

# SHARPENING THE VISION

A Ten Year Update of the Strategic Plan  
for Downtown Holland and  
An Update of  
the City's Master Plan

Mainstreet/Downtown Development Authority  
City of Holland, Michigan  
September 2007

This document can be found at: [www.cityofholland.com](http://www.cityofholland.com).  
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# A STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT AND MASTER PLAN UPDATE FOR DOWNTOWN HOLLAND

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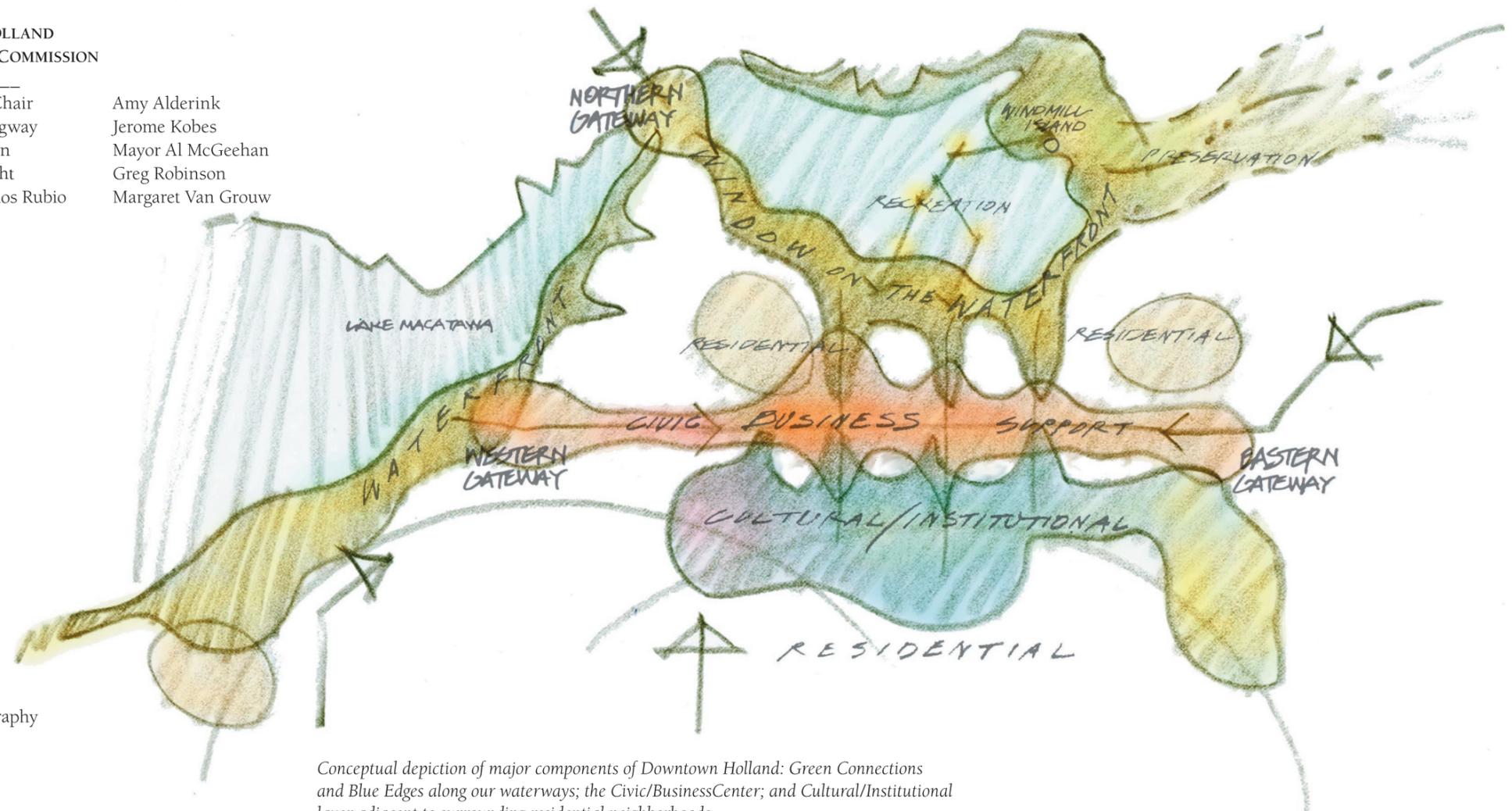
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Conceptual depiction of major components of Downtown Holland: Green Connections and Blue Edges along our waterways; the Civic/Business Center; and Cultural/Institutional layer adjacent to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

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Central Avenue Financial Center.

There are several large issues currently pending that will have a significant impact on our community generally, and on Downtown Holland in particular. These issues (which are addressed in this document on the pages indicated) include the following:

- Potential expansion of the BPW James De Young power plant (page 45)
- Re-development of the Center of Centers at 16th/River Avenue (page 69)
- The planned re-construction of River Avenue, north of the new bridge (page 70)
- The closure and possible re-development of Pfizer, Inc. (page 45)
- The closure and possible re-development of Hart and Cooley (page 70)

Depending on the exact direction these issues take, they will have greater or lesser impact on Downtown. Collectively, we need to remain aware of these issues and sensitive to their impact (and their possible domino effects) on priorities within the Strategic Plan.

# Sharpening the Vision

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan captures a sharpened Vision for Downtown, a 2007 point-in-time snapshot capturing Vision and Opportunity in a continually evolving strategic framework that combines policy and programmatic initiatives with significant potential future public and private projects and activities. These endeavors will build on the successful projects achieved in Downtown Holland before 1995, and the success achieved since the original publication of “Broadening the Vision: A Strategic Plan for Downtown Holland” in 1995. These successes continue to make Downtown a great place, the center of the greater Holland community, and one of the best and most distinctive small-city downtowns in America.



A. C. VanRaalte, founder of Holland.

## VISION STATEMENT.

### The Feeling...

“It’s like being at home and holiday at the same time, if you understand me.”

— *The Fellowship of the Ring*, JRR Tolkien

### The Vision for Downtown Holland:

#### To Be Recognized as The Best Downtown in America

Maintain and strengthen the attractive tapestry of commercial, residential, recreational, and community uses, and in so doing, be recognized as the best small town Downtown in America.



## THIS STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE PROCESS.

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has taken on the task of developing this Plan Update. The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of Downtown property owners, employers and employees, residents, and interested others. The process has involved many meetings of this group as they brought their own insights and sought the wisdom of many others in an open and engaging public process. Key efforts during this process included meetings with the Boards of both the DDA and Principal Shopping District (PSD) and a public forum where over 300 people with recognized connections to downtown along with members of the general public met in a half day workshop discussing the strengths and weaknesses found downtown relative to each of the Plan’s Themes (i.e. A Place to Live, A Place to Work, etc.). Opportunities and areas needing attention were then prioritized by the larger group and became helpful input as the SPC conducted its Plan Update work. City staff also polled high school students and other community residents, employers, and visitors as to what they would like to see improved, expanded on, or changed Downtown.

As the draft Plan was taking shape, conclusions of the Plan were reviewed with groups including the DDA and its committees, the PSD and its committees, the private development community, and other active Downtown organizations and institutions including the Riverview Group, Hope College, the arts and cultural community, with larger and diverse public forums. Feedback was solicited and priorities checked. The final plan draft then followed an approval and amendment process, taking it through the DDA Board, the City Planning Commission (and their mandatory public hearing process), and the Holland City Council.

Part I of this Plan represents an update to the 1995 Vision and Strategic Plan for Downtown. Part II of this Plan formally embraces the updated Vision and amends the City’s Land Use Plan for the Downtown.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

Downtown Holland has built its past success and future promise on a few guiding principles as the Downtown features a Community of Values; Unwavering Commitment to Quality and Detail, Collaboration with Leadership, and Trustworthy Relationships; that is Incrementally and Strategically Building On Success in an Ever Changing and Challenging Economic Environment; and that is Multi-Dimensional and Memorable, with a Distinctive Sense of Place.

## CONTINUING THE COMMITMENT.

In 1978, Holland established the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to address various Downtown issues. In 1984, the City received Main Street designation, formed a MainStreet Committee, and began receiving technical support from the National Main Street Center and the Michigan Department of Commerce. Subsequently, Holland's MainStreet and DDA organizations merged. MainStreet/DDA began to formulate a comprehensive public and private development plan for the economic and historic revitalization of Downtown.

The initial major capital endeavor of MainStreet/DDA was the Streetscape Project, undertaken in 1988 at a cost of more than \$3 million. Through this project, worn public amenities were replaced with brick paver sidewalks, new underground utilities, period street furniture, additional landscaping and design improvements. An innovative sub-surface Snowmelt system was installed from storefront to storefront along 3,000 feet of 8th Street to keep Downtown streets and sidewalks free of snow and ice during winter months. Streetscape/Snowmelt set the standard for public and private commitment to

Downtown, galvanized widespread community support for Downtown, and was a catalyst for the comprehensive revitalization effort that continues today.

A great variety of public and private sector projects and activities have been accomplished since the completion of Streetscape in 1988. From 1988 to 1995, Downtown public infrastructure investment totaled approximately \$4 million; and in excess of \$79 million in public funds between 1995 and 2006.

Private Sector: Investments totaling over \$65 million between 1988 and 1995, and over \$156 since 1995 have included new buildings by new investors as well as the continuing commitment by longer term investors and Downtown partners in both building revitalization programs and new construction projects.



Strategic Plan Workshop at Haworth Center, October 2005.



## SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP PREFERENCES

Based on Workshop conversations and voting preferences, the following list summarizes the most important ideas that were identified and supported during the half-day public workshop:

- Improved waterfront access, connections and amenities.
- Civic Center improvements focused on youth and family recreation.
- Improve walkability and pedestrian connections throughout Downtown.
- Attend to Central City neighborhoods; keep them strong; pay attention to schools.
- Take care of what we have: strengthen existing shops and businesses and maintain public facilities and infrastructure.
- Business succession: extend assistance to new entrepreneurs and businesses in transition.
- Expand outdoor cafes/dining; add entertainment especially as oriented toward families.
- Recruit businesses, such as a grocery, that conveniently meet everyday needs.
- Continue to enhance marketing efforts to broaden Downtown's appeal and customer base.
- Improve Downtown's appeal to diverse populations: race, age and income.

## SHARPENING THE VISION.

The remarkable renewal of Downtown Holland over the past two decades has been enthusiastically endorsed by the community. Now, setting a tone for the 21st Century, the Downtown Development Authority is “Sharpening the Vision” through the efforts of its Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). “Sharpening the Vision”, builds upon the 1995 Plan and looks to: first, clarifying and refining opportunities and improvements, and second, expanding on the scope and vision of opportunities that present themselves to Downtown a decade later. The Strategic Plan is built upon previous public and private planning and is focused on:

1. A comprehensive Vision for Downtown;
2. Enlarged geographic boundaries for Downtown, along with appropriate and sensitive linkages to adjacent areas of activity that impact and influence Downtown;
3. Identification, analysis, and linkage of Downtown facilities and opportunities; and
4. A coordinated, inclusive approach to achieving these opportunities.

## MAKING THINGS HAPPEN.

This report outlines opportunities for many persons and organizations to be involved in achieving this Sharpened Vision for Downtown. The DDA will carry this Plan as its Work Program, and will coordinate these activities and forward specific recommendations to City Council and other organizations for implementation. In essence, the DDA should be the quarterback and clearinghouse for all downtown public sector projects and a facilitator of downtown private sector activities. The Strategic Plan will enable Downtown to continue to grow, manage change, and be enhanced for local citizens and visitors alike.

## THEMES AND UNIFYING ELEMENTS.

Downtown Holland: Where Trend Meets Tradition!  
A Distinctive Destination Downtown in a Unique Midwest Community!

Downtown Holland is...

- A Place to Be, to Experience, to Engage...
- A Place for Family and Youth...
- A Place to Live...
- A Place of Culture, History, and Growing Diversity...
- A Place to Shop, to Dine, and to Be Entertained...
- A Place to Work...
- A Place to Invest...
- A Place of Environmental, Economic, and Social Sustainability...

All of Downtown is tied together through attractive, high quality, well-programmed, and well-maintained Unifying Elements including physical elements that define and establish a high quality pedestrian character including Streetscape, Sidewalks and Parks, Snowmelt, Street Trees and Landscape, Street Furniture, Lighting, Banners, Wayfinding Signage, Public Art, Water Features, Architecture, and Parking; and programmatic elements such as Festivals, Special Events and Parades, Sidewalk Cafes, Music, and Street Performers that lend a vibrancy and liveliness to the Downtown experience.



Herrick District Library.



Street Performer at Eighth Street Market Place.



Conceptual sketch of boardwalk connecting Window on the Waterfront Park to Windmill Island.



## PRINCIPAL STRATEGIC IDEAS.

The following principal strategic ideas that are expanded upon in this Strategic Plan. Downtown must:

### 1. Be People-Friendly and Attractive:

Downtown Holland benefits from an attractive physical layout, distinctive and well-maintained buildings, fine landscaping, and a “positive attitude on the street” apparent to visitors and locals alike. A key need is to keep adding to and adjusting Downtown to keep these physical qualities fresh and interesting (such as flower plantings, kiosks, and banners) and to assure public/private open spaces are programmed with vibrant events, promotions, and festivals with supportive street life including musicians and other street performers, sidewalk cafes, and open businesses.



8th Street sidewalk scene.

### 2. Sustain a Diverse and Vibrant Business Center:

A broad mix of retail shops, restaurants, diverse services, and special residential opportunities characterize Downtown and must be continually evaluated and improved. Strong and vibrant retail shops and restaurants are vital to assuring an attractive ground floor customer-oriented environment. Support for vital and convenient public and private gathering places supports a rich social environment. Appropriate new office, service, and residential capacity, ideally located on upper floors in the heart of Downtown with perhaps more flexibility at street level in perimeter areas, should continue to be added to the Downtown mix – as driven by market forces and guided by good contextual design.

### 3. Support Thriving Downtown Institutions:

Downtown’s rich tapestry of vitally important centrally-located institutions such as Hope College, Western Theological Seminary, Holland Museum/Trust, Holland Area Arts Council, Herrick District Library, and numerous churches and other helping organizations must be affirmed and supported. These have historically and appropriately been located in the center and are particularly valuable resources for both Downtown and central city neighbors and neighborhoods while remaining central to the greater community as well.

### 4. Promote Economic Development:

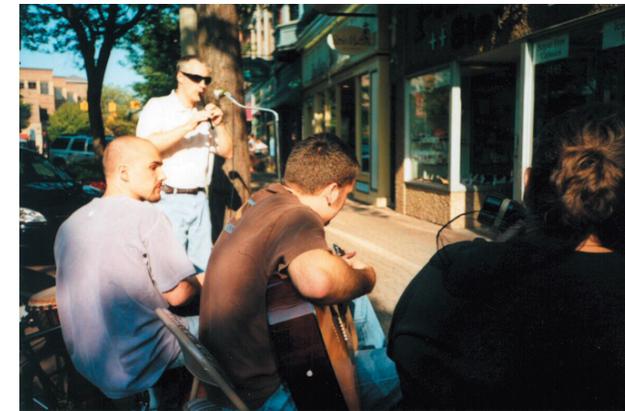
Increasingly, in order to keep up with economic trends (i.e. “new economy” developments) let alone explore untapped local resources and opportunities to achieve our vision, we must focus more attention on economic development. Specifically, the DDA must work more intentionally with City Hall, Lakeshore Advantage, and Downtown business leaders on new economic development opportunities that might fit well with the best of Downtown Holland.

### 5. Feature Its Green Connections and Blue Edges:

Bring new focus and attention to Downtown’s extensive network of green connections (pedestrians connectors) and blue edges (waterfront access). With a comprehensive public/private park, plaza, and pathway system, these assets are a wonderfully important framework for our Great Lakes identity; for safer and more inviting connections throughout Downtown; for greater public access to waterfront and



Globe retail shop open house.



Street musicians.



Peanut Shop co-owners.

open space; in support of increased attention to green, eco-friendly and sustainable business, new developments, and healthy lifestyles; and facilitating expanded educational and recreational activities and programming. The opportunity stretches from Kollen Park along Lake Macatawa, under the new River Avenue Bridge and along the Macatawa Marsh leading to Windmill Island and beyond along the Macatawa River Greenway.

**6. Be Effectively Managed and Promoted:**

The world in which Downtown Holland operates is ever-changing and increasingly competitive and complex. Downtown Holland’s management organizations, the Downtown Development Authority and Principal Shopping District, need to be more aggressive, competitive, intentional, and focused on the realization of recommendations and opportunities found in this Strategic Plan. Collectively, Downtown organizations need to “eat and sleep” the Plan with a more palpable passion, drive, and accountability toward timely completion of the key projects identified for further study and implementation. To these ends, a new focus on economic development will be necessary involving closer coordination with public and private economic development efforts. Further, Downtown organizations must be more directly involved in project planning from the outset, and develop a greater capacity and leadership role in public/private collaborations in downtown economic development.

**DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN “TOP TWENTY” PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, POLICIES**

**Overall Downtown:**

1. Downtown Management Organization and Economic Development. Re-focus, re-energize, and aggressively organize and proceed to implement this Downtown Strategic Plan. A more formal organization and leadership is needed in the area of Business Recruitment/Retention. *Public Lead.*

2. Assure on-going attention to detail and continuing efforts to: enhance pedestrian and non-motorized connections; maintain and improve streetscape and park amenities; collaborate and integrate facilities and programs of the Macatawa River Greenway; and integrate art, water, and vibrancy into the Downtown environment. *Public Lead.*

**Eighth Street Business Center:**

3. Comprehensive Streetscape and Landscaping Plan and Maintenance. Focus efforts to develop a plan and implementation program to enhance streetscape, address issues of maturing trees, enhance and expand flower plantings, and extend the seasonal appeal of streetscape environment. *Public Lead.*

4. Getting the Word Out. As efforts supporting greater communication and promotion of Downtown activities and amenities:

a. Visitor Center. Examine possible combination of marketing/management offices: Convention and Visitors Bureau, DDA/PSD, Tulip Time. *Public Lead.*

b. Leading Edge Technologies. Implement downtown-wide wireless internet access. *Public Lead.*

**Western Gateway and Future Waterfront:**

5. Civic Center Revitalization. Proceed with defining an appropriate program for expansion/revitalization program. *Public Lead.*

6. Expand Mixed Use Waterfront Redevelopment. Establish public edges, public access, public connections and public parking as setting the stage for private mixed use development: commercial restaurant, shops, office, and small inn combined with potential marina development (see #10) in vicinity of the former Western Machine Tool Works property. Encourage community dialogue and planning for the long-term future of the City’s waterfront. *Public and Private Lead.*

7. Complete Kollen Park phases: Complete Kollen Park phase 2



Mainstreet planter.



Flower beds along 8th Street.



8th and College.



and 3 redevelopments along with the Heinz Boardwalk and integrate possible additional parking in the vicinity of Boatwerks in support of subsequent redevelopment opportunities at Lake Michigan Contractors and the former Western Machine Tool Works. *Public Lead.*

8. Secure “Friendly Hands” Control of the CSX Rail Spur west of the Depot. Working with current users Heinz and Padnos, the City should convene a broader coalition of potential users and pursue the acquisition of this rail spur for combined commercial, public transit, and greenway use connecting all major areas of Downtown. *Public Lead.*

9. Examine Mixed Use Redevelopment Opportunities from Pine to River Avenue. On the south side of 8th Street and both sides of 9th Street between Pine and River Avenues connecting the Civic Center to central blocks of Downtown. *Private Lead.*

10. Municipal Marina Opportunity. Two angles on this potential: establishing a recreational boating marina with 20-30 boat slips for locals and visitors in the vicinity of the former Western Machine Tool Works property, and carefully examine the potential for a municipal commercial dock usable by present downtown industrial/commercial waterfront businesses and other community users. *Public and Private Lead.*

#### **Northern Gateway and Park of Parks:**

11. Windmill Island Boardwalk and Pedestrian Bridge to North Side. Design and implement the proposed Boardwalk across the marsh and secondary ped/bike bridges to the North Side. *Public Lead.*

12. Thrust of Hope and Downtown to north into this area.

Continue the planning for a thrust of mixed use office, service, residential, and Hope College-supportive opportunities on properties north of 7th Street bordering Window on the Waterfront Park. *Private Lead.*

13. Windmill Island Future: Collaboration. With Boardwalk above and at least some additional infrastructure, pursue public/private collaborations and flood-worthy facilities such as a “Maas Center II” meeting facility, Miller’s House & Barn, and possible Conservatory/Greenhouse. *Public and Private Lead.*

14. River Avenue Corridor Properties Redevelopment. Opportunities abound for redefining and revitalizing numerous private properties within the Pine, River and Central Avenue corridors,

including the Padnos “White” Building and the former Goodyear Tire Center properties on River, the former A. D. Bos Company and trucking terminal properties on Central, and the vacant property between River and Central on 7th Street. This thrust of River Avenue corridor improvements should continue north, beyond the Bridge, into Holland Township. *Private Lead.*

#### **Hope College and Near East Eighth Street:**

15. Super Block- Subsequent phases.

Support the construction of additional phases of mixed-use development within the “Super Block” including Plaza II, a Greenspace plan (temporary and long term), and additional buildings. *Private Lead.*

16. Hope College Redevelopment of the former Versendaal property. Support Hope College’s desire to see this pivotal property redeveloped as a lively linkage of “town and gown.” *Private Lead.*

#### **Eastern Gateway:**

17. Continued Hope College Improvements. Continue to build on the strong Hope College presence in this area through athletic/recreational, academic, and residential growth. *Private Lead.*

18. Roundabout. Implement roundabout or alternative intersection modifications. *Public Lead.*

19. Collaborations with Holland Township on Gateway issues. In addition to the roundabout, collaboration with the Township is both opportune and necessary with focus on the North Fairbanks Avenue area (opportunities include the redevelopment of the former Atmospheric Processing and nearby properties), the gateway corridor stretches of Chicago Drive and 8th Street extending out to US-31, challenges with properties in the Federal District and the Hart and Cooley properties, and integration with the Macatawa River Greenway. *Public Lead.*

20. Parking: Per the Downtown Parking Strategic Plan, address policy changes (zoning requirement, potential capital assessment and other implementation/funding policies) and parking development projects (interim and permanent parking in the Super Block/Hope College/North End areas, and potential on-street parking along 7th and 9th Streets). *Public and Private Lead.*



*DeVos Fieldhouse at Hope College.*



*Statue and fountain at Terraces Condominiums (6th and Central).*



*Sunset view at Boatwerks Restaurant.*

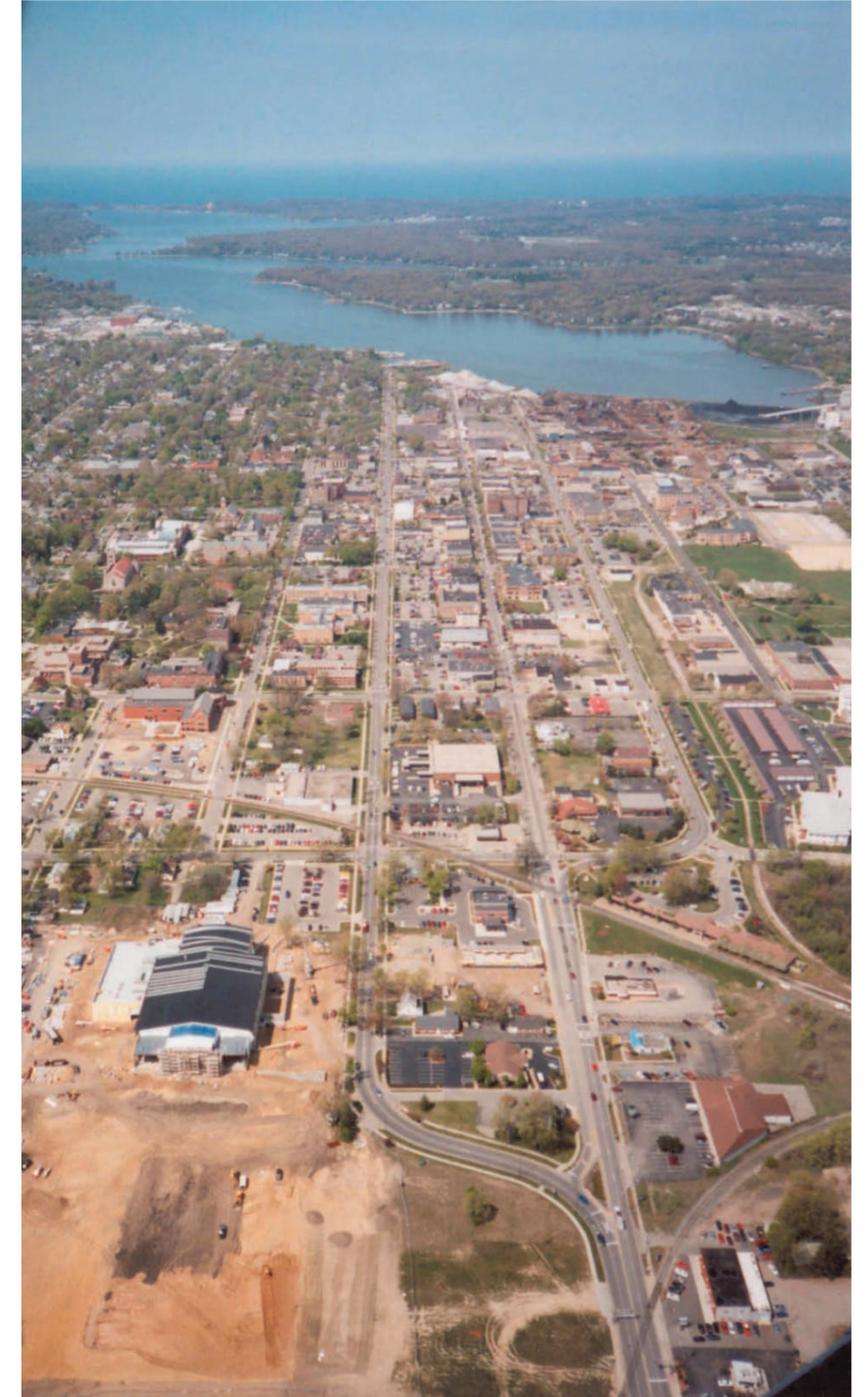
MAY 2006 DOWNTOWN AERIAL VIEWS PROVIDING CONTEXT, REVEALING OPPORTUNITIES.



*Aerial view along Pine River Avenue to the north, over the Police Station, Eighth Street Market Place, and the Civic Center.*



*Aerial looking northwest with DeVos Fieldhouse in center foreground.*



*Aerial looking west over DeVos Fieldhouse (under construction), across Downtown and Lake Macatawa, to Lake Michigan (2005).*



*Aerial view looking northwest to River Avenue Bridge with Hope College in foreground.*



*Aerial view to the southwest overlooking Macatawa Marsh and Window on the Waterfront Park.*



*Aerial view to the northwest overlooking 8th Street between Pine and College Avenues, with Centennial Park in lower left.*



*Aerial view to the northwest overlooking 8th Street at Central and College Avenues.*

# Sharpening the Vision PART I

## A Ten Year Strategic Plan Update Downtown Holland, Michigan

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the future of Downtown Holland. Welcome to Downtown just a few years from now - with improved gateway entrances and parks, additional residences, interesting new shops and services, a focus on entertainment, and more trees, flowers, art, and excitement all built upon and enhancing an already exceptional Downtown.

Welcome to a future which builds on an increasingly diverse mosaic that is Downtown today. There are great places to shop, read, stroll, listen to music, enjoy coffee, sandwiches, and dinner. We are able to live, work, play, worship, and learn all within this compact, walkable area we call Downtown. In Downtown, we are reminded of our deep roots and evolving heritage while enthused by tomorrow's ideas and opportunities. It is our commons, our gathering place, our center.

#### I. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this updated report is to document the continually evolving Strategic Plan for Downtown Holland. The first Strategic Plan was created by the MainStreet/Downtown Development Authority's Strategic Planning Committee in 1995 as an action-based framework to guide future public and private planning and development efforts

in Downtown during the next five-to-ten year period. It fully accomplished that effort and now this Update seeks both to capture the success and energy of the past decade and, more importantly, sharpen the planning and development vision that will carry forward for the next ten year period.

This Strategic Plan is also an invitation to all citizens to be involved in Downtown and its future. Current Downtown participants – shop owners, residents, office workers, students – seek new ideas to improve Downtown so that it can serve personal and community needs more

*'Immigrants' statue at Kollen Park.*



#### Getting Around...Document Guide

Executive Summary  
**Introduction**  
Vision

Themes

Unifying Elements

Accomplishments

Eighth Street

Western Gateway & Waterfront

Northern Gateway

Hope Coll & N. Eighth

Eastern Gateway

Areas of Influence

Organization

Implementation

City Master Plan

effectively. As you read this report, please think about how you can become involved. Are there opportunities for your active participation or investment? How can you help to improve the center of our community? How will these various plans and improvements provide new opportunities or enhance existing conditions for your benefit and for the benefit of your neighbors?

## II. THIS STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE PROCESS.

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) embraced the task of developing this Update. The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of Downtown property owners, employers and employees, residents, and interested others. The process has involved dozens of meetings of this group as they brought their own insights and sought the wisdom of many others in an open and engaging public process. Key efforts during this process have included meetings with the Boards of both the DDA and PSD, a public forum where over 300 people with recognized connections to downtown along with an open invitation to the general public were invited to a half day workshop discussing the strengths and weaknesses found downtown relative to each of the Plan's Themes (i.e. A Place to Live, A Place to Work, etc.). Opportunities and areas needing attention were then prioritized by the larger group and became helpful input as the SPC conducted its work. City staff also polled several classes of Holland High School students as to what they would like to see Downtown, and the broader community and visitors were similarly approached during Plan review.

As the draft Plan was taking shape, the draft conclusions of the Plan were shared with groups including the DDA and their Committees, the PSD and their Committees, the Riverview Group, Hope College, and in a larger public forum. A series of open houses were held where informal discussion and opportunities to comment were held. Feedback was solicited and priorities checked. The final plan draft will then follow an approval and possible amendment process that will take it through the DDA Board, the City Planning Commission (and their mandatory public hearing process), and the Holland City Council. Part I of this Plan represents an update to the 1995 Vision and Strategic Plan for Downtown. Part 2 of this Plan includes the necessary documentation to update the City's Land Use Master Plan in accordance with State requirements.

## III. PLANNING HISTORY.

Downtown Holland reflects the values and vision of the City's founders as well as the culture and diversity of today's community. Downtown has gained strength through its ability to identify opportunities and manage change.

Established by Dutch immigrants led by Reverend Van Raalte in 1847, Holland developed a traditional grid system that fans out from Lake Macatawa on the west and abuts the Macatawa River to the north. When Downtown's initial buildings were destroyed by fire in 1871, they were replaced by attractive, Victorian-era buildings. Today, these revitalized buildings grace Downtown streets and Downtown's original grid system remains intact and, in fact, is incrementally being expanded – supporting continued creative development in a historic downtown area.

The proliferation of the automobile brought sweeping changes to how Downtown functioned and evolved. For over a century, Downtown Holland maintained its original physical design and character as the community's main business district. But by the 1970's, the flourishing automobile culture changed shopping and development patterns dramatically, encouraging commercial strip developments and residential subdivisions in suburban areas while reducing the traditional position of Downtown as the singular commercial and retail focus of the community.

The past decade has been one of continuing to redefine the special place Downtown holds in a growing greater community where sprawling development is dispersing retail, residential, educational, entertainment, and other community-supporting uses and activities into an environment dominated by the need to drive. Within this regional pattern, only recently showing signs of redirection thanks largely to the forward thinking and collaborative efforts of the West Michigan Strategic Alliance, lies great opportunity for a strong and distinctive center.

## IV. BEYOND PHYSICAL: GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND A SOLID FOUNDATION.

The 1995 Strategic Plan was a plan focused primarily on the physical framework, combining vision with opportunity to focus on several themes coming together downtown, with emphasis on the specific physical development projects that could be realized. This



### BEFORE AND AFTER...



130 Central Avenue.  
Left, the former  
J.B.Laboratories.  
Currently, Lumir Building.



24 East  
8th Street.  
The former  
Williams  
Jewelers, now  
Kilwins.



39 East 8th Street.  
Lokker-Rutgers, before/current.

Photo Source: Lumir Corp./Ross Nykamp.

2007 Update includes an assessment of where we stand on those and new physical opportunities, but also goes further by stepping back to examine the roots of Downtown investment and development activity. There are several fundamental conditions that exist Downtown upon which relationships are based and community-oriented decisions are made. We call these conditions, common to all positive interactions and relationships Downtown, Guiding Principles.

**A Community of Values:**

“Downtown Holland continues to be the center of the Greater Holland area, serving the community and enriching the lives of its people. Downtown Holland has a distinctive personality built on a unique heritage and bolstered by an inherent sense of stewardship and integrity... This is a Place of Values.”

(from “Holland: A Place of Values” circa 1987)

**A Community with Unwavering Commitment:**

*Steadfast-*

There is a fundamental and widespread belief in the importance of Downtown as a vital community asset. This belief has shaped a collective effort, a public and private partnership that is committed to improving Downtown. While the commitment has been unwavering, it is grounded in pragmatic considerations and careful assessment of costs and benefits.

*Quality and Detail-*

Downtown Holland has been fortunate to benefit from the commitment to quality and to an elevated attention to detail in the design and construction of buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure; in the conduct of retail and service businesses; and in the day-to-day operation and offerings of cultural and educational institutions.

*Collaboration with Leadership-*

The commitment to collaboration has also been marked by strong and visionary leadership from both the public and private sectors. This



Plan Update demands that we continue to build successful collaborations while inspiring new and continuing leadership that is aware of the tradition of these principles and is visionary about their application to address future Downtown challenges and opportunities. Assuring continuity in this leadership as time passes and today’s leadership steps aside for tomorrow’s emerging leaders demands thoughtful transitional planning.

*Trustworthy Relationships-*

Downtown Holland has experienced revitalization in large part because of the face-to-face interactions and relationships of property owners, business owners and employees, institutional staff, residents, and public sector representatives. There is a basis of common interest and trust that sustains the community’s ability to work together to reach solutions and compromises where all parties individually are winners and the Downtown as a whole is enhanced.

**One Brick on Two:**

There is a phrase that has been used to describe how Downtown has continued to evolve, building on the foundations established by our predecessors. “One Brick on Two” describes the incremental and strategic enhancement that continues to occur in Downtown Holland. No single building project can be described as the “silver bullet”, the one project that has turned around and anchored a great revitalization since the challenging days of the early 1980’s. Rather, it has been a continuing accumulation of people, projects, community-oriented decisions, and resources, steered by guiding principles that incrementally and cumulatively make Holland so successful and appealing. Business leaders, property owners, shopkeepers, customers, and residents alike have come to acknowledge that the Downtown cannot sit back and become complacent about prior or current successes. It is understood that all aspects of downtown are constantly under pressure from internal and external forces, and that all aspects of Downtown organization need to be strategically responsive to changing needs, changing socio-economic forces, and changing market opportunities.

**Multi-Dimensional, Memorable, Sense of Place:**

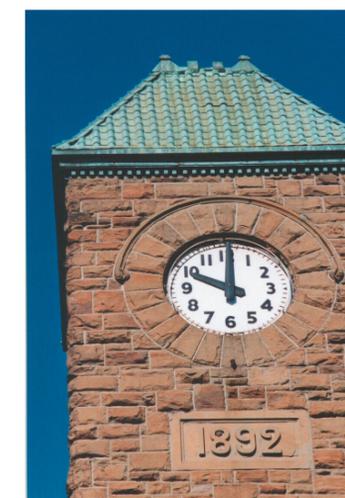
Downtown Holland is the ever-evolving product of very specific local conditions, opportunities, and traditions. It is a unique product that, while certainly influenced by regional and national trends and



Civic Center charrette process.



“One brick on two,” a philosophy of incremental enhancement by building on everyday tasks and strategic larger decisions leading to significant accomplishments.



Tower Clock.



8th and Pine intersection, looking southwest.

impulses, has typically integrated such forces in a distinctively local, considered way. Downtown is not a suburban mall nor a single developer's interpretation of an attractive downtown setting with the singular bottom-line profit motive. Downtown is an environment with an atmosphere enriched by the diverse mix of uses, activities, people, buildings and open spaces that define the physicality of this special place. This rich, vital tapestry is one experienced physically, psychologically, socially, environmentally, culturally, and spiritually throughout the Downtown and as a force in the broader community. Downtown is a unique and memorable environment, offering residents and visitors alike a special Sense of Place.

## V. CONTINUING THE COMMITMENT.

In the late 1970's and through the mid-1980's, Holland established a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), received a state-wide and national Main Street organization designation, and merged Downtown-focused efforts to set forth on a path of public and private collaboration directed toward the enhancement of Downtown. A comprehensive public and private focus on the economic and historic revitalization of Downtown was given a strong boost with the 1988 Streetscape Project, undertaken at a cost of more than \$3 million. Through this project, worn public amenities were replaced with brick paver sidewalks, new underground utilities, period street furniture, additional landscaping and design improvements. An innovative sub-surface Snowmelt system



*The Bridge store back entrance.*

was installed from storefront to storefront along 3,000 feet of 8th Street to keep Downtown streets and sidewalks free of snow and ice during winter months. A new and innovative Downtown environment was presented where Streetscape/Snowmelt set the standard for public and private commitments to Downtown, galvanized widespread community support for Downtown, and was a catalyst for the comprehensive revitalization effort that continues today.

A great variety of public and private sector projects and activities have been accomplished since the completion of Streetscape in 1988. These are summarized below:

### Public Sector:

The DDA and the City of Holland provided design assistance, Community Development Block Grants supporting building renovations, low-interest loan administration, and developed ordinances and policies allowing sidewalk cafes, creative signage and awnings, sidewalk performers, and overnight residential parking. Major capital construction projects included:

- Holland Museum, the Cappon House, the Settler's House, Armory, and neighborhood renovations all by the Holland Historical Trust with substantial City support;
- Multi-modal Padnos Transportation Depot;
- Renovated Holland City Hall next door to the expanded Herrick District Library;
- New and expanded City Police facility next door to the new and expanded Ottawa County Court facility;
- Town Park Phase I and Window on the Waterfront Park Phase II;
- New 8th Street Marketplace, home to the Downtown Farmers Market and a wide variety of festivals and special events;
- Various street resurfacing and reconstruction projects (most notably 7th and 9th Streets, Pine and River Avenues, and the new River Avenue Bridges); and
- Various extensions to the Downtown snowmelt, streetscape, and "invisible" underground public utility improvements and a new Downtown public restroom facility.

Since 1988, Downtown public infrastructure investment totaled approximately \$4 million by 1995 and in excess of \$79 million between 1995 and 2006.

## PROJECTS COMPLETED IN THE LAST TEN YEARS...

*Central Avenue  
Financial Center.*



*Holland Police Department (2005).*



*City Hall, from Centennial Park (expanded 1997).*

### Private Sector:

Investments totaling over \$65 million between 1988 and 1995, and over \$156 since 1995 have included new buildings by new investors as well as continuing commitment by longer term investors and downtown partners. Those major construction projects completed by new investors include:

- Financial Center and Bank of Holland by Bayside Capital;
- Plaza Building- launching the revitalization of the Super Block- by 8th Street Partners;
- Paragon Bank Building on East 8th Street;
- Priority Health Offices by Prins Development, also on East 8th Street;
- Multiple building renovations by GDK Construction;
- Downtown Place residential condominiums by Fifth Street Partners, LLC.; and
- New Macatawa Bank marking the east end of the Super Block.

New construction and continuing building renovations have occurred through the efforts of long-time committed Holland organizations including:

- Adaptive reuse of a former furniture store converted to the home of the Holland Area Arts Council;
- On-going revitalization of the historic Park Theater, complete with “Cool City” recognition for Holland and a wonderful small multi-use venue for Downtown;
- Multiple renovation, expansion and new construction projects by Hope College including the 100 East office and classroom building, the expansion of the Science building, development of the Haworth Conference Center and Inn with a current expansion underway to Cook Hall, the construction of the Martha Miller Center for Global Communications, and the DeVos Fieldhouse- home to Hope’s outstanding Elite Eight Men’s and National Champion Women’s

Basketball programs;

- Lumir Corporation’s development of the 100 East Building, Claremont Court, AlpenRose Restaurant, the former Baas’ Men’s Store, Riverview Building, and Brownstone Building along with more recent adaptive re-use of the former J. B. Labs (now the Lumir Building offices) and neighboring new residential condos (The Terraces), new retail and office construction on the site of the former Ebelink’s on River Avenue, all along with their on-going smaller scale retail, office and residential revitalization of numerous 8th Street and River Avenue properties; and
- Renovation, expansion and/or new construction of a variety of projects including the Holland Sentinel expansion, Padnos Company’s office renovation, Steketee Van Huis expansion, Curtis Center, Knickerbocker Theater, and the building by building investments of many other individual long-term property and business owners throughout Downtown.

Other private sector activities and investments have included:

- Repeated collaborations with the public sector in the sponsoring and promotion of public art and music events;
- Provision of low-interest loans by a committee comprised of several Downtown banks;
- Private sector park projects including National City plaza and the AlpenRose, Prince, and Hallacy parks;
- Valuable private sector planning resources were provided by the former Riverview Advisory Committee (now Riverview Group) in the form of staff support, an architectural model, and a slide show and brochure illustrating the Committee’s vision for Downtown; and
- This Plan would be remiss if it were not noted that the private sector commitment has also included substantial annual assessments that have supported the operation of snowmelt, Downtown Development Authority management activities, Principal Shopping District marketing and promotional efforts, and Downtown public parking. These Downtown assessments in total have exceeded \$4 million since 1995.

See “A DECADE OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS” later in this report for a summary of the past ten years of Downtown projects and programs in a sub-area by sub-area survey.



## ALLEY AND BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS SINCE 1995...



*Above, refined back facades and store entrances.*

*Left, DeVos Fieldhouse, west entrance.*

*Bottom, Holland Police Department and Ottawa County Courthouse.*



## VI. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.

Numerous new opportunities for cooperative public and private projects, programs, and policies which will enhance the Downtown's historic mixed-use character and vitality are identified in the following pages of this report. All of these parts comprise a whole that will continue to be an attraction for visitors and residents alike. Though we approach this sharpening of vision and the exploration of a new wave of opportunities for our future Downtown with enthusiasm and optimism, we must recognize that there are substantial challenges to the continuing, effective implementation of this vision. As we identify these challenges, we are reminded that Holland's collective public and private efforts, inspired and creative leadership, and community commitment have brought us through skepticism and past challenges to the vitality and quality we enjoy Downtown today. These forces must remain strong as we deal with the following challenges:

### a. Community Involvement.

Currently, a significant though gradual transition is occurring in key players and leaders Downtown in both the public and private sectors. Adequately involving, preparing, and transitioning to the new generation of leaders is vital. At a time when there seem to be ever increasing demands on one's time, sustaining the extraordinary level of community involvement that has been a benchmark of Downtown presents an on-going challenge.

### b. Competition for Resources/Economic Development.

As the City continues to grow and prosper, the desire for new community facilities and the need for maintaining existing facilities city-wide will challenge the ability to maintain high levels of investment targeted Downtown. In similar fashion, regional growth will result in broadening attention to other commercial, recreational, and residential areas. Downtown must continue to assert and demonstrate its vital role as a Distinctive Destination Downtown within the broader community and provide sound investment opportunities.

### c. Changing Market Forces and New Economy.

By definition, markets for goods and services are constantly changing. The seemingly never ending proliferation of big-box retailers along highways has challenged neighborhood shopping districts and

strip centers as well as Downtown to more carefully define where businesses can be most effective. Successful individual businesses must continually monitor, adjust, and respond positively to meet the market forces. Collectively, Downtown offers a very attractive package to consumers and users. Downtown needs to take active steps to market more effectively and to clearly define our market strengths and uniqueness in order to meet such changing market needs.

Downtown Holland is also our community's best opportunity for repositioning and strengthening our local economy with "New Economy" opportunities. These knowledge-based, often digitally-driven enterprises include cutting edge design, engineering, medical research, higher education and training, incubator/entrepreneurial organizations. We have several examples of such firms already in Downtown and more should be attracted to our center. Downtown is uniquely positioned, due to its diverse knowledgeable workforce, physical centrality, and connections to Hope College (and other schools of higher education) to trigger and support such new economy efforts. This is particularly true for small and medium-sized firms.

### d. Community Expectations for Quality Development.

Downtown Holland has achieved a high level of quality in new development and in the up-grading and maintenance of existing development. To protect that quality in existing investments and to realize that quality in future improvements, the City must be very clear about expectations for maintaining this high quality in both public and private sector initiatives.

### e. Diverse Mosaic of Downtown Uses.

Were we in Rev. Van Raalte's shoes and creating a new City starting with clear land today, we might not include certain existing land uses in the relatively small area which is Downtown Holland. Certain public and private uses, whether due to their appearance or external effects such as noise, odors or generation of truck traffic, might better be located in some of our industrial parks. But we are not starting with clear land. The Downtown we find today is a result of over 150 years of incremental land use and business decisions which have resulted in a mosaic of diverse uses and dynamic relationships. We should not forget the positive economic and civic role these diverse uses often play in the Downtown and the substantial investment they have made over many



*Aerial looking northwest over Hope College, East 8th Street, Macatawa Marsh, Windmill Island (May 2005).*



*Aerial looking southeast over Window on the Waterfront Park, and surrounding redevelopable edge blocks.*

years.

This mix of diverse uses and activities will continue. The challenge is to support and encourage such diversity of uses in ways that are consistent with our vision of Downtown where uses and character are compatible, where the pedestrian environment is both attractive and desirable, and where potential negative impacts are mitigated by creative and effective quality improvements. As opportunities arise for making positive changes to existing land use, the community must work together to reach a balance providing community benefits consistent with this Strategic Plan.

**f. Pedestrian Priority:**

**Calming in the Face of Increasing Traffic.**

As the region's population grows and as growth in car ownership rates exceed household growth, the community must creatively develop methods to more effectively manage traffic, calm traffic to enhance the pedestrian experience, and develop and support realistic alternatives to individual use of the private automobile.

**g. Neighborhood Stabilization.**

The health and livability of the Downtown are vital to the entire City and to the greater Holland region. In similar fashion, the health of Holland's central neighborhoods and their desirability as a place for all to live and invest are vitally important to the future well-being of Downtown. This Plan advocates the preservation and enhancement of existing neighborhoods and supports rigorous neighborhood stabilization and improvement initiatives.

**h. Mitigation of Environmental Concerns.**

Redevelopment of some Downtown properties is complicated by environmental concerns resulting from current and/or prior land uses. The City must continue to work with property owners and the State to

develop acceptable, expeditious, and cost-effective approaches to site clean-up and return these sites to productive use.

**i. Facilitating Implementation.**

Increasingly, the Downtown must compete with other communities and other commercial areas to attract high quality tenants and development. For the Downtown to effectively attract new investment, the community must be explicit about expectations and requirements while simplifying review procedures where City permits are involved. There should be reasonable administrative flexibility for allowing interpretations of those ordinances and policies consistent with Downtown objectives where they do not compromise protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

The process of gathering necessary City approvals can be confusing and sometimes intimidating. The DDA staff should provide greater assistance to private parties in moving through the City review process working closely with both applicant and City staff to facilitate effective and thorough review in a timely manner. Interactions with property owners and developers should be characterized by a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, by a clear understanding and articulation of applicable ordinances, and by a creative and realistic exploration of approaches to how an applicant might best meet requirements.

**j. Coordination and Communication.**

The on-going implementation of this Plan requires the participation and coordination of numerous public and private organizations and individuals. The DDA is uniquely positioned with overview of the range of Downtown issues, with both public and private representation and responsibility, and with a strong commitment to implement the recommendations of this Strategic Plan. To this end, the DDA must be well-informed and involved in all issues which impact Downtown. Further, the DDA must assert a leadership role and provide timely, informed, and well-conceived recommendations to City Council on all such issues based upon coordination and communication between the various public and private actors who impact or are impacted by such issues.

**k. Re-use of Existing Buildings.**

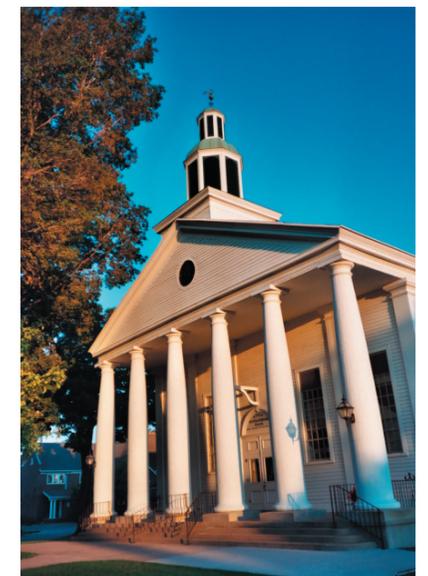
Much has been accomplished in the redevelopment and revitaliza-



8th Street sidewalk scenes.



Historic District home.



Pillar Church (1856).



tion of Downtown Holland through the re-use of existing buildings. A limited number of larger buildings remain Downtown which present significant challenges yet wonderful opportunity for creative adaptive re-use which celebrates the history of the community. There are currently two National Register Historic Districts that include properties within the area covered by this Strategic Plan and within the boundary of the Downtown Development Authority. Location within these designated districts makes a property eligible for federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits encouraging historically appropriate restoration and rehabilitation of significant older properties. A portion of the DDA district lies immediately adjacent to Holland's locally designated historic districts. In addition to those properties within designated Districts, the continued renovation of many older individual buildings Downtown can benefit from Historic Preservation Tax Credits as well and are encouraged to pursue such financial incentives.

### I. Compatibility of New Buildings.

Downtown Holland is fortunate to have a wonderful range of building styles and types. Without a written set of requirements, the Downtown has generally been fortunate to see new buildings of comparable size and quality of materials. A set of site plan review standards and compatibility requirements adopted Downtown a few years ago have attempted to clarify what compatibility involves and what the community expectations are for new construction. One of the more interesting aspects of Downtown is the incremental, small



The Curragh Cafe on 8th Street.

footprint growth of many Downtown buildings. Such incremental growth should be encouraged, even in larger buildings where such incremental building massing and architectural treatment can serve to provide visual connectedness with the existing streetscape. There should also be opportunity for contemporary expression (materials, massing and design expression) within what can safely be described as a conservative traditional architectural context, particularly when the new design is complementary to the existing building context.

#### m. Securing the Core.

It is very important to note that while the broad range and wide distribution of new projects are exciting and central to continuing Downtown's revitalization, a dominant theme of this Strategic Plan Update is an acknowledgement of the need to continue to secure and make more robust the present retail and business core of Downtown, particularly attentive to the two-block heart of 8th Street between River and College Avenues, while recognizing its expansion roughly a block beyond in each direction.

#### n. Celebrating and Embracing Diversity.

The people of the greater Holland community are comprised of a very exciting and widely diverse range of characteristics, interests, and beliefs. Today's economic world cries out for "identifying your niche" and developing a "brand." How can Downtown assure its economic vitality while continuing to strive to be a place where the entire community- as diverse as it is economically, racially, politically, and in terms of age, lifestyle, habits and interests- can comfortably come to, find sustenance in, return time and again, and identify with as the community's center?

## VII. SHARPENING THE VISION.

The remarkable renewal of Downtown Holland over the past two decades has been enthusiastically endorsed by the community. Now, setting a tone for the 21st Century, the Downtown Development Authority is "Sharpening the Vision" through the efforts of its Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). Organized in April of 1994 and comprised of representatives from various Downtown organizations, the SPC functions as a long-range planning committee advising the DDA. Through this effort, this Strategic Plan has been created to guide future



### VISIONING AS A PROCESS BY WILLIAM JOHNSON

"A Vision is not meant to be precise, but rather directional in nature. Its purpose is to help prioritize future occurrences and opportunities so that, for example, when an underutilized defunct Downtown property suddenly becomes available, it is relatively easy to refer to the Vision and have a good sense of what belongs (and what does not) and how development concepts might be shaped to best fit the property into the overall Vision."



The visioning process is a logical progression of steps which taken together will establish the future goals and direction for a community. This diagram was devised by William Johnson to graphically define the process.

Downtown projects and activities.

The 1995 “Broadening the Vision” Strategic Plan expanded thinking about Downtown, embracing edge areas that were not immediately thought of as Downtown but which have quickly become important areas within and supporting Downtown, and broadened the attention on the diversity of issues and opportunities that combine to revitalize Downtown. This new update, “Sharpening the Vision”, builds upon the 1995 Plan and looks first to clarifying and refining opportunities and improvements and next to expanding on the scope and vision of opportunities that present themselves to Downtown some 10 years later. The Strategic Plan is built upon previous public and private planning and is focused on:

1. A comprehensive Vision and Program for Action for Downtown;
2. Enlarged geographic boundaries for Downtown, along with appropriate and sensitive linkages to adjacent areas of activity that impact and influence Downtown;
3. Identification, analysis, and linkage of Downtown facilities, opportunities, and programs; and
4. A coordinated, inclusive approach to achieving these opportunities.

This report outlines opportunities for many persons and organizations to be involved in achieving this Sharpened Vision for a Broader Downtown. The DDA will coordinate these activities and forward specific recommendations to City Council and other organizations for final review and adoption. In essence, the DDA should be the clearinghouse for all public sector projects and a facilitator of private sector activities. The Strategic Plan will enable Downtown to continue to grow, manage change, and be enhanced for local citizens and visitors alike.



## VIII. THE VISION.

Downtown Holland: Where Trend Meets Tradition!  
A Distinctive Destination Downtown in a Unique Midwest Community!

Downtown Holland is...

- A Place to Be, to Experience, to Engage...
- A Place for Family and Youth...
- A Place to Live...
- A Place of Culture, History, and Growing Diversity...
- A Place to Shop, to Dine, and to Be Entertained...
- A Place to Work...
- A Place to Invest...
- A Place of Environmental, Economic, and Social Sustainability...



City of Holland Tulip Time float.



Kayakers at Windmill Island.



Tulipanes Festival in Centennial Park, 2006.



Street musician at Eighth Street Marketplace.



Re-mastered art banners, 2005-7.

## THEMES

As we Sharpen the Vision for Downtown Holland, one overall characteristic personifies the nature of Downtown. Downtown Holland is a Distinctive Destination Downtown set within a distinctive destination community. A true destination combines physical beauty and eye appeal; interesting and fun attractions such as shops and entertainment; friendly social diversity and the confidence of personal safety; plus a unique character and sense of place.

Destinations hold your attention easily and leave you wanting to stay a bit longer or return when time permits. You find psychological comfort and meaning, satisfy obvious or less apparent needs, and feel a part of something larger and unique in this place. Several general themes then provide the framework around which current efforts to sustain and enhance activity and to promote future growth and redevelopment will be realized.

Attention to all Themes demands a dynamic process of balancing change and recognizing opportunity for each Theme. Part of the animation and excitement of realizing an appropriate balance of all of these themes together is that they do come together in a Downtown unified by its walkability, pedestrian emphasis, and vitality.

As the Themes outlined below are integrated into specific plans, the vitality and excitement of life Downtown will continue to be enhanced, and the Downtown will even more be recognized as...

### I. A PLACE TO BE, TO EXPERIENCE, TO ENGAGE ...

Downtown Holland is one of our community's most important "Third Places". Third places are those locations where we freely interact with other members of society outside of home and work (our "first" and "second" places, respectively). In Downtown Holland, for example, the entire first floor environment is typically open for public interactions in stores, restaurants, service businesses, and civic organizations, all spilling into the sidewalks and streets as interactions continue. While these activities and uses also involve employment, they are primarily open and public in nature.

Third Places are "where we live together as a society." Other examples include places of worship, schools, parks, playgrounds, open air markets, and entertainment and sports facilities, all of which are components of Downtown Holland. It is this concentration

and combination of a wide range of uses that helps to create a vital, attractive, diverse, and powerful Third Place. Further, in Holland, we believe the effort to enhance and sustain this place is a year-round endeavor and our special snow-melted environment makes Holland a particularly gracious winter city.

### A Place to Be...

- For people of all ages to stroll, in a setting of attractive buildings, active businesses and lively storefronts and cafes, all easily accessible within a comfortable walk.
- With high-quality seating, paving, lighting, and landscaping punctuated by pleasant publicly accessible open spaces which feature public art and settings for live performances and exhibitions.
- Where parking is safe, readily accessible, and attractively landscaped without detracting from the continuity of Downtown buildings and activity.
- Featuring our water-related heritage through expanded public waterfront access, fountains and other water features which can become ice features during winter moments.
- Where one is free to stand back and observe the on-going life of Downtown or is equally comfortable joining in with the activities and interactions- whether planned or spontaneous- that occur all around.
- Where Green Connections, those well-detailed and landscaped paths lace together the many Downtown activities and attractions, and Blue Edges, providing the Great Lakes water connection and vitality so fundamental to the sense of place and evolution of Downtown.

### II. A PLACE FOR FAMILY AND YOUTH ...

- With a diversity of shopping, dining, and formal entertainment for families and youth of all ages.
- Showcasing a variety of arts and cultural attractions.
- Providing numerous targeted active and passive recreational opportunities within an environment that is comfortable and supportive of youth and families. Informal and often spontaneous opportunities for younger children to play such as interactive public sculpture, water features, pocket parks, and playground features are distributed randomly throughout Downtown.
- Other opportunities such as shops, services, and facilities, perhaps "edgier" in character, are supportive of the community's



Fiesta celebration at Eighth Street Market Place, 2006.

Left, 'Pledge of Allegiance' statue at 8th/College.



New childrens' play area at Kollen Park.



Above, Friday night concert in Centennial Park.



Typical apartment above storefront overlooking 8th Street.

teenagers seeking comfort in an environment that is distinctive but part of the greater Downtown scene.

### III. A PLACE TO LIVE ...

- Offering a range of residential options, such as new and rehabbed upper story apartments, historic homes, and new condominiums supporting an expanding and diversifying Downtown resident population. Housing opportunities serve a diverse age and socio-economic population and include housing targeted at young professionals, the diverse downtown workforce, and empty nesters.
- Where residents frequently encounter and engage their Downtown neighbors sharing social and community interests.
- Where shopping, services, dining, entertainment, recreation, and educational and religious institutions understand and cater to the daily needs of Downtown residents.
- Where residents of the historic districts, Hope College, and the close-in central neighborhoods utilize Downtown to support their daily needs as well.
- With an attractive and safe pedestrian environment, reasonable parking opportunities, and access to public transportation assuring varied transportation options.

### IV. A PLACE OF CULTURE, HISTORY, AND GROWING DIVERSITY ...

- As Downtown buildings feature varied architectural styles and building ornamentation expressing a broad cultural heritage and a tradition of architectural quality. In addition, areas of the Downtown are located within a National Register Historic District and several individual structures are listed on both the State and National Registers.
- Where the visual and performing arts and rich culture diversity and heritage are celebrated in galleries and on the streets, through performances, exhibitions, sidewalk and street-side sculpture, special programs, and festivals such as Fiesta, Tulipanes, and nationally



recognized Tulip Time. Where organizations and institutions including the Holland Area Arts Council and Holland Historical Trust daily provide activities, education and programming in the arts and community history.

- Where Hope College provides a particularly exciting and strong year-round array of visual and performing arts, broadly appealing public lectures and symposia on diverse topics in history and culture, and where the presence of academically talented student and faculty add variety and depth to community culture.
- Where the growing ethnic mix combines with the age and economic diversity of our community and is increasingly reflected in the people, businesses, and activity of Downtown.
- Where the Downtown continues to reflect the community's founding and central religious underpinnings through numerous places of worship, Hope College, Western Seminary, and a variety of service and civic organizations, all embracing the evolving socio/economic/racial diversity of the community.

### V. A PLACE TO SHOP, TO DINE, AND TO BE ENTERTAINED ...

- With over 150 businesses offering an expanding array of quality products and personal and professional services at competitive prices in a convenient, customer-oriented environment.
- Where a growing variety of restaurants, coffee shops, and outdoor cafes combine with creative street performers to attract residents and visitors alike to stay Downtown into the evening and enjoy the expanding setting for programmed and spontaneous entertainment.
- Where the unique Snowmelt system keeps the heart of the Downtown free of winter's snow and ice while attractive landscaping and attentive maintenance assure a pleasant year-round shopping, dining, and entertainment experience.
- Where a comfortable clustering of businesses and entertainment venues allows convenient pedestrian circulation and reasonable access to parking and public transit.



Model Drug Store Interior.



Bikers, pedestrians, and cars along 8th Street.



Concert at the Henry P. Vander Linde Bandshell in Kollen Park.

## VI. A PLACE TO WORK ...

- Where an estimated and approximately 4,000 employees presently work in small- to medium-sized commercial and industrial businesses within walking distance of Downtown shops and dining.
- With Hope College, Western Seminary, and a number of other institutional, municipal, and cultural organization employers within and adjacent to the Downtown.
- Where further development opportunities identified in this Plan could increase the employment totals for Downtown by 20 percent or more by the year 2020.

## VII. A PLACE TO INVEST ...

Including:

- a.) Over \$79 million in public infrastructure improvements (street reconstruction, streetscape sidewalk and landscaping, utility, snowmelt) and public facilities (City Police, County Court, and Eighth Street Market Place) currently underway or having been completed Downtown since 1995;
  - b.) Greater than \$156 million in private investment in rehabilitated and new commercial, institutional, industrial, and residential properties underway or completed Downtown since 1995; and
  - c.) Varied public and private financial assistance in the form of design assistance, low-interest loans, and facade improvement Grants have been provided since 1995.
- With a strong and mature Downtown management program (the Downtown Development Authority), a vital marketing and promotions organization (the Principal Shopping District), and an extremely high level of volunteer support;
  - With strong financial institutions, including young and growing local institutions as well as longer-established regional and national institutions, are committed to improving our community;
  - With private sector property and business owners aggressive in pursuing their own dreams in a manner consistent with the context of both quality and synergy;
  - With strong and consistent support of City Council and City management for Downtown initiatives and investment;
  - With growing discussion and coordination on a regional basis in areas of land use, green infrastructure and watershed improvement,

urban revitalization, and transportation planning occurring through such organizations as the West Michigan Strategic Alliance, the Governor's and Cool Cities Initiative, the Macatawa Greenway Partnership, and the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council; and

- Where an extended period of substantial population growth and dramatic regional economic expansion into the late 1990's followed by a more recent and continuing period of significant global, national, and regional economic restructuring find Holland and much of Western Michigan challenged yet poised (as a result of great resources, a livable environment, an affordable quality of life, a well-trained and creative workforce, and dynamic leadership) for growth and new prosperity.

## VIII. A PLACE OF ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ...

- Where the Downtown is set within the heart of the Macatawa Greenway and Great Lakes environment, where opportunities for programs and policies can acknowledge and capitalize on the extraordinary and immediate natural environment.
- Where rehabilitation and redevelopment activities occur in an environment encouraging sound and lasting ecological principles of energy conservation, material efficiencies, and renewable resources. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles and project certification are encouraged.
- Where entering and engaging an international economy and market forces can run side-by-side with the support of local and regional businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Where the spirit of interactions, the openness of invitations to participate Downtown, and the respect shown to all people are evidence of a community where social justice thrives.



Decorated Adirondack chair public art display (2003).



Fourth of July celebration along Lake Macatawa waterfront.



Christmas shopping along snowmelted 8th Street sidewalks.