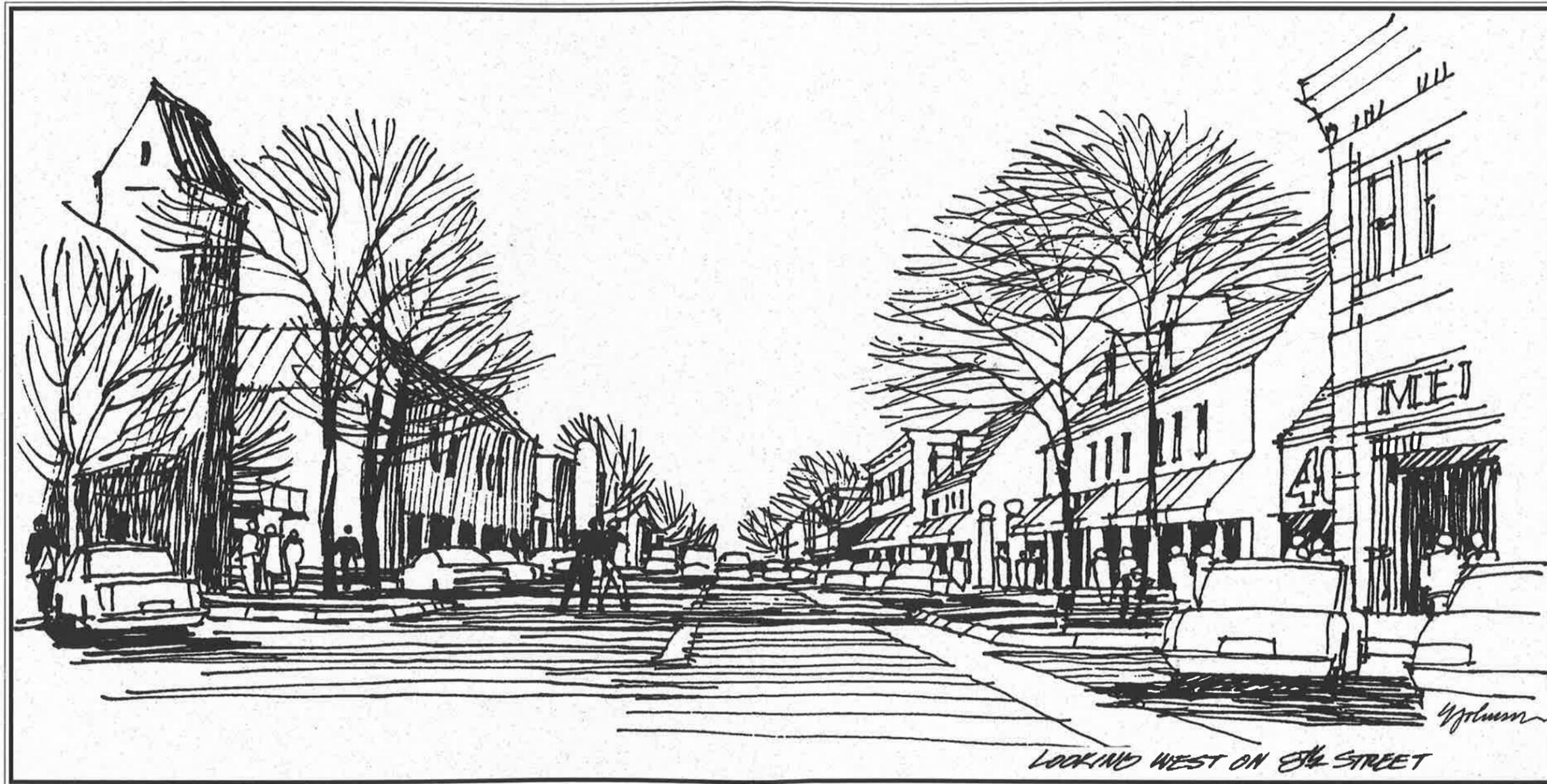


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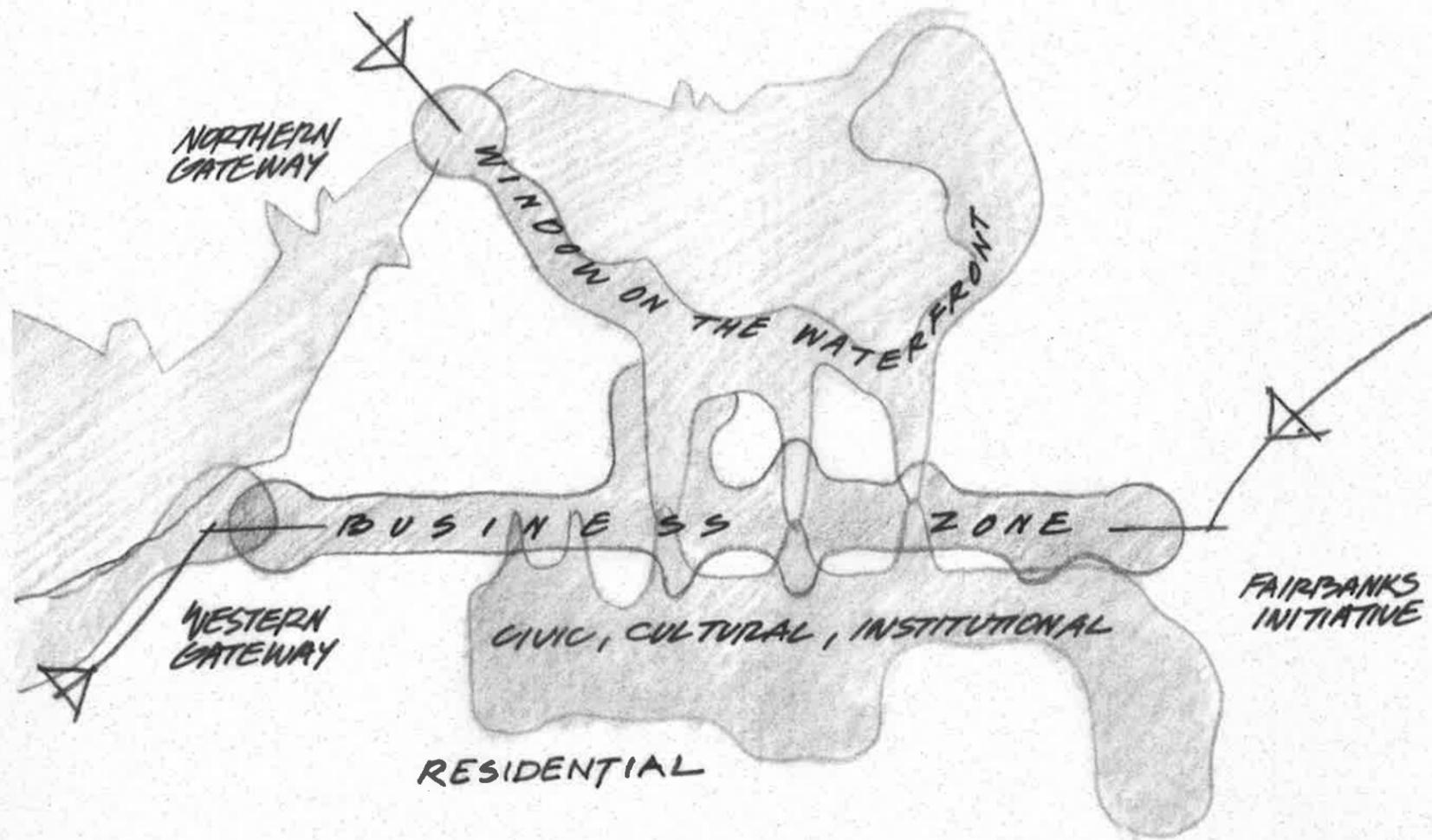
A Strategic Plan for Downtown Holland, Michigan



MainStreet/Downtown Development Authority

City of Holland, Michigan

June 1995



Conceptual framework for Downtown Plan.

Special Credits

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Cover Caption: Looking west on 8th Street with potential superbloc development on right, former fire station and 100 East building on left.

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Broadening the Vision

A Strategic Planning Report for Downtown Holland

Produced by

MainStreet/Downtown Development Authority

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Broadening the Vision: A Strategic Plan for Downtown Holland, Michigan



Welcome to the future of Downtown Holland. Welcome to Downtown just a few years from now - with new gateway entrances, improved parks, additional residences, interesting new shops and services, more trees, flowers, art, and excitement.

Welcome to a future which builds on the diverse mosaic that is Downtown today. There are places to shop, read, stroll, listen to music, enjoy coffee, sandwiches, and dinner. We are able to live, work, worship, and learn. In Downtown, we are reminded of our heritage, yet enthused by tomorrow's ideas and opportunities. It is our commons, our gathering place, our center.

This plan outlines a broadened Vision for Downtown, a strategic framework embracing significant future public and private projects and activities. These endeavors will build on the successful projects already achieved in Downtown Holland since 1984, projects which have made our Downtown one of the most outstanding in America.

Please join us as we explore our future. Welcome!



Introduction



I. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to document the new Strategic Plan for Downtown Holland. The Strategic Plan was created by the MainStreet/Downtown Development Authority's Strategic Planning Committee 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.

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 - are seeking new ideas to improve Downtown so that it can serve personal and community needs more 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. Planning History

Downtown Holland reflects the values and vision of its 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 - supporting continued creative development in a historic downtown area.

The proliferation of the automobile brought sweeping changes to planning and development in Downtown Holland. 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. Recognizing these changes, community leaders initiated a planning process designed to stabilize Downtown and to enhance its future development.

III. 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 began to formulate a comprehensive public and private development plan for the economic and historic revitalization of Downtown.

The major endeavor of MainStreet 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. Also, an innovative sub-surface Snowmelt system was installed from storefront to storefront on 8th Street to keep Downtown free of snow and ice during winter months. Streetscape/Snowmelt set the standard for public and private commitments to Downtown, galvanized widespread community support for Downtown, and highlights the comprehensive planning 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. Some of these are listed below:

MainStreet/DDA and the City of Holland: The City provided design assistance, Community Development Block Grants supporting building renovations, ordinances allowing sidewalk cafes, creative signage and awnings, overnight residential parking, and low-interest loan administration. Major projects included the Holland Museum, the multi-modal transportation Depot, Town Park Phase I, Window on the Waterfront Park Phase II, various street resurfacing campaigns, and numerous planning efforts. Public infrastructure investment totalled approximately \$4 million - mostly for replacing aging facilities.

Private Sector investments totaling over \$65 million have been led by Lumir Corporation's new 100 East Building and its renovations of Claremont Court, AlpenRose Restaurant, Baas' Men's Store, the Riverview Building and the Brownstone Building. Other private sector activities included local banks' low-interest loan program and numerous building projects such as the Holland Sentinel expansion, Padnos Company's office renovation, Steketee Van Huis expansion, Curtis Center, Knickerbocker Theater, and others. Private sector park projects included First of America, AlpenRose, Prince, and Curtis parks. In addition, valuable supplemental planning resources were provided by the Riverview Advisory Committee in the form of an architectural model, and a slide show and brochure illustrating the Committee's vision for Downtown. Other private sector organizations that have been active during this period include the Shops of Downtown Holland, the Holland Area Arts Council, Hope College, the Downtown Residents Association, and several others.

IV. Opportunities and Challenges

Numerous new opportunities for cooperative public and private projects which will enhance the Downtown's historic mixed-use character are identified in the report. There is particular enthusiasm for additional residential units, selective retail, restaurant, and office functions, and recreation and entertainment activities. However, several constraints will challenge these efforts - opportunities such as environmental concerns, increasing traffic growth and parking demand, competition for public resources, project coordination, and regulations related to building rehabilitation.

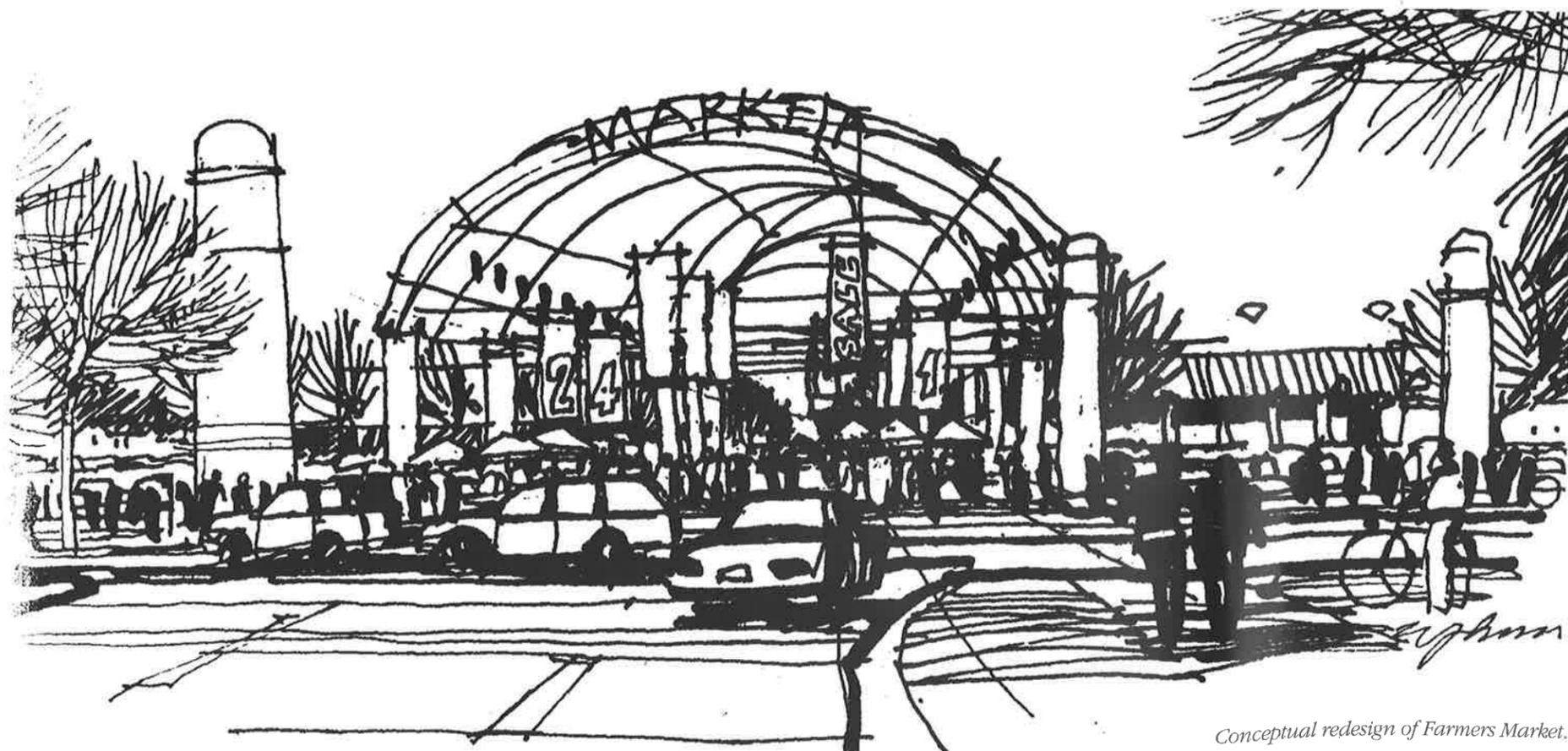
V. Broadening the Vision

The remarkable renewal of Downtown Holland over the past decade has been enthusiastically endorsed by the community. Now, on the threshold of the 21st Century, MainStreet/DDA is "Broadening the Vision" through the efforts of its Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). Organized in April, 1994, and comprised of representatives from various Downtown organizations, the SPC functions as a long-range planning and steering committee advising MainStreet/DDA. Through this effort, this Strategic Plan has been created to guide future Downtown projects and activities. The Strategic Plan is built upon previous

public and private planning frameworks and is focused on:

1. A comprehensive Vision for Downtown;
2. Enlarged geographic boundaries for Downtown;
3. Identification, analysis, and linkage of Downtown facilities and opportunities;
4. A coordinated, inclusive approach to achieving these opportunities; and
5. Appropriate and sensitive linkage of the Plan to stabilization efforts in adjacent neighborhoods.

This report outlines opportunities for many persons and organizations to be involved in achieving this Broadened Vision for Downtown. MainStreet/DDA will coordinate these activities and forward specific recommendations to City Council and other organizations for final review and adoption. In essence, MainStreet/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.



Conceptual redesign of Farmers Market.



Photograph of Fairbanks Initiative area with Western Foundry in foreground.



Civic Center patrons crossing Pine Avenue.

Themes

As we Broaden the Vision for Downtown Holland, emerging themes provide the framework around which future growth and redevelopment will be realized. As the themes outlined below are incorporated into specific plans, the vitality and excitement of life Downtown will be enhanced, and the Downtown will even more become...



I. A Place to Be ...

☑ For people of all ages to stroll, with a core of attractive buildings, active businesses and lively storefronts and cafes, all easily accessible within a comfortable walk.

☑ With high-quality Streetscape paving, lighting, and landscaping punctuated by pleasant public 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.

II. A Place for Family and Youth ...

☑ With a diversity of shopping, dining, and entertainment for families and youth.

☑ Showcasing a variety of arts and cultural attractions.

☑ Providing numerous active and passive recreational opportunities.

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.

☑ Where residents regularly come together sharing social and community interests through meetings of the Downtown Residents Association.

☑ Where shopping, services, dining, entertainment, recreation, and educational and religious institutions cater to the daily needs of Downtown and neighborhood residents.

☑ With an attractive and safe pedestrian environment, reasonable parking opportunities, and access to public transportation assuring varied transportation options.

IV. A Place of Culture and History ...

☑ 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 Downtown continues to reflect the community's founding and central religious underpinnings through numerous churches, Hope College, Western Seminary, and a variety of service and civic organizations.

☑ Where arts and culture are celebrated in galleries and through performances, exhibitions, special programs, and festivals such as Cinco de Mayo,

Arts Council Celebration, and nationally recognized Tulip Time.

☑ Where the growing ethnic mix of our community is increasingly reflected in both the people and businesses of Downtown.



V. A Place to Shop ...

☑ With over 150 businesses offering quality products and personal and professional services at competitive prices in a convenient, customer-oriented environment.

☑ Where a comfortable clustering of businesses allows convenient pedestrian circulation and reasonable access to parking and public transit.



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 experience.

VI. A Place to Work ...

Where 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 municipal and cultural employers within and adjacent to the Downtown.

Where further development opportunities could increase the employment totals for Downtown by 25 percent or more by the year 2000.



VII. A Place to Invest ...

including:

a.) over \$4 million in recent public infrastructure improvements underway, with an additional \$10 million anticipated by 1997;

b.) over \$1.6 million in financial assistance in the form of design assistance, low-interest loans, and facade improvement grants; and

c.) greater than \$65 million in private investment in rehabilitated and new commercial, industrial, and residential properties, with an additional \$35 million anticipated by 2005.

With a strong and mature Downtown management program, a vital merchants organization, and a high level of volunteer support.

Where strong and growing local financial institutions are committed to improving our community.

With growing coordination on a regional basis in areas of land use and infrastructure planning occurring through the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council.

Where demographic shifts, substantial population growth, and dramatic regional economic expansion have garnered attention and influence for Holland and much of Western Michigan.



1994 aerial photograph of
Downtown.

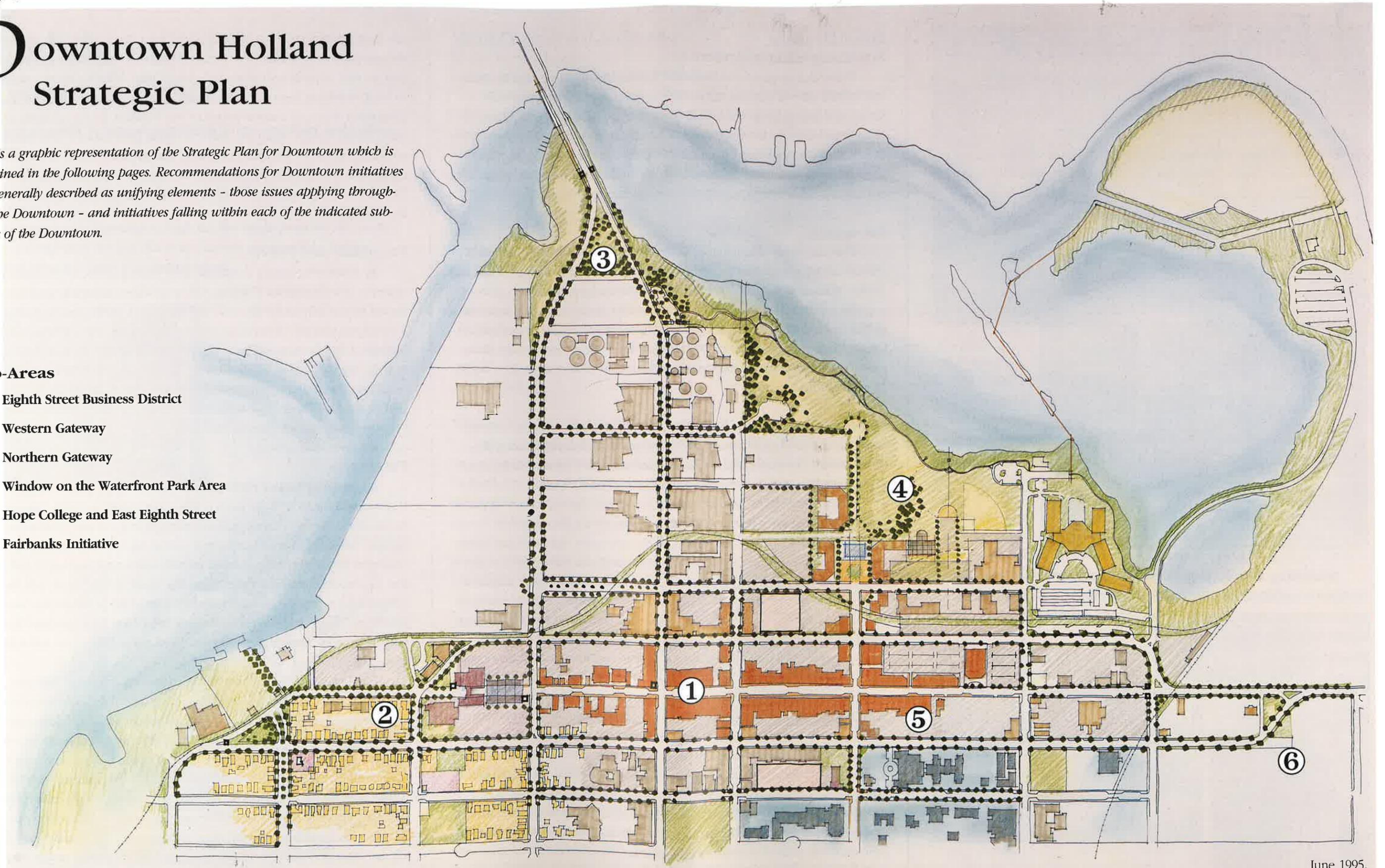


Downtown Holland Strategic Plan

This is a graphic representation of the Strategic Plan for Downtown which is explained in the following pages. Recommendations for Downtown initiatives are generally described as unifying elements - those issues applying throughout the Downtown - and initiatives falling within each of the indicated sub-areas of the Downtown.

Sub-Areas

- 1 Eighth Street Business District
- 2 Western Gateway
- 3 Northern Gateway
- 4 Window on the Waterfront Park Area
- 5 Hope College and East Eighth Street
- 6 Fairbanks Initiative



Unifying Elements

Summary.

Certain physical features in Downtown unify its identity, character, and functional effectiveness. These improvements, as described in the following paragraphs, have come to symbolize and distinguish Downtown Holland from other downtowns and business districts. To the extent possible, these features should be included in all new Downtown projects and improvement areas in order to further unify and connect Downtown's perimeter areas. Fountains, other water features, and other physical improvements should be seriously considered as new unifying elements in such projects to further enhance Downtown's attractiveness.



In extending these unifying elements into additional areas within the Downtown, consideration should be given to achieving a balance between reinforcing connections and allowing special areas within the Downtown to achieve their own distinct, though connected, identity.



Major Elements

Streetscape Improvements.

These include street and pedestrian lighting, brick pavers, park benches and bollards, flower planters, trees and tree grates. In addition to the 1988 Streetscape Project, these elements have been used in a number of private projects including the Curtis Center, 100 East Building, and the Riverview Building, and are already planned for the 7th and 9th Street reconstruction projects. These latter projects are intended to broaden the perceived boundaries of Downtown through the use of these design features.

Snowmelt.

This innovative "thermal grid" under Downtown streets, sidewalks, and several parking lots was an integral element in the Streetscape program and has proven to be very popular. Furthermore, this practical, cost effective snow removal approach has been used on several other private projects and has come to be identified with Downtown. It should be included, whenever possible, in future public and private Downtown projects. In a very pragmatic way, Snowmelt provides a significant impetus to the promotion of Downtown as a livable "Winter City".

Street Tree Lighting, Banners, and Signage.

The strings of small white lights as well as seasonal banners along 8th Street identify Downtown and create a distinct pedestrian-oriented ambiance. These amenities should be extended into adjacent street areas.

Changes in 1993 to the City's sign ordinance have provided new opportunities for creative signs Downtown, with a Design Review Board within MainStreet/DDA to assure compatibility of proposed new building signs. Soon, due to several Downtown street reconstruction programs, many traffic control and regulatory signs will be updated. These signs should fulfill their mandated purposes and be consistent with the character of Downtown improvements. A standardized signage program for key public Downtown destinations - such as the Museum, Depot, Hope College, Windmill Island, and various City parks - should be developed and incorporated as part of the Downtown street reconstruction projects.

Architecture, Art, Statues, and Murals.

In many ways, Downtown's most outstanding design elements are its fine buildings and the innovative use of window, entrance, and facade decoration. Through the Design Assistance Program, MainStreet/DDA has supported and encouraged their preservation and creative use, and this effort should be vigorously continued. New buildings should strive to incorporate architectural elements that enhance their visual appeal, and building rehabilitations should similarly retain distinctive architectural features.

Regarding art in Downtown, in addition to the excellent and wide-ranging

arts programming provided by the Holland Area Arts Council, recently both statues and new wall murals have graced Downtown sidewalks and buildings and are very popular with locals and visitors alike. Whether interior murals such as those at 84 East Pasta or Pooh's Corner, exterior scenes such as the Model Drug street scene, or sculptures such as Ben Franklin, the Joy of Music musicians, or the Padnos "scrap art", these art works have added a new character and depth to our Downtown experience. The arts and cultural offerings within the Downtown are emerging as one of the themes which distinguish the Downtown from other commercial or mixed use areas. More such efforts should be encouraged.

Fountains and Pools.

In addition to existing Centennial Park water features, several fine opportunities for new Downtown fountains will be available in coming years and should be carefully and enthusiastically considered. Water features provide both a visual and symbolic connection between Downtown and our waterfront heritage. A key location will be at the intersection of 6th Street and College Avenue, the entrance to Window on the Waterfront Park. Another possibility may arise at or near the new Haworth Center at the corner of 9th Street and College Avenue. Other possible locations include the First of America Park and the new "gateway" entrances to Downtown.

Parking.

a.) Design of Surface Parking Lots. The Streetscape project included improvements to most of the parking lots under MainStreet/DDA management. Improvements included brick wall and wrought iron entrance treatments, new signage, raised landscaped islands, new period lighting, trees, groundcover, expanded flower planting areas, and privately, new trash enclosures and many rear facade and entrance improvements. The result is a system of very fine parking lots and building treatments which extend 8th Street qualities and identity to 7th and 9th Street areas. Several private lots have also used these design elements. These treatments should be used in future new and rehabilitated parking areas.

b.) Availability. In addition to unified parking lot design, adequate, affordable, and accessible parking should be provided for Downtown employees, patrons, and visitors. At present, a good supply of such parking exists. This supply could possibly be supplemented further by sharing agreements with churches and other adjacent property owners. However, over time, new redevelopment projects may precipitate new parking concerns. MainStreet/DDA, in cooperation with private property owners, is conducting a Downtown Parking Study to determine existing and future parking needs, evaluate supply options including the feasibility of a multi-story parking deck, and consider new financing and management opportunities. In all of these efforts, the design character of any additional parking should be carefully considered and directed.

Eighth Street Business District

Bounded generally by Seventh and Ninth Streets and River and College Avenues

Summary.

Though substantially improved through the Streetscape program and maintained at a high level, the core 8th Street business district will be further enhanced through several "fine tuning" efforts.



Left,
existing alley condition.



Below,
potential alley improvements.

Major Projects and Activities

Streetscape/Snowmelt Extensions.

Whenever possible and practical, Streetscape design elements should be included in future public and private projects in this area. Also, targeted extensions of Snowmelt - particularly under the sidewalks on north-south avenues - as well as in new private projects, deserve serious consideration.

Action Plan - MainStreet/DDA should actively encourage both public entities and private owners to incorporate Streetscape/Snowmelt elements in their future Downtown projects.

Underground Utilities.

In conjunction with the 7th and 9th Street Reconstruction projects in 1995 and 1996, respectively, private property owners will be encouraged, through MainStreet/DDA and Board of Public Works coordination, to convert existing overhead wires, telephone, and cable TV to underground services.

Action Plan - Initial planning has begun on this task and, assuming private property owner agreement, this changeover could be completed by 1997 or 1998.

Visitor Center and Public Restrooms.

It is recommended that MainStreet/DDA, in cooperation with the Holland Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Tulip Time, The Shops of Downtown Holland, Chamber of Commerce, and private property owners undertake a thorough feasibility study of whether a separate and distinct Visitor Center should be established in this Downtown district. A related issue, discussed but unresolved for many years, is whether public restrooms in a convenient, central downtown location should be provided for downtown patrons.

Action Plan - Resolution of these issues should be pursued by the MainStreet/DDA Promotion Committee which already includes representation from most of these organizations.

Walking and Building Tours.

A superb way for locals and visitors to learn about and enjoy Downtown and for business owners to "show off" their operations is by conducting walking and building tours. Initial tours could be architecturally oriented, while others could focus on interesting business operations such as the Holland Sentinel, Beatrice Cheese, and the Board of Public Works (BPW) Power Plant,



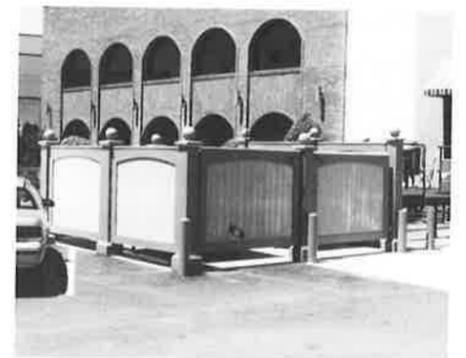
and Downtown's historic and cultural assets such as the Holland Museum, Cappon House, numerous churches, and Hope College.

Action Plan - It is recommended that MainStreet/DDA initiate a discussion of this concept with the Holland Area Arts Council, Downtown Residents Association, Hope College Art Department and Public Relations Office, BPW, Holland Historical Trust, the Holland Historic District Commission and other interested parties.

Comprehensive Trash and Recycling Program.

This plan would build on the existing citywide residential program (which was modified for Downtown residents) and would include all Downtown businesses and residents in a trash reduction, removal, and recycling effort. Based on several consolidations already achieved privately, the program is expected to lead to fewer containers, higher levels of service, and lower costs.

Action Plan - Preliminary work has begun on this plan and recommendations will be presented to MainStreet/DDA and City Council in 1995.

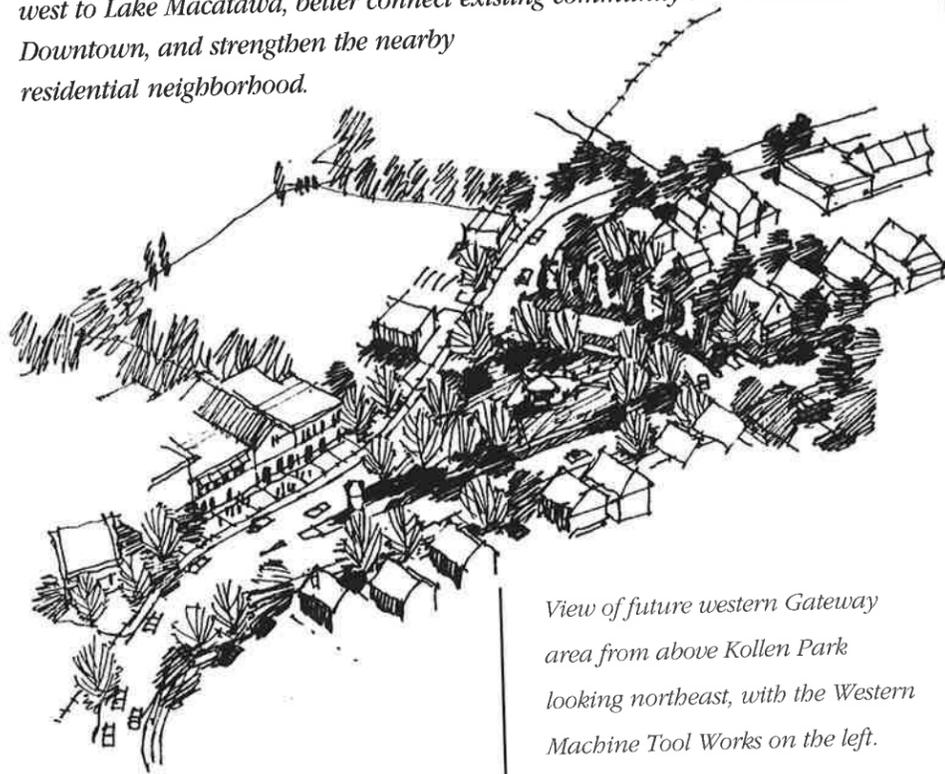


Western Gateway

Bounded generally by Van Raalte and Pine Avenues, 7th and 9th Streets

Summary.

The Western Gateway features several property revitalization opportunities, expanded public access to Lake Macatawa, important street improvements, new commercial and revitalized recreational venues, and related actions. Commitment to these projects will provide an extension of the Downtown west to Lake Macatawa, better connect existing community resources with Downtown, and strengthen the nearby residential neighborhood.



View of future western Gateway area from above Kollen Park looking northeast, with the Western Machine Tool Works on the left.



Western gateway entrance.

Major Elements

Western Machine Tool Works Project.

Purchased by the City in 1994, this landmark property is currently being examined by the City for potential reuse or redevelopment. This property should be targeted for mixed use redevelopment - potentially with a combination of retail, dining, and exhibit/meeting space. Every effort should be made to re-use the existing structure as part of the redevelopment of the site. The City should be very creative as well in addressing potential parking needs. The project should also assure public access along its 300 feet of Lake Macatawa frontage.

▣ Action Plan - The City expects to invite private sector proposals and public ideas for the property's reuse in 1995 with project selection and implementation by 1997. Due to site constraints, this project requires a creative solution and/or additional adjacent property to achieve its highest and best long term use. Long term, the City should seek other opportunities to acquire additional waterfront properties in this area.

Civic Center Re-use.

This City-owned recreation and meeting "workhorse" facility is slated for physical renovation, possible expansion, and probable new uses following the construction of a proposed Area Center, which would include a conference/athletic facility, performing arts center, and ice arena. A probable use for the Civic Center is as an expanded Community Center with a particular focus on programs for youths and families.

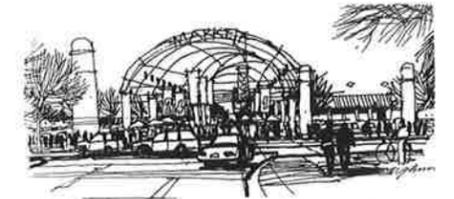
▣ Action Plan - A thorough reuse study should be undertaken to determine the best long term use for the Civic Center and for properties to the north along 8th Street. This should be initiated by the City following Area Center decision-making which is expected by mid-1995. This study should consider the range of recreational, cultural youth and family needs of the community. Improvement plans should carefully consider the importance of this property as a focal point for community activity and as a connector between the Downtown core, the waterfront to the west, and neighborhoods to the south.

Farmers Market.

This vibrant community market operates twice weekly in the Civic Center parking lot from May through November. The Strategic Plan strongly supports this activity and location and encourages a substantive facility be constructed in this area for the Market. This new facility might include canopies and stalls, and might also be designed to accommodate other outdoor community, cultural, arts, entertainment, or recreational activities.

▣ Action Plan - Similar to the Civic Center, this project awaits Area Center decisions. Previous conceptual designs for the Farmers Market should be reviewed and revised in concert with overall plans for the property and for properties immediately to the north.

Farmers Market improvements should be implemented prior to the Market opening in Spring 1996.



Future Farmers Market, see also page 5.

Related Projects

Street Improvements.

Final design for a transition from 7th to 8th Streets through this area should be based upon a comprehensive plan for the Civic Center property, properties on the north side of 7th Street, and other improvements along 8th Street. Development of this plan should begin immediately in order that transition improvements occur in a timely manner. Also, 9th Street in the Western Gateway will be completely rehabilitated under an approved City program which will begin in 1996. Along with improved pavement and landscaping, Streetscape-style lighting fixtures will be included in these street projects and extend to Van Raalte and 10th Street, the entrance to Kollen Park.

Western Tool "Triangle".

A particular benefit of the above street improvements and reconfiguration will be the redesign of the underutilized "triangle" of land bounded by 8th, 9th, and Washington Boulevard. Improvements are needed within the public right-of-way including landscaping and a Downtown gateway sign. Acquisition and/or improvements of private property in this triangle would also enhance this entrance to Downtown, the adjacent neighborhood, and the nearby waterfront.

Padnos Office Building.

Currently underway in this area is the construction of a new Louis Padnos Company office building. Complementing a fine restoration of a smaller 8th Street Padnos building, this new 7th Street facility will accommodate Padnos executive and management offices and help to establish a transitional use buffer between the industrial operations to the north and residential neighborhoods to the south.

Cappon House Museum.

The Cappon House serves as a civic anchor in this area. Possibilities for enhancing its role in the neighborhood include extended hours, its hosting of neighborhood gatherings, and other outreach activities consistent with its mission.

Historic Neighborhood Stabilization.

MainStreet/DDA encourages neighborhood stabilization in this area through improved neighborhood organization, through possible designation as an historic district, and the application of "OurStreet" revitalization principles. "Good Neighborhood" criteria, as developed by the Housing Advisory Commission, should also be applied as this residential area continues to evolve.

Northern Gateway

Bounded generally by the River Avenue Bridge, Pine and River Avenues south to 7th Street

Summary.

This area offers superb opportunities for beautification, improved pedestrian and bike access to and from downtown, and the revitalization of several underutilized sites.



Above, existing convergence of River and Pine Avenues looking south.



Above, rendering of new northern gateway park.
Below, photo of existing River Avenue bridge looking south.

Major Elements

Pine Avenue and River Avenue Improvement and Beautification.

A conceptual plan has been developed for Pine Avenue which includes a sidewalk/bikepath, landscaping, and additional public art. A similar effort should focus on River Avenue to assure safe and pleasant pedestrian and bicycle access. Improvements are also planned along River Avenue by the Board of Public Works (BPW) in the vicinity of the sewage treatment plant.

Action Plan - The next step in this project is the preparation of construction documents for the proposed improvements to both Pine and River Avenues. Such documentation should focus on detailed sidewalk, bikepath and landscaping improvements, but also lay the foundation for incorporating substantial public art into this area. The City plans to begin Pine Avenue improvements in 1995. Adjacent property owners will be encouraged to join this effort and undertake related landscaping and visual improvement projects.

Pedestrian Bridges.

This plan would improve existing sidewalks along River Avenue leading to the River Avenue bridge and add one or two small bridges for pedestrians and other non-motorized users. These small bridges would dramatically improve bridge safety for all users as well as enhance the accessibility between both Window on the Waterfront and northside biketrails and downtown and northside retail businesses. An important element related to both the pedestrian bridges and the Gateway properties is assuring safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings of River Avenue.



Rendering of future pedestrian/bikeway bridge.

Action Plan - This project should be undertaken as soon as possible and will involve the City, Holland Township and the Ottawa County Road Commission. MainStreet/DDA should serve as a catalyst in this effort and assist in the planning and design work necessary to initiate this improvement, encouraging creative approaches to dealing with difficult river and street crossings. Long term, any consideration of roadway and bridge replacement should include substantial pedestrian and bikeway amenities.

River and Pine Gateway Property.

Portions of the properties at the convergence of River and Pine Avenues and to the south have been identified for possible long-term BPW wastewater treatment expansion. Street-fronting portions of these properties could also be improved aesthetically and better connect pedestrian and landscape amenities between Van Bragt Park and the Window on the Waterfront Park.

Action Plan - The City and BPW should review these properties for possible long-term use. Consideration regarding acquisition is necessary and property owners are encouraged to contact the City if they are interested in selling their property.

Related Projects

Donnelly Building.

Donnelly Corporation is expected to vacate its River Avenue facility by 1996. It will be important to encourage appropriate short and long term uses for this highly visible property. Possible users/purchasers include the City/BPW, a business incubator, or other light industrial organization. Donnelly, the City, and DDA should work together to identify and secure appropriate tenants and/or purchasers of this property which assure use consistent with the goals for Downtown.

Van Tongeren Field.

This former softball field has become a temporary City storage area for discarded yard and park materials. This property represents expansion opportunity for surrounding uses and should be considered both for its own use potential and for its strategic value in transforming or securing other properties. It is recommended that the field's long term highest and best use be determined as soon as possible, and that the present storage function be discontinued or hidden from public view.

Padnos Building.

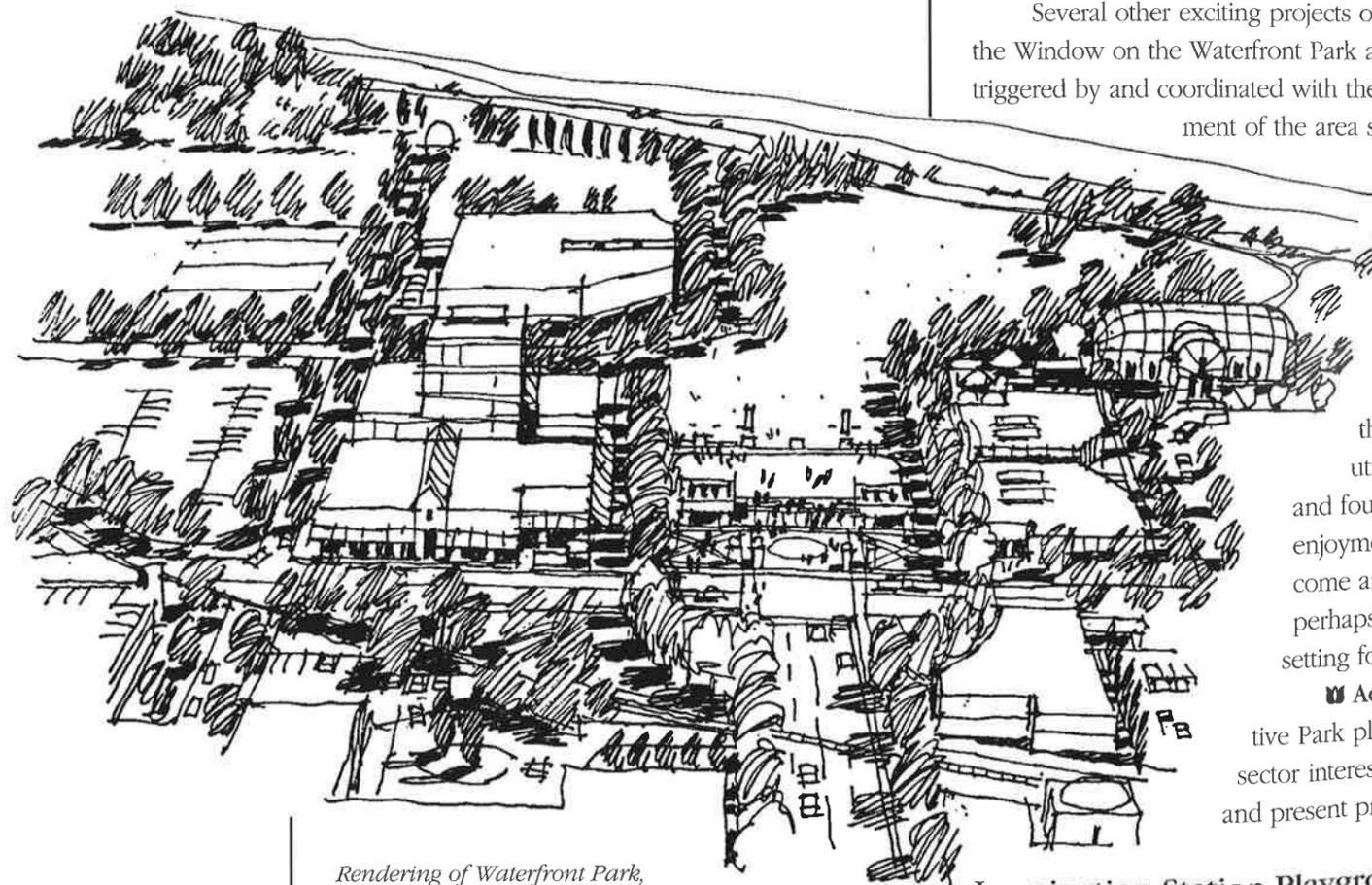
This 30,000 sq. ft. building along River Avenue at 6th Street is underutilized and offers interesting possibilities for creative re-use. MainStreet/DDA should encourage re-use of this building, perhaps through a design "charrette" targeting several underutilized Downtown buildings.

Window on the Waterfront Park Area

Bounded generally by Central and Lincoln Avenues, 7th Street, and Lake Macatawa Marsh

Summary.

This area offers wonderful opportunities for significant public park and related improvements as well as major private sector cultural, residential, commercial, and continued light industrial ventures. While the area is presently characterized by healthy light industrial and commercial businesses, completing Waterfront Park will improve public access, focus, and identity to this area and encourage an even broader mix of uses.



Rendering of Waterfront Park, looking north along College Avenue.

Major Elements

Window on the Waterfront Park.

Building on the 1987 Sesquicentennial Window on the Waterfront trail project, the second phase of this comprehensive park development was completed by the City in 1991 (in conjunction with the demolition of the former BPW services building). Now, because an alternative location has been purchased for Corps of Engineers' dredge materials which have been deposited in this diked area since 1976, the entire Park can be completed. Conceptual plans for further Park improvements have been developed by William Johnson, and the City and the Corps have budgeted for most of these improvements.

U Action Plan - The City should re-start this project in 1995 by planning and implementing soil drainage and stabilization activities in the diked area. Simultaneously, the conceptual improvement plan must be refined and construction documents finalized. This improvement plan must consider and coordinate a number of specific potential related facilities described in the following. MainStreet/DDA and other private sector organizations should assist the City in these efforts.

Several other exciting projects over the years have been contemplated for the Window on the Waterfront Park and adjacent park area and could be triggered by and coordinated with the Park's completion. Just as the redevelopment of the area surrounding the Park envisions a mix of uses and a variety of activities, so too the integration of those uses into the Park is critical for establishing a safe, active and attractive park.

Fountain/Ice Rink.

At the College Avenue entrance to the Park, there is a great opportunity to utilize water and create a reflecting pool and fountain for Spring, Summer, and Fall enjoyment. This pool area could possibly become an attraction in Winter months as well, perhaps as a refrigerated ice skating rink or as a setting for ice sculpture.

U Action Plan - In conjunction with a definitive Park plan and construction activities, private sector interests will be investigating these possibilities and present proposals to the City during 1995 or 1996.

Imagination Station Playground.

This high quality, child-designed and volunteer-built playground concept has been successful in many nearby communities. It is believed that this would

be an ideal location for such a project which is larger in scale and complexity than most school playgrounds.

U Action Plan - The overall plan for the Park should examine the placement and layout of this facility. The City, in coordination with the DDA, should establish a task force charged with developing plans and implementation steps for such a facility. Several private sector groups have expressed interest in contributing to such a project which would require City approval and oversight.

Children's Museum.

This hands-on, learning center has been discussed for several years. The Window on the Waterfront Park setting and adjoining properties offer an excellent context for such a facility.

U Action Plan - The City, Holland Area Arts Council, and several private sector groups have expressed interest in this project in the past. It is expected that the Park will catalyze these parties to action in 1995. The community should reach a consensus on whether such a facility can and should be developed and, if so, develop a specific plan for the facility.

Greenhouse/Conservatory.

The City has considered consolidating its various, old greenhouses into a single facility. One possible location is in the Window on the Waterfront Park, where the facility could be enhanced to become a Conservatory and could be "opened up" to allow public visitation. The new greenhouse, normally a strictly functional facility, could become a year-round attraction - perhaps promoted as a Winter Garden - for residents and visitors alike.

U Action Plan - This possible project should be initiated by the City with a review of existing greenhouse and nursery facilities. There are many commercial and individual horticultural enthusiasts in the Holland area who would probably embrace an opportunity to be involved in creating this special project. It is recommended that, in conjunction with the Park planning in 1995, that a small task force be organized by the City to brainstorm this possibility and make recommendations to City Council by late 1995.



Example of conservatory, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Related Projects

7th Street Reconstruction.

This \$7-million project begins in May 1995 and involves the complete reconstruction and improvement of 7th Street, including new underground utilities, new sidewalks with brick accents and crosswalks, landscaping, and lighting. Further pedestrian improvements are encouraged to continue along the north-south streets as well in order to link Downtown's Streetscape with the Waterfront Park. College Avenue should be the first priority for such north-south projects.

Beatrice Cheese.

A longtime mainstay of Downtown, Beatrice is currently constructing a 27,000 sq. ft. addition to its 6th Street facility. This commitment of a significant industrial employer supports the mosaic of diverse uses encouraged Downtown.

J. B. Labs Building Re-Use.

This large building at 6th Street and Central Avenue is expected to be purchased by Lumir Corporation in 1995. Currently, plans for new residential units are being considered for development by Lumir and other interested parties. This project is expected to proceed in parallel with Window on the Waterfront Park construction.

7th/Central Building.

The Riverview Partnership has developed conceptual plans for a multi-tenant 15 - 20,000 sq. ft. office building at the southeast corner which could be under construction as early as 1995.

GMB Office Building.

GMB Architects and Engineers are planning a new 25,000 sq. ft. headquarters building at the northwest corner of 7th Street and College Avenue with construction anticipated prior to 1998.



Conceptual design of GMB building.

New Housing.

Properties immediately to the west of the Waterfront Park present exciting opportunities for introducing high quality housing either as residential apartments or condominiums above retail and office uses, or as an economically and socially diverse independent housing development.

Windmill Island.

Windmill Island relates to the Waterfront Park area in a significant way due to the common marsh setting and similar park/civic themes being considered here. A goal of the Strategic Plan is to foster greater physical access between the two areas and to improve and coordinate programming of activities in both venues. The Strategic Planning Committee fully supports the 1995 initiative to thoroughly review and recommend changes at Windmill Island.



Example of urban fountain,
Boston, MA.



Top, rendering of potential higher
density residential development.

Bottom, rendering of potential mixed-
use housing and retail development.

Hope College and East Eighth Street

Bounded generally by Hope College Campus and 8th Street from College to Lincoln Avenues

Summary.

Hope College's strong relationship with Downtown will be enhanced by its new Haworth Center, expected joint parking initiatives, and continued operations in 8th Street properties. Other substantial private sector projects along 8th Street will strengthen and broaden retail and business opportunities.



Hope College campus.

Architect's rendering of
Haworth Center at Hope
College.



Major Elements

Haworth Center at Hope College.

In the summer of 1995, construction will begin on this \$15 million project containing conference meeting space for 400 persons, 50 overnight guest rooms, dormitory space for 272 students, and related dining facilities. Located east of College Avenue, between 9th and 10th Streets, the Haworth Center will form a bridge between the College and the central business district.

U Action Plan - Hope College is finalizing building plans, existing residences are being moved from the building site, and site work has begun. It is recommended that MainStreet/DDA and Hope, along with the CVB work together to better "package" the new center and Downtown for prospective visitors and guests.

Hope College Activities on 8th Street.

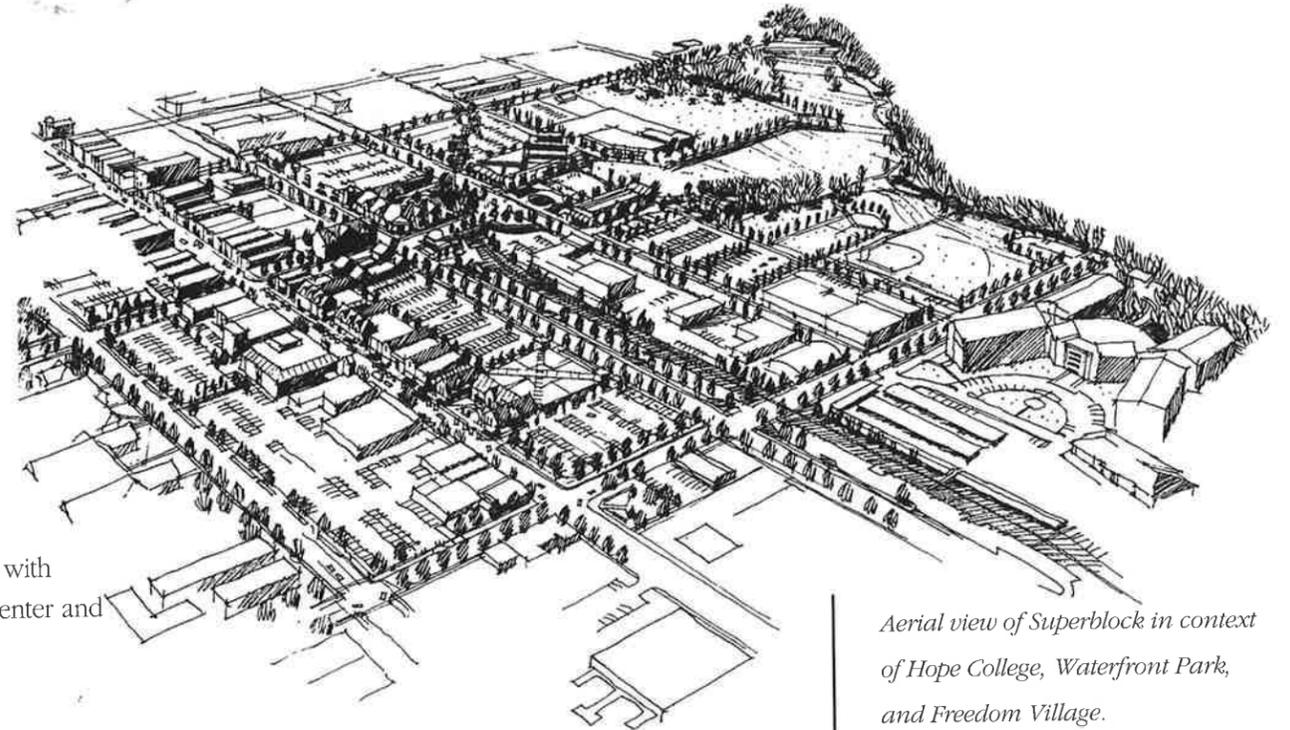
Hope College, through its ownership of the Knickerbocker Theater, its tenancy in the 100 East Building with Hope Academy of Senior Professionals (HASP) offices and general classrooms, and the Brownstone Building (in the Art Annex and upstairs apartments), and investment in the Riverview Partnership, has made a strong and important commitment to Downtown.

U Action Plan - The City, MainStreet/DDA and private property owners should continue to work creatively with the College to maintain the College's commitment and presence Downtown which significantly supports the area's diversity and vitality.

Superblock.

This block, bounded by 8th and 7th Streets and College and Columbia Avenues, is targeted for the next wave of major new 8th Street construction. Plans include ground floor destination retail and restaurant uses, with upper floor apartments and offices. Entertainment projects are also being considered for this block.

U Action Plan - Riverview Partnership currently owns about two-thirds of this block and is seeking appropriate tenants and co-developers in various conceptual plans it has developed. New projects are expected to begin as early as 1995 or 1996. The City, with MainStreet/DDA, should support related improvements which will assure successful redevelopment of this block.



Aerial view of Superblock in context
of Hope College, Waterfront Park,
and Freedom Village.

Related Projects.

9th Street Reconstruction.

This one-way eastbound leg of the Downtown State Highway Trunk system is scheduled for complete reconstruction in 1996 and the plan will include upgrading all utilities and provide for new sidewalks, street lighting, landscaping, flower planters, etc. The project is currently in the design and preliminary engineering stage and is estimated to cost \$2.9 million. The City should assure that these improvements will result in safe and convenient pedestrian access between the Downtown and the College and neighborhoods to the south.

10th Street Modifications.

Changes to 10th Street, due to the Haworth Center and other Hope College needs, may be forthcoming by 1997. All current discussions assume 10th Street will remain public and open to through traffic, but would include additional parking, new landscaping opportunities, and other pedestrian amenities.

Uptown Poster and Frame.

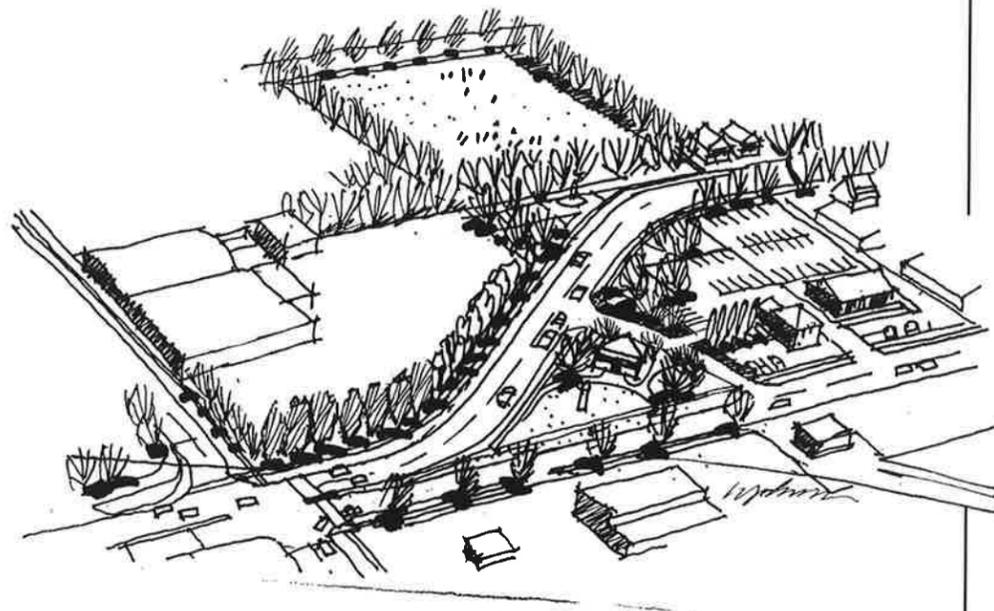
In 1995, this gallery is expected to move to the former gas station property at the southeast corner of 8th Street and Columbia Avenue. This new mixed office and retail property will be landscaped and reinforce commercial activity in this area of 8th Street.

Fairbanks Initiative

Bounded generally by Fairbanks Avenue, 8th Street, Lincoln Avenue, and 12th Street

Summary.

The Fairbanks Initiative offers a significant opportunity for new cultural and civic improvements and revitalization and will require a creative, cooperative effort between public and private interests. This area serves as both an eastern gateway entrance into the Downtown and as a connection between existing Hope College academic and recreational facilities. If successfully assembled, this nearly 20-acre site would provide for a variety of possible uses including a gateway park, recreational play areas, and new cultural or entertainment facilities. One potential use, both consistent with this area analysis and the overall goals of the Strategic Plan, is the proposed Area Center which could be accommodated in this area.



View of Fairbanks area at the convergence of 9th Street with 8th Street, looking southwest.

Major Elements

Western Foundry.

Once a strong economic force in the community, Western Foundry currently employs a handful of workers in a marginal building. The initial objective of the Fairbanks Initiative plan is to have the property under the control of long-term owners willing to play a partnership role in upgrading this gateway property and the surrounding area. Upon securing the property, the building should be removed and any potential environmental concerns remediated.

U Action Plan - There continue to be discussions with the owner of this property. A successful conclusion of these discussions would be the relocation of Foundry activities and acquisition of the property. The City should remain in contact with the present and future owners so that areawide land use and planning activities are coordinated and optimized.

Street Department.

This facility along Fairbanks Avenue houses all City Street Department vehicles, materials, maintenance shops, and employee support areas. In conjunction with the Western Foundry acquisition, the City is encouraged to relocate these activities to an improved site and facility.

U Action Plan - Relocating the Street Department will involve significant effort and require a somewhat unique site which is centrally located, accessible to a major arterial street, and shielded from general public view (due to its outdoor storage needs). It is recommended that the City intensify its ongoing relocation discussion by specifying the Department's exact needs and identifying possible relocation properties.

Property Acquisition.

In addition to the Western Foundry property, individual residential properties immediately adjacent to both the Foundry and Street Department sites should continue to be acquired in an effort to consolidate this area for alternative uses.

College Interest.

As Hope College looks to the future for enhancing facilities, this area is an important link between the heart of their academic and residential facilities and their recreational facilities east of Fairbanks Avenue (as evidenced by recent Educational District rezoning in this area). The College's continuing participation in land use and improvement decisions for this area is vital to coordinated planning and area-wide improvement.

Related Elements

9th Street Transition.

The 9th Street reconstruction project, scheduled for 1996 includes a "transition" road segment connecting eastbound 9th Street to two-way 8th Street in the vicinity of Garretson Street. Its exact design has not been established, but this segment should be designed to enable future access to and egress from this redevelopment area. Importantly, the 9th Street project will also extend Streetscape style lighting and landscaping into this area.

8th Street Improvements.

Already improved easterly of Fairbanks Avenue with a recent traffic intersection project and scheduled for improvements westerly of Wendy's in conjunction with 7th Street improvements in the Spring of 1995, the remainder of 8th Street between those two projects should be carefully reviewed for improvement opportunities. The City should develop a design plan which incorporates those "unifying elements" of Streetscape, lighting, signage, and utility work into this area and completes the connection to Downtown. This stretch, as the easterly gateway to Downtown, will include both public and private improvements.



Neighborhood Stabilization.

The residential neighborhood which extends southward is important to consider in these plans. Some of the houses on the northern perimeter of this area probably will be removed or relocated. The remaining homes and neighborhood, especially along 12th Street and to the south must be stabilized. Despite property demolitions, home relocations, and construction activities in general, the Fairbanks Initiative will bring positive, long term uses to this area - creating a strong incentive for residents and other property owners to remain and strengthen this neighborhood.

Adjacent Properties.

The improvements and transformation anticipated along and south of 8th Street, coupled with continued improvements to Windmill Island and the Window-on-the-Waterfront Park will provide impetus to possible redevelopment or improvements in and around the industrial property owned by Atmospheric Processing, Inc. (immediately north of 8th Street, west of Chicago Drive). This deteriorated area of mixed residential, commercial and industrial uses lies partially within the City and partially within Holland Township.

Challenges

Though we approach this vision and our future with enthusiasm and optimism, we must recognize that there are substantial challenges to the 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:



J. B. Labs building at 7th Street and Central Avenue.



Padnos building at 6th and River Avenue.

I. Competition for Resources

As the City continues to grow and prosper, the demand 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 within the broader community and provide sound investment opportunities.

II. Increasing 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.

III. The 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 or 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 a century of incremental land use and business decisions which have left us with 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 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.

IV. 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 realistic alternatives to individual use of the private automobile.

V. Neighborhood Stabilization

The health and livability of the Downtown is vital to the entire City and to the greater Holland region. In similar fashion, the health of Holland's neighborhoods and their desirability as a place for all to live and invest is 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. At the sensitive interface between Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, particular care must be taken to assure that all changes strike a responsible balance in the benefit to both the Downtown and neighborhood.

VI. Mitigation of Environmental Concerns

Redevelopment of some Downtown properties is complicated by environmental concerns resulting from prior land uses. The City must work with property owners and the State to develop acceptable, expeditious, and cost-effective approaches to site clean-up thereby returning these sites to productive use.

VII. 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. City ordinances and policies pertaining to all aspects of Downtown development should be reviewed to assure that there is a clear, reasonable presentation of the community's expectation for quality development consistent with Downtown objectives. 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 City should provide greater assistance in moving through the City review process, perhaps with a designated "ombudsman" 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 rather than by a preoccupation with how a proposal does not satisfy requirements.

VIII. Coordination and Communication

The implementation of this Strategic Plan requires the participation and coordination of numerous public and private organizations and individuals. MainStreet/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, MainStreet/DDA must be well-informed and involved in all issues which impact Downtown. Further, MainStreet/DDA must provide timely, informed, and well-conceived recommendations to City Council on all such issues, and assure coordination and communication between the various actors who play significant roles Downtown.

Implementation Strategy

Principles Guiding Implementation

- ❖ Maintain creative and aggressive leadership on the part of City Council and the MainStreet/Downtown Development Authority.
- ❖ Promote strong cooperative public-private initiatives.
- ❖ Create an environment that encourages expanded involvement and responsibility by the private sector.
- ❖ Continue a focus on the Strategic Plan as the framework for all decisions involving Downtown and foster a community-wide commitment to the vision of the Strategic Plan through communication and promotion.

Sequencing/Phasing/Priorities

Implementation efforts fall into three general categories:

- ❖ Those large scale projects that are inter-related with extensive public and/or private discussion, planning, negotiations, financing, decision-making, or improvements;
- ❖ Projects that must follow or are directly related to significant other activities or developments, such as infrastructure improvements; and
- ❖ Projects that do not rely upon other actions and can be implemented somewhat independently.

By considering the Strategic Plan as a framework for action, there is freedom to proceed with projects when the opportunity arises. Priority should be given to those efforts which can be implemented within one to three years, trigger other improvements or redevelopment, serve as models for further actions, and which have a high visibility and convey a sense of accomplishment and progress. Other efforts, including those for which other improvements or longer-range planning or financial commitment are necessary, are

IX. Re-use of Existing Buildings.

Much has been accomplished in the redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown Holland through the re-use of existing buildings. A number of larger buildings remain around the Downtown which present significant challenges for creative adaptive re-use. Buildings such as Western Tool Works, the J. B. Labs building, and the Padnos building on River Avenue, pose challenges to find creative alternative functions consistent with this Strategic Plan.

expected to occur within a longer time frame of four years or more.

Many efforts involve an on-going process of incremental planning, decision-making, and construction within the prescribed framework which may begin immediately but come to fruition over an extended period of time.

Actions and Tools Required for Implementation

The Work Program on the following page provides an overview of the general tasks necessary to accomplish the Major Elements and Related Projects described throughout this Strategic Plan.

In addition to those Elements and Projects, the following must occur simultaneously:

- ❖ Promoting the Strategic Plan and nurturing commitment;
- ❖ Building a strong information base in order to clarify direction and specific decisions through additional studies in the areas of parking, retail and office market assessment, and housing market demand;
- ❖ Developing procedures, incentives, and administrative capacity to facilitate implementation of this Plan;
- ❖ Reviewing and revising existing City Ordinances including, but not necessarily limited to, the Zoning Ordinance and Map, Building and Accessibility Codes, and Design Review standards and procedures (such as signage, awnings, storefronts, lighting, architecture, landscaping, and historic preservation);
- ❖ Developing a program and resources which will allow land acquisition and environmental remediation; and
- ❖ Continuing to encourage and facilitate private investment in property improvement and redevelopment.



*Western Machine
Tool Works.*



*Holland
Museum, Temple
Building and
Ameritech
Building.*

