

A Master Plan

Jacksonville Downtown Development Project

September, 2016

Executive Summary - What is this document?

This is a Master Plan document that reviews the issues of downtown Jacksonville, suggests specific options for improvement and also reviews the principles, guidelines and criteria for making these improvements. The recommendations are based on the City analysis conducted by the Mayor's Office, Jacksonville Downtown Development Steering Committee (SC) and the City Director of Downtown Planning and Development. All recommended options are based on a set of Program Objectives developed by the SC and the fundamental principles and recommendations of how these improvements can be made. Information has been included from the community development literature which may be helpful in moving implementation plans for each of these Objectives forward. The SC, Director and the Mayor's office will depend on the studioMAIN group for suggestions on specific projects for improvements such as parks, plazas, green spaces, street design and a pedestrian oriented environment. During the review process of the first draft, the Mayor's Office, SC, studioMAIN, Main Street Arkansas and others will make recommendations for additions and improvements in this Master plan. These recommendations will be integrated into this document for a final review with recommendations to the Mayor's office for implementation, as designed. While some objectives will depend on outside consultation for implementation most objectives are clearly within the domain of the City and this document makes specific recommendations regarding these objectives. In some cases timelines are recommended and in other situations, timeline decisions will need more discussion as Sub - Master Plan Projects are developed for each Objective. However, it is important to note that this first draft of the Master Plan reflects a prioritized list of the Objectives as established by the SC. The information, principles and guidelines presented in the Plan can be applied to the Jacksonville environment depending on specific requirements and resources. One of those resources will be the establishment of a Business Coalition (BC) of local business people. The primary role of this Coalition will be to guide the process of business recruitment. There is overlap between several of these Master Plan Objectives. For that reason, some redundancy will be found in the implementation strategies.

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Jacksonville History and Background

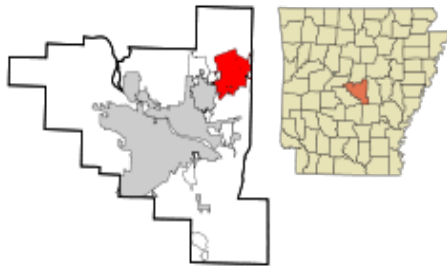
In order to understand Jacksonville today, it is important to have an understanding of how our City has evolved over the last 150 years and what economic, social, cultural and other factors have effected the growth of the City.

Jacksonville is a city in Pulaski County, Arkansas, United States, and a suburb of Little Rock. As of the 2010 census, the population of the city was 28,364.^[1] It is part of the Little Rock–North

Little Rock–Conway Metropolitan Statistical Area with 729,135 people as of 2014. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 28.2 square miles (73.1 km²), of which 28.1 square miles (72.8 km²) is land and 0.12 square miles (0.3 km²), or 0.42%, is water.

Figure 1

Location in Pulaski County Location in State



The city is named for Nicholas Jackson, a local landowner who deeded the land for the railroad right-of-way to the Cairo & Fulton Railroad in 1870. The community evolved from the settlement surrounding the railroad depot, eventually incorporating in 1941. In 1941, construction began on the Arkansas Ordnance Plant (AOP), which served as the primary facility for the development of fuses and detonators for World War II.^[2] Following the war, AOP ceased operations and the land was sold for commercial interests, including the development of the Little Rock Air Force Base in 1955. Today, portions of AOP still remain, including the Arkansas Ordnance Plant Guard House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and is on the grounds of the Jacksonville Museum of Military History.

As of the census of 2000, there were 29,916 people, 10,890 households, and 8,004 families residing in the city. The population density was 1,134.2 people per square mile (437.9/km²). There were 11,890 housing units at an average density of 450.8 per square mile (174.0/km²). The racial makeup of the city was 64.17% White, 27.88% Black or African American, 0.50% Native American, 1.98% Asian, 0.13% Pacific Islander, 1.14% from other races, and 2.58% from two or more races. 6.24% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There were 10,890 households out of which 40.2% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 55.1% were married couples living together, 14.6% had a female householder with no husband present, and 26.5% were non-families. 22.0% of all households were made up of individuals and 5.9% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.64 and the average family size was 3.08.

In the city the population was spread out with 29.0% under the age of 18, 12.8% from 18 to 24, 33.2% from 25 to 44, 17.6% from 45 to 64, and 7.3% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 30 years. For every 100 females there were 100.4 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 98.4 males.

The median income for a household in the city is \$41,331 with average household income of \$50,646. Males have had a median income of \$26,708 versus \$21,804 for females. The per capita income for the city was \$16,369. About 11.9% of families and 14.2% of the population were below the poverty line, including 20.5% of those under age 18 and 7.9% of those age 65 or over.

One of the biggest growth steps in Jacksonville history came during Second World War. With the announcement in 1941 of a new ordnance plant to be built in Jacksonville, growth was imminent. At the peak of construction, there were as many as 42,000 people in the Jacksonville area. With the influx of people, the Sunnyside Housing Project was built. These were prefabricated homes, and as many as 20 could be built in a single day. However, there was still a serious lack of housing. While the Sunnyside housing Project addressed part of the Jacksonville housing shortage of the day, this housing area has become, over time, a housing district of lowest income living and highest police activity in the City.

While WWII brought great growth to the City, it also brought the typical problems of growth, including demands placed on the schools, roads, utilities and of course, an increased population. A growth in crime was also a characteristic of the rapid growth of the City. Following WWII the population decreased drastically to about 2500 people in 1950. The arrival of the Air Force in 1953 boosted the population. In the 1950s and 1960s, the City's population increased by 560%. The Air Force Base became operational along with numerous small factories which contributed to the decade of rapid growth. While many communities were well established before WWII, Jacksonville lacked much of that infrastructure and the old traditional town model never developed. It was not until WWII and the Cold War era that people began to move into Jacksonville. This late growth was also consistent with the new role of the automobile society where everything was spread out and everyone drove to get goods and services. This orientation toward the automobile, along with single user zoning, has resulted in a community without a reasonable definition of "downtown" but a community of "strips" of shopping and housing between the eastern and western boundaries of the city. This Single-use zoning, also known as Euclidean zoning, is a practice of urban planning where every day uses are separated from each other and where land uses of the same type are grouped together. Shops are concentrated in one area, housing in another area and businesses in another. During this period of the 60s and 70s the city continued to grow sporadically following this postwar development phase resulting in automobile dependency on all services, needs and unused, underdeveloped and poorly utilized parcels of land.

The City of Jacksonville's growth pattern, like many other cities, has been the result of this type of Post-War community development. Some critics have argued that putting everyday uses out of walking distance of each other leads to an increase in traffic since people have to get in their cars and drive to meet their needs throughout the day. Single zoning and urban sprawl have also been criticized as making work-family balance more difficult to achieve, as greater distances need to be covered in order to integrate the different domains of daily living. There is a trend toward an opposite approach to urban planning to include mixed-use development and a compact city model. Increasing the population density of a "downtown" along with increased business development, a stronger pedestrian orientation toward walkability, green spaces, redesigned traffic flow patterns, mixed housing and a "sense of place" can produce a stronger sense of community and at the same time stimulate business growth. Studies have also shown that urban sprawl community growth is also more costly to maintain, over time, than a more dense model of downtown growth.

Education

Since 1927, Jacksonville had been part of the Pulaski County Special School District, one of the largest school districts in Arkansas. In the years leading up to September, 2008, parts of the Jacksonville community expressed a desire to split from the PCSSD. This measure was approved by the board of the PCSSD during that month, clearing the way, legally, for the formation of what would become Jacksonville North Pulaski School District.

In a response to a petition signed by more than 2,000 voters, the Arkansas Board of Education ordered an election to carve a new school district out of the existing Pulaski County Special School District.^[8] Jacksonville voters approved of the separation on September 16, 2014 with a vote of 3,672 for and 202 against (95% to 5%).

According to the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District, the district will be administered by the Pulaski County Special School District until final detachment projected for July 1, 2016.^[10]

The district consists of seven elementary schools, one middle school and one high school.^[10] The schools include Jacksonville High School, Jacksonville Middle School, Bayou Meto Elementary School, Arnold Drive Elementary School, Tolleson Elementary School, Dupree Elementary School, Pinewood Elementary School and Taylor Elementary School. Currently, a new high school is under construction and will open in the Fall of 2019. A previous high school, North Pulaski High School has been converted into a Middle School and Jacksonville High School will house all students until the new high school opens. In addition, a new elementary school is being planned. Jacksonville is also the home of two excellent Charter Schools which together, have a complete education program, K through the 12 grade.

A number of privately operated daycare services and church-affiliated schools are also available throughout the city. In addition, Arkansas State University-Beebe maintains a degree center at Little Rock Air Force Base for post-secondary education. . In addition, 6 colleges and universities are house education programs in the Jacksonville Little Rock Air Force Based Joint Education Center.

Public libraries

Figure 2



Nixon Library in Jacksonville

The Central Arkansas Library System includes the Esther Dewitt Nixon Library (Figure 2) in Jacksonville. The current 13,500 square-foot Esther Dewitt Nixon Library building is the third site for the Jacksonville Library, and opened in 2009. When it opened, the library contained about 12,000 books. The collection at the Nixon Library currently includes over 60,000 items including adult and juvenile fiction and nonfiction books, DVDs, and additional audiovisual items. Esther DeWitt Nixon was the first librarian for the Jacksonville Library. She served in that capacity for 27 years until her retirement in 1986. The library is named in her honor and serves the community of Jacksonville with a variety of programs for adults and children, reading and research materials and public computer and internet access.

Jacksonville Community Center

The Jacksonville Community Center (Figure 3) is a center complete with large meeting rooms, Olympic size pool, basketball courts, racket ball courts, weight room, outdoor jogging track and many other amenities.

Figure 3



The Jacksonville Community Center serves the community in many ways. Not only does it serve to provide the excellent recreational and fitness activities but also hosts many community events, polling locations, political events and public school related activities.

Little Rock Air Force Base

Little Rock Air Force Base, in Jacksonville, was authorized in 1953 and opened on 24 January 1955 with 6,100 acres donated by landowners, valued at \$1.2 million in 1952. Communications and several storage buildings, JATO facility, ordnance igloos, track and loading platform were completed by 30 June 1955, and the base was opened to limited air traffic on 9 September 1955. The base headquarters facility was accepted 31 January 1956, and all runways and other operational concrete areas were completed by January 1957. Construction of the Base began on November 6, 1953 and the base was officially activated by the Strategic Air Command (SAC) on August 1, 1955, hosting SAC's 384th Bombardment Wing (384 BW) flying the Boeing B-47E Stratojet and the 70th Reconnaissance Wing (70 RW) flying the RB-47 Stratojet and KC-97 Stratofreighter.

In 1960, the Air Force announced that Little Rock Air Force Base would house 18 Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles located throughout the state of Arkansas. In 1961, the 70 RW was re-designated as the 70th Bombardment Wing (Medium) and converted to the B-47, but was inactivated the following year before being declared combat-ready.

In September 1962, the 154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron of the Arkansas Air National Guard relocated to Little Rock AFB and reorganized as the 189th Tactical Reconnaissance Group (189 TRG).

Figure 4



Little Rock AFB, February 2010

Little Rock AFB is currently the primary [C-130 Hercules](#) training base for the [Department of Defense](#), training C-130 pilots, navigators, flight engineers, and loadmasters from all branches of the US military in tactical airlift and aerial delivery. It is home to [C-130E](#), [C-130H](#) and [C-130J](#) aircraft, as well as the C-130 Center of Excellence (i.e., schools for C-130E/H and C-130J crews). During its 60 year history the Base has had many missions on behalf of the American military. Impact of the Air Force Base on the Community has been significant and remains the dynamic social, cultural and economic force in the Community. The Little Rock Air Force Base is the fourth largest employer in the state of Arkansas, with a local economic impact of up to \$813.6 million. The Base employs full-time air force personnel, hosts part of the Arkansas National and a wide range of civilian employees and contractors. Most of these civilians are local citizens and most of the military personnel live in the community where they need housing as well as wide range of goods and services. With millions of dollars impacting Jacksonville and the surrounding communities, the Little Rock Force Base is an important factor in the growth of the Community.

Jacksonville Business Picture

Jacksonville, a community of 29,000 citizens in 2015 generated approximately \$406,000,000 in total retail sales. This measure of business has increased steadily over a 4 year period. However, the market for Jacksonville can be viewed to extend out about 5 miles beyond the downtown area and incorporates another 20,000 people. This geographical range is still beyond the primary business market for Cabot or Sherwood Arkansas. This population market of 50,000 people offers Jacksonville a substantial business growth potential. The downside for the Jacksonville business community is the amount of business revenue lost because of “leakage” to other businesses in the region. This leakage is defined as needs of consumers for goods and services that are purchased outside Jacksonville because these goods and services are not offered with the Jacksonville business community. This is obviously an opportunity gap for Jacksonville. In order to address this gap, Jacksonville must increase current business growth and develop new businesses to respond to these consumer needs. Just within the city limits of Jacksonville, Retail Attraction, LLC, an Economic Development Consulting firm has concluded that 100 million dollars is being lost annually to businesses outside Jacksonville. Within a 5 mile radius of Jacksonville an amount of \$206 million is being lost. This loss is because Jacksonville consumers choose to go outside Jacksonville for goods and services or must shop elsewhere because their needs can't be met in Jacksonville. The measure is taken on 10 categories which includes everything from food, clothing, sporting goods, and electronics to health care. Extending that shopping range to a 10 mile radius the leakage amount goes up to over \$350 million.

Jacksonville can address this economic issue. The community can be made more appealing to business interests with a more attractive downtown business community for the consumer, increasing the range of businesses that meets consumer needs. Providing a pleasant environment and a pedestrian oriented shopping atmosphere as well as the many other factors that keep people home to shop which also offers our community a “sense of place” for shopping, entertainment and enjoyment can benefit the whole community. This is an economic issue and certainly worth the planning effort but also results in a much stronger sense of community.

The Potential

Times are changing! They are always changing, whether we can recognize the change or not. This is one of the fundamental principles of systems. This is true of the human body, an economic system, an ecological system or a community system. This change in many communities is evolving toward a movement of people returning back downtown. This evolution

is having a positive impact on how people are living and working and the economic development of these communities. It is important to note that this is not the downtown of Norman Rockwell but a more modern model that results on less dependency on the automobile, more emphasis of the pedestrian, mixed use of buildings, improved public transportation, public infrastructure to favor people over cars, improved landscaping, transformation of large blacktop parking lots into more parks, green spaces and gardens. This is also an environment that attracts businesses, entertainment and the arts. While many businesses have gone to malls, smaller specialized ones are moving back downtown helping to establish a stronger sense of place in the community. This downtown movement is a positive economic dynamic. It can bring new businesses, inspiration and variation to the business community and, increase the tax rolls, offer home-based goods and services to the community and stimulate interest and business activity at “home”.

Previous Community Development Efforts

The City of Jacksonville has made several attempts to respond to the various aspects of these “growth” issues in the past. One attempt was made in 1995 and another in 2005. In each case data were gathered, a report was generated, discussions took place but few changes were made. In one case a consulting company was hired to suggest beautification plans and a few changes were made like roundabouts, flowers at intersections and some improved landscaping. All improved the look and appeal of the City. Little evidence can be found that there was a Master Plan that looked at all aspects of needed change and provided a detail work plan for implementation, timeline and funding possibilities. This current Master Plan will utilize planning from past efforts, build on past accomplishments and suggest a more long-term comprehensive strategy.

The Process

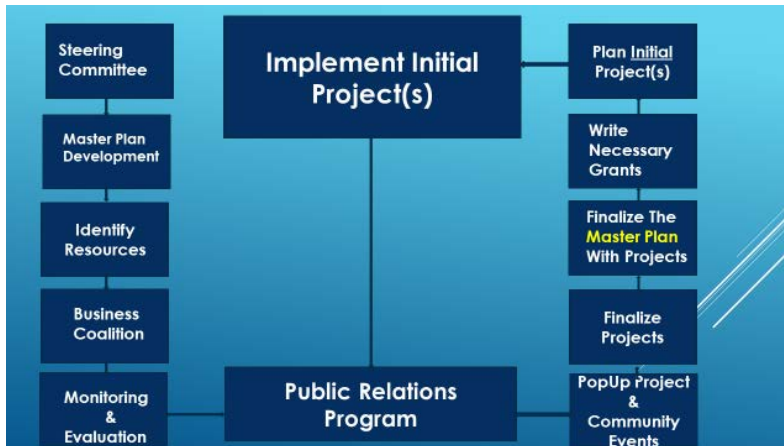
The current Mayor of Jacksonville, Gary Fletcher, has been working toward the improvement of the Jacksonville business environment for more than two terms as Mayor and has introduced many new and innovative programs for the citizens of the Community. He has systematically recruited new business and industry to the City and is highly interested in the development of a Master Plan for the City that will address the economic, social and overall beautification of the City. In that regard, he has recruited Dr. Robert Price, PhD, retired faculty member from the University Arkansas System and past member of Jacksonville North Pulaski Interim School Board and a current Commissioner of the Jacksonville Planning Commission. As a social and

behavioral scientist, Dr. Price has worked with many communities in Arkansas and nationally in the development of programs for education, health and economic development.

In a series of initial meetings Mayor Fletcher and Dr. Price developed an overall plan of action for moving forward with a Master Plan for Jacksonville that would result in the rejuvenation of the downtown area of Jacksonville. Mayor Fletcher appointed a Steering Committee (SC) to work with Dr. Price consisting of prominent Jacksonville Citizens from the areas of Law, Real Estate, Education, Community Development and the Retail business community. In an Initial meeting with the Steering Committee, Dr. Price and Mayor Fletcher outlined the purpose of the Committee, previous community development activities and the systematic process that would be followed to develop a Master Plan by early Fall of 2016. In the first meeting, the Director of Main Street Arkansas and the Coordinator of the Arkansas Historical Preservation Program presented an overview of their individual programs and how they can be of assistance to the Jacksonville Downtown Development Project (JDD). In the second meeting of the SC three representatives from Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects presented to Mayor Fletcher, Dr. Price and the SC how they might be of assistance to the JDD as part of their Pro Bono work with local communities. One of the architect representatives, who is a Board member of studioMain will be the liaison to the JDD initiative. studioMAIN is a Little Rock based organization of architects, engineers, community development specialists that are organized to help Arkansas Communities plan and implement a community development effort such as the JDD. In the meeting they expressed a commitment to helping Jacksonville and will also provide guidance and support in working with studioMAIN. Since this meeting, the Board of studioMAIN has met and has expressed an interest in helping the JDD. A formal application with studioMAIN is underway and a planning meeting is expected in the early Fall of 2016.

The steps in an overall development plan were presented to the SC by Dr. Price in the first meeting along with the specification of important role of the SC. See an overview of the plan in Figure 5.

Figure 5



Following the creation of the Steering Committee (SC), one of the first steps in the development of the Master Plan was for the SC to respond to a request by Dr. Price to complete a SWOT analysis on Jacksonville. The Director and the SC would follow a systematic process in the development of Master Plan and the whole of the downtown Project as represented in Figure 2. The SC conducted an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) which help to identify where the JDD needs to begin its efforts. Following the SWOT activity, these data were reviewed and ranked by the SC. The SWOT exercise was completed by the SC and is reflected in the Goals of this Master Plan document. From these Goals, specific JDD Objectives have been developed along with a work plan for each objective and timeline. All Goals and Objectives have been prioritized and a work plan for implementation have been specified. Implementation of these Objectives will be done on a prioritized basis and availability of funding. A monitoring of all activities will be conducted on a monthly basis by the SC and the JDD Director along with the Mayor’s office.

As mentioned, the two organizations have been contacted to assist Jacksonville with the downtown development process. They are studioMAIN and Arkansas Main Street.

- studioMAIN is a non-profit organization that mobilizes the design community and engages the local community to encourage innovative design for everyday life. As designers studioMAIN creates solutions and interventions for the urban fabric:

solutions that challenge us to participate in areas of the city ranging from the basic to the most engaging of spaces. In Jacksonville, studioMAIN has made a commitment to assist in the development of Downtown renovation by suggesting and designing spaces that contributes to the City's functionality and beauty.

- Main Street Arkansas is a program for downtown revitalization in [Arkansas](#). It is a program of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. Main Street Arkansas works through the 4-Point approach to downtown revitalization - Design, Organization, Promotion and Economic Restructuring. In Jacksonville, Main Street Arkansas is committed to helping the City move forward with development plans by offering consultation and review of development efforts.

Both organizations have presented to the SC regarding the specific role that each can play in the Jacksonville Downtown Development plans. The two groups will help with the formulation of specific plans for projects for many of the Objectives. Each Project will require a sub-Master Plan for development purposes. studioMain will offer suggestions and plans for the design and location of streets, parks, plazas, pedestrian walkability and other Downtown amenities. Main Street Arkansas has expertise in business development which will be made available to potential businesses. The Arkansas Historical Preservation Office will also be available to assist with potential utilization of our historical preservation district.

In addition, Mayor Gary Fletcher and Dr. Price have attended seminars and week-end workshops on the topics of downtown main street development. Mayor Fletcher attended a conference for 8 city Mayors across the southern United States along with 8 national city planners at Crystal Bridges Art Museum in Bentonville Arkansas. Mayor Fletcher presented the Jacksonville profile and received feedback from the national experts on downtown development. Mayor Fletcher and Dr. Price also attended a week-end workshop in Bentonville Arkansas sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation. This workshop consisted of a two days on development and a day on business development. Major Fletcher presented a current view of Jacksonville planning efforts.

In addition, The Jacksonville Public Facilities Board, Chaired by Mr. Tommy Bond has met with Mayor Fletcher and Dr. Price to determine the extent to which the Board can assist the JDD initiative. The Board is responsible for the planning and building of public facilities in Jacksonville and was responsible for getting the Jacksonville Community Center planned and built. The Chair will work with the JDD planning effort to determine how they can be of assistance to the whole process.

It is important to note that the SC (evolving into a Foundation Board) plays a critical role in the planning process. This Master Plan is on only a beginning point and the SC through their discussion must consider all possible options for the community. For example while existing plans (maps) may show specific areas of the Main Street under consideration for improvement, plans cannot be limited to this area of the city. For example, the SC might consider extending our thinking across the tracks all the way to the end of East Main, and include all the old

elementary school grounds, which I would level and turn it into athletic fields at least, or part of it into mixed use/residential.

Current Steering Committee Members

Mayor Gary Fletcher

Dr. Robert D. Price, PhD – Director, Downtown Planning and Development

Mike Wilson – Local Attorney, Community Activist and Former Arkansas Legislator

Thad Gray – Real Estate Company Owner

Katrina Mimms – Jacksonville High School Assistant Principle

Wally Nixon – Local Attorney and Business Owner

Theresa Watson – Director of Community Development, City of Jacksonville

Jim Peacock – Real Estate Company Owner

Gene Adams – Local Attorney

Barbara Mashburn – Jacksonville City Alderman and Former Jacksonville Historic District Board President

John Gwatney – Local Business Owner

Michelle Whited – Administrative support

Our Mission - “Jacksonville Growth, Prosperity and Quality of Life”

The Jacksonville Downtown Development initiative is a community redevelopment City Program formally initiated in 2015. The mission is to promote and support downtown’s economic, social, and creative vitality through community-driven projects and programs. A revitalized and vibrant downtown is a symbol of community economic health, local quality of life, pride, and community identity. The Mission of this JDD initiative includes:

- Promoting and supporting downtown’s economic, social and creative vitality including its image and appearance through advocacy, projects and business development.
- Supporting local Main Street projects in the City by providing economic development and design assistance, business consultation, and monitoring.
- Ensuring progress in all areas of a multilevel approach including: Downtown Design/redesign, Economic Positioning, Promotion and Organization.
- Utilizing assistance programs such as Main Street Arkansas, Studio Main and others, as resource centers, for the City in downtown revitalization techniques and to provide advice and technical assistance whenever possible to current and future downtown property owners and tenants.
- Attending, conducting, and/or sponsoring seminars and other educational programs concerning development, redevelopment and improvement of downtown business and the City’s asthenic environment.
- Promoting and encouraging the implementation of more effective, comprehensive legislative and financing techniques and devices that will further the revitalization of downtown.
- Providing a forum for citizens to share knowledge, experiences and problems for the purposes of developing programs which will better address issues related to downtown.
- Increasing public awareness of the benefits of having an economically strong downtown.
- Facilitating communication and co-operation between all sectors representing downtown, including, but not limited to, business, service and retail, property owners, public institutions, residents, and the public.
- Assist and guide private/public entities in the implementation of the “Downtown 2016 Master Plan”.
- Promote, guide, direct, support and encourage unique and innovative home ownership approaches.
- Promote the development of a diversified downtown business and social environment to include entertainment, the arts, green spaces, walkability, gathering places, improved landscaping/beautification and dining.
- Promote Education Programs for the purpose of work force development.
- Secure funding sources to support projects and programs.

Development Goals:

Goal Categories: From the broad Mission and based on the SWOT analysis conducted by the Director and the Steering Committee membership, 13 categories of City improvement Operational Goals were identified. These Goals represent the City’s greatest need for

improvement and are viewed by the Committee as the highest priorities for development which potentially can have the greatest impact on “Jacksonville Growth, Prosperity and Quality of Life”. They are presented as a prioritized list. The initial priority was established by the SC and consisted of the first ten items. After further analysis of the SWOT data, the Director added an additional three, based on the analysis of the SC for a total of 13. Each of these Goal Categories will be translated into Program Objectives for the JDD effort and implemented consistent with the prioritized list. It is important to note that because some Objectives may relate strongly to other Objectives, they may be combined for implementation purposes.

Goals:

1. Complete a draft of “drink by the glass” legislation within a 90 day period after final approval of the Master Plan by all involved groups and interested parties.
2. Increase the design and establishment of public gathering places
3. Develop all programs and projects in response to the needs of specific population groups of the City
4. Improve the City wide high speed internet system
5. Improve and increase the number of City parks, green spaces and street systems that are compatible with a pedestrian oriented environment, walkability, biking, reduced traffic flow and controlled parking.
6. Redesign a City traffic plan and street design minimizing the use of the auto downtown, increasing pedestrian utilization, walkability, biking, and improving cross-street planning
7. Improve the use of unattractive and underutilized existing properties and the Integration of the City Historical Preservation areas
8. Redesign public utilities to be more attractive and underground.
9. Generate more available capital to help implement planned activities.
10. Stimulate and recruit new and specialized businesses for the downtown Jacksonville area.
11. Collaborate with the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District in the development of education programs that reduce High School dropouts and increases graduation rates that can respond to work force needs of Jacksonville.
12. Collaborate the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District, Arkansas State University-Beebe, Arkansas Senator Jane English, Arkansas Department of Workforces Services, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Pulaski Tech in the development of education programs that respond to work force development that meets the needs of Jacksonville community.
13. Develop a Mixed Use Approach to New Housing

Funding Options

In addition to the volunteerism, pro bono work by the consulting organizations and administrative support from the Mayor's office, funding for the various aspects of Master Plan implementation will be critical. Some funding from external sources like the Federal Government will be possible along with the availability of Foundation money and investments from business entrepreneurs. However, core funding support must be available from the City of Jacksonville for a successful Master Plan Objectives implementation over time. A budget will be developed for each phase and project and appropriate funds will be sought to fund the individual project.

As previously mentioned, the Jacksonville Public Facilities Board, Chaired by Mr. Tommy Bond has met with Mayor Fletcher and Dr. Price to determine the extent to which the Board can assist the JDD initiative. The Board is responsible for the planning and building of public facilities in Jacksonville and was responsible for getting the Jacksonville Community Center planned and built. The Cahir will work with the JDD planning effort to determine how they can be of assistance to the whole process.

Review of the Master Plan

The review of the initial draft of the Master Plan will have several levels. Following a completed first draft by the Director, the SC will review the document in detail for additions, changes and corrections. The Mayor, and his staff, will also review the document with the same criteria in mind. In addition, the document will be reviewed by members of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce as well as the consulting agencies of Main Street Arkansas and studioMAIN.

Following these reviews, the Mayor will receive the final draft of the document for the presentation to the City Council for their endorsement. The SC will continue to function as the body of City representatives that guides the implementation process of all JDD Objectives working with the Director and the Mayor's office. The plan for implementation will be to start with Objective one and systematically work through the implementation of all Objectives as time and resources will allow. It is important to note here this plan should follow a systematically developed implementation plan and not be shelved like multiple plans before this time. The SC will continue to meet along with the Director and Mayors office on a regular basis to guide the implementation process. The SC, Director, Mayor's Office will work with all the appropriate community groups as well as consultants to implement all phases of each objective. It is expected that this will be a long-term Project and will extend over several Mayoral administrations in order for most Objectives to be implemented. It is hoped that JDD activities be

viewed as an ongoing City activity and be seen that community improvement is a never-ending process.

Following the endorsement of the final Master Plan, a condensed version of the plan will be developed for the purpose of sharing the overall plan with City leaders, community organizations and the general public. This condensed version will also serve as a basis for community presentations and media reports of the JDD planning effort.

Master Plan Evaluation Design

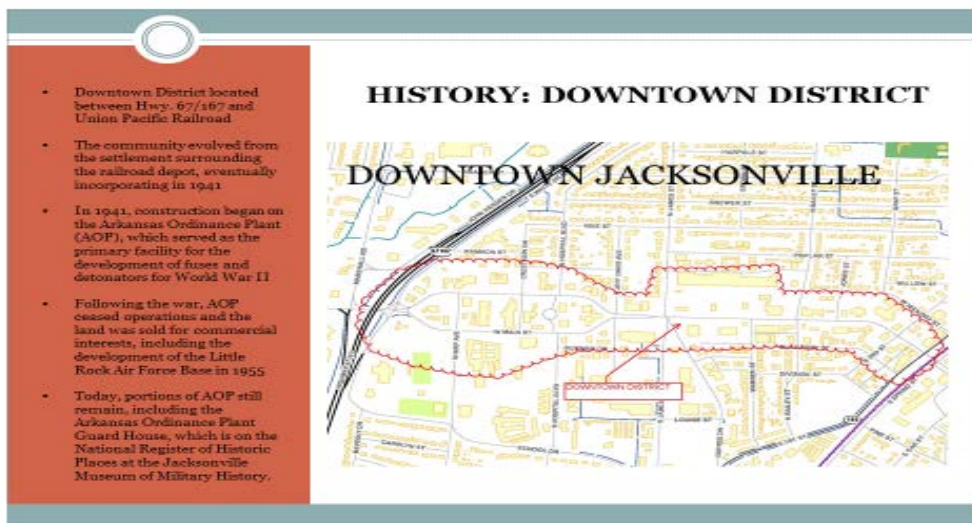
The true measure of the JDD is whether the Objectives were achieved. The Director and the SC must monitor all implementation activities and collect data on the quality of completed Projects. Formative evaluation data will be collected by the SC and Director regarding the quality, functionality and community satisfaction with each Project. These formative data will be feedback into the development process to insure a final high quality product. Periodic data will be collected from key sources to determine on-going satisfaction with all Projects. Appropriate changes should be made consistent with reasonable and functional requirements. Detail processes will be defined as individual Projects are planned and implemented.

The Plan

As described in the mission statement and reflected in the goals of the Jacksonville Downtown Development effort, the reason for wanting to take on this development effort is to improve “Jacksonville Growth, Prosperity and Quality of Life”. The Jacksonville Downtown Development initiative is a community redevelopment City Program initiated in late 2015. The overall mission is to promote and support downtown’s economic, social, and creative vitality through community-driven projects and programs. It was important to recognize that a revitalized and vibrant downtown is a symbol of community economic health, local quality of life, pride, and community identity.

In Figure 6 below, the area within the red line is currently considered the downtown development area. This area extends from Highway 67-167 on the west to 1st street on the east and is several blocks wide.

Figure 6



Using the city map above (Figure 6), as a reference, the aerial photograph (Figure 7) below shows where Main Street starts east of Highway 67-167. Immediately east of 67-167, West Main splits and forms a divided road with a two-lane east directed road and a westerly directed two-lane road. One focus of the Jacksonville Downtown Development program would begin in this area of West Main. The new Jacksonville North Pulaski School District High School would be near the beginning of this eastern directed lane at the intersections of West Main and Sharp Ave. At the eastern edge of the photograph is Military Circle and the Jacksonville Military Museum. This circle connects the eastern and western lanes of West Main Street. The area inside the red line, on this photograph, would be considered the western most area appropriate for Downtown Development.

Figure 7



Immediately east of the area would be the section of West Main where the divided West Main Street comes back together and forms an undivided four lane West Main Street (Figure 8 below). At the center of the aerial photograph is an area that has been labeled the “5 Points” area where the street of West Main, James Street and Dupree intersect. This area is being considered the center of our downtown development effort to form a “Town Center” due it central position in the Main Street district, newly developed city Library, and availability of land for development of small businesses, gathering places for the community and green space allocation. The last (Figure 10) of the aerial photographs depicts the eastern and last section of the proposed West Main Street development effort. Again, the area for development is inside the red line.

Figure 8



An actual photograph of the “5 Points Area” from ground level can be seen in Figure 9. The improvements made in 2010 by the Mayor’s office can be seen at the intersection. Improvements such as this can be made by businesses all along Main Street as a beginning to improving the look of the Downtown area. In addition, other improvements, such as additional green spaces, small parks, as well as a friendlier pedestrian environment can be designed and will be suggested and designed by studioMAIN as we move forward.

Figure 9



Figure 10 is an aerial photograph that shows the eastern end of West Main Street. This view shows the railroad tracks and the railroad overpass in the lower right corner and the beginning of the building that are in the new classified Commercial Historical District which is considered part of the JDD initiative.

Figure 10



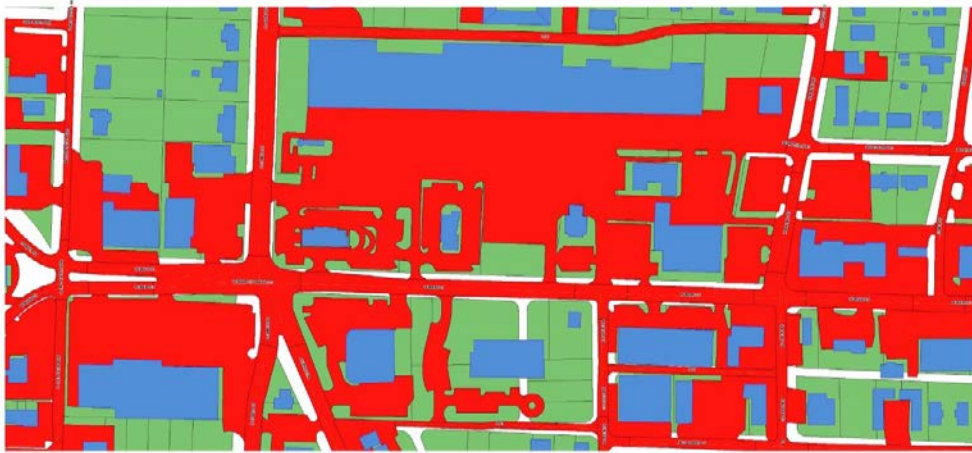
The 3 aerial photographs that can be seen in Figures 7, 8 and 10 represent the area of West Main Street being considered for downtown developed. The artist representation in Figure 11 illustrates how West Main Street could be redesigned into a two lane road with new landscaping, a pedestrian environment, greater walkability, gathering places and all the other factors that make for a more community oriented downtown environment. The overall mission of this Jacksonville Downtown Development will be directed toward the view represented in this artist's conception. The Legend is not useable in this drawing but the artist rendering does provide a redesign concept for downtown Jacksonville. This drawing is available in a poster size format.

Figure 11



An artist drawing of the "Five point's Area" Figure 12 shows the vast amount of asphalt, buildings and grassy areas. The map depicts all asphalt as red, buildings as blue and green as grass. This representation shows that much of the area is asphalt and potentially can be converted to city features that are much more conducive to downtown business development and a quality of life environment for the community.

Figure 12



The Importance of Branding

To make a significant impact, the Downtown Development Project should have specific branding, design and unique identification that help to create a unique identification for all programs and projects. Below are suggested actions that provide a structure and identification for phases of project implementation.

- In the short-term, each Downtown area would be “branded” through signage, banners and entryways.
- Adding the title of the areas or neighborhoods above street signs is an easy, cost-effective way to brand a neighborhood. This concept can be taken a step further by adding unique signage and gateways near the entry points of specific areas and neighborhoods, if appropriate. If this concept is effectively implemented, pedestrians will know when they are leaving one area or neighborhood and entering another, and each area or section will begin to develop a unique identity.
- Adding the title of each area, section or neighborhood above street signs is the first step. The concept can then be taken a step further by adding gateways near the entry points of each section. These entryway landmarks will further reinforce the branding, so it’s important that their design captures the unique character of

the community. Additionally, unique signage and/or banners should be added along the main artery of each related neighborhood.

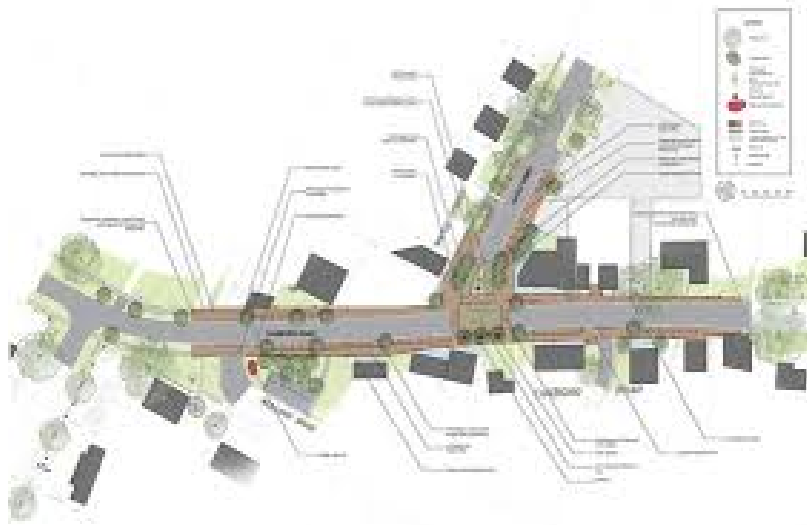
- Signage will be the first step, following a plan that develops each appropriate area. The branding process gives the whole development effort a name, and can also label each phase on the process and provide a sense of completion as different phases are completed. When finished, the whole effort has a sense of identity and each part, whatever they may be, will have an identity of it's own. All this should be a part of the initial design with consideration for modifications as events might dictate.

Prioritized Program Objectives

Program Objectives derived from the Goals will provide the foundation for implementation of specific Projects that address the identified needs of the City. In order for project development to take place for each goal, Program Objectives and a work plan for each Objective must be developed. Since several of the Goals identified by the SC closely relate, there will be some redundancy in the development of work plans for some of them. The implementation process for moving the JDD effort forward to translate the effort of the SC, the Mayor, the Director, previous efforts into a plan that is represented by attainable objectives. These prioritized Objectives will represent the priorities of the effort and will make up the core of long-term effort for the JDD initiative. The Objectives will state, in specific terms what the JDD effort is attempting to accomplish.

Sub-Master Plans, including a timeline and budget, for each of these Objectives will be required for all projects undertaken by the JDD initiative. Main Street Arkansas, studioMAIN and others will submit a a Sub-Master for each project undertaken within each Objective. These plans will include a design plans (as idicated below in Figure 13) like the example below that will suggest locations and designs for parks, plazas, new street designs and other improvements that will enhance the look and feel of the City's downtown. A more attractive downtown area will be more appealing to potential businesses and entrapenuars interested in development and investment. The design below in Figure 13is an example of an artist's drawing of a mainstreet development project which, like a Jacksonville design, specifies streetscape design, landscaping, business development, green spaces and a pedestrian oriented environment. Even though this is a represenation for illustration purposes only, the actual Jacksonville design, after studioMAIN input and planning will specifiy the similar Community componenets.

Figure 13



Objective 1

Complete a draft of “drink by the glass” legislation within a 90 day period after final approval of the Master Plan by all involved groups and interested parties.

General work plan for Objective One.

Working with the appropriate legislative contacts, the SC and other appropriate parties, the Mayor’s office will provide the leadership on this Objective. The Mayor’s office will provide, working with the Business Coalition, a written, monthly and detailed strategy along with a timeline for the completion of this Objective. Since the goal of this effort is to increase business in the Jacksonville Downtown area, an effort is also included in this plan directed at the beginning steps of new business recruitment. Additional efforts in this area are included in a later objective.

Some initial steps must include:

1. Establish specific goals of legislation
2. Develop a timeline for drafting and submission of legislation
3. Write and submit necessary legislation
4. Develop and implement community based PR campaign
5. Develop process for adoption of legislation by the community.
6. Develop a community education program that is prevention oriented related to alcohol consumption.

7. Develop youth education program in schools about alcohol abuse
8. Develop a marketing campaign for prospective businesses that may be interested in the new legislation.
9. Utilize the Business Coalition as an advisory group for the recruiting of new businesses.
10. Identify a Chair of the Business Coalition and require a specific plan for the identification and recruitment of potential businesses while utilizing the “Drink by the Glass” legislation as an incentive.

The development of serious alcohol related problems in the Jacksonville community must be recognized and prevented from the onset. A review of community approaches to the prevention of alcohol problems at the local level provides important conclusions. The evidence from controlled prevention trials at the community level demonstrate the potential of theory-driven, community environmental approaches to reduce local alcohol problems. Community action projects are just that, projects that seek to address the total community system and are not limited to a specific target or service group. These are efforts to involve community leadership in designing and implementing and supporting approaches to reduce problems across the community in total. To be effective, community action projects must involve leaders and citizens. These projects can be described as a partnership between the community and knowledgeable experts with experience.

Each of these projects represent instances in which experts participated in the design, supported the implementation of program activities, and conducted the process and quantitative evaluation for the local program. Such evaluations not only contribute to increasing the scientific basis of community action projects designed to reduce alcohol problems, but also increase the level of solid information that can be shared with the community about the results of their own effort.

Community projects for alcohol problem prevention confirm that changes in attitudes and beliefs are easier to attain than changes in either individual behavior (e.g., rates of problem drinking) or outcome measures (e.g., alcohol-related car crashes). A number of factors may account for this. Traditional attempts to treat and serve isolated high-risk groups have ignored the fact that most alcohol problems are not produced by members of such groups. Members of high-risk groups may be hard to find or resistant to change, and the cost associated with the treatment/service approach may be prohibitive. This suggests that alcohol problems are best considered in terms of the community systems that produce them. Local prevention strategies have the greatest potential to be effective when prior scientific evidence is utilized and policy is utilized to make changes. We should note that national as well as state or provincial laws often establish the base for local policies, including legal drinking ages, regulation of alcohol outlets, the legal blood alcohol level for drinking and driving, advertising restrictions, and service to obviously intoxicated persons

and underage persons. Local policies often address the implementation and enforcement of these existing laws.

Finally, more study needs to be directed toward establishing the efficacy of local prevention programs within minority groups that typically experience alcohol problems differing from those of the majority in communities. Potentially, Funding can be available for Jacksonville to plan, implement and evaluate community based projects such as this. For example, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism is currently sponsoring a project in two largely Hispanic low-income neighborhoods in northern California that utilizes some of the environmental strategies tested in the Community Trials Project. This project, though similar to other Community Trials project in terms of its environmental approach, differs in a number of important regards. First, project interventions are to be implemented at focus neighborhood groups as opposed to the general community level. Second, interventions have been tailored to address the unique drinking problems and patterns characteristic of neighborhoods with large numbers of low-income minorities. Third, the focus of project interventions is on youth and young adults (aged 15 to 29) who disproportionately experience alcohol-related problems in these neighborhoods. Such a project represents part of the next wave of community action projects to prevent and reduce alcohol problems. Early community assessment can determine which strategies may be appropriate for Jacksonville

While it may seem premature to begin education programs early in the further introduction of alcohol into the Community in an organized fashion, it would be naïve to think that such an introduction would not create some social problems among certain populations. It would be best to recognize these issues as potential problems and get ahead of the problems with education and organized intervention programs.

Following the endorsement of this Master Plan, the Mayor's office will form a planning Group to implement the work plan for Objective 1 and begin a systematic process of implementing this Objective. Such programs can also be part of proposed legislation which could result in funding for prevention programs.

Objective 2

Increase the design and establishment of public gathering places

Work Plan and Implementation Considerations for Objective 2.

Working with studioMAIN, the SC will identify locations, plans and design for construction of a minimum of three new gathering places in the downtown main street area within an 18 month period following the approval of the Master Plan. It is important to note that a specific plan of what public amenities will be developed and the location of each will be finalized as result of the

collaboration with studioMAIN. Figure 14 is a representation of how designed gathering places developed by the City of Jacksonville business entrepreneurs can bring people together.

Figure 14



Working with the Business Coalition, the SC will help to recruit new business to the downtown area that are compatible with the establishment of gathering places.

1. Utilize the following principles in the collaboration process of working with consultants in the design of new gathering places:
 - Collaborate with new businesses to plan gathering places within the business, wherever possible.
 - Identify and reduce physical and psychological barriers that impede the development of gathering places.
 - Good places for interaction are places where people – often from many parts of the community and/or diverse backgrounds – meet naturally and interact comfortably and often pleasurably because of the nature or attraction of the space and/or the activities associated with it.
 - There has to be a reason for people to go to gathering places
 - People in the space have to feel safe and comfortable
 - The space has to be welcoming and accessible to everyone
 - *Squares and plazas* - families take their evening walk around the square exchanging greetings with others, stopping to talk or snack on ice cream or other street food.
 - Design and construct Pedestrian friendly streets
 - Redesign Streets with wide sidewalks, canopies of trees that screen those sidewalks from traffic, offer dramatic views, many places to shop and eat, and interesting streetscapes become outdoor living rooms.
 - Build gathering places in Public buildings and their surroundings
Streets and boulevards.

Figure 15



- City Parks can serve as a neighborhood focus, with playgrounds, picnic tables and grills, sports fields, and other facilities bringing together adults and children from all corners of the area.
- Walking and biking trails encourage community folks to gather.
- Effective gathering places can help to develop a sense of community pride and ownership
- Gathering Places can increase the general enjoyment of life in the community
- Gathering Places can help to increase safety and security.
- Gathering Places can help to improve the livability of neighborhoods
- They can increase social capital, particularly bridging social capital.
- A good time to start development of gathering places is when the neighborhood or community is engaged in a planning process
- Gathering Places can be designed and developed when any major municipal project is in process such as a new high schools
- When we create good places for interaction we can design from scratch, encourage new businesses to include good interaction places, and use Studio Main resources to help design.
- Store front businesses bring people together on the street and encourage pedestrian traffic.
- Music environs at gathering places always encourage to people gather.
- Having appropriate seating for people at gathering places is very important
- Gathering places should have a mix of sun and shade

Figure 16



- Gathering places should have availability to food and drink
- Gathering places should have access to and be integrated with green space
- Gathering places should have a cleaning and visible maintenance schedule
- Gathering places should have lots of light for night gathering
- Gathering places are most successful when they have a common purpose.

Such good community gathering places are places where people want to be, and are physically set up to encourage conversation and interaction. They provide reasons to go there and reasons to stay, feel safe and comfortable, and are accessible and welcoming to everyone. It's to the benefit of any community or neighborhood to have as many of these natural gathering places as possible, since they allow not only for interaction, but for entertainment, cross-cultural learning and the establishment of inter-group harmony, and the building of neighborhood and community pride.

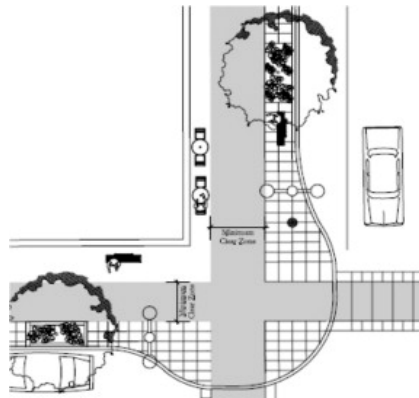
General Strategy: Working with the SC, studioMAIN will provide ideas and strategies for the location and design of gathering places. It will be the responsibilities of City leadership, working with the SC and BC to provide or solicit the necessary funding for any necessary construction of new gathering places. The Business Coalition, working with SC and City leadership to recruit new business that have, as their business design, the formulation of a gathering place. studioMAIN will provide the consultation with new businesses to identify the locations and design a gathering places as part of new business development.

Figure 17



Below (Figure 18) is an example of an architects drawing of a city intersection that might be designed and constructed to change the look and landscaping of the Community. The JDD effort will depend on studioMAIN to help with the design and location of parks, plazas, streetscape design, walkability strategies, biking redesign and green spaces. Once these recommendations are completed, Jacksonville will initiate an effort to prioritize and start construction, as resources are available. An effort will be made to depend on city funding, city construction, outside funding and volunteers to complete the construction on all designs. In addition, all business development will also require landscape design as part of any business development in a manner that is consistent with City plans. Maintenance of all of these sites will also be an expense that will depend on city effort and an volunteer adoption model by city business, and local organizations.

Figure 18



Objective 3

Develop and endorse economic and social programs in responses to the need of specific population of the City which helps to implement the quality of Jacksonville Downtown Development.

Work Plan and Implementation Considerations for Objective 3.

Responding to the diverse needs of the Jacksonville community requires both short and long term strategies. If the economic and social conditions of Jacksonville citizenry is to be improved, we must recognize that the issues are not only economic but also educational. We must recognize that if our economic and social conditions are to improve through downtown development we must also address unemployment, housing, graduation rates from high school along with post-secondary education opportunities. If our citizens are more gainfully employed through better education they can more afford access to improved housing as well as health care services, entrepreneurial opportunities and at the same time pay more taxes and become more contributing members of the community.

From a short-term perspective, the community must make an investment in our diverse population by working with the schools to improve graduation rates, supporting post-secondary training and education, improving unemployment and subsidizing improved housing opportunities.

All of these issues, both long and short-term can involve all our citizens in the benefits of the JDD results. Everyone spends more money, starts businesses of their own and pays more local taxes and becomes more productive and much less dependent on the community for public support. A community can't be responsible for curing all the complex ills of society but focused community programs and projects that address specific issues can have impact on the diverse population of a community and benefit the community as a whole. With this in mind, the following Objectives must be considered as part of the overall JDD effort.

- Develop a short-term plan for investing in co-owned mixed low-cost housing for low income families.
 - This plan could include subsidized down payments for low income families.
- Develop local community incentives and training for individuals to start and maintain small businesses within 2 years of approving the Master Plan.
 - Design a minimum of 4 workshops and seminars annually to help train local residents that want to start a small business.
 - Provide community-based consultation for small business entrepreneurs
- Develop local low cost post-secondary training programs that respond to business and industrial market needs.
 - Work with the local school district, Arkansas State University Beebe, Pulaski Technical School and Arkansas State Senator Jane English.

- Facilitate the construction of mixed housing and business facilities that are low cost housing and small business oriented that also promote gathering places in the community.
- Develop a community-based incentivized plan for the implementation of the housing recommendations of the 1995, 2014, 2015 and 2016 Jacksonville reports on community housing.
- Community Analysis of the quality of all of crime/safety issues, transportation, shopping and entertainment to determine the impact of community economic growth and quality of living in the Jacksonville community.
 - Address all City populations groups and develop programs that respond to community need.
- Community Analysis can identify disparities in health and services to determine its impact on community economic growth and quality of living in the Jacksonville community.
 - Address all City population groups and develop programs that respond to community need. This can uncover lack of access, underserved areas, and populations that suffer more than others from various negative health, economic, and social conditions.

Systematic community wide analysis can uncover issues that wouldn't otherwise be seen. A city may look problem-free, but small area analysis can identify geographic or population pockets within the larger area where problems are serious. Such analysis helps with deciding where to allocate resources. If you know where problems are most serious, you can target scarce resources appropriately. Effective analysis clarifies what problems, issues, and assets exist where. City wide analysis can help identify causes or contributing factors to a condition. By comparing the statistics and situations of a number of areas, you may be able to see why a condition exists in one area and not in another.

Objective 4

Improve the City wide high speed internet system

Work Plan and implementation Principles for Objective Four

Why Create a Wi-Fi Zone? Jacksonville needs to create an innovative downtown public Wi-Fi zones for a number of reasons that revolve around economic development, including the ability to promote local businesses on a splash or landing page, the attractiveness of free Wi-Fi to tourists, the fact that having this kind of connection “signals” to outsiders that a town is forward thinking, and, finally, the opportunity for those who might otherwise not be able to have the internet at home (whether this is because there is no option for a fast connection, or whether they simply cannot afford one) to access the internet from a broad area. Such a system also has potential for helping to improve local education at all levels including post-secondary training and workforce development.

How to Create a Wi-Fi zone: Whatever approach that is taken in the design and development of a City-wide system, it is critical that the approach ensures that a community fully backs the project, and by incorporating more voices into the project, more individuals know about it, understand it, and begin to support it. It is also usually cheaper, though it is most successful when there is a dedicated coordinator who can manage the process.

What is Wi-Fi? Wi-Fi is “a popular technology that allows an electronic device to exchange data or connect to the internet wirelessly using radio waves.” It uses the same technology that is in a simple radio to project the internet, which can then be collected by any device that has a Wi-Fi receiver (such as a smart phone, computer, or tablet.) It is a way to get and transmit internet wirelessly using short-range radio-waves, which is different from the cellular data plans you can get on your mobile device. Wi-Fi is shorter range and is connected to a local router that is plugged in to internet from a cable or DSL connection, whereas data comes from larger transmission towers.

From a user’s perspective, most smart phone users have limits on the amount of data they can download on their phones, and to use it, they need to be within range of a tower (which can be challenging in some rural areas). Often, given the choice between joining a free local Wi-Fi network or using up data (which they pay for), users will opt for the free Wi-Fi. Currently, data plans can be expensive!

Meshing: The Difference between a Wi-Fi zone and a Wi-Fi hotspot

Most home Wi-Fi systems come out of one router. This Wi-Fi can be referred to as a hotspot. As you walk around your house, the farther you get from your router, the lower the signal is. Some houses may have two routers, but when you select which network to connect to, you’ll see two different options for connection (one for each router). As you move from, say, the first floor to the second, if you have two routers, your computer will have to disconnect and reconnect to a new network. With a mesh system, on the other hand, several devices are installed which “talk to each other.” By using devices that mesh, we can create a Wi-Fi zone, which is different from a hotspot primarily in the amount of area it covers.

To create a “wireless mesh” we install several pieces of hardware that talk to each other and serve to create a zone. They mesh with each other, meaning that as you walk through the zone, your smart phone or computer will pick up the signal from whatever hardware you are closest to without disconnecting from the one you are leaving behind and asking you to reconnect to a new area. The result is a larger area with very good signal throughout. If you’ve ever been to a hotel or an airport with Wi-Fi throughout the entire building, it is almost certainly created through a mesh network, with a number of devices “repeating” the signal between each other (and meshing) so that you can have a seamless experience.

One of the most requested items is the "downtown Wi-Fi Zones and Hotspots". As a member of the Millennial Generation, the benefits of having a free and public wireless zone are intrinsic to most modes of operating. A public internet connection means that there is one more place where one can connect to a world in which they feel comfortable, where anyone can research the closest good restaurant. Look at pictures from my friends' adventures without using up megabytes on their data plan. But aside from allowing people to check in on Foursquare or send that essential email, there are many other benefits to having a free public Wi-Fi zone. A review of towns whose zones were implemented have shown some real benefits to free public internet access such as the following:

Disaster Relief: Grants from the Economic Development Administration have been and are available around the concept of disaster relief. Some northeastern cities used their system to coordinate during and after the Irene hurricane. There were many examples of collaboration, on-the-spot organization, and general helpfulness from everyone involved. Many other communities, without Wi-Fi systems, have told of the difficulties in getting correct messages out to everyone.

In cases like this, the benefit of a public Wi-Fi zone is that in a disaster situation, it does not take much power to make sure it is still running. A small generator or solar panel will do the trick. In addition, using the software to control the zone, the zone's administrator can add information to a page viewed initially by anyone using the Wi-Fi zone, which could easily be used as a means to spread information about where to volunteer or get help, what roads are closed, and what supplies are needed.

Education and Digital Literacy: Some members of communities are being left behind because they don't have access to internet or computers. Libraries, like our Nixon Library, are making great strides towards helping to stem this issue. Even libraries have closing times.

We all have heard stories of students driving 10 or 20 miles to idle outside of a closed library and use its Wi-Fi. We have also heard of people buying pizza from a restaurant with free Wi-Fi just so they can check their email. A free and public zone would always be running, and would not necessitate a pizza purchase (although it can still be a benefit to businesses within the zone if people become hungry while using the internet!) It would allow students to find a place where they can do their homework close to home, and where others can check their email, or even apply for a job.

Tourism and Town Promotion: People recognize that a town is "cool" and "hip" when their iPhone dings an announcement of a free wireless signal as they drive through. That free zone gives them a motivation to stop and explore the town more, and also allows the town to be recognized as a forward-thinking place, where new ideas and technology are welcomed. In addition, the zone can be set up so that a landing page is seen by everyone who begins to use the free zone. This page can have a calendar of town events, a listing of local eateries, and a page on things to do in the town. Visitors could stop in at one of Cities new downtown restaurants or

stores and decided to log on to the zone. They might also want to check their email, but each of visitors will see what else the town can offer them as well. The impact on the City can be significant. In addition to helping to bridge the digital divide and becoming a communication tool during a disaster, a Wi-Fi zone can send a signal that a town is informed forward-thinking, and ready to welcome positive change. We should look forward to helping our City implement these zones over the next few years!

Hardware -Understanding the equipment, and the necessary “hookups”

Access Point - There are a number of different hardware options that we can use to create a “wireless mesh network” (which is how a Wi-Fi zone is put together.) When looking at equipment, you can search for “wireless mesh Access Points.” They are called Access Points because a user can access internet through them.

Because these devices are installed outside, the types of equipment that could withstand rain and both high and low temperatures must be installed. Options for these types of equipment include (but not limited to):

- Cisco (the Aironet 1570)
- Aerohive (the AP170)
- Aruba (the MSr2000 and the MSR4000)
- Ruckus (the T300 series)
- Meraki (now owned by Cisco Gateway: Most of the devices listed above function

Gateways. A Gateway takes internet from a dedicated connection (it is plugged in, usually with a Power over Ethernet cable,) to a standard internet connection. For town Wi-Fi zones, a basic business level subscription is recommended. This connection is what brings Internet to the zone.

Repeater: Typically the same piece of hardware as a Gateway, Repeaters are not hardwired to the Internet. Rather, they extend the size of the Wi-Fi zone by repeating the Internet connection via one or more radios, and meshing with each other. One benefit of many of these systems is that these devices begin as gateways, but if the internet connection fails, they will automatically reconfigure into repeaters, taking a signal from another Gateway.

Software: Software is used for monitoring the zone and to ensure everything is working correctly. This software is also called a “cloud controller” because it resides on remote servers (the “cloud”) and can be accessed via the Internet from anywhere.

Controls: The Meraki system uses a proprietary cloud controller (known as a “dashboard”) to monitor the zone. The cloud controller is password protected, and can be accessed through any browser. The controller can:

- monitor access points:

Load Analysis: See what the load on each access point is, and flag when there is any issue associated with that access point.

- track usage and numbers of clients

Delve down to individual IPs and see who is using what site, as well as how long each IP is on the network for. This means that it is possible to find and potentially block abusers of the free network. (For instance if a user is downloading illegal music, he/she can be kicked off or blocked completely from the network.) It also means that it is possible to see which sites are most popularly visited on the network. For example, is it used mostly for checking email, or for reading restaurant reviews

Track Users: This is helpful in monitoring when the busiest times of the day are. For example, you can see spikes during town festivals. It is also tracked per access point, so you can see how many people are connected to each individual access point.

Track speed: See what the upload and download speed on the network is, as well as on each access point, and change it if necessary.

Track OS, manufacturers, clients: See exactly what types of devices people on the network are using. If it is mostly phones, for instance, then maybe creating more responsive web design is in order for optimized usage.

Configure access control: Change access to the network based on individual IPs, or by Access Point. There is even the option of creating a private network on a single Access Point that is completely separate from the public network. You can also set the network to time people off every thirty minutes, for example, so they have to log back in to continue using the free internet.

Administer splash page, and user experience: Create a splash page that makes each user agree to the terms and conditions of using the public internet. This page can also advertise those individuals or businesses who are donating bandwidth. It can redirect to whatever landing page is decided on.

From a user perspective: When a user wants to use the Wi-Fi zone, he first selects the zone from his list of networks. Once the user has selected the zone, he will see a splash page appear (this can be set from the cloud controller,) which he has to agree to in order to continue to the internet. When the user has agreed, he will be redirected either to a website set by the cloud controller, or back to the website he was attempting to reach

Incorporating the community - necessary stakeholders in creating the zone include:

- Local business owners
- Local town or city government officials
- local downtown revitalization groups

The town should also designate a Moderator and a Point Person: The Moderator will:

- Look after the Wi-Fi zone once it is up and running
- Moderate the zone, using the cloud software provided, to ensure there is no abuse of the free internet
- Be the first point of contact for community members with questions once the zone is live
- Be responsible for maintaining the zone, and moderating it through cloud-controller.

Monitoring the system can take as much or as little time as the monitor wants to put into it. With many towns, once the network is set up so that a few key sites or types of content are blocked, and a few security measures are put in place, the network can run by itself. In many towns, the monitor checks in weekly to make sure there is no abuse. Others who are more interested may choose to spend more time analyzing the network and adjusting the usage, but once it is set up, this isn't necessary. The network can be set up to email the monitor once a month with a report, and will also email if an Access Point goes down. This is when the monitor will need to check the problem and see whether the internet or power has gone down, and whether the Access Point needs to be restarted or if the appropriate vendor should be called.

The Point Person will:

- Connect with members within the town to gain input into best placement for the overall zone
- Gain permission from landlords, Boards and town business people for equipment placement on their buildings
- Address any concerns that the community might have about the project

- Be responsible for coordinating the process, creating a liaison between business owners and technicians

It is also imperative to find a technician/contractor:

Jacksonville must contract with an experienced technician to survey the sites to determine best positions for the gateway and repeaters. Local electricians can help install the equipment. Ideally a contractor should have experience with wireless networking and the software necessary to test signal strength when conducting a site survey to plan the zone.

Most electricians will have no problem with the simple wiring scheme, which requires very little power and can be fed by Power-Over-Ethernet (POE). However, they may not have proper materials and accessories in stock so it is recommended that ample notice be provided and a preliminary tour of the buildings to be wired. The point person in town works with the contractor to find best locations for the equipment, then with building owners for permission to place the equipment at these sites. The Access Points are weatherproof because they are mounted high up and out of sight, there is minimal concern about vandalism.

Maintaining the Zone

Once the zone is up and running, it will require some ongoing maintenance. While this maintenance is minimal, it is important for the moderator to be comfortable with the process of troubleshooting access points and adjusting controls on the cloud controller.

Some settings may need to be adjusted as the Wi-Fi zone continues and moderator(s) responds to public input. Jacksonville must also set up a maintenance fund to save for equipment replacements, advertising the zone, and/or expanding the zone if demand grows.

Important Note – Computer technology and software applications change rapidly. While the principles highlighted here provide for the implementation of this Objective, the specifics of implementation must be reconsidered in terms of the latest technology.

Objective 5

Improve and increase the number of downtown parks, green spaces and street systems that are compatible with a pedestrian oriented environment, walkability, biking, reduced traffic flow and controlled parking.

Figure 19



Work Plan and Implementation for Objective 5

Important principles for creating and improving City amenities are outlined in this section. This can be considered a menu for improving the Jacksonville downtown environment. The SC, Director and the Mayor's office will depend heavily on the experience and advice of the studioMAIN group for specific projects and the locations of those projects. It is also important to note that several of the Program Objectives are closely aligned and implementation strategies for each may be closely related.

This is a primary method for improving the attractiveness for the community and making it more appealing to investors as well as the citizenry. Improving the attractiveness of the living and business environment consists of several key areas. These areas include:

- Reducing the amount of automobile traffic in the Jacksonville downtown area extending both directions on Main Street from Highway 167 on the West to 1st street on the East. The James Street – Main Street intersection is considered the center of this downtown area. The intersection where Dupree comes into the intersection on an

approximate 30 degree angle. This intersection, is commonly referred as “Five Points” and is considered the center of our proposed Jacksonville Downtown Development initiative.

- The objective of reducing automobile traffic is to increase a pedestrian oriented environment complete with areas for biking, gathering places parks and open spaces. Increasing safety, improving environmental design as well as public transportation and parking are all part of a plan to improve the downtown environment.

Down

Figure 20



- The economic, environmental, health and social benefits for citizens and visitors are reason for improvement enough but a walkable Downtown is an additional asset to the community with significant economic, health, environmental and social benefits. These specific overall benefits include:
 - Economic Benefits - The economic benefits of a pedestrian-oriented community are far reaching. Real estate values and sales tax revenue have increased in cities that have adopted pedestrian friendly plan.
 - Health Benefits - The health benefits of walking and cycling are indisputable. By creating an environment that encourages physical activity, Jacksonville will promote a healthy lifestyle. A healthier population will likely result in lower health care costs.
 - Environmental Benefits - Removing cars from the roads, thus reducing carbon emissions, is an impactful way for Jacksonville to help solve the global environmental crisis.
 - Social/Community and Safety Benefits - A pedestrian-oriented city would allow residents and visitors to forgo their cars, and the associated frustrations, to travel in the least expensive and most socially satisfying manner: walking. Aside from being inexpensive (to the pedestrian and the city), walking promotes social interaction. Additionally, active streets enhance residents' and visitors' sense of safety and security. The development of a more walkable community

will position Jacksonville as a city that provides the most affordable transportation system any community can plan, design, construct and maintain. Walkable communities lead to more social interaction, physical fitness and diminished crime. Walkable communities are more livable and lead to whole, happy, healthy lives for the people who live in them. Walking increases social capital by promoting face-to-face interaction with your neighbors. Studies have shown that for each 10 minutes a person spends in a daily car commute, time spent in community activities falls by 10 percent.

- Design & Amenities – There are certain principles that can be utilized to enhance the physical environment of the Jacksonville community regardless of the enhancements that are developed to improve the attractiveness of the environment. These principles include:
 - Materiality: The color and texture of paving, landscaping, buildings and other design elements affect the human experience.
 - Human Scale: Smaller modules and more delicate detailing provide aesthetic interest at the scale and pace of a pedestrian.
 - Series of Zones: A landscape buffer between pedestrian walkways and adjacent streets can mitigate traffic speed and noise. A building amenity zone, such as an outdoor dining area, can bridge the gap between the walkway and the building façade.
 - Also, the creation of gathering places provides breaks in the street wall and gives pedestrians a chance to stop, eat or rest. The proportion of these zones and their relationship to one another is an important design consideration.
 - Variety: An array of design elements can provide day and night interest or seasonal diversity. Design elements must relate to one another, creating a common design aesthetic and giving the street a cohesive character. This concept of identity is evident in the most successful pedestrian areas and will also be discussed as we describe recommendations for branding Jacksonville Downtown Development projects and the suggested guidelines for streetscape design which in turn will improve the pedestrian environment.
- Parks and open spaces play a significant role in creating a pedestrian-friendly city. They offer an opportunity for people to escape the hectic pace of urban life by retreating to more natural, serene settings. Parks provide a welcome respite from the intensity of urban living. Urban parks are necessary for the health of cities and their inhabitants.

Figure 21



Figure 22



Parks and open spaces provide physical, mental and economic benefits by:

- Offering diverse outdoor recreational and exercise opportunities for Downtown residents, visitors and workforce.
- Promoting social health by offering gathering areas for celebrating heritage, family and the expression of ideas.

- Containing facilities that offer instructional classes, exposure to arts and crafts, and organized community and sporting events.
- Creating a sense of community, civic pride and identity.
- Becoming the “lungs” of the city, where vast amounts of vegetation and trees can grow and assist in carbon monoxide mitigation.
- Improving the price of real estate serving both the residents and potential investor who desire to live and start businesses in a city that offers such amenities.
- Parks should be highly visible, easily accessible and serve as desirable destinations. In doing so, Parks and open spaces will further encourage pedestrian activity Downtown, and begin to shift the cultural mindset toward a more pedestrian-friendly Downtown.

Parks and Open Spaces Allure:

Downtown parks contribute greatly to the city’s allure as a walkable city. More active and vibrant parks create destinations that draw pedestrians from one downtown area to another. The key to creating community parks is to make them accessible and pedestrian-friendly. They also need to be accessible by foot, bike or private transportation. The concept of a pedestrian-friendly path that connects all parks may be possible. This pedestrian path could be accomplished by using paving stones on the pathways to create bright, winding lanes that connect the Parks.

Figure 23



Activate the Existing Parks

Jacksonville already has several of parks and open spaces, however, these parks and potential plazas can better serve a pedestrian environment with the addition of key physical and programmatic improvements that cater to visitors, residents, the workforce and not just sport. More active and vibrant parks create destinations that draw pedestrians from one Downtown

neighborhood to another. Increased activation may be achieved by the following recommendations:

- Create programming for new and existing small and medium sized performance spaces.
- Create numerous short distance destinations that can be frequented often.
- Promote and organize events at public gathering spaces.
- Offer activities to populate parks year round.
- Offer free Wi-Fi access in all Downtown parks to attract nontraditional park users.
- Clean and maintain existing public restrooms and establish others.
- Dedicate funding for park programming.

Some of these improvements have already been adopted by Jacksonville Mayor's office as well as community organizations. However, this concept could be adopted more widely at other and additional city parks, offering more people the opportunity to walk to, and participate in, community events. Park facilities that would allow for events like these on a year-round basis would improve Downtown pedestrian traffic. Another way to enhance and brand existing parks, plazas and open spaces will through the recommendations identified by studioMAIN and Main Street Arkansas. All Architecture, signage, lighting, benches and shelters in these public spaces should also reflect the character and identity of the distinctive Jacksonville downtown neighborhoods.

Create temporary, pedestrian-only areas

Part of the magic of a vibrant urban area are the surprises one encounters while exploring. Temporary changes in the fabric and activities of the pedestrian environment help create these moments of discovery and delight. This approach can be used in a number of special events, such as the Downtown Art Market and Oktoberfest just to mention two possible events. The recommendation to add small art galleries would be a great opportunity to create a pedestrian-only setting. Other opportunities for excitement can be explored in a proposed Theatre District which could be motion pictures as well as plays.

These events should be encouraged and coordinated throughout the year to create a network of spaces that activate the community neighborhood. The rationale behind this is to introduce the concept of a pedestrian-only Downtown core. People and businesses will then begin to see and feel the dynamics of several city blocks without busy automobile traffic.

New Parks and Plazas as part of the Jacksonville Area Plan

While some parks and open space do exist in Jacksonville, the Downtown area is currently underserved in this regard. A Plan must identify several key locations for additional parks and plazas. This Master Plan will depend on studioMAIN to make these final recommendations.

However, this Master Plan recommends that plans be developed to secure land for such parks and plazas. The focus of these parks should be on healthy living and family-friendly environments. This Master Plan calls for making Downtown a more ‘family-friendly’ place; providing areas of activity like a Downtown Children’s Playground is a step in the right direction.

Create a Network of Complete Streets

Great destinations and districts are a fundamental part of creating a vibrant pedestrian environment. Just as important is a clearly navigable network of pedestrian connections between them. The City of Jacksonville should identify a framework of Green Streets as a means to enhance the public realm through street, trees and landscaping. This concept should be expanded to include the concepts of Complete Streets. This concept is a multidisciplinary approach to designing streets to accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, appropriate public transit, automobiles and adjacent property owners, while promoting an environmentally sustainable environment. Design criteria that should be considered include:

- Ample sidewalk widths that accommodate pedestrians, sidewalk cafes and vendors.
- Street tree placement that provides necessary balances of sun and shade during summer months.
- Reduced number and width of vehicular lanes.
- Two-way traffic where possible.
- Dedicated bike lanes with dedicated timed traffic signals that give bicyclists precedence over automobiles.
- Pedestrian priority crosswalks.
- Materials, furnishings and signage that clearly designate these as the primary pedestrian ways.
- Dedicated funds for capital improvements and maintenance for all Green Streets.

Figure 24



Figure 25



Create a Signature Downtown Park

Jacksonville should consider investing in the creation of a 21st century signature open space that makes a bold statement and announces the City's intention to be a progressive, forward-looking city. Such a park would be a major draw for visitors, as well as residents and the Jacksonville downtown workforce. Options do exist for the location of such a park. Specific components that could be included in this park are:

- A design and theme corresponding with the four seasons.
- Elements that are multi-functional in design to allow for concerts, recreation, speeches/meetings, indoor and outdoor events, and wildlife/landscaping.
- A multi-tier format, allowing for the design or redesign of a facility for each season in a high-tech fashion with as much flexibility as possible. This could be a one-of-a-kind, technologically-engineered facility. It is possible to achieve this goal by examining the design, functions, accessibility and programming of other such facilities. A specific plan needs to be developed as an outdoor amenity to attract visitors, residents, workers and students to the park
- Expand the Nixon Library to accommodate new uses that help activate an associated park based on the recommendations of a Sub-Master Plan that deals with the specifics of parks and plazas.
- Create clear street-level pedestrian connections to link key streets, New Plazas, Parks, new Museums, exhibits and expanded use of the Nixon Library

- Provide enhanced safety and maintenance services to parks and other expanded downtown amenities.
- Enhance the park’s function as the central Downtown location for community celebrations and festivals.
- City Investments in the downtown area, including a park and other designed facilities.

Figure 26



- Encourage a mix of activities and vibrant, transparent ground-floor uses in buildings facing the park.
- Community safety is very important in a pedestrian environment and here are a few recommendations for improved pedestrian safety that include:
 - Installation of emergency phones in strategic areas of downtown where there have been higher instances of crime. These phones should be in public places with a direct connection to the Jacksonville Police Department. These types of phones are most often seen on college campuses, creating a sense of security and comfort, especially at night.

Perception of Safety

Another area which is of primary concern to citizens is the perception of safety. Citizens should have a sense of the safety of the community. High risk situations should be avoided by insisting on regulations regarding the parks and grassy areas becoming “hangouts for characters and criminals” that may increase the risk of pedestrian safety.

Further recommendations for improving the perception of safety in downtown Jacksonville include:

- Implement recommendations to expand and enhance existing programs for the homeless, including establishing more 24-hour facilities for the homeless and ensuring a balanced distribution of service providers throughout Jacksonville. Obtain local community involvement and share the available pool of resources.
- Reevaluate all guidelines and policies relating to homelessness and vagrancy.
- Implement a “Good Neighbor” program in the Downtown area, including a website and hotline for sharing information among business and residents and monthly or quarterly neighborhood meetings. The program would be useful in identifying specific trends in downtown and could be used as an important tool in identifying and combating crime on a macro level.
- The development of safety education programs for the community
- Create an Alcohol Impact Area which focuses on specific problem areas of downtown where public intoxication issues are prevalent. The media coverage associated with these incidents creates a perception that areas of Downtown may be less safe than they actually are. Programs might be considered where merchants in an established area could be prohibited from selling certain types of alcohol during certain hours.

Objective 6:

Redesign a City traffic plan, parking and streetscape design minimizing the use of the auto downtown, increasing

Work Plan and Implementation Considerations for Objective 6

Street Redesign for Transportation & Parking:

Admittedly, Jacksonville’s traffic situation is not a major problem but with the a renovated downtown and new traffic issues presented by the new high school environment consideration should be given to maximizing street, traffic and parking in a manner that will enhance the Jacksonville pedestrian environment for the short and long term. The priority currently given to private vehicular traffic must be significantly decreased if the goals of the JDD are to be achieved. After evaluating best practices from around the world and across the country, multiple strategies can be identified that will allow for pedestrians, bicycles and appropriate community transit to take priority over private motor vehicles. If implemented, the footprint of private vehicular traffic will be decreased and the footprint dedicated to those on foot, bicycle or mass transit will increase. These recommendations are based on the following assumptions that been tested in other communities.

- Design should be based on future expectations and demand, not on past behavior.

- Consistently definitive and visionary leadership is required for success.
- A major shift in the manner that parking, transit and the pedestrian and bicycle environments are planned and implemented must occur. Therefore, decisive steps must be taken early on with the expectation that these recommendations will play out over many years.
- Minimizing private vehicular traffic Downtown will best be achieved by implementing a three pronged strategy:
 - Locate parking hubs at the periphery of the central B\business district. These parking hubs would cover the parking requirements of any new developments they are in close proximity to. In addition, these parking hubs would address the increased parking demand generated by population growth, and would intercept traffic prior to entrance into the downtown proper. These hubs could function as transportation oriented developments and be co- located at any future major transit stops and public parks.
 - In conjunction with these parking hubs, build-out plans for any necessary community transit system must address the various needs of the community. Any future system should include a variety of transit options and technologies appropriate for Jacksonville.
 - The pedestrian, bicycling and mass transit environments must receive sufficient investment and space allocation to ensure their prominence as the preferred means of movement through and around the downtown area. These ideas are explored in more depth below and are organized into the following arenas:
 - Parking
 - Appropriate Mass Transit
 - Traffic Management
 - Bicycling
 - Pedestrian Movement

Figure 27



Parking

Establishing a more pedestrian-friendly environment inherently involves reducing the number of private vehicles within that environment. Because many pedestrians may arrive Downtown as drivers prior to becoming pedestrians, complete eradication of private vehicles within the environment is impractical. Therefore, systematic parking is critical to establishing the most beneficial pedestrian environment. Such systems must be modified in order to ensure that they add to, rather than detract from, the pedestrian environment. In order to ensure that parking systems improve and respond to future needs and growth in the pedestrian environment, consider these recommendations are designed to achieve the following:

- Reduce parking demand in downtown Jacksonville.
- Centralize the majority of parking areas/spaces in strategic areas.
- Use the existing parking infrastructure more efficiently.
 - Short-term Recommendations
 - Encourage the use of “shared parking” in any new developments within the downtown area.
 - Encourage developers to “unbundle” parking in new developments.
 - Encourage businesses in the downtown area to implement “commute reduction programs” for their employees.
 - Decrease the maximum allowed time limits for on-street parking meters.
 - Price on-street parking to achieve a 15 percent vacancy
 - Price on-street parking directly proportionate to the demand at any given time.
- Establish “Maximum Parking Requirements” as opposed to “Minimum Parking Requirements” within the zoning code for new development.
- Continue to provide and enhance parking information for visitors and users via the downtown Jacksonville websites.
- Provide real time information on the location of available spaces.
- Create parking hubs in strategic locations on the outskirts of the downtown area.
- There may not be a shortage of planned parking options and a lack of current parking strategies creates a deficient system that is a detriment to a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- The implementation of the parking recommendations within this Plan represents a paradigm shift. Embracing such a shift is absolutely necessary in support of the pedestrian environment.

Old Paradigm: Motorists are able to find convenient, inexpensive and plentiful parking. This is accomplished by providing generous minimum parking requirements and utilizing indirect payment methods (i.e. indirect payment through taxes and/or building rents).

New Paradigm: Motorists have multiple parking options, with convenience tied to cost. The more convenient to Downtown, the more expensive the parking is. The less convenient to Downtown, the less expensive it is. This paradigm promotes direct payment for parking infrastructure. Furthermore, parking facilities should be utilized as much as possible; incorporating parking requirements that provide sufficient parking based on market demand rather than plentiful parking regardless of demand. This paradigm shift will work if drivers are well informed about all of their parking options.

Reducing Parking Demand and availability in the Heart of the Jacksonville:

The most effective way to reduce parking demand is to provide incentives for reduced private vehicle use within the Downtown area. In order to provide such incentive, the city must re-examine its free public parking pricing strategies within the city. Currently, it is totally free to park in any areas of the downtown. After all, what is better than finding free parking right in front of your destination? The current paradigm encourages such behavior and can add vehicle congestion to downtown when the area begins to develop. This behavior runs contrary to development of a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Strategies to Reduce Demand

- Price on-street parking so as to achieve a 15 percent vacancy. By adding the cost of on-street parking, potential parking issues can be significantly reduced and increase a pedestrian environment. Specifically, numerous studies have shown that the most efficient system is one in which on-street parking is priced to achieve a 15 percent vacancy. By increasing on street meter pricing, there will be a resulting decrease in on-street parking demand; there will be less vehicle traffic in the downtown and the pedestrian environment will be enhanced. Funds can be designated for further pedestrian improvements.
- Price on-street parking directly proportionate to the demand at any given time. By implementing pricing that is higher during peak driving periods, potential congestion in Jacksonville will be further relieved, providing for an even more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Decrease the maximum allowed time limits at on-street parking meters. By decreasing the maximum allowed time at parking meters from two hours to one and a half hours, the city will further encourage drivers to utilize on-street parking for short-term needs only. This time limit will encourage longer-term parkers to park in other locations.
- Break the cycle of automobile dependency through innovative parking requirements and recommendations. Such policies include establishing Maximum Parking Requirements as opposed to Minimum Parking Requirements for new developments.

Centralize the Majority of Parking Spaces in Strategic downtown Areas

- Create parking hubs in strategic locations on the outskirts of the downtown.
- In an effort to further reduce congestion within the City, large parking structures should be built at strategic locations immediately outside of the downtown.
- Such a strategy would ultimately decrease demand for private parking in the downtown and provide an incentive for development of private lots and garages; such development would in turn serve to enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment in downtown Jacksonville. As part of the creation of parking hubs, sensitive and innovative design would be needed to offset the visual impacts of these larger structures. Some interesting examples of parking structures are depicted in the illustrations below. For more detailed design recommendations see the “Design and Amenities” section of this report.

Figure 28



Figure 28 shows an example of the entry way of an underground parking garage. This garage has 3 levels down and is built below multiple businesses and in a retail section of the city. Conveniently located just steps from the Santa Fe Depot, the Railyard Garage is a tri-level, underground parking garage featuring 404 spaces, including 15 disabled spaces and 1 electric car charging station. The hours are daily, 6 a.m. to 12 midnight. The rates are \$1 for the first hour, \$2 for the second hour and each hour after and there is a \$12 maximum. Local businesses are above the garage and all businesses validate parking.

Traffic Management

Creating safe and convenient vehicle management solutions is a component of creating a healthy pedestrian environment. In order for people to walk safely and conveniently Downtown, they need to be able to interface with vehicular traffic in a non-threatening and safe environment.

Although the specifics of traffic management solutions are malleable, the concepts are general:

- The traffic management system must get people from where they live to Downtown in a timely, safe, clean and economic manner.

The system must encourage convenient access to Downtown that does not impede walkability.

- The traffic management system must integrate with existing and future modes of transportation, including transit, cycling and walking.
- The system must be scaled properly to enhance the pedestrian experience, while also serving motorists.

A pedestrian-friendly environment does not preclude vehicle-friendly streets. In fact, a well-balanced traffic management system will make streets more efficient for all modes of transit, while at the same time enhancing the pedestrian environment. “Traffic calming” measures and techniques are a tangible element of a well-balanced traffic management system. Traffic-calming measures fall into two general groups: one based on traffic management strategies and the other based on physical design techniques. Traffic management strategies include:

- The issuance of special need passes
- Truck restrictions
- Signalization systems (including intersection design and signal preemption)
- Transportation system management
- Parking management
- Traffic reduction ordinances
- Car and fuel taxation
- Speed limits

Physical design techniques create physical impediments to speeding and other vehicle activities that detract from the pedestrian environment. Such impediments include:

- Road undulations
- Humps
- Rumble strips
- Speed tables
- Strong vertical elements to create pinch points or gateways
- Traffic circles
- Offset intersections
- Diagonal diverters
- Virtual speed bumps

Recommendations

- Enhance the education of potential Downtown visitors that parking Downtown is primarily a perceived issue of a lack of facilities rather than reality.
- Promote where to park safely and cost effectively for various activity centers.
- Add crosswalk improvements, such as striping and ADA compliant ramps and signals where they do not already exist.

- Traffic-calming physical design techniques should be implemented or enhanced in the most heavily used pedestrian areas.
- Begin policy discussions about traffic-calming traffic management strategies that could be implemented in the mid- and long-term.
- Change one-way streets wherever possible to two-way streets to improve pedestrian safety, slow traffic and make better use of the road network by distributing traffic more evenly throughout Downtown streets in the morning and evening peak hours. Consideration should be given to the two one-way lanes of West Main to determine the best design for a new JDD planning effort.

In addition, as the Downtown streets get closer to meeting capacity, phasing in structured parking facilities at the periphery of the City is recommended to promote the success of a pedestrian zone. Policymakers could begin to formulate policies and plans for implementing and executing traffic-calming traffic management strategies, including the continuation of converting one-way streets to two-way traffic.

Planning must be done to examine street closure, redesign and development. For example Jacksonville Main Street is divided in some of the area being considered for downtown development. There are two lanes in each direction. A study must be completed to look at the feasibility of closing one lane in each direction in order to manage traffic congestion, pedestrian orientation, biking and the establishment of new landscaping, business development, parks and plazas. Consideration must be given to needs of high school traffic movement as related to walkability and other pedestrian needs. As with other projects undertaken as part of this Master Plan, a Sub-Master Plan will be required along with a development planning group to guide this process. There will specific requirements for street design based on traffic demands. In addition studioMAIN will provide specific recommendations for street and streetscape design.

Bicycling

Figure 29



A component of creating a walkable Downtown is to encourage transportation alternatives to the

private vehicle. Because of Jacksonville's mild climate and outdoor-oriented population, bicycling should be encouraged equally with mass transit and walking as a means of personal transport, as well as a means to improve the quality of life. Critical to the success of the downtown bicycling initiative is implementing policies which foster awareness of bicycling benefits and supporting an enhanced commitment to a bike-friendly infrastructure. This section discusses the policy and physical improvements needed in order to make Jacksonville a truly bike-friendly community.

A complete, continuous, interconnected network of named bicycle paths and routes is needed. Each route should be marked and lit, governed by traffic signs and equipped with signals of its own. This network should be interwoven with any public transit system; the street grid for cars, trucks, and taxis; and the sidewalk grid for pedestrians. Although working in concert with these other networks, the bicycling network must be separated from them to ensure that it is safe and useful for everyone, from eight year olds to 80 year olds. Strong leadership and forward thinking policies are needed in order to achieve the necessary physical improvements and enhanced physical bicycling infrastructure.

Figure 30



Recommendations

- Although much of what is recommended in this section should be addressed in any Jacksonville Bicycle Master Plan, the resulting bicycling network should continue to evolve. Like all these recommendations, a city representative should be identified to ensure that recommendations for bike improvements on major transportation projects are integrated into design and budget processes, thereby more effectively promoting bicycling as an alternative form of transportation.

Reinforcing good biking behavior and creating incentives to bicyclists are crucial if Jacksonville is to meet its objective of being a bike-friendly city. Education of bicyclists is necessary, including widely distributed marketing materials and safety information, along with maps of bike routes and trails in and around Jacksonville.

- Appropriate new construction in downtown could be required to provide bike storage and consideration for shower facilities and locker rooms.
 - Secure bike storage should be provided at transit stations to better enable multi-modal commuting.
 - Inner-ring neighborhoods need to be connected to the downtown area and to each other by quality, fully-connected and identified bike routes. Bike routes on large roads must be visible, physically curbed, fenced or graded away from both traffic and walkers. On smaller, neighborhood streets, where bikes and cars do mingle, the shared transport surface should be calmed with speed humps, traffic circles and curb bump-outs.
 - Parking lanes adjacent to primary bike lanes should be eliminated to ensure bicyclist's safety.
 - In addition to an information campaign, incentives should be created for commuters who choose to bike to work independent of the intrinsic benefits such as fuel savings and health. Incentives offered to bicyclists should be in line with those offered in other cities such as Seattle, Washington, and Palo Alto, California, including cash vouchers which can be used at local businesses.
 - Over time, continue improving bike routes and creating designated bike lanes with physical separation from vehicle lanes and pedestrians on primary bike thoroughfares
- Reinforcing good biking behavior and creating incentives to bicyclists are crucial if Jacksonville is to meet an objective of being a bike-friendly city. Education of bicyclists is necessary, including widely distributed marketing materials and safety information, and maps of bike routes and trails in and around the City.
- Appropriate new construction in Downtown could be required to provide bike storage, shower facilities and locker rooms.
 - Secure bike storage should be provided at specific locations to better enable multi-modal commuting.

Figure 31



Figure 28 clearly identifies a safe bicycle lane.

Pedestrian Movement

Downtown Jacksonville potentially can be a very successful place for retail and businesses, as well as a great pedestrian environment. The goal of the recommendations in this section is to summarize additional key strategies needed to elevate the level of pedestrian traffic flows in the downtown shopping areas. Much has already been stated about a pedestrian environment in the Jacksonville downtown plans. Some additional suggestions are stated below.

Recommendations

- Use of the Barnes Dance (all pedestrian-phase signals) at strategic crosswalk locations.
- Utilize more countdown clocks at pedestrian crossings and increase the walk time for pedestrians.
- Improve pedestrian direction signage at areas. Install message centers and street signage.
- Provide incentives to promote walking and market items like pedometers, water bottles and backpacks (for a change of shoes).
- Improve lighting on pedestrian walkways. (Determine if pedestrian-activated lighting at intersections is a practical solution.)
- Work to implement the Downtown Plan recommendations related to improving the pedestrian environment.
- Increase ground-level retail and street-side dining.

The development of centralized parking areas is intended to reduce the amount of cars downtown and to provide safe, convenient and economical parking. The reduction in cars and some modest improvements will greatly enhance the Downtown pedestrian-friendly environment.

Objective 7

Working with the Jacksonville Historic District Board, improve the use of unattractive and underutilized existing properties and the integration the City Historical Preservation areas

Work Plan and Implementation Strategies for Objective 7

Add a member of the Jacksonville Historic District Board to the Steering Committee

Develop a systematic plan of how the Board's efforts integrates with the JDD plan.

Defining Underutilized Buildings

Jacksonville has a wide range of underutilized buildings. Some of these buildings have temporary businesses but many remain vacant. Almost all are owned by companies or individuals and many are for sale. These underutilized buildings may be defined several ways, depending on one's perspective. Real estate professionals, appraisers and developers may define an underutilized property in economic terms, that it has not achieved its "highest and best use," or its maximum profitmaking capacity. Planners and government leaders generally have a broader perspective, taking into account the impact of underutilized buildings on the community's stability, economic vitality and property values. In addition to the fiscal gain of an occupied building, they strive to find a higher and better use that meets the needs of the community. A combination of several factors may be used as a way to measure under-utilization in a community, and the final determination rests with the community and its priorities.

Identifying and Prioritizing the Buildings to be repurposed

Most communities have multiple vacant or underutilized buildings, and so creating a prioritized list will help Jacksonville leaders know where and how to focus their resources on repurposing plans for these buildings. This will be a community-specific evaluation depending on the community's short/long term plans, economic environment, demographics, zoning and land use, cultural influences, and other factors. However, there are some general questions to ask to help determine the priority list, such as:

- Does the building have an historic and/or architectural significance? Conducting a historic and architectural survey is the first step towards identifying these significant buildings, and can be a useful marketing and economic planning tool. For example, if deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which is our nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation and protection, a building can qualify for federal rehabilitation tax credits (if income-producing) or preservation planning grants (if utilized by a nonprofit). In addition, a NRHP listing is a helpful marketing tool because of the universal recognition of this significant designation. Jacksonville has a listing of these building, some of which have been classified for other potential sites, and strategies must be developed to capitalize on this NRHP opportunity. A planning group, unless already exists, must be established to examine how these building can became part of the downtown development strategy. This strategy may include plans for renovation, a "pop-up" business environment or more permanent businesses.
- Is it a community anchor or local landmark? Iconic commercial or institutional buildings have a special place in the hearts of local residents, because they are the tangible proof of their shared history. Personal connections to buildings can span back for generations, and provide a sense of continuity and permanency to the community. Because of this strong local identity and often prominent location, these buildings should be high on the priority list. Due to their visibility, another benefit of

selecting and repurposing a local landmark is its potential to ignite surrounding rehabilitation efforts.

- Is the building marketable? Buildings with marketing appeal will sell faster than those without. For example, is the building located in a desirable and accessible location? Is it near a population center? Does it retain enough of its historic integrity, such as quality craftsmanship, or design that makes it appealing to a prospective owner? Determining the building's marketable attributes and effectively promoting them will be a key factor for investment.
- Is there a financial return for the community if the buildings can be City owned? Repurposing a building that has the potential to offer a financial return for the community, is also an important consideration. The financial return could be in the form of property taxes, jobs, housing, needed public services, or the potential of spurring additional building revitalization.
- Is it in danger of demolition? Local governments with an overabundance of vacant and deteriorated buildings may have a "demolition list" to permanently raze them. It's important for community leaders to periodically review this list for viable and significant buildings that may have potential for repurposing.

Ownership of the Building

Determining a repurposing plan for the building begins with the involvement of the building's owner. If the owner is private and absent, and is allowing the building to deteriorate and remain vacant, ideally he/she is willing to be involved in its repurposing plans. The owner may be willing to list it for sale and engage the help of the local government leaders or Chamber of Commerce for marketing assistance. The property owner may consider donating the building to the City of Jacksonville or nonprofit organization, which would provide stewardship of the building and allow the property owner a charitable tax deduction. If the building has gone through foreclosure, is owned by a bank or mortgage company, or is listed on a tax sale, our City might consider purchasing the property and marketing it for sale or lease. This pro-active approach will ensure that the most viable, significant buildings will be saved from continued deterioration, which can lead to non-reversible demolition.

Evaluation and Intervention - Identify and Stabilize Immediate Threats

If the building or buildings have been vacant or neglected for a period of time, it's imperative to identify immediate threats and secure the building from further deterioration. The building should be protected from water infiltration, animals and trespassers with short-term low-cost repairs, which will buy time until further action can be taken. There are four main areas that require immediate and ongoing inspections, and should be done by a qualified building contractor. The repairs should be done with proper building materials and techniques that don't destroy the building's historic features and take into account future rehabilitation efforts.

Roof leaks can lead to myriad problems, from the rotting of roof rafters and trusses to the deterioration of interior finishes and the creation of mold. Inspections should include checking for broken or missing shingles, holes or cracks in the roof surface membrane, loose or rusted sheet metal flashing, openings around vents, between the roof boards, in the valleys, and at the intersections of chimneys and parapet walls, and the inspection of gutters and downspouts. These openings may be repaired using replacement shingles, flashing materials and sealants. The attic area should also be inspected for severe deterioration of the roof trusses or rafters, which may require stabilization in order to make the building safe for occupants.

Windows – Whether it’s a missing window or the deterioration of window parts, there should be short term repairs conducted to alleviate water infiltration. If a window is missing, the opening should be boarded up and if window parts are missing or broken, they may be temporarily repaired with wood patches and sealants. Using plastic or canvas tarps are not suitable solutions because they can be easily destroyed by harsh weather conditions and are easily accessible by animals and vandals.

Exterior siding– Missing or broken corner boards or siding can also lead to water infiltration and may be temporarily repaired with wood, flashing material and sealants.

Foundation – If the basement or crawlspace shows signs of leaks, cracks or instability, it should be properly sealed from future water infiltration and securely braced for stabilization.

Mothballing

After the building has been secured, if funds are not currently available to put the building into a useable condition, it may be necessary to close up the building temporarily to protect it from weather and vandalism. This process, known as “mothballing,” can be a necessary and effective means of protecting the building while planning for its future.

Contamination, Safety and Health Hazards

A basic walk-through inspection can reveal potential contamination and safety and health hazards that may require further investigation. It is not the responsibility of the seller to clean up the site, remediate hazardous materials, or remove all potential safety hazards, but they should be aware of them in order to make the building safe for visitors, and marketing the building for sale. Costs to remediate environmental and building contaminants can vary widely depending on the particular site conditions. There are a variety of safety hazards that may exist and should be documented during early inspections. The building and access to it should be made reasonably safe for prospective buyers and visitors. Some of the more common hazardous building materials include asbestos and lead-based paint, which may be found in a variety of materials and surfaces. Other health and safety hazards may include:

- Mold/mildew

- Faulty electrical wiring, frayed wires or wiring that is not up to code
- Electrical switches
- Termite damage
- Chimney flues that are in ill repair or lined with clay tile
- Non-existent or insufficient air handling systems
- Animal droppings
- Mercury-filled devices or switches

Potential buyers of a commercial or industrial property have a responsibility to protect themselves from contamination liability that may exist. The first step is to contact an environmental consultant to perform a Phase I investigation. Phase I typically involves research of past building uses and a basic site inspection to determine if contaminants exist. If there are red flags in the history or other indications that the site is contaminated, the consultant would recommend a Phase II investigation. Phase II is a more in-depth process involving evaluation of soil and water samples and building materials. This may ultimately lead to a Baseline Environmental Assessment (BEA). A BEA puts Phase I and II investigation results into a specific format, and provides liability protection for the new property owner from pre-existing contamination they didn't cause. This report, which is presented to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and serves to document the buyer's due diligence, is critical to insuring the future development of the property.

Zoning

Historic properties are subject to local zoning restrictions, which may effect the future repurposing of a vacant or underutilized building. Zoning regulations dictate not only the use of the building in specific districts, but also a variety of development actions such as density, maximum size of a building, the required spaces around the building, building setbacks and the number of off-street parking spaces. If a historic building is located in a residential area not zoned for commercial use, the property owner may want to get a variance or special use permit in order to change this restriction prior to listing the building for sale. Rehabilitation plans that include the construction or removal of building additions or parking changes will also be affected by zoning restrictions and generally require a variance, special use permit or rezoning. Anticipating these types of development and repurposing changes and applying for the appropriate variances and/or permits will make the historic building more marketable for a potential buyer.

Renaissance Zoning

Renaissance zones may be used by local government entities to foster economic opportunities in specific deteriorated areas in a community. By providing exemptions and credits from certain taxes, commercial and industrial improvements may be stimulated and help to secure property owners for vacant and underutilized buildings

Building Codes

According to the building code, the local building inspector has the authority to insure the building's safety and accessibility, and reserves the right to counter any code that he/she feels does not meet the minimum safety requirements. If the property owner does not agree with their decision, he/she can appeal the decision to the local government body. Many communities are often willing to share their expertise and it may be worthwhile to consult with their city staff on difficult building code issues for historic buildings.

Form-Based Codes

First and foremost, form-based codes are place-based. According to the Form-Based Codes Institute, (FBCI), they are adapted to fit the unique characteristics of a community and intended to require new development to fit within the context of the community and reinforce a sense of place. They allow for the unique ecology of a community by permitting a mixture of uses and reflecting the importance of the relationship between various uses and building types to one another, as part of an integral neighborhood and overall community. Because of this focus on design and form rather than use, form-based codes directly impact the rehabilitation of vacant and underutilized historic buildings.

Insurance and Liability

The property owner is responsible for proper building and liability insurance. If the building is owned by a local government entity, the insurance should be covered by their blanket policy. If it is privately owned, and local government officials are actively showing the building to prospective buyers, they should have a copy of the liability insurance policy on file. Vacant buildings should have "no trespassing" signs posted visibly on the exterior.

Historic buildings may be insured two different ways. One way is to insure for replacement value, which involves replicating the original historic building materials and construction, and is generally very expensive and cost-prohibitive. The other way is to insure the cost of rehabilitating the building using substitute, compatible building materials and construction techniques. Most historic property owners opt for the second choice.

Assessments and Plans - Building (or Conditions) Assessment

Understanding the building's current levels of deterioration is crucial in determining how to stabilize, repurpose and market the building. The assessment can be brief or detailed, depending on the complexity of the building and available funds. A building assessment is a description of the building's architectural and structural integrity, and the current physical condition of its features, materials, finishes, and systems. It involves inspecting every inch of the building, from the foundation to the roof, and may also include an evaluation of its hazardous materials, safety features and handicap accessibility. The final report may include recommendations for additional investigations, tests and point out areas that need immediate repairs. Ultimately the building assessment can serve as a base for the creation of a master rehabilitation plan, which will be a guide for the property owner when planning the rehabilitation project. The cost of the building

assessment will be dependent on the size and complexity of the building, as well as the level of detailed information in the final report.

Master Rehabilitation Plan

A master rehabilitation plan serves as a comprehensive guide for the complete rehabilitation of a historic building in order to bring it to a state of functional utility. It is generally created from a building assessment and details the scope of work to be conducted, often prioritized into phased projects. A master rehabilitation plan may be a very useful tool for prospective property owners who are skeptical of the building's condition or unsure of how to rehabilitate it. It also helps to familiarize the new owner with immediate, short term and long term repairs so he/she can secure financing and establish a timetable for the project. Creating the scope of work should take into account applicable zoning regulations and building codes, as well as safety and fire issues and the abatement of hazardous building materials. It may also require the expertise of specific building specialists, such as structural engineers or those qualified to check the various building systems including the electrical, plumbing, HVAC or fire protection. If any building is eligible or listed on the NRHP and federal rehabilitation tax credits can be utilized, the plan should also incorporate the National Park Service's *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

Historic Structure Report (HSR)

In some cases, a more comprehensive report is required, and a historic structure report (HSR) may be a suitable choice. The HSR provides detailed documentary, graphic, and physical information about a property's history and existing condition, and also addresses management and/or owner goals for the re-use of the property should the City own the property or have a working partnership with the owner. It may also include recommended rehabilitation projects, prioritized in a phased work plan with estimated costs.

The assessment report, master rehabilitation plan or historic structure report should be conducted by an experienced historic architect, consultant or contractor who has knowledge of historic building materials, construction and architecture. Special building experts may be consulted for mechanical systems, environmental issues, structural engineering, hazardous materials, and other unique construction issues.

A feasibility report in this context is an analysis of the reuse opportunities of a specific historic building. This analysis requires an understanding of the building, its surroundings and the community's needs. This report is generally conducted by professionals and like a building assessment, can be basic or comprehensive, depending on the size and complexity of the building and available funds. A feasibility report serves as a guide for the community as they pursue suitable developers, business owners, or services to fill vacant and underutilized buildings. The most effective feasibility report analyzes both the building's characteristics and the community's needs in order to determine the best possible reuse opportunities.

An analysis of the building's construction and floor plan will help to determine compatible new uses that will capitalize on its assets, while protecting its historic integrity. For example, a former warehouse with an open floor plan may be more suitable for apartments than a historic office building with numerous individual small offices. The analysis should also consider the compatibility of the building and its potential use with its surroundings.

A feasibility report will also identify gaps in the local economic structure and provide knowledge of specific community needs or demands not currently met. Data is derived from a variety of sources and generally includes:

- An on-site inspection of the building to determine its physical opportunities/constraints
- Face-to-face interviews with stakeholders and individuals with knowledge of the local building and market conditions
- Discussions with potential buyers/renters who are actively seeking different space or physical settings other than those they are currently committed.
- Surveys of local business owners to determine the types of businesses that are missing in the community
- Discussions with local residents to determine their retail spending patterns and use of related services

ADA Compliance

Most historic buildings were not constructed for handicap accessibility. However, with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, access to public places became a civil right and owners of historic properties are obligated to evaluate their building to determine how to make it more accessible. Accessibility should be provided to the main entrance and/or primary public space, restrooms, secondary spaces, as well as to services, amenities, and programs offered by the occupant. Solutions should be considered within a preservation context, and conducted sensitively so as not to destroy the building's historic building materials and features. Local and state codes and federal laws should also be taken into consideration. If the property owner determines that certain modifications will threaten or destroy the historic integrity of the building, an exception may be requested to a State Barrier Free Design Board. These type of State Boards have the responsibility to receive, review, and process requests for exceptions to the barrier free design specifications, require appropriate equivalent alternatives and receive, process, and make recommendations for barrier free design rules.

The Value of a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Listing

The NRHP is our nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation and protection. A NRHP listing is an honorific rather than protective designation, and is a way to market the building and raise awareness of its importance. In addition, this makes an income-producing property eligible for federal rehabilitation tax credits. In order to qualify, the building must be either individually listed or be a contributing structure in a National Register historic district.

The federal rehabilitation tax credits amount to 20 per cent of the qualified rehabilitation work performed and are received back in the form of federal income tax credits. The purpose of these tax credits is to help offset the cost of upgrading or changing the use of a significant historic building. Credits may be calculated on capital costs such as mechanical, plumbing, roof work, painting, new bathrooms or kitchens and some soft costs such as architectural or engineering fees and permits. For example, if a property owner rehabilitated a downtown building to include upstairs apartments, and total rehabilitation costs were \$100,000, the property owner would receive \$20,000 of federal tax credits upon completion of the project. These credits may be carried forward 20 years or sold (syndicated) to another tax-paying entity for cash under certain circumstances.

These standards recommend the preservation of historic building materials and character-defining features, while allowing for significant alterations and/or additions in order to make the building efficient for contemporary use. The local government entity may want to be proactive in designating a commercial National Register district so that all buildings, including those vacant and underutilized, would be eligible for these valuable tax credits. A local Historian may be willing to volunteer to assist with this effort. The first step is submitting a NRHP Preliminary Questionnaire in order to determine the property's eligibility for a NRHP listing. If funds are limited, at the very least, this Questionnaire could be submitted because confirming the building's eligibility is an important marketing tool. While the City of Jacksonville has a Historical Preservation Commercial District, other areas may be eligible for examination.

Grant Opportunities for Government Entities and Nonprofits

- Preservation Planning Grants - Funding for planning reports such as building assessments, feasibility reports, environmental studies, and master rehabilitation plans, are offered by national and state public and private foundations. In order to be eligible, the building must be owned or operated by a local unit of government or a qualified nonprofit. It also must be listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP, or a contributing structure in a NRHP district or local historic district. These grants typically require matching funds.
- Certified Local Government (CLG) – Jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), local communities work through a certification process to become recognized as a CLG. Once certified, CLGs make a local commitment to historic preservation and become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program. Any municipality can become a CLG, including a county, a township, a large city or small village, or a town. By meeting a few simple but important standards, a community may receive financial aid and technical assistance that will enhance and promote historic neighborhoods and commercial districts. An active CLG program can become an important planning vehicle for community development by identifying specific preservation projects and applying for grants to carry out the projects. Grants are awarded annually on a competitive basis and require matching funds. Grant

activities include: conducting a communitywide historic/architectural survey, writing a NRHP nomination, creating a feasibility study for a historic building, educating the community on the value of historic preservation and rehabilitation projects for buildings that are listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP.

- USDA Grant/Loan Programs - The Rural Business Enterprise Grant and Renewable Energy and Efficiency Grant are business programs that work in partnership with the private sector and community-based organizations to provide financial assistance and business planning. The Community Facilities Program is a local government program that offers direct and guaranteed loans and grants to finance and facilitate the development of over 80 different types of essential community facilities serving rural areas. Applicants are encouraged to apply for the funding they need, and then USDA determines the type and amount of funding they will provide the applicant.

Marketing and Financing

In Jacksonville, historical building are typically privately owned by local business people or possibly owners out of the City. There may be options for the City to purchase one or more buildings or assist current owners with marketing to new owners that may have an interest in maximizing the buildings potential. There are four primary factors that determine the marketability of a historic building: location, building condition, adaptive re-use opportunities, and price. As mentioned previously, the condition of the building can be documented by a building assessment or HSR and adaptive reuse opportunities by a feasibility report. Since the location of the building cannot be changed, flexible zoning options may enhance its marketability or helping in decision-making for purchase. The building's proximity to population centers such as downtown or adjacent neighborhoods also plays a role in the value of the building. Determining the market value and price of a historic building is often challenging and depends on a variety of factors.

Appraisal and Market Value

If the local unit of government owns the building and is offering it for sale, there may be a local requirement (city charter or ordinance) to allow this action. This may entail a vote by the city council or the community, in the form of a referendum. Once resolved, the next step is hiring a licensed, certified appraiser to determine a selling price for the building. The appraiser should be knowledgeable with historic buildings and familiar with the local commercial building market. Along with the appraisal, the local unit of government may want to consider a few other factors before establishing a selling price, including demand (local, regional, state and national) and how quickly they want to sell the building and return it to the tax rolls. It may be helpful to consult with a local real estate professional for his/her input on these issues.

Generally, leasing the building to a commercial business owner is a last resort solution, because it does not fully release the city's liability for the building, and does not provide tax dollars for the community. However, in some cases, it may be a good short term solution.

Identifying Marketable Attributes for Purchase or Marketing

Identifying the building's significant attributes helps to establish price for purchase or assist current owners in marketing it for sale. Besides the typical features, other marketable attributes may include:

- Construction year
- Architectural style
- Basic floor plan and number of floors
- Commercial grade HVAC system
- ADA compliancy
- Style and condition of windows, roof, foundation and exterior walls
- Unique interior features and finishes, including wall coverings, flooring, and lighting
- Architectural features that showcase quality building materials or craftsmanship such as leaded or stained glass windows, and parquet wood floors
- Proximity to population centers, i.e. downtown, adjacent neighborhoods, etc.
- Ample parking

Commercial property owners or even the City not only want to know the current features of the building, but also the opportunities of adapting the building to a new use. Is there room on the lot to construct an addition or increase the parking area? Can an exterior patio or deck be added? Can interior rooms be subdivided or enlarged without jeopardizing the structural integrity of the building? Understanding how a commercial property owner may view the building's possibilities will help in marketing it.

How to Reach Potential Buyers

Historic buildings are unique and generally require a slightly different marketing approach than a newer building. If the city does not already own the buildings and have plans for development they might be sold to entrepreneurs with creative plans. Here are a few suggestions of how this may be accomplished:

- Create a task force – If there is not a board or association actively marketing the community's vacant and underutilized buildings, the local government entity may want to consider creating a task force. It should be comprised of community leaders who know the local business climate, can assist with local financing and marketing efforts, and understand a prospective new owner's needs. It may include bankers, commercial property owners, real estate professionals and business owners.
- Seek out experienced developers – There are developers throughout the state (and nation) that are experienced at developing historic buildings and familiar with the available tax incentives and economic tools. This is a specialized area of development and finding these investors begins with networking with other community leaders. A

developer who has repurposed a downtown building in one community may be willing to do it in another one, and is worth seeking out.

- Advertise on “historic buildings for sale” websites - Because of the unique nature of historic properties, there are many national websites that specialize in marketing historic buildings that may be worth utilizing in order to appeal to historic property buyers.
- Consult with a real estate professional – Local real estate professionals, who specialize in commercial properties and are experienced with the local real estate market, can be a valuable resource if the building is listed for sale. Depending on the complexity and size of the building, it may be necessary to consult with a real estate professional that specializes in historic buildings, understands the historic preservation economic incentives, and has a network of potential commercial clients.

Community Investing

Our community may want to take on the challenge of filling the vacant and underutilized building through local investing efforts. In recent years, there’s been a push for innovative local financing for startup businesses, which has led to many successful community owned enterprises. Local investing, also called “locavesting,” is a powerful form of local commerce that may be a pathway to fulfilling new economic and social goals, including the utilization of vacant and underutilized historic buildings. Main Street, a MSHDA program, assists communities with the revitalization of their historic downtowns and focuses on how communities can create their own investing programs. According to National Main Street’s Joshua Bloom, community-owned businesses fall into four broad categories:

- Cooperative: A communally owned and managed business, operated for the benefit of its members
- Community-owned corporation: A traditional, for-profit corporation that integrates social enterprise principles;
- Small ownership group: A small, ad hoc investor group that capitalizes and/or operates a business as a partnership or closely held corporation;
- Investment fund: A community-based fund that invests debt or equity in local business ventures.

Here are some success stories of communities that have utilized these programs:

- Local Investment Opportunity Network (LION) - A citizen-based organization in Port Townsend, Washington dedicated to exploring local opportunities to promote economic self-reliance, environmental stewardship, and community well-being.
- Barrels Community Market—this downtown grocery store in Waterville, Maine, relies on residents to not only buy local, but work local as most of the staff are volunteers.

- **Company Shops Market**—this community-owned full-service food co-op and cafe in Burlington, North Carolina, showcases local producers.
- **Small Business Groups/Partnerships - Cops and Donuts** in Clare, Michigan is a example of nine members of the local police department who banded together to save a historic bakery business, and saved the historic building as well.
- **Crowdfunding** – Is a community-driven investment tool, which allows individual residents to invest.

The utilization of our (Jacksonville) historic building might be linked to our effort to conduct “Boot-Camp” type workshops for community members that might want to start a business such as a pop-up or a new business with a more permanent type environment.

Local Incentives

In addition to community investing programs, the local government entity may want to offer grants or low-interest loans to encourage economic investment and revitalization of downtown historic buildings. These incentives may include programs for general rehabilitation, façade improvement, elevator installation, new signage or more and may provide the local unit of government with some control over the rehabilitation work being conducted.

Federal and State Economic Incentives for Business Owners

- There are a variety of economic incentives offered by federal and state entities to rehabilitate historic properties. Most of these economic tools can be used in combination, and should be evaluated by the prospective owner’s accountant and/or City attorney to be sure they are feasible and financially advantageous. Here are some of the more useful incentives and their websites. These Programs vary by state and Arkansas may have some or all of them.

Economic Development Corp.

- **Community Development Block Grants** are administered by the Community Development and Assistance Division in many states , for eligible counties, cities, villages, and townships, usually with populations under 50,000, for economic development, community development and housing projects. In particular, there are two programs that pertain to historic buildings, the Façade Improvement Grant and Signature Building Grant.
- **Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA)** provides tax abatements for obsolete commercial or mixed-use buildings in a qualified local unit of government.
- **Rental Rehab Program** – This program is designed to improve investor-owned properties and spur economic development. Funding for Rental Rehab is generally provided through the unit of local government with jurisdiction for code enforcement and/or rental licensing.

- Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) – This program has been very successful in conjunction with federal rehabilitation tax credits and other incentives, in creating low income housing in vacant or underutilized properties, many of which have been downtown buildings
- Preservation Easements – A preservation or conservation easement is a private legal interest conveyed by a historic property owner to either a preservation organization or a government entity. It allows the property owner to permanently protect their historic property, while taking advantage of a federal charitable contribution deduction. A preservation easement is a complicated and expensive process and works primarily for larger projects, where the value of the easement is significant.
- Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits

Thinking Outside the Box

- Government- Nonprofit Partnerships – If the local unit of government is struggling to fill one of its own buildings, it may consider partnering with a stable community nonprofit. There are many communities that have these types of partnerships, and the most effective ones involve the government owning the building, and the nonprofit leasing it. Although the government doesn't generate tax dollars from this lease, they do fill an otherwise unoccupied building and are relieved of some liability. These partnerships work well when there's a long term renewable lease and the nonprofit pays a nominal lease fee, and is responsible for all utilities, maintenance and repairs of the building. It's also beneficial if the building is a local landmark, because the nonprofit will benefit from its recognition and garner community support for restoration projects.
- Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) - Credit is the lifeblood of every community. Without access to it, businesses cannot be started or expanded and vacant and underutilized buildings cannot be repurposed. The local unit of government may serve as a financial intermediary, by creating a revolving loan fund to make low-interest loans to new business owners or developers. These programs involve a pool of money that's been set aside to invest in community projects and as the loans are paid back, the funds revolve back into a pool of money to be utilized for other loans. They vary in size, scope and complexity while maintaining similar objectives. RLFs are useful in financing programs whose long term goals may involve community redevelopment and property acquisitions.
- Pop Ups – Another unique way to fill vacant buildings is by bringing empty places to life through “temporary use strategies” that demonstrate how vacancy can be an opportunity and an adventure, not just a liability. This is an emerging economic development tool, and works well for communities with vacant and underutilized

buildings in a down real estate market. Temporary events, special exhibits and start-up businesses can occupy vacant buildings for little to no rent, in an effort to keep the downtown vibrant and vacant buildings occupied. For start-up businesses, this is particularly helpful as it provides a low cost way to introduce their business to the community, and can lead to a long-term lease for the building owner. One of the more effective pop up programs was developed in Cleveland by Kent State University's

College of Architecture and Environmental Design, entitled Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative, accessible at: "Pop Up City." Another innovative pop up program is "Light Up Livernois," a community storefront project on Livernois Avenue, Detroit, created by Detroit Collaborative Design Center. This project celebrates local culture and showcases businesses on the Avenue of Fashion through the creation of a pop-up community hub. In addition, Little Rock also has an active pop-up program that provides assistance to local communities and the University of Arkansas has a program in the School of Architecture that will assist community efforts. The next several figures show examples of sophisticated "pop-ups".

Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Main Street America, is a program that helps communities develop main street districts that attract both residents and businesses, promote commercial investment and spur economic growth. These employ a Four-Point Approach®, developed by National Main Street Center, which helps a community build partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders and encourages historic preservation. It promotes environmentally-sustainable redevelopment, integrates a community's cultural assets and fosters entrepreneurial development and downtown living. The State-Level program staff provides technical assistance and services to communities at three different levels: Associate, Select, and Master. Each level is designed to assist the community in tackling sophisticated downtown revitalization efforts. Main Street Arkansas has a well-developed program and is one of two consultant groups working with Jacksonville. They, along with the State Historical Preservation Program, have attended our Steering Committee meeting and outlined the options for their assistance.

- Developer Consultant– If a local unit of government is repurposing a building and is unfamiliar with the process; it may want to hire an experienced developer to guide the project. A developer who is knowledgeable with historic buildings, economic incentives, and project management could be invaluable as a consultant.
 - The Consultant along with a Jacksonville Community Group focusing on the building can result in a definitive and productive plan.

- Rehabilitation Projects Benefit the Community
- Repurposing vacant and underutilized historic buildings is an important economic development tool for the entire Jacksonville community. Rehabilitating a historic building has a compounding economic effect, as these projects typically pump more money into the local economy than new construction because of the use of local supplies, labor and services. These projects have a larger impact on local suppliers, as general contractors buy their supplies locally whereas new construction often requires non-local goods purchased out of town. Local craftsmen used in these projects then recycle their money back into their community's products and services.

Regrets Only Go One Way...

If the our historic buildings sit vacant for a while, be patient, because tearing it down may lead to future regrets. As Jack Neely posted on *Metro Pulse*, February 1, 2013:

“Over the years, I’ve heard begrudging regrets expressed about tearing a building down. We just didn’t know’ they claim, that a neighborhood was on the cusp of revival, that an old building might have profitable new uses – or that what resulted turned out to be less valuable than what was lost. Do people ever say, ‘We should have torn that building down when we had the chance?’ I don’t know. I’ve never heard it.”

Objective 8.

Redesign public utilities to be more attractive and underground.

The relocation of utility lines in Jacksonville has been considered in the past and found it can be an very expensive process and Utility Companies want to charge a very large fee for such an activity. This process has been attempted by many other communities and has ended up in court to decide the outcome. The legal literature is full of cases dealing with this issue. In some cases utility companies have won these legal battles and in other situations, communities have won. Small cities typically avoid tackling these issues because they accept the utility company decision initially or decide to avoid court because of the cost.

How can communities like Jacksonville find funds to reduce the visual impact of utility wires? The cost of a burial or relocation project can be staggering and communities often forego utility relocation projects to save money. However, several sources of funding from federal, state, and local agencies, in addition to special assessments, can help pay for utility relocation.

Federal Sources

One way for communities to pay for utility relocation is through the federal Transportation Enhancements Program, under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Through their state department of transportation, communities can apply for Transportation Enhancements (TE) funds for utility burial or relocation under the categories of landscaping, scenic beautification, or scenic/historic highway programs and welcome Centers. Utility

relocations are often incorporated as part of a larger project to improve local appearance. For example, Vidalia, GA and Augusta, ME used TE funds to bury utility wires as part of their downtown improvement projects. Maryland has also used federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to fund utility relocation projects.

State and Local Sources

Local and state community improvement grants are another method of funding smaller scale undergrounding projects. Some states, like Pennsylvania and Maryland, consider utility burial an aesthetic improvement akin to landscaping and allow communities to apply for funding to bury utilities as part of downtown and Main Street improvement grants. For example, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's "Downtown and Communities of Opportunity" grant program awards funding for communities seeking to enhance their quality of life and aesthetics.

In some states, like Washington, the state department of transportation (DOT) has the authority to pay for utility relocation costs necessitated by highway construction. In these states, the DOT can use federal highway funds for utility relocation under one or more of the following conditions:

- The relocation is in the public interest from a safety, aesthetic, economic, or legal standpoint;
- The utility has a property interest in its present location;
- The relocation involves implementing safety measures to reduce the roadside hazards of utility facilities to highway users;
- The utility is municipally owned and occupies the public right-of-way; and
- The state has a utility reimbursement law which gives it the authority to pay for utility relocation.

A Working group will need to be established to re-examine this issues for Jacksonville including DOT possibilities and all other possible options. The group should include citizens, City leadership and Utility officials along with the Jacksonville city attorney. The Group will need to develop a written plan of action to resolve this issue.

Special Assessment Districts

Some communities establish "special assessment areas" in regions that are scheduled for undergrounding in which utility subscribers pay an extra fee, generally two percent, on their monthly bill to fund the project. Special assessment areas are usually created through a petition by the majority of property owners in an area. Since the early 1970s, Commonwealth Electric in Massachusetts has successfully used special assessments to fund utility burial efforts in historic Cape Cod communities such as Nantucket. However, one drawback to special assessments is that the total revenue collected is often minimal in comparison to the cost of utility relocation, forcing communities to extend the schedule for undergrounding utilities over a long period of time.

Several states, including California and Oregon, have established special "undergrounding districts" to help communities pay for burying utility wires. For example, in California the public utilities commission collects a percentage of revenue from all wire-based utilities to pay for undergrounding. In order to receive a share of this funding to bury wires, a community must form an undergrounding district by either collecting signatures from at least 70 percent of the property owners within the proposed district or through a special resolution passed by the local government. In addition, property owners in the undergrounding district must agree to pay for the cost of hook-up from the new underground conduit to their property (typically \$500-\$2000). Once a community meets these requirements, the local government can apply to the public utilities commission for undergrounding funds and coordinate an undergrounding schedule with planners and utility providers.

Objective 9.

Generate more available capital to help implement planned activities.

Arkansas Main Street programs like Jacksonville's Downtown Development plans are usually locally driven, funded, organized, and managed with local volunteer services, some external funding and local support. Most programs have a paid part-time or full-time director. They are typically independent nonprofits or city agencies located in the community and are usually affiliated with the state, city, or regional coordinating Main Street organization and a sometimes associated with a network of other Main Street organizations within the state. The state has a Main Street Organization and an application process through which a community can be designated as a Main Street program. A nominal fee of 5000.00 is required to become a member of the statewide organization along with 25 other communities. Once, a Jacksonville Master Plan is completed, it will be submitted to Main Street Arkansas for their recommendations. Mayor Gary Fletcher will also budget the membership fee so that Jacksonville can become an active member. The coordinating organizations provide direct technical services, networking, and training opportunities to their affiliated programs as well as grants. Any community effort must officially associate themselves with the State organization by paying a minimal fee and joining a state network.

In addition to Jacksonville associating with Main Street Arkansas, an official relationship has been established with studioMAIN, a Little Rock based organization will provide primarily architectural design and engineering consultation to our Community for developmental projects. Important volunteerism also plays a critical role in the Jacksonville effort. This includes the Director of Downtown Planning and Development, Dr. Robert Price and nine community based Steering Committee members, including Theresa Watson, Jacksonville Director of Community Development as well as Mayor Gary Fletcher and his administrative staff. Funding potential also exists at the federal level, state level and local foundations.

It is also important to recognize that plans must be made by the City of Jacksonville to raise revenues to support downtown development. External Federal, foundation and private funds may be available for projects within the city along with entrepreneurial efforts but a City funding base will be essential and critical for moving forward. Some of these sources of funding have already been outlined in previous section of this plan. Special accounts should be set up by the City for funding all Project and used only for downtown development.

Objective 10.

Stimulate and recruit new and specialized business for the downtown Jacksonville

Entrepreneurship Boot Camps

To prepare local interest for individuals who want to form their own local small business the City of Jacksonville should consider the formation of an Entrepreneurship Boot Camp. The Small Business Boot Camp could be a 3-hour intensive training offering potential entrepreneurs and small business owners the basic knowledge and skills necessary to launch and grow their new small local business.

In an interactive setting, participants will learn the four areas of most importance as you are deciding to take the leap into Entrepreneurship. These high emphasis areas will develop and implement a good foundation for your new business. The four areas are as follows:

- Structuring your Small Business for growth & success. Inc? LLC? GP? LLP?
- Your Financial Plan – Does your business make \$en\$e?
- Marketing Plan & Branding – Establishing your Footprint and increasing market share.
- Operations, the Business Plan – How to create a business that lasts.

Business Recruitment Team

In addition to conducting Entrepreneurship Boot Camps for local citizens, a Business Recruitment Team should be organized. This role can fulfilled by the Business Coalition (BC) or a sub-committee of this group. However organized, the founding members of this team are extremely important for establishing the enthusiasm, momentum, professionalism and organization that will be needed. They need to be problem solvers and action oriented. This team and the recruitment process need effective and enthusiastic leadership to stay on track and be organized. Funding and in-kind services will be important to this committee. This proactive business recruitment team needs to be assembled. This team should bring a clear and realistic understanding of the market analysis, have skills in economic development and real estate along with connections to local decision-makers, and have an ability to sell and follow

through. Training for the team may be necessary. A team of five to seven participants could include:

- Established (and retired) business owners
- Local real estate professionals
- Current building owners who are interested in exploring various uses for their property
- Bankers
- Local entrepreneurship and development organization representatives;
- Elected officials
- Chamber of commerce and visitor bureau directors

The team will help serve as a management entity for recruitment efforts, focusing on those properties and areas that are critical for the economic success of the business district. Through the process, the team will coordinate efforts with local real estate professionals. A strong leader is necessary to maintain momentum of the team.

Before beginning a business recruitment effort, it is important to understand its objectives. For most districts, the effort should help:

- Maintain and develop the district as a mixed-use, multi-purpose center; and
- Strengthen the businesses and the business mix to enable the district to compete successfully in the market.

The purpose of the effort should also articulate a clear market position statement for the district that characterizes the type of retail mix, business opportunities, the shopping environment, and the target customer market. The statement distinguishes our district from surrounding shopping districts. Often, a community's market position statement will serve as background for identifying the types of businesses that could be recruited.

The first step for this group is to develop an initial work plan. All work plan action steps should be listed and prioritized. Sample work plan components might include the following:

- gather data about the community from the market analysis;
- inventory the real estate in the various business districts, particularly the vacant or underutilized buildings;
- survey the business situation by looking at the present businesses and why they are working, who are the "anchor" tenants, as well as the previous failures or relocations;
- meet with the property owners of these buildings to garner their support in the process;
- outline all incentives for business development, create a simple sales package; and develop your prospect list, etc.

Realistic timeframes need to be assigned to every step. The right team member(s) need to be assigned to every step (match skills to tasks). Most importantly, involve the broader community

in your work and seek assistance, ideas and contacts through the process. This work plan should be reviewed, updated and modified as needed.

We know that to attract retailers, our community must first make its business district visibly active, attractive, convenient and safe. This is often more difficult for non-shopping center locations including downtowns as they typically do not operate under a central management. Before the recruitment process begins, work with existing business operators and city officials to ensure:

- An aesthetically pleasing commercial downtown environment;
- A safe and secure commercial center;
- Adequate and conveniently located parking and transportation services; and
- High business operational standards and service which project a quality, unified and consistent image for the district.
- A downtown business environment that attracts people.

It is also important that the team fully understand what the community can offer the prospective business. Incentives might include:

- Technical assistance including market and feasibility analysis, business plan development, governmental regulations, advertising and physical design;
- Negotiation and leasing of space if the prospect is not working with a broker or not familiar with the area;
- Assistance with local zoning and development procedures;
- Centralized retail management in which business district organization gains the right to lease property from owners and place businesses in locations prescribed by an overall commercial center plan;
- Financing of building improvements, facades, displays, fixtures, inventory and start-up costs including a low-interest loan pool;
- Counseling with local financial institutions and assistance in completing loan applications;
- Financing options and incentives appealing to developers such as low-interest loan, Tax Increment Financing, or Community Development Block Grant funding programs;
- District wide image and marketing programs and advertising and promotion assistance for individual firms;
- An effective business to business networking system;
- Private development partnerships made up of local investors who might develop, own and operate a needed business; and
- Business incubator(s) to help establish new businesses at a reasonable cost and provide them with space and common services.

Attractive recruitment and marketing materials should be developed to convey the market potential of the business district. Business recruitment materials must help convince a business operator that your district is unique and that it offers a competitive edge over other locations.

Market analysis data already available will help potential business operators evaluate the potential for their venture. When developing marketing materials, provide only relevant information to avoid information overload. Consider the following:

- Letter of introduction including compelling reasons to consider your district;
- General information and photos of the community highlighting its assets;
- Market position and vision statements;
- Wish list of new businesses supported by market demand and supply data;
- New developments demonstrating investment downtown;
- Information on past openings and closings of businesses;
- Trade area geographic definition and demographic and lifestyle data;
- Trade area economic data including actual and potential sales data if available;
- Nonresident consumer data (including daytime population and tourism visitation);
- Descriptions of target market segments served;
- Major employers and institutions;
- Vehicle and pedestrian traffic volume;
- Mix of existing retail, service, dining, housing, office and lodging in the district;
- Press coverage and testimonials highlighting success stories;
- Promotional calendar; and
- Summary of financial incentives and other business assistance services available in the business district.

Graphs and maps are particularly effective ways to describe the region, the local area, retail competition and development trends. For the business district and trade area, examples include:

- Current district vacancy map;
- Business mix and clustering map displaying information on all district buildings;
- Major employers, institutions and points of interest map of area;
- Traffic volume map;
- Trade area maps defined by customer origin and drive-times; and
- Consumer spending demand and supply or surplus/leakage maps.

When targeting retail prospects, remember that not all retailers have the same requirements. A grocery store typically requires a different market than a general merchandise store. Communities should customize information to fit the needs of the particular prospect.

In addition to market data, information on specific buildings may also be useful. Secure the cooperation of the building owners and the real estate brokers if the property is listed for sale or lease. This information might include:

- Maps and photos describing the location, building and its history;
- Complementary businesses/clusters nearby;
- Sales and rent per square foot (with comparison market data);
- Available commercial and residential space and floor plan;
- Operating expenses including utility rates and taxes;

- Zoning and building code conditions or restrictions;
- Current tenants and how the building could be optimally reused; and
- Property owner or other contact for more information.

When completed, recruitment and marketing materials should be assembled in an attractive packet and possibly offered online. Quality content, graphics and formatting are required to support your community profile and image. Develop a simple sales package that is interesting, informative, honest and current, one that describes your community as a good place to do business.

This requires using the information on a community's targeted retail categories as well as where business in these categories should be physically placed. Compare these categories with available real estate. Ideal businesses will blend with and enhance existing businesses, utilize the available vacant space wisely, create synergy and offer unique merchandise or style. It may be useful to first list your vacancies on paper. Create a lease plan of the business districts and insert all current businesses and note the anchor tenants. Identify the vacancies and acknowledge their size and relationships to other businesses.

A wish list of potential businesses should be developed by the team. These potential businesses should complement and strengthen the existing businesses and reflect the market position statement. Realistic annual recruitment goals (number and type of businesses) should be set.

To identify appropriate business candidates (retail, service, restaurant, etc.) for your community, first analyze your list of market opportunities (see preceding example). Those categories that make market sense are then analyzed to make sure they fit into the niche, space utilization (specifically clustering) and marketing (specifically target market) recommendations.

Use the following criteria in finalizing your wish list:

- Is there appropriate space in the district for this type of business?
- Will it complement existing businesses?
- Will it serve targeted market segments?
- Does it fill an important gap in the business mix?
- Will the business strengthen an existing cluster of businesses?
- Was this business category identified as important in local consumer research?
- Does market demand and supply data support the need for this type of business?
- Does the business fit it with the market position and vision statements?

The team's next responsibility is to find appropriate businesses that might be interested in a site in your market area or need new space to expand.

Leads can be broken down into four general categories:

Existing Businesses within or near the business district – Often the best leads are found near home. Leads might include existing businesses seeking more space or a better location in the business district. The district’s business owner survey as well as ongoing conversations and personal contacts of the recruitment team, chamber of commerce and other economic development professionals can help identify these leads.

Emerging Entrepreneurs – Downtowns and business districts are often attractive to independent businesses. Accordingly, leads might include home-based or garage-based businesses seeking more fitting space and a convenient location for their customers. These leads might include managers of existing businesses wishing to go into business on their own. Commercial lenders, business schools, Small Business Development Center (SBDC) counselors, Main Street program business specialists, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), chamber of commerce and other public or private small business professionals should be asked to help identify these leads. See toolbox section on entrepreneurship.

Existing Local or Regional Businesses – Local or regional businesses, particularly those that have branch stores and are ready to expand, are often excellent prospects. These business operators typically have a good knowledge of the market area, and may already have multiple stores. They are often interested in expansion as a way to improve their penetration of the market. These leads can be identified through your team’s knowledge of the business mix in other communities in the region and information collected from your local consumer research. In addition, realtors, commercial brokers, sales representatives and suppliers that work within the region can be helpful. Sometimes ads in regional business, real estate and regional lifestyle periodicals can generate leads.

National Chains – If local or regional businesses are not interested in expanding, larger national chains can be contacted. It is important to be realistic about the kinds of chains that might be interested in a small community as their market, store size and parking requirements may preclude them from considering your district. Leads can be identified through directories and private databases listing chain site selection criteria and contacts. In addition, leads can also come from commercial brokers, trade shows, “deal making forums,” and conferences such as those offered by International Franchise Association or the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Once leads have been identified, a retail assessment checklist can be developed to ensure quality standards for prospects and to make sure the business would fit the market. The checklist could be completed by a team member on a reconnaissance visit to the business. It might include:

- Business category (type);

- Target markets;
- Businesses' location requirements;
- Image;
- Inventory and selection;
- Pricing;
- Presentation;
- Exterior appearance;
- Interior décor, lighting and fixtures;
- Service; and
- Traffic generated.

The recruitment team must now focus on a personalized sales effort that conveys a message that the district is a good location for expansion of a business or new business development. Efforts to personally communicate and then follow up with potential businesses are essential to the success of a recruitment effort. Presented below is a sequence of steps to reach potential business owners or developers.

Initial contacts with a prospect can be made through a personalized letter. In the letter, explain why your district would be an excellent place to do business. Identify selected incentives and summarize the most relevant market data that would interest the prospect. Your recruiting and marketing materials can be enclosed or included as a link to a web site with the information.

After the letter of introduction, a call should be made to the business to set up an appointment for a personal visit by someone on the recruitment team. The purpose of the appointment is to explain why your community is interested in their business. Be personal when making a contact, and impress them with your knowledge of their business. You need to express why you feel your community would be an appropriate match for their business. Explain why their business would be profitable and what incentives might be available. Provide recruitment and marketing materials and any other information to demonstrate the pro-business character of business district. Offer an invitation to the business operator to visit your community.

It is the host's job to persuade the prospective business or developer that your town has a distinct advantage over other locations. The site visit is a critical opportunity to persuade the business owner to invest in your district. Prospects should be personally invited to tour the community. The tour should include stops at possible business sites, competitive business districts, residential neighborhoods, employment centers and City Hall. Set up visits with key local merchants. Lunch or dinner should be included with selected business operators, property owners and public officials. Throughout the prospect's visit, the host should be prepared to answer questions such as why similar businesses have closed, the history of adjoining businesses next to prospective sites, and how to contact local landlords.

After the visit, it is important that thank you letters be sent from various community leaders including the mayor and selected business representatives. Mail or fax articles and publicity about downtown events and businesses during the following weeks. Deliver a basket of merchandise offered in your downtown. Finally, make sure the recruitment team is prepared to promptly answer follow up information requests in a prompt and professional manner.

It is important to make it very simple for the prospect to work with you. Be prepared to handle their objections, their concerns, and any obstacles that might come up. If they are concerned about financing improvements, take them to see the local banker. If they want outside dining but the zoning doesn't allow for it, help them work through the process with the City. If they object to some of the lease terms, assist in negotiating with the landlord. It's important to provide a single contact person responsible for keeping negotiations moving and follow-up on details.

A leader on the recruitment team should close the deal by selling the merits of locating in the business district. Remind the prospect that your district is looking for a business with their characteristics. Practice effective sales presentation skills and focus on key selling points of interest to the prospect:

- Key market data (such as a population density surrounding the district);
- Findings from your analysis of demand and supply in the particular business category;
- Expected sales per square foot and reasons why they would be successful there;
- Examples of comparable businesses in the district that have prospered; and
- Why the district is a better place to do business.

Continue to stay in contact with the prospect. If the prospect is interested, follow-up immediately with an action plan and necessary assistance (however, do not attempt to broker the property). If only marginally interested, call the prospect again in six weeks. If not interested at this time, include the prospect on your mailing list.

After businesses have been recruited, they must be welcomed and supported as are existing businesses. Marketing the new business and helping the owner's network with others in the district will be especially important in its early months of operation. Ongoing advocacy and follow-up will be essential.

During your business retention/recruitment process, you need to critique your work plan and update it based on the experience you have had. You want to create a repeatable sales process that will work again. Keep all your contact files and sales materials updated. Reevaluate your retention and recruitment criteria for the next situation and modify it as necessary.

When you have been successful in recruiting a new business or expanding an existing one, all efforts and contributions should be recognized. Celebrate a grand opening with your new

business, run a special ad announcing the new business or expansion in your local paper, get the local paper to run a feature article about the business recruitment/retention work and your success, speak at the Rotary, Lions, etc. about your accomplishments. After the “dust has settled” make sure you get testimonials from the new business, their landlord, from elected officials, other businesses, etc. that you can use in your next round of recruitment.

Your work is not complete once you have successfully found a new business for your community. It’s important to generate a welcome for this business and make sure that they are settled in and operating according to their plans. Keep up contact with your business in both good times and bad. Involve the new business in community activities and organizations, and by all means, involve them in your future business recruitment efforts! They can speak about the process and what changes could be made to improve it.

Objective 11.

Collaborate with the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District for improved graduation rates, Arkansas State University-Beebe, Arkansas Senator Jane English, Arkansas Department of Workforces Services, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Pulaski Tech in the development of post-secondary education programs that respond to work force development that meets the needs of Jacksonville community.

Responding to the diverse needs of the Jacksonville community requires both a short and long term strategy. If the economic and social conditions of Jacksonville citizenry is to be improved, we must recognize that the issues are not only economic but also educational. We must recognize that our improved economic and social conditions are to improve through downtown development we must address unemployment, housing, graduation rates from high school along with post-secondary education opportunities. If our citizens are more gainfully employed through better education they can more afford to access to improved housing as well as health care services, entrepreneurial opportunities and at the same time pay more taxes and become more contributing member of the community.

From a short-term perspective, the community must make an investment in our diverse population by working with the schools to improve graduation rates, supporting post-secondary training and education improving unemployment and subsidizing improved housing opportunities. All of these issues, both long and short-term can involve all our citizens in the benefits of the JDD results. Everyone spends more money, starts businesses of their own and pays more local taxes and become more productive and much less dependent on the community for public support. A community can’t be responsible for curing all the complex ills of society but focused community programs and projects that address specific issues can have impact on

the diverse population of a community and benefit the community as a whole. One of the investments that must be made in a community is preparing a work force that can be responsive to the needs of new businesses and corporations that decide to establish in the community. A work force that respond to the entrepreneurial needs of the investors who invest in the community can be prepared, in part, by a concerted effort of the local educational institutions, by starting work force programs and maximizing local educational programs. A Task Force of all involved parties must be established to conduct a needs analysis, develop programs and seek funding that responds to community needs.

Work Plan for Objective 11

In addition to the development of a Task Force to address the issues of Work Force development consisting of educational institutions, Arkansas work force agencies, key political leaders and appropriate federal programs, this objective must also address the issue of the high school drop rate in the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District. The Task Force must also address the development of a long-term incentivized plan for improving graduation rate by 40% for high school over a five year period from the current rate of 43% to 83% as well increasing school key performance efficiency rates from the current rates of the College Readiness Index (CRI) of 13.6%.

100 is a perfect CRI score which means that every senior student will have to take and pass one AP class. As of 2010, the Jacksonville pass rate for AP courses is 10%. 41% of students take AP courses but only 10% pass AP classes. A goal to increase this to a minimum of a 30% increase in each AP category might be reasonable approach. The JDD will support the local school district to endorse and support specific programs to increase student performance. The JDD effort will also encourage the Jacksonville Education Foundation to address the issue of graduation rates in the JNP School District and assist in a program that will identify students early who will potentially not graduate and implement specific projects that will help to improve the graduation rate. A process for implementation of such interventions might include:

- Update all statistics related to student performance and graduation rates
- Present stats to the JNP School Board and Community
- Present Stats to the Jacksonville Education Foundation
- Present an Implementation and evaluation plan to the Foundation and ask for endorsement form the JNP School Board and Administration.
 - Plan should include attainable objectives, timeline and educationally sound implementation principles.
- Incorporate the concept of economic development in the community as related to graduation rates and work force.

In order to work with the JNP School District, Arkansas State University-Beebe, Arkansas Senator Jane English, Arkansas Department of Workforces Services, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Pulaski Tech in the development of education programs that responds to work force development that meets the needs of Jacksonville community the following steps may be necessary.

- Organize a Post-Secondary Education task force to address the issues of an educated work force in Jacksonville and how programs at the local level, post-secondary programs and state programs can respond to this need.
- Develop a specific and attainable plan and timeline for the implementation of a post-secondary education program for Jacksonville.
- Insure that all parties involved have a specific component of plan development and implementation.
- Encourage both the JNP School Board and the Jacksonville Education Foundation as well as the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce to endorse and support the implementation of the Post-Secondary Education Plan.

Objective 12.

Collaborate with the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce in the planning and implementation of a Jacksonville Master Plan.

With limited resources, the city of Jacksonville must utilize all human resources to achieve the goals of increased business prosperity and quality of living for its citizens. This is best achieved when all city government and local organizations work together in a coordinated fashion to achieve the goals of business prosperity and quality of living. With limited resources for the JDD effort, any conflict drains resources and energy from the overall effort. Working together in a coordinated manner is the best strategy for all concerned. Setting territorialism and personal agenda's aside must be the best approach if the community as a whole will benefit from the City's efforts to improve the quality of life in our community.

It has been demonstrated that having a prescribed method in place for conflict resolution is an important strategy since different points of view exist on almost all complex projects. Another important consideration is to have an organizational method of opening up dialogue on any City issue. This can be done through designed communication strategies followed up with regular methods of getting all issues on the table for discussion. Another important method of resolving differences and moving forward is to form integrated work teams for all activities. Working together and forming working relationships establishes a personal bond which helps communications and the resolution of any difference of opinion.

- Secure endorsement of the Master Plan from the Chamber, the Mayor and the City Council
- Develop specific projects within the plan with shared responsibility of the Chamber and the City Administration.
- Establish leadership role in all Master Plan projects for Chamber leadership and members as well as City Leadership.

Objective 13

Develop a Mixed Use Approach to New Housing

Mixed-use development is a type of urban development that blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or industrial uses, where those functions are physically and functionally integrated, and that provides pedestrian connections. Mixed-use development can take the form of a single building, a city block, or entire neighborhoods. The term may also be used more specifically to refer to a mixed-use real estate development project—a building, complex of buildings, or district of a town or city that is developed for mixed-use by a private developer, (quasi-) governmental agency, or a combination thereof.

Traditionally, human settlements have developed in mixed-use patterns. However, with industrialization as well as the invention of the skyscraper, governmental zoning regulations were introduced to separate different functions, such as manufacturing, from residential areas. In the United States, the heyday of separate-use zoning in the U.S. was after World War II, but since the 1990s, mixed-use zoning has once again become desirable as the benefits are recognized. These benefits include:

- greater housing variety and density
- reduced distances between housing, workplaces, retail businesses, and other destinations
- more compact development
- stronger neighborhood character
- pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environments

Benefits of mixed-use development include:

- greater housing variety and density, more affordable housing (smaller units), life-cycle housing (starter homes to larger homes to senior housing)
- reduced distances between housing, workplaces, retail businesses, and other amenities and destinations
- better access to fresh, healthy foods (as food retail and farmers markets can be accessed on foot/bike or by transit)

- more compact development, land-use synergy (e.g. residents provide customers for retail which provide amenities for residents)
- stronger neighborhood character, sense of place
- walkable, bike-able neighborhoods, increased accessibility via transit, both resulting in reduced transportation costs

Other benefits of mixed use housing can also include:

- Create a framework for creation of a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy.
- Conduct a self - assessment to help assess community policies, programs, and codes to determine whether they support the type of development the community wants.
- Develop local assets to rebuild the local economy – look at locations like:
 - Douglass Georgia
 - Dubuque Iowa
 - Emporia Kansas
 - Paducah Kentucky
- Identify and build on existing assets.
- Engage all members of the community to plan for the future.
- Take advantage of outside funding.
- Create incentives for redevelopment, and encourage investment in the community.
- Encourage cooperation within the community and across the region.
- Support a clean and healthy environment.
- Look at Federal Resources and Technical Assistance Programs
- Look at Waverly Iowa for policy options for green infrastructure strategies and housing.
- Look at Sussex County, Delaware for green street design options
- Look at Laconia New Hampshire for the creation of walkable neighborhoods and neighborhood centers.

Increasing Downtown Density:

Reversing negative population trends is one of the keys to continued economic growth, but it can be an overwhelming task. One possible strategy: Focus on increasing population density in small towns. Why density? As people and talent are attracted to the economic opportunities, accessibility to work and entertainment, and other lifestyle factors offered by many urban areas, smaller towns may benefit by incorporating some of these same factors into their community and economic development strategies. Even some suburbs are starting to incorporate higher densities and more urban principles into their designs. As Steve Yoder wrote in *The Fiscal Times* regarding the growth of Bellevue, Wash., “Not long ago, density, walkability and access to public transit were more associated with cities than suburbs. But as more people flock to the cities, and many outer suburbs struggle, some suburbs have found a formula that’s helped them grow as fast as their urban siblings—create a downtown core that

lets them combine the city's culture, street life and walkability with their own lower crime rates and good public services." Creating a higher population density in a small town can help create a stronger and more competitive downtown core. Infrastructure and other resource costs are also important reasons that small towns might benefit from increasing density. As a community expands outward, more infrastructure has to be put in place and maintained over the long term (e.g., roads, water, sewer, electricity, broadband, etc.). If budget issues continue to impact states and cities, the ability to fund new infrastructure projects could be a roadblock to growing a community. Choosing to focus on increasing density in an area where infrastructure already exists may be quicker, easier and more cost-effective, especially considering the limited resources available to many communities. Additionally, when trying to maintain and manage resources more diligently, focusing funds or projects in a particular area of high density should create more impact than in an area where less people or businesses may benefit.

Increasing density may help a small town create a sense of place and quality of life that people desire. Even high-density small towns can retain their charm, as voters believe many of the towns on *Budget Travel's* list have done.

As the world continues to become more urbanized, it's important that small towns keep up with these changes. Increasing a small town's density to reflect some of the positives of a more urbanized lifestyle may be important to its future success. For many towns, population decline will continue to be a problem. But if increasing density in the core of the town becomes a priority of the community's growth plan, the town may be able to decrease some of these negative effects of population loss by building up what already exists. Population density is not just an urban measurement; it is also important to the growth of many small towns. Density can help create a stronger and more accessible downtown core, increase economic productivity, lower infrastructure costs and help create a lifestyle that many people believe only urban areas can provide.

Here are a few strategies towns can implement to improve density:

- Create planning and zoning that specifically targets particular areas of a town for population, housing and/or business growth (and/or change ordinances to allow higher-density structures). Specific businesses that do not currently exist in the Main Street are should be of special interest which might include more non-chain restaurants, specialty stores and boutiques.
- Locate new or existing community services or institutions in a certain geographic area (schools, libraries, health care clinics, post offices, utility companies, other governmental institutions or services that people need access to).

- Offer housing options of different sizes and prices, a mix between ownership and rentals, and variances in styles that will appeal to a large cross-section of people (singles, young families, retirees, etc.).
 - Types of housing to consider could include condominiums, cottages, town homes, single-family houses, cooperative housing, senior living facilities and other types that appeal to multiple generations and incomes.
- Utilize tax incentives to develop, redevelop or improve a specific geographic area of a community to entice more people to live there.
- Create shared amenities and public spaces for common use. These spaces should:
 1. promote human contact and social activities;
 2. be safe, welcoming and accommodating for all users;
 3. have design and architectural features that are visually interesting;
 4. promote community involvement;
 5. reflect the local culture or history;
 6. relate well to bordering uses;
 7. be well maintained; and
 8. have a unique or special character.
- Ensure connectivity and accessibility to population center (walking, biking, driving).

In addition to the utilization of all strategies cited above, the planning effort should investigate the possible benefits of including programs offered by the Arkansas Development Finance Authority and its HOME program as well as exploring the participation in the Property-Assessment Clean Energy (PACE) Program.



ONWARD AND UPWARD

ADDENDUM A
ENLARGED MAPS



ADDENDUM B

Bob, Mayor Fletcher:

It was great to see you yesterday!

To recap our meeting and next steps: Heather and Sarah (PSW) will spend the month of October generating the base drawings and documentation of existing conditions along Main St. (see #1 below). Beginning in November, the Steering Committee + Studio Main will schedule their first design charette. From this meeting, SM will begin generating the illustrations in #'s 2-4, and upon completion of this, we will schedule a follow up presentation to the SC.

The following is a *draft outline* of how Studio Main will organize the design sections/illustrations of “The Plan” p. 18 (downtown development area)

1. Main St. Assessment- Existing Conditions

a. 1-2 diagrams documenting existing road and sidewalk conditions, and current building stock

2. Redesign Main St. as a Complete Street

- a. Pedestrian friendly-sidewalks and crosswalks
- b. Bike lanes
- c. Landscaping/ Site furnishings
- d. Signage and way-finding (branding)

3. Pocket parks and Public Gathering Spaces

- a. Main St. corridor
- b. City wide

4. Creating place through points of interest

- a. New Jacksonville High School
- b. “Five Points” intersection
- c. Historic Area
- d. other TBD as design progresses

Thank you,

SARAH BENNING, AIA

Senior Associate