



Mason City Resource Team Report

DOWNTOWN MASON CITY, a PLACE where people want to...

January 2006

Prepared by
Main Street Iowa

Iowa Department of Economic Development
200 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309



IOWA
life | changing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
DEFINING DOWNTOWN	4
Development Zones	4
Traffic & Circulation	8
Gateways & Nodes	8
Wayfinding	9
Streetscape Design	11
Central Park	13
Pedestrian Orientation.....	14
Federal Plaza	15
MAKING IT HAPPEN DOWNTOWN	16
Business Plan	16
Business Planner	19
Business Developer and Recruiter	20
DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE.....	22
Upper Floor Housing	23
Infill Construction.....	24
The Mall.....	25
Community-based Organization	26
MASON CITY’S CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT	27
MAXIMIZING HUMAN AND FINANCICAL CAPITAL.....	33
Be Great Communicators.....	34
Be the Linkage and Glue among your Partners	34
Manage Money for Visible, Important Results.....	36
Support Productive Staff and Volunteers	37
CONCLUSION.....	38
APPENDICES	
A: Team Biographies.....	39
B: Portland Zoning Ordinance Example.....	43
C: Warm-ups and Template for Successful Meetings	44
D: Magic Wall Recipe	46
E: 14 steps to a Successful Volunteer Program	47

INTRODUCTION

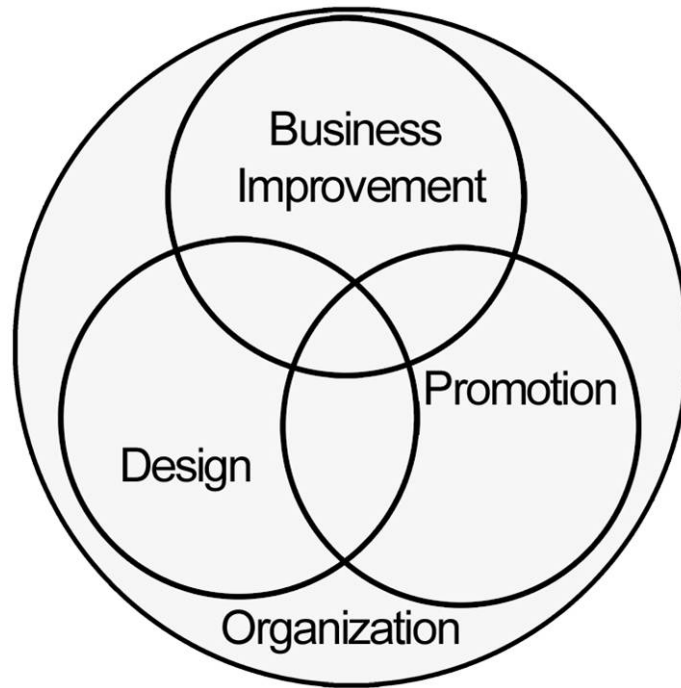
A Resource Team is one of the most significant services provided to a community during the early stages of a Main Street program's development. It is intended to aid the Downtown Association in the creation of an organizational strategy that will define its role as a leader in downtown's future growth and advancement.

A Main Street Resource Team is a comprehensive downtown appraisal by a team of multi-disciplinary development professionals.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach™ is a trademarked process of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center.

Its primary purpose is to establish historic and traditional commercial districts as economically viable centers of commerce through comprehensive, incremental and coordinated work in four key areas; Organization, Promotion, Business Improvement and Design. The key to the success of the approach is its comprehensive nature. By integrating all four areas into a practical downtown management strategy, the Main Street approach produces fundamental change in downtown's economic base.

Main Street Four Point Approach Interrelationship



Design – shaping up downtown's physical appearance and aesthetics.
Promotion – improves the overall image and perception of downtown.
Business Improvement – strengthens and diversifies the economic base of downtown.
Organization – keystone for funding and volunteers to implement the revitalization effort.

During the week of January 30, 2006, a team of six downtown development professionals, with state and national experience and selected specifically for their expertise engaged, listened, and responded to local residents and community leaders on challenges and opportunities relevant to the central business district.

Working closely with the staff and board of the Mason City Downtown Association (MCDA) a series of key issues were defined and developed as topical discussion point questions. These questions dealt with challenges and opportunities facing the organization and community which helped shape the team’s scope of work and paved the way for open, inter-active and meaningful conversations. While each could be considered relevant to one of the four points of Main Street, they are inter-related.

- How can we build the Mason City Downtown Association so that it becomes a force for positive, cooperative change in the city? (Organization)
- How can we raise downtown’s value with shoppers, merchants and residents? (Promotion)
- How do we brighten the look and feel of downtown – Mason City’s “living room?” (Design)
- How can we make downtown a friendlier place to walk, drive and visit? (Design)
- How can we develop downtown as the center for arts and entertainment in Mason City? (Business Improvement)

Team members, through a series of public forums, focus groups and interviews, worked with city leaders, local residents, development partners and the staff and board of the MCDA to define a shared vision for downtown. This report provides a summary of the issues discussed and is intended to help shape the identified priorities into a focused, manageable plan of action for the MCDA.

Throughout these discussions, individuals shared their hopes and desires for Mason City. They spoke of how they wanted the downtown to look, feel and function. Their statements took shape and the phrase “Downtown Mason City a PLACE where people want to” emerged.

<i>Downtown Mason City a PLACE where people want to</i>	
Live	Be involved
Play	Explore
Invest	Party
Relax	Volunteer
Have fun	Experience
Learn	Shop
Eat/Dine	Meet
Discover	Exercise
Live it up!	Be

The Mason City Resource Team was comprised of the following consultants. Their biographies are included in Appendix A of this publication.

- Dan Carmody, Carmody Consulting, Fort Wayne, IN
- Linda Donovan Harper, L Harper & Associates, Washington, D.C.
- John Monroe, Greenleaf Collaboration, Amesbury, MA
- Tim Reinders, Main Street Iowa, Des Moines, IA
- Jane Seaton, Main Street Iowa, Des Moines, IA
- Michael Wagler, Main Street Iowa, Ames, IA

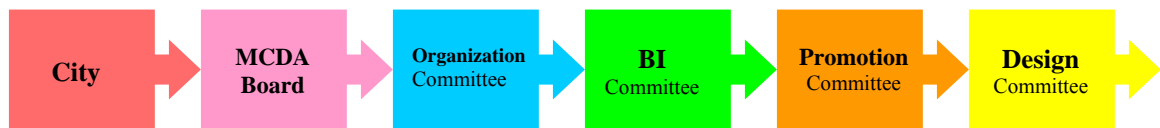
The document offers recommendations for establishing key zones in which to concentrate efforts while building upon existing assets or “placemakers” such as; downtown properties and significant architecture, public spaces and gathering places, commercial and professional businesses, “one-of- a-kinds”, arts, cultural and entertainment venues.

Over-Planned and Under-Implemented

Like many places that have seen its downtown lose market share to fringe areas, Mason City has developed many plans to restore downtown economic vigor but has had limited success in achieving downtown revitalization. This cycle of planning without implementation has undermined the community’s confidence in its ability to solve problems and left many cynical about the chances for future success. A key difference in the Main Street Approach to downtown revitalization is that it focuses on implementation.

Group Tags

Throughout this report, you will find brightly colored arrows marking areas of focus for the MCDA board, individual committees and the city. These tags indicate which group should pay particular attention to the content of that section, take responsibility and begin discussion on appropriate implementation action steps.



DEFINING DOWNTOWN

Development Zones

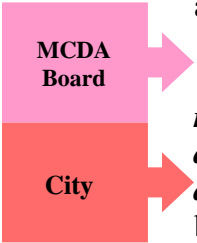
A key component for planning for downtown Mason City is identifying and defining the downtown to community leaders, citizens and visitors. Downtown can be defined by variety of ways. Whether it is through city plan, architecture of the built environment or design of the streetscape, the importance of the identification, enhancement or creation of this downtown identity cannot be understated. This downtown definition process must be undertaken in a two step progression and include not only the physical but also the emotional boundaries of the elements of the downtown:

1. Identify the physical and emotional boundaries of what makes downtown
2. Define the downtown to create visual boundaries for downtown

Downtown can be defined as:
...the traditional central business district of a community that has served as the center for socio-economic interaction in the community, characterized by a cohesive core of commercial and mixed use buildings, often interspersed with civic, religious, and residential buildings and public spaces, typically arranged along a main street and intersecting side streets and served by public infrastructure (Vermont Downtown Program).

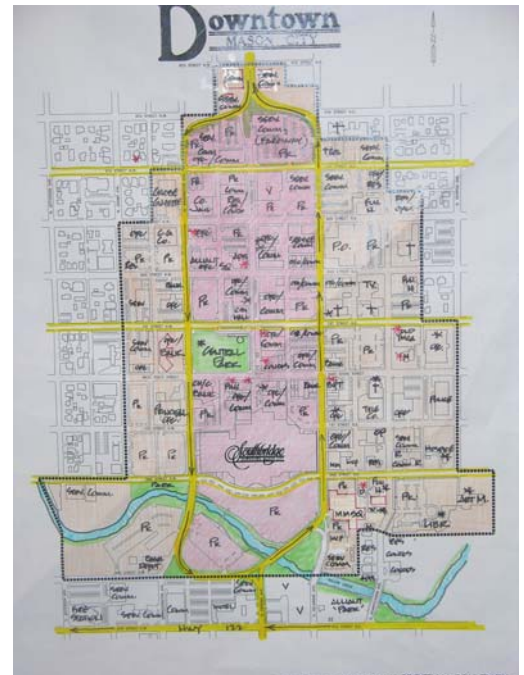
Mason City defined a downtown project area for the purposes of its Main Street application. While there are many challenges and opportunities within this area, it should be noted that revitalization needs are not limited to this particular district. It can be very easy for any downtown revitalization organization to lose focus and spread themselves too thin in the initial stages of the process in an attempt to reach the ultimate goal of a revitalized downtown more quickly.

Therefore to reach these goals, the organization in cooperation with the City government and all development players need to establish a core emphasis area and work diligently within that area. You cannot work across the whole of the downtown boundary....your efforts will be noble but lost. Clustering your efforts into a smaller core area will allow each effort to build on the next one and accelerate the process.



The efforts and resources for downtown revitalization should focus around this existing core and the designation of supplemental development areas. As this core area becomes stronger it will become much easier to expand and build upon this success. These primary development zones are mapped on page 7.

- **Top Priority (the core)** – With a strong core area, the immediate surrounding areas will prosper as well. The MCDA will be better able to provide services to more and more areas of the community as investor confidence grows and the community’s general attitude toward downtown improves. It will be easier to gather resources – financial, physical and human. People will begin to come to MCDA, making your job all that much easier. But without tangible results to market, the program will struggle to gather the resources necessary to thrive.



Downtown Mason City as define in Main Street application.

The core of downtown Mason City is based around two major elements – Southbridge Mall and Central Park. Central Park is the traditional “downtown square” evident in many communities. The mall is a more recent development that has become the main anchor of the downtown.

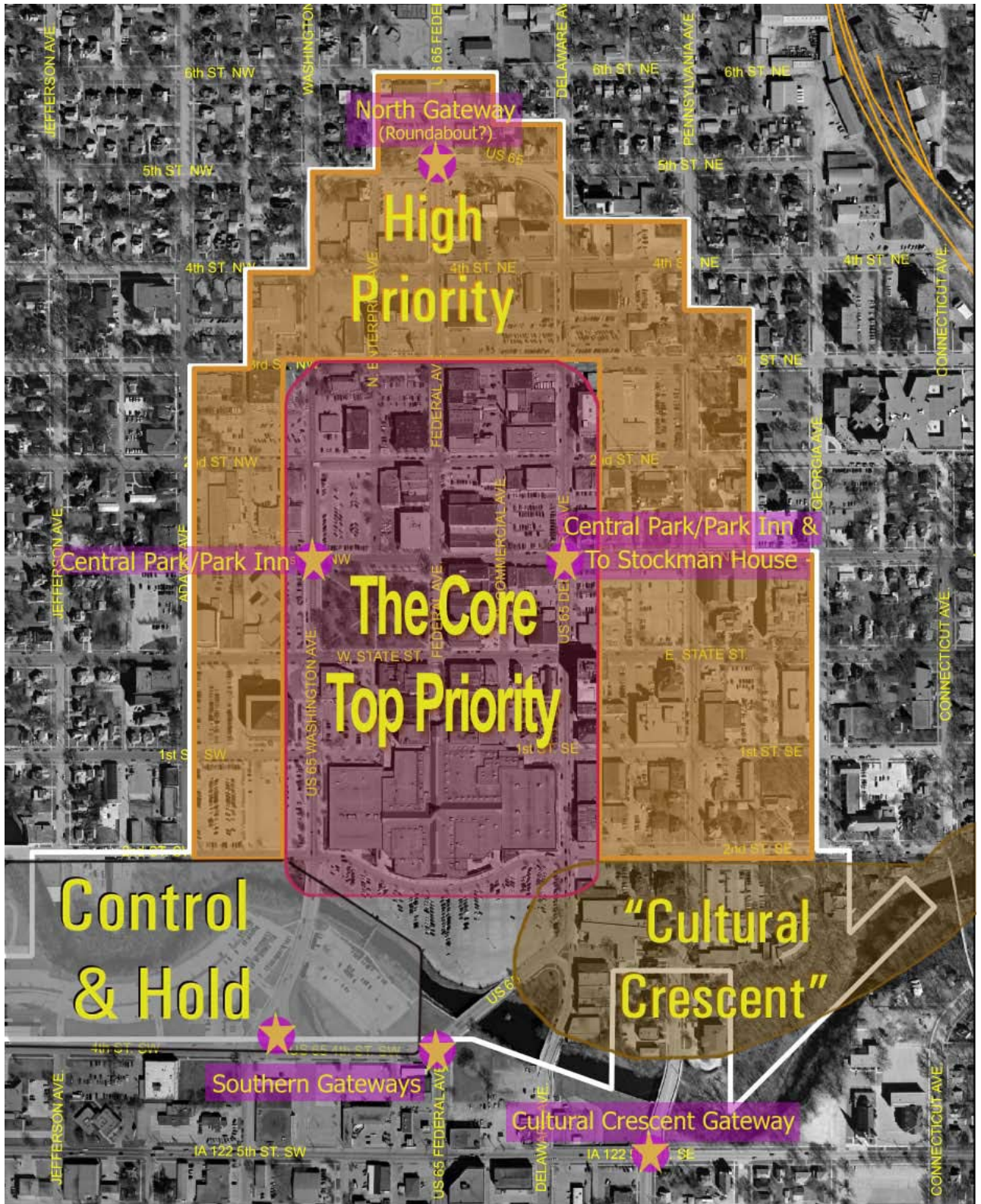
This core area also holds a major key to capitalizing on the unique cultural and architectural assets of Mason City. The importance of enhancing this connection and strengthening the inter-relationship between the cultural attractions and the core of downtown is a primary focus of this report. The team strongly believes that forging a strong partnership between these two elements is the future for downtown Mason City.

- High Priority Zone – The secondary zone is the majority of the remainder of the designated Main Street district, especially to the north beyond 5th and also the fringe areas that extend beyond properties that face Delaware and Washington. This area will also benefit from the revitalization of the core.

The importance of this high priority zone cannot be understated. This zone contains a great deal of important physical and emotional cultural assets to the community as well as providing a link/entry to the downtown. While this zone is not the Top Priority development zone, it is a very important sector of the downtown. As a result, projects that encompass the entire downtown (ex. Streetscape improvements, street replacement, lighting, etc.) should consider this zone as an integral zone in the downtown area.

- Control and Hold Zone – The area along the river in the southwest corner of the downtown provides great long term development potential. This area is largely surface parking or vacant land. Development in this area should complement the core and capitalize on the river. As investor confidence grows and the core is strengthened, interest in this area will grow.

Primary Development Zones



Traffic and Circulation

Mason City is a growing community and that growth is happening both on the east and west sides of the community meaning that downtown remains at the center of the community. Often times, communities the size of Mason City grow in one direction which tends to shift the center of the community.

City

A long range goal for downtown would be to eliminate the one way traffic on both Delaware and Washington. The regional traffic patterns have changed dramatically since Highways 122 and 65 were laid out through and adjacent to downtown. The truck traffic and “through traffic” on these roads is much lower now that the Highway 18 bypass and I-35 have been built. Studies may show that these roads now are used for predominately local traffic (including people commuting from throughout the county). Two-way traffic has been proven to slow vehicles, thus making it more pedestrian friendly. This would also restore much of the traditional feel to the core area. It also will help to re-unite the fringe areas with the core by improving the pedestrian character of the corridors along Washington and Delaware.

Gateways and Nodes

City

Gateway signs/markers and major node markers should be installed to help welcome and direct visitors into downtown Mason City. Currently the mall acts as a major visual icon at the southern entrance to downtown. The southern elevation of the mall is clearly visible from 4th Street south as one turns up Delaware into the downtown district. However, the main intersection for east bound traffic is actually 5th and Federal.

Design
Committee

The main access routes into downtown Mason City are via Iowa Highway 122 and US Highway 65. The majority of out of town traffic experiences downtown Mason City from either the south or west because of the connections to I-35 and Highway 218. The presentation of downtown Mason City as a first impression is not impressive.

One of the downfalls of the current traffic pattern is that no matter how wonderful Federal Street may become citizens and tourists alike could miss it if you do not provide greater density and excitement along the auxiliary streets and entrance arteries. This excitement might be in the construction of new buildings, upgrades and well landscaped parking areas, rear façade rehabs, banners and wayfinding signs. It might also mean rethinking the new landscape plans to include these entrance areas.

The improvement/revitalization of this area is not a direct responsibility of the Downtown Association. However, there are specific locations that act as gateways/entrances to the heart of downtown. Improving these areas does directly impact the perception of downtown and should be given high priority.

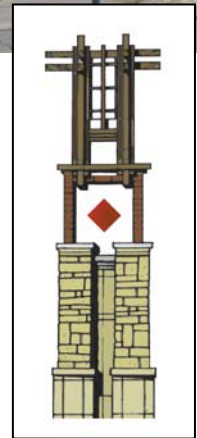
These gateways help identify the entrances and major corridors leading people into downtown Mason City. These features should be implemented as components of streetscape improvements.

Previously, recommendations from the Gould, Evans, Goodman Associates, LC

study completed in 2003 proposes a number of markers for wayfinding and signage along the riverfront. This basic design can be utilized for gateways both entering downtown and in the heart of downtown. The small medians created where Delaware and Washington intersect with 4th Street SE (Highway 122) are natural locations for these gateway markers on the south end of downtown. Another location to be considered on the south end is the intersection of 5th St SE and Pennsylvania. This is the main gateway to the “Cultural Crescent”.



(top) Example of entry node markers installed at 1st St NE and Delaware. Entry landmark example (right) designed by Gould, Evans, Goodman Associates, LC 2003 study.



Design Committee

On the north end, a similar triangular median exists at the intersection of Federal and 5th where Highway 65 splits into the two one-way streets just behind Fareway. This location could also be considered for a roundabout or traffic circle. A traffic circle might allow for a more direct connection with Federal that is now blocked by the Fareway development.

City
Design Committee

Wayfinding System

Implement a comprehensive wayfinding system for Mason City that would include the following goals:

- To identify downtown as a destination
- To enhance downtown’s public image through unique, helpful graphics
- To better organize and present information about Mason City’s downtown and cultural destinations to make them easier to find
- To simplify traffic patterns by guiding drivers to the downtown along specific routes
- To promote pedestrian travel and exploration of the downtown and community
- To identify public parking

Wayfinding means literally "finding one's way". Wayfinding is a system of logical guiding and informational elements which aid people in getting to and from their destinations. Wayfinding systems can direct visitors to major tourist attractions, guide pedestrians through downtown business or historic district or even guide motorists to public parking.

The existence of many cultural and entertainment amenities and historically significant structures, sites and districts within Mason City offer an ideal situation for a community/downtown wayfinding system. This wayfinding system can provide a transportation link between the downtown and all other cultural amenities within the city while at the same time providing a simple way for visitors and citizens alike to explore the community.



While Mason City currently has a primitive wayfinding system that provides directional clues to some cultural amenities (ex. MacNider Art Museum and Stockman House), the signs are beginning to age, are not placed in convenient locations, do not cater to pedestrian traffic and do not reflect a unified downtown or cultural and entertainment district.

Wayfinding systems can be designed in a variety of fashions and can be catered to accommodate both pedestrian and automobile traffic. There are two types of wayfinding systems that can be utilized within the downtown.

1. Direct Wayfinding: Direct wayfinding specifically tells the visitor what he/she is going to see and which way the site is. This type of wayfinding has been very successful implemented in Des Moines, Iowa, and Clinton, Iowa. In both of these cases, the wayfinding has been primarily aimed at vehicular traffic, but both contain smaller areas where pedestrian traffic is the focus.



Wayfinding signage examples from Clinton (left) and Des Moines (right)

2. Indirect Wayfinding: This method uses subtle clues and cues to direct the visitor to the different sites in a community. This type of wayfinding is often used within walking or driving tours that include multiple sites within a community's or district's history. This method is often used in conjunction with some direct signage to delineate traffic routes. A wonderful



Boston's Freedom Trail wayfinding system consists of a continuous red line to mark the trail (left) and also has medallions to provide direction to the next site.

example of this type of wayfinding can be found in Boston, Massachusetts, on its Freedom Trail. This wayfinding system uses a combination of sidewalk medallions that point the way and a continuous painted red line on the sidewalk to keep visitors on track.

This project can be taken on in a series of phases which continually add sites and signage as the community develops. Signage design should complement with BOTH streetscape improvements as well as any gateway and nodal landmarks which have been added to the entryways and intersections leading to downtown. These entry landmarks may provide a visitor with an obvious design motif when following a wayfinding system.

Streetscape Design



Implement a comprehensive and coordinated streetscape. By capitalizing on the downtown’s unique architectural and historic assets and complementing them with quality streetscape and private improvements, the downtown can provide the city with a unique identify as well as an authentic theme for the community to build upon.

The city has begun the preliminary steps in the completion of the downtown streetscape improvements that incorporated the Federal Street corridor from East State Street north to 5th Street (also including the replacement of streetlights on some cross streets). A consistency in the design and implementation of the streetscape improvements through the many phases which are proposed to complete this project must be stressed in order to ensure a sense of unity throughout the downtown district. When undertaking a streetscape project, it is always best to complete as much as possible within each phase.

A successful streetscape involves the partnership with the community, property owners, businesses, downtown associations, city, other appropriate governmental services and utility companies. A successful streetscape is also not limited to one element of the downtown; rather it must ***incorporate a complementing effort between the consistent design of other streetscape design elements*** like:



Lighting: At least four different types of street light design currently exist within the bounds of the Highway 65 “loop” that makes up the bulk of downtown.



Styles of streetlights found throughout the downtown.

Design Committee

One style of street lighting should be chosen to unify and define the downtown. This unification will aid in the definition of the downtown boundaries and help to create an identity for the downtown. There is no one “correct” style of street lighting for the downtown. It must be remembered that the downtown itself is a diverse collection of architectural styles and masses which reflect a variety of periods in the community’s history and development. While new lighting can reflect a certain period of the downtown’s growth, it by no means has to be true to the historic lighting of the district. The new lighting **MUST** complement the district and its architecture **AND** must be consistent throughout the define boundaries of the downtown.

City

Street Furniture: Street furniture present in downtown Mason City includes benches, trash receptacles and tables. Like the consistent design/style of all street lighting, all street furniture should be of like design/style and must complement the selected street lighting in the district. This does not prohibit the use of a different style for private street furniture servicing outdoor eating areas for cafés, bars, etc. Rather, this consistency in design must be found throughout all public street furniture found throughout the downtown

Design Committee

City

Informational Kiosks: While an informational kiosk currently exists at the intersection of East State Street and Federal Street, it is highly under utilized and does not reflect the same design as other elements within the streetscape. A streetscape informational kiosk can be utilized as complement to other advertising methods as well as functioning as a community billboard, downtown business directory or can provide tourist information. Again, this streetscape element must coordinate with other streetscape elements in order to portrait the downtown identity.

Design Committee

Promotion Committee



(left) existing downtown kiosk (right) example of an informational kiosk from Central City, Iowa.

Design Committee

Sidewalk Surface Treatment: It is recommended that all sidewalks in the downtown consist of a consistent surface treatment. Again, consistency does not mean the same. Rather it speaks to complementing design. After major nodes (intersections) have been identified, there may be a desire to accent these intersections with paving patterns or designs. Other uses of accenting paving patterns may be found when implementing wayfinding systems or pedestrian paths throughout the downtown.

Design Committee

City

Public Art: Public art is permanent or temporary physical works of art visible to the general public, whether part of a building or free-standing. Public art can serve a variety of function in the downtown setting. It can simple beautify the streetscape, educate the public or even serve a functional purpose. Many Iowa communities have successfully utilized public art in their downtowns. Cedar Falls beautified there streetscape through the use of a variety of sculptural pieces. Charles City utilized a more functional, “sitable” art to help integrate the adjacent Cedar River to the downtown.

Design
Committee

City

Bike Racks: There has been an expressed desire for the availability of secure bicycle parking/racks in the downtown district. While there is a small number bike racks present within the downtown, they are in most cases hidden and a bicyclist must search for the racks in order to use them. Instead of hiding these bicycle racks, many communities are now highlighting them as public art.



Functional public art bike racks in Des Moines' East Village

Des Moines' East Village put out a request for artists in a competition to create unique sculptures that also act as sidewalk art that beautifies the downtown in a fashion unlike any downtown. This unique method of providing secure bicycle parking has served a dual purpose in this district and is a viable solution for Mason City's downtown.

City

Design
Committee

Trees and Plantings: The use of trees, plantings and other landscaping methods in the downtown setting should be done in a strategic fashion as not to introduce new challenges in the downtown. Downtown trees and large plantings are best limited to large open gathering spaces or to be used as a screening technique. Lining streets with regularly planted trees can introduce issues with heaving sidewalks, maintenance and upkeep as well as a visual barrier of architectural and commercial assets in the downtown. Opportunities for appropriate public landscaping in the downtown are in Federal Plaza, Central Park, the "pocket park" located behind city hall as well as the use of small trees and plantings to screen and soften downtown parking lots.

Central Park

City

Design
Committee

Determine and implement highest and best use for Central Park space. Central Park is also a major pedestrian environment as well as a great venue for events and festivals in downtown Mason City. Currently there are plans for improving and updating the park. This has been a contentious issue in the community. Much of the discussion centers on the programming and use of the park itself. Should the park be a quiet respectful place or should it be an active vibrant space? Can it be both?

There are existing memorials and monuments in the park that pay homage to local veterans. There are some additional historical monuments in the space as well. The park is also a favorite venue for holding festivals, especially music events. Some see this as a conflict.

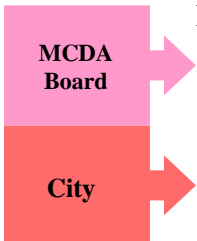
The current improvements being undertaken in Central Park allow for a reinvention of this important public space in the downtown. Because Central Park is the central element in the downtown, all streetscape improvements (lights, benches, trash receptacles, etc.) made

within the park should be consistent with streetscape improvements made throughout the downtown. This consistency in design will create a visual link between the downtown and central park while enhancing the identity of the downtown.

Central Park has historically been a meeting place for the community and, in recent years, has provided a highly visible space for public monument. This inclusion of a series of public monuments has given the impression of the park to many residents and visitors as a “sacred space” and not for public activity. While it is important to respect this use of the park, it is equally as important to utilize this space as effectively as possible. Through the use of creative landscaping and division of space, Central Park could create both a passive and an active atmosphere to enable a more flexible space for public events and entertainment as well as relaxation, a quiet place for lunch and personal reflection.

Pedestrian Orientation

One of the major differences downtown has over the typical suburban strip shopping development is that downtown has historically been pedestrian friendly and pedestrian oriented. However, in Mason City the one way streets of Delaware and Washington and the construction of Southbridge Mall have created a somewhat isolated “downtown island”. The one way pairs are a pedestrian barrier that inhibits movement east and west across these streets. Because of the high volume, and relatively high traffic speed on the one way streets, it is more challenging and less inviting as a pedestrian to cross these corridors. Also much of Washington lacks the typical pedestrian scale and character desired in a downtown environment. The buildings are largely set back from the sidewalk and there are long stretches of surface parking along this street. This environment also detracts from a pedestrian oriented area.



For maximum affect, expand, compress and focus.

- **Expand** the downtown’s key pedestrian zone East to attract customers from Delaware Street, the Brick and Tile Building and the Cultural Crescent and West to entice customers from Wells Fargo and The Principal.
- **Compress** from the North, thus establishing a well managed pedestrian zone which encourages and enhances the shopping and dining experience.
- **Focus** the downtown’s combined efforts on Federal Avenue from 1st Street South (the plaza) to 2nd Street North and the side streets immediately adjacent, and consider these new boundaries as Phase 1.

The mall itself is a major component and anchor for downtown and it is not about to go away. It is both a visual and economic anchor for the district. And while the mall has contributed to the traffic challenges, it has also helped to create one of the most positive pedestrian oriented areas in the entire community – Federal Plaza and Federal Avenue. Federal Plaza is the half block north of the mall where the mall straddles the street. This area is currently used for many outdoor activities and events and should continue to act as an outdoor “downtown living room”. This space has great potential to be the signature destination in Mason City for dining and entertainment.

Federal Avenue running north of the mall toward Fareway is a very pedestrian oriented environment. The mall and the new Fareway isolate this stretch of the street from any through traffic by blocking them. Also the sidewalks are adequately wide and there is generally consistent building fabric along the corridor. Intensive streetscaping, contiguous and continuous building fabric, especially storefronts and additional upper floor residential development will enhance the entire downtown and also enhance the pedestrian orientation of this corridor.

City

Design
Committee

Maintain and improve the pedestrian nature of Federal Avenue between the mall and Fareway with a special zoning overlay. This does not mean that the area will be closed to traffic. Instead, it means it will be focused on creating and improving the pedestrian nature of the area. Some provisions of the pedestrian zone could include:

- Mandating glass/traditional storefronts along the corridor. No blank/solid walls.
- Consider ordinance that restricts first floor space to retail use only. Offices can be allowed, but they should present a traditional storefront appearance.
- Encouraging outdoor pedestrian amenities like outdoor seating
- Encourage sidewalk cafes/dining.
- Eliminating and preventing any surface parking lots to abut the sidewalk area.
- Encouraging new infill construction along the corridor. All buildings should come right up to the sidewalk. If they do not come all the way to the sidewalk, any area in front of the building should be integrated as a pedestrian plaza/gathering space.
- On street parking is encouraged along the street. On street parking actually helps buffer the sidewalk from traffic.
- High levels of pedestrian amenities like seating, landscaping etc.
- Allow vending carts

BI
Committee

In good weather, street vendors can provide excitement and services to those living and working in the downtown. They can reinforce the Farmer's Market, provide services (a coffee cart), create excitement (selling balloons or snow cones) and allow small businesses unique opportunities to grow (student entrepreneurs).

City

Portland Oregon is one major city that has adopted pedestrian standards for commercial districts in the city (Appendix B). Some components of the Portland zoning code are included for reference. The creation of this special pedestrian overlay zone could help establish and reinforce the character of the core area of downtown. It can also help reinforce investor confidence for implementing desired mixed use projects in downtown Mason City.

Federal Plaza

City

Make Federal Plaza the regional destination for food, beverage, and entertainment if these steps are taken:

- *Redesign and renovate* the public space to encourage outdoor dining and event programming. During special events or in appropriate venues allow alcohol consumption throughout the plaza. Restricting alcohol consumption to Federal

Plaza makes events easier to control and respects the place of honor that Central Park has in the community

- *Incorporate* several stages to allow for a variety of entertainment including one stage built into the face of the wall that separates Federal Plaza from Southbridge. Such a stage could serve outward on glorious days and inward on inclement days providing for the most cost-effective brand of rain insurance: *Federal Plaza Rocks Rain or Shine!*



The wall between Southbridge and Federal Plaza should be operable to encourage indoor/outdoor event programming.

- *Utilize* all building spaces by converting some upper floor space to housing, some to office, and some as upper level dining. Balconies facing the plaza can provide for another form of outdoor dining to the al fresco cafes below.

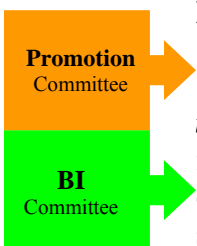


Upper floor uses along Federal Plaza should include housing, office, and dining. Think balcony.



MAKING IT HAPPEN DOWNTOWN

Business Plan



Develop a business improvement plan for each business highlighting the inside/outside approach. Increase the number of activities in the Federal Street Plaza making it Mason City's destination activity center....concerts, exhibits, eating and drinking opportunities. Recruit new active shopping and dining entrepreneurs to street level and some second story spaces. These efforts will strengthen and reinforce existing businesses. Explore the retail clusters that already exist and strengthen them: home and home accessories, spa and health related businesses, and the 3 D's (dining, drinking and dancing). Provide examples of creative housing opportunities and market this area as an exciting place to live.



Conceptual rendering showing outdoor seating and physical improvement possibilities in Federal Plaza.

Promotion
Committee

Understand the Market and explore utilization of the shopping clusters. Related to being at the center of the community are the healthy vehicular counts that deliver many daily visitors to downtown Mason City. Retailers and restaurants look at a combination of traffic counts and roof tops to determine where to site new facilities.

BI
Committee

Given the residential growth occurring on either side of downtown and strong traffic patterns, downtown has a better opportunity that most downtowns in cities the size of Mason City to capture chain operations as downtown operations.

Home and home accessories, spa and health, and the 3 D's (dining, drinking and dancing), along with increased support for arts and cultural related businesses will make it easier to attract new shoppers. Federal Plaza should be an electric and eclectic blend of retail and hospitality uses. There is a great start in place with Moorman's, Val's, the Quarry, and Laredo's.

Promotion
Committee

Encourage shopping in the downtown. There are an amazing number of employees and office workers in or near the downtown . . . the courthouse and related law offices, the Brick and Tile Building, Wells Fargo and other bank facilities, city hall, Mercy Medical hospital and related health and medical offices and The Principal. Work with retailers and service providers to target this group and entice them into the downtown to shop, eat and walk. As they begin to feel that this is their downtown, they will become avid supporters of the amenities in the downtown . . . retail will grow.

Promotion
Committee

Generating interest, excitement and a buzz about downtown's numerous arts and entertainment opportunities through a comprehensive marketing strategy are a must. This should become a high priority for MCDA and should generate more traffic and investment in the area. A cooperative advertising program can be created that will encourage all venues to promote together. There are numerous ways to achieve this goal without draining the budget. Some options are listed below.

BI
Committee

- Work with the CVB to get events on the state tourism website and regional tourism publications.
- Expand the speaker's bureau to allow for more presentations to local organizations on a more regular basis. This is not solely the director's responsibility.
- Explore a cooperative community website to promote arts and entertainment events. IE. Dubuque 365.com.
- Make promotional calendar, flyers, etc. multi-lingual.

What do we mean by "buzz?"
 Buzz may be hard to define, but like art, we know it when we see it.
 You know buzz is happening when people say or feel:

- ✓ Interesting people seem to congregate here.
- ✓ I'm liable to meet someone I know.
- ✓ Let's just go; we'll find something fun to do.

Promotion
Committee

Target promotions and events to appeal to the markets the downtown is attempting to attract to these businesses and events. Remember smaller events for this type of retail promotion are better than huge crowds so long as you have targeted the right audience. Encourage like businesses to cross promote bringing greater benefit for all.

Promotion
Committee

Plan, schedule and promote events and activities cooperatively with other venues in the community. The different community groups should also be encouraged to cross promote. Other communities who have successful examples are noted below:

- Gallery Hop (contact Valley Junction, West Des Moines)
- Art in the Park (contact Oskaloosa)
- Holiday and seasonal activities (IE. Spooktacular Parade with scary stories at the Library and vintage horror films at the MacNider.)

BI
Committee

Serve as the data clearinghouse for downtown. Good business decisions begin with good data. Collecting, analyzing, packaging, and delivering fresh data makes it easier for merchants to consider downtown locations and for investors to take a risk on a downtown project.

Important data sets include comprehensive information about:

- downtown real estate,
- complete data about the current mix of downtown businesses,
- market data about the population served by the downtown market
- income and household characteristics of population.

Some merchants are more interested in traffic counts than in information about nearby residents. Collecting property and sales tax information is important not just to share with

current and existing businesses but also to assess whether the Main Street program is succeeding in growing downtown.

Once data about downtown properties and businesses have been collected and collated, it should be put into an easy-read-format and widely distributed.

Have focus group meetings with commercial realtors, small business development organizations, lawyers, and accountants to present summaries of the data and to make sure all who may need access to the data in next eighteen months know where to find it.

Follow up with a simple postcard twice a year to remind those in the business delivery business that MCDA has the information they need.

Business planner



Taking the collected data and develop a business plan for the downtown. This tool can use to help focus the work of the committee as it decides which types of businesses to retain and attract and what kinds of real estate investors to solicit.

From a preliminary view of the market three clusters that seem most important for the future of downtown.

Retail, restaurants, and housing are three likely ways to increase the sense of downtown activity. Focus on them and consider the strengths and weaknesses of downtown as a location for these kinds of businesses compared to other places in the region and develop strategies that build on strengths and reduce weaknesses.

Key elements of a downtown business plan include:

- **Regional Economic Context:** What is happening within the regional economy? Is the region growing, are incomes increasing? What is the number of housing starts? Where is the region growing? Understanding the regional economy and downtown's role within the region is a critical part of a downtown business plan.
- **Current Business Mix:** Understanding the current mix of downtown businesses will give huge clues about where to look for new businesses. Businesses that compliment existing businesses or competing businesses in categories where customers want variety will strengthen existing businesses and provide opportunity for new businesses to succeed.
- **Business Clusters:** Downtown used to be everything to everyone but no one place serves all functions within our regions anymore. Understanding what the downtown's clusters are will give Mason City the chance to develop strategies to strengthen existing clusters.

Consider all the business clusters currently found downtown:

- **Hospitality**
Several restaurants, two theatres, an espresso cafe
 - **Destination Retail**
Southbridge Mall
 - **Convenience Retail**
New Grocery Store
 - **Civic Anchors**
City Hall, County Courthouse and offices, churches, library
 - **Office**
Lawyers, accountants, financial services
- **Assess Competition:** Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of downtown and the strengths and weaknesses of other commercial districts within the region will provide for realistic expectations regarding the size of local markets and whether there are unmet needs or whether downtown will have to take market share from other places in the region to grow downtown business.
 - **Desired Business Mix:** Identifying which markets downtown seeks to grow will allow for more focused efforts, Retaining and attracting investments and firms is difficult work but it is made easier by targeting specific kinds of business. Developing a future business mix that is feasible must be derived from more thoughtful analysis of the regional economic context, and clear understanding of what markets downtown is already having success competing in.

Business Developer and Recruiter



Work to first improve existing businesses to make it easier to recruit new businesses. Successful business development and recruitment is all about enthusiastically selling downtown opportunity from the inside out. Communities often fail to consider that the quickest; most likely candidates to grow downtown are those that have already demonstrated their commitment to downtown. Existing downtown businesses are hardy stock, they have figured out how to survive and with some additional help and guidance might just thrive.

If Main Street does a great recruiting job, Mason City can be sure that those not already downtown will ask existing businesses two questions: a) is downtown a good place to do business? and b) is the community supportive of downtown businesses?

Without the enthusiastic support of existing Main Street merchants, it's tough to get outsiders to invest their time and money in a new downtown business.



Assemble Tools and create incentives and marketing tools. Selling downtown to those already there or those that the community wants to attract is made easier by having tools to help close the sale.

- **Incentives:** Incentives should always be easy to use. Grant or loan programs must be user friendly and have reasonable timelines for approval or rejection or they will not be used.

Incentives should also be available to both new and existing businesses.

Grants, subsidized loans, or tax abatement should be triggered by the amount of new money invested, jobs created, or buildings renovated regardless of how long the business has been downtown.



- Providing financial assistance to help reduce the cost of opening a business demonstrates community support for downtown and helps to make more deals financially feasible:
- Façade programs help improve the look of a business which translates into a better image for the business and for downtown.
- Low cost loan programs reduce the cost of financing business development and public or quasi-public subordinated debt programs makes projects happen by reducing to an acceptable level the risk to that entity making a first position loan to the project.
- Tax abatements lower the on-going cost of operations often making it possible for a project to support greater debt load or to offer a higher return on investment that makes a project financially feasible.



- **Marketing:** Business development and recruitment is all about selling downtown opportunity. Designing and creating flyers, brochures etc. to extol the positive aspects of downtown and the incentives that have been put into place to encourage the growth of downtown business are important.

- Develop a communications strategy to distribute those marketing materials and to build an effective network within the realm of regional small business development.
- Build relationships with the commercial realty community as well as with organizations and experts that support and regulate small business development. This includes agencies such as Small Business Development Centers (SBDC's), the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Chamber of Commerce, local banks, accountants, and lawyers.



- Build a cooperative partnership with arms of local government who involved in the process of regulating business development. The various agencies can be a great ally in making the process of starting or expanding a small business an enjoyable one or they can turn this process into a nightmare.

- Know in great detail what infrastructure is in place to support the development of small businesses. The community college network usually hosts a Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Chamber usually hosts a SCORE chapter of retired businesses executives that provide free advice, community action agencies provide small business advice to empower lower income residents, and local attorneys and accountants often provide specific advice to those considering investing in a new or existing small business.
- Host a national retail development consultant once or twice per year to provide inspiration and practical advice to local business owners. Main Street Searcy's participation in the National Main Street program allows access to such experts, often at reduced pricing.

Presenting these experts helps build a culture that the Main Street program is doing a wide variety of things to build a culture of success for small business

- Focus groups with small business owners will reveal whether these services are effective or not and Main Street Mason City can identify capable partners with which to work to grow and attract downtown business.

Mason City has a very compelling set of assets if they are properly animated over the next few years. Achieving the items above is aggressive but doable. The items below are work plan elements that successful business improvement programs perform and the MCDA should develop as the more urgent items above are achieved.

DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE

The real estate aspect of downtown development is a business in of itself. While many small business owners are savvy enough and have sufficient resources to become building owners, there are those that need to partner with a landlord. To that end, Main Street needs to understand the dynamics of the local real estate market and to develop incentives and market Main Street to developers just as it does in seeking to develop and attract other new businesses.

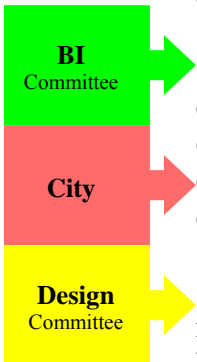


Some downtown residential projects are in need of reinvestment.

Adapting downtown real estate to meet current business needs and completing major renovations is often more complicated that undertaking similar projects on green field sites. Many downtowns have to overcome

years of deferred building maintenance and under-investment in downtown structures. In addition, most of the development community is more familiar with new construction and has become very specialized over the past fifty years. For these reasons, steps should be taken to make it easier to locate a business in the downtown as well as other steps to educate and promote the real estate investment opportunities.

Once again, working with those who advise, finance, and regulated property development is essential to making downtown development projects as user-friendly as possible. Real estate development is a time intensive process and for developers, more so than many other businesses, time is money. If downtown projects are more complicated and there are more hoops to jump through compared to other places in the market, developers will move onto easier places to do their next project.



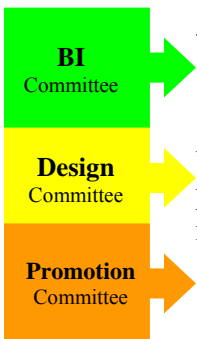
Analyze and Understand the Local Real Estate Market. Low rental rates reduce the developer’s interest in taking risk to convert derelict old buildings into historic gems. To expand the pool of possible tenants a supply of cool, yet affordable, space is required. It’s a challenge to provide that space when the cost to purchase and renovate a building cannot be covered from expected-upon-completion rental rates.

While there are some strong historic neighborhoods around downtown that have maintained their value others have lost their value and have become increasingly the place of housing of the last resort attracting people with behaviors that reduce the perceived safety of downtown.

Marketing historic living opportunities is important to make sure all older neighborhoods are not adversely affected by some bad apples living in one older neighborhood. Working with social service agencies to confront rather than permitting socially irresponsible behavior is also important.



A number of dormant upper floor spaces are ripe for development as market rate housing in Mason City.

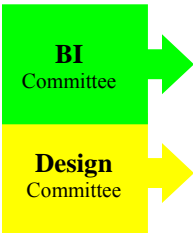


Upper Floor Housing

Conduct upper floor development tour. An early step should be taken to promote upper floor development opportunities downtown. Plan a tour that showcases completed projects (such as the unit above Val’s) but more importantly includes touring spaces that are ripe for conversion to lofts.

- Work with the design departments of nearby colleges and universities to garner student designs for these dormant spaces and proudly display them on easels.
- Make this an event a Main Street fund raiser by including a nice meal at one of the Federal Plaza restaurants (once again think leverage). The Romance of Loft Living around Valentine’s Day would highlight loft living for empty nester couples looking to invigorate their marriages now that the kids have left.

- Loft living is mostly for singles and couples without school age children. Those whose children have grown have a strong desire in loft living and have driven the downtown housing market in communities around the country. Target this event towards them and the developers that serve this market.



Present an upper floor development seminar. Follow up on the first year’s loft development tour by conducting an intensive upper floor development workshop. Offer this seminar to those in a sixty-mile radius as another way to attract a developer from outside the immediate vicinity and as a way to reduce the cost of presenting the seminar.

Property development incentives. Similarly, consider the business of real estate development. Programs developed to support real estate development typically revolve around stimulating investment that grows the tax base while business development is more centered on job creation.

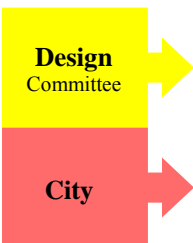


- Façade programs often are available to either property owners or the businesses that is a tenant in the building.
- Low interest loan programs or grant programs have been designed by some communities to help encourage upper floor housing. Often times rent from upper floor housing units is greater and more reliable than first floor commercial rents.

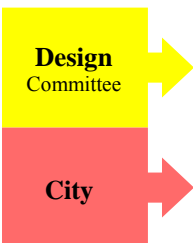


This cluster of hospitality businesses would benefit from a coordinated façade improvement package. Added income from upper floor residences could provide cash flow to pay for business improvements.

Infill Construction



Incorporate a strategy of “control and hold” to promote sensitive infill construction on strategic lots within the downtown. Within the bounds of the Mason City downtown district lines, there are over 20 surface parking/vacant lots, many of which consist of nearly half a city block. This abundance of undeveloped downtown lots provides a wonderful opportunity for future infill construction projects. New infill construction should be differentiated from the old yet be compatible with the historic materials, size, scale, proportion, façade fenestration and massing to protect the integrity of the property and downtown environment (Secretary of the Interior Standard #9).



Encourage appropriate infill construction on vacant, gravel lot at the corner of Federal Avenue and 2nd Street. Because of the strategic location of this lot within the heart the downtown’s pedestrian zone, Mason City should actively promote this lot for a mixed-use, infill project. New construction on this lot should not only complement its historic surroundings but must also be sensitive to its pedestrian friendly context. This should include ground floor commercial space, zero setback orientation and incorporate the new sensitive

infill characteristics discussed above. See Appendix B for Portland, Oregon, zoning code example of pedestrian zone.

This lot currently consists of a gravel parking lot. No major investment should be made by the city to “improve” the quality of the space as a parking lot.

Instead, incentives should be available to possible developers to help fill the economic gap to make this project viable.

This investment through development incentives by the city could leverage a much larger investment from the private sector.

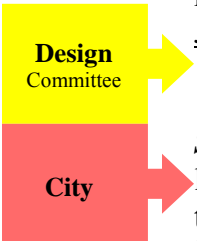


Vacant gravel lot located at the corner of Federal Avenue and 2nd Street.

New infill construction should provide an opportunity for downtown condominiums in appropriate locations. The introduction of downtown condo living can provide a great source of a consistent customer base and support for downtown businesses that thrive on foot traffic. Because there is currently no downtown housing market in Mason City, the feasibility of a downtown condo project should be tested through interest in downtown living of rehabilitated upper floor apartments/condos. There are many locations which provide a future opportunity for the construction of condominium buildings, including lots west of Southbridge Mall and lots in the southwest portion of the downtown district adjacent to the creek. Especially valid for the lot near the river as park development might accompany this project, condo development should incorporate a mixed-use approach in order to promote a public/private setting along the riverfront.

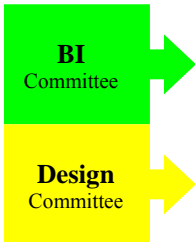
The Mall

There is an external force which is creating a strong sense of urgency for Mason City and the community must rise to this challenge. When the city mothers and fathers took creative and bold steps 20 years ago to save the downtown, they worked hard to bring Southbridge Mall to the downtown. Much has changed in the community since that time...new retailers have set up shop along the commercial strip and key community services such as the YMCA were allowed to leave the downtown. Yet the Mall has served as an anchor for the downtown. It is important to understand the realities of Mall development and management. Key anchors sign leases for 20-25 years. **THE MALL ANCHORS HAVE ONLY 3-5 YEARS LEFT ON THEIR LEASES!**



Determine and implement the highest and best use of movie theatre space within Southbridge Mall. Currently the movie theatre remains open featuring second run movies at low prices. This reduces the value of Southbridge and downtown Mason City in comparison to the new movie palace that opened out on the strip. Conversion of the movie theatre should be carefully investigated with the mall owners. Possible opportunities include:

- A family fun center. Burlington, Iowa currently opened such a facility that includes a boutique bowling alley, laser tag, video game arcade (much higher end than the Aladdin's Castle currently in Southbridge), indoor go-carting, theme restaurant, sports bar, and dance club.
- There seems to be a unique opportunity in Mason City for a theme pool hall. A perfect transition from the arts/culture center to the entertainment cluster would be the Trouble's Pool Hall.



Explore opportunities to rework food court orientation and programming.

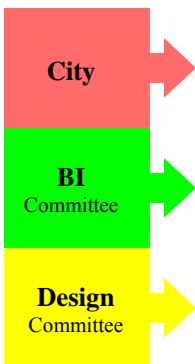
Reworking the food court section of the shopping mall would seek to accomplish several objectives.

- Transition the food court from the more youth-oriented Entertainment Center in the movie theatre to the more adult oriented bars and restaurants of Federal Plaza. Currently, that facility is oversized and looks like a failure because it is underutilized.
- The reworked food court area should provide interior gathering space for the community while providing convenience-oriented food and beverage for shoppers. The food court should be considered an extension of Federal Plaza and provide a unique indoor/outdoor experience families, shoppers and nightlife activities.

If MCDA and the city are to assist the mall management in keeping a vital retail component in this facility the community must do their part. All downtown partners must strengthen the immediate environment NOW:

- Upgrade the immediate physical environment.
- Upgrade the retail and commercial component in Federal Plaza, along Federal Ave. and the immediately adjacent E-W streets.
- Create activities that bring new shoppers to the downtown (and to the Mall).
- Encourage quality – do not let the mall consider 2nd run movie theatres --- look at new and creative uses for youth and family activities.

Do not let 2010 find Mason City celebrating the opening of the Park Inn Hotel and bemoaning the loss of the Mall.



Community-Based Development

Develop real estate community-based development organization. The fifth function that an increasing number of Main Street organizations find themselves performing is to become a community-based development organization because the for-profit development community cannot or will not conduct the types of development projects needed to increase the momentum of Main Street success.

A community-based developer has more ways to earn a return from a project than a for-profit developer. Examples include: the removal of blight inspires a neighbor to make a large investment that increases the tax base, reclamation of an architectural treasure builds

community pride, and the development improves the city’s quality of life and makes it easier to attract or retain major employers.

Community-based developers also can access many grants, low-cost loan programs, and can confer tax benefits that are not available to for-profit developers.

Working as a community-based developer is the work of mature Main Street organization. Given the infancy of Mason City’s program the next three years should be devoted to fully understanding local real estate market conditions and in expediting others to develop project rather than in becoming a community-based developer.

This will build the capacity of the organization to carefully consider becoming a community-based organization down the road if it is unsuccessful in getting others to do the projects needed to move downtown forward.

MASON CITY’S CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT



As discussed earlier, during the Resource Team visit, local residents were asked to identify “special places” within the heart of the community. The vast majority of the identified locations were within the existing “cultural crescent” or in the heart/core of downtown.

Capitalize on Mason City’s cultural and architectural assets. Mason City has been designated as a “Cultural and Entertainment” district by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. This designation creates an opportunity to enhance the marketing and collaboration of various groups concerned with the arts and culture. Mason City’s district includes some impressive cultural and historic attractions (cultural capital).

- | |
|--|
| <p><u>Cultural Capital</u>
 Music Man Square
 Charles H. MacNider Art Museum
 Public Library
 Meredith Willson boyhood home
 Community Theater
 Stebens Children’s Theater
 Decker House B&B
 Park Inn
 Rock Glen Neighborhood
 Stockman House
 Central Park</p> |
|--|

Not all of these attractions are in the heart of downtown, but they are generally contiguous to the downtown. Previously these assets have been defined as Mason City’s “Cultural Crescent” through local planning processes. The crescent extends roughly east from the south east corner of the mall through Rock Glen up to the Stockman House.

There are a number of projects and strategies that will help improve these linkages. They include:

- Locating/retaining the community theater immediately adjacent to Music Man Square
- Developing the former Willson Bakery complex as an arts and entertainment venue
- Enhancing the riverfront within the downtown and the “cultural crescent”.
- Finishing the Park Inn project

Unfortunately the solid wall continues along the side of the existing community theatre. Build the new Community theatre on this site, but get rid of that blank wall! Create great new architecture along the street with parking under, behind, or shared with the mall... give me something wonderful to look at! Let me feel the excitement of Mason City right away as I come into town.



One example of how a blank wall can be enhanced

Design Committee

Community Theatre needs to be located in close proximity to Music Man Square. Expanding at or near its current location is its best possible location for the following reasons:

- Increases the interest and complexity of the Music Man Square/Library/MacNider arts cluster making it a more compelling regional destination.
- Is located within the Willow Creek corridor that strengthens the future riverfront experience.
- Helps improve a major downtown entry point.
- Helps to bridge the gap between the existing cultural complex and the downtown core.
- Helps to strengthen the nearby historical neighborhood
- Allows for lower overhead through shared services.

City

Secure funding to purchase and renovate the buildings adjacent to Music Man Square. Plans have been developed to expand and diversify Music Man Square by renovating the row of adjacent commercial buildings. This project should be a very high priority for the community as it achieves the same objectives as expanding the community theatre.

Organization Committee

Lead volunteer efforts to restore the riverfront path system. The overgrown, litter strewn riverfront promenade near the library can be quickly and cost-effectively returned to a much more inviting environment by a community earth-day volunteer event in April 2006.

City

This step would remind people what a great asset the arts/culture cluster is for the community and perhaps allow for the unveiling of plans to grow the Music Man Square complex.

Organization Committee

Work closely with Wright on the Park, Inc. to secure financing to restore the Park Inn Hotel. With a strengthened arts/culture cluster, a more vigorous Southbridge, and a compelling Federal Plaza food and beverage cluster the foundation has been laid to complete the restoration of the Park Inn. With the arts/culture, family entertainment, and food and beverage amenities in place the hotel will succeed as a business venture.

City

Downtown Arts & Entertainment. The Cultural and Entertainment District designation creates an opportunity to enhance the marketing and collaboration of various groups concerned with the arts and culture.

MCDA Board

MCDA, as the organizational sponsor of the Cultural & Entertainment District, is in an excellent position to facilitate improved cooperation and inter-action among all venues, partner agencies and the city thus strengthening all groups and enhancing the Cultural Crescent.

City

Form a collaborative Arts Coalition. Mason City has an enviable amount of cultural capital “Wright Here Downtown”. The formation of an Arts Coalition will enhance each of these venues and maximize the impact of the Cultural Crescent. Collaboration is KEY!

MCDA Board

Be proactive. If it needs to happenmake it happen. Become the developer; take the first option, etc --- *do it*. Compliment these activities with upgrades to facades and landscape. Mason City is striving for visual continuity - no blank walls, no gapping teeth. Make it a safe and secure place to live, shop and work. Retail needs as well as needs of the property owners, will shift as the housing and tourism market improves. Be ready to assist with these changes. Strive to create a pedestrian zone that encourages walking, provides unique stores, offers friendly and personal service and feels comfortable. **Downtown is the place to be!**

Design Committee

Work with the Southbridge Mall to either open up the long “blank wall” along Delaware Ave at this intersection, a new trend in enclosed mall renovations, or to cover it with great murals. Catch my eye...make me want to stop.

City

Assist the current “auto-related” business at the NE corner of Delaware and 2nd St. to relocate to a more auto-oriented site and convert that space into a great restaurant.

BI Committee

Throw open those garage doors in good weather and create a side-walk café atmosphere adjacent to the theatre. Housing, art studios and/or theatre offices could be above. *If the Community Theatre owned this building, could the rents generate a revenue stream for the theatre?* Regardless, entertainment related services or activities on this corner link the Cultural Crescent east to west and provide an opportunity to encourage folks to stop and enjoy Mason City’s downtown. Note: planning for these concepts can take place in Phase 1, but construction and implementation are probably Phase 11 or 111.

MCDA Board

Enhance the Communication and Interaction of Arts Agencies Directors and Boards.

- Contact the director and board chair of each entity to invite their participation in a meeting to explore more collaboration.
 - Schedule regular, at a minimum quarterly, meetings among staff to share and determine potential partnership opportunities.
 - Rotate meeting sites between venues to allow staff to better understand available resources.
- Identify other groups that should be included. Reference the Cultural District Fact Sheet for possibilities.
- Partner with the school and NIACC on the formation of a Youth Arts Advisory Council comprised of young artisans, musicians, thespians to help plan the Cultural Season.

- Partner with the city and other entities in the creation of an Arts Incubator with sales space to be located in the Cultural Crescent or designated Top Priority area. (BUS IMPROVEMENT)
- Partner with the CVB and the city on a comprehensive promotional calendar that includes events, exhibitions, etc. from all venues in order to allow better coordination and to avoid conflicts. (MCDA’s focus is events held in Downtown and the Cultural Crescent.)
- Include an “Action in the Arts” piece in the *Downtown Dialogue* and encourage other groups to do so.



Remember that Mason City is much bigger than any one player in town; the downtown will succeed only to the extent that you work together. This is a Fundamental Truth in every Main Street community – and every other town, too!

- If you ever catch MCDA working entirely alone on a project, stop! Then Go find a partner or two.

Encourage generosity by giving credit freely for contributions to success. If other groups forget to credit you for your work, work it out in private rather than griping in public. Again, Say what’s going on, ask what’s going on. This can be a good way to work it out.



Promote cooperative programming by programming cooperatively. In a retreat setting, you would invite representatives of other groups to attend and speak for themselves.

- On a Magic Wall matrix (during a board meeting or at a two-hour retreat), identify the strengths of each “player” downtown.
- You may want to identify certain categories of partners: arts and cultural; entertainment and hospitality; retail and professional; economic development; neighborhoods in and adjacent to the downtown district; youth groups; etc.
- Remember that neighborhood groups and certain individuals are important players, too. Reach out directly to them to build working relationships.
- Ask high school students what they think of downtown and what they wish it had.
- Consider having (or urging another group to hold) a concert event for teens and 20-somethings. You may not enjoy the music, but they will. And you just may draw a crowd downtown of tomorrow’s leaders.



Encourage partners (and potential partners), first of all, to make the most of their core self-interests. The aggregation of self-interests will very nearly add up to everything Mason City needs.

- Where there are gaps, consider whether MCDA (or a prospective partner) can bridge them.
- In a few circumstances, you may need to urge a player to grow in a new direction, but most often, private and public groups will see opportunities and begin to grow on their own initiative.



Cultivate a “Host it Downtown” attitude. Strive to have the majority of arts, music and entertainment activities/events held in the Downtown and Cultural District.



- Make it easy for groups/organizations to hold events downtown. Become the information source for licenses, permits and requirements relevant to downtown venues. “Pave the way!”
- Communicate the opportunities for collaborative downtown events to the schools, community groups, NIACC, etc.



Reinforce and promote the “Cultural Crescent.” The designation of the Cultural and Entertainment District is a new opportunity and one that is no small undertaking. This element alone could be a full time position with its own volunteers. To blend the splendid amenities that are already in place will require a serious cooperative spirit.

The Downtown Association is in an excellent position to facilitate the interaction and connection between the “cultural crescent” and the heart of downtown. It is vital to the attractions in both of these areas that the linkages between these districts are strengthened and improved.



Mason City’s cultural identity is built on music. Consider ways to pipe in music across the downtown and in some areas of the Cultural Crescent. Adapt new and diverse music to old ideas and encourage the use of music at all cultural events and activities.



Strong National Brand Potential. Music Man and Frank Lloyd Wright are both internationally recognizable brands. Combining these two Mason City brand assets with the Surf Ballroom in nearby Clear Lake and you have a world-wide pilgrimage site for both music and architectural aficionados.

Mason City’s cultural identity is built on music. Promote a diverse music culture that will appeal to all ages and socio-economic groups “from Music Man to Madonna.”



“If we call ourselves a Music City then we need to be a Music City.”

- Coordinate and promote a summer music series filled with all types of music. Some successful events from other cities to explore:
 - Thursday Night Live (contact Waterloo about their Friday‘loo series)
 - All that Jazz (Dubuque)
 - Jamaica My Weekend & Goom-by ya-ya (Renaissance Rock Island, IL)
 - Latin Rhythms
 - Night in the Neighborhood (in cooperation with downtown neighborhoods)
- Promote Central Park and the Plaza as the “Main Stages” for outdoor entertainment venues
 - Expand the Thursday Night Live series. Contact Charles City and Waterloo to learn more about the cooperative arrangement with downtown food and beverage vendors.
 - Band concerts in Central Park “Music in the Moonlight”.
 - Band Festival Parade in Downtown.

- Encourage downtown restaurants and lounges to have live music – Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Theme nights—country, soul, jazz, big band, pop, rock and roll.
- Sponsor and encourage street musicians on the Plaza during Farmers Market and through the summer months and in the Mall during inclement months. *It may require special permit from the City to do so.*
- Explore ways to pipe in music across downtown and some areas of the Cultural Crescent.
- Wine & Music in the Mall – ValenWine was a great cooperative effort between the Mall and MCDA. Continue to explore events which provide unique experiences for local residents.

MCDA Board

MAXIMIZING HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL

MCDA can become the hub of implementation and action for downtown revitalization. As a force for cooperative change, MCDA will serve four key functions in Macon City.

1. Be Great Communicators
2. Be the Linkage and Glue among your Partners
3. Manage Money for Visible, Important Results
4. Support Productive Staff and Volunteers

Several recent decisions indicate that the community is not working cohesively in strategic fashion to achieve the already difficult goal of downtown revitalization. In slow-growth cities, it is often common that civic organizations work to preserve their piece of the pie rather than working to grow the size of the pie. In such communities that behavior helps insure continued slow growth and the long term atrophy of all civic organizations.

In more successful communities, civic organizations sacrifice short term objectives to do what's necessary to grow the community.

Organization Committee

Develop a constituent-based marketing strategy. Describe the downtown you desire and your projects from the perspective of residents, investors, partners, and visitors, **not** from **your** point of view. Almost nobody cares about what MCDA put into projects; they care about what they get out of MCDA's projects.

Organization Committee

Review your written outreach materials. Are they written from the perspective of MCDA customers and partners? Once a year, list specific tangible results and improvements you intend to make or support in the next 12 months.

Promotion Committee

- Specify how these changes will solve problems, ease hardships, and improve quality of everyday life for your audiences: shop managers, residents, shoppers, building owners, city officials, economic development leaders, young people, first-time homeowners, retirees, entrepreneurs, tourism and hospitality professionals, etc.
- What will these changes look like, feel like, smell like, sound like, and taste like? Paint a vivid, sensory picture of the future you want to create.

- Don't exaggerate, but do tell your stories with enthusiasm and heart.

Be a Great Communicator

Practice good listening skill. Genuine listening and hearing builds solid, working relationships which (next to downtown itself) is the most important resource you have. This is harder to do than it sounds, but is the essence of Great Communication.

- Listen more than you talk.
- Ask questions every day as you walk, work, shop, eat and relax downtown.
- Aggressively ask stakeholders how they see the problems that you see, and then listen openly.

Understand that many people resist change that is (or feels) imposed. The better you listen, the better you can, first, learn and, second, explain changes you propose.

Track of results, even modest and symbolic ones, every step of the way, and then publicize them so your reputation grows based on your accomplishments. No brag, just fact.

- Demonstrate accountability by keeping track of what you propose and what you do.
- Don't be afraid to acknowledge shortcomings you face; this is how you publicize what is needed to bridge gaps and get the job done.

Freely recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of others toward your shared goals. By demonstrating your Can-do Attitude with your deeds and cooperation, you'll add to the buzz downtown! Allow your own confidence to grow and be infectious with your enthusiasm.

Be the Linkage and Glue among your Partners.

MCDA
Board

Build understanding and trust among groups by hosting joint board meetings. While there are many ways to structure difficult conversations, one of the best is the simplest: ***Say what's going on. Ask what's going on.*** For example, "When we plan events and want to avoid schedule conflicts, we find it difficult to get information about your events. Would you like to coordinate schedules differently than we do currently? What obstacles do you see to collaborative scheduling? How can we eliminate those obstacles?"

- Include in the agendas, time to describe upcoming projects, recent successes, and pending questions.
- Allow time to clear up any simmering misunderstandings or tensions.
 - It would be prudent to begin such difficult conversations in private before broaching it in a more public forum.

Organization
Committee

Host an Annual joint Partners Dinner to shared progress and demonstrate more unity. Some obvious partners can include:

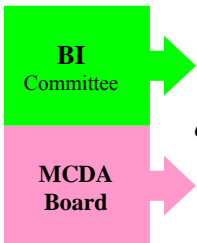
- City
- Chamber

- CVB
- EDC
- MCDA
- MacNider Art Museum
- Public Library
- Mason City Foundation
- Wright on the Park
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Historical Society



Identify how MCDA staff and volunteers (in their roles as great communicators and liaisons) can make life easier:

- Offer friendly reminders to merchants and restaurant managers about the need for sidewalk permits. The Program Director can drop them off during the spring. This creates a moment to chat about new and better sidewalk activities.
- Pass suggestions and constructive feedback to city hall staff about ways to simplify compliance and cooperation.
- Provide tips for merchants to improve sales through better sidewalk promotions, maintenance, facades, window displays, and signage.
- Cross-promote events and initiatives of other groups in your own newsletter.



Build your stature as an economic development player by providing useful services and data, such as:

- In cooperation with all economic development players citywide, assemble a matrix of current goals and programs (another good use for the Magic Wall).
- Identify opportunities for coordination and symbiotic support.
- Identify specifically how MCDA can support the missions of the Chamber and the EDC.
- Produce and distribute an Available Building Inventory.
- Publicize economic development accomplishments of downtown investors, owners and managers.
- Publicize economic success stories from other Iowa Main Street communities and nationally, using National Main Street annual statistics.



Develop a comprehensive public relations and communications strategy.

- Designate a team of savvy communicators to assess MCDA's current approach.
- Line up several volunteer writers and develop a concept for a weekly, biweekly, or monthly Main Street column. Work up an annual calendar of prospective and scheduled topics to support your events and match the seasons.
 - Pitch it to the newspaper for a consistent location and length.
 - If you can't get news space, consider buying advertising space.
- Meet periodically with the newspaper editor and publisher.
- Install a community bulletin board, or kiosk.
- Launch a website with links galore.
- Organize a roster of MCDA volunteers who can give engaging and entertaining presentations. Publicize them as your Speakers Bureau.
- Assemble high-quality slides, or PowerPoint images, to accompany speakers. If MCDA does not have one, buy a laptop and projector and learn how to create and customize presentations.



- **Don't** use the gimmicky text and sound effects.
- **Do** take great photos and use it as a slide projector with occasional annotation.

Manage Money for Visible, Important Results.

MCDA Board → *Use a snappy description of a revitalized downtown, combined with your current record of accomplishments, to fundraise for investments in downtown improvements.* Don't beg for handouts for survival. Be ready to state your case from any or all, of four perspectives, depending on the orientation of your audience:

Organization Committee →

- We are well-organized, efficient, and connected.
- We fight for and win the funding and support that downtown needs to thrive.
- Our events and enthusiasm inspire people to act and feel better about downtown and themselves.
- Our on-the-ground results make life easier and more productive every day.

Practice this by having board members identify which of these “frames of reference” most apply to them.

MCDA Board → *Create a Fundraising Task Force to update your fundraising strategy every year.* Whom will you ask, how will you ask, for how much, and for what? What is your goal for the mix of grants, investors, events and appropriations this year?

Organization Committee →

MCDA Board → *Review your current policies regarding food and beverage sales.* Do not give it away when people are willing to pay for food and/or beverages at special events.

Promotion Committee →

- First, understand and deal with legal and liability issues that go with selling beer.
- Investigate contracting options for food vendors, giving preference to existing downtown restaurants.
- Negotiate deals that respect your organizational services and investments.

MCDA Board → *Work methodically using a variety of methods to build support with the City and County for annual appropriations.*

- Understand their key criteria for allocating funds and then structure your request in terms that will meet their criteria.
- Build broad political support so you have champions who will speak up in public meetings.
- Reintroduce the SSMID proposal to the City Council.

MCDA Board → **Make budget decisions by asking yourselves the following questions:**

- Will this funding create tangible and visible results?
 - Do we know how we'll measure those results (dollars, square footage, rental and sales contracts signed, infrastructure improvements, participation and attendance, revenue, partnerships, press coverage, new memberships, or “buzz”)?
 - Are we committed to measuring and learning from the results?
 - Are we prepared to compile and publicize those results?

- If the proposal is for a study, is it essential, or at least worth the expense and time?
 - Do we already know enough to proceed?
 - Would a strategic grant to fund a pilot project provide a more useful measure of risk and reward before committing major funding?
- If we fund this project, are we prepared to follow it through to completion, or at least a major step forward to where others can pick it up?

Support Productive Staff and Volunteers

MCDA Board

Hiring full-time staff to match the workload. Take good care of your Program Director and avoid the trap many nonprofits fall into of burning out a succession of qualified staff. Rather than think the board’s job is to ask [staff] to do it, realize that your job is to help [staff] do it.

Organization Committee

- Commit to building a great volunteer program.
- Include in your paid staff job descriptions, “Oversee a large volunteer program.”
- Meet or chat on the phone with the director of successful volunteer programs for tips and lessons learned (Main Street Iowa can offer recommendations).
- Convene a two-hour retreat of board members, staff and current volunteers to set up your Volunteer Program:

Great Ways to Recognize Volunteers

- Applause and recognition at public events.
- MCDA lapel pins awarded after a certain length of service.
- Photographs and Press Releases to local newspapers listing volunteers who helped at an event.
- Volunteer of the Year award.
- Gift certificates for dinner or merchandise with downtown merchants.
- Annual ice cream social for all volunteers.
- Framed group photo of volunteers.
- Sponsor key volunteers to attend a Main Street workshop or conference.
- Calculate once a year, the market value of volunteer labor and in-kind donations. Let them know how valuable they are to MCDA and to the downtown economy.

- Identify current and prospective volunteer jobs, then put everyone in the retreat to work drafting one-paragraph “Help Wanted” ads (specific duties, time commitment and frequency, essential and useful skills, preferred age groups, personality traits, and fun and rewards to expect).
- Post the drafts on the Magic Wall for a Gallery Walk so everyone can review the drafts and add their two cents.
- Use the Magic Wall to involve others directly in the generation and organization of ideas and actions. [Call John Monroe if you’d like free pointers for a specific, upcoming meeting.]
- Recruit first for a Volunteer Coordinator to manage time-consuming recruiting and management of volunteers.
 - Consider whether this needs to be part of a paid staff person’s job some day.

Organization Committee

MCDA Board

A Volunteer Handbook should be compiled as the program develops. It will answer questions as new volunteers come aboard and save time for staff. Include in the Notebook any

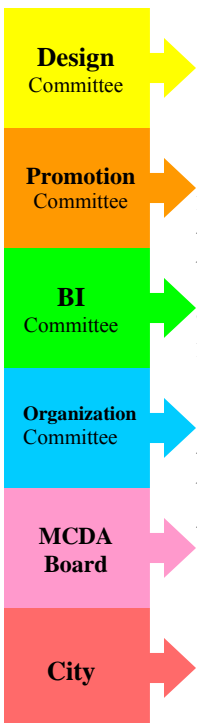
templates that volunteers need. Continuously publicize specific volunteer needs using a variety of formats:

- Place small stacks of two-sided, mini-newspapers around town,
- Run a couple of “Help Wanted Ads” in every issue of your newsletter,
- Submit one every week or two to the newspaper bulletin board,
- Submit one a month to radio and TV/cable stations for Public Service Announcements or bulletin boards,
- Ask every volunteer to do peer-to-peer recruiting throughout the year (especially, young people to recruit more young people).
- Assemble a team of young people (Jaycees, perhaps?) to identify the volunteer jobs and rewards that would appeal to their age group.
- Establish a volunteer concert crew of high school students; complete with special “Staff” T-shirts.
 - Arrange for select volunteers to assist with the sound system. Ask the performers or sound crew to teach your volunteers the basic of running a sound system.



Adopt the United Way 14 Steps approach to take good care of and retain the volunteers you already have. See Appendix E.

- Provide paths for “promotion” of loyal volunteers to encourage continued involvement.
- Establish a budget line to pay for volunteer recognition items and events. This would be a good item to pitch to a donor, especially one with an interest in volunteerism.



CONCLUSION

Mason City is fortunate to have progressive city leadership who are willing to invest in a comprehensive improvement program for downtown. This commitment combined with the Cultural and Entertainment District designation offers new opportunity for downtown to be known as a vibrant city center valued for its contribution to the economic, social, physical and political health of the community. Downtown’s future is bright. However, it is imperative that no more time be lost and that a “Do it now!” approach be adopted.

All of the thoughts and ideas presented by the individual team members are well thought out recommendations and, as a community or organization, you can choose to accept, build upon or reject any or all of them. But whatever you do, do it soon. Do not waste time...do not talk it to death...do not do another study....Just do it!!

APPENDIX A:

TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Dan Carmody, Carmody Consulting, Fort Wayne, IN

Benefiting from a schizophrenic youth split between the west side of Chicago and the loess hills of western Iowa, Carmody developed a keen appreciation for the distinctiveness of both central cities and Main Streets.

Schooled as a city planner in the Midwest and the North of England, Carmody is a devoted urbanist with special interest in the regeneration of depressed local economies. Educated as a tavern keeper, Carmody's understands the needs of independent business owners and the important role of conviviality in successful downtown revitalization.

Since 1988 Carmody has led Renaissance Rock Island a consortium of not-for-profits reviving a community that lost 40% of its tax base between 1984 and 1988. In late 2005, Carmody accepted a position as developer for Fort Wayne, Indiana.

From a budget of \$70,000 and a staff of 1.5 people, Renaissance Rock Island has grown to a staff of 14 with an annual budget exceeding \$4,000,000. Rock Island's strategy has been built upon profound partnerships between the public and private sectors; relies upon an incremental approach; and has been sustained through an entrepreneurial approach to non-profit management. Carmody's presentations serve to underscore the importance of these sound community development principals.

Special events, arts district development, hospitality industry development, and housing have been the key tactics deployed to grow downtown Rock Island. Carmody's presentations offer practical hands-on advice on how to utilize these tactics.

Since the mid-1990's Carmody has also served as a consultant to a number of downtown revitalization programs and is a frequent presenter at State and National Main Street conferences.

Linda Donovan Harper

L Harper & Associates, Washington, D.C.

Ms Harper assists corporations, governmental agencies and grass roots organizations to create effective programs, evaluate current programs and think in new ways about future goals and activities. As a nationally-recognized facilitator, strategic planner and consultant in the field of community revitalization, she has worked with over 200 communities, state agencies, corporations and non-profits in 30 states and three countries.

Using organizational development skills and a holistic approach, she creates flexible models for sharing information and insights while building organizational and community consensus and capacity.

Ms Harper brings a wealth of practical experience from her 20+ years of working for and with communities, corporations and non-profit organizations that range from international entities to local volunteer boards and municipal governments. Previously, she served on the Management Committee of the National Trust's National Main Street Center. Her past and/or present clients include:

- National Association of Counties
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Maryland's Smart Growth Commission
- New Hampshire Main Street Center/NH Community Finance Authority
- Delaware Office of Tourism
- Iowa Department of Economic Development
- Lancaster County (PA) Planning Commission
- DC Office of Economic Development
- Lebanon (PA) 2000 -- Downtown Revitalization Strategy
- Lititz (PA) Economic Development Committee and Borough of Lititz
- Eisenhower Strategy Group, Inc (Washington, DC) and
- a wide variety of local non-profit community revitalization and environmental organizations.

In addition, she currently serves as the Chairman of the Board for the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery in Washington, DC.

John Monroe

Greenleaf Collaboration, Amesbury, MA

John Monroe works on a freelance basis with communities, board of directors and citizen groups helping them to organize campaigns for revitalization, conservation and public service. He is particularly interested in Main Street communities because of their commitment to change through collaboration.

His services range from hands-on community workshops, to conference presentations, to board retreats and individual coaching. John also helps board members learn how to agree, disagree, make decisions and learn together smoothly.

John is the Director of Connecticut and Rhode Island projects for the Rivers & Trails program of the National Park Service. Based in Boston since 1991, he provides technical assistance to conservation non-profits, local governments and coalitions. Assistance focuses on producing tangible results (such as new trails and greenways open to the public), strengthening grass-roots organizations and expanding volunteer involvement through public events and brief publications.

Formerly, John was Executive Director of Charles River Watershed Association in Boston and Internship Coordinator for QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment in New England and Atlantic Canada. He attended St. Lawrence University and the Pennsylvania State University where he earned a Master of Regional Planning.

Tim Reinders

Main Street Iowa, IDED

Tim Reinders is the architectural design consultant for the Main Street Iowa Program. In this capacity, he provides technical assistance and training in all areas of design and preservation, storefront design drawings and general architectural and planning services to all 34 of the participating Iowa Main Street communities.

Tim has also done consulting work for other statewide Main Street programs, including Wisconsin, Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, New Jersey, Delaware, New Hampshire and Boston, MA.

Prior to joining the Main Street Iowa staff in October 1989, he was the Main Street Manager in Clinton, Iowa, beginning in the spring of 1988.

Tim is the past President of the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance, a statewide advocacy organization for preservation issues in Iowa. He also served on the state commission for land use, preservation of farmland and growth management of cities. The commission studied the effects of growth (i.e. sprawl) in Iowa and its effect on prime farmland. Tim is also a member of the State Historical Society's "Technical Advisory Network" that provides direct technical assistance to potential grant applicants for historic rehabilitation projects.

Tim has a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from Iowa State University where he also did his Master's studies in Community and Regional Planning.

Jane Seaton

Main Street Iowa, IDED

Jane Seaton is the state coordinator for Main Street Iowa working with all communities enrolled in the program. Prior to joining the Iowa Department of Economic Development in 1994, she spent five years as the development coordinator for the Adams Community Economic Development Corporation in Corning, Iowa, facilitating the industrial and commercial (Main Street) development programs.

A former small business owner, Ms. Seaton has a strong background in community development with an emphasis in organizational and volunteer development. She currently serves on the Iowa Architectural Foundation Board of Directors and the IAF Community Design Committee.

Seaton has served as a consultant for the National Main Street Center in Arkansas, Connecticut, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Washington and has presented at National Town Meeting, the annual conference of the National Trust's Main Street Center.

Michael Wagler
Main Street Iowa, IDED

Michael Wagler is the design assistant for the Main Street Iowa program. Wagler aides the Main Street Iowa team in providing historic preservation, planning and graphic design services to the program's 34 communities. He has a bachelor's degree in historic preservation and architectural history from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia.

Wagler is a native of Bloomfield, Iowa, a Rural Main Street community in southeastern Iowa. He became involved with the Main Street organization in 1998 in Bloomfield, where he volunteered many hours for Bloomfield Main Street along with serving on the Design Committee.

Michael is currently finishing his graduate studies in the Department of Community and Regional Planning at Iowa State University where he is studying the use of historic preservation in Iowa's rural communities.

APPENDIX B

Excerpts from Chapter 33.130 – Portland Zoning Code

33.130.030 Characteristics of the Zones

F. Storefront Commercial zone. The Storefront Commercial (CS) zone is intended to preserve and enhance older commercial areas that have a storefront character. The zone intends that new development in these areas will be compatible with this desired character. The zone allows a full range of retail, service and business uses with a local and regional market area. Industrial uses are allowed but are limited in size to avoid adverse effects different in kind or amount than commercial uses and to ensure that they do not dominate the character of the commercial area. The desired character includes areas which are predominantly built-up, with buildings close to and oriented towards the sidewalk especially at corners. Development is intended to be pedestrian-oriented and buildings with a storefront character are encouraged.

H. Central Commercial zone. The Central Commercial (CX) zone is intended to provide for commercial development within Portland's most urban and intense areas. A broad range of uses is allowed to reflect Portland's role as a commercial, cultural and governmental center. Development is intended to be very intense with high building coverage, large buildings, and buildings placed close together. Development is intended to be pedestrian-oriented with a strong emphasis on a safe and attractive streetscape.

33.130.230 Ground Floor Windows

A. Purpose. In the C zones, blank walls on the ground level of buildings are limited in order to:

- . Provide a pleasant, rich, and diverse pedestrian experience by connecting activities occurring within a structure to adjacent sidewalk areas;
- . Encourage continuity of retail and service uses;
- . Encourage surveillance opportunities by restricting fortress-like facades at street level; and
- . Avoid a monotonous pedestrian environment.

B. Required amounts of window area.

1. In CN1 & 2, CO1 & 2, CM, CS, and CG zones, street-facing facades on the ground level which are 20 feet or closer to the street lot line must meet the general window standard in Paragraph 3. below. However, on lots with more than one street frontage, the general standard must be met on one street frontage only. The general standard must be met on the frontage of the street that has the highest transit street classification according to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. If two or more streets have the same highest transit street classification, then the applicant may choose on which street to meet the general standard. On all other streets, the requirement is 1/2 of the general standard.
2. In CX zone, all exterior walls on the ground level which face a street lot line, sidewalk, plaza, or other public open space or right-of-way must meet the general window standard in Paragraph 3, below.
3. General standard. The windows must be at least 50 percent of the length and 25 percent of the ground level wall area. Ground level wall areas include all exterior wall areas up to 9 feet above the finished grade. The requirement does not apply to the walls of residential units, and does not apply to the walls of parking structures when set back at least 5 feet and landscaped to at least the L2 standard.

APPENDIX C

Warm-ups Template for Successful Meetings in Mason City, Iowa

The following template provides a menu of possible warm-up comments and ticklers. Cross out the ones you don't need.

Contract for Roles

- Confirm whether one person will be in charge of the meeting, or facilitate it, or whether everyone be responsible to stay on track.
- “Do I have your permission to serve in the role of _____?”

Let's Leave With List:

- Review it.
- Ask for additions or changes.
- Check for Agreement, then move ahead.

Agenda Preview:

- Quickly walk through the agenda.
- Agree how you'll deal with getting behind: revise the agenda or agree to stay longer.
- Finish with Plus/Delta to assess our work and improve our next meeting.

Things that will HELP our Work:

- Speak loudly so we can all hear and understand one another.
- One person at a time - no interrupting.
- One meeting at a time - no side conversations.
- Give every idea time to breathe, even if you are eager to kill it.
- Speak the truth and be hard on ideas, yet take it easy on people involved.
- Staying for the whole time will help. “Does anyone have to leave early?”

Things that will HINDER our Work:

- Speeches - catch yourself, or we will, or I will.
- Putting anyone on the spot.
- Cell phones and pagers ringing.
- Keeping your thoughts until after the meeting. Please speak now - not in the parking lot, or tomorrow.

Other Helpful Pointers:

- Let's hear from everyone, even the typically silent people.
- Can we accept that there are more viable approaches than Our Way and The Wrong Way?
- Let's recognize that there are vastly differing working and thinking styles:
- Suggest improvements - rather than telling us “It's not going to work and I'm gonna' tell you why.”
- Let's look for the simple solution.

Decision-making Options:

- Let's agree on our definition of consensus:
 - 100 percent of the group is at least 80 percent in agreement. –or–
 - “Can you live with it, even if it's not an idea you would have proposed?”
- Vote.
- Make a recommendation, or defer to a decision-maker.
- Defer to a small group for further development.

Tools We'll Use:

- Magic Wall, with each of you writing your ideas on sheets of paper, then posting them for the group.
- Silence
- Popcorn format – speak when you are ready, not in order.
- Shifts from small to large groups and back again.

Logistics:

- Bathrooms are....
- Refreshments - serve yourself anytime.
- Be comfortable - stand, sit and move around.
- HVAC comfort.
- Lighting.
- Weather contingencies.

Introductions:

- Name, affiliation, etc.
- What is your role (short term or long term) relative to the issue we are addressing today?
- What is one word that comes to mind as we get started today?
- What question is on your mind as we begin?
- Tell us something about you that we probably don't know.
- Name a skill, or a perspective, that you bring to the table (especially one we may not know about.)

APPENDIX D

Magic Wall Recipe

Ingredients:

- ◆ One 8-to 14-foot-long piece of rip-stop nylon from a fabric store. Heavier weight fabric looks sharper and is a bit easier to work with; lighter weight folds into a smaller package.
- ◆ One full can of 3M Artist's Spray Mount - Artist's Adhesive (#6065) (black, white & red can). There are no known satisfactory substitutes.
- ◆ Markers (use darker colors to ensure visibility, i.e. blue, black, green, brown, purple)
- ◆ Paper (half sheets save paper, encourage brevity, and keep your wall from running out of space). Color paper as well as white allows you to color code comments.
- ◆ Masking Tape or push pins (to hang the wall). If you must leave no trace, then use white "artist masking tape" or painter's "blue tape."

Directions:

- A. Lay the fabric on newspaper-covered floor with stupendous ventilation, but out of the wind (a garage with open doors works well). I'm not kidding about the ventilation; this stuff is not good for your brain.
- B. With sheets of paper, mask about 6 by 6 inches in each corner where you will attach masking tape to hang the wall (because the spray mount tends to dissolve the masking tape adhesive toward the end of gigs).
- C. Spray to cover the fabric completely, though lightly, with back-and-forth motion on one axis (say, lengthwise) and then in the other (say, crosswise). Spray in random patterns until the can runs out. Breathe as little as possible.
- D. Get out of there and let it dry and air out for three or four hours, or more.
- E. Fold it up, sticky side in to keep dirt from attaching to the fabric. Continue to air out for a week before using it for the first time, so you don't overcome your first set of meeting participants with the smell. Once it's aired out, the wall doesn't smell.

Set-up & Show Time!

- F. Don't be timid when pulling the wall open (it sticks to itself with great determination); it's rip-stop, so you won't hurt it. You'll probably need a colleague to help you pull it open and tape, or pin, it onto the wall.
- G. When it's show time, hand out black markers (one for every participant, if possible), distribute the white and color paper half-sheets as needed.
- H. The rest is up to you and your imagination. Hints: take digital images before you strip down each set of sheets so you have a permanent record of what was said and how it was arranged. When you pull sheets off the wall, keep them grouped by topic with a cover sheet showing the agenda item, or topic, they relate to; this makes transcription a breeze – especially when compared to bulky flip charts.
- I. If you are having a multiple-day meeting, it's likely that walls mounted with tape will fall during the night. It's not usually a big deal to re-hang it in the morning.

Care and Storage:

- J. At the end of the meeting, remove all the paper from the wall (paper left on for more than a day or two may stick permanently). Always fold the Wall sticky side in. Don't let the sticky part touch dirty floors or you'll carry that dirt around.
- K. Cleaning & renewing the wall. Your wall can be used many times before needing a new coat of spray mount. Throw it in the washing machine with hot water and detergent, then a dryer; reapply spray mount as before.

APPENDIX E

14 Steps to a Successful Volunteer Program

*Adapted from workshop materials of the Voluntary Action Center,
a service of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay.*

1. Make a clear organizational commitment to run a volunteer program.
Don't think of volunteers as an add-on. Decide to use volunteers well, or don't use them at all.
2. Write up a menu of all roles that volunteers might serve.
Don't overlook using volunteers to run your volunteer program!
3. Write clear, specific job descriptions and guidelines for volunteers.
This is the most important step in a successful program. Descriptions need not be long, just clear and specific. Some may be one sentence; ongoing volunteer jobs may require a half-page.
4. Set up a simple record-keeping system.
Write a one-page application form for prospective volunteers. Create a log sheet for each volunteer to jot down hours worked and accomplishments. This yields valuable statistics for fundraising proposals and assures volunteers that you want to know how hard they are working.
5. Recruit prospective volunteers constantly.
Promote your volunteer openings among target audiences and distribute application forms until you have a waiting list.
6. Interview, select and assign volunteers.
Match skills with needs: technical skills, interpersonal skills and physical skills. Conduct a friendly, yet formal, interview. Use the conversation to set expectations.
7. Provide a well-organized orientation.
Volunteers want to know exactly what they are expected to do. The better you explain Who, What, Where, Why and How at the beginning, the more productive and dependable your volunteers will be. Well-informed volunteers are happy volunteers.
8. Have a steady supply of things to do.
Or at least predict the busy and the slack times of year so volunteers can plan ahead. Your volunteers may or may not have paying jobs; nevertheless, they all have other responsibilities that you must respect.
9. Maintain good relations between paid staff, board members, and volunteers.
Volunteers ought to be just as professional as those who get a paycheck. Be sure to treat them that way.
10. Provide volunteers with the appropriate amount and kind of supervision.
Supervision varies with the work and the individual. Monitor for more than problems: catch your volunteers doing things **right** and thank them for it. See Step #13.
11. Offer training to enhance current skills and to cultivate new skills.
While some volunteers are happy to find a niche and stay put, others will want to grow and may become leaders.
12. Evaluate your volunteer program annually.
Evaluate the work of your volunteers; this gives you a basis for recognition. And evaluate your program, too. Ask a Volunteer Coordinator from another group to critique your approach.
13. Recognize good work. Recognize good work. Recognize good work.
Never miss an opportunity to give genuine, positive feedback and recognition. When volunteers are ready for new challenges, provide them.
14. Improve your volunteer program in response to suggestions and changing conditions.
Listen carefully to volunteer suggestions and criticisms. Ask for a Plus/Delta review just after an event. "What worked well?" "Next time we run this event, what will make it better?"
Update your volunteer needs as your programs change.