



Chapter 5

Development Concept

The previous chapters of the Downtown Marshalltown Plan discussed the people and economics of the market area, development potential, current conditions, and stakeholder perceptions and goals. Major advances in Downtown during the last five years have solidified Main Street as a vital mixed use district. The Main Street district has added to its traditional civic and commercial focuses with new restaurants, specialty retailing, and residential investments. However, the areas around Main Street – the fabric of adjacent neighborhoods to the north and south along with parallel streets – are considerably less strong. In a way, the overriding principle of a downtown concept is to build strong bridges between the Main Street district and surrounding neighborhoods, and to rebuild the city fabric around Main. This, in turn, both attracts more people to Downtown businesses, and uses the quality of Main Street itself as a foundation for additional growth.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE VISION

A comprehensive development vision for Downtown Marshalltown is guided by following principles.

- MAIN STREET WILL BE THE CORNERSTONE OF DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT, STRENGTHENING AND STRENGTHENED BY NEW DEVELOPMENT ON SURROUNDING BLOCKS.

Main from 3rd Avenue to 3rd Street is the anchor of Marshalltown's center and is one of the city's major image centers. The economic vitality and physical quality of Main Street creates a more attractive development and investment environment for surrounding, less well-developed blocks. On the other hand, restoring the quality and fabric of surrounding blocks reinforces Main Street, adding new local customers and creating a positive atmosphere that attracts visitors from other parts of the city and region. Main Street is the key – but paradoxically, most of the plan's recommendations concentrate on areas off of Main Street. Expanding Main Street along key corridors into surrounding neighborhoods offers the greatest opportunity for growth and economic benefits.

- DOWNTOWN WILL BECOME A NEIGHBORHOOD, COMPLEMENTING ITS TRADITIONAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL FOCUS WITH RESIDENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Downtown could become home for many new residents, and has both the support facilities and land resources necessary to encourage residential development. Housing is a way to establish a neighborhood fabric, creating a downtown community that functions all day. Downtown should host a variety of opportunities, including single-family urban housing, townhouses, apartments, senior living, and lofts and apartments in historic buildings. The district's adjacency to the Community Y and Fisher Community Center also provide superb support features for downtown housing. The neighborhood immediately west of 3rd Street along Main is one of Marshalltown's most beautiful environments. New development to the north and south can similarly reinforce the commercial and civic focuses of the district, provide new housing, and sustain substantial new development.

- DOWNTOWN WILL BE AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT CENTER FOR CIVIC AND CULTURAL LIFE.

The Marshall County Courthouse is the city's most identifiable symbol, and its square is an important place for civic events. Other major event facilities include the Coliseum and the small Farmers Market at 2nd and State. Nearby and immediately across the Union Pacific tracks are the Community Y and Fisher Community Center, the city's two major civic resources. Yet, the civic role of Downtown can be increased by creating new places Downtown and providing an improved event and meeting facility. These improvements, combined with other features, can increase the quality of community life in an evolving

downtown neighborhood, and make Downtown more central to the lives of the city's residents.

- DOWNTOWN WILL FLOURISH AS A CENTER FOR NEW ENTERPRISE AND PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTS THAT HELP EXISTING BUSINESSES GROW.

Communities develop business and industrial parks to encourage new employment and enterprise. Marshalltown's downtown is a major employment and industrial center, but could use available land and excellent transportation access to expand this role. The district should use its major assets to grow as an employment center, and provide a great location for new business and industry.

But new business is only part of the downtown picture. Many existing businesses are located on sites better suited for other uses. In many cases, they are sited in the interiors of blocks, and are surrounded by houses, denying them the space to grow. Redevelopment policies should provide these businesses with better downtown locations, allowing for both growth and more efficient operations.

- PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SPACE SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A MEANS TO INCREASE DESIRABLE PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

Public investments, like the new Public Library, are very important because they satisfy community needs. The voters of Marshalltown demonstrated their vision by overwhelmingly approving the library bond issue in April, 2006. But these investments can be doubly powerful by encouraging private investment and renewal. Public projects in Downtown should be conceived to generate a strong and positive private market response. For example, the library will create an environment that makes adjacent housing highly marketable. A new public square, similarly, can also create an amenity that adds substantial value to an adjacent site. Public investments create private responses, and help to pay for themselves through that process.

- DOWNTOWN SHOULD PRESERVE ITS HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASE THE FINANCIAL REWARDS OF OWNING AND DEVELOPING BUILDINGS IN THE CITY CENTER.

Downtown has a wealth of historic buildings, many of which are concentrated on Main Street. These are unusual resources with substantial potential for upper level development. Full utilization of these structures will benefit downtown, protect unique assets, and improve financial returns to their owners.

- DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT WILL BUILD ON THE SPECIAL CHARACTER AND ASSETS OF THE DISTRICT.

These resources include:

- **Main Street**, an extremely attractive and economically sound commercial street.
- **Marshall County Medical Center**, a growing health center that attracts patients and their families from the city and the surrounding region. Downtown can provide a source of services to visitors and employees of the hospital.
- **Fisher Control and the South Downtown industrial community**. Fisher Control is a major employer and long-time anchor and contributor to Downtown. The company has a major capital and philanthropic stake in the district and its employees are vital to the downtown economy. In return, a strong downtown benefits Fisher and use of vacant nearby sites for new housing and business improves the company's physical setting, helps recruitment, and creates a better business environment. The rest of the downtown industrial base similarly benefits the district, and is further benefited by a vital downtown.
- **Community Y/Fisher Community Center complex**. These major community resources are adjacent to Downtown and support residential development. However, the railroad separates these features from the downtown center.
- **Civic facilities**. These facilities include City Hall, the Courthouse, the Coliseum, Marshall County Historic Museum, and nearby churches, and future projects such as the planned restoration of the Orpheum Theater. Civic facilities establish Downtown as a center for civic, cultural, and public life.
- **Underused land**. Land resources and deteriorated properties give Downtown room to revitalize and grow. Sometimes, underused sites are viewed as a problem. In a market with expanding potential, however, available land is an enormous asset.
- **Proven markets**. Downtown has demonstrated market attraction in a number of retail and service areas, and can absorb a significant share of the city's residential market. The proven economic success of Main Street also provides a base for additional retail goods and services.
- **Special places and surprises**. Downtown is an area of great character and hidden treasures. Examples include historic buildings on Main Street; the former bus depot on Center Street; Stone's Restaurant under the 3rd Avenue viaduct; and the "covered



town" under the Center Street viaduct at Nevada Street. Downtown Marshalltown is an exciting district, with special features waiting to be discovered.

- DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT WILL REINFORCE BUSINESS NICHES THAT ARE THE PROVEN MAINSTAYS OF PROSPERING CITY CENTERS.

While downtowns nationwide have struggled to preserve their traditional retail roles, successful districts have been able to rebuild with business niches that have a demonstrated ability to attract people to town centers. These include stable traditional local businesses; restaurants and entertainment; specialty retailing, and offices.

- **Traditional local businesses.** Every downtown has long-standing local businesses that have adapted to change and continue to be anchors of their districts. In some cases, these coalesce around specific business clusters, such as "home arts" (furniture, home improvements, galleries, and home-related crafts), jewelry stores, and gift shops and other specialty retailers.
- **Restaurants and entertainment.** Restaurants have often been the vanguard of downtown revitalization, and this has certainly been true in Downtown Marshalltown.
- **Specialty retailing.** With the loss of mainline downtown retailers in an era of mass retailing and on-line sales, specialty shops have become increasingly important to central district retail revitalization. These shops typically require relatively high visibility, geographic clustering, and a pedestrian environment that encourages browsing and experience shopping. Specialty retail and service businesses are an important part of Marshalltown's main street economy.
- **Offices.** Offices bring people downtown, and increase the potential markets for both housing and supporting retail services. An office-friendly environment that encourages new development and tenants is a key part of the downtown vision.

THE “PROGRAM” FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

The design process for a building begins with a “program”, identifying the fixed requirements for spaces and the functional relationships among those spaces. Similarly, a downtown vision should establish a basic program of features and needs, derived from considering current projects and market potentials. This program – the ingredients for Downtown development – includes the following:

- 1. Housing development providing for annual production of about 25 to 27 units.** Annual housing demand for Marshalltown is established at about 65 housing units. Downtown can absorb up to 60% of the city’s new rental demand and 25% of its owner-occupied demand, creating a substantial potential residential market. However, for this residential market to emerge, the downtown environment must be viewed as both pleasant and supportive – a place that one would choose to call home. Downtown housing development should include both adaptive reuse and new construction.
- 2. Senior housing.** Downtown has several successful senior developments in or adjacent to the district. The most recent success is Westtown Apartments directly on Main Street. Restaurants, stores, churches, and the medical center, all within walking distance, make Downtown an excellent residential environment for older adults. Senior housing development also will bring regional residents into Downtown; typically, about 50% of the residents of a quality senior development come from outside the city.
- 3. A relatively significant amount of retail development.** Marshalltown is a major regional retail center. Once, this retail market was focused in Downtown, but the District now represents about 20% of the city’s estimated total commercial floor area. Nevertheless, specialized niches continue to provide opportunities for additional retail sales and services, including restaurants, specialty retailers, and local services. Other specialized retail markets include businesses that both serve and are themed by the city’s growing Latino population; and businesses that provide services to patients and families of the medical center.
- 4. A network of greenways and public spaces.** Downtown’s two primary open spaces include the frequently used Courthouse Square at Center and Main, and the lightly-used Sauer Park at 2nd Avenue and State. An overall agenda for expanded open space should include three types of facilities:
 - A new multi-purpose public square that supplements the courthouse square

as a place for events, creates a downtown park for more passive enjoyment, and becomes an anchor that encourages substantial adjacent private investment.

- A pathway system that provides attractive and secure pedestrian routes between off-street parking and Main Street businesses.
- A greenway network that uses streets and green corridors to link existing neighborhoods, new development, and the Main Street core.

5. Completion of major public and nonprofit development initiatives.

Programmatic elements include:

- The new Public Library, approved by Marshalltown's voters in April, 2006. This facility will be both a great community resource and a cornerstone for new neighborhood development.
- Reuse of the historic public library, perhaps as part of an improvement to City Hall.
- Completion of the Medical Center's expansion program.
- Solutions to public assembly and meeting needs, involving the Coliseum and a new conference and event facility.
- Restoration of the Orpheum Theater as a cultural and performing arts space.

6. Industrial and trade services. Large parts of the District are used for industrial and trade service purposes. These tend to cluster in the southwestern part of Downtown, along the UP tracks. However, some of these uses are also scattered in parts of Downtown where other, more retail-oriented uses might be more appropriate. The Downtown program should provide for the possible relocation of some of these uses, placing them in a more appropriate industrial sector of the District.

7. New industrial and building sites. This includes enhancement, and, in some cases, redevelopment of the district's south edge, and the location of industrial, wholesaling, and trade services in a renewed enterprise corridor.

8. Continuation of the downtown streetscape. Marshalltown installed major streetscape improvements, including lighting along Main Street and attractive intersection nodes at the key intersection of Main and Center. These improvements are rightly credited with improving the perceptions and retail climate of the Main Street corridor. Later stages should extend improvements to other strategic areas

and complete the streetscape along Main from 3rd Street to 3rd Avenue. These improvements need not be expensive, but involve continuing lighting themes, improving the pedestrian quality of the district, and introducing landscape onto the district's streets.

THE DOWNTOWN CONCEPT

The concept for Downtown Marshalltown emerges by combining the principles for downtown development with the program based on markets, existing projects and priorities, and district-wide needs. The concept is divided into five related subdistricts, including:

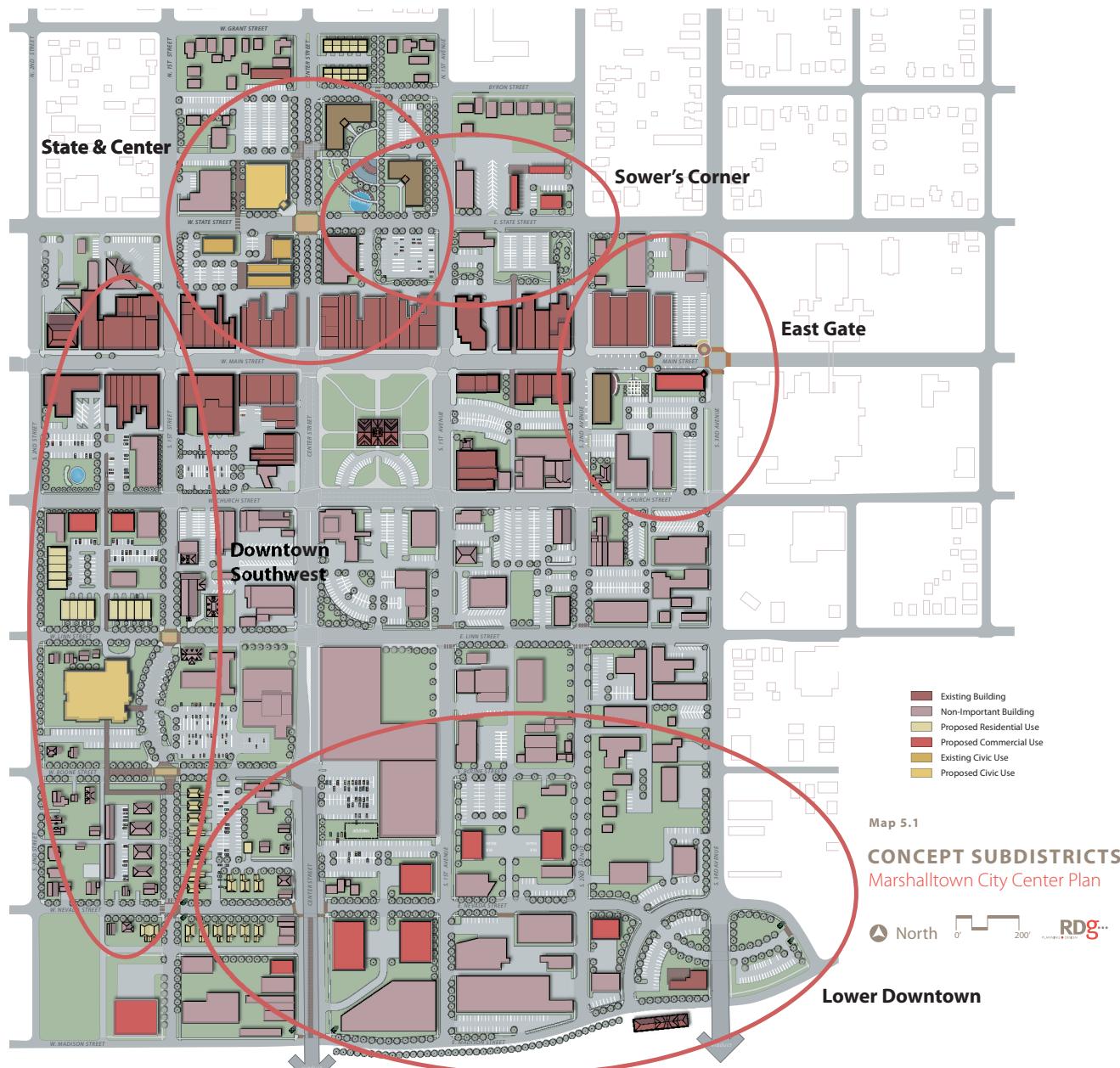
- **DOWNTOWN SOUTHWEST**
- **STATE AND CENTER**
- **SOWER CORNER**
- **EAST GATE**
- **LOWER DOWNTOWN**

These subdistricts are identified on Map 5.1, Downtown Plan Subdistricts. As evident from the map and as indicated in the Principles section, the focus of revitalization efforts is in restoring the quality and fabric of blocks surrounding Main Street and creating linkages with adjoining districts.

Downtown Southwest

The Concept

The Downtown Southwest development district will use the new Public Library as an anchor to create a new downtown residential neighborhood, connected to Main Street and convenient to major employment centers. Reuse of vacant or underused sites around the Library will provide a variety of new housing settings. A greenway will connect this new, pedestrian-friendly district to Main Street. Innovative street design of 1st Street will provide a strong link between the library and the center of Downtown, and can also create better and safer access south to the Community Y, Linn Creek Trail, and Fisher Community Center.





Project Elements

1. New Marshalltown Public Library. First Street provides head-in parking and is curved toward the library's main entrance. This design also brings pedestrians to the front door along 2nd Street and expands Fisher Controls' parking lot.

2. 1st and Nevada Housing. Vacant land along 2nd Street and vacant or deteriorated sites along Nevada are used for the development of up to 19 new owner-occupied housing units, creating a new residential neighborhood around the Library Square and convenient for Fisher employees.

3. 1st and Linn Redevelopment. This project assembles property to build up to 14 new townhouse units along Linn and 2nd Street. A midblock greenway connects the block to Main Street and the new library. Auto repair uses are relocated to a more appropriate light industrial area, possibly in the Lower Downtown area. Deteriorated residential properties along Church Street are replaced by commercial or mixed use buildings, completing redevelopment of a block by combining existing business with carefully located new buildings.

4. Westtown Block Parking. Existing parking south of Westtown Apartments is redesigned for improved function and flow, and the greenway from the Linn Street redevelopment block is extended north as a defined sidewalk leading to Main Street. A neighborhood park is located at 2nd and Church. The greenway and 1st Street design provides excellent pedestrian connections between

the Westtown senior apartments and the new library.

5. Tremont Block Parking. The alley south of the restored Tremont building is curved to the south to improve visibility for cars exiting the building's covered parking. The parking lot itself is reconfigured to provide better function and landscaping.

6. 1st and Linn intersection improvement. This intersection provides a key part of the sidewalk link between the new library and Main Street. Corner nodes and patterned crosswalk paving improves its walkability. The intersection could be themed around the adjacent St. Mary's Church.

7. 1st and Boone intersection mini-park. An attractive, pedestrian-friendly intersection connects the library and the new Nevada housing development. Replacement of several deteriorated houses by a green space along the south side of Boone further improves the quality of this new residential intersection and sustains the value of new houses planned for the neighborhood.

Illustration 1 depicts how this subdistrict might appear upon completion of these revitalization projects.

Illustration 1



Projected Cost and Development Response

Table 5.1 below displays the projected public development costs and private development value realized by the Southwest development initiative.

State and Center

The Concept

The State and Center intersection, now the edge of the main street district, will become a major anchor and image feature in its own right. A new public green, featuring a fountain and waterway, will become an important open space, and the centerpiece of both new residential development and civic facilities. Multi-family housing with covered parking, designed for adults, will frame the square's northern and eastern edges. An L-shaped building design extends the public realm into the front doors of these new housing buildings. City Hall will expand into the historic library, and a public parking and drop-off area will be provided for citizens off State Street. The square will also form the front lawn for a new conference and event facility along a renewed Center Boulevard. Alternatives exist for incorporating the Coliseum into the new project.

At the north edge of the development site, new townhouses and commercial development in the rehabilitated Depot will extend the project into the neighborhood. This lively mix of uses around a community commons will create significant investment and will become another special district for Downtown Marshalltown. The entire State and Center concept is estimated to generate approximately nine million dollars in private investment. Illustration 2 depicts how the State and Center subdistrict might appear upon completion of these revitalization projects.

State and Center



Project Elements

1. Center Commons. The square block between Center and 1st Avenue, State to Byron, represents a major opportunity for a public/private redevelopment project. A major public plaza at the corner of State and Center will provide needed downtown green space and a focal point

for civic events. This plaza would occupy approximately one-quarter of the block and should include both a water feature and space for public events. The plaza would be designed and constructed in close coordination with a proposed multi-family development here called the Center Apartments.

2. Center Apartments. This project, oriented to adults, is envisioned as two three-story buildings containing a combined 75 units. Underground parking, as well as ample surface parking would be provided. The building layout should be configured to orient towards, frame, and benefit from the Center Commons amenity.

3. Depot Restoration. This fine small building would be restored to a small office use and anchor the revitalization project west of Center Street.

4. Conference and Event/Senior Center. The clearance of the Center Commons and Center Apartments block requires the replacement of the senior center facility currently located in the former armory building on State Street. While the current

Illustration 2



senior center is operated with traditional programming (congregate meals, recreation activities), a new center affords the opportunity to evaluate the senior citizen needs of the soon-to-be-retiring baby boom generation. Indications are that their needs may differ substantially from traditional senior center programming and therefore will require different space.

The block north of the current library offers the opportunity to combine space for a new senior center with community events space for activities now held in the Coliseum, as well as conference and meeting room space. This project is envisioned as a one-story, 20,000 square foot building with parking located to the north. This concept assumes the demolition of the Coliseum gymnasium as described below. An alternative that would leave the Coliseum gym is also discussed.

5. Coliseum. The fate of the Coliseum remains one of Marshalltown's key unresolved public facility issues. The input received during this planning process revealed evenly

split public opinions. Half believe the Coliseum to be a "white elephant" that has outlived its useful life and not worth additional public investment. Gymnasium recreational programming has been substantially relocated to the new "Y" and other facilities. The other half believes the recent significant public investment dictates that the building be retained and improved to extend its useful life and programming.

The State and Center concept indicates that the front of the Coliseum be retained and perhaps rehabilitated as a military museum displaying artifacts and photos. The gymnasium is demolished and, combining that space with the adjacent commercial lot fronting North 1st St., provides space for City Hall parking.

An alternative, titled Coliseum Alternative is also provided. In this alternative, senior center activities are transferred to the Coliseum, the lot across from the Carnegie Library remains as parking, and housing is developed north of that

State and Center: Coliseum Alternative



parking lot.

6. City Hall Expansion. The Carnegie Library provides space for City Hall office expansion, with an internal connection constructed between the buildings. The 1970's addition to the Carnegie Library would be removed, providing a convenient area for a city offices drop-off, a small parking lot, and access to the large parking lot on the Coliseum gym site.

7. Byron Street Townhomes. The concept includes a proposal to redevelop property between Byron and Grant Streets, east of Center into townhomes. This project would have an interior access to ground level parking in the units, thereby presenting an urban housing front onto both Byron and Grant streets. Like the remodeled bus depot, this project serves as a transition to the existing neighborhood to the north.

8. Center Street Boulevard Streetscape. It is proposed that the extension of a boulevard with landscaping on Center north of Main Street be a downtown streetscape priority. The streetscape improvements should extend north to Byron Street. This project will link the State and Center redevelopment improvements to the Main Street streetscape, physically linking the two civic centers of the community – the County courthouse square and city offices. An intersection improvement, with pedestrian-differentiated crosswalks and “civic theme” enhancements, will tie the Carnegie Library, Center Commons, and new Conference and Event/Senior Center together. Because the “median” in the half-block of Center north of Main Street is used regularly for freight unloading to Main Street businesses, that section of the median would be surface brick only (no landscaping), which will allow for truck unloading.

9. State Street Parking. The almost half-block of parking located south of State Street and west of North 1st Avenue, while conveniently located to serve Main Street, is also poorly designed, dark at night, and not an inviting place to be. It is proposed that the lot be reconfigured, creating a mid-block pedestrian linkage between the Center Commons and Main Street businesses. The path would extend east-west as well as north-south, creating a mid-block link across N. 1st Avenue and connecting ultimately to Sower Park. This pathway should be reconfigured for more efficient parking and access, landscaped and well-lit, so that people feel comfortable using the parking lot. As documented in Chapter 3, Existing Conditions and Opportunities, there is an adequate number of off-street parking stalls downtown. However, unless those spaces are perceived to be safe and inviting, they will not be used and downtown businesses will suffer.

Projected Cost and Development Response

Table 5.2 displays the projected public development costs and private development value to be realized by the State and Center development initiative

TABLE 5.2: Projected Development Costs, State and Center

Component	Public Cost: Acquisition & Construction of Improvements	Private Cost: New Development (Value of Added Tax Base)
1. Center Commons	\$1.16 Mil.	
2. Center Apartments	\$1.33 Mil. (acquis/reloc.)	\$6.5 Mil.
3. Depot Restoration	\$27,500.00	\$188,000.00
4. Conference/Senior Center	\$2.5 Mil.	
5. Coliseum	\$914,000.00	
6. City Hall Expansion	\$194,000.00	
7. Byron Street Townhomes	\$315,000.00	\$1.75 Mil.
8. Center St. Streetscape	\$400,000.00	
9. State Street Parking	\$1.5 Mil.	

Sower Corner

The Concept

The downtown revitalization plan includes improvements aimed at building on the emerging historic district focused on State and North 2nd Avenue. Sower Park, Sower House, the historic schoolhouse, Binford House, the Farmers' Market, and several Victorian homes all are oriented around that intersection and constitute an attraction within a ½ block walk from Main Street. To enhance this attraction, the automobile-related use at the northwest corner of 2nd and State should be redeveloped into a small office building – perhaps a future home of the Historical Society offices. The farmers' market can be expanded with another pavilion, as shown in the concept.

The South of State parking area greenway system, detailed in the State and Center subdistrict, is extended east to connect to Sower Park, and the parking lots on the north half of this block are reconfigured. This system will define the alley from the reconfigured public parking, cross First Street, and extend to Sower Park and Historic District. This trail, connecting the two parks, is about 20-30ft wide. With an ultimate reuse of the Tallcorn apartment building, the parking lot west of Sower Park can be improved to two levels. Ultimately, the intersection pedestrian amenities can be improved in a manner similar

to that proposed for the State and Center intersection.

Projected Cost and Development Response:

Table 5.3 below displays the projected public development costs and private development value to be realized by the Sower Corner development initiatives.

Table 5.3: Projected Development Costs, Sower Corner

Component	Public Cost: Acquisition & Construction of Improvements	Private Cost: New Development (Value of Added Tax Base)
Farmers' Market Corner	\$147,000.00	\$271,000.00

Sower Corner



East Gate

The Concept

The intersection of 3rd Avenue and Main Street is perhaps the downtown Marshalltown intersection most in need of public improvements. It is the gateway intersection onto Main Street from the highway, Route 14, passing through Marshalltown. It is also the intersection connecting the downtown with one of the largest employers in Marshalltown, the MMSC. While the hospital has parking on the west side of 3rd Avenue, there is not a very strong association between the Hospital and downtown. The highway functions as a barrier and the adjacent edge of downtown is not very inviting. The perception is that the downtown is not adjacent to or linked to the hospital. A couple of hundred feet separation feels like a couple thousand. This weakens the ability of the hospital and hospital visitors to contribute to the downtown and also deprives hospital patrons of potential services.

This downtown plan comes at a time when the hospital is contemplating some major investments in the 3rd Avenue frontage of their campus. Also, the hospital is evaluating bringing new services, such as cardiology and oncology, into this facility. This expansion will draw additional people to this site from outside the community, making a proposed new Main Street commercial building more feasible. The hospital is investigating use of paging devices that will allow family and visitors to leave the facility for periods of time while staying in communication. This would also facilitate more interaction with the downtown area.

The east end of downtown Main Street, and particularly the stretch between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, is the weakest part of Main Street. Vacant and deteriorated buildings, and marginal or inappropriate uses, dot this part of downtown. And yet, there are promising indications that this area will turn around. A group is working on restoring the Orpheum theatre, applying the strategies that have saved theatre buildings in other Iowa communities. The old Bakery building has been remodeled as a residence on the second floor and there is discussion about the community college moving into the first floor.

Thus, it is appropriate to focus on the easternmost block of downtown Main Street to take advantage of these ongoing revitalization efforts and to support, as well as capitalize on, hospital growth plans. Because revitalization efforts are ongoing on the north side of Main, the focus of recommended action is on the south side of Main Street. Also, the south side presents specific redevelopment opportunities, including adaptive reuse for housing and potential retail mixed-use development.

These proposals constitute a plan to provide for the kind of environment and parking that is needed to support investment in a residential conversion of the Iowa Wholesale Supply building and a retail mixed-use development opportunity that more effectively links downtown to the Hospital. In addition to strengthening this linkage, additional goals for this area include provision of adequate parking and accommodating an expanded community college presence downtown.

The components of a recommended East Gate revitalization project include the following:

- Iowa Wholesale building adaptive reuse
- Mini-park
- New Commercial Mixed-Use Building
- New Parking Lot
- Intersection Improvements

1. Iowa Wholesale Building. The Iowa Wholesale Building represents the most promising opportunity for adaptive reuse of a multi-story downtown warehouse building for housing. Its sturdy original construction, excellent condition, accommodating floor plan and potential availability all make it an ideal adaptive reuse candidate. The current plumbing wholesaler occupant would be an excellent occupant of a revitalized Lower Downtown Business District, as described below.

Depending on unit size, the building could provide between 24 and 32 dwelling units that could be either rental apartments or owner-occupied condos. While the building floor plate works well for housing, the wall of the first two floors on the east side is blocked by the adjacent building. Because window exposure is a requirement for housing, the adjoining building (207-09 E. Main) would have to be purchased and demolished as a part of the project. Those acquisition and demolition costs are included in preliminary financial estimates.



East Gate

2. Mini-Park. The removal of 207-09 E. Main Street will resolve the window issue and also make space available for a small “mini-park”, which will provide an outdoor passive recreation space in support of downtown housing and pedestrian activity along Main Street. The mini-park also serves as a link between support parking located south of the Main Street buildings and Main Street.

3. New Commercial Mixed-Use Building. A new multi-story mixed-use commercial and office or housing building is proposed at the southwest corner of 3rd Ave. and Main Street. Building size is approximately 10,000 sq. ft. per floor. Several properties would have to be assembled to provide space for the new building. Current owners include the Marshalltown Medical and Surgical Center (MMSC), the City of Marshalltown, and Bob’s Furniture. Table 5.4 below summarizes the public acquisition cost to assemble the property. A more detailed evaluation of the financial impacts of this proposed development is included in the Tax Increment Financing example later in this report.

4. New Parking Lot. MMSC uses its property on this side of 3rd Avenue primarily to provide support parking. However, that parking is now crowded around several existing buildings. This redevelopment concept includes a consolidation and reconfiguration of parking to continue the support of hospital parking needs, while providing parking in support of the housing and commercial redevelopment projects. The concept includes expanding the parking lot down a half block to Church Street. This would remove a couple of non-contributing uses and add needed parking. The area is large enough to become structured parking in the future and would provide 120 to 130 stalls in the meanwhile.

5. Intersection Improvements. The intersection of 3rd Ave. and Main needs significant pedestrian amenity improvements such as differentiated crosswalks, streetscape planting and fixtures, perhaps a small open space, signage and a significant gateway feature announcing the downtown. The parking lot on the north side of 3rd and Main must be retained both because that lot is needed to serve the hospital and also to support the future need for parking for the restored Orpheum theatre.

Illustration 3 depicts how the East Gate subdistrict might appear upon completion of these revitalization projects.

Projected Cost and Development Response

Table 5.4 compares estimated costs and benefits, from a tax base standpoint, of proceeding

with this project versus taking a “do nothing” approach to this redevelopment proposal. The completion of an adaptive reuse project for housing at the Iowa Wholesale, and the construction of the new commercial building, will add substantially to the tax base, thereby providing a tax increment from which project assistance can be drawn.

TABLE 5.4: Projected Development Cost, East Gate

Component	Public Cost: Acquisition & Construction of Improvements	Private Cost: New Development (Value of Added Tax Base)
1. Iowa Wholesale Housing	\$260,000.00	\$4.0 Mil
2. Mini-Park	\$150,000.00	
3. New Commercial Bldg.	\$275,000.00	\$1.24 Mil
4. New Parking Lot	\$686,000.00	\$250,000.00

Lower Downtown Business District

The Concept

The industrial area south of the downtown historically has been the major employment center of the community, with Fisher Controls, Cooper Manufacturing and others anchoring the area with expanding businesses. We are here dubbing this district the "Lower Downtown Business District", and borrowing from Denver, "LoDo" for short, to reflect its close relationship to the downtown.

The northern edge of this district is Linn Street, where land uses transition from commercial and office to industrial. Fisher Controls property defines this edge, extending west across Center to border the new Library site, west of 1st Street. Madison Street, defining the south edge of LoDo, is the primary east-west artery through the district, with continuity extending east and west of the district. Center Street and 3rd Avenue are both viaducts over this district. However, with a half clover-leaf intersection configuration with Madison Street, 3rd Avenue is the primary north-south access.

The vacant Arbie Feeds grain elevator reinforces a perception of stagnation in the district. While this perception may not be based on fact, it is prevalent and should be addressed. The revitalization of the district, therefore, should begin with the demolition of the Arbie

Lower Downtown



Feeds elevator and the redevelopment of that highly visible property. West of Center Street, the district should transition, along Nevada and 1st Streets, from commercial uses to residential. This transition area provides an opportunity for urban-scale detached single-family, or townhome, development.

The components of the revitalization concept for LoDo include:

- 1. Street Improvements.** Madison, as the primary corridor through the district, should be enhanced with street trees and signage reflecting a district logo. The reconstruction of the historic railroad station south of Madison as a visitor center or business could be a highlight of that corridor and a unique feature downtown.

Nevada Street represents a secondary east-west corridor that can have greatly increased importance, if improved, in both defining the district and east-west accessibility. Its intersection with 1st Street constitutes an entryway into the LoDo district and could be improved with an entryway signage feature. Sections of

Illustration 3



Nevada need to be improved with full paving and, most significantly, the street should be extended east, north of Stone's restaurant and under the 3rd Avenue viaduct to create east-west continuity through the district. This extension will allow for a reorganization of the Stone Restaurant site into a more efficient parking and access configuration. Finally, Nevada, like Madison, should be improved with street trees to enhance the quality of the public environment in the district. The estimated costs of Madison and Nevada street tree planting is summarized on Table 5.5 below.

2. Infill Development. In addition to demolition and redevelopment of the Arbie Feeds site, there are numerous opportunities for infill development in LoDo. The development concept identifies eight potential sites for new infill development, including Arbie Feeds. These sites represent potential locations for both new businesses and relocation of auto, warehouse or industrial-type businesses from the downtown district.

One of the infill opportunities, Number 5, is in the small "under the viaduct" Center Street business district, which is a unique subarea of the downtown. In

TABLE: 5.5: Estimated Tax Value of the Lower Downtown Business District Concept

New Commercial Building	Area (sq. ft.)	Unit Cost/Value
		\$20.00/sf for office/warehouse
1	17,548	\$350,960.00
2	14,840	\$296,800.00
3	10,807	\$216,140.00
4	16,848	\$336,960.00
5	3,900	\$78,000.00
6	6,984	\$139,680.00
7	6,984	\$139,680.00
8	6,460	\$129,200.00
Total New Warehouse/Office Tax Base		\$1,687,420.00
Streetscape	Length	Unit Cost
Nevada Streetscape (area #6)	2,154 linear ft. (includes both sides of Nevada)	trees, 30 ft o.c. (72) @ \$300/tree
Madison Streetscape (area #7)	2,372 linear ft. (includes both sides of Madison)	trees, 30 ft o.c. (80) @ \$300/tree
		\$21,600.00
		\$24,000.00

addition to supporting the infill opportunity, the city should improve the parking underneath the viaduct and improve pedestrian connections to this area.

Table 5.5 summarizes the total estimated added tax value of these eight infill development projects, using a conservative \$20.00 per square foot assessment assumption

Connections

The previous section described major development projects that make up the heart of the downtown development program. This section describes areawide connections, designed largely to lead visitors to downtown and to make the district more pleasant and easier to use. In many ways, the Connections provide the fabric that combine individual projects into a unified whole. Elements of development projects already described that enhance connections include:

- Library to Main Street center-block walkway
- South of Main Street alley improvements
- Center Street streetscape improvements north of Main Street
- South of State parking lot greenway
- Main Street and 3rd Avenue intersection improvements
- Madison and Nevada Streets improvements

Additional components of the revitalization strategy that enhance linkages and improve accessibility include:

- Entrance Corridors
- Areawide Trails
- 2nd Street Pedestrian Bridge
- Wayfinding

1. Entrance Corridors. The primary entrance corridors to the downtown area include the Center and 3rd Avenue viaducts, Main Street, Madison and 3rd Street. Of these, the

two that haven't been discussed are the Center Street viaduct and 3rd Street. There should be consideration of a downtown gateway feature where Center Street returns to grade level at Boone Street, perhaps in combination with wayfinding signage indicating direction to the new library. However, this gateway feature is deemed to be a lower priority to that described at the Main Street and 3rd Avenue intersection.

Third Street, although having viaduct connectivity over the railroad and Linn Creek, represents a local access to the downtown through a predominantly residential area and enhancements to this corridor are considered secondary to those described above.

2. Areawide Trails. Map 5.2, Downtown Connections, identifies proposed trail connections to the downtown area. An enhancement to this planned system would be the establishment of a connection between Linn Creek and Main Street, east of Center Street. A connection along 1st Avenue, with bicycle parking on the Courthouse site, is one option that should be evaluated.

3. 2nd Street Pedestrian Bridge. The closure of the at-grade crossing of the railroad tracks at 2nd Street is currently being pursued by the railroad. While access to the aquatic center and Community Y is established over the 3rd Street viaduct, the 2nd Street connection remains popular due to less out-of-distance travel, especially for youth on bicycles. Therefore the concept of street closure with construction of a pedestrian bridge is being considered. While this solution would retain current pedestrian accessibility, an alternative might be the construction of a new bicycle ramp off the 3rd St. viaduct in the vicinity of the existing stairway just west of the pool site. In addition to this pedestrian connection issue, a pedestrian bridge across Linn Creek to connect cultural and recreational facilities on both sides should also be pursued.

4. Wayfinding. A wayfinding signage system to direct visitors and tourists to downtown attractions and facilities is needed for downtown Marshalltown. As an example, during the public input component of this planning project we discovered that the "parking problem" in downtown Marshalltown is in part a problem of visitors not knowing where the public parking lots are located. A downtown direction signage system need not be extensive and expensive. However, key attractions and facilities should be identified, including: public parking lots, city hall, library, hospital, and Sower Corner.

