



## Chapter 3

# Existing Conditions and Opportunities

The last two chapters addressed Marshalltown's demographic dynamics and considered the goals and perceptions of stakeholders in downtown. This section analyzes existing conditions in downtown Marshalltown, providing a basis for developing a comprehensive business district development program. This discussion considers the following features:

- GENERAL LAND USE PATTERNS
- LAND AND BUILDING USE
- BUILDING ASSESSMENT
- CITY CENTER RESOURCES
- TRANSPORTATION
- PARKING ADEQUACY ANALYSIS

## GENERAL LAND USE PATTERNS

It is important to first discuss the existing general land uses that are adjacent to the downtown. These land use patterns influence the type and location of future development, and are a basis for more detailed site-specific recommendations made in Chapter 5, The Development Concept. Map 3.1 displays the existing general land use in the Marshalltown downtown and surrounding areas.

There are five distinct land uses surrounding the downtown core that make a significant contribution to the economic vitality, and general liveliness of this area. These land uses include residential, industrial, the hospital complex, civic/recreation, and commercial.

### Residential

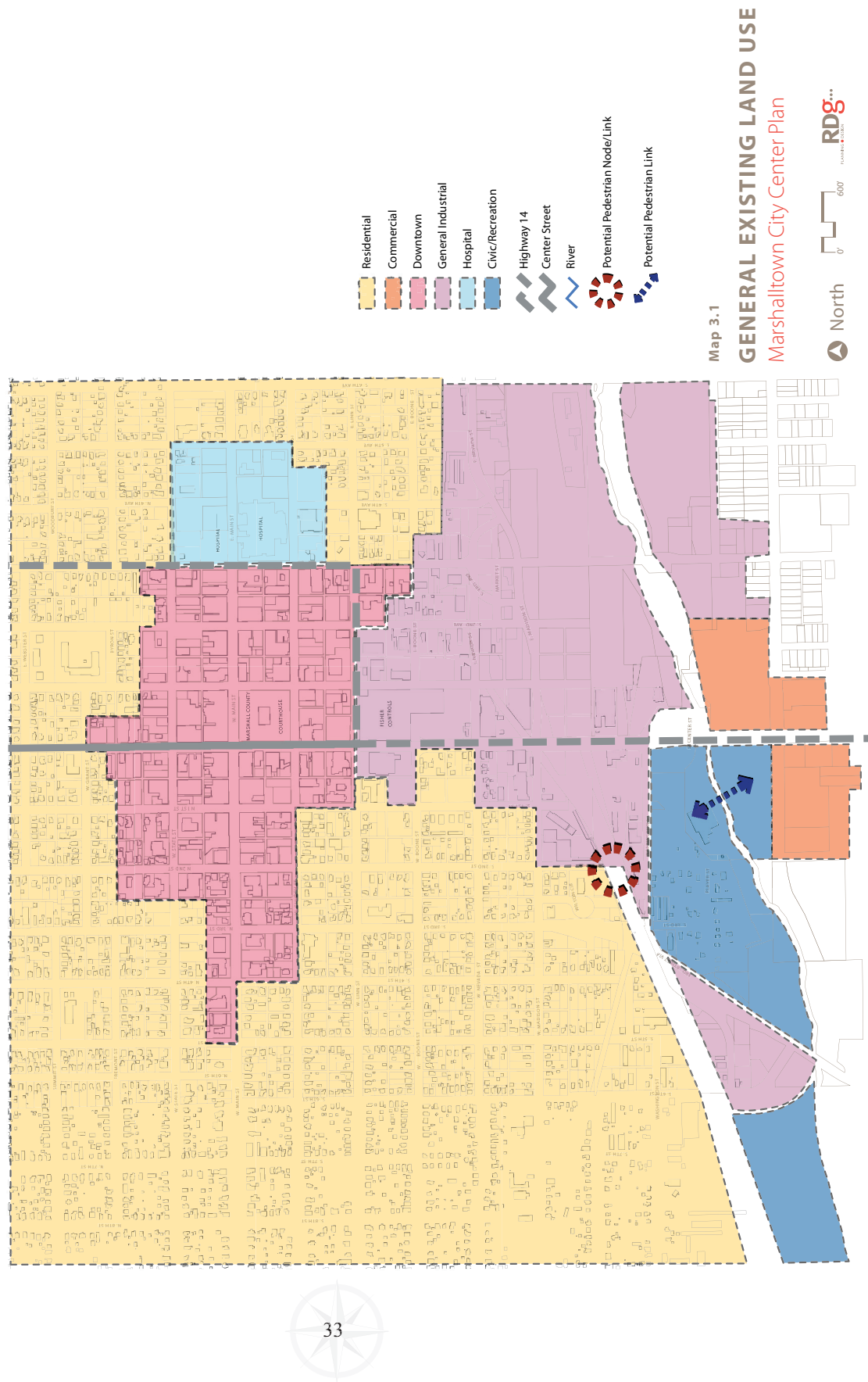
The downtown is surrounded by single-family, multi-family, and senior housing residential development. The diverse demographic makeup that subsequently exists with this variety of housing stock provides a prospective market for an increase in downtown commercial and housing development.

### Employment Centers: The Hospital and Industrial Area

The first major employment center is the Marshall County Hospital complex, roughly bounded by 5th Avenue, State Street, 3rd Avenue, and the mid-block between Linn and Church. Main Street is the primary connection to this area. Proximity to the downtown provides shopping, dining, and services for hospital visitors and employees. With growth of the Marshall County Hospital complex expected to continue, the downtown's ability to continue to offer these services will only increase in importance.

The second major employment area is located directly south of downtown extending to the north side of the river, with general industrial uses located on the south side of the river as well. Center Street provides a north/south connection, functionally linking this area with the downtown. Some important industrial employers in this area include Fisher Controls, Iowa Lumber, Goods Evespouting Company, the Marshalltown Redemption Center, Cooper Manufacturing, Ron Fisher Furniture, and the Marquart Block Company. Although this area contains predominantly industrial uses it also includes a variety of uses including an auto parts store, tattoo parlor, car wash, trailer sales, tire sales, post office, and single- and multi-family residential development.

As with the hospital, the downtown provides convenient access to services, dining, and shopping for the employees in this area. There is potential for a pedestrian node/link



located at 2nd Street crossing the railroad tracks which would provide access to the civic and industrial area for the neighborhoods located to the north.

### **Civic/Recreation**

The Community Y and the Fisher Community Center are the core of the identified civic/recreation area. This area provides an important city-wide recreational resource, and is nearby the downtown and major employment centers. There is potential for a pedestrian connection that would link both sides of the river, possibly located between the Fisher Community Center and the Community Y.

### **Commercial**

A small commercial district is located on the south of the river, and south and east of the civic/recreation area. This area includes chain commercial development including Fareway, Hardees, Hy-Vee, Walgreens, and Taco John's. These commercial establishments compliment niche retail and commercial uses located in the downtown with Center Street providing the main link between the two areas.

## **LAND AND BUILDING USE**

Downtown has several strengths that will ensure its importance as a key component of the commercial market. Above all, it has a feeling of place that cannot be matched by the sprawling retail concentrations typically crowding the edges of communities. Table 3.1 summarizes downtown Marshalltown's building uses by square footage. Maps 3.2 and 3.3 illustrate street level and upper level building uses in the downtown area respectively.

The Downtown area contains about 2.6 million square feet of nonresidential building space, about 76% of which is located at the street level. While the current first floor

vacancy rate of 5.5% is considered moderate for a downtown mixed use area, the 46% upper level vacancy rate is quite high. About 400,000 square feet, or 15.4% of downtown Marshalltown's building space is vacant. The district's largest concentration of vacant street level space is along Main Street generally east of 1st Avenue. Upper level vacancies are prominent along the entire length of Main Street through downtown.





**TABLE 3.1: Building Uses, Downtown Marshalltown, 2005**

	Street Level	Upper Levels	Total	% of Total
<b>Automotive</b>	106,971	0	106,971	4.1%
<b>Civic Uses</b>	287,107	32,415	319,522	12.3%
<b>Industrial</b>	454,976	0	454,976	17.5%
<b>Residential*</b>	256,714	201,294	458,008	17.6%
<b>Office/Financial</b>	212,482	98,037	310,519	11.9%
<b>Restaurant/ Entertainment</b>	63,902	0	63,902	2.5%
<b>Retail and General Commercial</b>	304,336	0	304,336	11.7%
<b>Commercial Services</b>	178,369	7,087	185,456	7.1%
<b>Vacant</b>	108,195	292,907	401,102	15.4%
<b>Total</b>	1,973,052	631,740	2,604,792	100.0%

*\*Excludes single-family residential*

*Source: RDG Planning & Design*

## Consumer Uses

Retail, commercial service, restaurant, entertainment, and automotive uses make up about 25% of downtown buildings, covering about 660,000 square feet, corresponding to about 32% of the city's total retail space. Most of downtown's retail, service, restaurant, and entertainment uses are located in the district's intense core along Main Street between 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue. While the number of automotive uses is relatively small, concentrations exist along 3rd Avenue and East State Street.

## Office Uses

The district contains about 310,000 square feet of office space, which represents about 12% of the overall building area. Much of this space is located at the northern, southern, and western edges of downtown, along State Street, Church Street, and West Main Street.



## Industrial Uses

The area also contains about 455,000 square feet of industrial space, covering about 18% of downtown's total building area. Anchored by the Fisher Controls facilities, downtown's industrial uses are generally located south of Linn Street and east of Center Street.

## Civic and Public Uses

Civic uses comprise about 320,000, or 12%, of downtown Marshalltown's building space. Government offices and religious institutions are located throughout downtown, with several churches along West Church Street.

## BUILDING ASSESSMENT

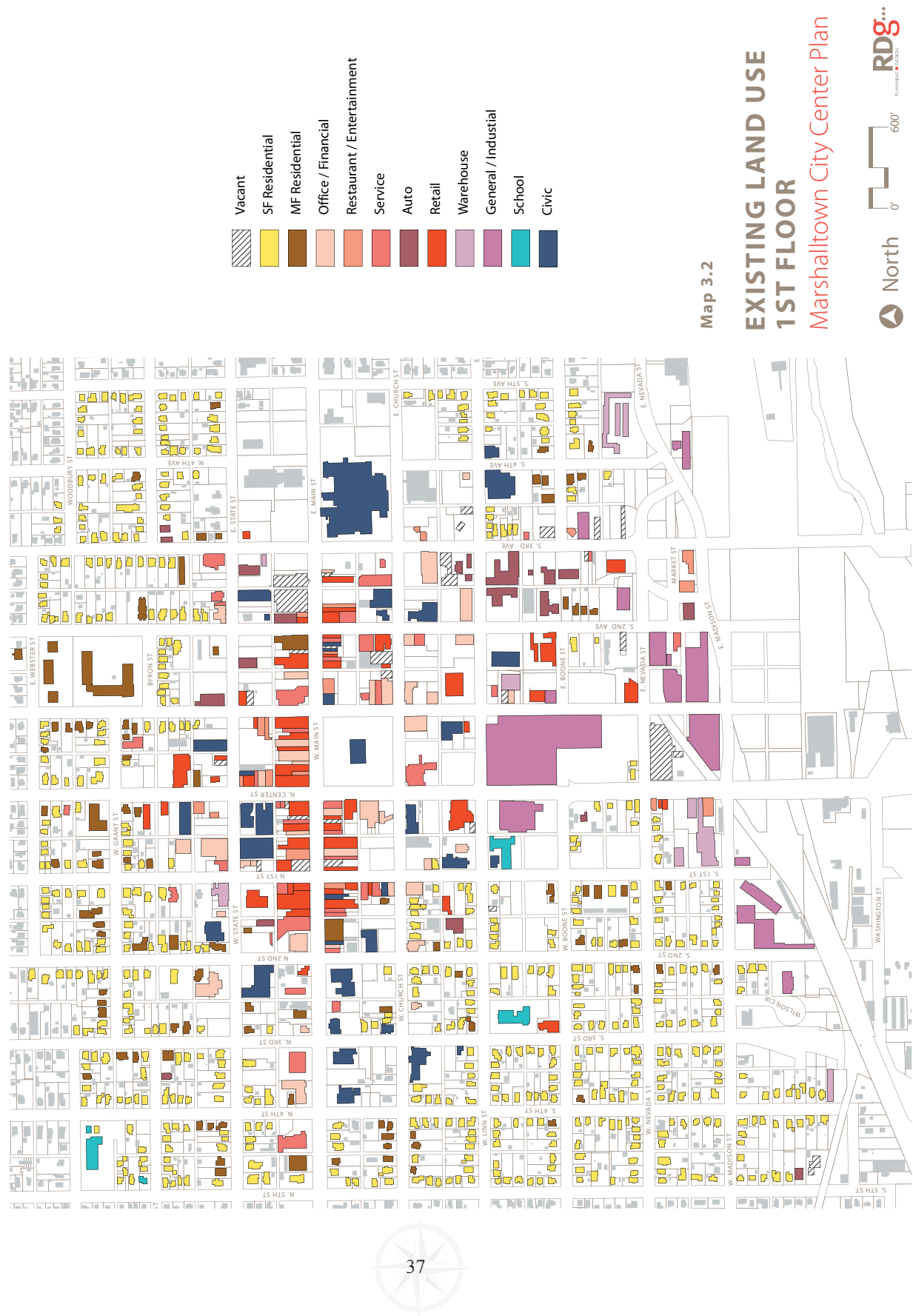
Map 3.4 displays a general exterior assessment of building conditions in downtown Marshalltown. Most of the district's buildings were initially developed to high standards, preserving them in good structural condition. Buildings are grouped into the following condition categories:

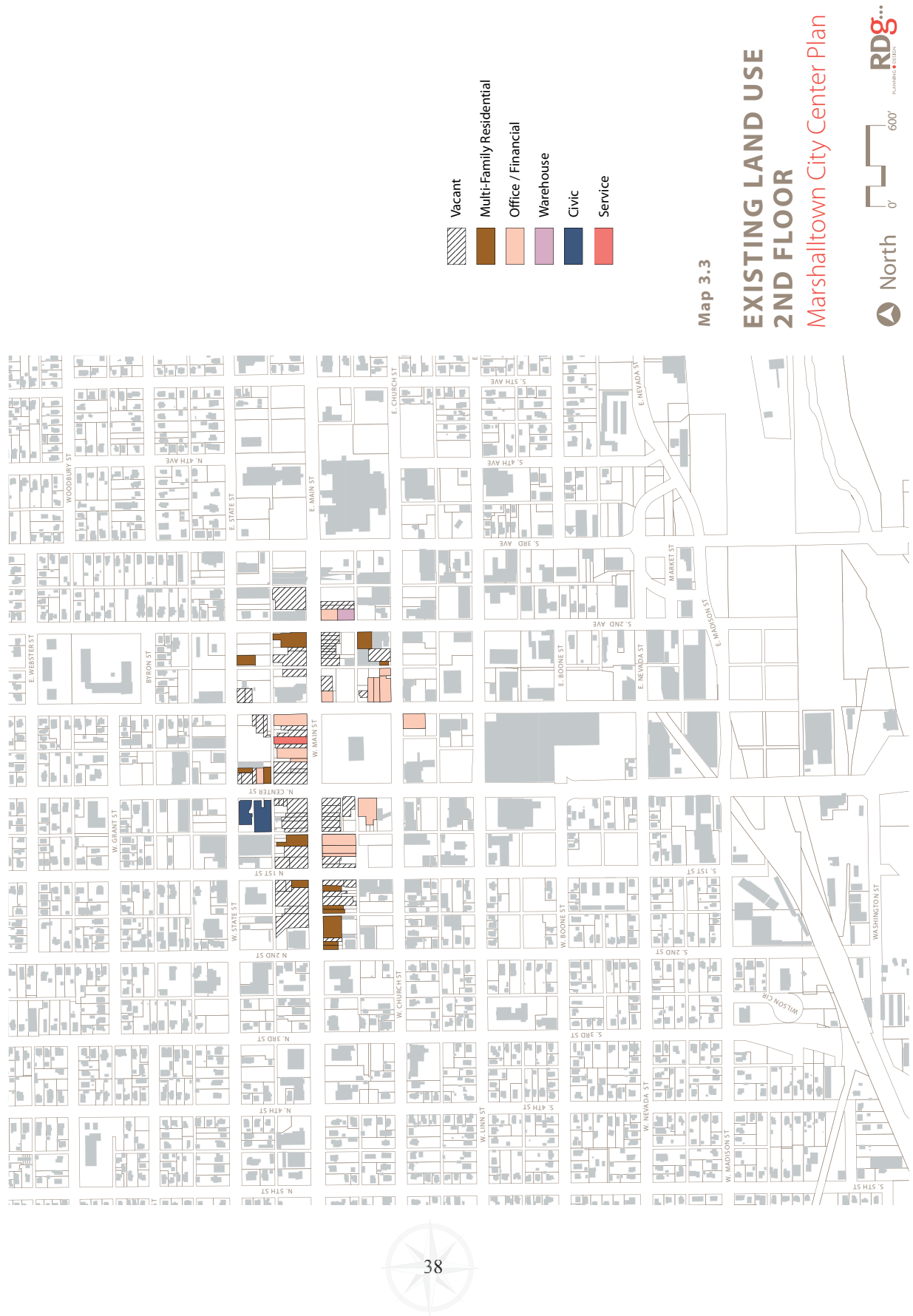
**Excellent**, including contemporary or recently rehabilitated or restored structures. The western portion of downtown, along Main Street generally west of 1st Avenue, contains the highest percentage of buildings in excellent condition. The historic nature of the business district's central core has apparently encouraged significant preservation and restoration activity.

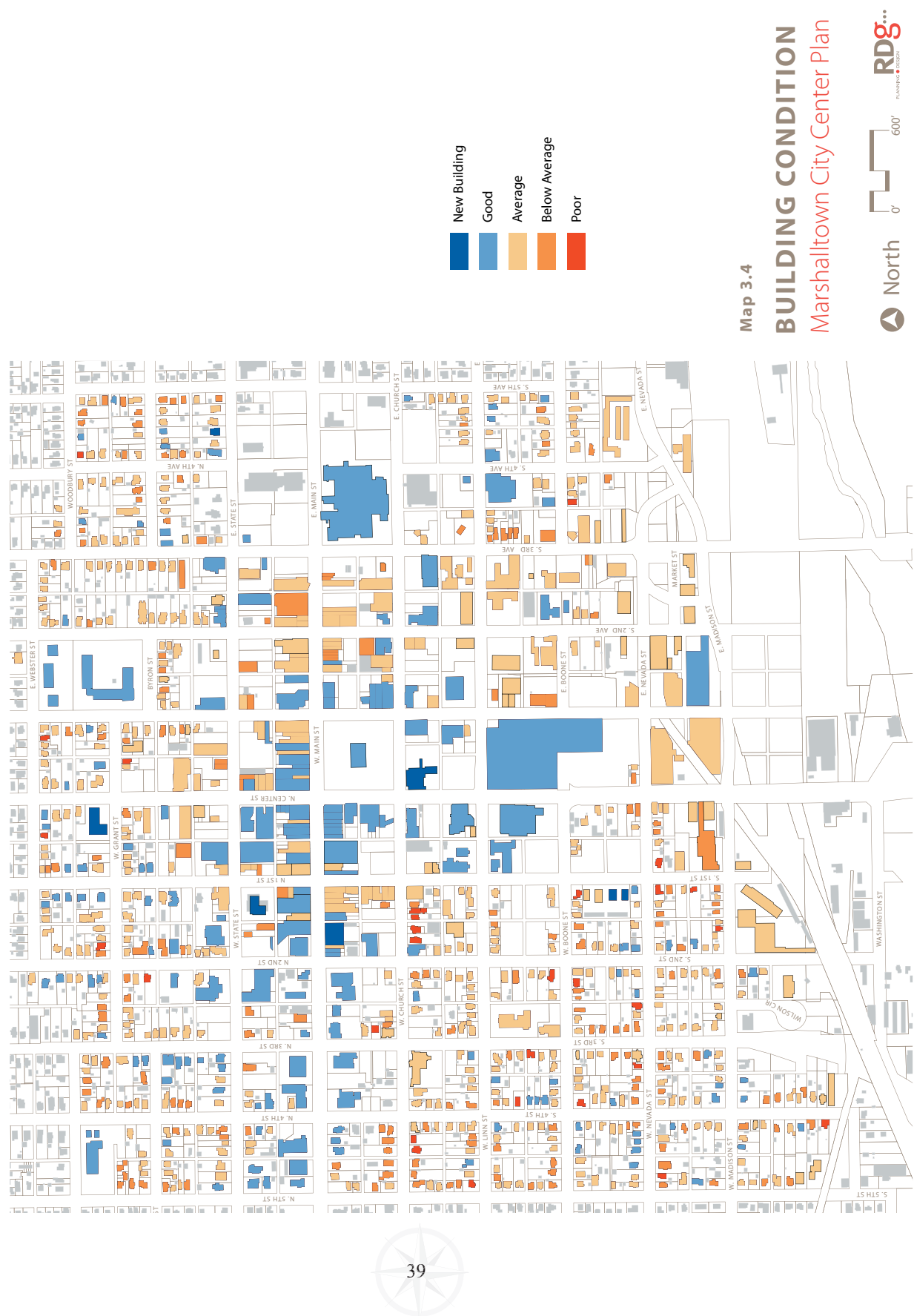
**Minor maintenance**, including buildings generally in very sound condition that require ongoing maintenance. While these buildings are found throughout downtown and surrounding residential areas, several buildings east of 1st Avenue are beginning to display some need for rehabilitation.

**Significant maintenance**, including basically sound buildings that nevertheless require substantial rehabilitation. These are most prevalent in single-family residential areas surrounding downtown and commercial areas along 3rd Avenue and East Main Street.

**Deteriorated**, including buildings in relatively unsound condition for which rehabilitation may not be economically suitable. While downtown's commercial core contains few structures in very poor condition, several deteriorating structures are scattered throughout surrounding residential areas.









## CITY CENTER RESOURCES

In addition to assessing building conditions, it is important to identify structures that are historic and cultural resources for the community. Such identified buildings are assets for Marshalltown and should be integrated functionally and aesthetically into future development proposals. Presently there are four individual sites, and one district in the downtown listed on the National Historic Register. The individual sites include the Binford House, Glick-Sower House, The Marshall County Courthouse, and the C.H. Whitehead House. These sites can be seen on Map 3.5, City Center Resources.

The historic district is comprised of structures and sites, that when considered as a whole are deemed historically, culturally, and architecturally significant. According to the National Register of Historic Places the Marshalltown Downtown Historic District contains 34 key contributing structures, and 45 contributing structures. Key structures are distinct in the fact that they may be nominated individually for the NRHP, while contributing structures are older than 50 years and share a common architectural style with key structures. The existence of a historic district in the heart of the city is certainly a valuable resource for tourism, and business and housing investment in the downtown.

In addition to the properties listed on the NRHP, the downtown has an abundance of civic, religious, residential, retail, service, and industrial uses that provide added value to the district. Examples of existing resources include the senior center on Byron Street, the religious institutions near the intersection of W. Main Street and 3rd Street and others located along Church Street, the Marshall County Hospital complex, the Farmers Market site, and Fisher Controls. These sites are illustrated on Map 3.5, City Center Resources.

## TRANSPORTATION

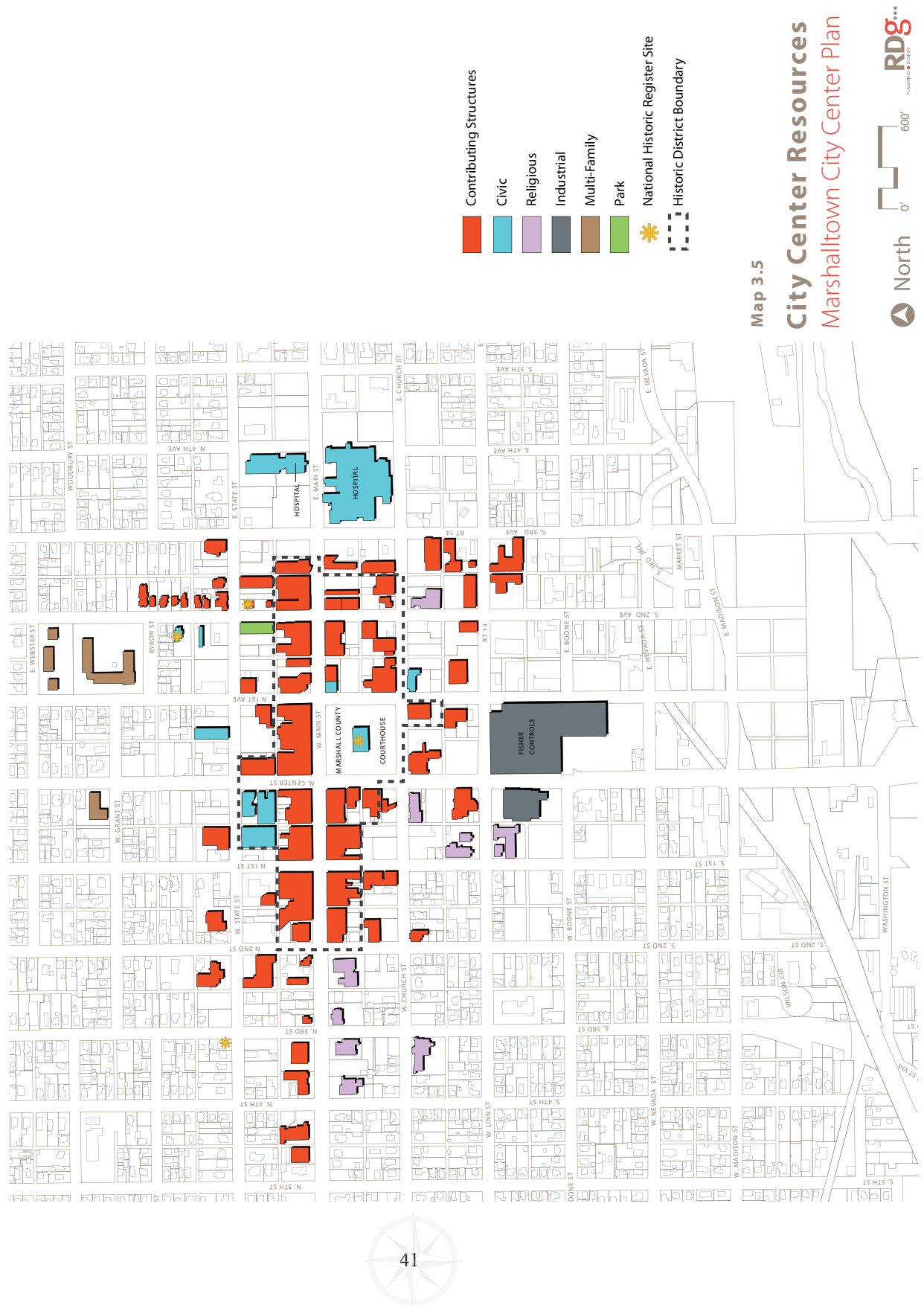
Transportation is a critical system in downtown Marshalltown and influences major development issues.

The downtown has four parallel east-west corridors that in one way or another provide arterial or collector transportation functions:

### State Street

State Street carries east-west traffic across the northern edge of downtown in two or three relatively wide lanes with parking on both sides. It carries an average of about 4,400 vehicles per day (vpd) between 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue, which is well below its capacity. Historically, traffic on State Street flowed one-way westbound, but was





converted to two-way during the 1990's.

### **Main Street**

Main Street, downtown's traditional commercial street, carries east-west traffic through the district's core. The street has two lanes with parallel parking on each side and four-way stops at each intersection between 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue. It carries an average of 5,000 vpd through downtown, which is under its capacity. During the 1990's, traffic on Main Street was converted from one-way eastbound to two-way and traffic signals at each intersection were replaced with four-way stops.

### **The Church Street and Linn Streets**

Church Street (westbound) and Linn Street (eastbound) carry east-west traffic along the southern edge of downtown, each with three lanes. Church Street carries about 3,200 vpd west of Center Street and Linn Street carries about 2,100 vpd east of Center Street. Both of these streets operate well below their capacities. Conversion of these streets to two-way traffic is recommended.

### **The Nevada Street/Madison Street System**

Nevada Street (east of 3rd Avenue) and Madison Street and Lincoln Way (west of 3rd Avenue) carry east-west traffic through the industrial area at downtown's southern edge. Nevada Street carries 4,800 vpd east of 3rd Avenue and Madison Street carries 2,500 vpd west of 6th Street. This corridor, which has two traffic lanes, includes a grade separation at Center Street.

While east-west traffic is distributed among several streets, north-south traffic is channeled on fewer major routes, corresponding to viaducts over Linn Creek and the Union Pacific Railroad. North-south routes include:

### **3rd Avenue**

3rd Avenue, or Iowa 14, is the most heavily traveled north-south corridor through downtown. Traversing the district's eastern edge, the street carries between 7,400 and 11,200 vpd in four traffic lanes. 3rd Avenue is the primary north-south corridor on Marshalltown's north side.

## Center Street

Traversing the center of downtown, Center Street carries 1,700 vpd north of Webster Street and 4,800 vpd south of Main Street in four traffic lanes. Because Center Street is the main north-south corridor on the city's south side and the primary gateway to downtown from the south, its traffic volume increases to 13,900 south of the railroad viaduct. Center Street has two lanes north of State Street, three lanes between State and Main Streets, four lanes between Main and Church Streets, and five lanes south of Church Street.

## 3rd Street

3rd Street, which becomes 6th Street south of the railroad viaduct, carries 6,100 vpd between Church and Linn Streets and 9,900 vpd at the viaduct. With two traffic lanes, the street functions as the primary entrance to downtown from neighborhoods in the city's southwest quadrant.

## PARKING ADEQUACY ANALYSIS

As in any business district, adequacy of parking facilities is a key issue for downtown Marshalltown. Map 3.6 illustrates the locations of all on-street and off-street parking facilities in the downtown core, which includes the district's highest density areas, generally between 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue from the north side of State Street to the south side of Church Street. The area contains a total of 2,806 parking spaces, 576 of which, or about 21%, are on-street spaces. A total of 735, or 26% of downtown parking spaces, are located in municipal parking lots. Another 1,460 spaces, or 52% of the total, are located in privately owned parking lots. Major off-street public parking resources include:

- A 49-space lot on the north side of State Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues.
- A 75-space lot on the south side of State Street between Center Street and 1st Avenue.
- A 59-space lot on the north side of Church Street between 1st and 2nd Streets.
- A 105-space lot on the north side of Church Street between Center and 1st Streets.

Table 3.2 calculates parking demand for downtown, based on existing building use. The calculation indicates a relative balance between parking supply and demand for the entire area. The calculations indicate a demand for about 3,217 parking spaces, corresponding to

a nominal shortage of about 411 spaces. However, because every building in a downtown does not require full use of each space, and different uses can share parking at different times, demand is reduced by about 20%. As a result, the adjusted demand is about 2,574 stalls, which translates into an approximate 232 space surplus.

While this analysis indicates that downtown's parking supply generally meets demand, parking in some parts of downtown remains relatively scarce. Map 3.7 indicates the parking surplus or deficit for each block, based on existing building uses and parking spaces. Areas on the district's periphery experience surpluses, while the district's core experiences a relative shortage. This shortage is most pronounced on the north side of Main Street between 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue. While businesses in this area can rely on parking resources around the courthouse square and along State and Church Streets, reconfiguring existing parking may be necessary in the future. In addition, new developments should provide most of their own parking, rather than draw from the existing supply.



**TABLE 3.2: Parking Supply and Demand, Downtown Core, 2005**

<b>Type of Parking</b>			<b>Supply</b>
<b>Private Off-Street Surface</b>			1,495
<b>Public Off-Street Surface</b>			735
<b>On-Street</b>			576
<b>Total</b>			2,806

<b>Use</b>	<b>Floor Area</b>	<b>Parking Ratio/1,000 SF</b>	<b>Parking Requirement</b>
<b>Office</b>	303,312	3.0	910
<b>Retail</b>	254,559	3.0	764
<b>Service</b>	148,451	2.5	371
<b>Automotive</b>	36,542	3.0	110
<b>Industrial</b>	68,495	1.0	68
<b>Warehousing</b>	34,780	1.0	35
<b>Civic</b>	161,034	2.5	403
<b>Multi-Family Residential</b>	285,171	1.5	428
<b>Hospitality</b>	43,106	3.0	129
<b>Total</b>	1,335,450		3,217
<b>20% Mixed Use Adjustment</b>			643
<b>Adjusted Total</b>			2,574
<b>District Surplus/ Deficit</b>			232

*Source: RDG Planning & Design*



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