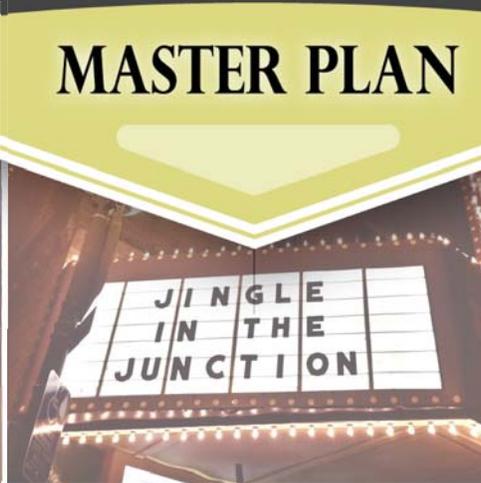


HISTORIC
WEST DES MOINES
MASTER PLAN





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the many residents and business/property owners who participated in development of this Master Plan through interviews, meetings, workshops, surveys, and through participation via the project Mobile App and Website.



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Kevin Crowley – Plan and Zoning Commission
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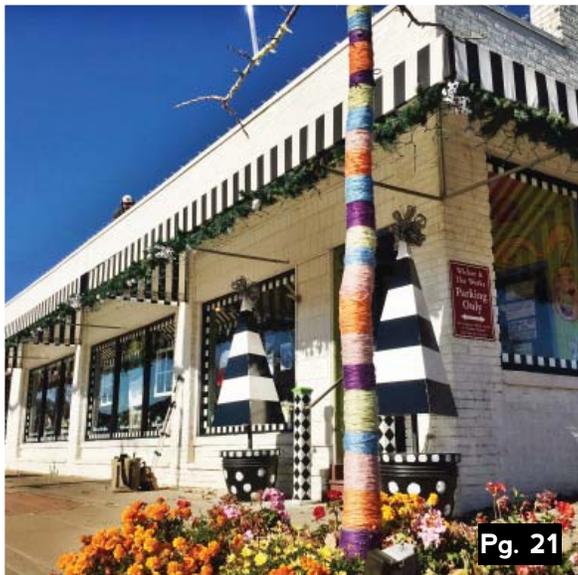
CONSULTANT TEAM



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Business Districts, Inc.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Master Plan for Historic West Des Moines (HWDM) is the culmination of over a year's worth of analysis, research, and community dialog. It is a guide book, outlining steps in order to take a wonderful part of the community and make it even better.

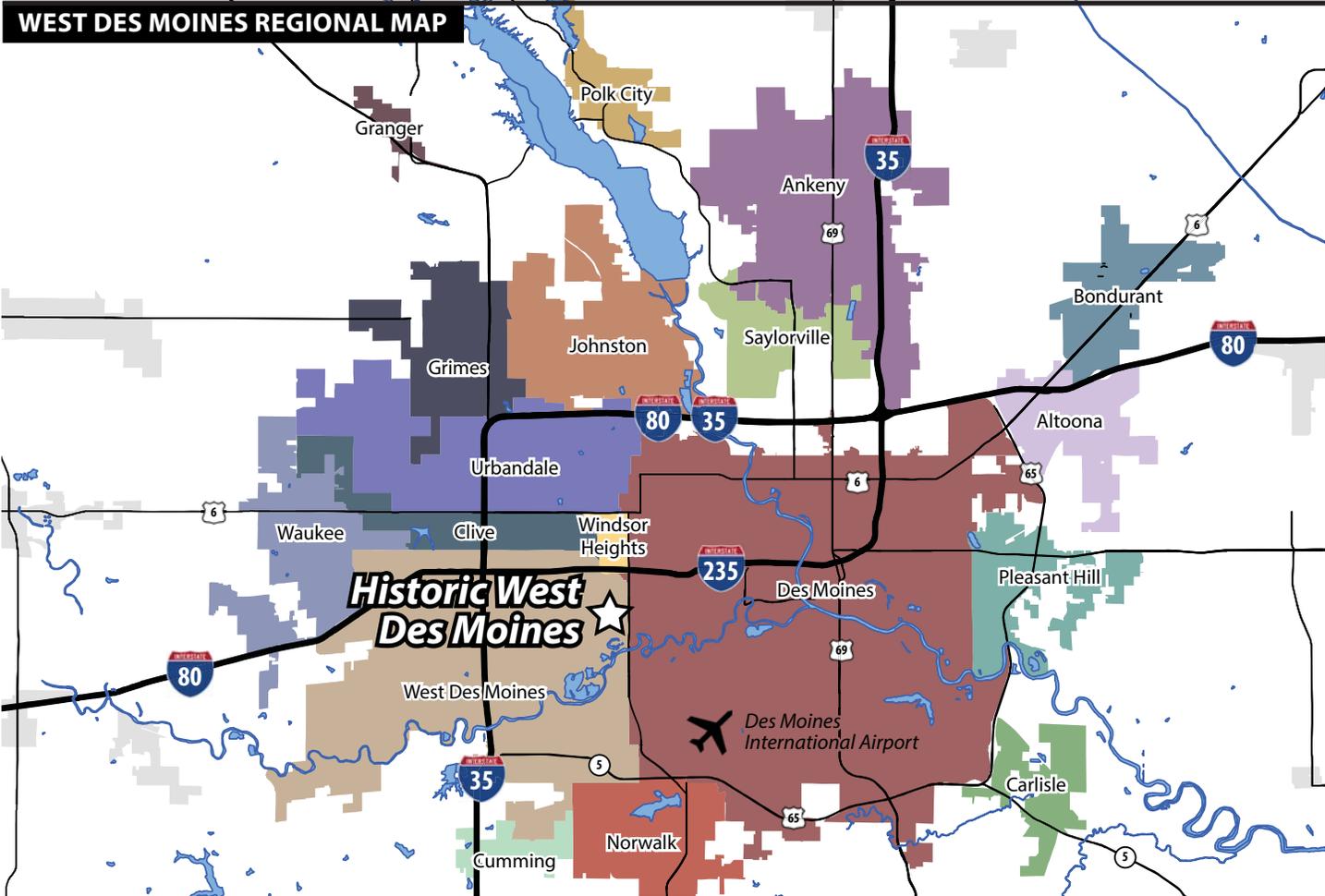
What is HWDM?

HWDM (Historic West Des Moines) is the community's gathering place and where the City of West Des Moines began. It is a desirable place to do business and to live. The commercial district includes some of the City's most historic buildings and most modern retailers. Residents are proud of their diversity, great schools, and local parks. They recognize and celebrate the distinctive character of their neighborhood within the context of West Des Moines' success. In a word, HWDM is unique.

Numerous myths exist about HWDM. Examples are: Valley Junction only has antique stores; neither HWDM residents nor residents in the City's more distant neighborhoods patronize downtown businesses; and the residential area is less desirable than other parts of the City. Frankly, all of these are 'urban legends.' The facts are: HWDM has many savvy retailers and functions both as the heart of the community and as a regional destination; many residents do patronize downtown businesses-some spend more, some less; and the broader HWDM residential area has a wide range of household incomes and housing options, in addition to great schools and parks.

“Numerous myths exist about HWDM. Frankly, all of them are urban legends.”

Diane Williams, BDI



Where is HWDM?

Location Map

In the case of HWDM, the name says it all – HWDM is indeed immediately west of the City of Des Moines, Iowa. The area was originally known as Valley Junction due to its location in the valley of the Raccoon River (immediately to the south) and the junction of two railroads including the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad (now Union Pacific) which had a roundhouse, switching yards and repair shop in Valley Junction.

HWDM is generally defined by 1st Street (Highway 28) to the east, Railroad Avenue to the south, and Grand Avenue to the north and west. To keep the plan focused, certain parcels along the periphery of this area are excluded (see location map).



Why and how was this plan developed?

From outward appearances, HWDM is doing well. Most space within the downtown is leased; the area is busy with activity during the Farmers Market and other events hosted by the Historic Valley Junction Foundation, and homes within the surrounding neighborhood area appear well kept. Yet a look beyond the surface reveals underutilized upper-story spaces, homes and buildings with sometimes significant deferred maintenance, and an ever more competitive business environment that demands attention. To address these issues and to capitalize on the wonderful assets present in HWDM, the City contracted a consulting team to work with the community to develop a Master Plan to serve as a blueprint for the next 10 to 20 years.

Three key elements went into developing the plan. A robust community engagement effort was designed and executed to solicit input and ideas from residents, businesses and visitors. A thorough background analysis was conducted to examine both past plans and existing conditions. These efforts, as well as development of specific solutions to address identified issues, were guided by the professional expertise of the consulting team of Teska Associates, Inc. and Business Districts, Inc. A short summary of these efforts is provided on the following pages, while a more detailed summary of the background analysis is documented in the Appendix of this Master Plan.

3 Key Elements of the plan

1. **Robust engagement**
2. **Thorough background analysis**
3. **Development of specific solutions**

OVER THE YEARS...

1846

- The first settler to the area was James C. Jordan in 1846. He was politically active, and served as a county supervisor, a state senator and a state representative. His home was a stop on the "Underground Railroad", and has been preserved by the West Des Moines Historical Preservation Society.



1891

- Between 1891-1896 the area grew rapidly. A group of businessmen formed the Hawkeye Investment Company and purchased 40 acres of land east of 8th Street which is now the Valley Junction Downtown.



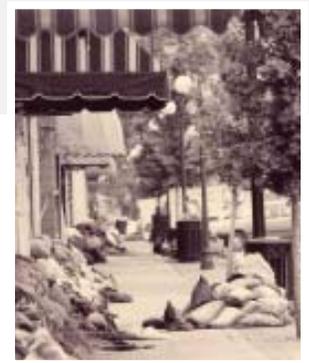
1922

- The surrounding neighborhood has always been diverse. Many African American and Hispanic workers were brought in to work on the railroad (particularly during a 1922-1923 strike), and their families have remained in the area ever since.



1993

- Major flooding in 1993 led to the construction of the levee and rehab of many homes.



Community Engagement

Effective engagement is about meeting folks where they are and providing a variety of tools which enable them to interact. Everyone engages differently and in this way we allow them to choose and interact via the method with which they are most comfortable. From in-person interviews and meetings with business owners and stakeholders, to idea sharing via the website, mobile app and at events such as Jingle in the Junction, to focus groups with seniors, millennials, empty nesters and students at Stilwell Elementary... and a mobile idea chalkboard posted in Valley Junction -- a variety of outreach tools and avenues were explored to maximize input. Below and on the two pages that follow is a visual tour of engagement methods, statistics, and feedback received over the course of the project.



OUTREACH COMPONENTS

- Website
- Mobile App
- Quick Polls
- Idea Chalkboard
- Interviews
- Steering Committee
- Walking Tour
- Workshops
- Graphic Brainstorm
- Focus Groups
- Survey by Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Community Events
- Open House, Public Hearings

SHARED IDEAS

"Sidewalk cafes are needed."

"Utilize Phenix school. It would be a great place for meetings, community activities, indoor farmers market, etc."

"Increase the mixed use of Fifth Street."

"More upper story rental apartments and condos would be great for the district and businesses."

"Keep the street parking in Valley Junction. Helps create the small town atmosphere."



BUSINESS OWNER KICK-OFF EVENT



STUDENT FOCUS GROUP | STILWELL JUNIOR HIGH



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP | OPPORTUNITY SITES POLL



WALKING TOUR | STEERING COMMITTEE

teska **Graphic Brainstorm | Historic West Des Moines Master Plan**
from **Teska Associates, Inc.**

NEIGHBORHOOD BRAINSTORM

what can we do?
what can we do?
what's the goal?

REMODELING!!!
ATTRACTING FAMILIES + YOUNG FOLKS
INFRASTRUCTURE (NEEDS 2 BE CONSISTENT)
CODE ENFORCEMENT
LESS RENTALS
DEEPER DISCUSSION W/ EACH OTHER
TALK 2 SENIORS
WORK COLLECTIVELY
GET THE WORD OUT!

00:13 HD vimeo



JINGLE IN THE JUNCTION



DESIGN-4-LIFE WORKSHOP



**HISTORIC
WEST DES MOINES
MASTER PLAN**

IT'S TIME TO TURNIP THE BEET

Come see the Draft Historic West Des Moines Master Plan!

<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">WEDNESDAY JULY 20</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold;">PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE 7-830 PM</p> <p>137 6TH STREET HUMAN SERVICES BLDG</p>
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">THURSDAY JULY 21</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold;">FARMERS MARKET 5-730 PM</p> <p>137 5TH STREET HISTORIC VALLEY JUNCTION FOUNDATION</p>

LOCALLY GROWN IDEAS

TOP RATED RECOMMENDATIONS

FRESH RENDERINGS

DRAFT PLAN

JOIN US!



WWW.HISTORICWDM.COM

PROJECT MARKETING | EVENT POSTER

HISTORIC WEST DES MOINES
MASTER PLAN

HOME ABOUT NEWS KICK-OFF VIDEO DOWNLOAD THE APP SHARE IDEAS CALENDAR RESOURCES PHOTOS CONTACT




ABOUT

VIEW THE KICK-OFF VIDEO

DOWNLOAD THE PROJECT APP

** Join us on January 14th for the "Today + Tomorrow" Workshop! **

Welcome to the website for the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan. The time has come to make Valley Junction and our surrounding neighborhood the best it can be! Help us answer the question ... "What's Next?" Click the links below to get started and don't forget to download the project app!




WEBSITE



Free

Release: Dec 03, 2015

PROJECT APP



Background Analysis

Understanding the historical, physical, demographic, and economic conditions within HWDM is critical to developing a plan for its future. The following is a brief summary of key components of this background analysis. For additional detail, please see the Appendix (published separately).

Past Plans: As the oldest section of West Des Moines, the study area has been addressed at varying levels in a number of past planning efforts. Most of these plans are available for review and download on the City's website. – www.wdm.iowa.gov

Past plans include:

- ❑ **City of West Des Moines Comprehensive Plan (2010)** – presents policies and a Future Land Use Plan which is supportive of existing development patterns.
- ❑ **Valley Junction Streetscape Plan (1999)** – much of this plan has been implemented.
- ❑ **Valley Junction Market Strategies Plan (2010)** – created branding and other concepts, many of which have been implemented by the Historic Valley Junction Foundation (HVJF).
- ❑ **City of West Des Moines Public Art Master Plan (2015)** – Outlines a clear City-wide commitment to public art, including potential for additional opportunities within HWDM.
- ❑ **City of West Des Moines Bicycle Master Plan (2015)** – Details a City-wide plan linking neighborhoods with key destinations throughout WDM, and within greater Des Moines.
- ❑ **Architectural/Historical Reconnaissance Survey of Valley Junction (1998)** – Examines existing structures for architectural and historical significance, noting “the residential neighborhood east of 8th Street and the old downtown district along 5th Street represent important and disguisable historic entities worthy of preservation.”
- ❑ **A Pattern Book for West Des Moines Neighborhoods (2008)** – Examines historical housing styles in WDM, and outlines suggestions for remodeling and expansion, including many green building techniques.
- ❑ **Southeast Basin Stormwater Study (2013)** – Addresses the causes of and potential solutions to the issue of flooding in the area, including potential new stormwater basins at 12th Street and Vine Street, and along the west side of 16th Street south of Stilwell Junior High School.



Recipient of the Outstanding Planning Award for Best Practice from the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association

Economic + Market Assessment

This effort focused on both residential and commercial opportunities in HWDM. Highlights include:

- HWDM is both a neighborhood and a traditional commercial district. It fits what the Urban Land Institute (ULI) describes as a 'diet urban' location – a suburban area near and accessible to a major city center, with walkable blocks and proximity to employment.
- The commercial district has two core markets, a neighborhood market and a larger custom market related to the unique mix of shops in Valley Junction. Both are strong markets offering significant potential.

CORE MARKET #1: The population of the study area is approximately 4,800 residents, while the larger neighborhood market has a population of approximately 30,000, and an average household income of slightly over \$90,000. However, the average household income of \$57,700 in the HWDM study area is significantly lower than the larger neighborhood market. This neighborhood market generally extends north to Interstate 235, south to the Raccoon River, west to Valley West Drive and east to 42nd Street in Des Moines.

CORE MARKET #2: The custom market (which was defined based on interviews with local merchants), has a



Less than 5% Commercial Vacancy Rents at \$10-\$15 Per Square Foot

total population of approximately 272,000 and an average household income of approximately \$96,000.

- When compared to other similar downtowns in the region, Valley Junction has significantly more retail shopping options but significantly fewer dining options. Strong local ownership and the variety and unique character of local shops are strong positives for the district.
- While the HWDM business mix had historically been dominated by antique shops, this mix has changed significantly in recent years with an increasing variety of retail establishments. This is a very positive trend. The market study recommends that businesses continue to appeal to younger consumers.
- Attracting additional small office users, particularly to upper story space, is recommended. The study notes that the average suburban office worker spends an average of \$104 per week near their place of employment.
- Most of the commercial space within the downtown is currently occupied (less than 5% vacant), and rents are reasonable (\$10 to \$15 per square foot).



“Valley Junction is the place to go if you want a unique gift item.”

- Four current retail and restaurant trends relevant to HWDM include:

TREND #1 - The Experience: Delivering a unique consumer experience is key to customer attraction, sales performance, and image positioning.

TREND #2 - Millennials: As the U.S.’s largest demographic cohort, their direct or indirect impact on all real estate uses is significant – and regions like Des Moines have been particularly attractive to this age cohort.

TREND #3 - Post-Digital Effect: The advent of on-line shopping has radically changed the shape of retailing. While major retailers have struggled with sales at their stores, many independent retailers have experienced increased sales due to unique products and presentation. Several participants in the focus group interviews noted that Valley Junction is the place to go if you want a unique gift item.

TREND #4 - Local: Trends supporting small business owners, local foods and food systems, and a general push to ‘shop local’ is a major plus for HWDM.



56% Renter Occupied Housing 1 in 3 Adults have a Bachelors Degree

- When looking at the immediate residential market (the two census tracts covering HWDM) compared to the City of West Des Moines as a whole, several interesting facts emerge:

POPULATION: The population density within the study area is significantly higher than that of the overall community (4,320 people per sq. mile vs. only 1,550 City-wide).

OWNERSHIP: The percent of renter occupied units is also higher, with 56% renter occupied in HWDM vs. only 37% for the City as a whole.

INCOME: Average household income is significantly less in HWDM (\$57,700 vs. the entire City \$93,300).

EDUCATION: 28.1% of adults living in HWDM have at least a bachelor’s degree (slightly above the 27.7% state-wide value). However, 50.4% of all West Des Moines adults have a similar educational attainment.

- Based on demographic trends and interviews with local real estate professionals, the residential market evaluation recommends:

- Adding new housing options, including both rental and owner occupied. This includes adaptive reuse such as the rehabilitation of the former Phenix school or upper-story spaces along 5th Street and new construction on identified opportunity sites including potential for new residential south of Railroad Avenue.
- A focus on promoting rehabilitation of existing homes and apartments to meet modern codes and green building practices. This effort will require partnership and potential incentives.



Land Use + Zoning

Existing land usage within HWDM is primarily single-family residential, with a strong commercial district along 5th Street south of Locust Street and on adjacent blocks immediately east and west.

The City's Future Land Use Plan and Zoning Map both suggest future extension of this downtown north to Vine Street. Other significant land uses within HWDM include parks (American Legion, Holiday, Florer, Railroad and Wilson), schools (Hillside Elementary and Stilwell Junior High), and neighborhood commercial development at 1st Street and Grand Avenue (Val-Gate) and Railroad Avenue and Grand Avenue (Normandy Plaza). Existing Zoning patterns are summarized in the Appendix.

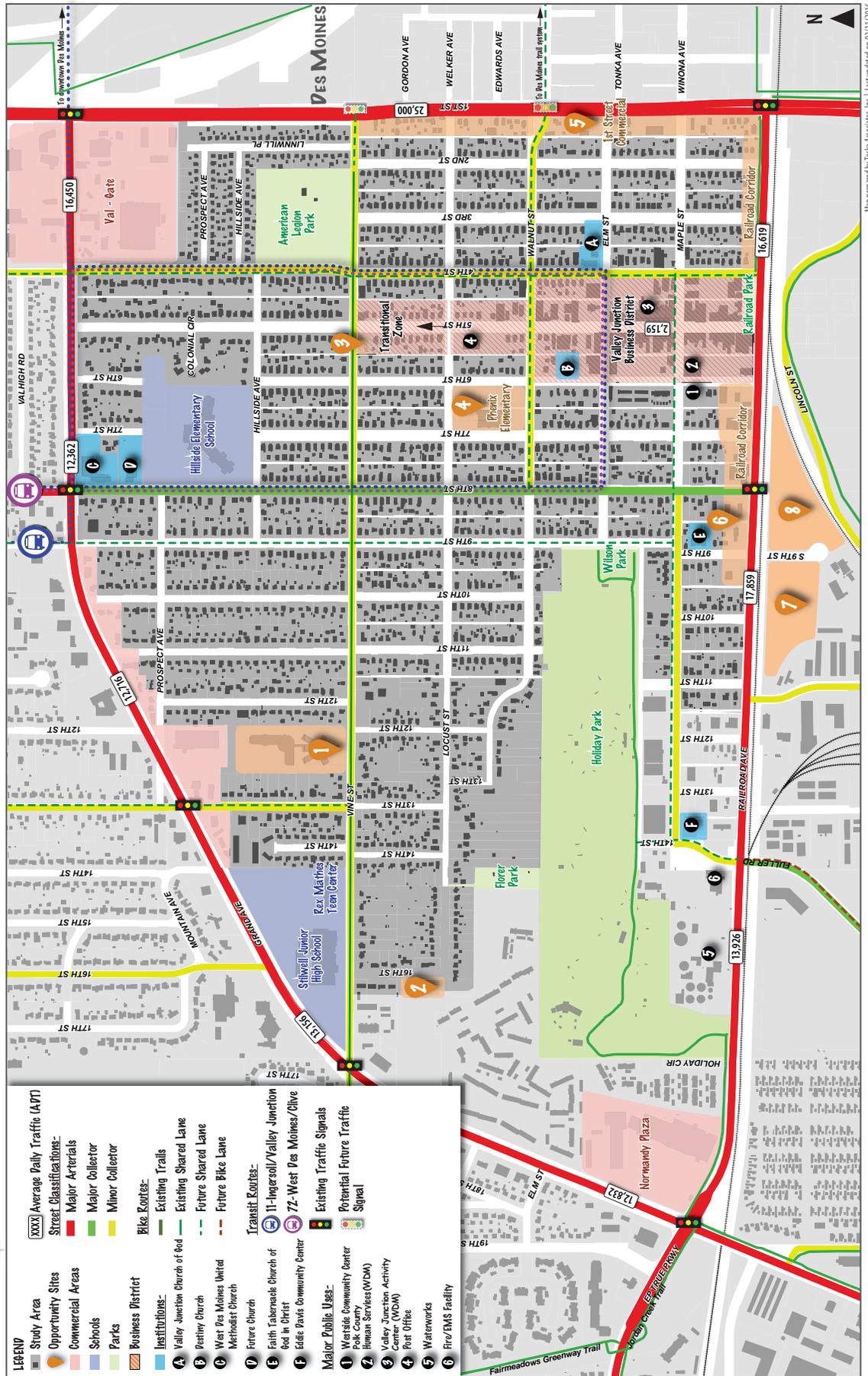
The **Issues & Opportunities Map** on the following page highlights the location of many of the key neighborhood features including general land use, institutions and public uses, street classifications, and bus and bike routes.

HISTORIC

WEST DES MOINES

MASTER PLAN

Issues + Opportunities Map



LEGEND

- Study Area
- Opportunity Sites
- Commercial Areas
- Schools
- Parks
- Business District
- Institutions-
 - Valley Junction Church of God
 - Presby Church
 - West Des Moines United Methodist Church
 - Future Church
 - Faith Tabernacle Church of God in Christ
 - Eddie Davis Community Center
- Major Public Uses-
 - Westside Community Center
 - Park County
 - Human Services (WDM)
 - Valley Junction Activity Center (WDM)
 - Post Office
 - Waterworks
 - Fire/EMS Facility
- Street Classifications-
 - Major Arterials
 - Major Collector
 - Minor Collector
- Bike Routes-
 - Existing Trails
 - Existing Shared Lane
 - Future Shared Lane
 - Future Bike Lane
- Transit Routes-
 - 11-Ingersoll/Valley Junction
 - 72-West Des Moines/Olive
- Major Traffic Signals
- Potential Future Traffic Signal



Physical Conditions

Physical conditions in HWDM are shaped largely by three factors:

❑ **Land** – Land in HWDM all drains to the south to the Racoon River. The topography is fairly flat south of Vine Street (with the exception of some steeper slopes on the north side of Holiday Park). Once north of Vine Street, slopes increase more significantly (in the 3% to 10% range) going up toward Grand Avenue. A significant portion of this area south of Vine Street was in a designated flood plain, but this designation was removed once the Racoon River Levee was constructed. The area is blessed with significant park land.

❑ **Landscape** – The landscape of HWDM is characterized by typical suburban landscapes of lawns, trees and gardens. A significant number of mature trees exist within the residential neighborhood, particularly north of Walnut Street.

❑ **Buildings** – Overall, there has been little new construction in HWDM in recent years. Many of the commercial structures along 5th Street were built in the railroad boom times between 1892 and 1918. According to the 1998 Architectural Reconnaissance Survey for Valley Junction, “the great majority of the buildings constructed in Valley Junction between the 1890s and 1940s were... based upon vernacular forms. As employed by architectural historians, the term vernacular refers to common, ordinary structures that were not designed by professional architects.” The only building in HWDM that is on the National Register of Historic Places is the former City Hall/Engine House at 137 5th Street (now the Historic Valley Junction Foundation offices).

PHYSICAL CONDITION | PHOTO MOSAIC



Transportation Infrastructure

While Valley Junction historic rail activity has declined, increased accessibility by car, bike, bus and even plane continue to provide HWDM with excellent regional access and mobility.

West Des Moines is at the junction of Interstates 80 and 35 providing easy access to virtually anywhere in the nation. Regional routes such as 1st Street (SW 63rd Street or Iowa Route 28), Grand Avenue, and Railroad/Ep True Parkway connect HWDM to downtown Des Moines and neighboring communities within the Greater Des Moines Metropolitan Area. West Des

Moines, and the surrounding region, has a growing network of bike trails.

The popular Levee Trail providing access to HWDM points east (including downtown Des Moines) and west. The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) provides bus service into and through HWDM via fixed route service on Route 11 (Ingersoll/Valley Junction) and Route 72 (West Des Moines/Clive) and an on-demand service. And the Des Moines International Airport is less than six miles south of HWDM.

SHARE YOUR IDEAS TODAY!

This survey is being conducted on behalf of the City of West Des Moines, which is undertaking a new Master Plan for Historic West Des Moines.

HISTORIC WEST DES MOINES MASTER PLAN

Follow the link to our website and click on "Take The Survey" to let us know your thoughts about the neighborhood, and how we can make it better, and we will include your name in a drawing for a new iPhone6.

The survey was conducted on-line in late 2015, and had 1,060 responses.

HWDM Survey

Separate from but in conjunction with this Master Plan, the City of West Des Moines engaged Neighborhood Development Corporation (NDC) and Revelation Research Solutions to conduct a survey, with follow-up focus groups, to learn about the public's awareness of, attitudes toward, use of, and interest in living in HWDM.

The survey was conducted on-line in late 2015, and had 1,060 responses. Focus groups included young adults, empty nesters & retirees, those who live and work in the area, and frequent visitors. A more detailed summary of the survey, including details of methodology and demographics is provided in the Appendix. Highlights of survey results include:

- People like the areas historic character, small town feel, friendliness, unique local shops, events, and richness of the experience (many things in one location).
- Survey respondents would like to see even more local shops, more restaurants, easier parking during events, and improvements to older commercial and residential buildings.
- The historic, small town character of the area suggests that new development should remain small in scale and character (no big box retail, no 4-story plus buildings, etc.).
- Of those interested in living in HWDM, approximately 60% expressed interest in single-family detached homes while 40% preferred attached homes or apartments.



CHAPTER 2

VISION

What does HWDM want to be?

A phrase often repeated during the planning process was that the goal of the Master Plan is to take a good neighborhood and make it great. HWDM is already a very attractive area to live, with great accessibility, availability of nearby shops and dining, and streets lined with affordable homes arranged in walkable blocks.

To identify ways to take the area from good to great, a variety of exercises were conducted with both the Steering Committee and the community to help determine a desired future for Historic West Des Moines.

- An Idea Chalkboard** was created to ask two fill-in-the-blank questions. Highlights of this activity are summarized in the word pictures shown on the right.

 - The Valley Junction Commercial District would be great if _____.
 - The surrounding neighborhood would be great if _____.

- A **“Mad-Lib” exercise** was conducted at the Today and Tomorrow Community Workshop. This exercise allowed participants to describe what they like about the downtown and the surrounding neighborhood, where they go frequently, and what improvements they would like to see. The table on the following page summarizes the results of this activity.

Chalkboard Ideas for the Downtown

family-fun more artwork
 LED lighting dogs public art
 Fair Trade Store bakery coffee shop
 hotel **bookstore**
more restaurants
 restaurants with bigger patios
 2nd hand store general store
 breakfast place railroad crossing

Chalkboard Ideas for the HWDM Neighborhood

interactive art pieces
 more trails wine bar
 bike trail **microbrew**
 on RR Avenue
 basketball **ART**
(arterial rapid transit)
 cross-over RR Avenue
 pedestrian mall bike racks

So based on this input, what does HWDM want to be?

THE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHT THE DESIRED VISION / GOALS FOR HWDM:

❑ **An eclectic collection of unique small shops and restaurants.** It is the go-to place for that special gift or a fun night out. It has a growing variety of dining options, including family-friendly and ethnic restaurants. New shopping options are available, particularly on off-5th Street locations.

❑ **A special gathering place** to celebrate the history, diversity and culture of West Des Moines. A new event space and/or plaza has been created in a more central location within the downtown, and events are kept fun and fresh.

❑ **A wonderful place to work** within steps of great places to live or to grab a quick cup of coffee, have a relaxing lunch, or meet-up with friends after hours.

❑ **A great place to live,** with easy access to quality schools,

parks, transportation, shopping and dining. New single family and multi-family housing options are becoming available, and existing homes are well maintained.

❑ **A sustainable and healthy environment** with enhanced bike and pedestrian access including a new connection to the levee trail and improved access across Railroad Avenue. A new community garden has been created, and green building and site design principals are being integrated into new construction, building rehabilitation, and public infrastructure projects.

Valley Junction Downtown		
Keyword Descriptors	Existing Destinations	Desired Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Vibe Play Shop Eat Meet People Local Unique/eclectic Quaint Variety Accessibility Busy Friendly/fun Edgy Safe Quiet/peaceful Historic Clean Attractive Walkable Vibrant Convenient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valley Junction 5th Street Railroad Avenue Raccoon River Park Farmers Market Legion Park Browns Wood Antique Shopping Coopers Historic City Hall Holiday Park Listen to live music Val Lanes Finding Iowa Longest Yard Jordan Creek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signage Streetscape Flowers Bike friendly More restaurants Energy independent Infrastructure New shops Vendors Outdoor stage Building restorations Preservation Best breakfast in town

Surrounding Neighborhoods		
Keyword Descriptors	Existing Destinations	Desired Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable Walkable Active Convenient Safe Neighborhoodly Friendly Historic Connected Close to amenities Schools Small town living Unique Well preserved No place like it Area parks Beautiful Diverse Character Bike paths Atmosphere Central location Transitional homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Parks Raccoon River Holiday Park Valley Junction Local Brewery Farmers Market Legion Park Close to DSM Airport Close to downtown Jordan Creek Mall Phenix Park Union Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dog Park Outdoor concerts Bike connectivity Bike parking Advance parks Celebrate parks Building maintenance More lighting Streetscaping



CHAPTER 3

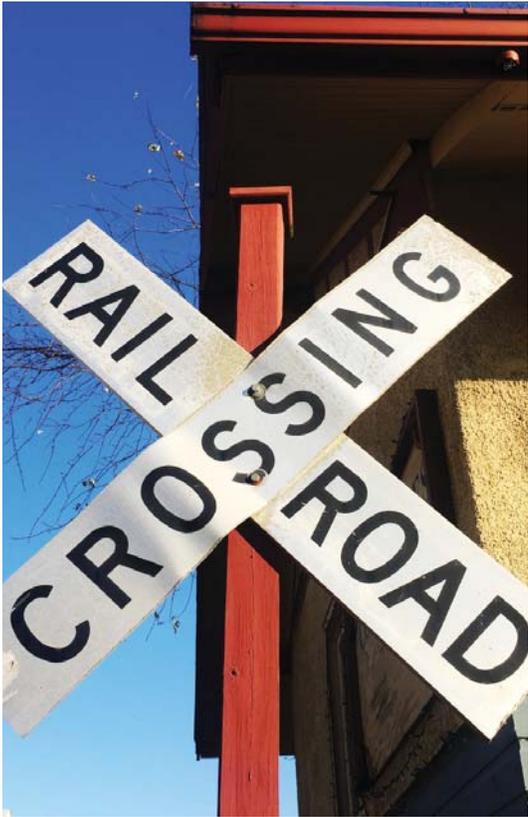
GUIDE

What do we need to do?

Historic West Des Moines (HWDM) is and will remain unique. The challenge is to identify ways to celebrate and enhance that uniqueness and make a really good place even better. The following recommendations are organized by category. They are based on listening to the needs and desires of local residents and businesses, filtered through knowledge of the market and professional expertise. They are listed in this section in no particular order. However, these recommendations are prioritized in the following chapter.

The work needed to complete plan objectives will take place over a decade, and the work needs to be done. These recommendations and related action steps will ensure that HWDM, already regionally known as a great place, will become an even greater experience with a stronger local economy.

“The challenge is to identify ways to celebrate and enhance the uniqueness of HWDM, and to make a really good place even better.”



Celebrate the Story

The Historic Valley Junction Foundation's (HVJF) many events and marketing programs have solidified HWDM's regional reputation as a unique commercial district. This work must continue, while adding new ways to tell the area's story. HWDM's story should be recognized as an important part of the community's identity and as a regional asset. That story has both historical and modern day elements. As the birthplace of West Des Moines, the area's history is an interesting and engaging tale and worthy of celebrating. The thriving Main Street of today is also worthy of celebration, and the HVJF understands the value of communication and has and will continue to promote the evolving story of ongoing small business owner and entrepreneurial success—whether retailers, restaurateurs, or office users. The business growth opportunities, described on the following pages, also tell HWDM's story and illustrate how the area will compete

and grow in the future. HWDM is not only a place where small businesses can invest and succeed, but it has appeal power because it is committed to a unique and unified experience.

HWDM's neighborhood is also a great place to live and invest, and is a story worth telling. New residents moving to the neighborhood are committed to investing in their properties. There are emerging opportunities for different types of programming to better engage HWDM's residents and to celebrate the area's historic and modern day diversity.

Residents love living in HWDM. By engaging children and their parents, residents gain greater affinity for their neighborhood. Ultimately, the evolving HWDM story will require continual communication to educate all potential customers, residents and future HWDM leaders.

Some ways to tell the story include:

STORYBOARDS OR PLAQUES

Many visitors to HWDM today have little way of knowing about the area's colorful and unique history. Installation of building plaques and storyboards within the HWDM downtown would be a simple way to tell the story and enhance the visitor experience.

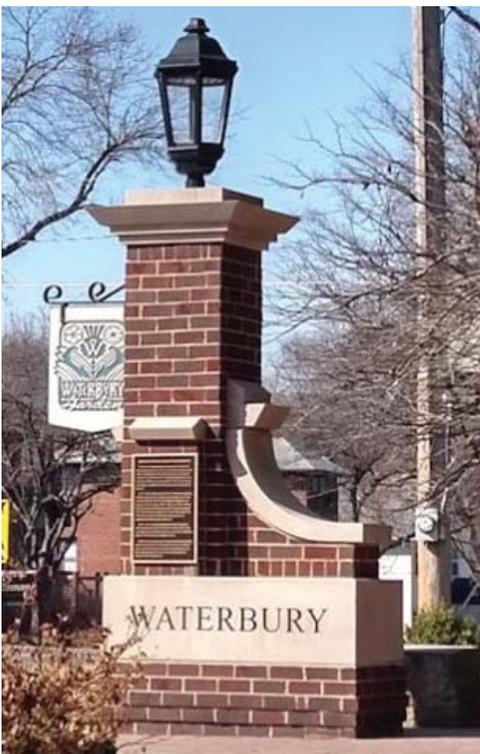
WALKING TOURS

HWDM is a very walkable area full of wonderful stories. A walking tour would give visitors a better understanding of this history. The tour can be both self-guided and, as available, led by a tour guide/storyteller. Another opportunity would be to integrate historical facts and self-guided walking tour via an app – unlocking unique adventures.

HISTORIC DISPLAYS

Several residents suggested creating a small museum to tell the story of HWDM. Cost concerns are a big challenge with any type of museum, and WDM already has the Jordan House nearby which celebrates community history. As such, a separate museum is not recommended. However, temporary and/or moveable interactive exhibits and interpretive tools are suggested. A series of displays celebrating the area's history should be created and used at events and moved to various locations such as the HVJF office, the Community Center, Polk County Community Center, WDM Human Services building, etc. These displays would provide opportunities to celebrate immigration and ethnic stories.





More ways to tell the story include:

EVENTS AND RECORDINGS

HWDM has a rich, multi-cultural history which makes for wonderful, engaging stories. Story-telling events, and recording stories by some of the communities longer-term residents, are important to celebrating the area's past.

HISTORIC DISTRICT

The downtown along 5th Street, particularly south of Walnut Street, is a wonderful and unique regional attraction, with charming older commercial structures and a special character and identity. The City and the HVJF should nominate this area of 5th Street as a National Register Historic District. The creation of a National Register district will provide opportunities to access state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation projects. Enabling this type of reinvestment will sustain both the area's unique character and its 'brand' identity. A formal application will require additional historical research by a qualified consultant. Any guidelines developed for this National Register District should combine three elements for future success: encouraging quality rehabilitation projects; recognizing project cost constraints; and maintaining sufficient flexibility to integrate fun and whimsy into overall revitalization efforts.

EDUCATION

To continue to celebrate the areas unique heritage, it is recommended that the West Des Moines Historical Society, the City, and the HVJF work cooperatively with both Hillside Elementary and Stilwell Junior High School to educate students about their community. As one example, a multidisciplinary curriculum has been developed in Nashville to educate grade school children about their traditional commercial districts, neighborhood history, and local architecture. More information about the Nashville program is available here:

<http://nashvillepreservationtrunks.blogspot.com/p/curriculum.html>

NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAYS

The City has already installed some attractive signs/identity elements along Railroad Avenue that celebrate the uniqueness of Valley Junction. However, development of gateway signs to welcome residents and guests are recommended at key community entrances, including:

- Vine St. and 1st St.
- Vine St. and Grand Ave.
- Grand Ave. and 8th St.

Business Growth

Valley Junction's position as a unique regional district will require focused business mix management based upon a growth system that responds to market change and sustains the district's local character. The district has been built on strong independent businesses, and that local focus is critical to maintaining the district's unique identity. Business recruitment efforts should be targeted to attracting additional independents, not national chains.

HWDM faces two (2) immediate business growth issues-- first, how to activate HWDM's side streets in the downtown with new users, and second, how to support future business succession and transition planning for some of HWDM's most successful retailers. The activation of HWDM's downtown side streets with retail or restaurant uses near Fifth Street with less intensive uses, such as small offices, as the commercial district transitions into the residential areas represent mix management for business growth. Recognizing what businesses can succeed where and capitalizing on existing business adja-

cencies are the strategic components in collaborating with HWDM property owners to maintain strong tenancies. These strategies will also be crucial to working with developers as commercial infill projects occur in HWDM.

Regarding side street activation, it is recommended to start with Maple Street and Elm Streets first, with future activation of 4th and 6th Streets as demand dictates. Maple Street between 4th and 6th Street has already begun this transformation, and has significant opportunities for additional activation (see section on streetscape for a proposed festival street concept for this area). Likewise, Elm Street, with the existing Wicker in the Works shop at Elm and 4th Streets, offers similar potential. Future business growth along 4th and 6th Streets may be possible through development of the frontage of existing City parking lots with commercial development assuming additional parking can be provided to replace any lost spaces, possibly in a single level deck behind the future shops.



WICKER AND THE WORKS





In structuring this business growth system, West Des Moines and the Metro area have multiple resources, both expertise and access to funding, to provide succession planning for existing businesses and to sustain the district's future independent businesses. For example, the West Des Moines Business Incubator represents an opportunity to foster small office uses and additional shared, or co-working, spaces. Bringing together these varied resources into a comprehensive system will require additional partnerships and extensive coordination.

To foster similar entrepreneurial retail growth in recent years, the downtown experience now often includes temporary retail and food uses and events, most notably retail and restaurant pop-ups. These spaces are typically open interior first-floor spaces that can host a variety of events or short-term rental to one or more retail businesses. Creation of such a space serves at least four (4) purposes:

- Generating new forms of excitement about the district and its businesses, and by extension, the district's image;
- Cultivating potential business owners not yet ready for a physical location;
- Activating district vacancies or inactive areas, such as Valley Junction's best side street locations, to showcase those locations and begin to expand perceptions of the district's business offering;
- Enabling businesses to 'morph' business concepts, or to experiment. For example, an established restaurateur has the opportunity to test a new business concept with a 90-day restaurant in a vacant space or with a food truck.

This type of system supports entrepreneurial business growth, including emerging small retail and offices users, enables current owners' desire to expand their businesses or start a new business concept, identifies new businesses that fit the district's mix, or aids owner transitions, as described above. Developing a comprehensive business growth system should also incorporate emerging resources such as crowdfunding, to address the needs of entrepreneurs and property owners.





Cultural & Entertainment Mix

HVJF operates a wide variety of events and activities throughout the year, including a very popular weekly Farmers Market and Music in the Junction concert series during the summer and Jingle in the Junction during the Christmas season. These events are well attended and well promoted, and no major changes are recommended other than routine monitoring and refinement based on experience and visitor feedback. Events should be kept fresh, with new features added occasionally while eliminating features or events that are less successful.

The one element often mentioned by residents in both meetings and the survey was a desire for a small indoor concert/performance venue. Such a venue could provide year-round events and performances that could bring additional customers to HWDM shops and restaurants, and provide residents with a close-to-home entertainment option. Such a facility could potentially be created in one of the larger upper-story spaces, or perhaps on one of the larger opportunity sites. The success of venues like the Des Moines Social Club suggest an appetite for such facilities in the region, and HWDM would seem an ideal location for a smaller cultural/entertainment facility.



Residential Mix and Choice

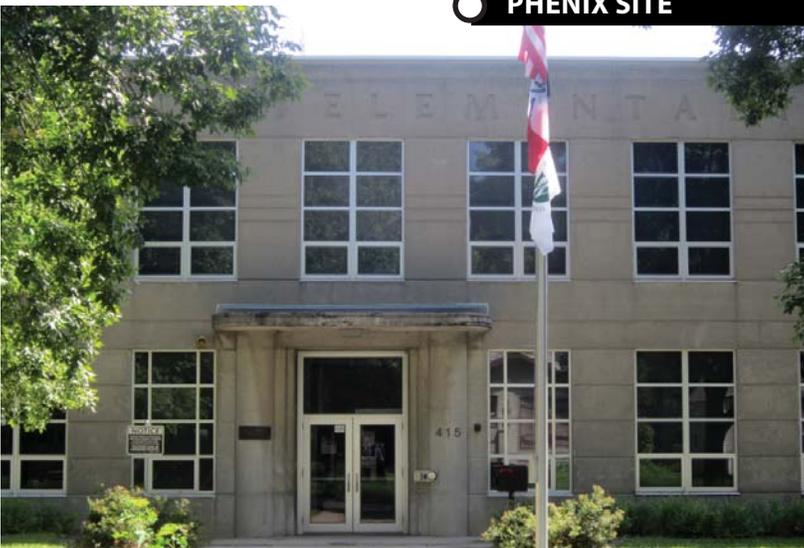
HWDM is a desirable place to live with convenient regional access and proximity to jobs, affordability, a walkable and attractive character, good local schools and parks, and access to both the HWDM downtown and other neighborhood goods and services at both Val-Gate and Normandy Plaza. Given these assets, homes in good condition do not stay on the market very long. Both the survey and focus groups conducted by Neighborhood Development Corporation (NDC) indicated additional interest in living in HWDM. Opportunities include:

UPPER-STORY APARTMENTS



While a few nice apartments have been created on upper story space along 5th Street, opportunities clearly exist for creation of additional units. Rehabilitation of these spaces can be expensive, and incentives will likely be needed to partner with property owners in capitalizing on this strong market potential. Challenges include the need to provide sprinklers, updating HVAC systems, replacing older roofs, and addressing accessibility issues. In some cases, walls and interior modifications will also be needed to create attractive spaces to meet market demand. Given the higher renovation costs, these apartments will likely need to be market rate units – which should be easily supportable given the unique and desirable living environment of 5th Street.

PHENIX SITE



This former school property, acquired by the City for redevelopment, offers the most immediate opportunity for new housing in HWDM. The school building is planned to be converted to apartments, with 75% of the units targeted as affordable by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines. The frontage along 6th Street offers opportunities for a mix of attached and detached homes (see Opportunity Site 4 sketch).



Residential Mix and Choice

SOUTH OF RAILROAD AVENUE



Although currently zoned for industrial use, two large and mostly vacant sites exist on the south side of Railroad Avenue at 9th Street. These sites offer potential for mixed use development, including potential higher density townhomes and apartments which could take advantage of the excellent proximity to both the HWDM downtown and the Levee Trail. This type of redevelopment and rezoning would be similar to the Valley Station development on Lincoln Street just south of Railroad Avenue, which was recently completed for senior housing. This approach will require modification to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning to accommodate non-industrial use for these properties.

Existing Valley Station Senior Housing

OTHER INFILL OPPORTUNITIES



Two additional opportunities for new housing were identified, one being the Bridges of Iowa property along Vine Street between 12th and 13th Streets (Site 1), and another along the west side of 16th Street (Site 2). Both of these sites have also been identified for potential long-term stormwater management by the City. As plans progress, the City should explore potential opportunities to accomplish both redevelopment and needed drainage improvements on those sites. Site 1 could be developed for a variety of medium density residential homes, including smaller lot single-family, duplex and townhomes. Site 2 would be most appropriate for single-family or perhaps duplex homes. (See pages 37-39 for map and details of opportunity sites.)

Existing Bridges of Iowa (Site #1)

Residential Character

Residential property maintenance and code enforcement were two related issues that were often raised when discussing HWDM with both residents and the Steering Committee. While a quick tour of the area reveals a charming neighborhood with older but well maintained homes, a closer inspection reveals some concerns – particularly in less visible locations such as along alleys. Programs such as the successful “Rock the Block” program by Habitat for Humanity have helped to improve some properties in the area. However, more work is needed. Consideration should be given to making “Rock the Block,” or some similar community home improvement effort, an annual event. Incentives may also be appropriate to help spur additional rehabilitation efforts (see neighborhood investment below). Other efforts to maintain and enhance residential character include:

Landscaping & Curb Appeal

Do's	Don't's	Reason
Do make your tree if conditions require.	Don't make your tree unless truly required.	Leaving a tree unstaked helps promote a strong root system that will help keep the tree anchored!
Do water and fertilize your plant.	Don't water and fertilize unless you have the correct amount and appropriate products.	Applying incorrect products could be fatal for your plant. Ask a specialist about correct water and fertilizer applications.
Do use mulch around trees and beds.	Don't over mulch or mulch too close to the base of the plant.	Mulch can provide many benefits to your plant, just make sure it stays away from the base.
Do prune your shrubs.	Don't prune off more than 1/3 of the plants overall size in one year.	Pruning is very beneficial, but pruning too much can make the plant suffer.
Do use plants where they will help block wind and sun and provide shade during summer months.	Don't place plants where they won't survive.	Plants can help provide protection from the elements, like shading your air conditioner and blocking winter wind, but they also have their own growing requirements. Pick appropriate plants for both aesthetics and function.
Do incorporate hardscape.	Don't be afraid to call in a professional.	Wood, stone, and other materials can help define your outdoor spaces, however, their structure and stability is very important. Be aware that you are using correct materials and designs to make your hardscape last.

The Cape Cod Family Room Addition

A portico, or columned, covered entrance, adds charm and protects visitors from the rain.

The trim on the addition matches the original house.

Outside, the addition blends in with the scale and style of the original house. Creating a large 2-story family room here would have damaged the character of our Cape Cod. You can often achieve the same spacious impression with a much lower top or vaulted ceiling while keeping a modest exterior profile. Following the “rule” of the scale here helps us consistently match our modern needs to a traditional exterior. The end result looks as if it were made by the same craftsman who built the original.

Original Elevation

The addition is carefully proportioned to match the home and neighborhood.



COMMUNITY GARDEN

Guidelines

The City, in cooperation with the Iowa Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), developed a Pattern Book for West Des Moines Neighborhoods to “encourage homeowners to retain the integrity and character of their homes.” This is an excellent guide to help maintain neighborhood integrity by allowing for additions that fit the existing housing character while integrating “green” building practices. These excellent guidelines should be well publicized, and they should be used in review of new construction, additions or exterior remodels within HWDM. The Pattern Book can be found here: <http://www.wdm.iowa.gov/home/showdocument?id=1384>

Community Garden

A Community Garden can be a wonderful place for residents to come together, share gardening tips, and grow their own food – or food for others. The City of West Des Moines already has one Community Garden in Jordan Creek Park near I-35. However, a location within HWDM would provide convenient access to residents on the east side of the City, and would provide neighborhood residents with an additional opportunity for social interaction. Two potential sites within HWDM have been identified:

- An area within the former Phenix school site, or
- The southeast corner of 6th Street and Walnut Street (City owned property).



Neighborhood Organization

The existing Valley Junction Residential Association (VJRA) can be a key partner in enhancing the neighborhood through close coordination and information sharing with the City, identification of issues and concerns, and volunteer neighborhood improvement activities. Other possible areas where the VJRA could aid in plan implementation include:

- Share information about the Master Plan vision, and encourage plan implementation;
- Identify and implement neighborhood clean-up and beautification projects (in cooperation with the City);
- Assist with identifying appropriate residents to tell and record stories of the area's rich and diverse history.

Coordinated Home Improvement Resources

Development of a tool sharing program is suggested to provide residents with an opportunity to share resources and reduce the cost of home improvements. The tool library could also maintain a list of recommended contractors for projects that may go behind the scope of a do-it-yourself project. Although outside of HWDM, the Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity Restore has a tool library in operation at their Euclid Avenue location.

Downtown Character and Streetscape

HWDM has a unique, independent, and historic character. Past streetscape projects have helped to enhance the area, including creation of Railroad Park, gateway treatments along Railroad Avenue, and attractive landscape planters throughout the downtown. Based on community input and field observations by the consulting team, a number of enhancements are proposed to improve and update the overall pedestrian environment and make the area even more appealing for both residents and guests. Proposed improvements include:

OUTDOOR SEATING AND OUTDOOR DINING

The relatively narrow sidewalks (approximately 12' wide) in the downtown along 5th Street do not allow for outdoor dining, and provide limited opportunities for seating today. The area has very limited public seating areas. Some local merchants have placed benches in front of their stores, often at the requests of shoppers who visit the area. To address this issue, several approaches are recommended:

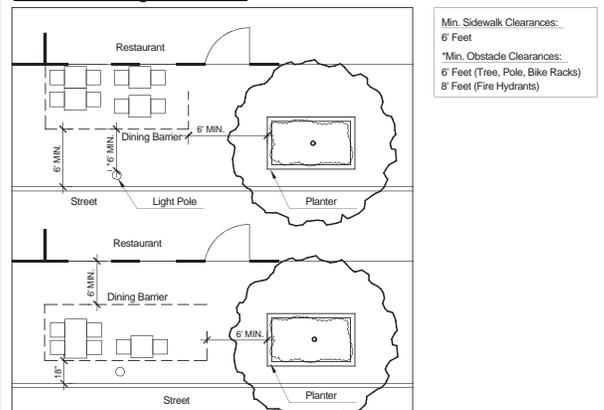
- ❑ For buildings that can accommodate it, consider roof-top patios.
- ❑ Widen sidewalks by narrowing the roadway drive-isle (see 5th Street/Mid-block Typology sketch).
- ❑ Allow restaurants to 'rent' parking spaces and create outdoor seating areas in front of their establishments.



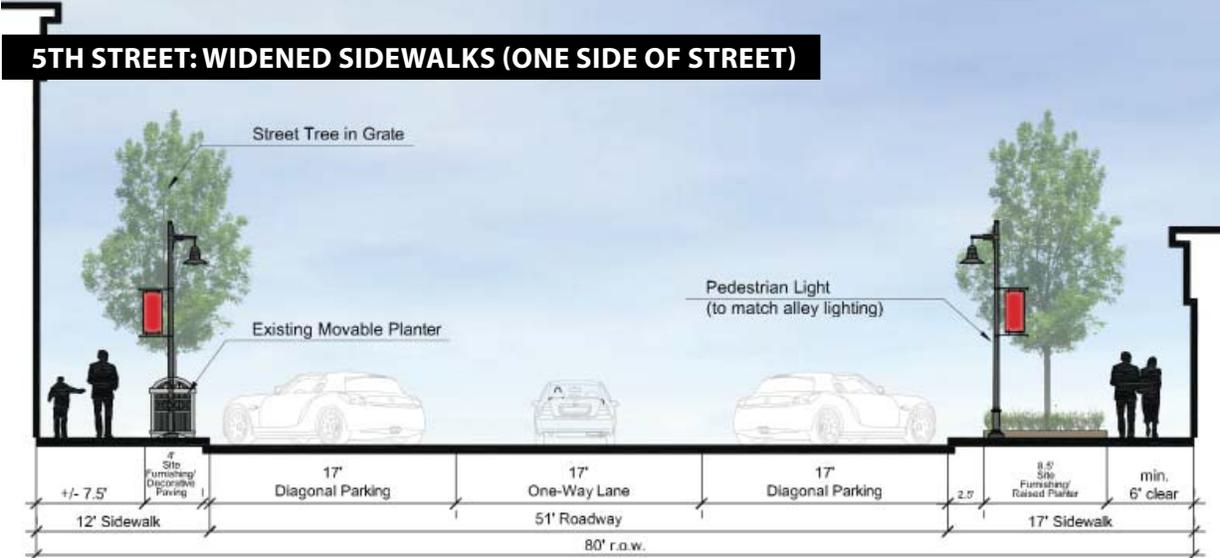
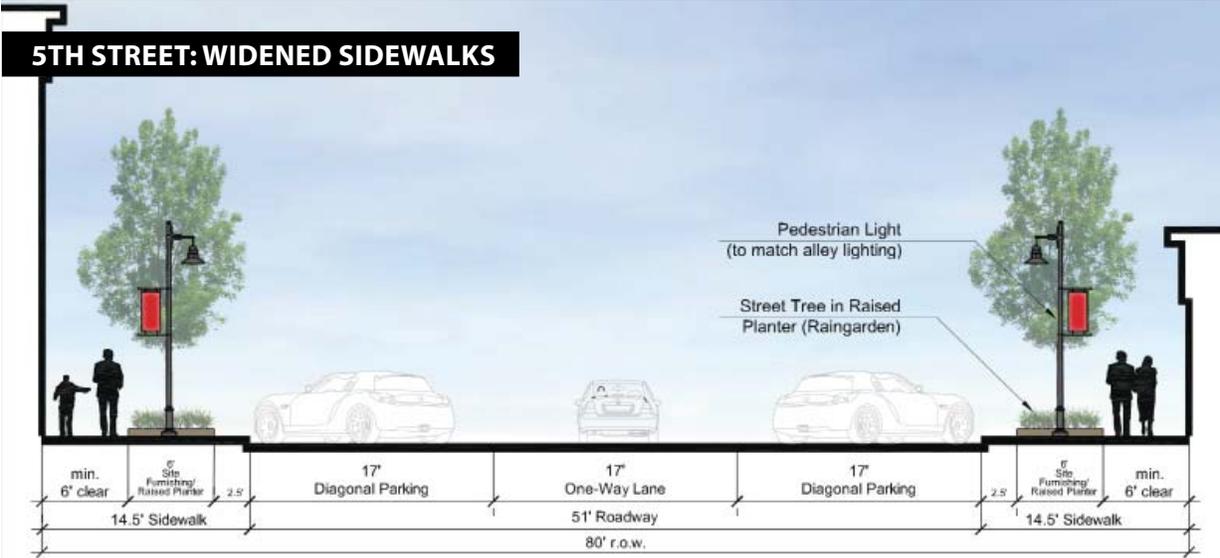
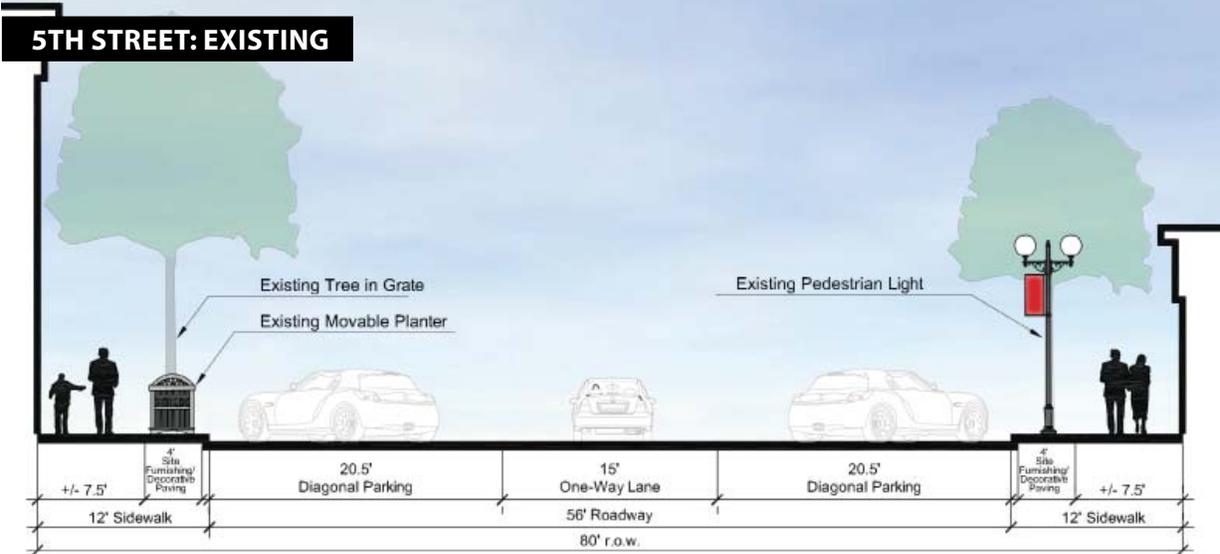
- ❑ Create additional parklets for seating, and for fun. A parklet is a very small temporary park that fits within an existing parking space. The concept can be used to add additional seating opportunities, create opportunities for temporary art, and just to add some fun to the streetscape. The City of Covington Kentucky recently created a "Curb'd" design competition that brought several temporary parklets to their Main Street. The installations were constructed in the spring and removed in the fall to allow for winter snow plowing. <http://www.curbd.org>. An even more temporary approach is known as Park(ing) Day – an annual worldwide event where artists, designers and citizens transform parking spots into temporary public parks. <http://parkingday.org>.

- ❑ Allow for additional seating and/or dining in pedestrian bump-outs (areas at intersections where the roadway is narrowed to enhance pedestrian safety).
- ❑ Allow outdoor dining within pedestrian pass-throughs.
- ❑ Estimated streetscape enhancement costs of approximately \$1,000,000 per block along 5th Street.
- ❑ Maintain Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility on all sidewalks.

Outdoor Dining Guidelines



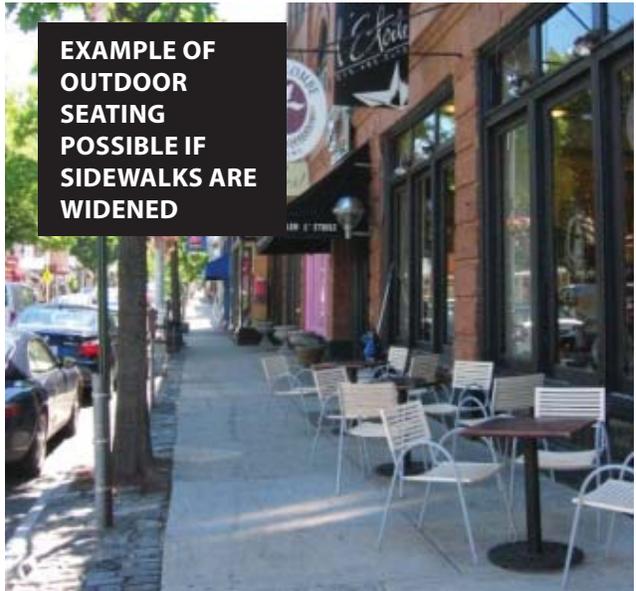
Widening Sidewalks



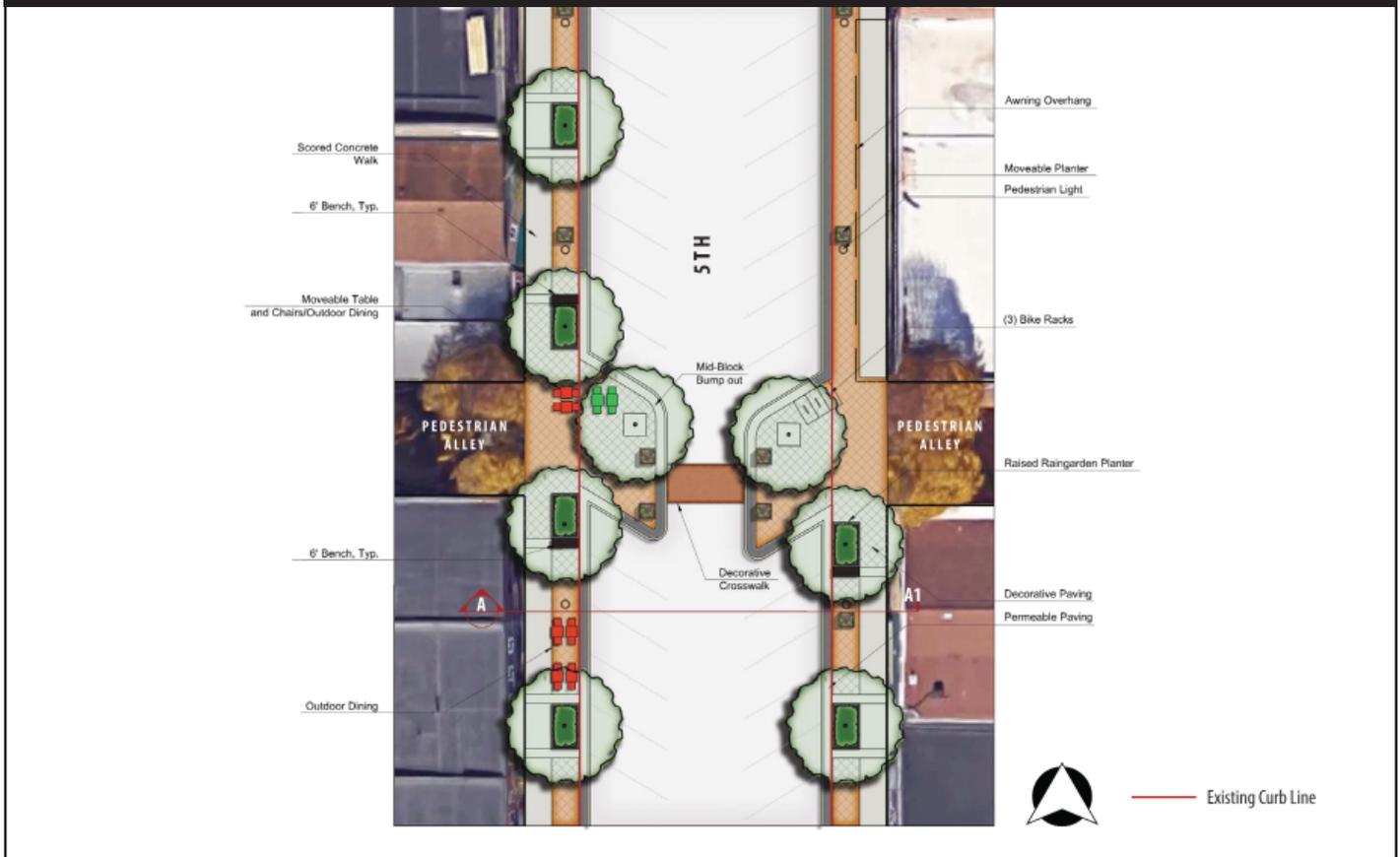
Positive Existing Streetscape Enhancements



Possible Streetscape Improvements



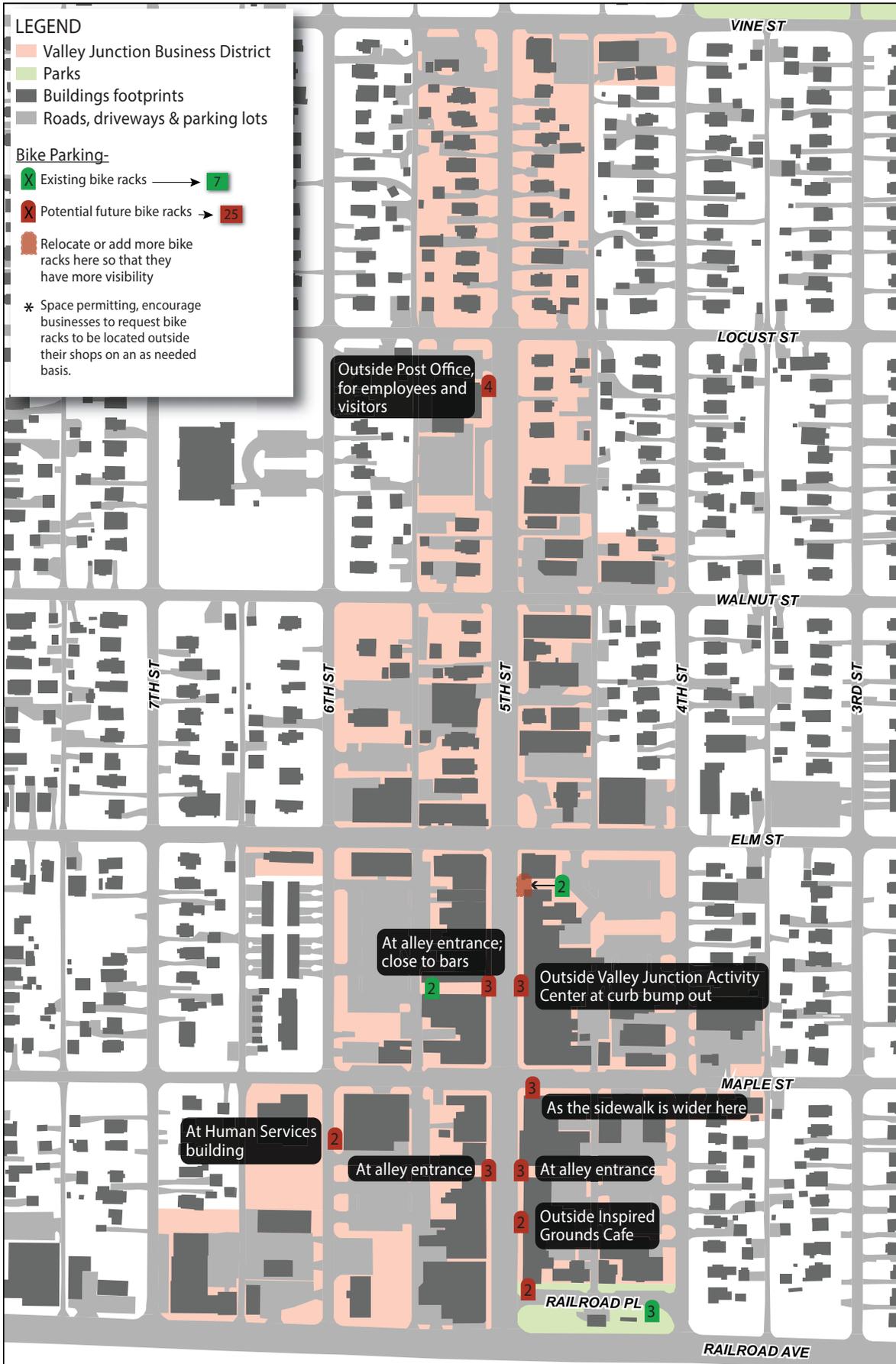
PEDESTRIAN BUMP-OUTS



PEDESTRIAN/BIKE ENHANCEMENTS

The walkability of HWDM is one of its primary draws. The following enhancements are recommended to improve the pedestrian experience and improve bike access:

- Create pedestrian bump-outs on 5th Street adjacent to existing pedestrian pass-throughs between buildings and at intersections. Mid-block crossings will provide a safer pedestrian environment and enhance the appearance of the district.
- Install additional bike racks (see plan) in visible locations.
- Create a raised platform at the 5th/Maple intersection that favors the pedestrian and encourages cars to slow down.
- Widen sidewalks where possible to prioritize the pedestrian over cars.
- Replace aging pavers to avoid potential trip hazards.
- Continue to enliven pedestrian pass-throughs as noted elsewhere with murals and other public art, seating and outdoor dining opportunities, enhanced landscaping, and keep it fun.



Bike Rack Locations Map | Historic West Des Moines Master Plan
 Last updated on February 22nd, 2016



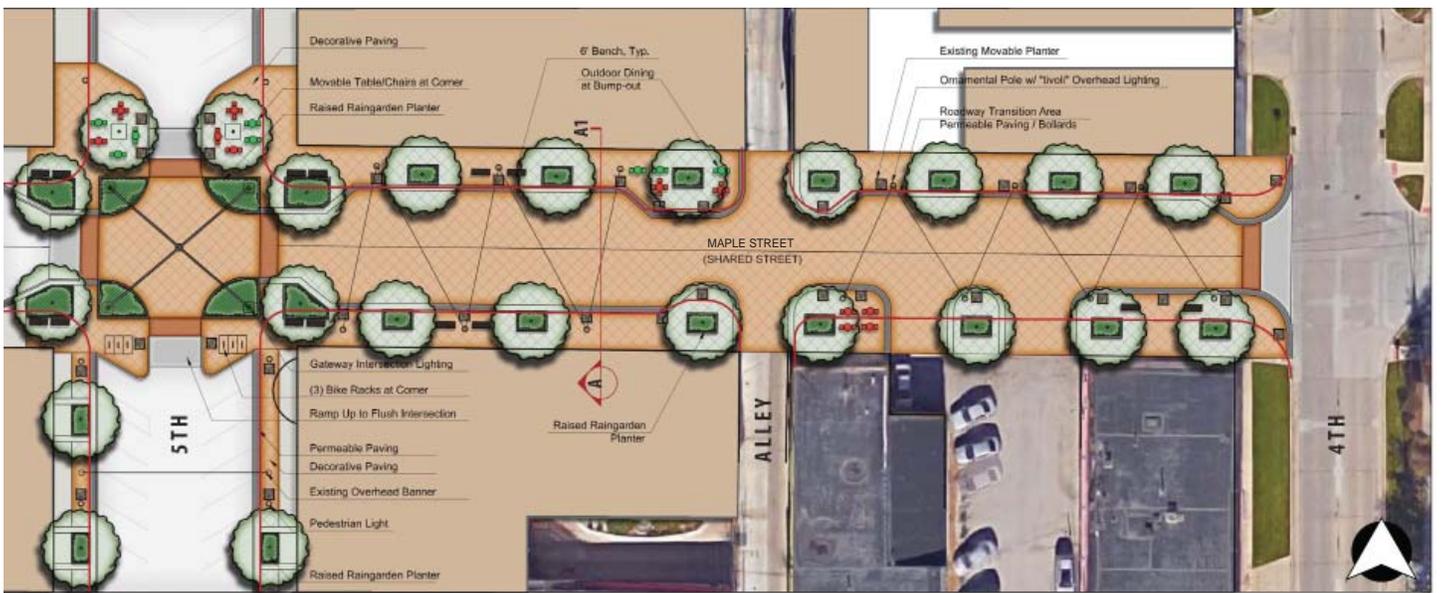
CIVIC SPACES

The only significant civic space in HWDM's downtown today is Railroad Park. While this park has been well used for events, its location adjacent to busy Railroad Avenue and on the edge of the district is less than ideal. An interactive fountain, public art, and both paved and green open space for events are features that should be considered within a new civic space. Two options to address this issue are proposed for consideration:

- ❑ Creation of a shared street along Maple Street. A shared street prioritizes the pedestrian and is designed like a civic plaza – that happens to allow cars and parking on non-event days. The illustration below shows how this approach could work.
- ❑ Estimated Maple Street/5th Street intersection improvement cost of \$300,000.
- ❑ Estimated cost of creation of a shared street along Maple Street between 4th and 5th Streets of \$2,000,000.
- ❑ Creation of a separate plaza on 5th Street if a property becomes available between Walnut and Railroad, preferably in a corner location.



Maple Street Shared Street Concept



Existing Curb Line

Facade Improvements

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS



EXISTING BUILDING FACADE



- A** Gooseneck Lighting
- B** Remove Shingle Roof Awning, Replace with Sign Panel or Transom Windows, Flat or Blade Signs are appropriate
- C** New Awning
- D** New Decorative Wood Door
- E** Paint Unpainted Aluminum-Frame Windows and Trim to Match (Use Natural colors for walls and trim and reserve brighter colors for accents such as doors, signs, and awnings)
- F** Decorative Barber Pole
- G** Blade Sign (min 7' height clearance)



MURAL EXAMPLES

MURALS

HWDM's Downtown has several interesting murals. Additional building facades, particularly within the pedestrian pass-throughs and along alleys, present opportunities to expand this effort. The HVJF, the City and its Public Arts Advisory Commission, local artists, local businesses, and schools should work together to create unique works of art that are fun, colorful, and celebrate the areas unique identity and culture.

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

Guidelines should be developed to guide commercial property owners in the renovation of their properties to maintain the character of the HWDM Downtown.

Development Opportunities

Twenty-six opportunity sites were identified within HWDM for potential redevelopment. Some will likely just involve reuse of a vacant structure, while others may involve a more extensive redevelopment. These opportunity sites were initially developed by the consulting team, with a few additional sites added based on comments from the Steering Committee and at community meetings. Those meetings were also used to help prioritize sites. The following plan and accompanying table identifies the location, size, and existing conditions on each site. It also provides recommendations for reuse.

The following sites were identified by the community to be addressed early-on in plan implementation. They are not listed in any particular order. The timing of development will be dependent on the market and desires of individual property owners.



SITE 3

Site 3 at the southwest corner of Vine Street and 5th Street. This now vacant commercial corner has a long history and connection to the neighborhood, and redevelopment is needed.



SITE 4

Site 4, the former Phenix School site, which is recommended for a variety of residential uses as well as integration of a small park/open space area.



SITE 21

Site 21, at the northwest corner of 1st Street and Railroad Avenue. This property is a gateway to HWDM, and improvements are recommended to maintain its commercial use while enhancing the sense of arrival for residents and visitors. Focus should be on the 1st & Railroad intersection with other properties included as appropriate.



SITE 22 + 23

Sites 22 and 23, south of Railroad Avenue. These larger sites offer potential for mixed use development, including new residential use, which could provide unique living opportunities conveniently located near the HWDM Downtown and the Levy Trail.



SITE 24

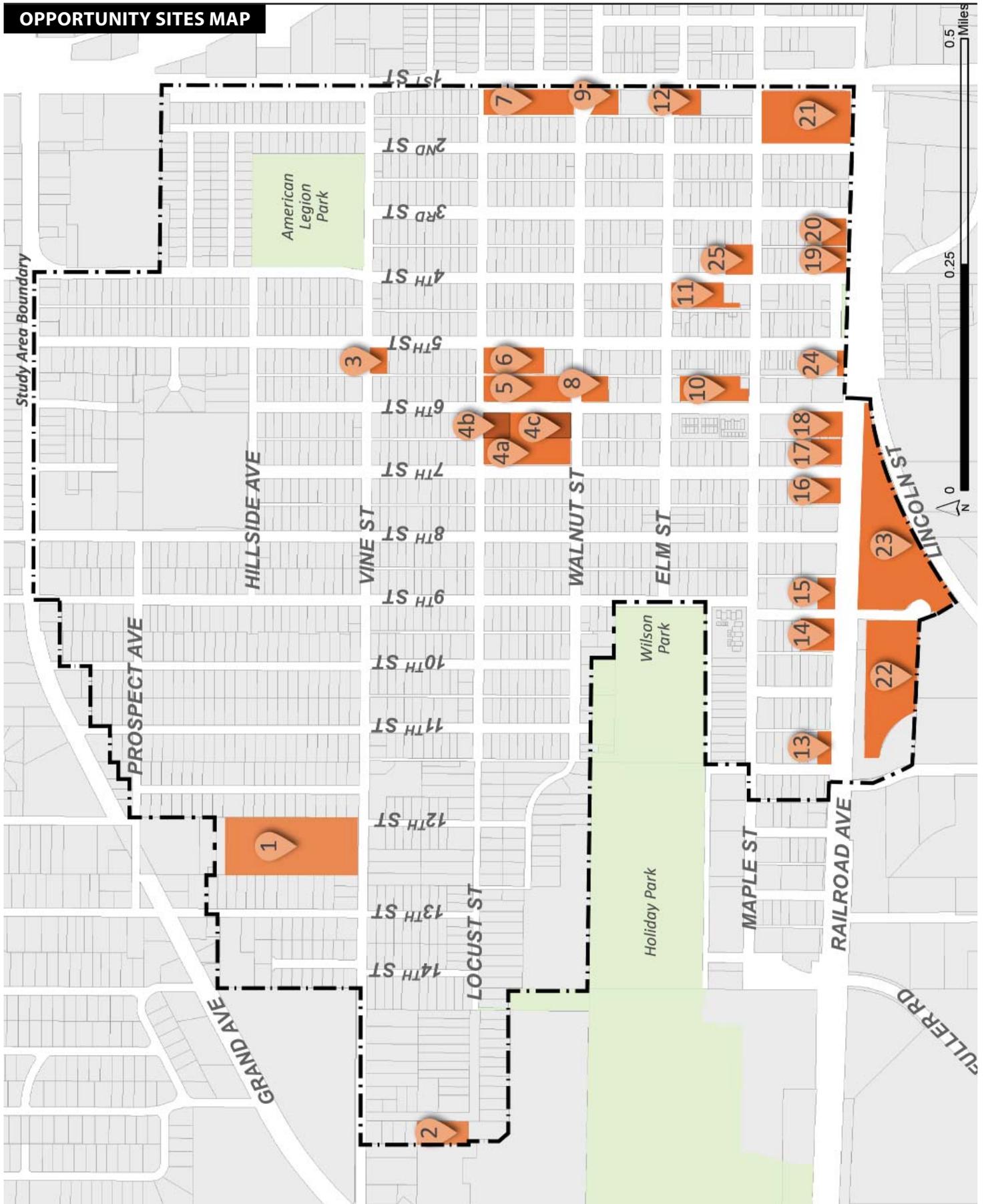
Site 24 is another gateway site, located at the northwest corner of 5th Street and Railroad Avenue at the entrance to the downtown. This building is in need of significant rehabilitation, but if improved could provide a welcoming and appealing 'front door' to HWDM.



SITE 25

Site 25 is located at the northeast corner of Maple Street and 4th Street. This property could serve as an anchor to a reinvigorated Maple Street corridor, and could accommodate a wide variety of uses including a destination restaurant, a variety of retail uses, or even residential use.

OPPORTUNITY SITES MAP



Opportunity Sites

Site No.	Area (Sq. Ft.)	Parcels	Existing Use	Land Use	Existing Zoning	Proposed Use	Notes
1	255,641	1	Bridges of Iowa	HD	RH-19	Medium to High Density Housing, with space for stormwater management	Existing easements; slopes 17' down to the south, 11% slope at mid point; potential stormwater management area (all or part of site)
2	40,405	1	Vacant lot	SF	SF-VJ	Single family (attached or detached), with space for stormwater management	Slopes 16' down to the west (12% slope); potential stormwater management area (all or part of site)
3	14,482	1	Vacant former convenience store (Scott's)	HBC	VJ-HB	Caterer or small restaurant	Slopes down by 2.7% to the east.
4a	101,411	5	Former Phenix School	SF	SF-VJ	Building converted to apartments and community use, small park, and appropriate parking	Slopes down by 2.7% to the east.
4b	21,961	3	Former Phenix School site	SF	SF-VJ	Single family (attached or detached)	
4c	21,678	2	Former Phenix School site	SF	SF-VJ	Single family (attached or detached)	
5	72,627	10	Single family homes	SF	SF-VJ	Single family homes (possible conversation to attached units based on market demand)	
6	51,005	5	Post office	HBC	VJ-HB	If Post office vacates possible uses could include a destination restaurant with parking, offices, or small fresh market/deli	
7	73,870	11	Single family homes	SF	SF-VJ	Business transition, allowing conversation of homes to small -low traffic generating businesses while maintaining residential character	
8	21,668	3	Single family homes	HBC	VJ-HB	Destination retail or office use	
9	19,321	1	Walnut Place Retreat (scrapbooking shop)	VJ SC	VJC	Retail or medium density residential use	
10	54,021	1	Municipal parking lot	HBC	VJ-HB	Parking, with potential retail use along 6th provided lost parking is replaced	
11	45,820	1	Municipal parking lot	HBC	VJ-HB	Parking, with potential retail use along 4th provided lost parking is replaced	

Zoning Descriptions

- RH-19 High Density Residential
- SF-VJ Single Family Valley Junction
- VJ-HB Valley Junction Historic Business
- VJC Valley Junction Commercial
- GI General Industrial
- BP Business Park

Opportunity Sites

Site No.	Area (Sq. Ft.)	Parcels	Existing Use	Land Use	Existing Zoning	Proposed Use	Notes
12	21,840	2	Townhomes	VJ SC	VJC	Medium density residential	
13	13,189	1	Cowles Automotive	SF	SF-VJ	Single-family or duplex	
14	34,961	1	Colorado Classics Furniture shop	VJ SC	VJC	Single-story retail, potential mixed use with ground floor retail/restaurant and upper-story office or residential	No slope. Potential brownfield redevelopment incentives.
15	17,862	1	Superior Auto Sales	VJ SC	VJC	Single-story retail, potential mixed use with ground floor retail/restaurant and upper-story office or residential	No slope. Potential brownfield redevelopment incentives.
16	23,957	3	Kinetico Water Systems	VJ SC	VJC	Mixed use with ground floor retail/restaurant and upper-story office or residential	Existing easements; nearly no slope. Potential brownfield redevelopment incentives.
17	24,896	2	Baptist Mission (storage)/Culligan Water Conditioning	HBC	VJ-HB	Mixed use with ground floor retail/restaurant and upper-story office or residential	No slope. Potential brownfield redevelopment incentives.
18	68,929	5	Nostalgic Enterprises	HBC	VJ-HB	Mixed use with ground floor retail/restaurant and upper-story office or residential	Existing easements; no slope. Potential brownfield redevelopment incentives.
19	19,968	3	Vacant lot	MD	SF-VJ	Office or residential	
20	20,620	3	Vacant lot	MD	SF-VJ	Office or residential	
21	148,468	17	Single family homes/Contractor	VJSC and SF	SF-VJ and VJC	Mixed use (vertical or horizontal), with gateway feature on 1st/Railroad intersection	
22	199,899	1	Vacant railroad building	GI-Vacant	GI	Mixed Use, commercial and residential. Will need to be rezoned	Existing easements; no slope. Potential brownfield redevelopment incentives.
23	306,944	1	Vacant lot	GI-Vacant	BP	Mixed Use, commercial and residential. Will need to be rezoned	Existing easements; no slope. Potential brownfield redevelopment incentives.
24	6,622	1	Used car lot and retail shop	HBC	VJ-HB	Renovate existing building for enhanced retail/restaurant use	
25	21,877	2	Vacant buildings	HBC	VJ-HB	If buildings reused - ice cream shop or small snack shop (hot dog stand, italian ice, etc.), florist, or art gallery for corner building, small office for larger one. If redeveloped, destination restaurant or mixed use (commercial and/or apartments)	

Zoning Descriptions

- RH-19 High Density Residential
- SF-VJ Single Family Valley Junction
- VJ-HB Valley Junction Historic Business
- VJC Valley Junction Commercial
- GI General Industrial
- BP Business Park

HWDM Investment & Future Development

Within the Valley Junction commercial district, opportunities exist for new in-fill development and for rehabilitation of the district's historic structures, including upper stories. New development on vacant land along Railroad Avenue, south of the existing commercial district, represents a third opportunity for new residential and commercial construction. This commercial construction would provide some new lease space to complement existing Valley Junction commercial space and tenancies.

The following three 'back of the envelope' calculations for sample project scenarios apply representative rents and costs to sample projects that could occur in HWDM. These calculations and their supporting assumptions are indicative, not precise. They reflect

current average construction-related costs and rents for each use category that may or may not be components of any individual owner or developer proposal. In considering each scenario, this analysis compares estimated project costs to the value derived from the development program. This analysis assumes typical local market conditions and holding periods. It should be noted that investment timeframes differ and reflect individual ownership objectives, especially in commercial districts with high percentages of owner-occupied properties.

These sample projects include a historic building rehabilitation, in-fill opportunity, and a mixed-use project concept for one of the identified sites on the south side of Railroad Avenue.

Existing Building Rehabilitation

The following scenario describes two (2) concept redevelopment programs for one of Valley Junction's historic mixed-use buildings. This scenario assumes a 2-story building with a 3,000 SF footprint and includes two (2) 1,500 SF ground level lease spaces with four (4) second story 950 SF apartments.

Development Program		
Retail (2 spaces at 1,500 SF)	3,000	
Residential (4 units at 950 SF/Unit plus common)	3,000	
Current Rents and Value	Monthly	Annually
Retail Rents	\$12	
Apartment Rents: Month/Annualized	\$0.90	\$11
No parking costs		
NOI	\$41,400	
Value (Income)	\$487,000	
	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Rehab Costs PSF (Fully loaded)	\$50	\$90
Estimated Project Cost	\$300,000	\$540,000
Uses/Project Costs		
Hard Costs	\$225,000	\$405,000
Soft Costs and Contingency	\$75,000	\$135,000
Total	\$300,000	\$540,000
Sources of Funding		
Owner Cash (10%)	\$30,000	\$54,000
Main Street Challenge Grant	\$50,000	\$50,000
Federal Historic Tax Credit (20% of Eligible)	\$36,000	\$64,800
State Historic Tax Credit (25% of Eligible)	\$66,000	\$118,800
Debt (20% Cash Out from Perm Refinance)	\$60,000	\$108,000
Workforce Housing Tax Credit (10%)	\$15,000	\$27,000
Available Sources	\$242,000	\$395,600
Gap	-\$58,000	-\$144,400
Other Potential Costs/Change of Use		
Grease Interceptors	\$40,000	
Fire Suppression	\$15,000	
Full Restaurant Kitchen (Low Estimate)	\$100,000	

The first redevelopment program shows a rehab costing \$50 PSF, or \$300,000, and the second program shows a rehab at \$90 PSF, or \$540,000. The building's current rents are assumed to be \$12.00 PSF for the commercial space and \$.90 PSF (or \$11 PSF annually) for the rental units. Both reflect current Valley Junction conditions. The current estimated real estate value, given the rental income, is \$487,000. Assuming an increase in rents after project completion to \$15 and \$12 PSF, respectively for commercial space and the apartment rents, this value increases to \$593,000.

The overall projects costs are also compared with potentially available funding sources, including owner cash and debt, tax credits, and Main Street-related grant funding. Assuming the owner can successfully assemble this capital stack, the building rehabilitations in both programs result in financial gaps between available funding and rehabilitation costs and a modest increase in property value, given the likely rents are unchanged in either program. These scenarios indicate the need for additional incentives (financial and regulatory) to ensure quality rehabilitations to support strong ground level tenants and new downtown living options. A longer holding period by ownership would be assumed in this scenario.

Infill Construction

This concept assumes the construction of a new 10,000 SF mixed-use building in HWDM. This building would have a 5,000 SF footprint, on ground level, and 5,000 SF second-story with 5 apartments. There would be ten (10) shared parking spaces plus access to shared parking in Valley Junction.

Development Program: 2 Story Development - 1st Story Restaurant | 2nd Story Apartments (5 total)
10 shared parking spaces

Use	Square Feet	Construction/Parking Cost Estimate	At Asking Rents		Estimated Value to Developer (8% Cap)	Difference
			Rents	Annual Income		
Mixed Use	10,000	\$925,000-\$1,100,000	\$15/\$12	\$70,000-\$85,000	\$1,029,000-\$1,080,000	-\$23,000 to \$104,000

The asking rents for the completed in-fill lease space and apartments are \$15 PSF for the ground level space and \$12 PSF (\$1 PSF per month) for the apartments. Assuming an 8% capitalization rate, the estimated project value is \$1,029,000-\$1,080,000. The different between this value and the estimated project costs indicates the potential for a successful project, assuming construction and land costs meet developer and owner project objectives.

New Development at Site 23

Site 23, located just south of Railroad Avenue, was identified during the plan process as a priority site for new development. The mixed-use development concept for Site 23 includes commercial and residential uses with provisions for parking, including a parking area (identified on the Site concept drawing as Expanded Parking) near the proposed Bike Bridge within the concept.

Development Program: Site 23

Uses	Construction and Parking Cost Estimate	Rents	Annual Income	Estimated Value to Developer	Difference
Apartment and Commercial	\$24,100,000-\$24,900,000	\$18/\$15	\$1,900,000-\$2,000,000	\$27,000,000-\$27,950,000	\$3,000,000-\$3,950,000

As a 'from the ground up' new development concept, the rents shown reflect typical rents for newer apartment and commercial lease space developments in the City and neighboring communities. The PSF rents are slightly higher than those shown in the in-fill example above (\$18 versus \$15 for commercial and \$15 versus \$12 for apartments). The capitalization rate for the multi-family/apartment component is lower (7%), reflecting regional market conditions and investor perceptions for those properties. The capitalization rate for commercial is 8%, as with the in-fill example. The resulting Site 23 estimates indicate the potential for a larger successful project, though the commercial component would be less attractive when applying the above assumptions.

Site 4: Site Development

CONCEPT A: Single-Family Lots



- A** (16) Single-Family Lots (30' x 135') and (40' x 135') at Corners
- B** Relocated Parking Lot: 50 Spaces
- C** Neighborhood Playground Gateway
- D** New Neighborhood Playground
- E** Community Gardens

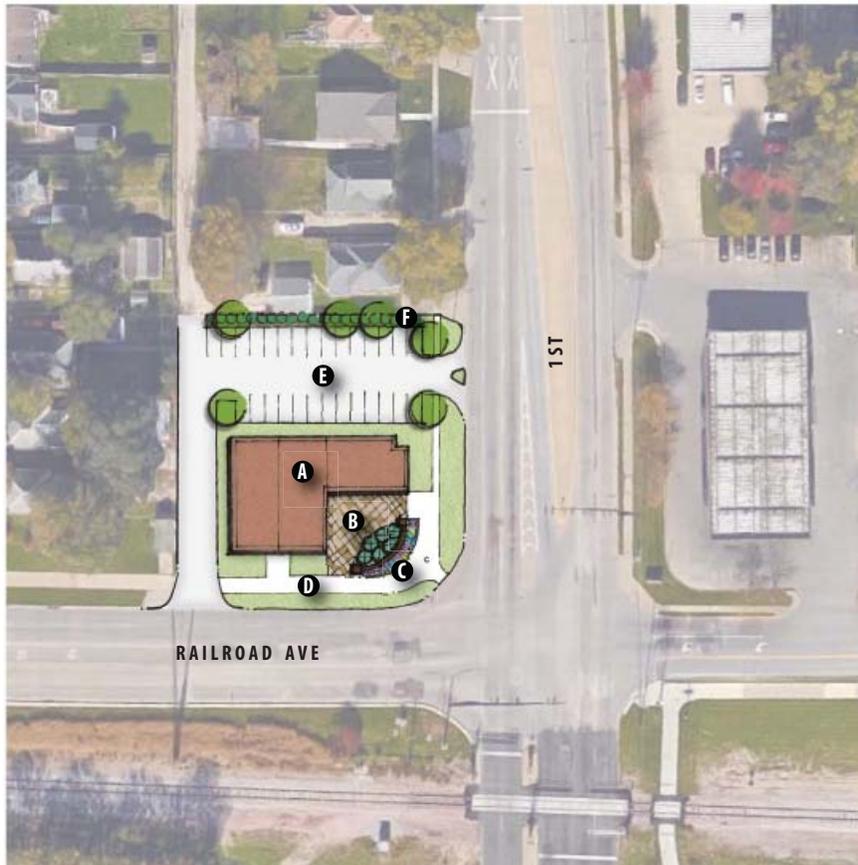
CONCEPT B: Townhomes



- A** (20) 2-Story Rear-Loaded Townhomes +/- 2,200 s.f. (20' x 55')
- B** Relocated Parking Lot: 50 Spaces
- C** Neighborhood Playground Gateway
- D** New Neighborhood Playground
- E** Community Gardens
- F** Open Space



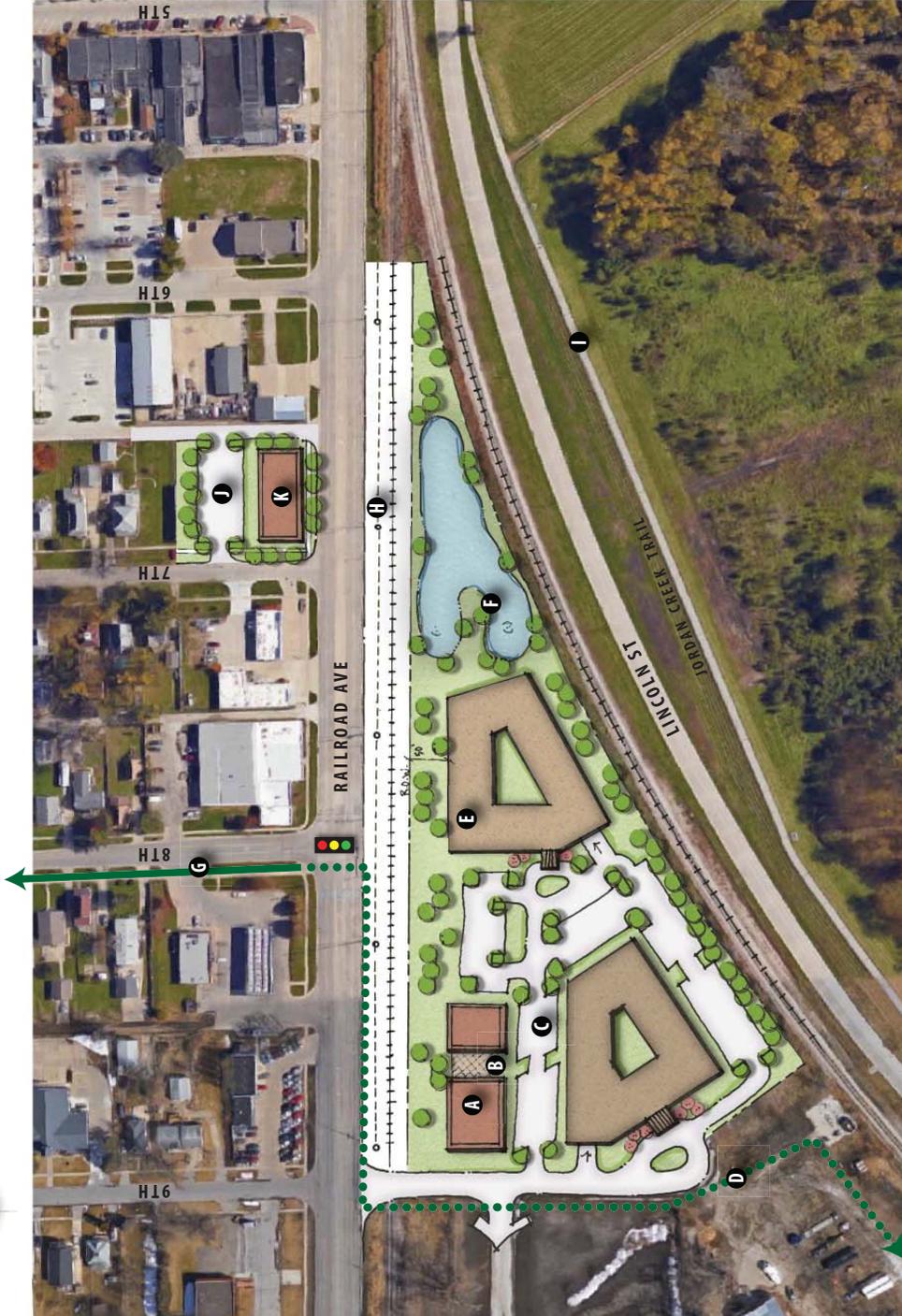
Site 21: Site Development



- A** Commercial Building (1-story): 6,000 s.f.
- B** Outdoor Plaza w/ Decorative Paving, Seating and Trellis Structure
- C** West Des Moines Gateway Sign and Landscaping
- D** Existing Bike Path
- E** *Surface Parking: 28 Spaces
4.7 per 1000 s.f.
*To Accommodate Parking (1) Residential Property is Affected
- F** Screening Parking Lot w/ Fence, Shrubs and Trees



Site 23: Site Development



Site 23: Mixed-Use Development

- A** (2) Commercial Buildings (1-story): 13,000 g.s.f.
Parking: 51 spaces @ 3.9/1000 s.f.
 - B** Outdoor Plaza w/ Decorative Paving, Seating and Trellis Structure
 - C** Street Parking: 36 spaces
 - D** New Bike Path (10' Min)
 - E** (2) 4-1/2 Story Apartment Buildings: 100 Units each
200 Total Units
288,000 g.s.f.
Parking: 200 Underground Spaces
100 Surface Spaces
(300 total @ 1.5 per Unit)
 - F** Detention/Water Feature
 - G** Existing Off-Street Path (8ft)
 - H** Overhead Utility Wires
 - I** Existing Bike Path
- Railroad Ave Frontage**
- J** Surface Parking: 28 Spaces @ 4.7 per 1000 s.f.
 - K** 1-Story Commercial Building: 6,000 s.f.

Bike Improvements

- Existing Off-Street Path (8ft)
- New Bike Path (10' Min)





Incentives

Improving already developed areas creates some unique financial challenges. From a market and economic perspective, four components to HWDM's improvements need to be addressed. All of these suggested incentives should increase private sector investment in HWDM.

Building Upgrades

While many HWDM commercial buildings are in adequate condition, others require upgrades. Examples include maintaining the building envelope and fostering upper-story development and improvements. Structuring a simple, targeted, and effective incentive to address these building upgrades will support stronger HWDM tenancies in the future and enhance HWDM's overall neighborhood experience with new types of spaces and uses.

Restaurant Attraction

As the business mix data in the Market and Economics section shows, HWDM has significantly fewer restaurants than other comparable districts in the Des Moines Metro area. A substantial number of respondents to the recent survey wanted more downtown restaurants, including restaurants with entertainment venues. Interviewees during this plan process also noted restaurants as an important opportunity. Current HWDM restaurateurs have also suggested interest in developing new restaurant concepts, including ethnic

restaurants. All of these factors indicate market support. Currently, certain local and regional regulations increase costs to open in HWDM, making the district uncompetitive as a potential location for the type of experienced restaurateur that wants to locate in and could succeed in HWDM. Attracting additional restaurants will require incentives to address restaurant specific issues, such as grease traps, sprinkler systems, or other requirements for restaurant build-out.



Change of Use

Related to the building improvement and restaurant issues is the City's current change of use regulations. This issue obviously requires careful thought and careful balancing of life safety and commercial interests. As a historic commercial district, HWDM has the opportunity to develop upper story apartments and office uses. Both types of users will benefit HWDM. Identifying how the City can creatively approach this issue in partnership with downtown's property owners and HVJF will strengthen HWDM's real estate economics during the plan's life. Any incentives to support these new upper story uses have the opportunity to realize three (3) objectives—supplementing existing state and Main Street Iowa incentives to enable upper story redevelopment; applying best practices in upper story redevelopment to attract these new uses; and assuring that HWDM's historic character and real estate values are sustained over this plan's life.

Neighborhood Investment

Whether Millennials seeking a first home in an accessible neighborhood with urban amenities or buyers committed to the emerging small house ethic, neighborhoods like HWDM are an attractive option. Metro area investors are currently interested in rehabilitating existing homes and building new housing in HWDM. With new projects, such as the Phenix redevelopment, and potential for future apartment and upper story development, partnership opportunities exist to complement HWDM's current housing options and respond to new residents attracted to the neighborhood. Multiple housing resources are currently available from the City of West Des Moines, NDC, the Metro Home Improvement program, Neighborhood Finance Corporation, and Mid-American Energy, among others.

The Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) is worthy of highlighting, as it has been very popular in the past and restoration of participation in this program was recently re-instituted (June, 2016). This program is designed to help with both home rehabilitation and/or home purchase. There are no income restrictions for the program. The City has budgeted \$200,000 for this program, and that will be matched 4:1. It is anticipated that, as in the past, these funds will go quickly.

Packaging these offerings into a comprehensive program accessible to HWDM's residential owners will ensure that HWDM's residential areas remain strong, as new City residents consciously choose HWDM. Other potential tools include:

❑ **Establishment of a Conservation District for the HWDM residential neighborhood.** A neighborhood conservation district is typically a zoning tool to preserve residential neighborhoods with less restrictive regulations than a locally designated historic district. Often, these areas, or neighborhoods, have a unique or historic character, but they may be less significant in preservation terms or would not necessarily meet the criteria to become a local historic district. Who administers this function varies—it can be zoning, planning, historic preservation (in larger cities), or housing. Also, review is generally binding and administrative. Review is also based upon a specific set of design guidelines applicable to that neighborhood. Bloomington, Indiana, has extensive experience applying this tool and have used it successfully for the neighborhood near their downtown. This neighborhood consists of smaller homes—unique but not architecturally or historically

significant. Iowa City, IA has also successfully employed this tool. Some communities also work with partners to provide homebuyer education and hands-on training designed to improve overall housing quality. The City's Pattern Book has guidelines in place for such a potential Conservation District.

- ❑ **Property Tax Rebate Program.** This program would be used to encourage and provide assistance to property owners in the renovation and redevelopment of vacant or underutilized retail, office or mixed use buildings and sites. The property tax rebate will be based on a five-year sliding scale, starting with a 75% rebate of the tax increment revenues generated by the upgrade/replacement, decreasing to 15% in year five. This program is currently only available for projects of \$1,000,000 or more.
- ❑ **Property Improvement Fund.** Funding of between \$5,000 and \$150,000 is provided through this program that is designed to assist property owners in the renovation and upgrade of older commercial, office, and mixed use properties. Funds can be used for major renovations, including new electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems, fire suppression systems, replacement roofs, and façade improvements. A minimum assessment agreement is required, which will allow the City to be paid back through the increased property taxes on the improvement.
- ❑ **Regulatory Compliance Fund.** As the name suggests, this program is designed to assist property owners in compliance with government regulations (fire sprinklers, ADA compliance, bringing building components up to code standards, etc.). The program funds up to 50% of the cost of compliance as a grant, up to a maximum of \$150,000.

In addition to the above incentive programming, the planned National Register nomination for a HWDM historic commercial district should proceed. Having a district in place will allow HWDM's eligible property owners to take advantage of the 20% federal and Iowa's 25% rehabilitation tax credit. Improvements to Iowa's tax credit processing will ensure this opportunity exists for future building projects. These incentives, when layered with other available state and any new local incentives, will ensure that buildings are renewed, and strong tenants can be secured.

Sustainability and Health

Many of the previous recommendations contained in this Master Plan address the economic sustainability of HWDM. However, the environmental sustainability of the area is also critical to long-term resiliency and prosperity. HWDM is already a healthy neighborhood, with short walkable blocks, access to excellent parks, schools, and shopping.

One interesting metric on walkability is called a 'walk score', a score determined by access to shopping, parks, schools, etc. as compiled by www.walkscore.com. The web site is primarily used by people looking for apartments that are in a convenient, walkable location. HWDM scores very well, with an overall score of 73 (on a 100-point scale). For comparison, the City of Des Moines has an average score of 44. Interestingly, one area the HWDM scored low on regarding the walkscore was in the area of culture/entertainment. Given the number of events and festivals in the area, this low score seems strange. It is likely that the scoring system does not consider events, and just looks at established indoor venues such as theaters or small concert/performance venues. Such an indoor facility would be a wonderful addition to HWDM, and should be explored within the context of one of the larger redevelopment sites.

The additional pedestrian enhancements, and the suggested community garden, will only enhance this healthy living environment. The following are key recommendations in this area.



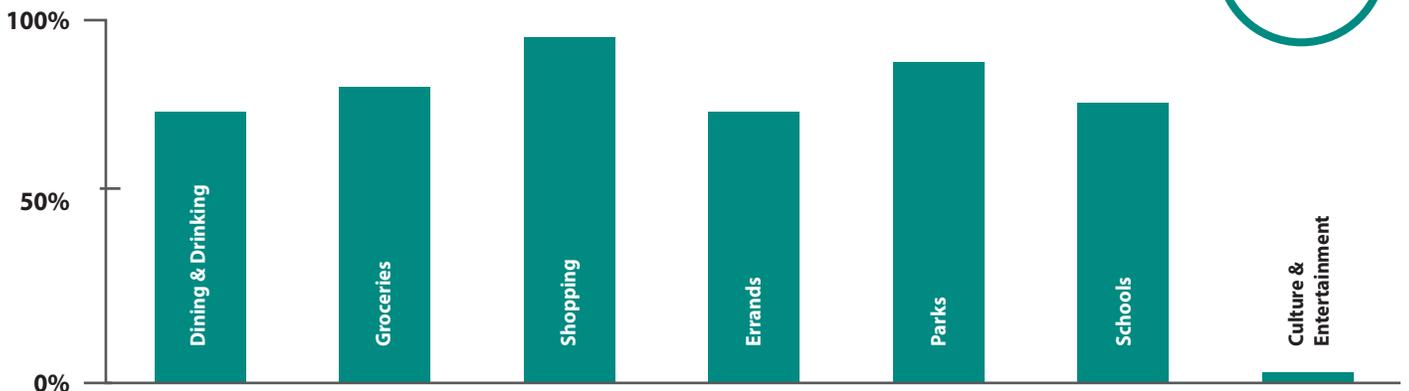
GREEN BUILDING PRACTICES

HWDM is already home to some successful green building efforts, including the LEED certified rehabilitation of the former City Hall/Fire Station at 137 5th Street (now occupied by the HVJF), and development of some green building demonstration homes built along Maple Street near Wilson Park. Both rehabilitation and new construction efforts in HWDM should build on these efforts, integrating energy efficiency whenever possible. The WDM Pattern Book provides good examples of ways this can be accomplished.

Walk Score

The Walk Score for this location is based on the following categories.

73



BIOSWALES AND RAIN GARDENS

Much has been done to address historic flooding issues within HWDM, including construction of the levee and improved storm sewers throughout the area. The City should continue these efforts, including:

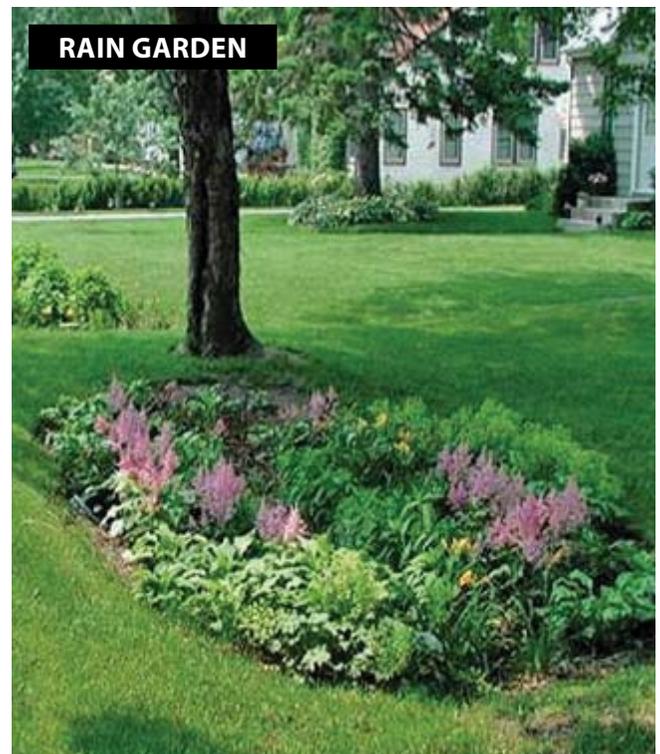
- ❑ Encouraging the integration of rain gardens where practical, including both individual properties that have drainage issues and in public projects such as street and streetscape improvements.
- ❑ Enhancing the existing swale along 1st Street between Val-Gate and Vine Street with native plantings that can both enhance the appearance of the area, reduce maintenance, and do a better job of filtering and slowing run-off.

GREEN ALLEYS

WDM worked with property owners and enhanced the alleys in HWDM within the past ten years, and these improvements have helped. However, like any type of infrastructure, there will come a time when these alleys will need to be replaced. At that time, the City of WDM should consider a green alley program to improve drainage, function, and aesthetics within alleys in HWDM. An excellent example of such a program is in Dubuque, where permeable pavers have been installed in alleys to reduce run-off, provide a clean and attractive service access to properties, and provide an overall enhancement to the neighborhood. More information on Dubuque's program can be found here: <http://cityofdubuque.org/1818/Green-Alley-Reconstruction>

LED LIGHTING

Continue efforts to replace street, pedestrian and parking lot light fixtures, or installation of new fixtures, within HWDM utilizing LED illumination for enhanced energy efficiency. Mid-American Energy has a program to replace existing street lights within the neighborhood (and all of West Des Moines). The City will be responsible for addressing fixtures within the HWDM Downtown.





Parking

From observations, conversations, and data review, there appears to be two parking issues in HWDM. The first is proximity, with everyone wanting to park along 5th Street while parking spaces in City lots along 4th or 6th Streets go unused. This is a common issue in any downtown. The second is peak demand, particularly during festivals and events where certain streets are closed to traffic and large crowds create increased parking demand.

The Parking Availability Map on the following page shows existing parking within and around the downtown. Recommendations include:

● ENHANCED PARKING DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

Additional signs are needed to direct visitors, particularly for events, to existing parking lots along 4th and 6th Streets.

● MAINTAINING EXISTING PARKING LEVELS

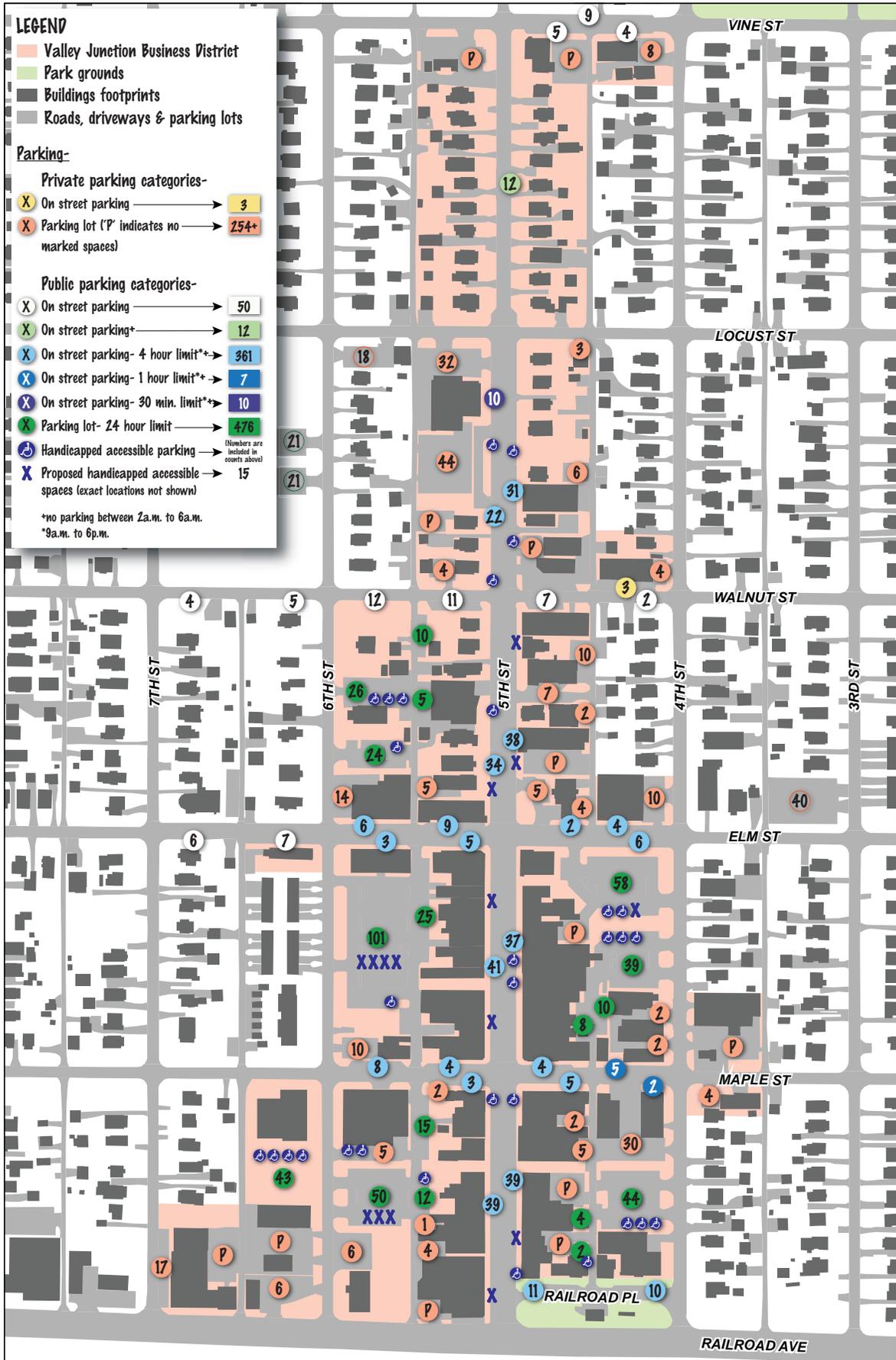
The plan does call for the loss of a few spaces along 5th Street for pedestrian improvements. However, particularly within existing public or private parking lots, any loss of spaces due to new development should be replaced on-site or within the immediate vicinity.

● ADDITIONAL STREET PARKING

Develop additional on-street parking on 5th Street in the 500 block. As new commercial development occurs within this area, the City should extend the angled parking already in place in the 100 to 400 blocks to this block.

● PROVIDE ADDITIONAL HANDICAP PARKING

As suggested by residents, a comparison of the proximity and number of handicap spaces within the downtown was completed. This examination suggested a need for additional handicap parking throughout the area. The diagram on the following page highlights (with an x) suggested locations for additional handicap parking.



LEGEND

- Valley Junction Business District
- Park grounds
- Buildings footprints
- Roads, driveways & parking lots

Parking-

Private parking categories-

- X On street parking → 3
- X Parking lot ('P' indicates no marked spaces) → 254+

Public parking categories-

- X On street parking → 50
- X On street parking+ → 12
- X On street parking- 4 hour limit*+ → 361
- X On street parking- 1 hour limit*+ → 7
- X On street parking- 30 min. limit*+ → 10
- X Parking lot- 24 hour limit → 476
- ♿ Handicapped accessible parking → (Numbers are included in counts above)
- X Proposed handicapped accessible spaces (exact locations not shown) → 15

*no parking between 2a.m. to 6a.m.
 *9a.m. to 6p.m.

Parking Availability Map | Historic West Des Moines Master Plan
 Last updated on February 17th, 2016

0 300 600 Feet
 Prepared by Teska Associates, Inc. N



Bikes

West Des Moines has made significant strides in becoming a bicycle friendly community, with extensive paths and a detailed Bike Master Plan. HWDM already has a bike path connection along Railroad Avenue between 1st Street and 4th Street, and a bike path running east-west through adjacent Holiday Park. However, discussions with residents and businesses led to the following recommendations to enhance bike accommodations within the Study Area.

Connection to Levee Trail

Several alternatives to provide an enhanced connection between the Levee Trail and HWDM were explored, including grade separated bridge options. However, the recommended approach is to develop a connection from the Levee Trail that would use the existing 11th Street railroad crossing (near Lincoln Street), run along the railroad tracks in an easement recently obtained by the City to 9th Street, then within the 9th Street right-of-way to Railroad Avenue.

From there it could run along the south side of Railroad Avenue, with a crossing integrated into the existing signal at 8th Street. An existing box culvert could be used as a dedicated trail providing access to Maple Street, which is shown on the Bike Master Plan as a designated shared lane bike route. The proposed new bike trail will require close coordination and approval by the Union Pacific Railroad.

Bike Racks

Additional bike racks are recommended within the HWDM Downtown. Racks should be located in visible locations for enhanced security (see plan on page 33).

Catalyst Activities

With any Master Plan, it is important to show early progress in achieving plan objectives to maintain plan momentum. Several areas of focus are suggested:

Add Restaurants

Add Restaurants. From a market perspective, capitalizing on the overwhelming interest in attracting new restaurants to HWDM represents the best early steps. Developing a restaurant attraction incentive, working with interested property owners with suitable HWDM locations, and identifying or revisiting area restaurant operators with interest in HWDM are all tasks that can be readily completed and will result in mix improvement and increased restaurant sales.

Pop-Up Space

Pop-up Space. Development of a temporary store front that can serve as seasonal sales space for local entrepreneurs, host special events, and serve as a potential incubator of ideas and future permanent businesses.

Redevelop Phenix Site

Noted elsewhere, redevelopment of this site will bring new residents to the area, providing new customers for area businesses and expanding the property tax base.

Public Art

The City of WDM has an active public art program, and HWDM is the perfect pedestrian friendly environment for public art. Two tracks are recommended:

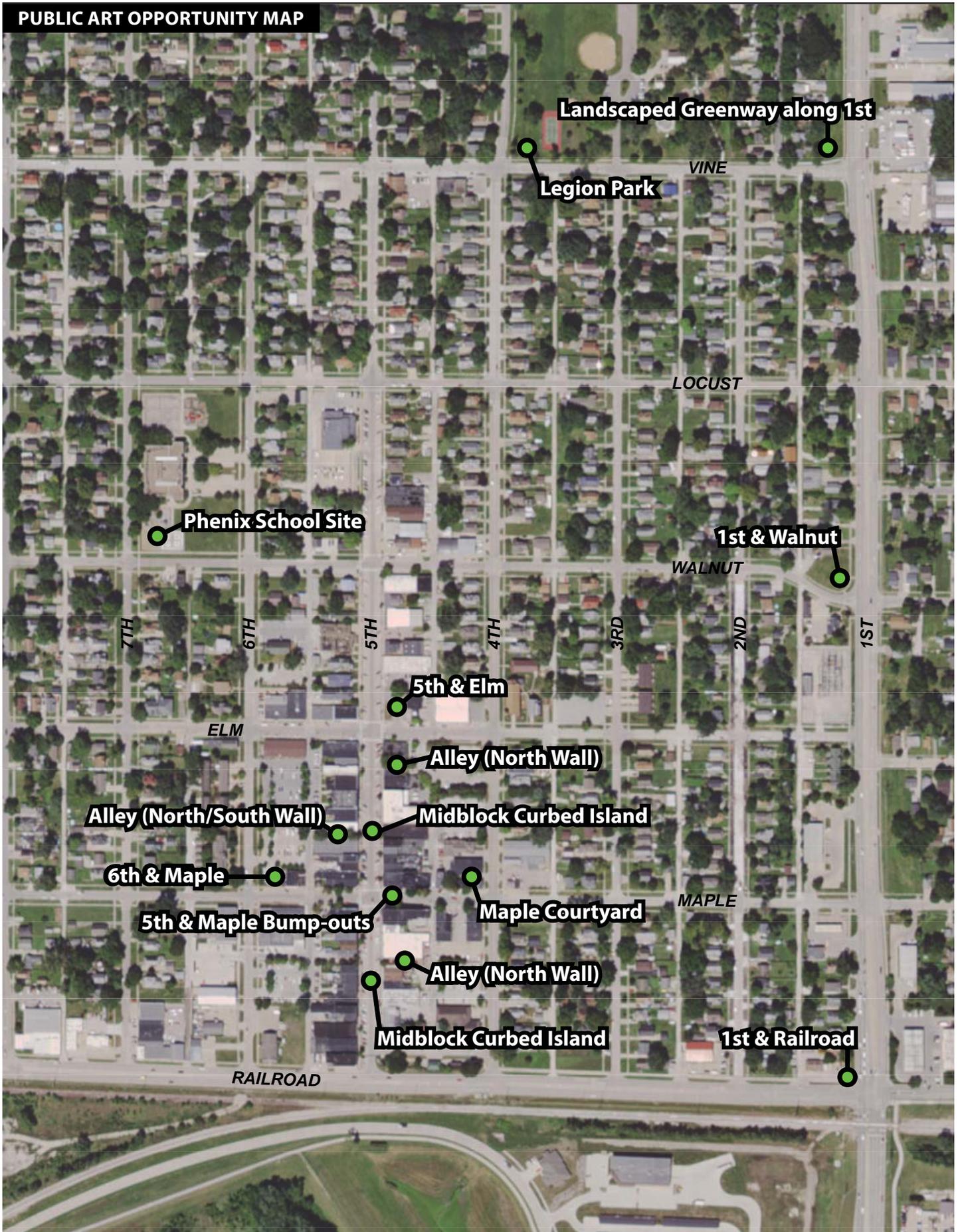
- ❑ Permanent or semi-permanent art installations by artists consistent with the guidelines in the City's Public Art Master Plan. Potential locations for these art installations within HWDM are suggested on the following plan.
- ❑ Temporary art displays, done by the community and/or local school students, that would add fun and color to the area.



Security

In interviews, focus groups, and general conversations during the planning process it was clear that both residents and visitors feel that HWDM is a safe neighborhood and shopping district. However, as with any busy area with retail activity and events, safety and security should never be taken lightly. Consideration should be given to installing a security camera, or cameras, in key locations within the downtown. Issues such as location, monitoring, archiving, etc. will need to be addressed if this concept is to be implemented.

PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITY MAP



CHAPTER 4

ACTION

How do we get there?

This Master Plan presents many ideas and strategies for enhancing HWDM. Implementation of these ideas will require time, money, and significant effort on the part of residents, businesses, the City, and the HVJF. While some ideas can be done relatively quickly and inexpensively, ideas like the shared street concept will take significant resources, and time to accomplish. Successful places are always evolving and changing to adapt to economic, market, and social/cultural conditions. This Master Plan is designed to provide a roadmap for some of these changes for the next ten to 20 years.

“Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.”

- Peter Drucker



What and When

The Steering Committee, along with the consulting team, worked closely to prioritize plan recommendations. These priorities are noted below. Priorities are categorized as follows:

Category 1 – Tasks that can be completed within approximately one year.

Category 2 – Mid-term tasks, with a desired completion of between one and three years. Note that on-going tasks are color-coded in this category, with some projects anticipated before and some after this one to three-year period.

Category 3 – Longer-term, typically more capital intensive projects that will require more time to secure funding and complete design work.

Item	Tasks	When	
1	Attract Additional Restaurants (with outdoor dining if possible)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement incentive system to address extraordinary costs related to restaurants (commercial kitchens, grease traps, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Identify potential restaurateurs and spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt incentive program by end of 2017 <input type="checkbox"/> Two new restaurants open by end of 2017
2	Phenix site redevelopment	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete financing for rehab and conversion of existing building to apartments	By December, 2017
		<input type="checkbox"/> Select developer for 6th Street frontage, and approve development agreement	By June, 2017
		<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt site master plan, including relocation of parking for existing building, development of a new park area (with potential community garden, and new housing along 6th Street, approve new plat (and zoning if needed)	By December, 2017
		<input type="checkbox"/> Develop new homes along 6th Street	By December, 2019
		<input type="checkbox"/> Create park space	By December, 2020
3	Community garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine location and program/rules and maintenance plan <input type="checkbox"/> Promote <input type="checkbox"/> Install and operate, including monitoring and adjustment of regulations as needed 	By Summer, 2017
4	Signs (particularly allowing blade signs)	<input type="checkbox"/> Modify sign regulations to accommodate appropriate pedestrian scale signs as noted in section on regulations (page 60)	By Spring, 2017
5	Creating additional opportunities for outdoor seating (and dining)	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop guidelines and allow parklets	By Summer, 2017
		<input type="checkbox"/> Implement streetscape recommendations (curb bump-outs, widen sidewalk, allow parklets, etc.)	By December, 2021
6	Parking Education and Signage education	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop and distribute a simple parking diagram showing available public parking, and promote on HVJF website and/or app	By Summer, 2017
		<input type="checkbox"/> Develop and install new parking directional signs as noted on the plan (page 50)	By Summer, 2019
7	Public art	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a community-based temporary art installation within the downtown	By December, 2017
		<input type="checkbox"/> Install one or more art piece(s) within HWDM	By December, 2019
8	Rehabilitate existing housing stock	<input type="checkbox"/> Work with property owners to inform of available programs and implement other suggested activities (tool sharing, etc.)	On-going
9	Add new parking	<input type="checkbox"/> Install angled parking along the 500 block of 5th Street similar to that found on the 100-400 blocks	By December, 2020

Item	Tasks	When
10 Activating upper stories along 5th Street*	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop and fund local incentive system for building rehabilitation	December, 2016
	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek national register status for downtown, which will allow for additional tax credits and grants	December, 2017
	<input type="checkbox"/> Work with property owners to better utilize upper story space within the downtown	On-going
11 Trail connection (to Levee Trail)	<input type="checkbox"/> Work with railroad(s) and obtain approval for trail crossings <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain funding and install trail connection	December 2018
12 Develop priority opportunity sites (especially those that are vacant)	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with property owners to discuss options and promote redevelopment <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate development agreements and secure zoning as needed	On-going
13 Neighborhood Gateways	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop design for neighborhood gateways and secure appropriate sites <input type="checkbox"/> Install neighborhood gateways	December, 2022
14 Integrate sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrate sustainable features into all new public projects and encourage in private development	On-going
15 Celebrate history	<input type="checkbox"/> Install plaques/story boards in downtown to celebrate areas history <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct story telling event, including guided walking tours	December, 2018
16 Funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a new Urban Recovery Area and TIF	December, 2017

*Additional action steps provided in the Appendix



Examples of narrow lot single family homes that were highly ranked during the visual preference survey. Photos courtesy of Glenn Lyons, Neighborhood Development Corporation.



Building Capacity

The who, what, how, and when of the plan's recommendations and action steps will require a focused and substantial time commitment by multiple partners, but the most affected will be the City and the Historic Valley Junction Foundation (HVJF). As a non-profit, HVJF has limited staff and financial capacity, given the requirements of their downtown revitalization work. HVJF will need additional resources—staff and funding to enable self-supported plan implementation. Sustainable funding sources, such as a Self-supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID), represent one possibility. City staff has community-wide responsibilities and commitments. Integrating HWDM implementation priorities into various staff roles and responsibilities will be an important aspect of implementation capacity. This integration also recognizes that potential HWDM (re)development will be highly visible and that its smaller scale will require staff time commitment in multiple partnerships with other entities.

Finding the Funds

Funding of improvements outlined in this Master Plan will come from a variety of both public and private sources. Key sources include:

● PRIVATE INVESTMENT

HWDM, with its excellent access and amenities, is an attractive place to invest – and most of the funding for new private development will undoubtedly come from private sources. However, as noted previously, the economics of redeveloping or rehabilitating older properties suggest that some incentives will likely be needed as well.

● URBAN RENEWAL AREA / TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

The Valley Junction Urban Renewal Area (URA) District was established in 2009, and was originally planned for a 15-year life span. Creation of this area allowed the City to utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds to support redevelopment. TIF captures increases in property tax revenue to be used to make improvements within the District. However, due to court rulings and the opinion of the City's financial advisor and Bond Council, the current Valley Junction URA needs to expire on 6/30/2017. Prior to that date, it is recommended that the City consider creation of a new Urban Renewal Plan for HWDM. New boundaries, objectives, and projects will need to be defined – and this HWDM Master Plan should be used to help guide that effort.

● TAX ABATEMENT

Under Iowa Statutes, the City can enter into a tax abatement agreement to promote redevelopment. However, use of abatements within the TIF District would be counterproductive as the abatement would cause there to be no or very little increment.

● GENERAL REVENUE

The City of West Des Moines can allocate a portion of their general revenue from property taxes and other sources to make public improvements within HWDM.

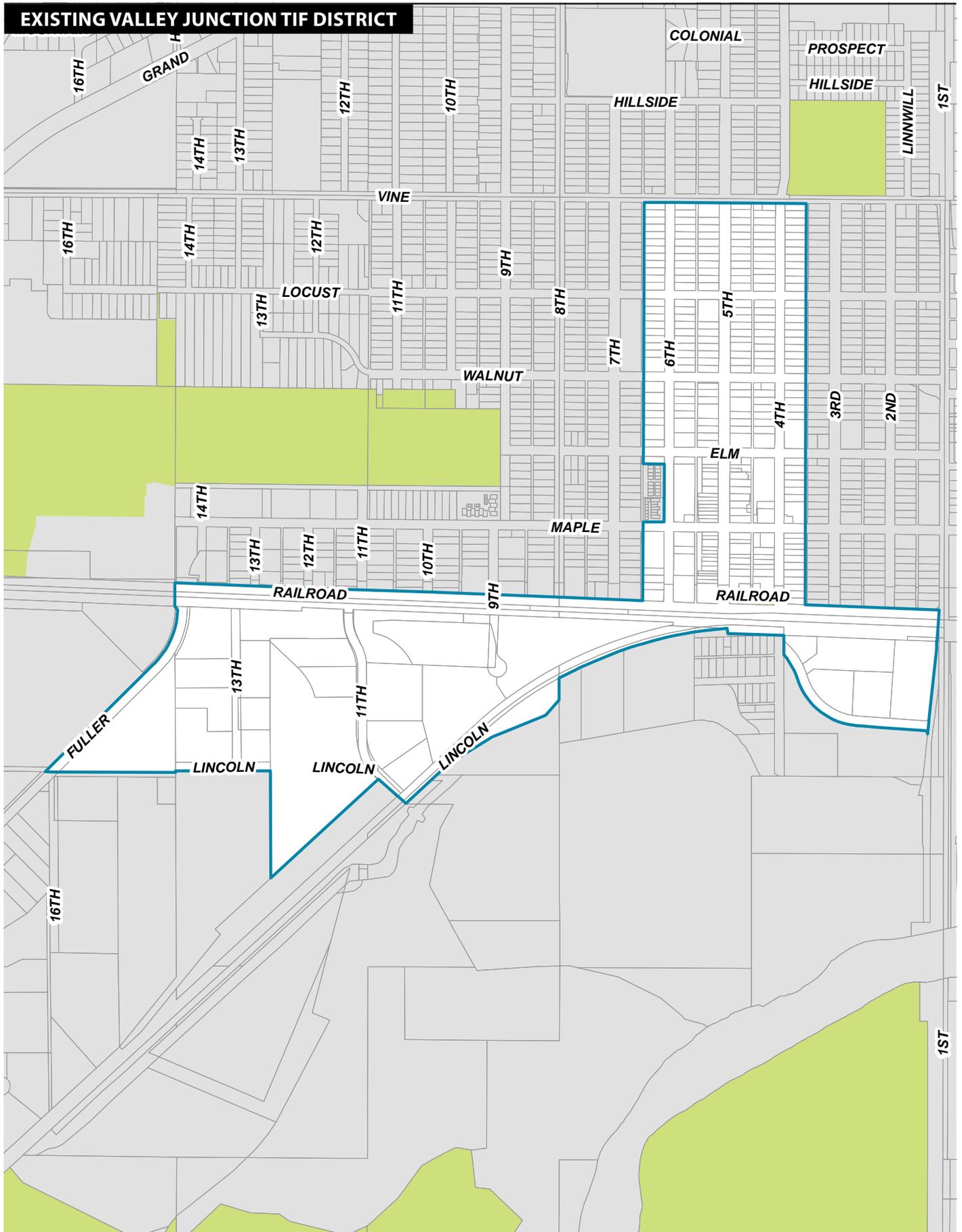
● SPECIAL SERVICE AREA

The HVJF, in cooperation with property owners (at least 25% per statute – minimum 50% recommended), could create a Self-supported Special Service Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) to fund improvements within HWDM. This District would create an additional property tax for properties within the District, which would be used to fund improvements and services within the District.

● LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX

The local option sales tax is a 1% sales tax that can be used by a municipality to fund government activities. While such an option is allowed in most of Iowa, it is not currently permitted in most of West Des Moines since it lies in Polk and Dallas Counties. If permitted by the State, this local option sales tax could generate significant revenue for the City, providing opportunities to both make improvements in HWDM and other areas of the community while potentially lowering property taxes.

EXISTING VALLEY JUNCTION TIF DISTRICT



Modify Regulations

To implement this Master Plan, changes to the City’s sign regulations and zoning map will be required. Those changes are highlighted on the following pages.

Sign Regulations

The HWDM downtown is a unique, pedestrian focused shopping environment within the City, and signage should reflect that character. The City’s sign code needs to be amended to address the unique signage needs of the HWDM downtown, including allowing of blade signs and other pedestrian-oriented signs (sandwich boards, etc.). All signs should be scaled to the character of the district and associated buildings and businesses. Signs should relate to the architecture in at least one or more of the following categories: material, shape, and color.

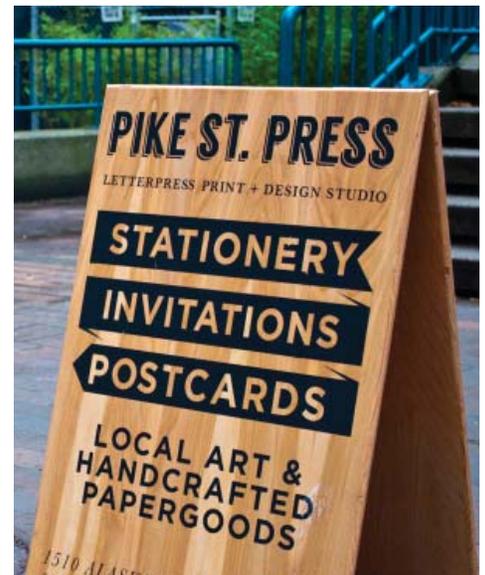
Suggested guidelines are highlighted in the following table.

Feature	Blade/Projecting Signs	Sandwich Board Signs
Design/ Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Should not obscure or destroy architectural details. <input type="checkbox"/> Signs on the same building must be coordinated (similar style, placement) <input type="checkbox"/> Bracketing and support materials must fit the original architectural style of the building or enhance the design of the sign. <input type="checkbox"/> Complex shapes are encouraged rather than simple rectangles, circles or squares. <input type="checkbox"/> Signs should have two finished sides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Signs must be maintained in an upright position at all times, and may need to be weighted to ensure they do not fall into the public way. <input type="checkbox"/> May only be displayed during open business hours <input type="checkbox"/> Must be removed during times of snow and inclement weather.
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Min. 8’ from sidewalk <input type="checkbox"/> Max. 4’ projection from building, with minimum 4” between the store-front and sign. <input type="checkbox"/> Must be mounted perpendicular to the structure to which it is attached. If at a corner of a building, the sign may be placed at a 135-degree angle to the façade of the building used for customer entrance. <input type="checkbox"/> Must not extend of the parapet on single story buildings, or the top of second story windows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Must be placed in front of the associated establishment. <input type="checkbox"/> Must not interfere with or obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic, with a minimum of five (5) feet of passage maintained on the sidewalk. <input type="checkbox"/> Must be freestanding (not anchored to sidewalk or attached to poles, etc.)
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maximum 4 square feet, plus 1 additional square foot for each five lineal feet of store frontage over 20 feet. <input type="checkbox"/> Maximum sign depth of 12” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maximum 2’ wide, Max. of 3’-6” tall
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wood, metal or similar materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Frame shall be painted or stained wood or metal. Plastic framed signs are discouraged. <input type="checkbox"/> Lettering should be professionally applied. <input type="checkbox"/> Chalkboard signs are permitted; white erasable boards are not allowed.
Illumination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Most blade signs should not be illuminated. <input type="checkbox"/> If illuminated, external illumination is preferred, with the light source designed to not create glare for pedestrians or motorists. Neon tubing is permitted. <input type="checkbox"/> Interior lit signs must only be channel letters or have halo illumination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich boards shall not be illuminated.
Number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 per building, or one per 20’ of frontage if occupied by multiple businesses on the ground floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 per business

Blade/Projecting Sign Examples



Sandwich Board Sign Examples



Rezoning of Sites 22 and 23 South of Railroad Avenue

These properties are currently zoned for industry and business park use. The plan calls for more mixed commercial and residential use. This change will also require an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan, and close coordination with the property owners to discuss potential development opportunities and ways to maximize benefit for both the private property owner, the City, and the HWDM neighborhood. The specific zoning that would be appropriate will be

somewhat dependent on the nature of the specific development proposal, but would most likely be developed as a planned development. The suggested uses and character for these sites within the Master Plan do not exactly match any of the land use categories in the existing Comprehensive Plan. The Valley Junction Commercial category would be the closest, but it would need to be modified to include residential.

Initiate Catalyst Activities

With any Master Plan, it is important to show early progress in achieving plan objectives to maintain plan momentum. Page 53 notes several recommended steps to begin the process of plan implementation, which are summarized here:

● ADD RESTAURANTS

From a market perspective, capitalizing on the overwhelming interest in attracting new restaurants to HWDM represents the best early steps. Developing a restaurant attraction incentive, working with interested property owners with suitable HWDM locations, and identifying or revisiting area restaurant operators with interest in HWDM are all tasks that can be readily completed and will result in mix improvement and increased restaurant sales.

● POP-UP SPACE

Development of a temporary store front that can serve as seasonal sales space for local entrepreneurs, host special events, and serve as a potential incubator of ideas and future permanent businesses.



REDEVELOP PHENIX SITE

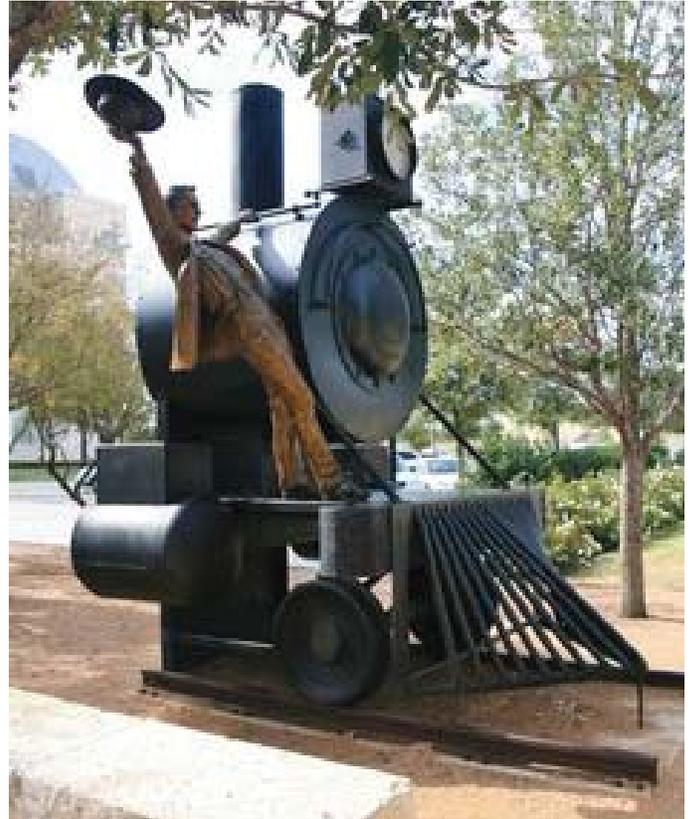
Noted elsewhere, redevelopment of this site will bring new residents to the area, providing new customers for area businesses and expanding the property tax base.

PUBLIC ART

The City of WDM has an active public art program, and HWDM is the perfect pedestrian friendly environment for public art. Two tracks are recommended:

- ❑ Permanent or semi-permanent art installations by artists consistent with the guidelines in the City's Public Art Master Plan.
- ❑ Temporary art displays, done by the community and/or local school students, that would add fun and color to the area.

Public Art Examples



Monitor Plan Success

Implementation of this Master Plan will take considerable time and effort on the part of many individuals and organizations, including property and business owners, developers, the City, and the HVJF. It is recommended that an implementation task force be created to spearhead this effort. The task force can be a subset of the Steering Committee used to develop the plan, and must include City Staff, HVJF Staff, and both resident and business owner representation. The task force should meet at least quarterly to discuss plan implementation activities and next steps.

