

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

March 10, 2015

City of Marshfield



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City of Marshfield, Wis

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This document is the latest in a series of plans that have guided the concerted actions of the City of Marshfield, Main Street Marshfield, and their partners in helping to create and sustain a healthy downtown district. This plan builds upon prior efforts. It was formulated with many opportunities for stakeholders and the community to voice their opinions, offer ideas, and review recommendations. The strategies it contains reflect community consensus, are based in market realities, and are scaled to the capacity of local organizations to promote change toward the ultimate vision for downtown Marshfield.

INTRODUCTION



The History of Downtown Marshfield

Marshfield was founded later than many Wisconsin communities, following the arrival of the Wisconsin Central Railroad in 1871. The plat of the City, including most of the downtown, was recorded in 1875, and Marshfield was incorporated as a city in 1883.

Only a few years later, in 1887, a fire destroyed much of the city, including all but one of its commercial buildings. The City rebuilt, this time mandating that all commercial buildings be made of brick or other fireproof material.

Since its beginning the downtown has been home to a diverse mix of uses including retail stores, eating and drinking places, lodging establishments, banks, and offices. Industry located primarily along the railroad, which played an important role in the economy, as Marshfield is not located on any waterway. In fact, Marshfield holds the distinction of being the largest community in Wisconsin, that is not a suburb, that is not located on any water body.

Health care has played an important role in development of the city. This began with St. Joseph's Hospital, and expanded with establishment of the Marshfield Clinic in 1916. Originally located on the 600 block of South Central

Avenue, the clinic moved to a new building next to the hospital in 1975. Its reputation draws patients from a great distance, helping to support a stable local economy and draw visitors who may patronize downtown businesses.

Prior Planning and Action

It should be noted that Marshfield has been dedicated to revitalizing its downtown for a considerable time. The City's Main Street Program is the second-oldest in Wisconsin, having been established in 1990 and continuing uninterrupted for over two decades. The City has been an important driver of revitalization through its continued investment in downtown parking and infrastructure, as well as other activities.

This plan is the latest in a series of plans for the downtown, updating a strategy prepared in 2006.

The City and Main Street Marshfield have accomplished or made significant progress on many of the goals contained in that plan, but notably, have not implemented some of the key recommendations related to tasks such as creating a public gathering space or fostering redevelopment. This current plan will pay extra attention to the market conditions and steps necessary to accomplish these tasks.

City and Main Street Marshfield staff conducted an exhaustive review of the 2006 plan, noting areas of progress as well as those areas in which additional effort is needed. The full report is included at the end of the report as Appendix A.

The Planning Process

To update the current Downtown Master Plan for Marshfield, the City and its consultant team worked collaboratively over a period of approximately eight months. Between May 2014 and February 2015 the following tasks were completed:

- Task One: Existing Conditions
- Task Two: Market Analysis
- Task Three: Vision, Values, Goals, and Objectives
- Task Four: Define Today’s Downtown
- Task Five: Occupied Building Analysis
- Task Six: Redevelopment Areas
- Task Seven: Land Use Plan
- Task Eight: Alternatives Open House
- Task Nine: Implementation Strategy
- Task Ten: Draft and Final Plans

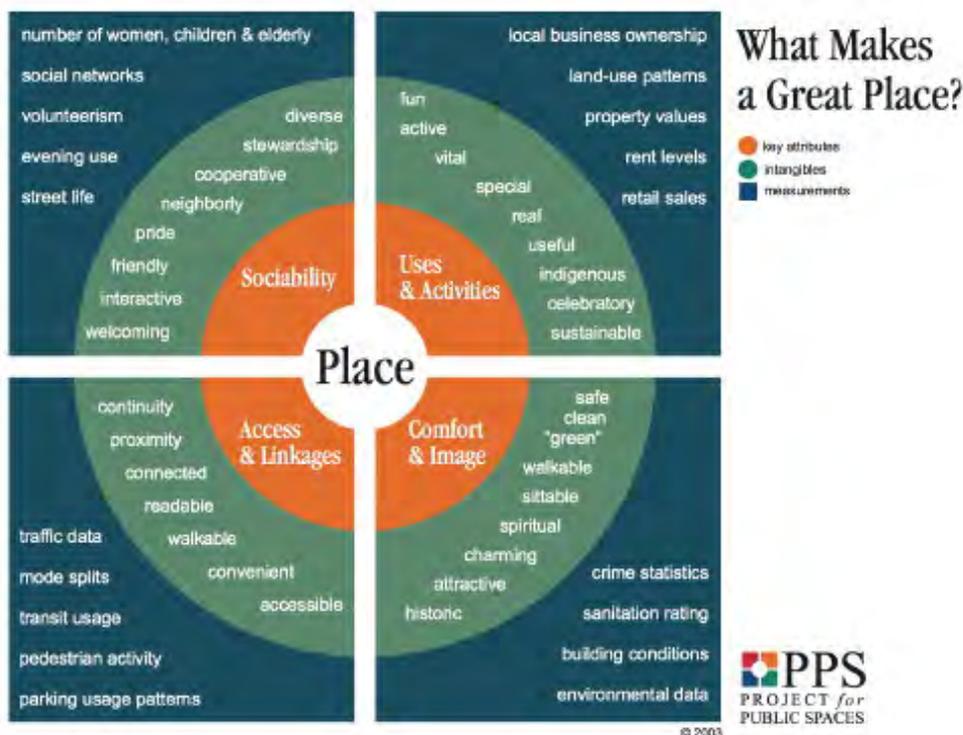
Throughout the planning period the City and its consultant team (the “project team”) met regularly via phone and in-person to review existing conditions, gather

public input, develop alternatives, and draft the plan itself.

Public Involvement

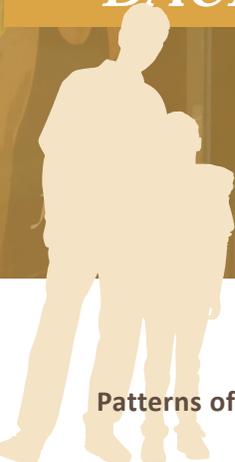
In conjunction with the tasks listed above the project team implemented a robust public participation strategy in order to ensure that the Plan update aligns with the interests, values, and aspirations of the community of Marshfield. A description of that strategy and the results are described in detail in Appendix B. Specific activities used to gather public input included the following:

- Vision and Placemaking Workshop, held on September 17, 2014, and open to the public.
- Resident Survey, conducted between October and November of 2014 (online).
- One-on-one interviews with key stakeholders identified by the City and Main Street Marshfield, along with randomly selected businesses.
- Project website, www.plandowntownmarshfield.com, used to keep the public informed of the process and upcoming events.
- Mind Mixer website, presenting online exercises.
- Open House, conducted on November 20, 2014, used to present preliminary concepts and gather feedback on proposed alternatives.
- Plan Commission (February 17, 2015) and Common Council (March 10, 2015) meetings to present the draft and final plans.





BACKGROUND ANALYSIS



Patterns of Use

Downtown visitation is light during the morning hours. It appears that the majority of people commute through downtown rather than stop, and most on-street parking spaces are empty until mid morning. Eating places such as The Daily Grind and The Family Restaurant tend to draw patrons in these hours, when many other businesses are closed. By noon traffic has increased significantly and remains strong until late afternoon. Aside from the cinema and eating and drinking places, few businesses remain open in the evening.

A variety of uses help to anchor the downtown. Importantly, the downtown has a grocery store. The Pick 'n Save was constructed with a suburban site plan featuring a store situated behind a large parking lot, but the use does draw customers who may shop other downtown businesses. The hardware store is another important retail anchor to the district. Rogers Cinema is the city's only movie theater, and is therefore an important entertainment venue. City Hall and the post office are the most significant government anchors.

Area Demographics

By population, Marshfield is the 40th largest city in Wisconsin, and in the top ten percent. The city is estimated to have had 18,952 residents in 2012, which is a slight decrease since 2010. The city grew between 2000 and 2010. In general, the central Wisconsin region in which the city is located has a stable to declining population base, and is aging. People from smaller communities and rural areas have been migrating to the larger cities such as Marshfield, Wisconsin Rapids, and Wausau.

The central part of Marshfield is bounded by 14th Street on the south, Oak Avenue on the west, Doege Street to the north, and Vine Street on the east. This area has a greater concentration of multifamily housing as well as rental units, and holds about 15 percent of the city's population. Housing stock is generally older here than outlying neighborhoods. While this includes some nicely restored Victorian and revival style homes, it also includes many nondescript properties that have not been as well maintained or updated to modern standards.

Demographically, the central area tends to be younger than Marshfield as a whole, with a median age

of 37.1 years, compared to 41.3 years for the city. It is also poorer. At 1.94 persons, the average household size is slightly smaller than the 2.1 person average in the city. The area's median household income of \$31,979 falls well below the city median of \$40,570, as does the per capita income (\$18,495 versus \$25,989 for the city).

Vacancies are more common than elsewhere within the city. Citywide, 0.6 percent of owner occupied units are vacant, and 3.9 percent of rentals. The overall vacancy rate in the downtown area is 9.7 percent, or 164 units. This may be an indication, as the 2014 Marshfield Housing Study observed, that some older and lower-priced units have very little appeal to buyers or renters.

Business Mix

The central area contains 332 commercial buildings (including industrial space and mixed use buildings) with a total commercial floor area of 1,935,000 square feet. By floor area, industrial uses, warehousing, and trades occupy the largest share. Office, government or organizations, and retail have roughly similar proportions. Compared to similar communities, Marshfield has relatively few eating and drinking places in the downtown area. Eleven commercial spaces were identified as vacant in August of 2014, making up 1.9 percent of the total floor area.

- **Entertainment.** Entertainment uses include uses such as fitness centers, martial arts studios, dance studios, arcades, movie theaters, and similar businesses. These are six of these businesses in the downtown. Arguably, the most significant of these is Rogers Cinema, which is the only movie theater in Marshfield.
- **Eating and drinking.** These are 28 restaurants, drinking places, and snack and beverage places in the central area. These tend to be located at the northern and southern edge of the core downtown, where taverns offering drinks and a limited grill menu are the dominant format.
- **Government and organizations.** Twenty churches, government facilities, service clubs, the Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts, and other organizations have their location in the downtown. Churches comprise nearly half of the total. Governmental uses include city functions such as City Hall, the library, and the U.S. Post Office. This total may not include some state or county government offices located in multi-tenant office buildings.
- **Industry, warehousing, and trades.** These uses tend to be located on the periphery of the downtown, either west of Chestnut Avenue or north of the railroad tracks. There are 38 businesses in total. The

prevalence of these uses downtown is typical of most downtown districts, and the legacy of land use patterns common up until the last half century or so.

- **Lodging.** A single hotel is located in the downtown. The Holiday Inn and Convention Center is one of the city's largest and best hotels. Its restaurant, conference, and banquet facilities draw many potential patrons to the downtown district.
- **Offices.** Nearly 17 percent of the commercial space in the central area (over 326,000 square feet) is occupied by office uses. A precise count of businesses in this space is not available, as more than one business will often occupy space in the same building. Sixty-five distinct businesses were recorded, though the actual number will be much higher. Banking and financial services is included in this business grouping.
- **Personal services.** Salons and spas, laundry and dry cleaning services, photo studios, and similar kinds of uses are classified as personal services. There are a total of 23 of these businesses in the central area.
- **Rental services.** Businesses that primarily offer rental or rent-to-own products fall into this heading. Examples may include car rental, equipment rental, or movie and game rental establishments. Two of these businesses were identified in downtown Marshfield.
- **Repair services.** Automotive servicing, equipment repair, and similar services are considered repair services. There are six repair businesses in the downtown areas. This is a relative few compared to other cities.
- **Retail.** Retail is often the most visible use and the one most desired by community residents. It is also one that most communities struggle to support in their downtowns. Marshfield has 53 retail uses in the central area, more than any other type of use except offices. Both basic and specialty retail stores are well represented among the total.



Downtown Marshfield - Pedestrian enhancements

Buildings and Land Uses

Buildings in the core part of the downtown were constructed between 1870 and 2011, with an average construction date of 1936. Structurally, nearly all appear to be in good condition. While commercial buildings have been generally well maintained, this is not true of some residential properties. The City is currently in the process of developing a commercial and residential property maintenance code.

The City and Main Street Marshfield have made a tremendous effort to encourage commercial façade renovation. The City's façade renovation program has been active since 2009 and provides up to a 50-50 match to private investors. Approximately 36 properties have benefitted from the program, with the City's \$250K investment resulting in over \$1.3M in improvements. Some commercial buildings, as well as many residential properties in the surrounding neighborhoods still need attention.

Main Street Marshfield has a design guideline prepared in the 1990's, which is used to advise property owners concerning appropriate renovations. This guideline follows a format typical of Main Street programs in the era and is dated by current standards. It does not adequately address infill or redevelopment opportunities, does not offer guidance concerning techniques that can help to liven the district, and does not cover landscaping.

Stylistically, the majority of buildings can be described as commercial vernacular, with only a few buildings exhibiting a distinctive architectural style. The former City Hall (colonial revival), 211 South Central Avenue (art deco with bas relief panels), and 168-170 Central Avenue (with elements of Tudor and colonial revival styles) may be the most architecturally interesting buildings. Several buildings have been considerably altered from their original design. A portion of the downtown, roughly from 3rd Street north to Veteran's Parkway, has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Two of the city's historic structures, the former Wisconsin Central depot and the Thomas House, have been relocated from their original sites.

While ground floor space is well utilized, this is not always the case for additional levels. There are some examples of basement space that is used for offices. More commonly, upper levels are being used for offices or rental residential units. Still, several buildings have vacant upper levels that could be converted to productive uses.

Commercial uses are concentrated along Central Avenue and side streets between Chestnut Avenue and Maple Avenue. Industrial uses are located mainly along

West 2nd Street and Depot Street. The surrounding neighborhood is made up of mostly one and two-family homes. Many of these have been converted to rentals.

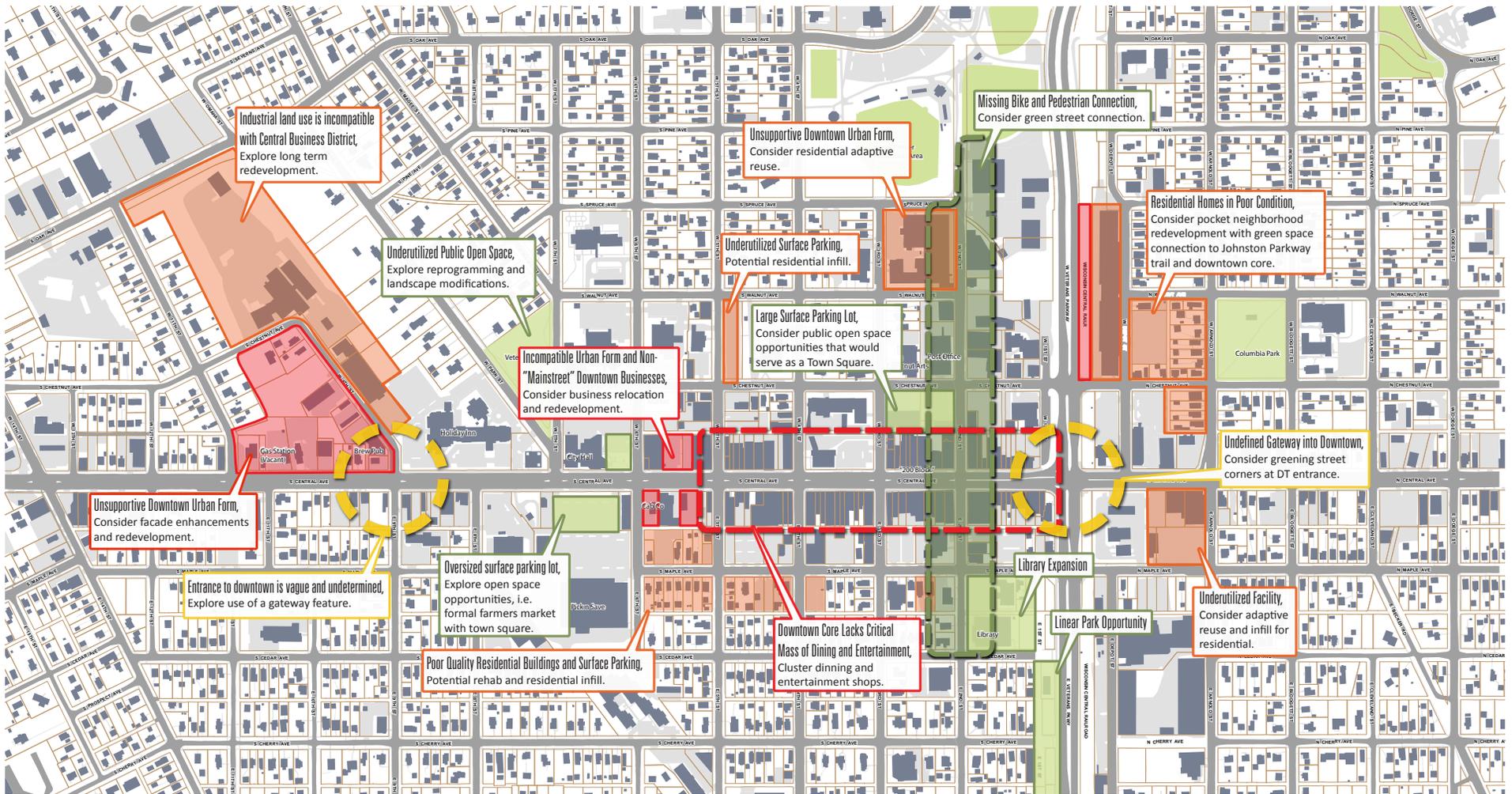
There are two areas of relatively recent redevelopment. At the south end of downtown, a neighborhood commercial strip center is anchored by a Pick 'n Save grocery store. Across from it is a Holiday Inn with conference facilities. To the north of the railroad tracks, an existing building was rehabbed for Hudson's, a popular local restaurant. Two new buildings were constructed adjacent to that building, and sometime earlier, a Walgreen's drug store was built. Unfortunately, the area is now plagued by vacancies, as Walgreen's relocated, Hudson's was forced to close during the recession, and there are vacancies in one of the newer commercial buildings. Though smaller in scale, a new building was constructed on 6th Street to house The Market on 6th Street, selling wines and cheeses. Built in a bungalow style, it is an excellent example of infill commercial development.



Downtown Marshfield - Thimbleberry Books



Downtown Marshfield - Building mural



FORCES AND ISSUES
2015 DOWNTOWN MARSHFIELD MASTERPLAN UPDATE



Market Analysis

Recommendations for downtown Marshfield are based on a market analysis conducted during the planning process. Several opportunities for business attraction and real estate development were identified as possible over the next few years. The full market analysis is attached as Appendix B of the Downtown Plan, and a summary is provided here.

- **Housing.** Marshfield’s population will grow slowly over the coming decade, but there will be a significant shift in population by age. The fastest growth will be in the number of older households. This is due to a combination of factors including younger households moving out, older households moving in, increased longevity, and an increasing number of people in the older generations. In ten years, the oldest members of the Baby Boom generation will reach their 85th year. This will create demand for condominium and rowhouse development, as well as apartments. Both new construction (redevelopment) and renovation of existing buildings are possibilities.

- An average of 15 owner occupied condominium or rowhouse units can be supported each year, or 150 units over the next decade.

- An average of 15 market rate rental units can be supported in each of the next ten years. Additional affordable housing development in the downtown area is discouraged

- **Retail.** Downtown Marshfield has more store and more retail floor area than the mall. Building a stronger downtown retail community has its challenges, including the need to attract stores that will make it less necessary to leave the city for specialty shopping, and sustaining a critical mass or retail within the core (Central Avenue from the railroad south to 5th Street). The district can support

more than 25,000 square feet of additional retail within likely categories such as:

- Specialty food stores
- Health care and personal products
- Sporting goods
- Gift, novelty, and souvenir stores/home furnishings
- Arts dealers

- **Eating and Drinking.** The downtown’s existing restaurants capture about a third of the market potential. Within the city, there is unmet demand for additional full service restaurants and unique limited service restaurants. In the downtown, there is a particular need for restaurants providing quick lunch items. Including the vacant Hudson’s location, the downtown may support an additional 20,000 square feet of new restaurants. Examples of the kinds of eating and drinking places that could be viable include:

- Full service restaurants with a full service menu or specialty (ex., Italian, Mexican, etc.)

- Limited service restaurants such as delis serving unique sandwiches, soups, and other quickly served, good quality foods.

- Snack and beverage places, such as coffee shops or bagel/donut shops.

- **Office Uses.** Marshfield is expected to add nearly 600 office-based jobs over the coming decade, generating a need for 116,128 square feet of office space. Not all of this will be captured in the downtown. Twenty to 40 percent of the demand would create a need for up to 46,450 square feet of office space. The city may want to consider discouraging office uses in the core blocks of Central Avenue in order to support retail and dining uses, and instead favor office uses



Downtown Marshfield - Weber Building



Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts

on upper floors and along secondary streets in the downtown. If the available vacant space in these locations is utilized, there would still be a need to create 10,000 to 30,000 square feet of new office space, either in new buildings or in renovated space.

- **Lodging.** Marshfield can support an additional midscale hotel such as a Hampton Inn, Comfort Inn, Best Western, or La Quinta Inn. Several places in the downtown might be redeveloped for this use. A parcel of 1.6 to 2.0 acres would be required for an 80-room, three story building with parking.

Transportation and Infrastructure

In general, public infrastructure within the downtown and adjacent areas is in excellent condition and will present few challenges to downtown revitalization. There are some minor concerns related to parking management and wayfinding.

Both Central Avenue and Veteran’s Parkway are state highways and carry the heaviest traffic within the city, though this still falls well below the volume that would be found in a more urban community. Traffic on Central Avenue in the core downtown falls within a range of 9,200 to 11,900 cars per day (2008 traffic counts). This compares to a peak of 16,100 cars per day in the city’s north side commercial district. Traffic on Veteran’s Parkway falls between 7,100 and 8,400 cars per day.

Developed with a simple grid pattern, the downtown is easily navigated. Traffic and visibility (due to zero setbacks and on-street parking) can make it difficult to make left turns onto Central Avenue at times. Most downtown users seem to account for this and plan their routes to cross Central Avenue at signalized intersections.

The City of Marshfield has made substantial investments in downtown streets, rebuilding South Central Avenue in 2009 and South Chestnut Avenue in 2013. Maple Avenue will be reconstructed in 2015. North Central Avenue, from Veteran’s Parkway north to Arnold Street, is scheduled for resurfacing in 2019. Side streets and most neighborhood streets in the area are also in good condition.

The east-west railroad corridor through downtown was narrowed in 2007, however, it remains an impediment to both vehicular and pedestrian flow. The rail line is on a major route and sees heavy usage. As new development occurs it may be necessary to move forward with grade separation although there are no existing plans to do so.

There is a bicycle and pedestrian path on the south

side of Veteran’s Parkway, connecting to neighborhoods east and west, and to Steve J. Miller Park, where there is an overpass spanning Veteran’s Parkway and the railroad. Bike lanes were added to Chestnut Avenue and are planned for Maple Avenue when the street is reconstructed in 2015. Bike racks have been installed downtown.

Not surprisingly, bicycle traffic in the downtown tends to be heaviest on the path along Veteran’s Parkway. It is also heavy on Central Avenue, though over time this may change with the new bike lanes on Chestnut Avenue and the planned bike lanes on Maple Avenue. East-west traffic tends to use 4th Street and 7th Street. People are also using Vine Avenue and Oak Avenue to travel north and south.

The downtown district and surrounding area is very walkable, with wide sidewalks and good street crossings. Signalized intersections and center median refuges help to make crossings safer. The biggest challenge is the crossing of Veteran’s Parkway, which carries a high volume of traffic at high speeds. The parallel railroad tracks and open lots on the corners help to create an impression that the crossing is wider than it actually is, and likely deters some people from moving between the central downtown and north downtown areas. The safety of crossings on Central Avenue and Veteran’s Parkway continues to be a concern for many downtown stakeholders. Other challenges to walking the district relate mostly to amenities, such as the lack of protection from the elements and the relatively austere streetscape.

The City has invested in improvements to several public parking lots, including landscaping and signage. These, along with on-street parking, provide an ample supply of parking stalls apportioned uniformly throughout the district. Some private lots supplement the public spaces. Downtown business owners did not



Side streets can provide additional outdoor seating opportunities

cite parking among their concerns for the district. Some landlords and tenants, however, expressed frustration with the requirement to purchase a parking permit, which they believe is a deterrent to living downtown.

Downtown has seen much of its utility infrastructure reconstructed in the past several years, in conjunction with street reconstruction projects. Overhead utilities have been buried or relocated to alleys

Public Buildings and Open Space

Several important civic buildings are located in the downtown, including City Hall Plaza, the Marshfield Public Library, and the Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts. The library is currently in the initial stages of an expansion that will repurpose the existing building as a community center and construct a new library adjacent to it. The new two story building will have 38,000 square feet and feature outdoor seating. It will have a prominent presence on Veteran's Parkway.

Other public buildings are located within the downtown area. The U.S. Post Office is located on Chestnut Avenue and is an important downtown anchor. The City's garage complex is located on 2nd Street. This has been discussed as a potential long-term redevelopment opportunity. Other federal, state, and local government offices are located within downtown buildings.

There is little public open space in the downtown area. Veteran's Park and a small plaza adjacent to City Hall are the only two public spaces on Central Avenue. Neither is ideally located or adequately sized to host large events. Columbia Park, located on Chestnut Avenue and Blodgett Street, has a band shell, but no visibility from Central Avenue. It is also located north of



STH 13 Downtown Marshfield - Attractive Landscaping, however the Intersection with Central Ave. needs to convey a Stronger Sense of Arrival

Veteran's Parkway and the railroad tracks, some distance from the downtown core. Steve J. Miller Recreation Area is an interesting asset. Again, this park is located three blocks west of Central Avenue and is not directly connected to the downtown core. Its four ball fields and community center draw many people who might easily visit downtown businesses.

Aesthetic Qualities

Central Avenue has been the focus of streetscaping efforts in the downtown. The City has adopted a simple design on Central Avenue, featuring concrete walks with brick paver inserts, decorative lighting and furnishings, and widely spaced trees. There may be an opportunity to do additional LED lighting retrofits as the City continues to upgrade lighting downtown. Banners have been provided on light poles. Crosswalks are colored. Although simple and easy to maintain, the streetscape may have a harsh feel, given the small number of trees and few planting areas.

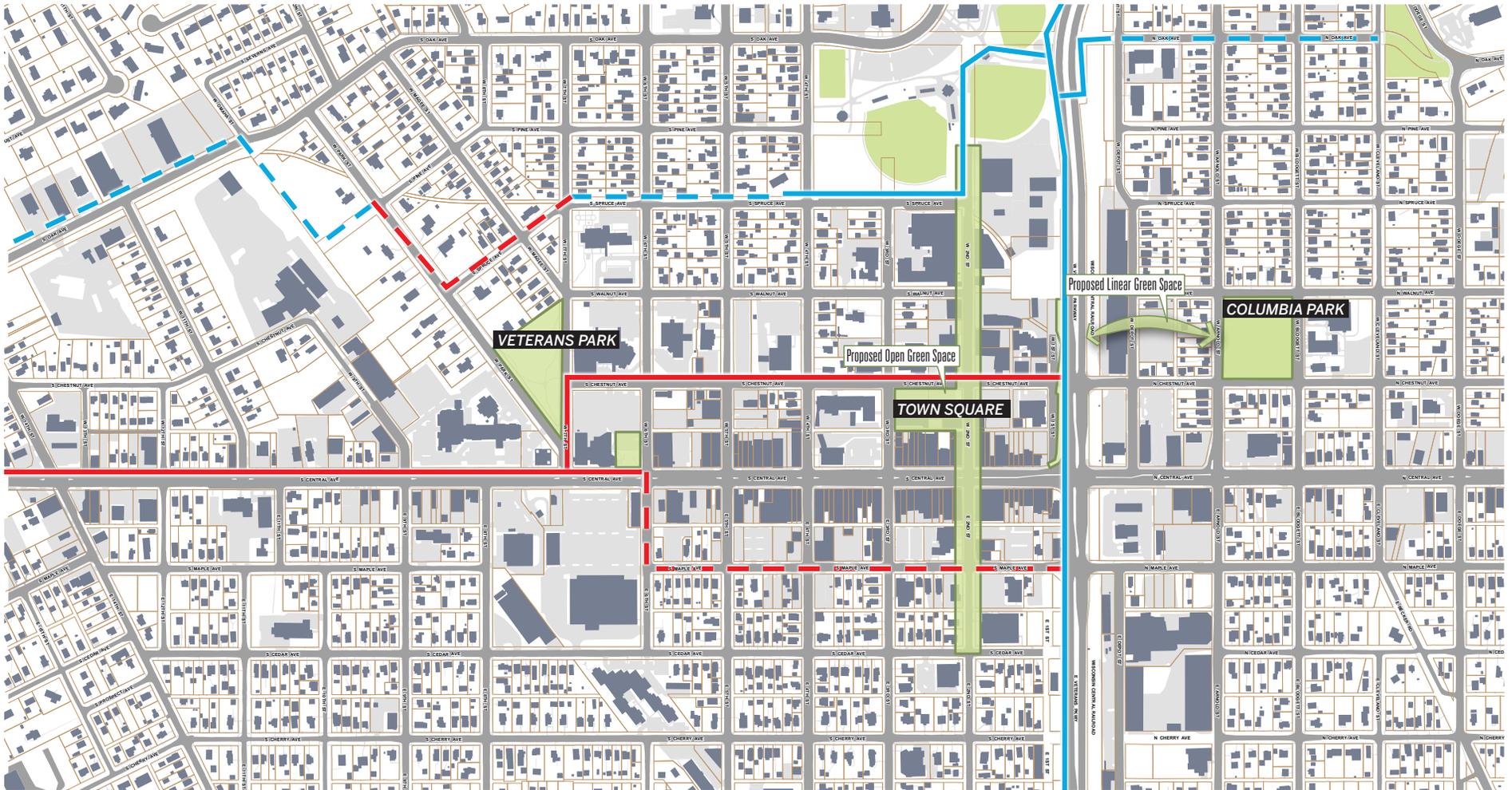
Fewer amenities have been included in streetscape designs for secondary streets, on most blocks due to a lack of a larger right-of-way and a desire for on-street parking and bike lanes. Areas where there is no on street parking allow space for grassed terraces. The terraces across from the Post Office and next to the Police Department do have grass. A similar approach will be used on Maple Avenue.

Downtown lacks a sense of arrival, whether traveling on Central Avenue or Veteran's Parkway. Low brick walls were constructed on both south corners of Central Avenue and Veteran's Parkway, and gateway features were installed in the terrace of Veteran's Parkway at Cedar Street. Unfortunately, these are difficult to see. The situation may be somewhat improved when the new library is constructed, as it will be highly visible from Veteran's Parkway.

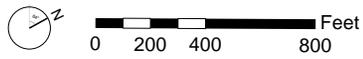
The City has installed some wayfinding signage directing people to the downtown. Within the district, there are few cues to help people navigate to anchor destinations or parking.

Private signage does not appear to be a significant concern. Most signage is professionally done and sufficient to advertise the business. The City recently updated its sign ordinance. The only concern is the presence of a small number of billboards that detract from the appearance of the district.

Business visibility is typical of a traditional downtown corridor. As several business owners noted, the ability to put merchandise, flowers, or other items out in front of their storefront helps to draw attention to the business. Overall, the appearance of the district and buildings is



Trail information was acquired from City of Marshfield Bicycle Transportation Plan, 2013.



GREEN SPACE AND CONNECTIVITY
 2015 DOWNTOWN MARSHFIELD MASTERPLAN UPDATE



not unpleasant. There are no “eyesores” to contend with, and the district is very clean. At the same time there is no strong visual “hook” or feature that would grab a visitor’s attention and leave them with an image to remember. It is all very ordinary.

Only a small number of properties have private landscaping. This tends to be minimal, such as at the Pick ’n Save, the former Walgreen’s store, or Marshfield Monument. Because of the zero setback requirement in the Downtown Mixed Use Zone, there is no landscaping requirement.

Organization

Responsibility for activities contributing to downtown revitalization in Marshfield are split between several organizations.

• **City of Marshfield. The City of Marshfield has been a leading partner in efforts to improve the central business district and surrounding neighborhoods, providing leadership, financial support, planning, infrastructure, and services to restore and sustain its vitality. Important roles in downtown revitalization that are played by the City include:**

- Providing planning to guide downtown revitalization activities.
- Establishing and administering codes, such as zoning, sign regulations, building codes and inspection, and similar services that establish standards for downtown development.
- Providing funding, including annual operational funding for Main Street Marshfield and project-specific funding for revitalization activities such as redevelopment.
- Reconstructing streets, upgrading infrastructure, providing parking, constructing sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and installing streetscaping and other improvements that make downtown more functional, walkable, and attractive.
- Maintaining the City’s office functions in the downtown, which are a source of downtown employment and an anchor drawing patrons to the district.

• **Main Street Marshfield. Marshfield has the second-oldest Main Street Program in Wisconsin. Main Street is a model approach to business district revitalization developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It is centered around a four-point approach encompassing organization, promotion, economic restructuring, and design. Newly formed organizations receive a great deal of technical assistance and training from Main Street staff**

within the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. As an established program, Main Street Marshfield may still participate in training programs and networking activities, and receive limited technical assistance from program staff. Main Street is organized as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Some of its primary objectives include:

- Increase the investment and tax base in the downtown area
- Encourage a broader array of services for downtown clients and customers
- Identify retail gaps in the district
- Help existing downtown businesses expand
- Recruit new businesses to the downtown
- Provide an organizational framework for long-term economic restructuring
- Hire and train a full-time manager to coordinate Main Street activities and volunteers
- Encourage, where appropriate, the restoration of commercial buildings to reflect the history of the City’s commercial development
- Increase social and cultural activities in the central business district
- Enhance the appearance of downtown through public and private efforts

• **Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Chamber is an important player in economic development activities within the community.**

Other organizations may play a contributing role, including Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts, Marshfield Public Library, and Centergy, the regional economic development organization

Downtown Revitalization Tools

Marshfield has some important tools at its disposal to assist in implementing any downtown revitalization recommendations. These include the following.

• **Tax Incremental Financing District #4. Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) is a tool used to fund improvements within a defined area. TIF districts do not reduce the property taxes paid. Rather, the difference between taxes paid in the initial year and subsequent years, referred to as the “increment”, is used to pay for improvements. Where those improvements help to enhance**

property values, more increment will be generated.

Marshfield has created a total of nine TIF districts, four of which are now closed. Three of the nine districts have been in the downtown. In addition to TIF District #4, TIF District #2 was established to aid in redeveloping the Purdy School. TIF District #3, which is now closed, was used to help restore Tower Hall (the former City Hall building).

TIF districts may be used to fund many activities such as property acquisition, site clearance and environmental remediation, infrastructure development, and economic development programs. One of the primary uses of TIF District #4 has been to pay for the reconstruction of Central Avenue, Chestnut Avenue, and in 2015, Maple Avenue. TIF districts are allowed to incur new costs for a fixed period of time after their creation, and the expenditure period for TIF District #4 will expire in 2018.

The City may consider several options concerning the use of tax incremental financing to fund recommendations in this plan. Some areas addressed in the plan are not within the boundaries of any existing TIF district and may be included in a new one. A majority of sites, however, are located in TIF District #4. The City might consider making expenditures under the existing district prior to the 2018 deadline, waiting until the district is retired to establish a new one, or amending the district to remove properties that can be included in a new one.

• **Business Improvement District.** A business improvement district (BID) is a tool used to fund additional services or investments within a specified area. It is created when a majority of the property owners within the area elect to levy a special assessment on their property. The Marshfield BID was established in 1990 and has been an important source of operational income for Main Street Marshfield. Objectives of the BID include:

- Retain a full-time executive director and part-time Staff Assistant to coordinate the Main Street Marshfield programs and fund the projects designated in the annual work plan.
- Maintain an office in downtown Marshfield that will serve as the operating base for the Main Street Marshfield.
- Fund advertising, promotions and other activities to enhance the economic, social and cultural vitality of downtown Marshfield.

A Business Improvement District Board of Directors manages the BID. Responsibilities of the Board include the implementation of the operating plans and preparation of annual reports. The Board also considers, on an annual basis, changes to the operating plan for consideration by the Common Council. The board consists of seven (7) members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council.

• **Façade Improvement Program.** Marshfield’s TIF District #4 has funded a 50/50 grant program to defray the cost of significant building façade renovation activities. Only commercial and mixed use buildings located in the district are eligible.



Clinton, IA - Street Landscaping



Bayshore, WI - Town Square Park

Redevelopment Opportunities

Several redevelopment opportunities were identified during the planning process. The opportunities were identified based on staff meetings, public input, and results of the market research. Many of the same sites were recognized in prior plans. The redevelopment opportunities are organized into short term, longer term, and renovation/adaptive or re-use potentials.

In general, commercial uses are recommended for sites in the core downtown or immediately adjacent areas, with the remainder of sites being redeveloped with residential uses. Ideally, the City and its partners will attract additional owner occupied housing to the area in the form of rowhouses and condominiums. Rental units should be limited to market rate units. Given the concentration of lower income households in the central neighborhood, adding additional low income housing is not a desirable scenario.

Short Term Redevelopment Sites

These sites are considered priority opportunities for redevelopment based on characteristics of the sites, their potential for positive impact on the downtown district, and market demand. Additional analysis and recommendations for these sites can be found in Appendix C – Redevelopment Sites.

• Columbia Park / Felker Brothers Redevelopment Area

This redevelopment opportunity would transform the mix of older industrial buildings, surface parking, and one- or two-family family homes south of Columbia Park. Residential uses are envisioned for the site, and may include some combination of townhomes, condominiums, apartments, or a pocket neighborhood. The pocket neighborhood might be located between Arnold Street and Depot Street.

Depending upon the final design the proposed development could preserve and incorporate a portion of the existing historic single family homes along Arnold Street adjacent Columbia Park. There is also the potential to preserve the office portion of the Felker Brothers property, located on Chestnut Avenue between Depot Street and the railroad, which is an attractive example of art modern architecture.

Redevelopment in this area should incorporate public or private greenspace (with public access), with an emphasis on providing a greenway corridor and bicycle and pedestrian improvements from Columbia Park to the railroad corridor, and along the railroad corridor north to where it ties into the existing path



<http://www.rosschapin.com/>

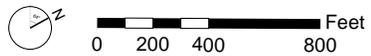
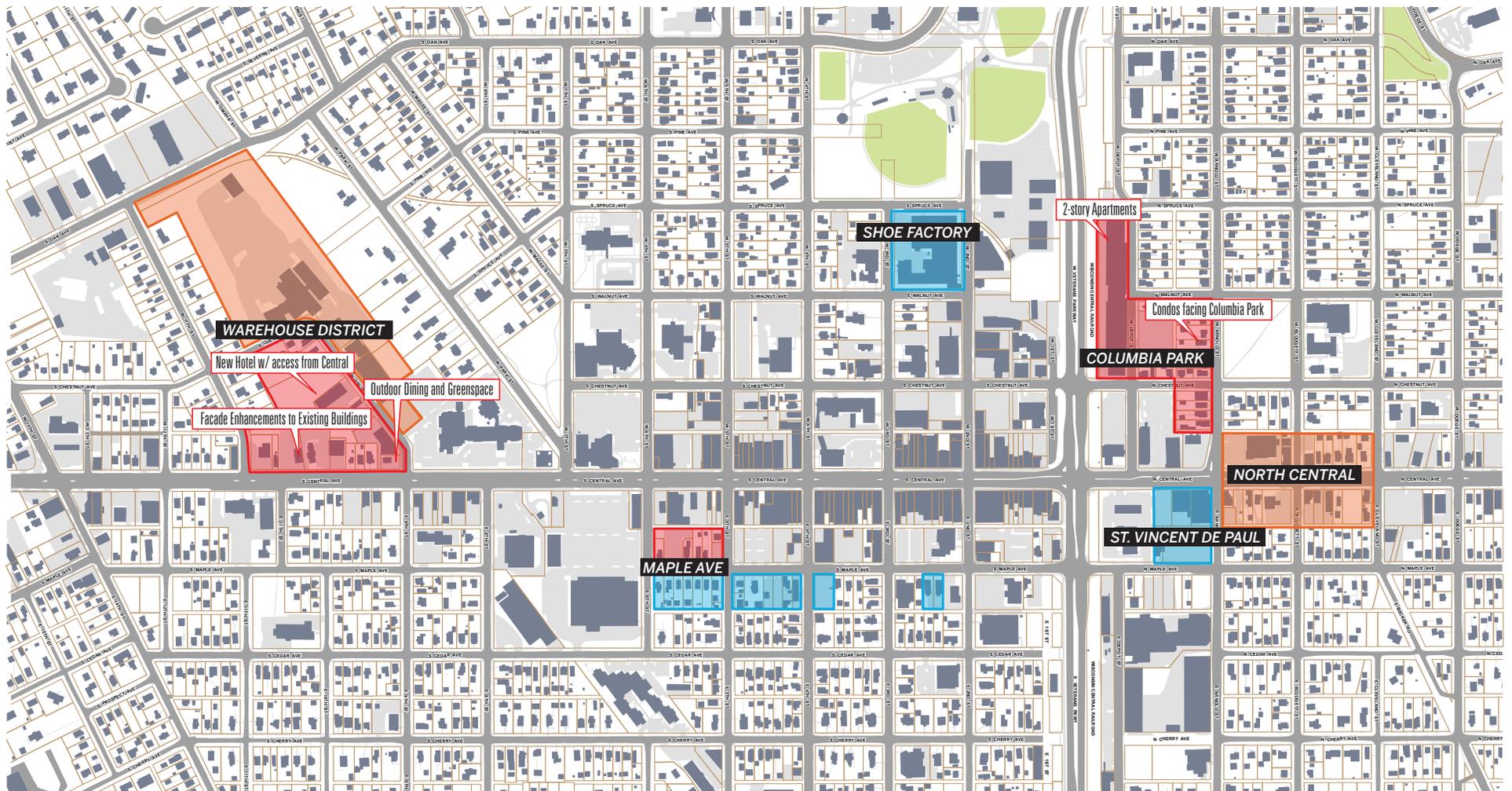


<http://newearthliving.net/>



What is a Pocket Neighborhood?

Pocket Neighborhoods are about nearby neighbors sharing and caring for common ground. Pocket neighborhoods increase residential density by clustering homes around a shared green space.



- Short Term Redevelopment
- Long Term Redevelopment
- Renovation/ Adaptive Reuse

REDEVELOPMENT SITES
2015 DOWNTOWN MARSHFIELD MASTERPLAN UPDATE



system.

• **Maple Avenue Redevelopment Site**

This redevelopment opportunity would transform a block of existing single family homes in poor condition into a block of urban rowhouses. The development would provide new options for ownership or market-rate rental housing in downtown on Maple Ave. between 5th Street and 6th Street. This concept could be used in similar situations on the periphery of downtown to add density while rehabilitating the City’s housing stock.

• **South Gateway Redevelopment District**

This redevelopment opportunity would improve the southern gateway into the downtown retail core through a combination of new development, landscaping and façade improvements, and redevelopment. The focus is on the parcels located between 9th Street and 11th Street west of South Central Avenue. The 2006 downtown plan identified a larger “gaslight district” at this location, which included the adjacent warehouse district.

The focus of redevelopment is to create a more attractive gateway, increase the density as well as quality of development, and attract new businesses to the downtown. The elements of this redevelopment opportunity could be built incrementally, with a short term focus on aesthetic improvements that will improve the image of downtown Marshfield and create a sense

of arrival for visitors entering downtown Marshfield. Longer term, the market study suggests the potential for commercial development that might include a hotel at this site. A new hotel would play off the existing Holiday Inn and its conference facility, support nearby restaurants, and bring more potential shoppers downtown.

Long Term Redevelopment Sites

Downtown Marshfield and its surrounding neighborhoods have several sites that could be considered for future redevelopment. These sites may be characterized as being occupied by uses not likely to move in the foreseeable future or having less market demand than sites identified for short term redevelopment.

• **Warehouse District Redevelopment Area**

This redevelopment opportunity builds on shorter term improvements in the south gateway planning area. The 2006 Downtown Master Plan identified this area as the 9th street redevelopment district that would include a mix of housing, artist studio spaces, additional restaurants and green space.

This plan update recommends that the City concentrate its efforts on long term conversion to residential uses at this location. Art galleries, studio space, or similar commercial uses should be



Visualization - Maple Ave

Infilling with urban style row houses can provide new options for ownership or market-rate rental housing in downtown.



Existing Conditions - Maple Ave

concentrated instead in the Downtown West planning area. Concentrating these types of uses in that area would leverage the Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts and help create a cluster of creative destinations that would support the core downtown retail area.

• **North Central Avenue Redevelopment Area**

This redevelopment opportunity would occur in the north part of downtown between Cleveland Street and Arnold Street along North Central Avenue. The location includes a combination of underutilized and vacant commercial properties, as well as several businesses and a few residential properties. The vacant Walgreens at the corner of North Central Avenue and West Arnold Street would be a key parcel in any future redevelopment at this location. This redevelopment area is located at the major northern gateway into the retail core of downtown. In its current state this site does not provide an inviting and attractive entrance to the downtown.

• **2nd Street Redevelopment Area and City Garage Complex**

The City of Marshfield owns a large site with several buildings housing public works functions (city garage). This site has frontage on 2nd Street and Veteran’s parkway, and is bordered to the west by Steve J. Miller Park. Several

light industrial, warehouse, and repair businesses are located in buildings on the north frontage of 2nd Street between the city garage and Chestnut Avenue. These older, predominantly metal-sided buildings seem candidates for eventual redevelopment.

The central location, excellent visibility, and proximity to amenities found at this location suggest the potential for a high quality redevelopment that should be planned as a unified site to provide guidance to individual redevelopers. A mixed use neighborhood can include job-generating office development along with residential uses.

• **South Central Avenue Infill Sites**

From 7th Street to north 4th Street, along Central Avenue, there are a handful of undeveloped parcels currently used for parking. These include the parking lot for City Hall. Opportunities could arise for development proposals on these sites.



Visualization - Town Square

Creating a central public green space can help support downtown business as well enhance civic identity



Existing Conditions - Town Square

Renovation and Adaptive Re-Use

Several buildings in the downtown core and surrounding neighborhood have the potential to be renovated and adapted to new uses as current tenants change. In some cases, renovating these buildings can significantly enhance the appeal of the downtown, and simultaneously create unique space with a character unavailable in new construction. Some buildings stand out as strong possibilities for adaptive reuse.

• Weinbrenner Shoe Factory Site

The City of Marshfield sponsored the opening of a new shoe factory in downtown Marshfield during the Depression era. Today it continues to lease the building to Weinbrenner Shoe Company, with a large number of employees at the site (currently 106).

This three story industrial vernacular building displays some Art Deco characteristics and is primarily constructed of brick with large metal casement windows. It is listed on both the State and Federal historic registries.

The most likely redevelopment scenario would convert a majority of the building to market rate loft apartments and/or condominium units. It should be noted that this opportunity would only make sense if and when the current business is no longer viable, or if a suitable alternative location was deemed desirable by the current business owners.

• St. Vincent de Paul

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a world-wide organization serving the needy with food, clothing, housing and guidance. The organization's Marshfield facilities are located at 149 North Central Avenue. The site includes a large, early 20th century industrial building and other commercial or warehouse structures.

A variety of services are located at this site, including a medical clinic, transitional housing services, food pantry, and thrift store. The site is identified as a potential renovation in order to encourage aesthetic and pedestrian enhancements to the building and its surroundings, which would further improve the northern gateway to downtown. Upper floors of the building might be used for some combination of offices and residential units.



Modern Mixed Use Building - Integrated into Historic Downtown



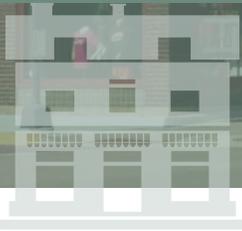
Butte, MT - 2nd Floor outdoor dining



Cumberland, MD - Mural and Kiosk



GOALS & STRATEGIES



Goals and strategies are the heart of the plan. They set achievable targets and lay out a set of actions to help the community reach them. Many of the strategies are highly interrelated, and the degree to which any of them are implemented may affect the outcomes of several goals or objectives.

The goals and strategies for downtown are laid out briefly in this chapter of the plan, and more detailed implementation measures are detailed in the implementation section of the plan.

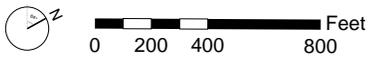
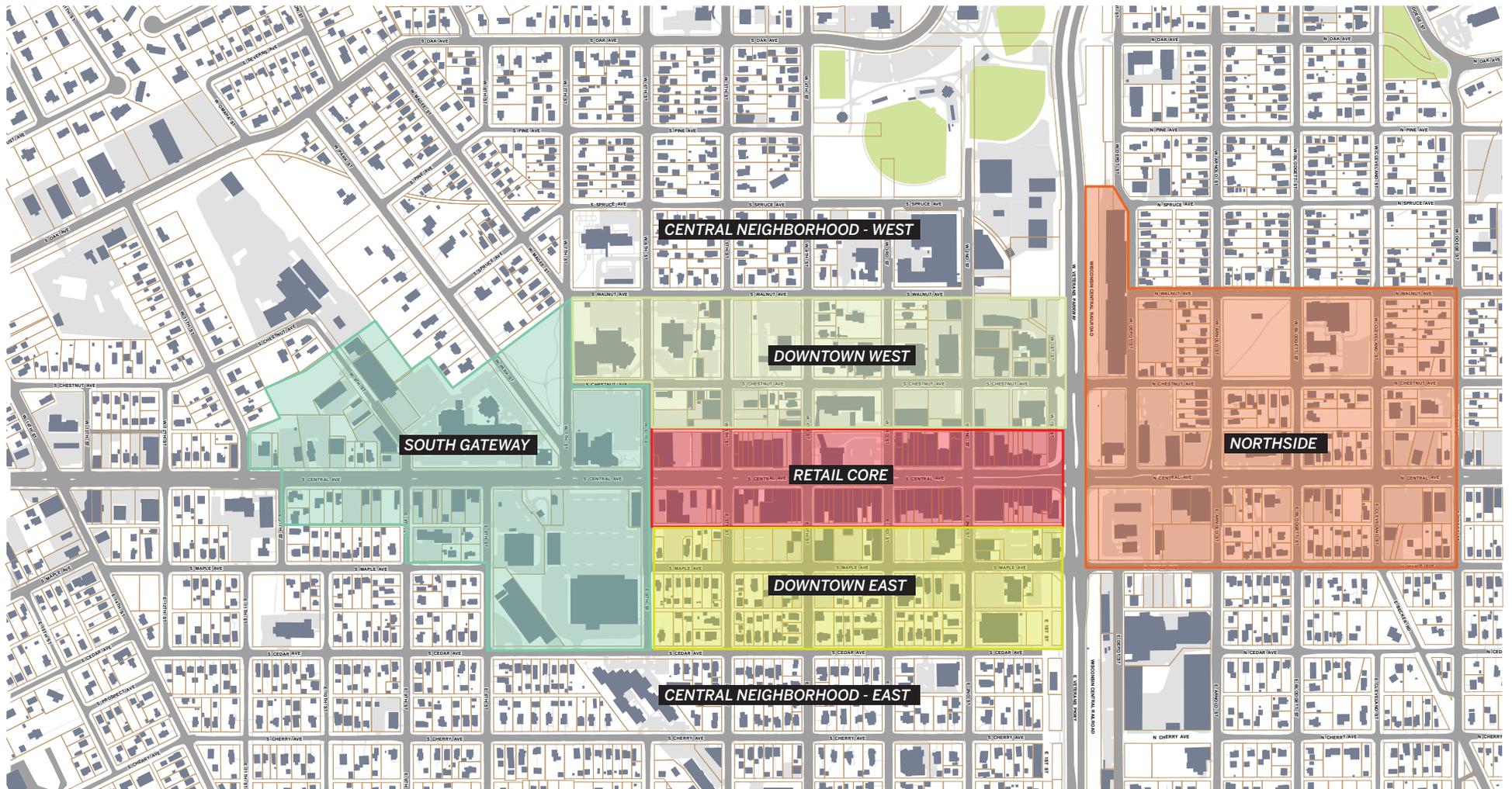
One of the first topics to be explored in the planning process was the question of how to define the boundaries of downtown. Opinions range from a very narrow definition of a few blocks of Central Avenue, to the boundaries of the business improvement district, to very broad definitions taking in nearby neighborhoods. Downtown Marshfield is, in fact, comprised of several distinct areas, each with their own character, needs, and opportunities. Each of these areas may play a somewhat different role, yet they all are closely related and contribute to creating the broader downtown district.

Retail Core. The retail core is located on either side of Central Avenue from 6th Street north to Veteran's Parkway. This is the principal commercial street where the majority of downtown's retail and dining businesses

are located. It include most of the district's historic properties, and is where the greatest investment in revitalization has occurred. This area is intended to remain the commercial core of the district.

New development along Central Avenue should generally have at least two stories and a zero foot setback. Building setbacks may be increased to accommodate a courtyard area, with high quality landscaping in the setback area.

South Gateway. The South Gateway includes areas of more recent redevelopment (Pick 'n Save and the Holiday Inn) along with much of the "gaslight district" proposed in the 2006 Downtown Master Plan, and properties along South Central Avenue as far south as 11th Street. It serves as an important entry to the downtown core, with a mix of businesses that serves neighborhood or community shopping needs. The South Gateway is poised to see redevelopment contributing to the vitality of the core. Buildings set back from the street already exist in the area, and a continuation of this pattern may be considered. Ideally, the setback area will be used to provide attractive landscaping or outdoor seating, with the majority of parking to the side and rear of the building. Low walls, and landscaping should be used to screen parking from the street.



DISTRICTS
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Downtown – West. Blocks west of the retail core include a number of important public and private commercial uses, transitioning to residential uses further west. The U.S. Post Office, banks, and other commercial uses are located in this part of the downtown. This area can grow in importance as an office location, along with retail and dining uses, and provide opportunities for redevelopment.

Downtown – East. The transition to residential uses occurs more quickly east of the retail core. Still, several commercial uses are located in the area, and the library is an important anchor of this part of downtown. Residential redevelopment and renovation can add new housing close to the downtown core. New commercial development can provide office, restaurant, and retail space.

North Side. Veteran’s Parkway and the railroad isolate this area from the core. Historically, this has served as an important part of the downtown with a concentration of commercial and manufacturing uses, though these have grown less significant over the past several decades. This area can still play an important role as a commercial gateway with new office, retail, and dining uses, and offers opportunities to increase residential density within walking distance to downtown.

Central Neighborhood West. Moving further west from the downtown core, there are a number of attractive older residential neighborhoods where housing is within walking distance. This area also features Steve J. Miller Park and long term redevelopment sites such as the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory and the City’s garage complex. In addition to residential development, the City should also consider allowing low intensity commercial uses, along Walnut Avenue, that blend in with the surrounding neighborhood.

Central Neighborhood East. The neighborhood east of downtown also offers housing in close proximity to the district. This area can be targeted for renovation programs to improve the housing stock and encourage more owner occupied units. In addition to residential development, the City should also consider allowing low intensity commercial uses, along Cedar Avenue, that blend in with the surrounding neighborhood.



Downtown Marshfield - A Place for Everyone

Downtown Vision

Marshfield’s Downtown Master Plan is built around a shared vision for the future of the district. This vision statement has its origin in prior planning, and reflects a broad consensus of the community:

"Downtown is a dynamic mixed use center and heart of the community. More than any other part of the city, downtown defines Marshfield and embodies its character, history, culture, and commerce. Marshfield will continue to sustain and build upon those assets and qualities that make it a distinctive and cherished part of the community: its urban character, history, cultural resources, welcoming businesses, people, and diversity of uses. These efforts will be carried out through a partnership of city officials, Main Street Marshfield, business leaders, property owners, and others committed to strengthening the social, cultural and economic position of the downtown. Together, we will make downtown Marshfield a more welcoming, attractive and vibrant place to live, work, shop, learn and play."



Bozeman, MT - Public Art

Goals for the Downtown District

The Downtown Plan is comprised of goals and targeted strategies that can help to achieve. This section of the plan presents those goals and strategies in an overall coordinated approach to revitalization. A detailed action plan or implementation strategy is laid out in a following section.

The following goals have been established for this Downtown Plan:

- Create an attractive downtown environment through investments in streetscaping, art installations, parks and greenspaces, and quality private redevelopment projects.
- Support the growth and retention of existing downtown businesses while attracting new businesses that compliment existing ones and fill gaps in the district’s business mix.
- Promote downtown as the City’s preeminent shopping, dining, and entertainment destination, featuring a mix of specialty retail businesses, eating and drinking places, arts and cultural offerings, recreational opportunities, and events.
- Encourage redevelopment, infill development, and renovation or restoration of historic properties, resulting in high quality commercial or residential space, increased value, and an attractive appearance.
- Establish the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods as a preferred location for housing, offering a high quality rental and owner occupied units in new and historic buildings, including opportunities for condominium and townhouse development on redevelopment sites.
- Build upon existing improvements to make the downtown more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly, safely accommodate motorized traffic, provide ample and convenient parking to a variety of users, and orient visitors to the downtown and significant destinations in the district.
- Provide a centrally-located, visible, and functional gathering space where residents and visitors can congregate informally or during downtown events.
- Coordinate the activities of multiple organizations with overlapping roles and responsibilities for downtown revitalization.



Parklet with outdoor seating



Recessed facade allows outdoor dining



Encinitas, CA - Archway over Street

Downtown Revitalization Strategies

Marshfield embraced the Main Street Program almost a quarter century ago. Reflecting its four-point approach, the strategies that make up this plan are grouped under the headings of design, economic restructuring, organization, and promotion.

Design

Stakeholders, residents, and visitors all share the desire for a highly functional, easily navigated, safe, clean, well maintained, and attractive downtown. These are basic building blocks of an environment conducive to gathering, shopping, and participating in activities that bring life to the downtown. The following strategies will help to shape the downtown environment.

1. **Invest in improvements to the physical appearance of downtown.**
2. **Continue to implement transportation enhancements that will make the downtown area more welcoming to pedestrians and bicyclists.**
3. **Provide new and improved public gathering spaces within the downtown, while continuing to enhance connectivity to parks in the adjoining neighborhoods.**
4. **Expand upon existing gateways and wayfinding to foster a sense of entry and guide users to parking, anchor institutions, parks, and other features.**
5. **Foster high quality building design including renovations, infill, and redevelopment.**
6. **Assess opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features into the downtown environment.**

Economic Restructuring

Economic restructuring refers to programs and initiatives that enhance downtown economic conditions by strengthening the business community and promoting real estate development. Diverse and healthy businesses bring traffic to the district on a daily basis, generating the revenue that, in turn, provides capital to reinvest in the district. New and improved buildings improve the appearance of the district while promoting historic preservation and adding new residents, businesses, and visitors.

7. **Foster redevelopment of priority sites through property assembly, site clearance, and developer solicitation.**
8. **Encourage renovation of existing owner occupied and rental housing within the central neighborhood.**
9. **Promote restoration and adaptive reuse of key historic buildings as opportunities arise.**



Clinton, IA - Street landscaping celebrating local history



Glenwood Springs, CO - Outdoor seating area downtown



Murphys, CA - Landscaped streetscaping

10. Establish a core retail area within the downtown, on both side of Central Avenue, from 6th Street north to Veteran's Parkway.
11. Continue and expand upon existing efforts to retain, expand, and attract new businesses to the downtown.

Organization

The tasks that make up an overall approach to downtown revitalization in Marshfield are carried out by several organizations. Defining clear responsibilities and providing a structure through with these organizations can come together, collaborate, assess progress, and consider changes will be essential to achieving the consensus vision for the district.

12. Define a management structure for the downtown.
13. Assess needs for revitalization tools and programs to revise existing programs and establish new ones.

Promotion

14. Promoting the district is an essential component of revitalization, sharing knowledge and resources to create awareness and a positive image of the district.
15. Market downtown as a destination for local shopping, unique products, quality dining, entertainment, and an active environment.
16. Collect information to monitor visitation, business participation, and visitor patterns.
17. Evaluate existing events, and assess new activities that will draw people to the downtown, and increase programming to bring more people downtown.



Park City, UT - 2nd Floor deck over sidewalk



Walla Walla, WA - Small outdoor recessed seating area



Grand Forks, ND - Outdoor market canopies



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



The implementation plan is intended to provide greater detail to assist the City, Main Street Marshfield, and others in taking specific actions to act on the plan’s recommended strategies.

Strategy No. 1: New and improved landscaping, amenities, and other enhancements to the physical environment will help to create an attractive setting for residents, workers, and visitors to downtown Marshfield.

1. Implement streetscape enhancements with an emphasis on adding landscaping, street furnishings, art installations, and other features that soften the appearance of the pedestrian zone.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

Marshfield has already made significant improvements to its public streetscape. Enhancements may include additional landscaping to soften the appearance of the district, streetscape furnishings and art installations to help liven the space, and creation of new opportunities to provide outdoor dining.

a) Install additional landscaping in the public right of way, especially on Central Avenue. This should include street trees along with planters and/or flower beds. A maintenance plan should also be included in any new planter and flower bed installation.

b) Identify needs and locations for additional amenities in the downtown streetscape. These may include art installations, “functional art”, and other streetscape improvements such as benches, tables, bike racks, fountains, etc.

c) Determine the logistical and regulatory feasibility of using temporary platforms to expand outdoor dining opportunities in the district.

2. Require a greater amount and quality of landscaping on private development projects within the downtown area, where there will be a setback from the street.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: 2015

New private redevelopment should be required to provide high quality landscaping in the street yard, with additional consideration for creating public or private gathering places, such as pocket parks, on larger sites. The City should work to improve landscaping at the street edge of the Holiday Inn, Pick ‘n Save, and former Walgreen’s sites.

a) Incorporate a landscaping standard into new

design guidelines prepared for the downtown. Require larger redevelopment sites (such as the area around Columbia Park) to provide public green space tying the site into the larger neighborhood.

b) Evaluate changes to the Downtown Mixed Use zoning district to require landscaping where there will be a setback from the street.

c) Collaborate with the owners of the Pick 'n Save and Holiday Inn sites to improve landscaping along the street edge, screening parking and presenting a more attractive appearance to the south end of the district.

3. Work with owners to remove billboards from the downtown.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing – dependent upon leases

Billboards are inconsistent with the image that the community wants its downtown to portray, and the City should work with owners to remove them.

a) Work with the billboard owners to remove billboards once current leases expire.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street	These organizations will want to see a return on investment relative to both a sense that the appearance of the downtown has significantly improved and that the enhancements are helping to draw more visitors to the district.
Customers	Residents, Businesses, Patrons	Residents and patrons will assess the appearance, comfort, and ultimately, vitality of the district. Businesses will assess success through increases in customer traffic, and customer satisfaction with the improvements.
Resources		Initial funding for installation can be high relative to the investment in other revitalization activities. Ongoing maintenance will be a concern for city staff in terms of both hourly and financial commitments.
Learning and Growth		Performance, and public response to specific improvements should be monitored to determine what may merit replication and where improvements may need to be made. Other cities should be observed to learn what improvements are having a significant impact, and may be considered in Marshfield.

Strategy No. 1

Case Study: Rear Building Facades - Tylertown, Mississippi

In places where the backs of buildings are visible from heavily traveled streets, or where there is ample parking at the rear of buildings, fixing up the rear facades to create attractive new entries can help to overcome perceptions that there is a lack of parking, create more visibility for businesses, and make it easier for customers to shop. In Marshfield, the City has provided very attractive parking lots along Chestnut Avenue and Maple Avenue. Many of the buildings along Central Avenue are exposed to these lots, yet few of the businesses have taken advantage of this exposure.

Tylertown, Mississippi offers an example of how rear building façade enhancements can help downtown businesses. Entering the downtown from the west on Highway 48, the first thing drivers see on the left is the parking lot and front façade of the Sunshine Market, a grocery that is the anchor retailer in the district. To the right is another parking lot, and the rear facades of several early 20th century buildings, that together are larger than the grocery and Family Dollar on the other side of the street. These facades were very visible, but only one business had made any effort to open its rear to the parking lot.

Recommendations for the downtown included restoring a portion of the town square to a park, where the entire space had been covered with asphalt to create parking. The building that would be most affected were the same ones adjacent to the parking lot on Highway 48. To address this, the plan called for a wide sidewalk along the rear facades of these buildings, along with façade improvements to put a “front door” on the parking lot. In effect, this continued the impression of a “retail strip” on both sides, and perpendicular to the highway.

Public improvements have since been installed and some of the property owners have made improvements facing the parking lot. At the time of the plan there were several vacant properties in this block, including some where the owners have made improvements. All of the buildings are now occupied. Improved visibility and access to parking has been a factor in this change.



Strategy No. 2: Continue to implement transportation enhancements that will make the downtown area more welcoming to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Great progress has been made in this area in recent years with completed or planned reconstruction of Central Avenue, Chestnut Avenue, Maple Avenue, and side streets. Incremental improvements can be made over time as new issues or opportunities are identified.

Learning and Growth City staff should monitor new technologies to make crossings safer and evaluate their potential for Marshfield’s unique challenges.

1. Provide additional crossing improvements as techniques are identified.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

The City may consider adopting new approaches or technologies that will make crossings safer for pedestrians.

a) Innovative approaches can be monitored and adopted as they become available.

2. Improve connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: 2015 and ongoing

Good connections to nearby residential areas will promote more walking with downtown as a destination. This will become more important as redevelopment and renovation occur within these neighborhoods.

a) Continue to develop pedestrian and bicycle paths and networks that improve mobility and safety.

b) Develop greenway corridors on 2nd Street and in the proposed Columbia Park redevelopment area.

3. Consider installing bike lockers or decorative bike racks.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

Bike lockers will be attractive to people who commute to downtown to work, and for downtown residents to store their bikes. They often provide people staying in the district for a longer period of time a better option for storing bikes, helmets, and other items. Bike racks can be designed as artistic or sculptural elements to add interest to the streetscape.

a) Assess the desire for bike lockers by downtown residents and commuters. Potential locations may include parking lots in the downtown core.

b) Decorative bike racks add visual appeal to

the streetscape and can be a means of advertising businesses in the district. Whitewater and Platteville have installed similar features that can serve as models.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street, Police Department	These organizations will be concerned with ensuring the safety of persons in the downtown, as well as creating an environment that is easily walked and biked.
Customers	Residents, Businesses, Patrons	Businesses will be primarily concerned with the ease in which people can move up and down Central Avenue to link trips to multiple stores. Users of the downtown will be primarily concerned whether they can safely walk or ride a bike without needing to take extraordinary care.
Resources	Depending on the improvement, the financial commitment may be minimal or fairly large. It may be necessary to educate the general public on how new safety measures are employed. Police enforcement may be required.	
Learning and Growth	City staff should monitor new technologies to make crossings safer and evaluate their potential for Marshfield’s unique challenges.	

Strategy No. 2

Case Study: Downtown Street Closure, Petoskey, Michigan

People know of downtown street closures to create pedestrian malls, but less commonly, Secondary streets in a downtown may be closed to create park space or greenways. In downtown Petoskey, Michigan, two blocks of Park Street and the adjacent, nearly abandoned railway corridor were closed and converted into a very popular downtown park.

The design for the space is very simple. It features a sloped grass lawn filled with mature trees. A wide sidewalk lines the side where buildings now front on the park instead of onto a public street. Other paths cut diagonally across the space. The only furnishings are benches and a few tables where people will often stop to rest in the shade on a summer day.

In some instances, buildings with frontage on another street back up to the park. In these areas there has been a concerted effort to develop the backs of these buildings with an attractive façade facing the park. Elsewhere, buildings that once fronting a public street now have no direct street access. This has not proved to be an impediment. All of the buildings are occupied with a mix of retail, service, and dining uses. The location has proven to be very attractive for restaurants including both full service establishments along with options such as coffee shops and gelato shops.



Strategy No. 3: Provide new and improved public gathering spaces within the downtown, while continuing to enhance connectivity to parks in the adjoining neighborhoods.

Marshfield has long recognized the need to provide a central gathering place in the downtown core, to function as a recreational asset and location for events

1. Develop a new park on the half block bordered by Chestnut Avenue, 2nd Street, and 3rd Street.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Beginning in 2015 and including several phases in following years

This site offers many advantages. It is central to the core retail and dining district. It is located across the street from the Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts, presenting the opportunity for outdoor arts programming. The site is owned by the City and can be developed in phases.

a) Investigate the feasibility of utilizing the News-Herald site and adjacent parking lot for the proposed park use. This site was recommended by the consultant team and received a great deal of favorable public feedback. The site is preferred due to its proximity to the downtown core, location along the 2nd Street corridor, and adjacency to the Chestnut Center for the Arts, which may offer programs in the space.

b) The initial phase of development can be implemented in the first year, and can be little more than sodding the parcel formerly occupied by the News-Herald Building. Benches and picnic tables can benefit users in the short term, while planning for the park is completed.

c) Planning, engineering, and fundraising for the future park can take place within a one to two year time frame. This should begin by determining the uses that will be accommodated in the park and securing commitments from the appropriate organizations to program the space. Designs should be based on those intended uses. Design drawings and cost estimates can be used to help raise funds for development, with possible sources including the City, state and private foundation grants, and a local fundraising campaign.

d) Development may be timed to various sections of the park. The former News-Herald site can be developed first as it requires little additional preparation. Meanwhile, the parking lot can be closed off as needed to provide additional space during large events, with its redevelopment as a park to follow.

2. Redevelop 2nd Street as a green street corridor.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield and City of Marshfield

Timeline: Beginning in 2015

2nd Street connects the expanded library, core downtown, proposed park, and Steve J. Miller Park. This street can be redeveloped with significant landscaping, art installations, traffic calming, and other bicycle and pedestrian improvements to tie these resources together. The green corridor can be an incentive to promote eventual redevelopment of public and private properties along West 2nd Street.

a) Develop a design for the corridor, incorporating street calming measures, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, significant vegetative landscaping, street amenities, and art installations.



b) Based on the adopted design, identify a timeline for improvements. Many features can be added incrementally as nearby development occurs. Features such as sculpture, murals, or other art installations can be added annually to create a continually evolving street scene.

3. Columbia Park redevelopment

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: 2015 to 2017

Columbia Park is an underappreciated asset. This park could be improved and better-integrated into the north downtown. Pocket parks and a linear greenspace, extending south and parallel to Chestnut Avenue, can be incorporated into future redevelopment projects in the area.

a) Review public comments about the park to develop and implement a plan of improvements, that might include removing pine trees, adding signs, and improving lighting.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City	The city will weigh development and maintenance costs against the benefits of having a long-needed public space.
Customers	Main Street, Other civic organizations, Residents, Visitors	The park will be assessed based on how well its design responds to programming needs of various organizations that will use it. Residents and visitors will consider how well the park accommodates both programmed activities and informal use.
Resources	Park development can have a significant cost, but may be partially offset by grants and fundraising.	
Learning and Growth	Functionality should be the critical planning consideration in park design. Decisions will need to be made based on committed programming for park spaces, and assessed over time as uses evolve.	

Strategy No. 3

Case Study: Valparaiso, IN – Central Park Plaza

The City of Valparaiso, Indiana was successful in transforming a drive-thru ATM and blighted commercial property into a new outdoor civic space in the heart of their historic downtown. Through strong public private partnerships and innovative funding models it has succeeded financially while helping strengthen downtown as the central social district for the community.

The City created a public gathering space that is prominent, flexible, sustainable, and meets the needs of the modern user. The park has become a very important venue for a variety of informal and formal entertainment, while serving residents and visitors alike. City leaders are strategically savvy about building a strong “hospitality niche” in which Central Park Plaza is seen as an essential cornerstone. Restaurants and watering holes are the other key downtown components of this niche.

Valparaiso, a city with strong music and art programs, rallied support for a performance pavilion within the park. The pavilion anchors the park plaza, blending with downtown buildings and optimizing views across the open area for performances. Built with local brick and Indiana limestone, the pavilion includes public restrooms and a transit waiting area that was partially funded by a successful transit grant application. A grand pergola, walkways and open lawns, trees and rain gardens, seating, and a splash pad complete a list of the park’s features. The park includes many sustainable design features.

Shopping opportunities are available at the Central Park Plaza Market two mornings a week, June through September. The Market offers fresh local produce, handmade products and beautiful plants and flowers. There are several in-event opportunities for people to be active, not just passive audience members. These seem to especially revolve around eating and drinking, like the Popcorn Festival, the Valparaiso Brewfest and the Valparaiso Wine Festival. CPP has also become a popular location for private events in which attendees might be active, such as weddings, parties, business meetings, church services, etc. These events provide rental income to support programming. Central Park Plaza is the site of events on 80 days during the year and last year they attracted about 130,000 people.

The park is deemed to be a success in that it draws people to the downtown and creates an incentive for them to stay, building a better quality of life and generating traffic for nearby businesses. This is certainly true during programmed events, but importantly, the park was developed with features that continue to draw people even when no activities have been scheduled. People living, shopping, and working downtown, as well as residents of the whole community may enjoy a variety of activities in the park.



Strategy No. 4: Expand upon existing gateways and wayfinding to foster a sense of entry and guide users to parking, anchor institutions, parks, and other features

The downtown district lacks a definite sense of entry from either Central Avenue or Veteran’s Parkway. Additional landscaping and more prominent entry features can help to distinguish the district from the remainder of the strip. Additional signage is needed to direct people to key destinations in the downtown, especially when these are located off of Central Avenue.

1. Improve gateways into the downtown.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Completed by 2020, as opportunities arise

Gateways play an important role in defining the character of a district and distinguishing it from the remainder of the city. A well designed gateway can help to signal that a district is worth stopping, instead of simply driving through or past it.

a) The wide street, considerable setbacks, and railroad corridor combine to make it difficult to distinguish the entry into downtown from Veteran’s Parkway. Existing gateway features are difficult to notice. The placement and architecture of the new library addition will help to rectify this problem. Additional landscaping and signage, particularly on the north side of Veteran’s Parkway, would be a further improvement.

b) Planned resurfacing of North Central Avenue may create an opportunity to install distinctive entry features. Options may include a center island or narrowing the street cross-section with bump-outs, on which gateway features can be installed.

c) Gateway features on South Central Avenue may be erected in concert with redevelopment of the frontage between 9th Street and 11th Street.

2. Provide additional wayfinding to guide visitors to key downtown destinations.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Beginning in 2015

Marshfield currently has a signage program that provides some elements of wayfinding. A full wayfinding program is comprised of significantly more, creating a consistent identity reflecting the “brand” of the district, and simplifying navigation through cues that may include landscaping, street furnishings, lighting, architecture, gateways, and other features. It may even incorporate technology such as the Internet and mobile applications. The program should be designed for multiple travel modes and recognize distinct phases of travel such as planning, approach, entry, parking, and walking to

the destination. Phases of a wayfinding development program include:

a) Inventory, map and assess the downtown visitor experience: patterns of approach, travel routes through the district, key destinations, visitor behavior, needs for information, existing wayfinding cues, brand and identity, marketing aspects, etc.

b) Prepare a comprehensive wayfinding plan identifying components and their locations, messaging, and a cohesive design approach. Integrate physical elements with web and mobile resources.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street, businesses	Wayfinding educates the public and enhances the functionality of investments the City has made in features of the downtown.
Customers	Residents, Shoppers, Visitors	Wayfinding simplifies navigation and makes the district more user-friendly.
Resources	Outside expertise may be needed to develop the wayfinding program. Funding will be required for its installation and upkeep.	
Learning and Growth	Wayfinding needs must be continually monitored to respond to change. Some elements of the program, such as web content or names of businesses may change, necessitating frequent updates.	

Strategy No. 4

Strategy No. 5: Foster high quality building design including renovations, infill, and redevelopment.

Main Street Marshfield has guidelines that were prepared more than two decades ago. These do not reflect many current practices or offer guidance on design approaches to bring more activity to the street.

1. Update the design standards manual prepared by Main Street Marshfield to reflect more current standards for building design and landscaping.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: 2016

The design manual should address historic rehabilitation, renovation on non-historic structures, and new construction. Landscaping recommendations should be included. The City may consider adopting the manual either as a guideline or requirement, in addition to Main Street Marshfield.

a) Confer with the Wisconsin Main Street Program to help identify issues within Marshfield that may be considered in and updated design manual, and to identify examples from other communities that can be used as a model.

b) Prepare an updated design manual.

c) Explore options for how the manual will be upheld, ranging from an advisory guide to a policy formally adopted by the City.

2. Preserve historically and architecturally significant buildings while allowing for the adaptation or replacement of other buildings in the downtown.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: 2017

Marshfield has a downtown historic district where preservation standards should apply, and historic preservation tax credits may be available to offset some costs of rehabilitation. More flexibility can be offered in outlying areas to allow modern architectural styles, a greater variety of materials, and creativity in both renovation and new construction. Main Street Marshfield and the North Wood County Historical Society are anticipated to play a significant role in this strategy.

a) Identify buildings where there is a preference for historic restoration as opposed to renovation or redevelopment.

b) Make available information concerning requirements for rehabilitation of historically-designated buildings, as well as state and federal tax credits that can allow owners to recover eligible restoration costs.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	Main Street, City, Building owners	Main Street and the City will benefit from a more attractive district and improved property values. Building owners will have more marketable buildings, but may be concerned about costs.
Customers	Tenants, Users of downtown	Downtown will be more attractive as a destination, and buildings will be better designed to showcase the businesses within.
Resources	Preparing design guidelines requires technical expertise that may not be available in-house.	
Learning and Growth	Current best practices have changes since the original design guidelines were created, and will continue to evolve.	

Strategy No. 5

3. Promote an urban design character that supports a pedestrian-friendly business district.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

All building design should follow recognized practices of having largely transparent façades, frequent openings, and quality materials that contribute to a district that is enjoyable to walk. Buildings that do not conform to these design standards may be targeted for renovation or restoration.

a) Inventory the downtown to identify buildings that do not meet the adopted standards.

b) Approach owners to explore options for renovation or replacement, utilizing incentives such as the City’s façade loan program or tax incremental financing on large-scale projects.

4. Use innovative approaches such as recessed façades, balconies, rooftop terraces, and temporary platforms to convert on-street parking (parklets) to create space for outdoor dining.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: 2016 and ongoing

Downtown Marshfield is challenged by a wide four-lane highway and relatively narrow sidewalks that make it difficult to place merchandise or seating outside. Techniques such as recessed facades, fully-opening windows, second floor balconies, rooftop patios, sidewalk bump-outs, and temporary platforms are some approaches that have been used to create outdoor space when sidewalk space is limited.

a) Educate building owners and tenants about innovative building design practices that can create outdoor dining or sales space.

b) Identify regulatory barriers and other conflicts that may hamper the ability of building owners to create outdoor space using the approaches that are promoted.

c) Create a demonstration program for temporary curbside dining platforms.

5. Promote continued rehabilitation of visible rear facades to create building entries and improve appearances.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

Marshfield has many parking lots on the back half of blocks fronting on Central Avenue. This exposes the rear façade, which if ignored may be unattractive, but if fixed up may be an asset to encourage people to take a more direct entry into the building. Rear facades fronting on the proposed Chestnut Avenue park may be of particular importance.

a) Identify priority locations for rear façade improvements. This may include sites like the block facing Chestnut Avenue, between 2nd Street and 3rd Street, that will be exposed to the proposed park.

b) Identify case studies, or examples where rear façade improvements have had a positive impact on the building, tenants, and community at large.

c) Work with property owners to encourage rear façade renovations on priority sites.

Strategy No. 6: Assess opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features into the downtown environment

As Marshfield continues to develop the district and its infrastructure, the City should monitor current best practices and opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features that can serve as demonstration projects, save city costs, and have positive environmental impacts. Examples may include installing LED lighting, promoting storm water infiltration, and specifying native plants in landscaping.

No specific recommendations are being made with regard to sustainable design. As public projects are considered in the downtown area, City staff and their consultants should review and consider available green technologies and sustainable design practices on a case-by-case basis to determine where they may be appropriate.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City	The City will want to look for long term savings as well as environmental stewardship.
Customers	Various users of downtown	Users will assess these features based on how well they serve and enhance the district.
Resources	Enhancements will generally be cost neutral, either directly or by offsetting other expenses. Features should be selected to minimize the need for additional staffing or maintenance.	
Learning and Growth	Learning is a significant requirement as staff may need to gain education concerning sustainability practices and users may need to learn how to interact with new features or practices. Performance should be monitored to determine if the techniques are suitable for replication elsewhere in the city.	

Strategy No. 6

Strategy No. 7: Foster redevelopment of priority sites through property assembly, site clearance, and developer solicitation.

Several priority sites have been identified that could be redeveloped to meet the anticipated demand for commercial and residential space within the next five to ten years. These are:

- **Columbia Park / Felker Brothers Redevelopment Area**

This site includes the Felker Brothers buildings, the block bounded by Chestnut Avenue, Arnold Street, Walnut Avenue, and Depot Street, and four homes on Arnold Street east of Chestnut Avenue.

- **Maple Avenue Redevelopment Site**

The Maple Avenue sites includes all of the parcels fronting the west side of Maple Avenue, between 5th Street and 6th Street.

- **South Gateway Redevelopment District**

This redevelopment area is a portion of what had been designated the gaslight district in the 2006 downtown plan. It includes the commercial frontage on the west side of Central Avenue between 9th Street and 11th Street, as well as the commercial or industrial parcels on the south side of 9th Street.

- **News-Herald Redevelopment Site**

The City of Marshfield acquired this property on the northeast corner of Chestnut Avenue and 3rd Street in 2015. This plan recommends that the site forms part of a larger park meeting the longstanding needs of a central gathering place in the downtown. If that does not occur, the site would best be redeveloped with a mixed use building, having office or other commercial space on the ground floor, and residential units above.

The City and its partners can take an active role in promoting these redevelopment opportunities. A greater level of detail concerning these sites and redevelopment concepts is provided in Appendix C – Redevelopment Sites.

1. Work with property owners to acquire priority development sites and recruit developers to these opportunities.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

Many Wisconsin communities have been working proactively to spur on redevelopment by acquiring targeted properties and soliciting development proposals consistent with concept plans for the site. This would be a new role for Marshfield.

- a) Prepare redevelopment concepts for targeted

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Property owners	City concerns will include blight elimination, growing the tax base, and fostering new business and residential growth. Property owners will be concerned with displacement or profitable redevelopment.
Customers	Residents	Residents will have a more attractive downtown and new choices for housing or businesses.
Resources		Redevelopment is likely to require city participation. Staff time and even outside expertise may be required to initiate and execute redevelopment projects. Financial commitments may come in the form of TIF, state grants, or other sources.
Learning and Growth		Staff may need to gain specific expertise to facilitate projects. The public may benefit from education about the redevelopment process and the City's role in promoting it. Successful redevelopment projects will demonstrate market demand to spur additional private investment.

Strategy No. 7

sites. Depending on the scale of the project, these may go beyond the recommendations in this plan. This concept plan will guide potential developers as to the character of uses, density, site planning, and design that the City expects of any redevelopment proposal.

- b) Secure property control through either direct acquisition or option to purchase. Site control is necessary to effectively negotiate with potential developers.

- c) Solicit development proposals through a request for qualifications or request for proposals.

2. Promote restoration and adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings as opportunities arise.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

Demand for residential units and commercial space may be met through the renovation and adaptation of underutilized buildings in the downtown, such as the St. Vincent DePaul building or the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory. As these opportunities arise, the City should review proposals and consider appropriate actions to encourage quality projects.

- a) Meet with the owners of buildings with potential for renovation. Provide information about the available market for uses and programs to assist in recovering a portion of redevelopment costs.

- b) Provide appropriate assistance (financial or technical) to help owners carry out renovations.

3. Transition industrial sites in the downtown area to commercial, residential, or mixed uses as the current occupants vacate space.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

There are several industrial uses located in the downtown or in adjacent neighborhoods. The City will not seek their removal, yet at the same time, must be prepared to seize upon opportunities to transition these uses as they depart. Sites might be considered for redevelopment or renovation, depending on the buildings on the site.

a) Annually meet with the property owners or operators of businesses at targeted sites, to ascertain their future plans for the business and site.

b) On a case-by-case basis, consider acquisition of properties as they become available. It may be in the City's best interests to acquire smaller properties until several can be assembled into a larger site that can be offered for redevelopment.

c) Provide appropriate levels of financial or technical assistance to support redevelopment projects.

4. Continue policies that review parking needs with each new proposed development project.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

The City has adopted policies that review parking needs of any new development or redevelopment project in the downtown. Projects with a significant impact on parking requirements may be obliged to provide private parking meeting some or all of the newly generated need, or the City may need to consider providing additional public parking.

Strategy No. 8: Encourage renovation of existing owner occupied and rental housing within the central neighborhood.

Downtown Marshfield and the surrounding neighborhoods should be perceived as a desirable location to live. For this to happen, the City will need to partner with owners to rehabilitate deteriorating units, encourage conversions to owner occupied units, and develop a mix of new housing.

1. Eliminate the requirement for a downtown residential parking permit.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: One to two years

Residents of the downtown are currently required to purchase an annual parking permit if they leave their vehicles overnight in public lots. This is an added cost of living in the downtown that puts downtown apartments at an additional disadvantage relative to apartments elsewhere in the city. Eliminating the requirement will help downtown units compete for tenants.

a) Identify alternative approaches to managing resident parking in the downtown. This might involve designating specific parking lots or stalls within lots for long term parking, allowing overnight parking in different lots on different nights, or other strategies.

b) Assess the potential to phase out the requirement for parking permits. This added cost is a disincentive for people to live in the downtown.

2. Prioritize redevelopment, infill, and renovation over adding second floor units in Central Avenue commercial buildings.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

Several of the buildings on Central Avenue have vacant second floor space that could be converted to offices or apartments. While residential units can be developed, the challenges of parking, potential conflicts with ground floor uses, and desirability of creating upper level offices to preserve space on the ground floor for retail and dining, suggest that residential conversions should not be actively promoted.

a) Inventory unused upper level space in the downtown to assess the potential for conversions.

b) Provide information to owners about market opportunities and requirements, particularly with regard to creating office space.

3. Create programs to encourage renovation and conversion of substandard rental properties to

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City	Any investment of public funds will need to demonstrate clear impact on the quality of the neighborhoods.
Customers	Residents, Property owners	Residents will look to the quality of neighborhoods once programs have been put in place. Property owners will consider the value of any programs, and whether they are an adequate incentive.
Resources		Both a funding and staff commitment are necessary. Staff will be required to design, market, and administer the program. Funding is required to offer incentives. Some outside funding, such as competitive CDBG-Housing grants are available but will be limited to benefitting lower-income households.
Learning and Growth		Staff may need education about housing programs and training to administer programs such as CDBG-Housing. The City will need to track activity under any program it creates to assess impact and consider modifications.

Strategy No. 8

owner occupied housing.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: One to three years to develop, then ongoing implementation

As also recommended in the 2014 Marshfield Housing Study, the City should develop incentive programs to assist in rehabilitating housing in the central area.

a) Examine available funding sources along with successful programs adopted in other communities, with an emphasis on converting rental properties to home ownership, and targeting market rate housing.

b) Conduct an analysis of upper level living units in the downtown, and a study of parking available to these units.

Strategy No. 9: Promote restoration and adaptive reuse of key historic buildings as opportunities arise.

The downtown includes a National Register historic district along with many other buildings eligible for listing. Where enough of the historic fabric exists, these buildings may be restored to their historic character.

1. Create an inventory of downtown buildings that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: 2016

The North Wood County Historical Society should be a partner in this initiative.

a) The City of Marshfield has an historic building survey that can be updated to assess existing buildings in the downtown area.

b) Determine individual buildings where preservation is a preferred option. Not every old building is significant enough to merit preservation. New buildings in the downtown core should be designed to blend in with historic buildings, but more design flexibility can be provided elsewhere.

2. Provide information and technical assistance to owners of targeted historic properties to assist them in planning and conducting restoration activities.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

a) Consider programs to help historic building owners, such as providing technical assistance to apply for preservation tax credits.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street Marshfield, Building owners	The City and Main Street will realize a benefit from improved buildings and history that is preserved. Building owners will see an increase in value and revenue streams from the building.
Customers	Residents, Users of downtown	Residents will appreciate historic preservation and the improved appearance of buildings, that may help to attract new businesses.
Resources	This will require a commitment of staff time and expertise, along with the potential for some funding.	
Learning and Growth	Some technical knowledge may need to be acquired. As local knowledge of preservation and techniques grows, subsequent projects can be easier to implement.	

Strategy No. 9

Strategy No. 10: Establish a core retail area within the downtown, on both side of Central Avenue, from 6th Street north to Veteran’s Parkway.

A critical mass of businesses are needed to cultivate a successful retail district. Residents and business owners have both noted that the downtown recently supported a greater number of retail businesses, but that a growing number of storefronts are now occupied by nonretail uses. Several actions may be considered to discourage uses other than retail and dining, which supports a destination district, from taking up space in the core downtown.

- 1. Recognize the core retail district on both sides of Central Avenue, from 6th Street north to Veteran’s Parkway. Educate property owners and business owners about the importance of maintaining a critical mass of retail and closely related businesses, if the district is to remain a specialty retail destination.**

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

- 2. Alternative approaches can be used to discourage uses other than retail and dining from occupying space in the core area. Together with initiatives to recruit retail and dining businesses, some combination of the following approaches may be considered.**

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield / City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

a) Where particular buildings are considered vital to supporting the specialty retail environment, consider acquisition or enter into leases with the right to sublease the space. Main Street Marshfield’s 501(c)3 designation may make it the appropriate organization to take on this role. Ownership or control of the lease will prevent inappropriate uses from locating in the space and will provide time to secure an appropriate tenant.

b) The zoning code may be amended to make uses other than retail and dining a conditional use, establishing the opportunity for the plan commission to reject other used where their concentration may have an adverse impact on the retail district as a whole.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Property owners, Retailers	The City has an interest in preserving downtown as a specialty retail district, but will have concerns about the potential impact on property owners. Some property owners will be concerned about limiting opportunities to lease buildings. Retailers will realize a benefit by having a greater concentration of like and contributing businesses in the district.
Customers	Residents, Visitors, Business patrons	Sustaining a vibrant retail environment and attracting additional restaurants are high priorities of most residents. Visitors and customers will be attracted by a greater number of these businesses.
Resources	Financial commitments may vary considerably based on the approaches taken.	
Learning and Growth	It is important to track the downtown business mix over time, to develop an accurate understanding of how it is transitioning. Mapping these uses will help to assess where retail and dining are concentrated, and where other uses may be disrupting the district.	

Strategy No. 10

Strategy No. 11: Continue and expand upon existing efforts to retain, expand, and attract new businesses to the downtown.

The market analysis demonstrated solid demand for additional retail, dining, and office uses that can be located in the downtown district. Current efforts to recruit new businesses can be targeted to the sectors that have been identified. It is equally important to work with existing businesses to help them increase profitability and plan for major changes.

1. Work with businesses to improve their online presence.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

It is critical for businesses to have a strong online presence if they are going to attract customers, retain them, and grow sales. It is not uncommon for the successful independent businesses to get a significant share of their sales through the internet. In addition to being transactional, businesses should be managing their presence on sites such as Yelp, Expedia, Foursquare, and other directory and rating sites.

a) Conduct an internet search for businesses in the downtown district. Assess their own managed presence through business web sites and social media sites. Evaluate business ratings on sites such as Yelp, Google, Urban Spoon, and Trip Advisor.

b) Identify priority needs in terms of business online presence training. Prepare case studies of businesses that have realized a substantial benefit from web marketing or sales.

c) Develop training programs that may include class sessions or one-on-one training, depending on the subject matter.

2. Encourage new eating and drinking establishments to locate within the downtown and create the conditions that support a quality dining experience.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

The market analysis demonstrates the potential for new eating and drinking places in the downtown. These businesses draw visitors on their own, and have a symbiotic relationship with specialty retail that helps to extend the length of stays in the district.

Detailed recruitment strategies are enumerated in Appendix E – Business Development Strategies.

3. Monitor, and if appropriate, promote the opportunity to develop a new hotel in the downtown.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street	These organizations desire a strong downtown business community to maintain the district's economic and social vitality.
Customers	Businesses, Property owners, Residents, Visitors	A broad selection of desirable businesses provides interesting shopping, quality dining, and necessary services to residents and visitors. Quality businesses pay good rents to building owners, who in turn maintain and improve their buildings. Businesses benefit from a critical mass of like businesses that makes the district a destination for customers.
Resources	This activity requires a substantial commitment of time, along with some level of financial resources.	
Learning and Growth	Staff must have an understanding of business location principles and attraction techniques, which may be acquired through training. Continued implementation will help to identify the most effective techniques for Marshfield's particular circumstances.	

Strategy No. 11

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

The Convention and Visitor's Bureau and Main Street Marshfield are important partners in this task. A new hotel can be successful in Marshfield. There are at least two viable locations where it could be sited in downtown redevelopment areas.

a) Regularly confer with Convention and Visitor's Bureau staff concerning the need for an additional hotel to meet demand and expectations.

b) Discuss the potential market for a new hotel with the owners of sites deemed best suited for the use.

c) Include discussions with hotel operators when the City or Main Street staff participate in activities such as ICSC's Dealmaker events.

4. Support new office development through conversion of the upper levels of buildings in the retail core, renovation of other buildings in the downtown, and new construction on infill or redevelopment sites.

Project Lead: City of Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

There is demand for additional office space in the community, and a portion of this can be located downtown. It is preferable to locate this use outside of the core retail and dining district, either on the upper levels of Central Avenue buildings, or on side streets.

a) Downtown is a viable, and often highly desirable business location. Downtown buildings and sites should be marketed and recommended to businesses recruited by City and regional economic development staff, where the use is appropriate. A downtown location can offer many advantages not available in a business park.

b) On a long term horizon, consider the development of a high quality mixed use district between Chestnut Avenue, Veteran’s Parkway, 2nd Street, and Steve J. Miller Park. This district may contain a combination of offices and residential units in single- or multiple-use buildings.

Strategy No. 12: Establish a management structure to implement the downtown plan.

A management structure is necessary to coordinate the activities of multiple partners, to maintain progress on initiatives in the plan, and to consider responses to changing conditions within the district or the broader economy.

1. Define roles for City, Main Street Marshfield, Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and others involved in downtown activities.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

Plans are more likely to be implemented when responsibilities are clearly known and accepted. This plan assigns the lead responsibility for implementing each project or initiative. As the plan is implemented these responsibilities should be reviewed, and a lead organization should be assigned to new initiatives that arise due to changing conditions.

a) Assignments are flexible and not limited to what is in the plan. Roles may change over time depending on issues like technical ability and the resources available. Assignments should be reconsidered as necessary.

2. Establish a downtown management team to coordinate plan implementation activities.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate

The plan management team will consist of key staff representing organizations with large roles in implementing the plan. At a minimum, it will include staff from the City of Marshfield, Main Street Marshfield, and the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

a) Review the composition of the team periodically to consider whether other organizations may need to be represented, based on the projects being executed.

3. Adopt a process for periodic plan review, coordination, and adaptation.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

a) Conduct regular meetings of the downtown management team to share information, coordinate activities, and discuss emerging opportunities, trends, etc.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street, partners	There is a shared desire for a plan that results in action, rather than "sitting on a shelf". The management structure helps to ensure that the plan’s recommendations are acted upon.
Customers	Investors in downtown revitalization	A well designed, coordinated downtown revitalization effort will produce results, demonstrating progress that will sustain interest from supporters, volunteers, and the general public.
Resources	A minimal staff effort is required to periodically review, discuss, and coordinate revitalization activities.	
Learning and Growth	As priorities shift, capabilities or resources expand or contract, some initiatives are completed while other arise, it may be necessary to shift roles and adapt to new approaches.	

Strategy No. 12

b) Conduct an annual review of progress in implementing the plan, assessing whether targets have been met, considering possible changes to the plan, and identifying needs for the upcoming year. This should occur prior to the City and Main Street Marshfield’ annual budgeting meetings.

Strategy No. 13: Assess needs for revitalization tools and programs to revise existing programs and establish new ones.

Tax increment financing is the City’s primary tool for funding revitalization. The current district covers much of the downtown and will have its spending window close in 2018. The City and its partners should consider alternative approaches that may be used to fund future initiatives. The City has already established a downtown business improvement district.

1. Create a blue ribbon panel with representation from elected officials, downtown advocates, and persons with relevant technical knowledge to examine funding mechanisms for downtown improvements and ongoing operational funding.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: 2016

a) This panel may examine approaches used in other communities and call on outside expertise to present ideas.

b) Develop a multi-year funding strategy to ensure continued momentum for downtown revitalization.

2. Carry out steps necessary to secure funding streams identified by the panel.

Project Lead: TBD

Timeline: TBD

These tasks will be determined through the outcomes of the process.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street	These organizations need to understand options and locate stable funding for revitalization initiatives.
Customers	Residents, Businesses, Property owners	These and other stakeholders will be called upon to provide support through taxes, special assessments, or contributions. Clearly identifying uses and demonstrating positive outcomes will earn support.
Resources	Staff support will be required to coordinate activities and locate appropriate experts to assist in the work.	
Learning and Growth	This task is generally a learning effort aimed at understanding the community’s long term options for funding its downtown programs and initiatives.	

Strategy No. 13

Strategy No. 14: Market downtown as a destination for local shopping, unique products, quality dining, entertainment, and an active environment.

Downtown Marshfield has more specialty shops, more retail square footage, and more dining establishments than Marshfield Mall (Shoppes at Wood Ridge). The district and community should recognize this fact and downtown should be similarly marketed as the premier destination district in the city.

Additional information concerning marketing is found in Appendix E – Business Development Strategies.

1. Implement a comprehensive marketing campaign for the downtown district.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

a) Marketing should be targeted to the primary and secondary trade areas identified in the market analysis. Additionally, tourism marketing should feature the downtown prominently.

b) Develop a unified message and look to all marketing materials to reinforce the district’s brand. Ensure that the Main Street Marshfield web site is listed to direct people to additional information about the district.

c) Promote historic tourism in the downtown.

d) Track the impact of marketing investments to determine their impact.

e) A diverse set of marketing approaches can be considered to target different audiences or promote different activities.

- *Printed materials.* Printed items may include brochures, flyers, posters, mailings, or similar pieces, and are usually targeted to a single purpose or activity, such as a business directory, downtown guide, or event poster.

Downtown information should be provided to area hotels and made available in every room to encourage visitors to shop and dine downtown.

- *Novelty items.* Key chains, balls, magnets, and other small promotional devices are an excellent tool to help promote the district or specific activities. These may be printed with the downtown website and additional information, such as the dates of major events.

- *Media advertising.* Radio, magazine, and newspaper advertising can be the largest marketing

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	Main Street	Limited marketing dollars call for careful decisions on marketing approaches, based on their effectiveness.
Customers	Businesses, Customers	Businesses are investors and partners in marketing and will measure value by how well these efforts work at bringing customers into the district. Customers want to receive the information they want at the time they want it and in the format they want it.
Resources	This task requires staff time and expertise, supplemented by outside expertise such as graphic design capabilities. There is a need for ongoing funding of marketing.	
Learning and Growth	Marketing must be tracked to determine effectiveness and maximize the return on resources. Many downtown programs learn about new techniques through other downtown organizations and state Main Street staff.	

Strategy No. 14

expense. Investments in advertising should prove their return if they are to be replicated. Some organizations have created cooperative marketing programs that share advertising between the downtown organization and businesses that contribute funding.

- *Web strategies.* The downtown needs to maintain an up-to-date web presence through its web site and social media.

- *Mobile application.* Mobile applications can be used to help drive traffic to the district. They can provide information such as business directories or historical information, assist in general navigation or to find businesses and parking, can provide tracking information to gather customer insight, and push marketing messages to potential customers. As an example, a person using a mobile application may elect to have a list of lunch specials sent to them every weekday.

Strategy No. 15: Collect information to monitor visitation, visitor patterns, business mix, program participation, and other data concerning the district.

Tracking information over time is essential to understanding the impact of programs and initiatives carried out by the City, Main Street Marshfield, and their partners. This information can be used to demonstrate progress, evaluate the effectiveness of programs, and fine tune marketing, as well as for other purposes.

1. Develop a program of surveys to get stakeholder feedback.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

Surveys can be an effective tool to gather information and to assess perceptions. Surveys can be easily conducted online using applications such as Constant Contact, at a cost of less than \$200 per year.

a) Business surveys can gather information about the impact of activities on sales by asking questions such as whether the business saw an impact on sales (percentage difference during an event or change in sales over the same day in the prior year, etc.), or how the owner perceived a change in customer traffic.

b) Customer surveys can ask questions like:

- Was the customer aware of a particular ad campaign and did it influence their decision to shop in the district?
- Did the customer visit businesses or make purchases during a particular event?
- How often, and in what format does the customer prefer to receive information about the district?

2. Track internet marketing metrics

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

Internet-based marketing is relatively easy to track using industry standard measures. A tool such as Google Analytics should be built into the web site to enable more effective tracking of hits.

a) Web site traffic can be measured using several metrics. These include the number of unique visitors, total page views, and bounce rate (the number of people immediately leaving after landing on the site).

b) Social media metrics include the number of followers, likes and shares on posts, and comments.

c) Email campaigns are easily measured using metrics such as the percentage of emails opened and the click-thru rate to links provided in the email.

3. Evaluate the benefits of developing a mobile

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street	This information is needed to measure return on investment.
Customers	Businesses, Downtown supporters	By demonstrating a good return and the commitment to measure program effectiveness, value is created and a case can be made for investment.
Resources		Staff commitment is necessary both to plan and put mechanisms in place for data collection, and to gather and analyze information. A minimal financial commitment will be needed.
Learning and Growth		Some training may be required to build the capacity to gather meaningful data.

Strategy No. 15

application for the district.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

Emerging mobile technology presents some unique means of collecting data. Proximity sensors (such as i-beacons) can detect when a person with the appropriate mobile application passes a specific site. In addition to collecting data to help measure visitation, the application can push targeted marketing messages to that person's smart phone.

4. Work tracking approaches into advertising campaigns.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

Response rates to a call for action. Many advertising campaigns are designed to prompt a potential customer to take a specific action. For instance, the marketing may ask a customer to bring a coupon in to be redeemed, visit a web site, etc. Counting how many people take this action provides a measure of market penetration for the campaign.

Strategy No. 16: Evaluate existing events, and assess new activities that will draw people to the downtown, and increase programming to bring more people downtown.

Interest in particular events may grow or decline over time. Organizations should not be committed to hosting any event without understanding if it is widely desired, achieves expected outcomes, or may be less favored than other activities. By monitoring and assessing each event or activity, Main Street Marshfield or others will be in a position to objectively decide if that event should continue. At the same time, the organizations will want to evaluate ideas for new events or activities that can have significant impact.

Follow a practice of evaluating events and activities immediately after they are conducted, using feedback gathered from people attending. Identify if changes can be made to improve the activity. On an annual basis, consider whether particular activities or events should be replaced with potentially more effective ones.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	Main Street	Events require a substantial commitment of time and should have a commensurate impact.
Customers	Residents, Visitors, Businesses	Residents and visitors will be attracted to events that can offer interest. Businesses will look to additional customer traffic as a means to determine if the event is successful.
Resources		Staff and volunteer time commitments are substantial. Costs may be significant, although some types of events may produce income.
Learning and Growth		Other communities should be monitored to understand trends and get ideas from successful programs. Events should include a strategy to get feedback from people attending.

Strategy No. 16

Strategy No. 17: Establish the district as a regional center for arts, culture, and entertainment.

Downtowns often play a role as the cultural center of the community, housing activities such as museums, theaters, and galleries. This is true in Marshfield, where the library, Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts, Rogers Cinema, and Upham Mansion are all in the downtown. Arts, cultural activities, and entertainment will draw people to a location. By building on these resources, Main Street Marshfield, the City and their partners will bring additional patrons to the downtown, benefitting shops and restaurants in the district.

1. Continue ongoing programs that promote the arts, and cultural activities within the downtown district.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

Public art installations and cultural programs can have a positive effect on the image of the district. Promoting the area arts with a goal to retain or create business clusters from them is a win-win strategy. The arts can celebrate industry and creativity, attract visitors, and become a magnet for regional income. Arts, cultural, and historic organizations in the area will be key partners in this effort.

a) Look to establish key streetscape enhancements using art within area cultural themes, such as the city’s railroad history.

b) Many communities have established a goal to add a new installation every year. This might begin with a project to install small pieces throughout the downtown, and then move to larger art pieces such as murals, historical place markers, educational pieces about the history of buildings, and reenactments. While many of these may be public, private property owners can also install art on their buildings that adds to the atmosphere of the district.

2. Make the preservation and presentation of culture and history as an important role for the downtown district, and for its connection to business development.

Project Lead: Main Street Marshfield

Timeline: Ongoing

The cultural arts have been a success in Marshfield. Continued celebration of the railroad as a creator of the community has been very successful, and led to preservation of the depot and the Thomas House. Many of the industrial businesses located in Marshfield have ties to the railroad for lumber and steel resources.

a) Expand upon the popular Hub City Days theme as a component of a comprehensive business and quality of life strategy.

PERSPECTIVE	INTERESTS	CONCERNS
Stakeholders	City, Main Street, Sponsors	Businesses, property owners, and others may be sponsors of art installations or activities.
Customers	Residents, Visitors,	Arts, culture, and entertainment improve the quality of life and attract visitors.
Resources	Consistent funding is needed to offer programs and install art works. Staff time is needed to coordinate activities.	
Learning and Growth	Activities should be evaluated to identify what is having the greatest impact on business vitality and visitation.	

Strategy No. 17

