projects.** Discretionary grants will be considered based on special and/or unique needs or situations requiring innovative program approaches not specifically provided for in regular economic development infrastructure grants. This may include brownfield site redevelopment, downtown development, and general public infrastructure activities.

**Michigan Urban Land Assembly Program.** The Urban Land Assembly (ULA) Program was established in 1981 by Public Act 171 of 1981. The program is administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). This program provides financial assistance in the form of loans to eligible municipalities for the acquisition of certain real property for economic development purposes, including industrial and commercial projects. The program is directed toward revitalizing the economic base of cities experiencing economic distress and decline. The ULA Fund provides loans that can be used for direct costs of the acquisition of land, demolition, relocation, and site improvements required to make the land marketable. Projects involving the acquisition of land for commercial use must be located in the DDA district.

**Waterfront Redevelopment Grants.** Clean Michigan Initiative Waterfront Redevelopment Grants provide funding to revitalize waterfront properties by funding property acquisition, demolition, response activities, and public infrastructure and public facility improvements. The goal of the program is to encourage new private investment and private job creation along waterfronts.

Projects that are primarily parks and recreation in nature will generally not be funded under this program.

Grant funds may be used for eligible activities that are part of a project described in a waterfront redevelopment plan. The plan must include a description of how the project will significantly contribute to local economic and community redevelopment or the revitalization of adjacent neighborhoods, and how the project will provide for public access to the waterfront or will provide recreational opportunities for the public.

Eligible activities include:

- Environmental response activities on waterfront property consistent with a waterfront redevelopment plan
- Demolition of buildings and other facilities along a waterfront that are not consistent with a waterfront redevelopment plan
- Acquisition of waterfront property or the assembly of waterfront property consistent with a waterfront redevelopment plan
- Public infrastructure and facility improvements to waterfront property consistent with a waterfront redevelopment plan

**Land and Water Conservation Fund.** The objective of this program is to provide grants to develop land for outdoor recreation. At least 50% match is required from the City. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) makes recommendations to the National Park Service (NPS) on which applications to fund and NPS grants final approval. The City must have a DNR-approved community five-year recreation plan to be eligible.

**Transportation Economic Development Fund.** The Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF) was created in 1987 to assist in the funding of highway, road, and street projects necessary to support economic growth. The program's mission is to enhance the ability

of the state to compete in an international economy, to serve as a catalyst for economic growth, and to improve the quality of life enjoyed by Michigan residents. Specifically, the program is intended to create or retain jobs and encourage private sector investment.

The fund, administered through the Michigan Department of Transportation Office of Economic Development, in conjunction with the president of the Michigan Strategic Fund, provides a means for state government, local agencies and business to work together to meet the often extensive and urgent demands placed upon the transportation system by economic development throughout the state. There are several types of TEDF grants available; Midland may be able to qualify for Categories A or F:

- Category A is intended to improve the network of highway services essential to economic competitiveness; improve accessibility to target industries as a catalyst for economic growth; support private initiatives that create or retain jobs; and, encourage economic development and redevelopment efforts.

- Category F is intended to provide funding for transportation projects that are coordinated with the secondary all-season system or provide all season routes within a city, improve all-season capabilities on routes having high commercial traffic and improve access to the state trunkline system.

**Transportation Enhancement Program.** The Transportation Enhancement program is a competitive grant program under the Federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The program funds projects such as nonmotorized paths, streetscapes, and historic preservation of transportation facilities that enhance Michigan's intermodal transportation system.

SAFETEA-LU specifies the following 12 activities as eligible funding:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails)
- Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists Transportation Aesthetics
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification
- Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, including historic battlefields
- Inventory, control and removal of outdoor advertising
- Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities)
- Historic preservation
- Archaeological planning and research
- Establishment of transportation museums
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals)
- Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff or reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat continuity

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**Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program.** The Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP) is a comprehensive initiative of research and grants to investigate the relationships between transportation and community and system preservation and private sector-based initiatives. Grants are available for projects that:

- Improve the efficiency of the transportation system - identify, develop and evaluate new strategies and measures of transportation efficiency that are based on maximizing the use of existing community infrastructure, such as highways, railroads, transit systems and the built environment
- Reduce the impacts of transportation on the environment
- Reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure
- Ensure efficient access to jobs, services and centers of trade
- Encourage private sector development patterns that result in land development patterns that help meet the goals of the program

**MDOT Small Urban Program.** The Small Urban Program provides federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding to areas with a population of 5,000 to 49,999. Road and transit capital projects are eligible for STP funds. Road and transit capital projects are eligible for funding under the Small Urban Program. All road projects must be located on the federal-aid highway system and within the federal urban area boundary. Projects must be consistent with regional land use and development plans.

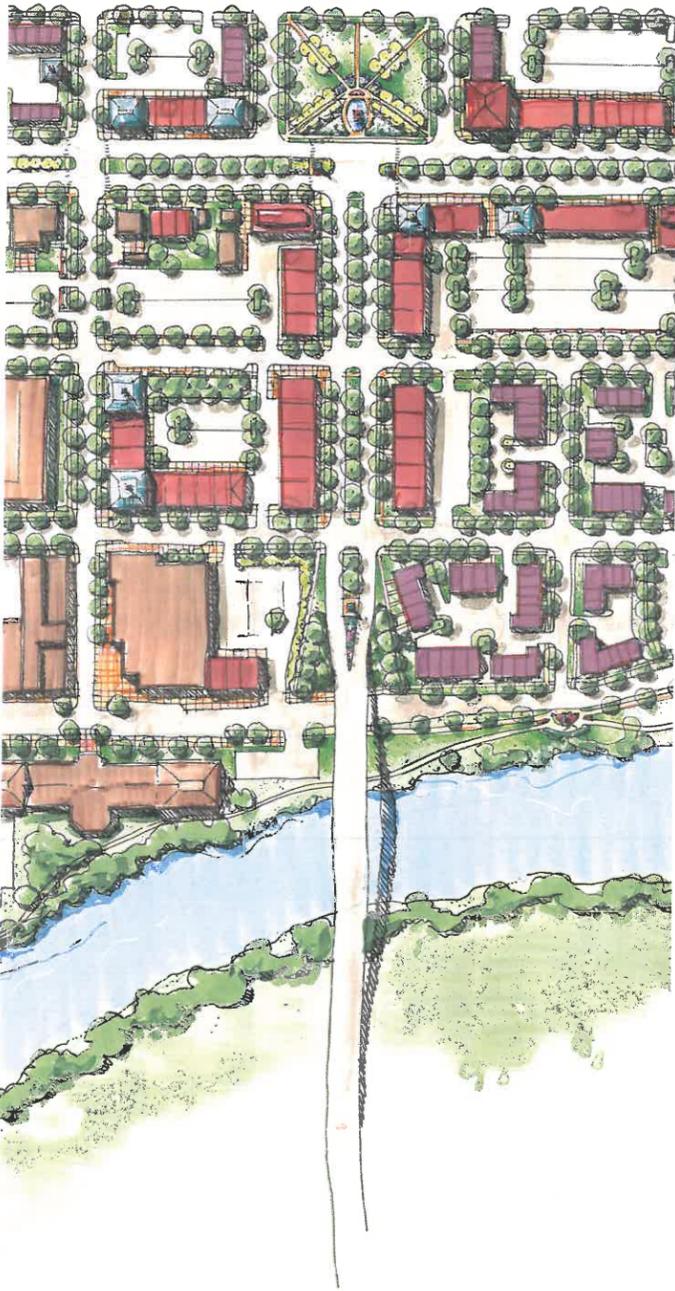
### **Next steps: continue design development**

The individual projects illustrated in the DDA Plan concept will need further refinement as each phase is undertaken. This includes programming of public spaces,

selection of furnishings and materials, detail design elements and schematic layouts. Once the schematic design process is completed and approved, construction documents can be prepared for implementing various elements of the plan.

The DDA and the City should work to market the opportunities identified in this Plan to the development community. This may be a role for DDA personnel. The City should use this plan as a tool to recruit developers and inspire the development community to help the DDA achieve the vision laid out in this Plan

# Implementation Matrix



Time frame	Project	Partners
5 years	Riverfront Infrastructure - Farmer's Market improvements	Midland DDA
5 years	Riverfront Infrastructure - Expansion of parking area behind the courthouse	Midland DDA, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 years	Riverfront Infrastructure - Riverfront promenade, from Farmer's Market to Rodd Street	Midland DDA, City Council
5 years	Jerome (M-20)/Main Street Gateway Enhancements - Narrow median island running from M-20 past Fitzhugh	MDOT, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 years	Jerome (M-20)/Main Street Gateway Enhancements -Textured pavement in the Fitzhugh intersection linking Fitzhugh across to the Courthouse entrance	MDOT, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 years	Riverfront Residential Developments - Construct first block of residential	Private Developer(s), Planning Commission, City Council, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
10 years	Riverfront Residential Developments - Construct second block of residential	Private Developer(s), Planning Commission, City Council, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
5 years	Riverfront Residential Developments - Pedestrian-oriented design enhancements on McDonald between Main and Ann Streets	Midland DDA, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 years	Riverfront Residential Developments - Enhancement of mid-block alley running parallel to Main Street as service corridor and pedestrian access	Midland DDA, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 years	Riverfront Residential Developments - Streetscape improvements to Ann Street, between Ashman and Rodd	Midland DDA, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 to 10 years	Poseyville Road Boulevard Alignment - Removal of Cronkright and George Streets, from Poseyville to Buttles and replacement with a single Poseyville Boulevard aligned with the bridge	MDOT, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 to 10 years	Poseyville Road Boulevard Alignment - Reconnection of Larkin Street as a through, two-way street with main intersection at the new Poseyville Boulevard	MDOT, City Council, Public Works Dept.
10 years	Poseyville Road Boulevard Alignment - Phase 5 residential and commercial	Private Developer(s), Planning Commission, City Council
5 to 10 years	Poseyville Road Boulevard Alignment - Conversion of Cronkright and George Streets, at the terminus of Poseyville Road, into park space	Midland DDA, City Council, Public Works Dept.
15 years	Civic Center Realignment/Road Extension - Construct curvilinear through street connecting Fitzhugh and Ellsworth Streets	MDOT, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 years	Civic Center Realignment/Road Extension - Study opportunity for public spaces, commercial and residential infill in surface parking lots	Midland DDA, City Council, Public Works Dept.
5 years	Indian/Buttles (M-20/US-10 Bus) - Study Conversion to Two-way Boulevard - Conduct traffic study of the project, including modeling to ensure that the project can adequately handle traffic. Analyze current and projected traffic for the roadway to determine capacity needed along the new roadway.	MDOT, Midland MPO, City traffic engineer, City Council, Public Works Dept. Business owners, Residents, County
5 years	Indian/Buttles (M-20/US-10 Bus) - Study Conversion to Two-way Boulevard - Establish accurate alignment and required right-of-way. Demolition or relocation of some homes and businesses along the north side of Buttles and some reconfiguration of intersections and US-10 BUS, west of Jerome, before it turns onto Eastman Avenue	MDOT, Midland MPO, City Council, Public Works Dept., County
5 years	Indian/Buttles (M-20/US-10 Bus) - Study Conversion to Two-way Boulevard - Install way-finding signage to guide users of new configuration	MDOT, Midland DDA, County
5 years	Upgrade Downtown Parking System - Detailed parking study to evaluate traffic and pedestrian flows during Dow Diamond events identify opportunities for off-peak utilization of parking supply	City traffic engineer, City Council, Public Works Dept.



# Implementation Matrix



Time frame	Project	Partners
5 years	Upgrade Downtown Parking System - Consideration of parking meters and parking pricing to appropriately align price with parking convenience	Midland DDA, City Council
5 years	Upgrade Downtown Parking System - Implement coordinated parking and wayfinding program with maps and directions to various downtown parking facilities	Midland DDA
5 years	Upgrade Downtown Parking System - Improve aesthetics of parking areas and coordinate access and circulation between adjacent parking areas as they are resurfaced or redesigned	Midland DDA, City traffic engineer, Public Works Dept.
5 years	Gateway Enhancements - Develop gateway enhancements at Downtown's main entry points, including at Eastman Avenue, Ashman Street, Rodd Street, Poseyville Road, Indian/Buttles, West Main Street, and Jerome Street	Midland DDA
5 - 15 years	Expansion of Streetscape Improvements - Prepare and implement streetscape plan to incrementally upgrade the streetscape of each downtown development area so it matches the amenities on Main Street and Ashman Street	Midland DDA, City Council
5 - 15 years	Infill Parking Deck at Civic Center - Evaluate surface parking lots around City/County buildings as they are transformed into other uses. Regular evaluation of feasibility of constructing infill parking deck northwest of City/County buildings	Midland DDA, City traffic engineer, City Council
15 - 20 years	Conceptual Projects - Townhouse development at southwest corner of Ashman and Buttles	Midland DDA, Private Developer(s), Planning Commission, City Council
15 - 20 years	Conceptual Projects - Parking lot redevelopment into office building with first floor parking area on east side of Ashman Street, between Ellsworth and Larkin Streets	Midland DDA, Private Developer(s), Planning Commission, City Council, Public Works Dept., Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
15 - 20 years	Conceptual Projects - Construct infill retail space on Main Street at northwest corner of Main and Gordon Streets, and on the northwest corner of Main and Cronkright Streets	Midland DDA, Private Developer(s), Planning Commission, City Council, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
15 - 20 years	Conceptual Projects - Construct infill commercial space on north side of Ellsworth Street, between Ashman and McDonald Streets	Midland DDA, Private Developer(s), Planning Commission, City Council, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
15 - 20 years	Conceptual Projects - Redevelop block north of Ellsworth Street, between McDonald and Rodd Streets, with commercial and residential space	Midland DDA, Private Developer(s), Planning Commission, City Council, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
15 - 20 years	Conceptual Projects - Develop public gathering place created by closing McDonald on south side of Buttles	Midland DDA, City Council, City traffic engineer

## downtown midland redevelopment and design plan

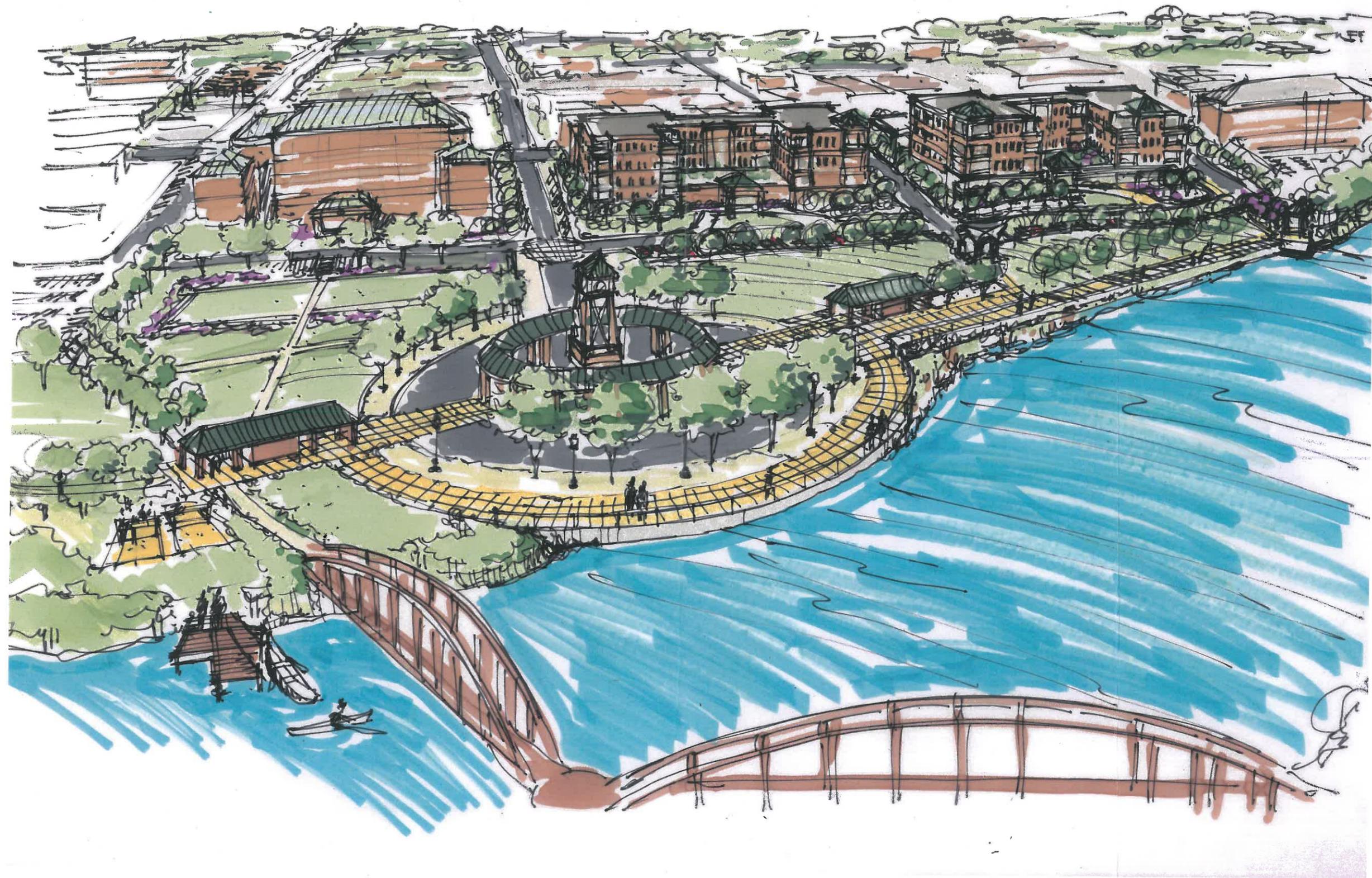
### Summary

Downtown Midland already possesses many of the important qualities of a successful district. Visit Downtown Midland on a typical day and you may see businesspeople having a lively lunch in the Ashman Court Hotel, a senior walking to the local card store to purchase a birthday card for their favorite grandchild, or a busy shop keeper chatting with a nearby resident on Main Street. In the future, this picture could also include a bustling waterfront park and downtown residents walking from their townhouse to a local restaurant for dinner or to a town pub for a night cap after a fun-filled evening at a Loons game.

As downtowns across the country continue to evolve into premiere destinations, the importance of neighborhoods in the downtown cannot be overlooked. Housing aids in the creation of a “24-hour” downtown, offering activity around the clock. Downtown residents create a built-in market for downtown businesses, reinforcing investments already in the district. Finally, downtown living can reduce sprawl and potentially improve a city’s tax base. To take advantage of these benefits, several housing opportunities have been presented in the redevelopment plan.

The vision of a 24-hour downtown can only be achieved by a public-private partnership, one side cannot do it alone. City officials and private developers are realizing, that such partnerships can offer a way to develop projects that would not otherwise be feasible using separate resources. To protect the investment made by public-private partnerships, the redevelopment plan has also recommended the improvement of *existing* segments of the downtown including continued streetscape enhancements, mixed-use infill development, and realigned roadway networks that promote a walkable district.

The redevelopment plan will guide future growth in the downtown. It will ensure that the downtown continues to evolve into an exciting district featuring entertainment, culture, recreational opportunities, places of business, and residential neighborhoods while preserving its historic charm. This plan is the first step by the Downtown Development Authority to plan for an evolving downtown that will become an asset to the city of Midland for generations to come.



View of proposed Downtown Midland Waterfront