

Ottawa, Illinois  
September 2008

Destination    
Development<sub>inc</sub>



Branding, Development, &  
Marketing Action Plan



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF WORK.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE OTTAWA BRAND .....</b>	<b>9</b>
The brand promise concept .....	10
Ottawa's Brand Promise .....	11
<b>STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES &amp; THREATS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY &amp; BRAND DIRECTION.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
#1 Memorize the brand promise .....	24
#2 Create and empower the "Grow Ottawa Team".....	26
#3 Promote Plan Adoption by the Community at Large.....	29
#4 Hire professional urban planning services to crete a downtown masterplan.....	31
#5 Adopt downtown ordinances that give structure to destination activities.....	37
#6 Enhance "Old Town" with additional features. ....	38
#7 Develop a brand and logo "Standards & Practices" Manual.....	40
#8 Create a "Best of Ottawa" guide.....	43
#9 Conduct brand-building outreach in the community.....	45
#10 Hire a Retail Business Recruiter .....	46
#11 Create a Technical Assistance Program for downtown merchants .....	51
#12 Designate "Old Town" boundaries and apply a special zoning ordinance .....	55
#13 Create a website focused on the gardening brand .....	57
#14 Develop public relations resources .....	61
#15 Develop an E-newsletter program .....	65
#16 Develop Visitor Activities and Events to Support the Brand.....	67
# 17 Enhance the Current Wayfinding System for the City with a Focus on Downtown .....	69
#18 Recruit Garden-oriented Groups to Ottawa .....	72
Recommendations Summary.....	74
<b>THE OTTAWA DOWNTOWN IDEA BOOK .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION.....</b>	<b>95</b>
Demographic Mapping of the Ottawa Market.....	96
Butterfly Gardens Research .....	98
Notes for the Ottawa Brand.....	99
Ottawa Illinois Interview Summary .....	103
List of Interviewees .....	108
Sidewalk Café Design Guidelines and Standards .....	109
Street Performers Ordinance.....	111
Peer-driven Retail Sign Ordinance.....	113
Review of Previous Plans.....	117
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>126</b>





## Introduction and scope of work



## Introduction and Scope of Work

The town of Ottawa, Illinois is situated in La Salle County on the banks of the beautiful Fox and Illinois Rivers and just south of Interstate 80. Ottawa's population of 19,000 is part of approximately 1.8 million people who live within fifty miles of downtown Ottawa and about 9.6 million who live within a 75-mile radius of Ottawa. Ottawa residents enjoy the rural environment that surrounds them as well as the proximity of the Chicago urban experience.

Ottawa is predominately a middle-class town with traditional Midwestern values. The population has remained largely unchanged for decades. Completion of high school education is high, and the predominant types of employment are in health care, construction, education services, mineral products, accommodation and food services, public administration, and the like. The crime rate is significantly below the national average.

Downtown Ottawa is typical of rural towns within two hours driving distance from large urban and commercial centers. Many of the original base retail stores have moved out to malls and retail strips along major highway corridors, and many downtown property owners have deferred building maintenance and rent at lower rates than they could if the properties were upgraded. The main shopping district of La Salle and Columbus Streets have become populated with a mixture of service providers and retail establishments that pay low rent, or own their own buildings. Recent municipal improvements have been made to street lighting, and some property owners have restored their buildings to their original grandeur. La Salle and Columbus Streets form the north-south state route of Highway 23 and introduce significant commercial truck traffic through the middle of town. The downtown is centered on the north side of the confluence of the Fox and Illinois Rivers. Substantial waterfront exists in public hands.

The City of Ottawa is interested in developing a special identity that will attract a portion of the huge surrounding area population, and revitalize the downtown into a place attractive to both local residents and visitors. The City has retained Destination Development, Inc. to assist them in an evaluation of downtown Ottawa's tourism potential and current status as a visitor destination.

In October of 2005, Destination Development, Inc. conducted and presented a Tourism Marketing and On-site Assessment of Ottawa in a two-hour workshop. A Tourism Assessment is a process in which the area is looked at from the eyes of a visitor. No prior research was facilitated, no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project, and the town and surrounding area was "secret-shopped." The assessment is a no-holds barred look at the community from a visitor's perspective. It includes marketing, signage, things to see and do (attractions mix), critical mass, ease of getting around, customer service, availability of visitor amenities (information, restrooms, parking, etc.), general appeal, and the community's ability to attract overnight visitors, who spend three times that of day visitors.

Following the assessment, the City began to act on the suggestions that DDI made with regard to fixing issues that were observed during the Assessment. In June 2007, the City entered into a contract with DDI to provide Ottawa with a Downtown Strategic Branding, Development and Marketing Plan – a branding concept that would help the town meet its goals to increase visitor spending and promote the visitor industry and economic development. The City is particularly interested in ways in which the downtown district along La Salle Street could become more vibrant and developed.

The DDI Team returned to conduct a more thorough review of the downtown resources – both developed and undeveloped – that could be used in the creation of product in support of a tourism brand. To meet the City's goals, DDI performed a number of tasks that were detailed in the scope of work as follows:

### **Task 1. Stakeholder Interviews & Outreach**

DDI interviewed thirty selected individuals about the community, including retailers, community and city government leaders to obtain background information on previous branding efforts and to solicit ideas about viable brands for Ottawa. A successful branding effort must be embraced by community organizations, so understanding which direction would receive the most buy-in is important. This process gave us a sense of where the city wants to go and which brand has the greatest chance for success. The list of interviewees and a summary of our interviews are in the Supporting Documentation section of this document.

**Task 2. Research Review**

DDI conducted demographic research and reviewed existing visitor research of the area, determining primary and secondary target markets. DDI reviewed reports and studies that have been previously prepared for the city. A summary of the studies we reviewed is in the Supporting Documentation section of this document.

**Task 3. Market Analysis**

DDI reviewed existing marketing materials produced for Ottawa, looked at tourism trends, neighboring community marketing brands and marketing materials, and performed a competitive analysis of neighboring towns to make sure there were niche markets that were not taken that Ottawa could pursue. We also looked at the size and profile of the larger regional market population for Ottawa to gain insight into the viability of any brand we recommended.

**Task 4. Brand Identification**

DDI inventoried the downtown's attractions, activities and local amenities, classifying and differentiating them between diversions and primary lures, or attractors. Lures are the primary draw to a community, like Disneyland is to Anaheim, while diversions are secondary activities – things that the visitor could do closer to home, but will do while in your area. In Anaheim, diversions include golfing, shopping, dining, visiting museums, local events and even going to Universal Studios and Knotts Berry Farm. We looked for various possible brand development options to see if they could be classified as the “best” in the particular category (making Ottawa worth a special trip over the same things the visitor can find closer to home) or different.

We looked for existing resources that would create the most economical pathway to developing a tourism product that could become THE brand for Ottawa. Which assets have the potential to deliver the greatest return on investment? Every branding effort requires product development so we looked for brand ideas that would leverage current assets. Each promising brand concept was measured against our brand “feasibility test questions” to see if it passed muster. Once a brand was selected for recommendation, DDI created graphic identities and slogans in support of the brand.

**Task 5. Branding Workshop**

DDI conducted a Branding Workshop in Ottawa in order to educate local stakeholders on why branding is important for small towns, the nature of a brand, what makes a successful brand, and how brands are developed. The workshop presented many examples of good and bad community branding and case studies of how specific towns created their brands successfully. DDI also presented the principles of good graphic identification, logos, slogans and signage that effectively support the brand. The workshop laid the groundwork for presentation of a specific brand for Ottawa based on the rules for good community brands.

**Task 6. Product Development**

Brands are grounded in delivering on the promise, therefore before any marketing is done, the community must insure that the visitor experience exists through adequate product development. DDI inventoried existing product that with repositioning and augmentation with new product would deliver on the promise. We researched other towns with similar brands, and examined the “gardening” market before recommending specific product development that will support the brand, as well as more general product development not associated with the brand directly, that would make downtown Ottawa a great place to go for both local residents and visitors alike. This included the suggested retail mix of stores and places to eat, the comfort amenities needed by pedestrians, beautification, and events.

**Task 7. Marketing Planning**

Telling the world about Ottawa's new brand direction requires a sound marketing plan. DDI examined the existing promotional collateral, websites, events and other promotional efforts, and developed a series of recommendations specific to attracting local and regional visitors to Ottawa because of the brand. These include key marketing messages, good graphics, a robust website presence, as well as public relations, collateral materials, partnerships between the private sector and public sector and advertising.





## The Ottawa Brand



## The brand promise concept

Branding is a perception people have of you, or your product. When people mention “Ottawa”, what’s the first thing that comes to mind? What are their perceptions? What is the feeling they have when they hear the name of the city – both locally in Illinois, and throughout the Midwest?

The branding portion of the Ottawa Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan is built around creating a unique view of Ottawa, illustrated on the next page.

Everything Ottawa does, in terms of downtown development, marketing and community development should reinforce the perception or brand you are trying to create in the minds of your residents and visitors.

Look at your websites and your marketing materials. Do they reinforce the brand vision? If not, then redevelop those marketing efforts and showcase the activities, the businesses, the photographs and other elements so that you deliver on the promise.

The recommendations in this plan have been carefully developed to reinforce the primary brand message and include the products needed to deliver on that message. It’s important to note that a brand must be earned. You must deliver on the promise. This brand promise is the perception we hope Ottawa will earn over the next five to seven years as this plan is implemented.

## Ottawa's Brand Promise

Green and glorious, the new Ottawa has emerged as a gardener's paradise, a regional centerpiece for the botanical arts. Once the western frontier of our nation, then a vital transportation and manufacturing link in the Midwest, Ottawa now stands as a premier destination for the traditions and practical art of gardening.

Ottawa's historic downtown and its architecturally beautiful buildings have been transformed into an engaging botanical experience showcasing the aesthetic pleasures of plant life in its many forms. The waterfront invites a meander, with its beautiful English-inspired greenhouse, while the downtown features unique signature shops and original restaurants showcasing organic produce along the tree-lined streets shimmering with springtime blossoms. Here you can also learn from Master Gardeners, watch skilled craftsmen create outdoor art from glass, iron and clay, or just amble through the Farmer's Market for the best produce the region has to offer.

Each season Ottawa brings new gardening experiences to life - whether it is to shop for specialty tools and supplies amid the fragrances of spring and summer, enjoy the fall harvest celebration, or experience the dazzling light displays during the winter - all the while learning how to prepare your garden for the next season. Ottawa surprises and delights gardeners, young and old, throughout the year.

### **The Brand Promise (the one sentence version)**

Ottawa showcases the world of plants and the joy of gardening in a pedestrian setting of engaging attractions and activities.





## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats



## Ottawa's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

From our reconnaissance of Ottawa, Illinois research and personal interviews, we have summarized the specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the community to develop a stronger tourism industry.

Strong consideration is given to the strengths of a city, which can become the foundation for a particular brand. Likewise, opportunities previously undeveloped often inspire strong branding ideas. Weaknesses are sometimes fatal to branding efforts, but oftentimes they can be overcome. Threats are potentialities, factors to be considered for the future strength of the brand.

### Strengths

Ottawa is located within easy driving distance from a huge metropolitan population.

Ottawa's downtown is situated at the confluence of the Fox and Illinois rivers, which gives it great appeal.

Ottawa's downtown possesses architecturally interesting and historically significant buildings, which provide ambiance.

Ottawa's citizenry are educated, hardworking, capable and enthusiastic about improving their downtown.

Ottawa's proximity to Interstate 80 makes it easy to access.

### Weaknesses

The retail mix in downtown Ottawa, from a visitor destination perspective, is weak. This includes the quality of some of the restaurants on La Salle Street.

Many of the downtown buildings need repair and façade restoration yet the market cannot sustain rents that provide for these capital improvements.

Ottawa possesses no important "lure" that brings people to the town for anything unique or special. The history of the Lincoln-Douglas debates is not a strong enough lure.

Ottawa lacks good signage and wayfinding for navigating the town and locating important destinations.

The downtown lacks an inviting urban hotel.

### Opportunities

The millions of visitors to Starved Rock State Park have yet to develop much awareness or interest in Ottawa, because they do not yet perceive a reason to go there. This can be changed with the right product and marketing message.

Heritage Harbor will introduce an upscale consumer audience to downtown Ottawa. The window of opportunity during which they might "adopt" downtown as a gathering place will be short.

The clearing of the "Jordan Block" and the potential for the city to acquire the riverfront elementary school property offer Ottawa a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redirect the downtown toward the riverfront.

Downtown retail space lease rates have room to grow with a more vibrant shopping experience.

### Threats

The commercial truck traffic on La Salle and Columbus Streets may have a dampening effect on the creation of a pedestrian-friendly corridor along those two streets.

The winter damp and cold could be a barrier to pedestrian shopping downtown year-round unless overcome with very attractive shops and/or environmental solutions.



## Executive Summary & Brand Direction



## Executive Summary & Brand Vision

The purpose of this plan is to provide the City of Ottawa with a branding focus centered on its downtown. Much more than a logo or a slogan, a city's brand is the image and feeling that it portrays. It is a perception in people's minds, the promise of an expected experience. When that promise means an active experience that is unique and fun for visitors, such as a special shopping experience, then the town becomes worthy of a special trip.

If we asked Chicago or Northern Illinois residents about their impressions of Ottawa, they would be hard-pressed to identify anything about Ottawa that sets it apart from any of the dozens of other small towns scattered across the Illinois River Valley. It is apparent that Ottawa does not currently have a strong identity as an interesting place to visit.

Every branding effort requires product development, but which brand-niche can best succeed with the least amount of investment, and produce the fastest return? In many cases the answer lies in leveraging something that is already working in the community to capture and "own" a new brand identity – one not already being used by another community tapping into the same markets. In other cases, something entirely new is developed as the brand.

### Brands Considered

We looked at a number of brand options keeping in mind the current assets of downtown Ottawa, the limitation on available funds for future development, the character of the town, the desires of the local community for a certain "feel" within their downtown, and most importantly, the essential criteria by which successful brands are created.

Some brands we rejected fairly quickly for a variety of reasons:

- Outdoor Recreation – the lack of variety in natural landscapes
- Team Sports – the sports facilities advantage of nearby towns
- Visual Arts – the lack of uniqueness and presence of nearby, mature art towns

### We considered the following brands for downtown Ottawa:

A marching band destination. Originally, the quality of the high school band led to the idea of a destination for band competitions and performances from

all over the country. But the students are not around in the summer when they would be most needed.

The Illinois & Michigan Canal Brand. We thought of making Ottawa a central destination of the I & M Canal project. There just were not enough visitor experiences that could be developed to make this a brand work for downtown Ottawa.

Art Glass. We considered building on the legacy of Ottawa's glass manufacturing with an artisan based art glass brand. Many other communities in the Midwest have this as a significant attraction already and it would not be unique.

Organic Culinary & Dining. Drawing on the agrarian heritage of the region, we looked at developing a downtown "restaurant row" of organic food experiences. However, problems with supply chain distribution made this brand difficult to sustain.

Botanical Arts - Gardening. We looked again at the farming, horticulture and agrarian elements of the region and considered gardening as a brand. Not just passive viewing of gardens, but the active learning and creating of gardens of all types.

### Recommended Brand

We recommend for downtown Ottawa a Botanical Arts & Gardening destination brand. In considering this brand, we tested it against specific criteria that need to be met for a successful brand and determined that developing a retail center for botanical arts and gardening would be a good fit for Ottawa.

Narrow focus: Good brands always begin with a narrow focus. Being all things to all people no longer works. This is the age of specialization and creating a niche that is unique within the marketplace is a winning formula. This does not mean that existing assets that bring current visitors to Ottawa should be discounted or ignored. The more one has to offer, the better the destination. It does mean however, that the brand becomes the single idea of what Ottawa is known for, particularly to the more distant markets.

**Extensions:** Good brands begin with a narrow focus but also have the potential to add additional features that add to the lure and the diversions that keep customers spending. For example, an initial focus on gardening and shopping for gardening-related items would eventually extend to a vastly expanded farmers market in a permanent home protected from the weather. Ottawa could also develop a signature annual flower show, expand their restaurants to focus on organic foods, create a winter focus on indoor plants, branch out into landscaping, and have specialties like heirloom gardening.

**Wide appeal:** While narrow in focus, the brand should have wide appeal within the market and have economic stability. Certainly, the regional market of 9.6 million within 75 miles of Ottawa is a significant market and gardening is the second most participated activity in the U.S.

**Uniqueness:** Our research of the regional market shows that no other town within hundreds miles has developed a significant gardening or botanical arts destination in their town. The closest potential competitors, Chicago Botanic Garden, Morton Arboretum (Lisle, IL), Anderson Japanese Gardens (Rockford, IL), the Mari-Mann Herb Farm (Decatur, IL) are about viewing gardens. None of them are the focus of their town, or offer the full experience of garden learning, shopping, displays, etc. all in a pedestrian setting. By creating a Botanical Arts and Gardening destination, Ottawa can be both unique and offer the largest concentration of retail stores devoted to gardening within its market.

**Existing assets:** Ottawa has the raw materials available to create a great gardening destination – a beautiful and walkable La Salle Street shopping district, public land along the waterfront and the desire to create something special. The downtown retail mix will have to be rearranged and augmented, new businesses recruited, and ones located outside the downtown moved into downtown, but a critical mass of branded shopping and dining can quickly be organized.

**New money:** Drawing from the surrounding region, this brand will introduce new money into Ottawa, where it will be spent by local proprietors, providing an economic multiplier effect in the local economy. Nationally consumers spend an average of \$428 per household on gardening activities each year.

An environment for locals: A collection of shops and restaurants in the downtown will attract locals as well, particularly if evening hours are kept in the retail stores. Essentials for the botanical brand, such as floral shops, hardware stores, clothing stores, outdoor art shops, outdoor furniture stores, and dining places, will attract locals to gather with their friends downtown.

### **The popularity of gardening**

Gardening is a hobby with a history of sustained participation. This will create a stable brand for Ottawa.

“The fastest-growing leisure activities on the list of twenty-one activities of the first two decades of the new millennium are walking for exercise and gardening or yard work.”

“In addition, the range of merchandise sold in support of these activities will change over time. Opportunities abound for businesses that incorporate these future leisure trends into their strategic plans.”

*From “The Tourism and Leisure Industry: Shaping the Future” by Klaus Weiermair and Christine Mathies, Haworth Press, Inc.:*

“U.S. consumers now spend more than \$1.3 billion a year on container gardening, according to Container Gardening Associated.

Retail sales of lawn and garden products to consumers totaled \$35.1 billion last year. That was an annual increase of 3 percent or \$1.03 billion

Do-it-yourself lawn and garden activities that saw the biggest increase in spending in 2007 included lawn care, vegetable gardening, ornamental gardening, and herb gardening.”

### **2007 National Gardening Survey**

Nationwide, 71 percent of all U.S. households or an estimated 82 million households participated in one or more types of lawn and garden activities in 2007




THE GARDEN CLUB of AMERICA

Home | Arboreta & Gardens | GCA Clubs | Pamphlets | Position Papers | Scholarship | Casey Trees | Donate | Members Only

The purpose of The Garden Club of America is to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, to share the advantages of association by means of educational meetings, conferences, correspondence and publications, and to restore, improve, and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement.





The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc.

Tel: 815-617-5269  
Fax: 815-617-5710  
117 Ashland Place  
Evanston, IL 60120-3301

Send all mail to:  
The Garden Clubs of Ill., Inc.  
P.O. Box 425  
Evanston, IL 60120-0425


Welcome to The Garden Clubs of Illinois Website

## Welcome

Welcome to The Garden Clubs of Illinois Website. Currently we have 9648 members in 205 clubs, an additional 18 affiliate plant societies, arboretums and the-like, and 27 Junior Clubs in Illinois. Founded in 1925, we are a charter member of National Garden Clubs, Inc., an international organization that is the largest volunteer gardening organization in the world. Wander through this site. Find out what we do. Check on educational opportunities. Learn how to join a garden club. Contact us through our Headquarters via mail, telephone, fax or e-mail. Office hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. The federation is governed by a Board of Directors representing all areas of Illinois. The President for the 2007-2009 term of office is Jody Bailey. Barbara D. May of Massachusetts is National Garden Club president. The theme for her 2007-2009 administration is "Nurture the Earth - Plant Natives."

Photo: Netherlands Flower Bulb Information

See BROADWAY IN BLOOM information/schedule on the Latest News Page!



**Mission Statement of National Garden Clubs, Inc.:**  
National Garden Clubs, Inc. provides education, resources, and additional networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, civic and environmental responsibility.

Use the links below to navigate:

- About Us
- Latest News
- Calendar of Events
- Education
- Floral Design
- GARDENGLORIES
- Horticulture
- Membership Information
- Special Projects
- Book Reviews
- Forms
- Awards
- Links

*The market for gardening is huge and there are many national and regional resources available to Ottawa as it builds the Botanical Arts and Gardening brand. These range from affinity groups that are a core part of the market, to university extension centers that have detailed information on designing, planning and growing plants in the midwestern region.*

The most popular lawn and garden activities in 2007 included lawn care (48% of households), growing indoor houseplants (31% of households), flower gardening (30% of households), and landscaping (27% of households).

Consumers spent an average of \$428 per household on do-it-yourself lawn and garden activities in 2007, or 7 percent more than the \$401 average spent in 2006.

Households that spent the most on their lawns and gardens in 2007 included people 55 years of age and older, college graduates, married households, households with annual incomes of \$75,000 and over, households in the South, two-person households and households with no children at home.

#### **Harris Interactive for the National Gardening Association**

The regional market includes the Illinois Garden Club with 206 local clubs and 9,648 members, the Indiana Garden Club with 106 local clubs and 2,500 members, and the Michigan Garden Club with 189 local clubs and 7,141 members.

#### **Socio-demographics of the market**

DDI researched the segments of the market for an Ottawa Botanical Arts/ Gardening brand. We used ESRI's "Tapestry" LifeMode segmentation to understand the composition of residents within 20, 40 and 60 miles from downtown Ottawa. "Tapestry" groups consumers by their lifestage and lifestyle characteristics in order to illustrate their purchasing motivations. We found that:

#### **Within 20 miles of downtown Ottawa, the largest concentrations of consumers (Top 10 ESRI "Tapestry" LifeMode segments) were in the following groups:**

- 19.3% are upscale - invest in landscaping
- 23.6% are "senior styles" - take pride in their gardens
- 29.2% are "traditional living" - tend a garden
- 5.8% are building families - are buying homes
- 8.5% are "rural life" - tend a garden

#### **Within 40 miles of downtown Ottawa:**

- 20.7% are upscale - invest in landscaping
- 24.4% are "senior styles" - take pride in their gardens
- 24.7% are "traditional living" - tend a garden
- 6.1% are a "midland crowd" - do-it-yourselfers
- 11.3% are "rural life" - tend a garden

#### **And within 60 miles of downtown Ottawa:**

- 34.3% are upscale - invest in landscaping
- 4.4% are "senior styles" - take pride in their gardens
- 13.6% are "traditional living" - tend a garden
- 12.7% are building families and homes - garden basics
- 6.1% are a "midland crowd" - do-it-yourselfers
- 4.6% are "rural life" - tend a garden

#### **The Vision**

The brand goal is to become the central place in Illinois, and eventually the Midwest, to learn about gardening, experience great gardens, and buy plants and gardening products. In order to become that place, Ottawa will need to develop the product and visitor experiences that will draw visitors to town and create the diversions and spending opportunities that will keep them there.

Imagine that Ottawa is THE place in the Midwest that comes to mind when thinking about gardening. The downtown is the center of the action. Retail shops of all kinds are full of botanical and gardening related merchandise. Live demonstrations are available that include gardening techniques, artisans in action making garden art, flower shows, and Master gardener lectures. Public places are full of flowers, landscaping, fountains and other water features, street entertainers and musicians, and offer gathering places with seating, restrooms, and places to get something to eat and drink. A special place would be the banks of the Illinois River with outdoor venues full of activity.

From the Washington Square Park block to the Illinois River, downtown Ottawa will be the centerpiece of the brand. There are several key components to making the brand a success:

The Ottawa lure: THE place to go to see and experience the best in the botanical arts: floriculture, organic produce, garden art, indoor gardening, heirloom species, etc.

The icon: A large English-style greenhouse/arboretum located near the waterfront.

The diversions: Organic dining, music in the gardens, retail shopping, artisan garden art, the Farmers Market and gardening demonstrations.

The ambiance: Historic downtown Ottawa, outstanding landscaping, gathering places, and the rivers.

The amenities: Ample parking, wayfinding signs, information kiosks, clean and convenient restrooms, water fountains, places to sit and free downtown wi-fi internet.

### Marketing the brand

The stronger the product, the easier marketing the brand becomes. Creating a large critical mass of gardening activities, retail stores and services will make marketing of the brand more successful. The fact that the botanical arts and gardening destination will be unique within the greater Chicago marketplace is also a strong plus. Gardening is experiential and involves the consumer in hands-on activities, making the brand even more attractive.

A number of marketing tools are available for “telling the world” about Ottawa’s new brand. Most important is the Key Message that you need to communicate.

The key message for the brand is: Ottawa is THE destination that offers the greatest variety and concentration of plants, products and services for gardening, landscaping and outdoor living. Ottawa is your one-stop garden shopping destination : more stores, more variety, more activities, more learning resources and more fun.

Secondarily, Ottawa offers these choices in a convenient, beautiful, pedestrian-friendly environment. The number of resources justify the trip.



Visitors will be attracted through a variety of marketing initiatives.

Ottawa will develop a Chicago TV gardening show featuring a Master Gardener/local personality. This person would become a full time spokesman for the Ottawa brand, reaching out to the regional market through television, radio, and live appearances throughout the region. (See “Gardening with Cisco” on KING-TV, Seattle)

Ottawa’s website will attract visits with a robust section devoted to plant and garden issues, e-marketing newsletters and blogs devoted to various gardening subjects. Gardening videos will be placed on YouTube.

National gardening product manufacturers will be recruited to sponsor different gardening sites within downtown Ottawa and the local Farmers Market will be relocated to a permanent home with expanded hours and days of operation.

Merchants will be encouraged to create outdoor displays and to place planters and benches in front of their stores. Light poles will sport colorful

banners according to the event or the season, and at night, special lighting will keep the downtown active and colorful.

### The downtown identity

Part of the marketing of the downtown is to create and identify the boundaries of the destination retail portion of the downtown and to give it a name.



Doing this puts a stake in the ground and tells the consumer “you’re here, you’ve arrived.” We recommend that the destination retail area be called “Old Town”. While the botanical brand is going to be readily apparent, the district name needs to be broader in appeal so it can be marketed to Ottawa residents as a shopping, dining and gathering place for them as well as out-of-town visitors.

### The City Brand logo

Every credible book on the process of branding will always tout the fact that you never build brands, develop identities, or marketing tag lines using focus groups. A focus group consists of a number of people sequestered in a single room and they discuss and look at identities and concepts as a group. When people “discuss” concepts and creative types “sell” the concept to those in the room, the result is a watered down, generic, all-things-to-all- people identity and tag line, which often needs explaining. Yet, when these marketing messages show up in ads in Smithsonian or Midwest Living magazine, how will the logo be explained to the reader? How could the meaning be explained to potentially millions of readers?

This is an ineffective process since readers, viewers and others will size up the perception of the logo and tag line in mere seconds. The first impression, the first glance has to “close the sale.”

It is VERY important to remember that logos and tag lines are NOT brands and it’s easy for people to get hung up on graphic images and text. Brands are built on product, not logos and slogans. They are simply marketing tools used to support the brand. Additionally, brands must be earned. You never roll out a brand until you can deliver on the promise. It is nearly impossible to develop logos and slogans and get even 70% local buy-in.

The recommended brand logo developed by DDI is shown at the bottom right of the advertisement to the left. The slogans “Ottawa - a perennial favorite” and “Life begins in the garden” are also shown. There are many applications to the logo – downtown street banners, downtown wayfinding signs, advertisements, the Ottawa website and promotional stationery for example.

### The Brand Slogan

Like logos, slogans are a shorthand way of communicating the brand promise, and the slogan often accompanies the logo in marketing materials. Ottawa would not use the logo and slogan for at least 18 months to 2 years – when the critical mass of retail shops and services is in place and the brand promise can actually be delivered. Two suggested slogans for Ottawa are:

- *“Ottawa: A perennial favorite”*
- *“Ottawa: Life begins in the garden”*

Once the basic brand logo is developed, it's important to get every organization that markets the destination to embrace the brand, and present themselves as a part of the brand. You are far more powerful as one loud voice than a number of small individual voices. This is the entire purpose of developing a destination brand in the first place. When everyone is communicating the same message the effort becomes both powerful and fun.

When individual marketing organizations that are pieces of the same visitor destination use separate marketing messages and identities, it creates confusion in the minds of your prospects. Can you imagine what would happen if every Coca-Cola bottling plant designed its own cans, developed its own ads for Coke, and had its own logo for the product in that area? Coke would not exist as a brand.

People don't care about organizations; they care about the visitor experience. Yes, each entity should have their own identity or “point of distinction,” but when it comes to marketing to the outside world, it should be a unified voice cementing your brand to the people in your market area as THE place to go in the Chicago area for botanical arts and gardening. Using a single tag line among all marketing organizations will create stronger brand awareness.

The primary Ottawa logo is the foundation of all its derivatives. It will receive the most exposure and can be used in common by all organizations marketing the brand.

The City government will want to support the brand but with a version of the brand logo that is suitable to application on municipal stationary, signage, vehicles and other official applications.

When you can get people and organizations pulling in the same direction, the branding and marketing effort becomes a fun, rather than competitive, process, and the results in terms of increased tax base can be simply phenomenal.

Happy reading.



## Recommendations



# 1 Memorize the Brand Promise.

## Description:

Use the brand promise as your guiding mantra, as a way of keeping on track with the brand development. With many participants involved in the development of the brand, it is easy to become distracted or to focus too much on side issues. Understanding where you want to go helps keep everyone focused. Downtown Ottawa would become a central location that would offer in one place a cornucopia of knowledge about plants and gardening, exhibits of plants and landscaping, access to a wide variety of goods and services useful to the gardener and a delightful environment in which to shop and dine.

The brand promise is the core of this entire branding, product development, and marketing program. It is what you want people to think of Ottawa when they hear the name.

Because a brand is a “promise,” foremost to the effort is making sure the community delivers on that promise. You never just roll out a brand, you must earn it.

If we dissect the brand promise, there are two primary components in it:

1. Positioning Ottawa as THE place to go for all the outdoor living ideas, purchases and services from anywhere in the Midwest. Starting out first by attracting those within the Illinois Valley around Ottawa, then from the greater Chicago area, and then from the Midwest. Depending on how large the critical mass of retail and services becomes, Ottawa could even become a gardening destination for the nation.
2. The focus of the brand is the downtown, which is the “centerpiece” of the brand experience. The brand promise states that downtown Ottawa:
  - a. Has more choices of everything required for outdoor living than any other single place in the market.
  - b. Is in a beautiful pedestrian shopping setting, where the experience is both exciting and relaxing, with many signature shops, “discoveries,” and unique items.
  - c. Has all the amenities that make the shopping experience exceptional – great restaurants, ample parking, free wi-fi, tree-lined streets and landscaping, and a vibrant nightlife after six in the evening.

In order to deliver on this promise, much work is needed, most of which is addressed in the following recommendations

1. You MUST promote the businesses (specifically) that deliver on the promise of “exceptional eateries,” high quality lodging that gets built in Ottawa – especially in the downtown (any place that is three-stars or better), “signature” specialty shops - your anchor businesses - and elements that “prove” that Ottawa is modern and upscale.

Focus on the “urban” aspects such as wireless high-speed Internet access, a landscaped, iconic English-style greenhouse/atrium area, the new boutique hotel’s 500 thread count sheets, highly rated dining, and classical music or performing arts - always a cultural icon.

2. Property owners and merchants MUST make downtown stunningly beautiful. We have included ten pages of photos, taken from all over North America, showing ideas on how to make downtown a true destination in terms of gathering places, beautification, and merchants that portray upscale, “worth a special trip” curb appeal, something currently sorely lacking downtown.

3. The City of Ottawa, the Visitor Center Services and the Chamber of Commerce need to all use the same type treatment and promotional efforts so that the effort drives a stake into the ground that Ottawa owns the botanical art/gardening brand.

4. Everyone marketing the town should start using third-party quotes - the “two thumbs up” accolades that reinforce and substantiate the brand. Brands are what people think of you, not what you say you are. Success depends on these third-party endorsements.

5. You build your brand using public relations, while advertising is used to cement your ownership position. A region-wide exceptional, professional PR effort is front and center to the brand, but this must be rolled out as the product to support it is developed. You cannot sell an empty promise.

6. There MUST be activities after 6:00 pm. This includes shopping until 9:00 pm, restaurants open until 10:00 pm, and entertainment that lasts until after

midnight. And not just on weekends. Successful downtowns don't close at 6:00 pm.

**Implementation:**

Everyone: Ottawa Visitor Center, Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, the City of Ottawa, .

**Approximate cost:**

No funds required for the adoption of the brand concept.

**Possible funding sources:**

None required

**Timeline for implementation:**

2008

**Rationale for the recommendation:**

Brands are perceptions - what people think of you as a city. But brands are built on product, while marketing is used to prove you own the brand. Without a product to back it, the brand will die a quick death.

That's why a great deal of this plan is built around downtown. Ottawa must deliver on the promise of the right mix of signature shops, exceptional eateries, nightlife, and entertainment all in a stunning and modern downtown setting.

It takes the whole community to develop a strong, winning brand. Ultimately it will require every organization on the same page and pulling in the same direction. Once this happens, the effort will stick in the minds of visitors and can spawn incredible brand awareness, just as in the case of Las Vegas, which at one point, when 48 of 50 states legalized some form of gambling, decided to become a family destination with something for everyone. When that became an unfulfilled promise, they finally went back to what they were known for: Sin City and the "playground for adults." This narrow focus was delivered with the most successful tag line in American history "What happens here, stays here."

But, just like every other town, they still needed to deliver on the promise. They did that by developing a theater and selling out 740 Celine Dion shows, producing five Cirque d'Soleil shows, and creating memorable ads and promotions that solidified the brand.

Side note: Logos and slogans are NOT brands. They are just graphic images and tag lines used to support the brand. Do not get hung up on these.

In everything you do: advertising, websites, brochures, guides, billboards, press releases, etc., ask yourself each time: "Does this promote the brand perception - what we want people to know of us and do we deliver on that promise?"

## 2 Create and Empower the “Grow Ottawa Team”

### Description:

A brand leadership team consisting of no more than twelve members needs to be formed. The Team should be comprised of those individuals committed to “championing” the brand, and making it happen.

The members of this team will be the “voice of the brand,” working in a hands-on capacity as advocates for the brand vision, being instrumental in fulfilling all of the recommendations set forth in the Action Plan.

The brand leadership team or “Grow Ottawa Team” (GOT) should include key “speakers” from the Chamber, the Visitor Services Center Board, downtown property owners and/or business owners, the City Council or staff and others who are good communicators and committed to the brand vision. The Mayor should appoint the team members.

The local organizations and city officials should read through this plan, and then decide whether or not they feel passionate about the objectives and projects detailed herein. Those that are willing to invest time, in some cases money, are willing to take a few hits along the way, are good speakers, are enthusiastic, those that have something to gain with the implementation of the plan, and are willing to be doers, not just directors, should be appointed to the GOT.

This entire effort will rest on their shoulders. Without champions, the branding and product development process cannot succeed and nothing will come of this plan.

This is the most important decision of this entire program and often the most controversial.

Selected names should be given to the Mayor, who, should appoint these individuals as the GOT. It would be their job to implement this plan, with the city’s assistance and support, where appropriate. Keep politics out of the appointments.

They will typically report to the Council twice a year, letting the city know how progress is coming along, and where they need support for specific projects.



The team will act much like a planning commission. They would report directly to the City Manager and Mayor, and have no status as an organization, other than that of an advisory committee. They will help set direction, will work with the city on various aspects of the program, but most importantly, they will be the voice of change: to make something happen.

You cannot build a brand without investment, and the initiatives in the plan require both public and private investment. So this team must be willing to take a stand and be the voice of reason.

Once the GOT has been selected, they would decide among themselves, working with the Mayor, on length of time members would sit on the team. The Mayor would appoint new members to the team as needed.

While we recommend that the team be limited to eleven individuals, this is not set in stone. The point is to have a small enough team that things can actually get done, since this is about implementation. There may need to be additional people on the team, or perhaps three different small committees within the GOT. For example, one group that might be charged with “brand

management,” watching over the use of identities, marketing messages, tag lines, creation of a Standards and Practices Manual (more on this later), and would work with graphic design and marketing professionals, as well as other local and regional organizations tapping into the brand. This group is often referred to as the “brand cop” to make sure the brand stays on point.

A second committee could be charged with the product development initiatives, all of which have a downtown focus.

And the third committee would be charged with the outreach and marketing effort. Getting publicity, promoting events that help deliver on the brand promise. They would be charged with finding and promoting the businesses that most exemplify the brand in terms of quality and image, and that are your “anchor businesses.” They would also work to bring other nearby communities into the brand direction. After all, you will be far more effective as one loud voice than as a number of small individual voices. Additionally, the more you have to offer, collectively, the further people will come and the longer they will stay. If you can develop a larger GOT without letting politics and personal agendas get in the way of making something happen, then the more people on the ground the more effective the effort will be.

Each person on the team should be assigned a recommendation or given an assignment, that best suits him or her and that they are willing to take on. If they have something, personally or professionally to gain from it, then by all means put them in charge of that item.

Once again, this is the most important decision in this entire plan. Read the plan, adopt it, then become active pioneers in bringing it to life. If you ever want to create a lasting legacy, this is the perfect vehicle.

### **We recommend that the Grow Ottawa**

#### **Team consist of the following:**

The Mayor of Ottawa

1 representative from the Ottawa Chamber Board

1 representative from the Ottawa Services Center

1 Planning Commission Member

2 downtown property owners

1 Master Gardener from the University of Illinois

1 Local Master Gardener

1 retail or dining proprietor not from downtown

1 downtown retail or dining proprietors

1 representative of the local hotel industry

1 community member at large

#### **Implementation:**

Mayor of Ottawa, Chamber, OVC

#### **Approximate costs:**

No specific costs are associated with this recommendation

#### **Possible funding sources:**

None needed

#### **Time for implementation:**

2008 forward

#### **Rationale for recommendation:**





Every branding effort requires pioneers and those who will tirelessly champion the cause. These champions should be made up of primarily people in the business community. Those willing to spend time and money in bringing the plan to fruition. We surveyed 400 well-branded towns in North America and in 396 of those communities; the brand was a grass roots effort. Rarely will a “top down” effort ever yield success. Why? Elected officials are voted into office to be all things to all people, yet brands are about being known for something specific. The days of “we have something for everyone” are over and politics is the killer of any branding product. In this age of specialization you simply must jettison the generic. That type of branding effort yields a watered down, mediocre, ineffective brand.

You can never develop an effective branding effort by public consent. The City of Anaheim never asked Walt Disney to develop a theme park in the heart of their city. In fact, they tried to kill the project, thinking he was out of his mind. But he and some others tirelessly championed the cause, locals got used to the idea, and the rest is history.

Brands are built on product, while marketing is simply the way to tell the world who you are and why you are different than everyone else. That’s what makes you worth a special trip.

The GOT will be charged with implementing this plan, the overall brand direction, and the product that supports the brand. It will be their job to foster partnerships with the City of Ottawa, Ottawa Visitors Center and regional marketing organizations, auxiliary organizations, downtown businesses and property owners, financial institutions (who will need to invest in the brand), Department of Transportation, the county, educational institutions, etc.

This group of people is the voice of the brand. They will speak at Kiwanis, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce luncheons, City Council meetings and at other organizational annual banquets, always promoting the brand.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm.” This group of champions must “sell” the concepts in this plan while educating the community on why these recommendations are important. You will NEVER get everyone to agree, and so this group will also need to take the hits associated with developing the brand and the product to support it. This is not about winning popularity contests; it’s about importing new cash into Ottawa and making it a desirable place to spend both time and money. And that means standing for something specific. We all want to get along, but the “group hug” mentality will get you right back to “Discover More” and other generic offerings that could fit any community virtually anywhere.

The Grow Ottawa Team members will be the essential champions who reach out to sell the brand concept to all the organizations who are so necessary to its implementation. These individuals will do the work to see that the product is developed that will bring the brand to life, fulfilling the brand promise. The concerted effort by these individuals will be the force of the entire branding effort, keeping the brand image in focus, keeping the plan on track, and overseeing the successful development of Ottawa’s downtown Botanical Arts and Gardening destination brand. They are doers, not administrators.

### 3 Promote Plan Adoption by the Community at Large

#### Description:

The initial, and most important, project the Grow Ottawa Team will undertake will include bringing other organizations to the table. Implementing the brand and the product development recommendations needed to support the brand requires a community effort.

Most important to this effort is bringing in the Chamber, downtown property owners and the retail shop proprietors both on La Salle and Columbus Streets and those who offer a gardening-related product or service whether they are currently located downtown or not. This might be somewhat of a challenge because many of these business people will see it as the GOT telling them what to do, which couldn't be further from the truth. The brand will not get developed without creating and marketing the critical mass of the right shops and services. The "pool" of attractions and activities, marketed collectively makes the downtown easily worth repeat visits and extended stays. But to do this will require a fundamental shift in the way the downtown is marketed. In an effort to please everyone, current marketing efforts are far too generic. Often membership-driven organizations tend to confine their marketing efforts to their own members, which is less effective than promoting the very best of the entire area.

This will not be an easy sell, but if the GOT can succeed in creating these partnerships, the downtown can easily become the area's place to go for plants, gardening and outdoor living purchases and simply as a cool place to hang out with friends.

The idea of this recommendation is to approach all partnering businesses and organizations, and those that can contribute to its success, to join forces as one loud voice, and have them adopt the plan in its entirety. By doing so they pledge to support it, and pledge to implement the items assigned to them.

A critical element of this recommendation is that the plan be adopted in its entirety. Like a puzzle, if you toss out some pieces and reshape other pieces, you end up with a puzzle that is incomplete and worthless.

It would be far better to redevelop the plan until you get one that everyone can buy into (without becoming generic so that the message doesn't get

lost), and so that everyone is still behind the vision. A tremendous amount of time, money, and research went into developing this plan and each piece intertwines with other recommendations, so that elements cannot be simply tossed aside without drastically reducing the effectiveness of the effort.

The GOT needs to work closely with others that are necessary to make the brand succeed, including:

- City of Ottawa
- Ottawa Visitor Services Center
- Ottawa Chamber of Commerce
- La Salle County Development (land for nurseries)
- Ottawa Art League and other arts organizations
- The State of Illinois Bureau of Tourism
- Local museums and historical societies
- Garden clubs
- Rotary, Kiwanis and other auxiliary organizations
- Local attractions and hoteliers
- Higher education institutions

In many cases it may not be a formal adoption, but a "yes, we're on board and will help where appropriate" will be sufficient. The idea is to gain support for the plan.

It is necessary, however, to have the City adopt the plan, formally, since they play a large role in many of the recommendations, such as development of a wayfinding system, downtown infrastructure initiatives, zoning, parking, and transportation.

In fact, the GOT should start with the City since it is such an important partner in the process, and since the Mayor with Council approval appoints the GOT.

The plan should be formally reviewed every three years. This process takes into consideration new opportunities and information as well as giving the public another opportunity to recommit to the brand.

Consider having an outside facilitator meet with the Grow Ottawa Team every six months during the first couple of years in order to make sure the efforts stay on track and to help solve serious issues or remove roadblocks to the overall effort. In a planning effort of this scope its easy to become side-tracked on secondary issues and to take your eye off the ball. This process helps keep the group efforts focused.

**Implementation:**

City Council, Chamber Board, OVC Board, community

**Approximate costs:**

No specific costs

**Possible funding sources:**

None required

**Time line for implementation:**

Begin in 2008. Developing a branded destination takes years to complete.

**Rationale for recommendation:**

Downtown Ottawa has great potential to develop as a Botanical Arts and Gardening destination. Now is the time to put a plan into action that will draw visitors downtown. When a plan of this nature is developed, territorial issues often arise creating a lobbying effort to discourage parts of the plan from being adopted. This plan is tightly integrated and will not be nearly as successful if it is dissected or dismantled into various elements. The sum of all its parts will make it a cohesive and successful program. Similar to building a car engine, without all the parts, it will not run or perform to its optimum potential.

As the plan is implemented, many of the recommendations will require approval by the City of Ottawa, particularly those that are budget or capital projects.

It takes the whole community to create a successful brand, and that means everyone working together. The City, Chamber of Commerce, retailers and property owners all have vital roles to play in the successful positioning, branding, and development of downtown.

## 4 Hire Professional Urban Planning Services to Create a Downtown Masterplan

### Description:

Hire professional downtown urban planning services to take the lead on developing a Downtown Master Plan. An overall master plan is needed to thoughtfully develop essential physical elements throughout the downtown retail district and waterfront district, tie the two together, and create consistency in the look and feel of the downtown. We recommend hiring a regionally based urban planning firm to undertake this project and work with the city, using this plan as a guide. In carrying out the brand, the downtown will need garden areas, container gardens along the sidewalks, plazas or gathering areas for outdoor events, and other features.

The urban plan scope of work should include the following:

### A two-block demonstration project

We've mentioned critical mass as an important concept in creating the destination retail needed to attract consumers. The ten+ten+ten rule means that not only are the number of destination retail shops and restaurants important, but the physical concentration of them is as important.

Getting people out of their cars and keeping them out of their cars is critical because the longer they are on foot, the more money they will spend. This means the planning has to make the destination pedestrian friendly.

Shops have to be next to one another because pedestrians have to be “lured” or pulled down the street, always tempted by the next storefront and window display. If the shops are scattered all over town, the intervals between the shops will cause them to lose interest and leave.

Critical mass begins to work even on a small scale – say, two blocks on either side of the street. Downtown property owners, and merchants may be skeptical of the likely success of a downtown retail destination, and certainly the consumer will be. A demonstration project of two blocks creates an early success story and will bring the consumers into the downtown as well as convince the merchants and building owners that it is in their best interests to help build an even larger critical mass.

The urban planning firm should work with the Retail Business Recruiter to find the two blocks along La Salle or Columbus Streets where initial efforts

should be concentrated. Part of the criteria for selection is the willingness of the merchants and building owners to invest in façade improvements, better window displays and sidewalk merchandising, the likelihood of attracting branded tenants into those blocks, and their willingness to maintain consistent business hours, even in the evening.

### Develop Phases

The urban planning firm should devise a schedule of phases to the development of the essential elements to the downtown. Some elements will be more important than others, while funding issues may drive the timing of certain facilities or improvements. A schedule will give structure to the community's expectations of accomplishment for the brand, and provide investors and new tenants a timeline for their own planning.

### Provide private sector projects into the mix

The urban planners should incorporate and even drive the content and speed of private developments in the downtown and on the waterfront. Private developers will bear the brunt of investment that will transform the downtown. Product is the main ingredient in brand building. You can have a beautiful downtown, but if there is nothing of interest behind the facades, the brand will fail. Product that provides visitor activity and involvement is key. The plan should give parameters to the private sector as to what is wanted and where. Compromises are essential, but developers want to know what the rules are up front before they invest.

Where are the best places for urban nurseries? What should really go on the Jordan Block to aid in the linking of the downtown with the waterfront? Where are the public places that will enhance nearby private investment, such as garden spots near restaurants with outdoor dining? What is the best mix of public and private development on the elementary school property? Where should the English-style greenhouse/atrium be placed? These are the types of questions that the urban planners need to address.

### Provide a permanent home for the open-air market

The urban design should specifically address the best location for an open-air market. The present location on a public street next to Washington Square Park is not a long-term solution, particularly if the “farmers market” concept is expanded to become a Certified Farmers Market, or add a significant



*A permanent home for the farmers market should be developed where it can be protected from the weather, expand to several days of the week, and become multipurpose.*





organic produce component, or add a branded section for nursery plants, and gardening and outdoor living accoutrement. Would it work best on M-I canal land? On the waterfront property? Or elsewhere? We envision that a permanent pergola structure be built for the open market, with some convertible protection from the weather in the spring and fall seasons.

### **Amphitheater**

Another structure that is important in making the downtown a community gathering place, a visitor destination, and more animated in the evenings is a small to medium-sized amphitheater suitable for gardening exhibits and demonstrations, speakers, a stage for televised gardening shows, small concerts and theater, and the like. The physical location of this should be designated by the plan and how it fits with its surroundings, the impact of other sources of noise on performances, and its impact on the neighborhood at different times of the day and night from sound and light.

### **Public restrooms**

Ottawa needs at least one location, and ideally two locations in between Washington Square Park and the Riverfront for public-access bathrooms. These can be located in existing buildings or be freestanding. Ideally one would be located toward the North end of La Salle Street and one toward the South end of La Salle Street. These would be in addition to restrooms in the Riverfront development. They should be well marked and easy to find. If freestanding, the restrooms should be developed in an architectural style that is complementary to the existing downtown architecture. They should be ADA compliant, include multiple private stalls, infant-changing tables, exterior lighting, and landscaping. Public restrooms can make the difference between having visitors stay several more hours downtown, or leave before they're done spending money. When restrooms are located near shopping and dining, visitors who stop primarily to use the facilities are much more likely to spend money and linger in the area.

### **Features to include in the design process**

The following individual features should be considered in the urban plan design:

1. The largest attraction will be public spaces along the Illinois River including the current public parking, public pedestrian approach to the water, and



the promenade, as well as the property currently housing the elementary school and playgrounds. We envision a mixed private/public use of these sites. Creating a seamless transition to the rest of the downtown will be an important task of the urban planners.

2. Riverfront gardens should be one component of the design. Nothing attracts like water, and one of the benefits of the brand is the connection between plants, water and water features. The riverfront gardens should create places for both contemplative rest, and locations for families, small “street” entertainment and audiences, water fountains, waterfalls and features, public art sculptures, vendors for drinks and ice cream, and other amenities.

3. Koi Ponds are a wonderful feature related to gardens and water and they are very popular. As an attraction, Koi are particularly fun to watch while they eat. Feeding times should be scheduled and promoted as the jumping, churning and water-walking that often occurs delights both young and old. One or more Koi ponds should be a feature of the riverfront development. Koi will survive Midwest winters just fine as long as they can remain below the freeze point of the pond. If protected from natural predators and vandalism, Koi will live 30 to 40 years and grow 30 inches or longer in length.

Watching Koi even reduces stress, and they are a natural addition to the garden atmosphere and water features that would surround them. These “living jewels” should be included in the urban plan. We suggest a 10,000-gallon pond with a water-garden component. In the downtown there should be a pond and water garden store, classes on building ponds, filtration and fish. Complementing this feature, the city should host Koi clubs from around the U.S. and host Koi shows, where believe it or not, people actually “show” their Koi and are awarded cash and prizes. Consideration should be given to including a Koi pond associated with the English greenhouse/atrium. The pond could be an indoor/outdoor feature with a waterfall, and fountains.

4. In Japanese culture, garden-making is a high art, and no gardening brand would be complete without an acknowledgement of the contribution made to gardening by these highly refined visions of solitude and retreat. A portion of the riverfront setting should be devoted to a representation of Japanese gardens, containing the essential element of water, rocks, a stone lantern, a



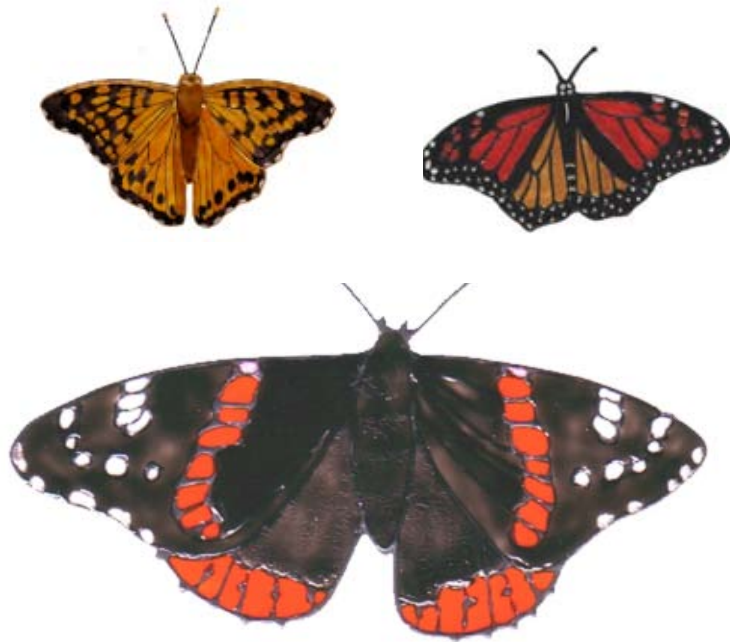
*Far Left: Build places for outdoor performances and events to animate the riverfront district. Above: No large garden setting is complete without homage to the classic Japanese garden experience. Below: Community gardens involve the community in enriching ways for both young and old.*



teahouse or pavilion, an enclosure device such as a hedge, fence or wall, and a bridge or stepping stones. Strolling gardens, a particular form of Japanese gardens would be a suitable subject matter for Ottawa. (See: Anderson's Japanese Gardens, Rockford, Illinois.)

5. Community Gardens would be a great way to engage the local citizenry into the brand by creating a hands-on experience of gardening, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, producing nutritious food, and creating opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy and education. Community gardens can grow flowers or vegetables. Before organizing community gardening, a suitable site or sites around Ottawa need to be identified and set aside. Gardens should be in a safe place, with access to paths, sidewalks or streets, and with a source of clean water, adequate sun and drainage. One site that might work well is the filled-in land of the M-I

*Below: These are just three of the more than sixty butterfly species indigenous to Illinois.*



Canal that traverses the town. The community garden can be made available to individuals, households, school groups, or local affinity organizations. If strung along the Canal route, these would become another attraction for visitors. A good source of information about developing community gardens is at [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org).

6. Butterfly gardens are another natural attraction, particularly for children. With over 60 indigenous types of butterflies in Illinois, planting both butterfly host plants and nectar plants requires nothing exotic and can become a popular feature from summer through fall.

7. An exhibition area should be included in the public areas. There will be a need of a large, flexible multi-use space where a variety of events can take place. Whether this is incorporated into the proposed public market space, or amphitheater space, English-style greenhouse/atrium or developed separately, there will be a needed flat, hard-surfaced space for exhibitors, small fairs, etc. Space permitting, this venue could be landscaped as part of a small arboretum featuring exotic trees that will grow in the Illinois climate.

In addition to more formally planned landscaping, there are several opportunities to beautify more natural spaces such as the riverbanks, the river islands, or roadsides leading to and from downtown Ottawa with selected wildflowers. In order to be dramatic, we recommend using only two or three species, only two or three colors, and concentrating the blooms for a good showing. Again, the concept of critical mass comes into play!

Street trees are one of the most important plant decisions Ottawa can make for the sidewalks downtown. Where possible, sidewalks should be narrowed as a traffic-calming factor, to widen sidewalks for increased pedestrian use, as a place for outside dining and extensions of store window displays, and to allow for the placement of shade trees. The type of trees selected is important because the city will be stuck with them for years to come. Ideally they should be shade trees, which give head clearance when mature. They should have leaves that are small or disintegrate easily when they fall. They should have minimal or no fruits or nuts that create a walking hazard, and their root systems must maintain the tree's integrity during high winds, yet not become invasive to underground pipes, electrical wires, or sidewalks. Merchants often complain about leafy or umbrella trees covering their retail signs. Do not



*The riverfront redevelopment should offer a variety of public spaces. Imagine weddings in one of these venues. Colorful glass plays well with gardens. This is an opportunity for local artisans to get involved in the brand.*

let that dissuade you from selecting the right tree for shade. The destination downtown will convert from a drive-by mode to a pedestrian mode. Retail signage should shift to pedestrian-level blade signs perpendicular to the face of the building. It is at this height – between seven and nine feet – that pedestrians walking down the street will be drawn in. Numerous studies have been conducted nationally that show that street trees alone add 15% to the retail sales on city blocks that add them.

**Implementation:**

City of Ottawa, Grow Ottawa Team

**Approximate Cost:**

\$80,000

**Timeline for implementation:**

2009

**Possible funding sources:**

TIF funds

**Rationale for the recommendation:**

Ottawa has little to offer the visitor in the downtown, particularly at night. In order for the city to attract more gardening shoppers who come to Ottawa for the branded shopping, it needs to create a gathering place downtown, filled with shopping, dining, and entertainment throughout the day, and particularly, in the evening so that local residents will also be attracted downtown.

Downtown has good “bones” with its existing architecture, but so far the city has not been able to create a pedestrian-based critical mass of retail shops, entertainment, and dining. Visitors won’t be lured downtown until there is a good reason for them to go there, and providing more things to do, especially in the evening will remedy that.

Planning of this process is required in order to begin the process of transforming the downtown core and creating a more beautiful and energetic place. The professional urban planning firm should take the lead in doing this preliminary work using this plan as the overall guide.

## 5 Adopt Downtown Ordinances that give Structure to the Activities in the Destination

### Description:

Ordinances should be implemented that address signage, sidewalk dining, and street entertainment in the downtown district. We've included three sample ordinances in the Supporting Documentation section of this report that can be modified and adopted by the City of Ottawa: Retail Signage, Sidewalk Dining, and Street Entertainment.

1. An ordinance for sidewalk dining. Sidewalk dining adds considerable character to the assortment of any community's restaurants. Sidewalk cafés provide open-area dining on public sidewalks. Sidewalk cafés are not permanent installations. Virtually every popular downtown pedestrian destination provides for the ambiance of outside dining.

2. An ordinance allowing and regulating street performers. Street performers provide a valuable public service that can enhance the character of any downtown and provide an immediate jump-start to help establish the animation of its pedestrian destination. Street performance may include acting, singing, playing musical instruments, pantomime, juggling, magic acts, dancing, reading, puppetry, and other activities that attract the attention of the public.

3..Peer-driven retail sign ordinance. Establish a retail signage and outdoor display review board comprised of downtown property and retail shop owners. A Peer-driven Sign Review Board should be created to protect the aesthetic integrity and maintain a consistent and complimentary design scheme for commercial signs within the downtown district. This board would be charged with reviewing and approving sign design, providing display guidance for other businesses, and enforcement.

**Implementation:** City of Ottawa, Grow Ottawa Team

**Approximate cost:** No specific costs

**Possible funding sources:** No funding required

**Implementation timing:** 2010



## 6 Enhance “Old Town” with Additional Features.

### Description:

This recommendation is about implementing downtown projects.

### Highway signage

After the gardening theme is further developed in Ottawa, use billboards on Interstate 80, both east and westbound, to lure travelers into town and promote the gardening brand. In order to be effective, highway signs must be eye-catching. There are four keys to success:

1. Use the right words.
2. Make it brief.
3. Keep the design simple.
4. Keep the sign maintained.

People traveling at highway speeds have about four seconds to read your message. If there's too much to read or it appears too cluttered, your sign will simply be ignored by the vast majority of motorists. The best signs contain fewer than ten words. An undisputed rule of marketing states: “put your bait out on the highway.” Billboards are most effective when they offer something that travelers need or want, even if it's just “the facilities.” One of the biggest mistakes that communities make is not telling potential visitors why they should stop.

### Street lighting, trees lit, architectural lighting

There are three specific ways that lighting can be improved along LaSalle Street. Decrease the wattage of the existing street lights (the light is overwhelming), outlining buildings with low voltage lights, and decorating the street with arches of decorative lighting year round. With silhouettes delineated by white lights, architecturally interesting buildings exhibit charm even at night. Low voltage LED lights now remove the issues of the cost of electricity and bulb replacement that have damped enthusiasm for this feature in the past. Virtually every planned destination retail or entertainment place today has great lighting and for a very good reason, it attracts visitors and creates a pleasing environment. A third way to create ambiance is to create permanent arches of lights across LaSalle in order to create a festive look and feel to what is essentially the center “mall” corridor of the downtown.



**Wi-fi downtown**

Install a Wi-fi system in downtown Ottawa with either the city or a non-profit corporation installing, operating, and maintaining the network. Free Wi-fi is becoming increasingly common in communities across the country. Cities wanting to bring more business downtown are finding that offering free Wi-fi is a good incentive. In addition to attracting new business, a wireless zone also allows downtown workers to work outside, spurs the development of sidewalk cafes and coffee shops, and facilitates city functions such as parking enforcement with the use of hand-held devices.

**Decorative crosswalks**

Create decorative crosswalks at intersections where there aren't already brick crosswalks. One option is to use StreetPrint™, based in Canada, with operations throughout the U.S. The process embeds decorative designs into the asphalt – it isn't paint – that will last for decades. This type of decorative crosswalk starts at about \$6 per square foot, far less than actual paver-blocks, and with an extended life expectancy. And since it can be driven over immediately after installation, it doesn't close down the street for long. The design can be anything, which makes it perfect for choosing a design that enhances the gardening brand.

**Piped music**

Consider a sound system that broadcasts music throughout the downtown retail district. Light, classical music would set the tone for the Riverfront



District's clientele. Music adds a lot to the visitor experience, even if it is only subliminal. It creates peace of mind and acts as a deterrent to urban hustle and bustle that many big city residents are trying to escape when they visit a smaller community like Ottawa. During events, specific themed music can be played to establish the right frame of mind for participants and spectators alike. It has also been demonstrated that music can act as a powerful controlling agent. Several communities have broadcast classical symphonic music in areas prone to drug dealers, teen loitering and vandalism and discovered that it helped prevent the problem. The troublemakers dispersed because they didn't like the music. Problem solved.

**Implementation:**

City of Ottawa, Grow Ottawa Team

**Approximate cost:**

To be determined.

**Possible funding sources:**

TIF funds.

**Timeline for implementation:**

2009-2012

## 7 Develop a Brand and Logo “Standards and Practices” Manual

### Description:

A Standards & Practices Manual for the downtown Ottawa new, branded logo, retail/waterfront district identity, Chamber logo and City logo needs to be developed. This document will contain graphic design standards for logo and slogan usage; templates for website development and the production of printed sales and marketing materials; as well as the proper use of key marketing, advertising, and promotional messages. The wayfinding system, a separate recommendation, will complement the guide with standards for wayfinding and gateway signage, streetscape enhancements, public art, pole banners, and other specific directional applications.

Continuity is critical in developing a strong branding program. The City departments, Chamber of Commerce, Visitor Services Center, local organizations, and all other parties that represent Ottawa’s identity to the public should use the Standards & Practices Manual.

This will ensure a strong branding effort that creates top-of-mind awareness.

Examples of approved logo and brand use should be provided in the guide. This includes dimensions and minimum sizes, fonts, and colors. Logo colors must be identified as specific Pantone colors and/or as percentages of the four process colors: cyan, magenta, yellow, and black (CMYK). Guidelines for reproducing the logo in black and white and in one color need to be included.

Wrong usage of the logo (in structure, color, or fonts) needs to be defined. Combining the logo with other logos or branding elements should never be permitted.

Web design templates should be illustrated showing the use of the logo, color palette, and structure. RGB and HTML colors should be listed. Examples of PowerPoint presentation with the logo should be incorporated. Examples of logo use should be provided for the following:

- Identities for the City and local organizations. The main logo is “Ottawa – Life Begins in the Garden”, or “Ottawa – a perennial favorite”. This will be used in marketing and advertising. “The City of Ottawa” logo will be used for municipal letterhead, business cards, and official signage. The “Ottawa

Chamber of Commerce” will be used by the Chamber throughout their organization.

- Vehicle graphics will be used on City of Ottawa municipal vehicles.
- District graphics would include the signage for “Riverfront Place” or the “Riverfront District” which could be the designation given to the redeveloped waterfront area, and the downtown destination retail district.
- The Website should use all these graphics as appropriate.

Key to proper use of the logo and brand is the responsibility of the Brand Manager, who monitors the use and prevents unauthorized use.



*The logo at left would be used for all promotional graphics whether in print, on the web, or on outdoor banners and directional signs.*



*The logo at left would be used by the city for its municipal graphics, including letterhead, business cards and even municipal vehicles.*



*The Chamber and other promotional organizations would use a version of the basic logo.*

If the Ottawa brand is to revolve around the place for all things related to gardening, then that needs to be communicated as the primary draw or lure to the city for visitors, and the accompanying diversions as the compelling reason for residents to come downtown. This can be accomplished through a unified, specific, consistent set of communications to the public and gardening-related groups and event organizers.

Ottawa wants to cement its position regionally as the place to go for gardening subjects of every kind, and that there is always something interesting and engaging available. The Grow Ottawa Team should work with all the marketing organizations that promote Ottawa to attract visitors to Ottawa through the shared gardening brand.

#### Implementation:

Grow Ottawa Team, OVC

#### Approximate cost:

\$25,000

#### Possible funding sources:

TIF Funds

#### Timeline for implementation:

2009 for beginning to implement the brand strategy. Use the downtown logos when the branded product is developed enough that the brand promise can be fulfilled.

#### Rationale for the recommendation:

Logo and branding design should give a community an easily recognizable identity – a symbol and message that represents the community and the experience it has to offer. Whenever the logo is used, it should bring to mind

*Left is an example of a Standards & Practices Manual from Moses Lake, WA*



images of enjoying that community. Repetition helps to reinforce the viewer's perception, but consistency is the only way to ensure logo and brand recognition.

The manual contains a system of coordinated visual elements that make up the community's graphic identity. It provides specific rules about proper use of the logo and brand to help maintain the integrity of the design.

The branding effort will be far more effective as one loud voice, rather than several lesser ones. Community buy-in for the brand is essential if it is to become successful. All kinds of organizations will need to adopt the brand:

- those that create and develop product, infrastructure, assets, and amenities
  - those that conduct marketing and public relations to attract visitors
  - those that offer secondary activities not directly associated with the brand
- \* even local residents need to embrace the brand.

The Grow Ottawa Team will have to champion the brand vision and reach out to the community, creating believers and advocates for this plan. This will require a series of meetings, speaking engagements, and media interviews to publicize the vision to all levels of the community. The Standards & Practices Guide will be helpful.

## 8 Create a “Best of Ottawa” Guide

### Description:

Develop a new marketing brochure entitled “Best of Ottawa” that promotes the specific businesses and attractions in Ottawa that offer the best that the city has to offer in products and services a consumer would enjoy when they visit Ottawa. Special attention should be given to businesses that support botanical arts, gardening or outdoor living.

These should include retail stores as well as restaurants and lodging, so that shoppers can plan to stay overnight. Other attractions should be added as they come online, such as the iconic English greenhouse/atrium. Each participating retailer needs to meet certain criteria in order to be included – the brochure needs to promote the very best that Ottawa has to offer. They should be recognized for their uniqueness or excellence, be open at least six days a week, including weekends, and be open until at least 7:00 p.m. They should also have attractive curb appeal.

The “Best of Ottawa” Guide should feature something special or unique about each shop or restaurant. Details matter. If there is a unique species or varietal plant available, write about it. If a restaurant has a signature menu item, suggest that they order it. People like specifics, and the more interesting and unusual items you can mention, the better.

The Guide should be written in advertorial format – not just a series of ads. Details about each shop or restaurant should be provided in a way that would make a gardener feel he or she HAS to go to Ottawa for all the unique shops. Sell the regional shoppers on what makes Ottawa THE place to go. Sell them on the idea of having a fun couple of days in Ottawa, shopping, dining, planning.

Use professional photography throughout the brochure to showcase each shop, restaurant and location. Special displays should be designed and photographed, special food dishes should be staged, and in some cases, models should be used in pedestrian settings. Feature the pedestrian setting of the shopping area, flowers, banners, outdoor dining, beautification, lighting, etc.

The Guide should contain several maps, including a map of the location of the City of Ottawa in the Illinois Valley, travel times from major metro areas, directions from Interstate 80 to the downtown District, a walking map of the

downtown showing the location of each retail storefront and dining location, and the location of other brand-related stores throughout the town. In addition to stores and places to eat, include other interesting features such as where to park, the waterfront (when redeveloped), city hall, the location of public restrooms, hotel and motels, public gardens or gathering places, etc.

The brochure should be a public/private partnership, with each advertiser paying the costs for their own page. It is important that the Guide address activities, events and attractions in every season of the year. The Guide should be both printed and available for download on the website.

### Implementation:

Ottawa Visitors Center

### Approximate cost:

Developmental Costs: \$15,000. Printing: \$20,000. Website version management: \$3,000 per year.

### Possible funding sources:

Hotel Tax Funds and grants, private sector funds

### Timeline for implementation:

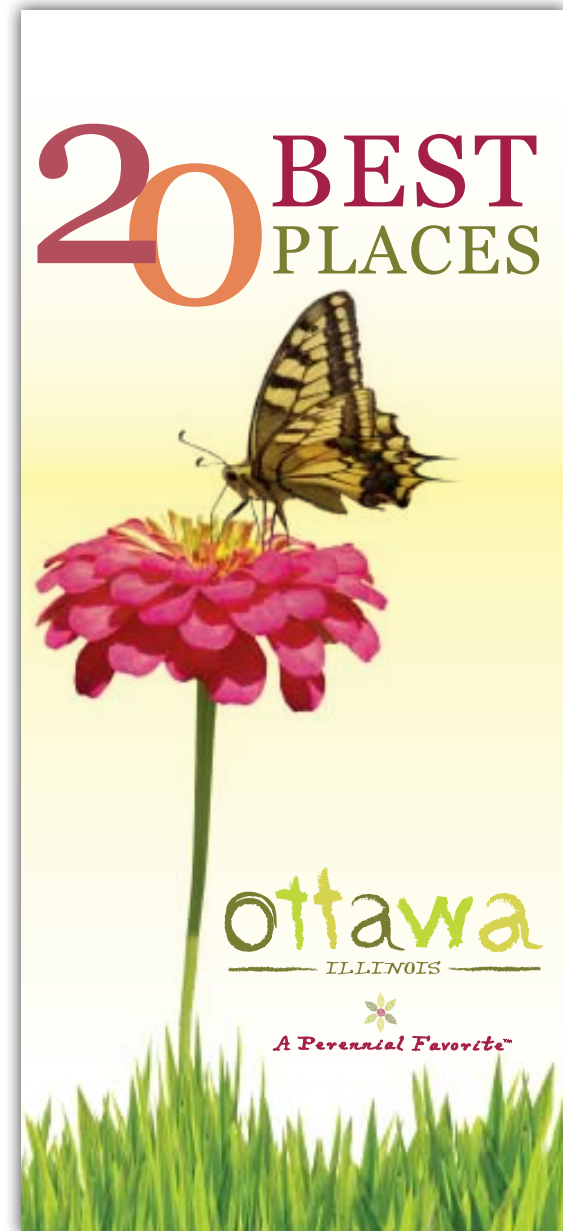
2010

### Rationale for the recommendation:

The days when it was sufficient to simply list all the shops in your destination are over. Convenience is at the top of the list for visitors, and this includes the planning stages of their visit to your destination. Potential shoppers will want to know all the details of why they should come to Ottawa to shop for gardening items. They will want to know how many shops there are. (Is it really worth the two-hour drive from Chicago?) What specific products and services are offered, particularly within walking distance of where they will park? And finally, what makes these shops different from others that they might find closer to home. They will want to know if they'll have a fun time while they're in Ottawa, where they might eat or spend the night, and if this shopping experience will be a wonderful, memorable event.

This brochure, full of color photography, details and information, will convince consumers that Ottawa is the place for all their outdoor living and gardening needs. It will be a powerful sales tool.

*Right: Always lead with your best offerings. A brochure like this should be place in every hotel room in Ottawa, at information kiosks, distributed at regional nurseries, restaurants, garden shows, and available as a download on the city's websites.*



## 9 Conduct Brand-building Outreach in the Community

### Description:

The planning process begins with understanding the brand promise, setting up the leadership team and bringing other organizations onboard. There are also several tools you should develop to create awareness of the process and the brand generally throughout the community.

1. Using information and graphics from the Action Plan, and your own understanding of the community organizations to which you will be talking, develop a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation(s) would explain the purpose and strategies for plan development, with a special emphasis on how it will benefit the entire community through additional visitor spending, job income, new retail stores and restaurants, a revitalized downtown, a gathering place for the community, evening entertainment and shopping, a stronger tax base, etc. The presentations should be mostly graphics, not words, short and fast moving to retain interest and move the story along briskly. Presenting to organizations like school boards, Kiwanis, Rotary, historical and art societies and garden clubs will draw out interested individuals who can become advocates or “champions” of the brand, and doers who will volunteer their time to help make the brand a reality.

2. Creating awareness of the branding initiative with the local citizenry can be helped along by developing an annual, collectible brand poster worthy of framing. Several

thousand of these posters can be printed and given away and sold. The poster should depict some element of the gardening, botanical arts or outdoor living theme and should include the year and the brand logo. These posters should be placed in the windows of retail establishments, restaurants, hotels, municipal and school buildings, county facilities, museums, etc. The posters



can be developed by local artists either by invitation or by competition. A limited printing of the posters on high quality paper, numbered and signed by the artist could be sold or auctioned off with the proceeds going to building the brand. The posters should keep to a standard size and shape, and be of enough value that they become collectible.

3. Another promotional idea is to develop a series of bookmarks, which feature graphics or photography on one side and a gardening tip on the back. These should be numbered, so they too will be collected. The bookmarks should come out every season of the year over a period of years, or all at once. Placement of the bookmarks strategically can help to move consumers around the town. For example, different bookmarks appear only in certain key retail establishments or restaurants and this fact is made known, so that consumers will seek them out and in doing so, be guided to different stores.

### Implementation:

Grow Ottawa Team, Ottawa Visitors Center

### Approximate cost:

PowerPoint: in-house labor only. Poster: \$5,000, Bookmarks: \$5,000

### Possible Funding Sources:

Hotel Tax Funds

### Timeline:

Annually, beginning 2009



# 10 Hire a Retail Business Recruiter

## Description:

The Grow Ottawa Team should hire a Retail Business Recruiter to attract the necessary mix of businesses and amenities downtown. Other than the GOT, this is the most important task for success.

The Retail Business Recruiter will spend his or her time soliciting specific retail businesses into the downtown district, including a boutique hotel, plant, garden and outdoor living-specific businesses, and restaurants. The specialist will also work with Ottawa's existing brand-related businesses that are not now located in the downtown core to entice them to relocate. And, they will work to keep downtown existing businesses that support the brand.

This will also require working with property owners downtown to find locations for the businesses needed downtown. There are already many businesses that directly relate to the gardening brand. Some are already in the core of the downtown while others are either nearby or scattered throughout the rest of Ottawa. These businesses as well as others that are not in Ottawa, but would add greatly to the necessary mix of retail, must be recruited and located in the downtown district. In addition, a mix of businesses that will attract the local population into the downtown is required. This person works for the GOT, not the property owners or retailers, so they do not receive commissions, only compensation from their client - the GOT.

There are a number of retail/property owner incentives that should be explored in "rearranging the furniture" in the downtown destination retail district.

Property owners control leases. If they have an incentive to not renew an existing lease and instead to attract a gardening supplier, ultimately they will benefit from greater demand for their space and higher lease rates. But initially, they may need some financial incentive to remake their space suitable for a retail tenant, or to supplement the initially lower lease rate they might get from their retail tenant. Also, An incentive might be needed to require retailers to remain open for specific periods of the day.

Things to do to support the Retail Business Recruiter: Set up a Relocation and Recruitment Fund using a combination of funds from the TIF zone and

other sources. Make the funds available to the recruitment specialist as they work with downtown property owners and retail business owners to remix the downtown retail environment toward the brand. Getting the right mix of businesses is more important than keeping the downtown clean and beautiful. That can come later if necessary. Most important is what is behind the storefronts. It is what's inside the shops that will drive traffic into the downtown. There are several ways in which the funds should be applied:

1. Subsidizing the advertising of a property owner's empty space in the downtown. This could be done individually or with a grouped number of properties. Make sure that the advertisement focuses on and appeals to the retail stores you want, or the supporting diversions you need. Use advertising in regional agricultural and gardening trade journals, but also work with the trade media to run stories on Ottawa's new brand, with descriptions of the types of retailers that are being recruited, the types of store space that is available, the terms of leases, and what Ottawa is prepared to do to promote the store specifically as well as the downtown brand.

2. Use funds as a negotiating tool when bringing together branded retail currently outside the downtown and downtown property owners in order to put them together. This may require some funds for space improvements, or moving costs, or a month's rent, or to compensate a broken lease agreement in the original property. For those businesses in Ottawa but not downtown that have already been identified, the Retail Business Recruiter should work with them directly. The recruiter should be armed with the right tools, including: printed copies of the Action Plan, a PowerPoint presentation of the Action Plan, printed sheets with information on available downtown space, utilities, parking, terms of agreement, hours of operation, and specifically how Ottawa will help market their store.

Bring in a workshop presenter and consultant to educate retail store owners on interior displays that boost sales, window dressing, extending window displays effectively to the outside of the storefront and retail store signs that work harder.

3. Use the funds to negotiate with current downtown ground level businesses that offer unrelated services to move to a side street or to an upstairs office.

Offer moving expenses, or financial assistance for upgrades to the new space, assistance in signage, and notification of existing customers. Financial assistance could be in the form of outright grants as a percentage of the total cost, or as low interest loans, or as forgivable loans if the retailer remains in the lease for a specific amount of time.

4. Focus on creating, signing, advertising and reducing the cost of parking in the downtown. Parking will be one of the most important concerns of retailers you are trying to recruit. Customers need to know they can park nearby to reach the stores on La Salle and Columbus Streets. Work with retail store owners and employees to have them park in safe locations off the main streets. Getting owners and employees to park away from their place of business means changing long-standing habits. Don't penalize shoppers with short metered times because store owners are undisciplined. Shoppers should have a four-hour parking window at the minimum.

Offer the property owner an incentive to include in their tenant lease agreement a condition of specific store hours. The Retail Business Recruiter would assist in establishing what these hours will be. It does no good to have the right stores downtown if they are not consistently open at the times when consumers want to shop. Most shopping occurs in the evening, after working hours so require retail to be open until at least 7:00 pm and restaurants to remain open until at least 10:00 pm. The recruiter position would be contracted full-time and the individual selected must have a business license and be responsible for his or her own taxes, benefits, and overhead. Working from home or a remote office is permissible for this position. The Retail Business Recruiter would not be a city employee, but should report to the Grow Ottawa Team.

The recruiter position is primarily an "outside sales" effort, but would have access to city facilities (with staff permission) for meetings and related activities. The Retail Business Recruiter would be hired on a three-year contract, with renewable extensions if necessary. A quality recruitment effort should sunset within three years, at which time Ottawa should reach critical mass for its downtown development.

By using a sub-contractor, Ottawa will be able to find the individual best suited to the job.

The following are desirable traits to look for in selecting a Retail Business Recruiter:

- Excellent track record in commercial real estate sales (this is a sales position)
- Well spoken with excellent writing skills
- Experience dealing and negotiating with small businesses
- A strong understanding of the real estate and development industries and markets
- Extensive contacts in the development and business industry
- Understands public/private finance, land use, zoning, and other issues that need to be addressed during the recruitment process
- Is self-motivated, a strong leader, and results-oriented
- Understands commercial finance, incentive programs, etc.

For many downtowns, the retail mix is about providing diversionary shopping and dining. For Ottawa, the downtown retail is the lure as well as the diversion.

Ottawa needs to "rearrange the furniture" - or the business mix. This means separating "neighborhood retail" like grocery stores, drug stores, dry cleaning, etc. from "destination retail" like plants, flowers, gardening supplies, outdoor art and furniture and retail shopping and dining.

Ottawa needs to apply the Ten+Ten+Ten Rule. To become a destination downtown (for locals or visitors) you must have the minimum, in two to three lineal blocks, the following mix:

1. A MINIMUM of ten destination retail shops, revolving around your central botanical theme. Destination retail shops are those that a local or visitor would go out of their way to frequent. In addition to gardening services, outdoor living, birding, landscape architects, store fronts for local nurseries, etc, destination retail might include a wine store, cigar store, home accents, galleries, artists in action, antiques (not second-hand stores), clothing or logo gear, outfitters, gourmet kitchen stores, books, a magazine stand, and other specialty retail shops.

2. Ten dining and food-oriented businesses. These would include sit-down dining, coffee shops, bistros, candy stores, soda fountains, cafes, gourmet food items, a bakery, and even food-cart vendors. One or more restaurants should have an organic food theme.

3. Ten things open after 6:00 pm at least four nights a week. People, particularly in the peak seasons, are looking for places to hang out. Outdoor



*Just like a mall, a visitor destination downtown district needs one or two “anchor” tenants that will lure people downtown. Ottawa’s anchor tenants need to be a sizable retailer offering a wide variety of plants, outdoor sculpture and art, outdoor living furniture, landscaping and pond-making materials and the like. Once in the pedestrian setting, other retailers will benefit.*

dining, street vendors, public markets, street entertainers, dining and shops, etc. Visitors are more likely to spend the night in towns or areas where there are things to do after 6:00 pm. It’s simply not much fun to be cooped up in a hotel room watching TV until the next morning. Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors so creating the critical mass that makes them want to stay overnight is important.



### Gardening and Outdoor Living Retail

To create the lure, La Salle, Columbus and their side streets for the first block on either side, need to have the right mix to support the brand. We recommend the following:

- 4 places that sell gardening plants and accessories or one major anchor tenant as in Woodinville, WA – see [www.molbaks.com](http://www.molbaks.com)
- 2+ retail florist shops – with one that carries exotic indoor plants
- 3 garden art and accessory stores including the sale of pergolas and greenhouses
- 2+ artists in action workshops where outdoor art is manufactured on site
- 2+ stores that sell patio furniture, awnings, barbecue sets and outdoor spas
- 2+ downtown outlets for nurseries located outside of town that also sell seeds.
- 2 stores that sell containers and pots for plants
- 1 store that sells artificial flowers
- 1 specialty gardening bookstore
- 1 store that sells fertilizers and pesticides – including “green” alternatives
- 2+ landscape and deck architect services for residential
- 1+ stores that specialize in Koi ponds, water features and fountains

- 1 specialty hardware store that sells gardening tools, irrigation and watering systems, etc.

- 

#### **The downtown also needs:**

1. Seasonal flower and garden shows
2. A Master Gardener lecture series
3. An outdoor landscaped site that can be rented for weddings, receptions and other events.

#### **Develop for the Upscale Market**

After establishing the critical mass of branded shops, the next priority should be the creation of a downtown-dining district. Tempting aromas, strong curb appeal, attractive interiors, great service, reasonable prices, and multiple choices are the main ingredients for a successful dining district. Established restaurants outside the downtown core should be recruited to come downtown – particularly those offering evening entertainment. There should be at least five additional restaurants downtown that feature evening dining. An appealing and varied dining district is a key indicator of a community's health and vitality.

The mix also needs at least ten destination-oriented retail shops that cater to the needs of locals and visitors alike. All of these businesses should offer evening hours:

- 2 Home accent stores
- 2 Stationary shops (featuring botanical and floral-themed cards, and gift items)
- 1+ Wine stores
- 1 Upscale women's clothing and shoe store
- 1 Quality antique store
- 1 Bookstore
- 1 Music store
- 1 National and International magazine and newspaper stand
- 2 Fine art galleries

Most of these retailers should be unique mom-and-pop establishments that offer goods and services not found in nearby shopping malls.

#### **Downtown Hotel Recruitment**

Recruit a mid-scale chain or boutique hotel to be located downtown. It should be a 3-star or better hotel with 50 or more rooms and approximately 4,000 square feet of meeting space that will accommodate about 150 guests in a banquet setting and 250 guests theater-style. It can be a limited-service hotel, because of its location downtown and close proximity to restaurants. Whether they are tourists or visiting professionals, hotel guests prefer to NOT be cooped up in their rooms at night. Overnight visitors could represent a primary driver of a vibrant nightlife in downtown Ottawa.

#### **Implementation:**

Grow Ottawa Team, City of Ottawa

#### **Approximate costs:**

\$75,000 annually for three years

#### **Possible funding sources:**

TIF funds

#### **Timeline for implementation:**

2009-2010





#### Rationale for recommendation:

To create a vibrant, active, prosperous downtown that attracts visitors, it's necessary to offer a "critical mass" of the types of retail shops, dining, and entertainment that people want. For critical mass, the minimum in a two-block area would be ten destination retail shops, ten places to eat, and ten businesses open after 6:00 p.m., including entertainment. This creates a very walkable, concentrated district with a lot of appeal, and a lot going on. Often, however, this mix of businesses doesn't just happen on its own – it needs help from a Retail Business Recruiter.

Because many downtowns can't get their acts together, developers have been going it alone - creating new downtowns - and furthering the plight of towns struggling with revitalization efforts. The problem stems from the fact that most downtown revitalization efforts focus on marketing (fliers and brochures, websites), producing a few events and on beautification efforts. Wider sidewalks, street trees, facade improvements, beautification efforts, and gathering areas are all necessary ingredients to a successful downtown, but these items simply provide the stage - the ambiance.

Have you ever gone to a theater just to see the theater? No, we go when there are actors on the stage. For downtowns it's what is IN the buildings that make downtown a draw. The rest is pure ambiance. Most downtown associations spend 80 to 90 percent of their time working with local downtown tenants who are looking for immediate results, rather than on creating a long-term solution that will make downtown a destination.

Other towns that have achieved "critical mass" around a central focus include Sisters, Oregon (population 1,500) – art shopping; Bend, Oregon (population 55,000)- outdoor recreation; Port Townsend, Washington (population 9,000) - a Victorian Seaport town; Solvang, California - a Danish town; Poulsbo, Washington - "Little Norway"; Fredricksburg, Texas -German, etc.

Notice how gas stations and fast food establishments gather on all four corners of an intersection. Why would competitors want to be so close together? Because people are drawn to choices.

To do this, you need to rearrange the business mix. This is the difficult task of putting like businesses together, around a central focus or brand. It often includes property exchanges, downtown property owners working to attract a narrow range of tenants, and creating districts for different types of businesses. Communities are seeing the benefit in creating civic center campus areas, corporate campus environments, neighborhood retail areas, and destination areas or entertainment districts. To accomplish this, you MUST start with property owners, who must work together to achieve the critical mass.

A perfect example might be Jackson, Wyoming. This town of 12,000 full-time residents has an outstanding downtown that lures millions of visitors annually. In fact, Grand Teton National Park is now the diversionary activity to a visit to Jackson. Downtown Jackson is home to 85 galleries and retailers with a "focus" on western art: western home accents and furnishings, western wear, galleries that sell western art, and western themed restaurants and lodging facilities. Jackson embodies the western spirit. And this "brand" is seen in the facade improvements, architectural styles, etc.

The Retail Business Recruiter must be able to work with the local businesses and property owners to help rearrange the business mix, as well as recruit the other pieces so necessary for a vibrant downtown.

# 11 Create a Technical Assistance Program for Downtown Merchants

## Description:

Many of the downtown merchants will require technical assistance as they incorporate the brand into their business and upgrade to meet the new standards of the destination retail district. Both group and individual assistance should be offered. Many will be reluctant to discuss their business in front of a group of their peers. An educational workshop should be organized for the downtown property owners in order to provide them with the dynamics of retail marketing that can have a role in increasing the value of their retail space over time through a branded cooperative development and marketing effort. This should be followed up with one-on-one assistance.

The workshop would cover the following issues:

### 1. Vandalism

There are different ways in which to reduce vandalism and the workshop should cover alternatives. These include: lobbying for proactive pedestrian level community policing, e.g. cops on bicycles, downtown walking beats, etc.; engaging youth and students in the downtown; retail “phone trees” for alerting other merchants; installation of lighting and surveillance cameras, etc.

### 2. Beautification

Merchants should be encouraged and supported to develop their own container gardens on their properties, planters and hanging baskets of flowers on their storefronts. A specific program should be developed for this with a discounted central source for planter pots and annuals, as well as a program for periodic watering and fertilizing of the plants during the growing season.

All of the most successful towns in America have undergone intensive beautification programs. Ottawa has already taken steps in this direction, but more needs to be done. Vigilance is required to continually enhance, revitalize, and maintain a community’s aesthetic charm. We recommend that a local gardening club adopt downtown beautification efforts associated with planting and maintaining annuals.

One of the most visible and effective programs involves planting. A local gardening club should be recruited to coordinate the following efforts: Replacing drab corners with colorful splashes of annual flowering plants



- Creating an annual buying cooperative
- Providing a watering tractor for downtown planting
- Designing more planting for landscape buffers between sidewalks and traffic lanes
- Encouraging merchants to display hanging baskets

The local gardening club can also assist with advice on seasonal plantings so that the downtown can display a variety of plantings all year round.

### 3. Window and exterior displays

Another downtown initiative speaks directly to the importance of the retail mix and what is inside the buildings. The gardening brand is all about shopping for branded goods and services while the diversions focus on other shopping and dining. As good as the store contents are, it's necessary for the consumer to be lured inside. Professional consulting should be provided to all shopkeepers who want the latest tips and tricks on creating beautiful and appealing window displays and advice on how to carry their merchandising outside their front doors to the entryway and sidewalk. The pedestrian scale of the downtown district offers many opportunities to intrigue the passerby



*Moving from a drive-through downtown to a pedestrian-scaled downtown requires a change in approach to the scale and positioning of retail signage. Perpendicular “blade” signs at a specific height, Typefaces that can be read. Always put the product you sell first, and larger than your name.*

with the attractive and the unusual. Drawing visitors inside is the first step in creating a sale.

### 4. Retail signage

Downtown retail signs should reflect the upscale nature of the brand, protect the aesthetic integrity of the beautification, and maintain a consistent and complimentary design scheme for commercial signs within the downtown district. Guidelines should be developed for business and property owners with regard to size of signs, colors, materials and placement. See Recommendation # 11 for a template for a retail signage program that is peer driven.





### 5. Outdoor dining and gathering places for entertainment

Downtown planning should accommodate outdoor dining, including using a portion of the sidewalks in front of restaurants for outside tables. Sidewalk cafes are great attractors in good weather, where people can see and be seen, and enjoy the ambience of the lighted trees and buildings. Recommendation # 11 contains suggested guidelines for sidewalk cafes. Plans should also develop small public areas where sidewalk musicians and other entertainers can perform both during the day and in the evenings. These performers add to the cosmopolitan type of atmosphere Ottawa wants in support of the brand. The public spaces for performers do not need to be very large, but should accommodate ten to fifteen spectators. Recommendation # 11 outlines a permitting process for street performers



### 6. Lease rates

The creation of “critical mass” in a concentrated area will generate higher revenues for all businesses in the area. If downtown property owners embrace the vision of Ottawa’s downtown district they are taking on the obligation of investing in the future, both with cash for initial improvements in their properties and lost rental income for several months. If the vision is successful with the district becoming vibrant and viable, the property owners will more than make up their debt service and deferred lease income. In addition to their initial cost of building out their retail space, property owners will need

“patient money” in the form of deferred return on their investment as the shopping district takes hold and traffic builds. Until a critical mass of branded retail exists in the district, the entrepreneur-renters may not be able to afford rents that support the landlord’s debt service. However, once the district becomes successful, demand for space in what is a contained area will rise sharply, and profitable rents can be achieved to repay the investment.

If the going rate for leased space downtown is currently \$1 per square foot, property owners may need to be creative to attract the right mix of entertainment, retail, and dining. For instance, the landlord might provide a five-year lease with the first six months free, followed by six months at \$.50 per square foot. In year two, rates might be raised to \$.75 per square foot, in year three to \$1, and by year four up to \$1.25. After that, tenants would pay the market rate because business would be building during this period and they would be able to offset their rental increases.

Often banks will provide creative financing for building and tenant improvements at reduced or deferred interest rates to help building owners absorb the initial development costs. There are dozens of case histories that can be used to demonstrate the return on investment, where property owners help subsidize rents in the initial building of critical mass and then see a tremendous return after just five years. Jackson, Wyoming, and Carmel, California are two examples where rates have climbed to \$45 per square foot and higher, with both running at 100 percent occupancies.

### 7. Facades

Several buildings in the downtown core of Ottawa would benefit from improvements to their façades. Improvements to consider are water features, misters in the summer, planters, trellises, and Trompe l’oeil. Planters and trellises will provide refreshing greenery. Trompe l’oeil is an art technique involving extremely realistic imagery in order to create the optical illusion that depicted objects actually exist instead of being mere two-dimensional representations. A common example is painted architectural detail that realistically simulates genuine three-dimensional features. The technique is widely used even in places with renowned architecture, such as Florence, Italy.

### 8. Open hours

It is important to make sure that businesses are open consistently. Visitors expect it. We recommend that downtown merchants adopt a cooperative

program to ensure that at least some businesses remain open seven days a week and during evening hours. As business grows, operating hours should be gradually extended.

As lease agreements are negotiated with new downtown merchants, operating hours should also be agreed upon. The eventual goal is for all destination retailers in the downtown core to remain open at night, seven days a week. Initially, merchants should consider a cooperative program in which they agree to remain open for extended hours on a rotating basis. There are a number of other programs designed to assist retailers in covering the personnel costs of remaining open for extended hours. One is a job-share program, where part-time workers move from business to business to cover lunch hours and errands. Having the right mix of businesses downtown will fail if most of them are closed during evening hours or on certain days of the week. Achieving critical mass means that businesses must be open consistently.

### **9. Bringing merchants into the brand**

A destination retail downtown district should be thought of in the way a shopping mall functions. There are two or three anchor stores that lure the consumer to the destination. These should be related to the brand, such as a huge full-service combination nursery, garden store and outdoor living center. Then the other stores benefit from the consumer who walks by. But malls function because each merchant sees themselves as a part of something bigger than themselves – a critical mass of shopping. For this reason, downtown merchants need to be coaxed into being a part of the whole – to see their actions as affecting the entire downtown. If only a third of the stores in a shopping mall were open at any given time, would you go there? If the mall were dotted with attorneys, insurance agents, appliance repair shops, stockbrokers and tattoo parlors, would you stay as long? Helping merchants to see the value to them in working together is essential to creating a cohesive branded destination where consumers want to spend their time.

#### **Implementation:**

Ottawa Chamber of Commerce

#### **Approximate cost:**

Workshop/Training Costs: \$10,000; individual assistance: TBD

#### **Possible funding sources:**

Chamber funds and TIF funds

#### **Timeline for implementation:**

2009 forward

#### **Rationale for the recommendation:**

Participation of retail merchants is vital to the creation of a downtown where the locals want to hang out, and where visitors see a reason to return again and again. While each retail shop knows the importance of displaying a unique individuality, they may be less aware that creating a critical mass of attractive shops and restaurants will benefit them personally. Assisting them with individual consultations as well as informative workshops will go a long way to the success of the downtown.

Participation of property owners is essential to the success of this plan because they control what type of tenants are placed in ground floor store fronts, they can establish covenants that result in stores being open consistent hours of operation, and they determine what façade improvements are made to the exteriors of their buildings. If the brand succeeds, property owners will benefit from more stable tenants and higher lease payments. Property owners also take the initial risks in tenant improvements, and incentive based lease agreements that attract the right mix of retail and dining downtown. Educating property owners about how destination retail works, what it requires from them, and how to proceed is an important step in creating downtown Ottawa as a destination retail success story.

# 12

## Designate the Downtown “Old Town” Boundaries and Apply a Special Zoning

### Description:

Ottawa’s downtown needs to develop a distinctive “destination retail” district that will attract visitors and locals alike. Currently the downtown has a mix of local services with some retail that appeals to the visitor. Successful downtowns today retain the local services, but also concentrate destination retail around a theme or brand. By rearranging the retail mix in to these two categories, the destination retail become a vibrant district with lots of activity during the day and importantly, at night as well. Districts create a sense of arrival by constructing gateway signs at the entrances to the destination retail district and wayfinding signage to direct visitors to the district. This district becomes the focal point for the Botanical Arts and Gardening brand.

While it may grow beyond its initial boundaries over time, we recommend that the downtown destination retail district be bounded by East Jefferson St on the North, the Fox River to the East, the Illinois River to the South, and mid-block west of La Salle Street to the West. This is where initial efforts should occur.

Washington Park just north of East Jackson Street is an important venue for the brand but it is surrounded by historical, religious and civic buildings and is not considered a part of the retail district. Rather, it is a site for outdoor events and hopefully as a display of some of the botanical landscaping that the brand encourages.

Complementary to and a future part of the downtown district is the waterfront district. This large tract of land includes the promenade along the Fox and Illinois Rivers, the grounds of the elementary school, and a number of public parking lots. This area will need to be master-planned in order to determine the public space/private commercial mix, and how to integrate it into the commercial portion of downtown.

We recommend zoning the downtown district for destination retail for ground floor businesses. Permitted uses for ground floor businesses in this zone should include primary brand stores as well as secondary services such as restaurants, bars, candy shops, soda fountains, cafes, coffee shops, bistros, snacks, theaters, clothing retail, antiques, gifts, home accents and furnishings, galleries, museums, books, cards, and music retail. Permitted second floor

(and above) would be other commercial, business and services, as well as residential.

### Implementation:

City of Ottawa, Grow Ottawa Team

### Approximate cost:

No specific costs associated with this recommendation.

### Possible funding sources:

None needed

### Timeline for implementation:

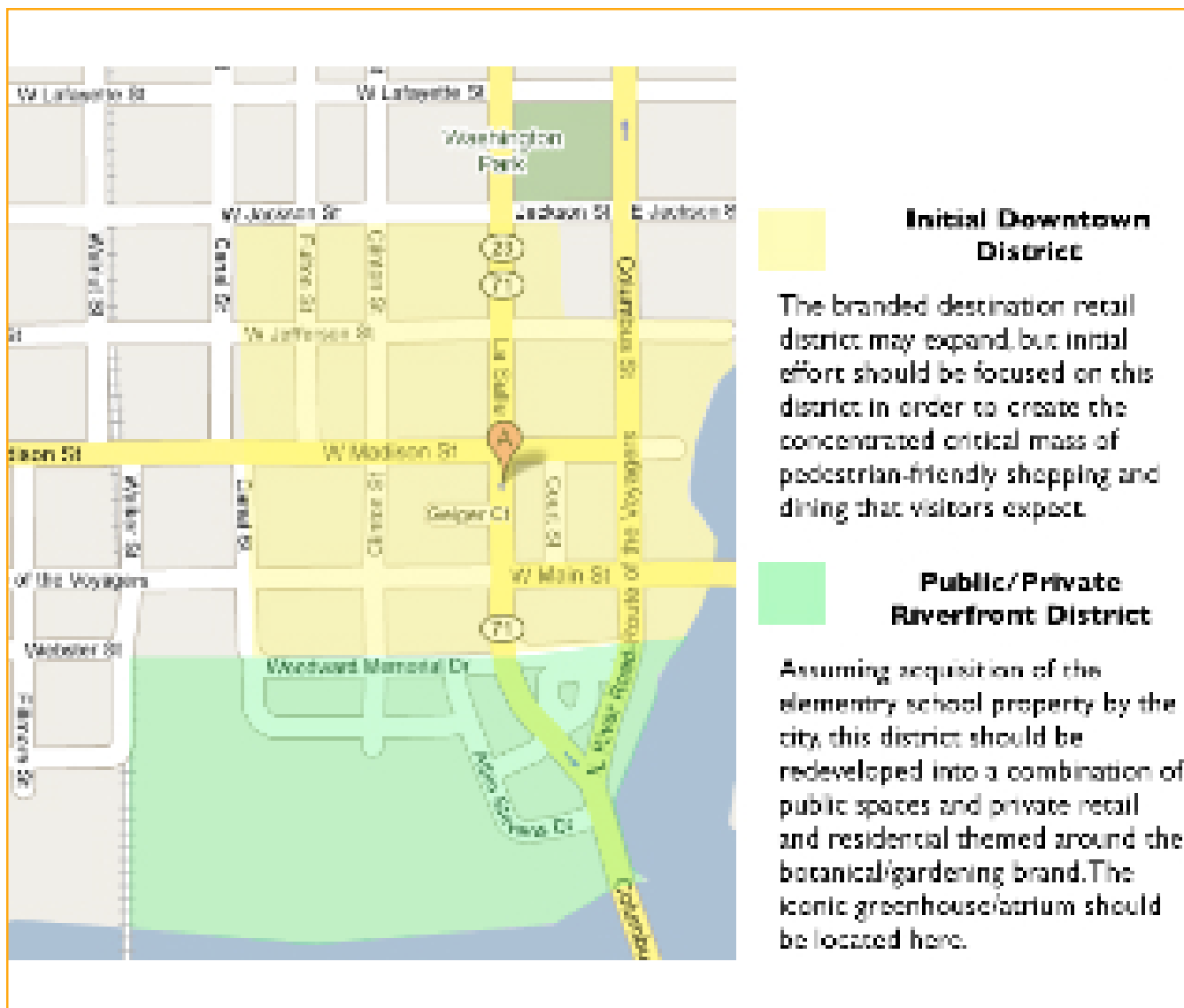
2009

### Rationale for the recommendation:

One of the most important ingredients for downtown’s success is to concentrate the branded shopping, attractions, and amenities within a pedestrian-friendly core. You want visitors to park, get out of their cars, and walk from shop to shop. The four-block area along La Salle Street provides an ideal location for “phase one” of developing the “critical mass” of shopping and dining necessary to build the gardening niche. The most popular activity of visitors is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting, and that’s also where most visitor spending takes place (mostly in the evening).

Gateways provide people with a sense of arrival, they slow traffic, and they result in increased spending. They also help unify merchants in the district, who then tend to keep common hours and work together on curb appeal, marketing and other issues – as merchants do in a mall. When you consider why so many builders create beautiful entries into their residential subdivisions, you can see the importance of entryways. They create pride of ownership and increase the perceived value of the properties. The same is true for downtowns. Gateways should be designed to fit the town’s brand or ambiance.

Classic examples of where the creation of a pedestrian-friendly shopping district has been successfully executed are Disney World in Orlando (Downtown Disney), the Navy Pier in Chicago, and Mall of America in



Minneapolis. The same is true for many smaller towns that have applied the same concept successfully: Eureka Springs, Arkansas; Cannon Beach, Oregon; and Woodstock, New York, to name a few.

The strategy for destination retail zoning helps orchestrate future development of the downtown district. In order to attract the gardening and outdoor living market and local spending, Ottawa needs to concentrate branded services on La Salle and Columbus Streets and their side streets as well as diversify its downtown retail mix for locals, and create more diversions and secondary activities for both groups. The intent is to create a lively shopping and dining district downtown that is attractive to both residents and visitors. In a limited downtown area, use of all the available first floor retail space for destination retail is very important in order to achieve critical mass. The more there is to offer visitors in a pedestrian-friendly area, the longer they will stay, and the more they will spend. If first floors are filled with service businesses or resident retail (such as grocery stores or insurance agents), there won't be room for enough destination retail to attract visitors.

# 13 Create a New Website Focused on the Gardening Brand.

## Description:

The Grow Ottawa Team should develop a website specific to the brand. The Visitor Services Center has a website with special sections dedicated to Events, Lodging, Shopping, Dining, Attractions, History, etc. however much of the information is in list format. Just as the Activities Guide is designed more as a motivational sales piece than as an inventory of what Ottawa has to offer, so must there be a compelling website that provides all the details that will close the sale with the consumer.

- a. It takes a team to develop an effective tourism website:
  - i. The architect – the site map and how it flows, what the content includes
  - ii. The engineer – the person that develops the backbone of the site, chooses the right software and writes the code.
  - iii. The interior designer – the agency that makes it graphically pleasing
  - iv. The maintenance crew and builder – the people that keep the content updated, fresh and always add new content.
- b. Home page links should include the following:
  - i. Home – with compelling large photographs and clear links.
  - ii. What to do – visitor experiences, not just passive attractions
  - iii. Where to eat – focus on the best Ottawa has to offer downtown
  - iv. Where to stay – begin with the best hotels, write about them, then list the others
  - v. Where to shop – start with the best shops, unique shops, provide details such as unique items for sale, interesting displays. Include where to park.
  - vi. Getting here – Start from the freeways and give specific directions, and again, where to park.
  - vii. Photos and videos – include both professionally created and amateur 3 minute or shorter videos of visitors' experiences in the downtown, and events, dining outdoors, on the water, etc. Create a whole section of "how to" video's related to gardening. Major name brands should jump at the chance to sponsor and produce these videos. Or, find a good brand that already has them produced and will post them.
  - viii. Maps and Guides – Printable maps for guidance is good but not enough. Include a good 3-D map of the core downtown area with street names, labels of specific sites, etc. Include a regional map showing

directions to local nurseries, organic farms, and other agrarian venues of interest.

- ix. Media and Trade – sooner or later the media will pick up on what is going on and want to write about it. Be sure you have prepared the photography and written stories that they will be looking for. Public relations is the most important form of communication in building a brand. You cannot buy that kind of exposure.
- x. Resources for Gardeners – be the site that gardeners go to for information even when they are not planning to visit. This will expose them to the sight more often. There are many gardening resources and an annotated list of links will be a welcome addition. If you can get reciprocal links, this will improve your standing in Google and Yahoo searches under "gardening".
- xi. The gardener's blog. Create a blog managed by master gardeners where people can get and share information.

c. The "What to Do" link should lead you to a page where you can "pick your season." Provide six seasons as follows:

- i. Dec/Jan: The holidays
- ii. Feb/Mar: Winter events, and preparing your gardens for spring
- iii. Apr/May: Spring fling, and what to buy, plant and grow.
- iv. Jun/Jul: First half of summer, and summer gardening activities
- v. Aug/Sep: Second half of summer, and harvesting the garden
- vi. Oct/Nov: Fall events, and putting your garden to bed for the winter
- vii. Once a visitor picks their season, they can "Pick Your Passion" which leads them to a variety of experiences available that time of year. Some may be featured in every season, but some will only be showcased in their primary season, such as flower shows.

Focus on the different life stages: kids, young adults, families and retirees. Give them specific ideas as to how to create a great social experience downtown. Provide specific itineraries, don't just list the events. Give details; how to get group tickets, when and where to make restaurant reservations, how to transition between events and dining and shopping. And don't forget to tell them where to park.

- d. With "Pick Your Passion," there should be the following categories:
  - i. Gardening

- ii. The Arts (performing, visual, public art)
  - iii. History (museums, walking tourism landmarks)
  - iv. Events (do not include local events that only residents would be interested in. Each event should reinforce the brand perception and be worth a special trip.)
  - v. Recreation (fishing, boating, golf, hiking, biking etc. Recreation that is a special event should be listed under Events or Sports, such as competitive recreation)
  - vi. Entertainment (Any professional entertainment should also be listed under Events. Others that would be included here would be movies, nightlife, street musicians or artisans, local theater productions, for example.)
  - vii. Signature Shops (Best of downtown retail shops – shops unique to Ottawa or with specialty items. You can link to the Chamber for local malls and run of the mill stores.)
  - viii. Signature dining (the best dining experiences in Ottawa only. No national chains or fast food restaurants)
  - ix. Kids & Family (children's entertainment, educational recreation, etc.)
  - x. Hidden Treasures (this would include unusual, off the beaten path places, or activities. Neat little places known by the locals.
- e. In the “Where to Eat, Where to Stay, Where to Shop” sections ALWAYS promote the top-rated FIRST, once again, to support the brand perception first identified in this plan. If need be, have a third party help determine these ratings. Do NOT just provide lists. For each there should be an interior photo, a paragraph telling the visitor what's so special about each and then details: pricing (\$\$\$), meals open for, specialties, hotel features, etc.
- f. Videos and Slide Shows. Consumer expectations have gone beyond flash-driven slide shows on destination websites. Their experience with YouTube and Google video has created an expectation of cool videos covering a range of subjects about the destination. They want to see professionally produced vignettes of their special topics of interest, but they also want to see amateur videos which have greater credibility because they represent third-party assessment of what Ottawa really has to offer. A combination of the good amateur videos and your own professional efforts is needed. Photos are also welcome, and some viewer-produced photos should be included. Be sure to get written permission from the authors of both video and photos. Creating

a supply of videos and photos from which to choose can be done through local contests, where the winner's efforts are acknowledged and featured on your website.

g. “Getting Here” is one of the most important sections of the site. Show Ottawa in relationship to other cities in Northern Illinois and primary free-ways. It's fine to link to Mapquest or Google maps but there should also be a regional map that shows features Mapquest won't have: drive times from various cities, distance in miles, the nearest commercial airports, train or bus connections to Chicago, etc. Include a good downtown map that shows clearly where there is public parking. Include the hours of parking operations and cost. Indicate if validated parking applies. Also include a “road conditions” section that is updated often so people can find trouble spots, construction areas, and seasonal considerations for driving.

h. The “Guides & Information” section includes:

- The new “Best of Ottawa Guide,” hidden treasures, printable event calendars. All online brochures should be downloadable PDF files as well.
- Reciprocal links to other organizations, local communities, attractions, and activity vendors, the state tourism site, airport, downtown, etc.
- Local and regional contact information, including locations of visitor information centers, phone numbers, and operating hours.

i. The “Media & Trade” section would be home to:

- Online Press room (one of the best in the country can be found at [www.exploreasheville.com](http://www.exploreasheville.com) and a good one to emulate)
- Meeting and event planning resources
- Local media contacts and links
- Tour operators
- Resources for local partners (the business community, local organizations, regional marketing partners)

j. On the home page, focus on the highlights. Make a statement about the things you have that are the biggest, the best (by third party endorsement, and use quotes), and truly unique to the city.

k. Each category should offer sample events or activities that can be experienced all or most of the time.



HOME



VISIT



RESOURCES



GETTING HERE



DINING



DOWNLOADS



LIVING



CONTACT

### Life begins in the garden.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Integer nunc. Curabitur nisl. Cras fermentum mi at quam. Mauris porttitor pellentesque pede. Proin a eros. Proin consectetur sem et erat. Quisque porttitor mauris id velit. Integer lobortis ornare lectus. Pellentesque mauris lectus, dictum et, vehicula in, mollis ultrices, lacus. Phasellus justo lorem, feugiat non, laoreet et, faucibus nec, turpis. Sed vitae tellus nec mauris vestibulum convallis. Vestibulum eget tellus ut augue blandit tincidunt. Cras arcu. Ut a quam in erat placerat imperdiet. Aenean facilisis



Li

### LATEST NEWS

 Date set for 2009  
International Garden Expo  
Monday, February 18, 2008

 New Organic Dining:  
Geena's Grand Opening  
Monday, February 18, 2008

 Compost Workshop Slated  
Monday, February 18, 2008

 New Spa offers organic  
aroma-therpay massage  
Monday, February 18, 2008



- l. Write the website focusing on specifics, not the generic.
- m. Include “Did you know” online post-it notes.
- n. Promote the best hotels first.
- o. Work to reinforce the image of Ottawa as the most interesting, comprehensive, gardening resource center in Illinois.
- p. Develop podcasts (both video and voice). Let visitors choose from many than might provide examples of what specific events or attractions have to offer. Podcasts could be developed for a score of attractions, shops or restaurants and would feature one to two minute segments about each of your anchor businesses downtown. An example of an excellent tourism website is the one produced by the Asheville, North Carolina CVB – [www.explorea-shville.com](http://www.explorea-shville.com). Read through the website to see some very good ideas; in particular the pressroom, the visitors guide, and the way the site portrays the city’s brand image.

**Implementation:**

Ottawa Visitors Center

**Approximate cost:**

\$15,000

**Possible source of funds:**

Ottawa Hotel Tax funds and grants

**Timeline:**

2010 forward

# 14 Develop Public Relations Resources and Place Advertising Strategically.

## Description:

We recommend that Ottawa hire a professional PR agency with community branding and repositioning experience. The focus of this PR effort should be to present the new botanical brand to the world. The effort should not begin until Ottawa can deliver on the promise of the brand. Part of the PR contract should be to assist the city in developing the online “press room” mentioned in Recommendation 12. This is the place that contains resources, news, and assistance for the media. Cultivating the media is an important task, as you want them on your side in communicating the brand. The press can be cynical, particularly the local press, which will have covered all the pronouncements previously made that new things in Ottawa are being planned, only to see that nothing changed. Delivering on the promise is as important for the media as it is for the consumer.

The pressroom should have several pages, each of which are devoted to specific items that will make it easier for the press:

a) Public Relations contact page – list several contacts and include their photo. The press is generally under deadline, and if they cannot reach one person instantly, they need access to another. It may be your only chance to weigh in on an article they are writing, or to get free publicity for an upcoming event.

b) Story ideas page – don’t wait on the press, write up your own story ideas as “prompts” for the press to pick up on. These can be about the gardening brand, or the music scene, art, food and special cuisine, or visitor experiences, for example. Makes sure they know where to go on the website to download photos that go with each story idea.

c) Photo gallery page – a picture IS worth a thousand words, and providing great photography is extremely important. Don’t just gather up amateur photos from all over town and post them. Think carefully about how you want to position each subject. You will need eventually to script a number of photos and hire professional photographers to go shoot them. Some photos should have “models” in them relevant to your target market. Others can be candid shots of events and visitors having fun, but shot by a professional who knows how to frame them. All of them should be available in high-resolution digital format. Present the photos online in low-resolution and

then have them register online for the high-resolution versions. This way you know who is receiving them, and they will agree to use them for editorial purposes only, assign proper credit and not be sold or used commercially elsewhere. The same should be done for your logo graphics. Be sure to group your photos by subject so they can be researched easily.

d) Press Kit page – this page should contain background materials that can be inserted into any story or article

1. Interesting facts about Ottawa
- 2.. History and Statistics
3. Climate and weather
- 4.. Six season variations information
- 5.. Other interesting information.

e) News release page – include a running log of all news released that you convert into PDF format so they can be downloaded. Be sure to show the date of the release.

f) Full Fact Sheet page – more extensive than the “interesting facts” in the Press Kit, this page would contain an extended list of facts about every facet of Ottawa, the brand as it develops and other local subjects. Here is where you also list historical facts about the community.

g) Press Trip page – some out-of-town writers will want assistance in making arrangements to visit and write about Ottawa or a special subject in Ottawa. This page allows prospective writers to request help from the Visitor Services Center or the Chamber in planning their trip, making the right connections with local stakeholders, or gaining access to particular events. They may also be looking for financial assistance or some in-kind consideration. This is the mechanism for them to make their requests.

h) Media coverage page – this is where Ottawa gets to post the media coverage they receive from the press. It allows the press to see what’s been covered and in what manner. List the stories by year and month and if possible include links to the actual story source, and photos.

## Strategic Ad Placement

Public Relations is much more effective at building your brand, but there are occasions when strategically placing advertisements is effective. Generally

PR is used to build a brand (credibility is very important), while advertising maintains awareness. Ad placements are often required to “seed” advertorial sections of newspapers or vertical garden publications. Placing ads on the websites of garden clubs, and major gardening sites can also drive readers to your own website.

**Implementation:**

Grow Ottawa Team, Ottawa Visitors Center

**Approximate Cost:**

\$50,000 over two years.

**Potential source of funding:**

Hotel Tax Funds

**Timing for Implementation:**

2009 for getting materials developed. 2010 for publicity

**Rationale for the Recommendation:**

Public relations will be more effective than advertising during the early stages of brand development. Public relations provide valuable third-party endorsement. Readers consider published articles about a destination far more credible than advertising about the same place. Editorial features are also read three times more often than ads.

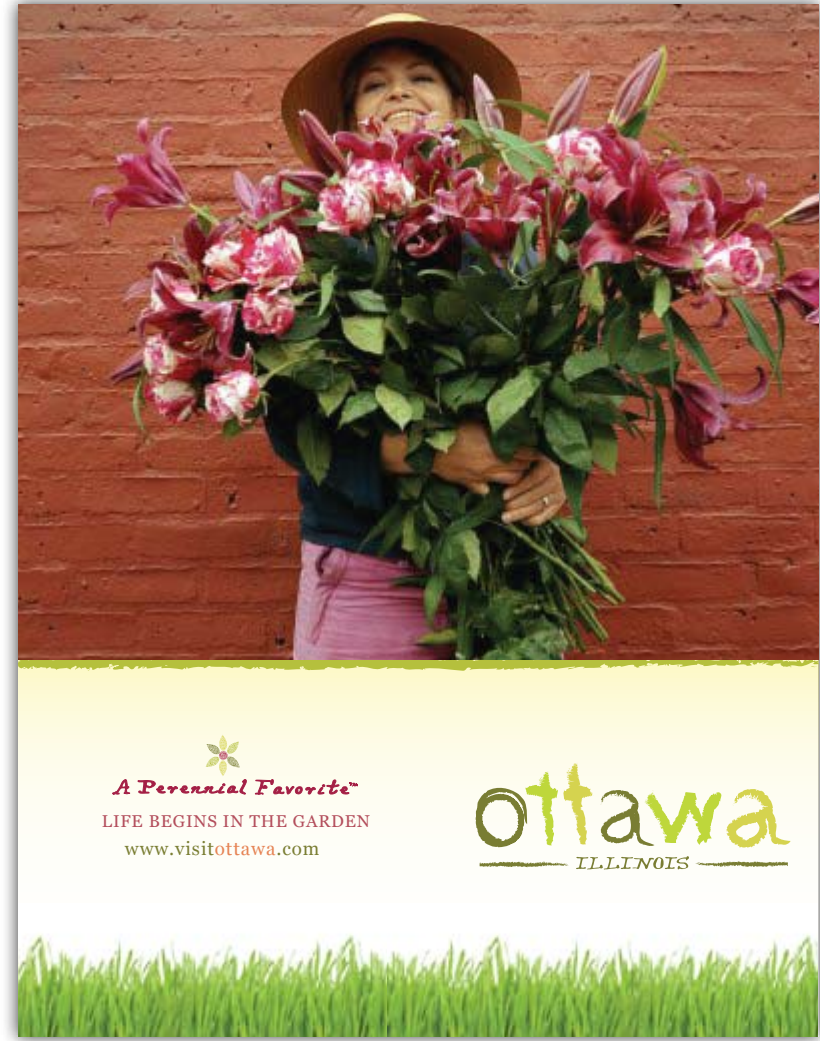
Ottawa is a couple of hours from large population centers. A well-executed PR campaign will convince Chicago area residents that it's worth the drive because Ottawa provides something that can't be found closer to home.

The first year of the program should be spent “getting ready” by creating all new marketing materials, making staff adjustments, and upgrading retail establishments. That should be followed up in the second year with a targeted publicity campaign.

For every dollar invested in public relations, there is typically a three-dollar return in “earned media” (the equivalent of the cost if you had to pay for the

space). That's why we think public relations will provide Ottawa with the best bang for the buck and hopefully quick-start its branding initiative.

*Next Two Pages: Public Relations should be used to build the brand and advertising to reinforce the brand. These sample ads focus on building brand awareness and drive readers to the website for detailed information.*





  
*A Perennial Favorite™*  
LIFE BEGINS IN THE GARDEN  
[www.visitottawa.com](http://www.visitottawa.com)

ottawa  
ILLINOIS



  
*A Perennial Favorite™*  
LIFE BEGINS IN THE GARDEN  
[www.visitottawa.com](http://www.visitottawa.com)

ottawa  
ILLINOIS

# 15 Develop an E-newsletter Program

## Description:

Create an E-newsletter that offer's monthly gardening tips (e.g. "what to do in the garden this month") and direct readers to where in Ottawa they can find the supplies, materials and services they need that month. This would be an opt-in free subscription. Master gardeners from all over the country would provide advice in the newsletter.

This will require website software that presents them with an online form to fill out, keeps a database of names, email addresses, residential addresses, and interest categories that they can check, so you can deliver to them exactly what it is they are looking for. You can even send them follow-up surveys so you can gauge how well a certain local event was received and what you can change to make it even better than before. Place someone in charge of managing the database, removing prank and bad addresses, and sorting the forms by interests, origin of residence, or other criteria.

The application should include the following:

- a. Email Address
- b. First Name
- c. Last Name
- d. Address (optional)
- e. City
- f. State
- g. Zip
- h. Country
- i. Phone (optional)
- j. Fax (optional)
- k. Would like to receive newsletter? Yes/no
- l. Interest Categories
  - 1.Arts & Crafts
  - 2.General Gardening
  - 3.Music/Concerts
  - 4.Landscaping
  - 5.Ponds and Water Features
  - 6.Flower gardens
  - 7.Vegetable gardens
  - 8."Going Green"
  - 9.Events/Festivals

- 10.Attractions
- 11.Nightlife & Entertainment
- 12.Dining/Restaurants
- 13.Shopping
- 14.Lodging

m.Special Deals/Packages

n. Want to receive information from other providers? Yes/no

Be sure to make clear that you have a privacy policy that will protect them from receiving other emails, unless they indicate otherwise.

The Ottawa Gardening Newsletter needs to be professionally produced, and made available on the Chamber of Commerce, the Visitor Services Center and the City websites. The newsletter content must be engaging, keeping the reader browsing through it as long as possible. In addition to listing events by date for the next several months on an Event Calendar, engage the reader with contests they can enter, information about hotels that are offering special rates for event-goers, stories about the next flower show coming to town, and the like. Each newsletter should have links to the site's What to Do, Where to Eat, Where to Stay and Packages & Deals sections.

For each event listed in the Calendar, devote a single page to the details. Include a photo or photos of the last version of the event, the date, the time and the exact location with a link to a map that shows the location. Show them where to park and what it will cost. Not knowing how convenient an event is can be a big deterrent to going at all. Be sure to link to the specific event's own website if it has one, and make the page printer friendly. Another good thing to add are testimonial statements of previous event attendees, or even short video clips of people at the event. Nothing sells like video, and third party endorsements.

## Implementation:

Grow Ottawa Team, Ottawa Visitors Center

## Approximate cost:

\$10,000 annually

**Potential source of funds:**

Hotel Tax funds and sponsorships

**Timeline for implementation:**

When product and website are developed

**Rationale for the recommendation:**

Keeping a visitor coming back is much cheaper than attracting a new one each time, but they must be kept engaged in the brand. There are many newsletters online. The successful ones constantly ask for feedback so editors can provide what is of real interest to the reader. If your subscriptions fall off, and the blogs dry up, you know you're doing something wrong.

# 16 Develop Visitor Activities and Events to Support the Brand.

## Description:

Visitors are attracted to destinations for experiences. Create opportunities for visitors to become involved in the brand in direct, meaningful ways, by developing a series of “literally” hands-on activities associated with gardening. These events should be sponsored by either local or national brand names, such as “The Home Depot Instructional Garden Series” in order to pay for the cost of putting them on. Persons who attend these events could be given incentives, such as discounts on the purchase of gardening tools, or free merchandise. Involve the whole downtown with discounts at a number of participating retail stores and dining establishments so that there is a reason to stay longer in Ottawa.

Involve master gardeners in the events that are demonstrations and lectures. Videotape the lessons so that they can be added to the website library. Develop a relationship with a Chicago television station to produce a weekly gardening show for the metro area. This is a great way to market the town’s brand and create interest in local visitor events. Have some of the shows produced in other parts of Illinois, particularly the neighborhoods of Chicago, as a way of connecting with your target audience.

## Some of the activities could include:

Pruning classes: Position this class at the time of year when most pruning of trees and shrubs should be done.

Winter gardens: This is a great demonstration event for the fall.

Installing a drip irrigation system. This would be part of your “going green” series. It is very likely you could get public funding for this from any number of municipal water departments as a conservation measure.

Container gardening made easy: Schedule this as a showcase event for Spring. Make this an opportunity for dozens of Master Gardeners and landscapers to show off their talents in making beautiful container gardens. Have the visitors judge the individual efforts and give prizes to the winners. Have all of the containers for sale after the event as a way to raise money for the branding effort. Get corporations to bid on the containers.

Perennials and shade area gardens: This is an opportunity for the outdoor furniture retailers to show off their products, large-scale tree nurseries, and landscape architects.

Creating an English Garden: Bring in a master gardener from a famous garden in England. Have a real (or fake) animal topiary display for the kids. Make it a real British affair with crewing tournaments on the river, croquet games and lawn bowling demonstrations.

Fruit trees in the Midwest: Combine this with a fruit harvest theme in the late summer. Expand the farmers market to include large displays of fresh fruit for sale. Include contests for homemade fruit pies and jams & jellies.

Raising Organic Vegetables: This event could focus on organic methods in the vegetable garden. Bring in Master Gardeners and other experts to provide classes and demonstrations on composting, raised bed plantings, natural fertilizers, and other related topics.

The Christmas Tree forest: This event would be held in the riverfront complex and be a winter wonderland with sponsored Christmas trees decorated. Each year could have a different theme for the decorations. Include plenty of lights on the trees and elsewhere so the place becomes magical at night.

## Implementation:

Grow Ottawa Team, Ottawa Visitors Services, City Special Events Dept.

## Approximate cost:

To be determined

## Possible source of funds:

Sponsorships, private contributions (tax deductible?)

## Implementation:

2009 forward

## Rationale:

Visitors come for the experiences, not the scenery. It is critical that there be a series of events that will draw people to the town year-round. A wide



variety of events are required so that there is something for everyone in the downtown over the course several months. Most of the events should attract between three and six thousand people. This is an optimum size for creating enough excitement and still is quite manageable.

*Creating opportunities for “hands-on” experiences will generate far more interest than just shopping and dining. The botanical/gardening brand lends itself to generating a wide variety of interesting experiences. Even short programs and demonstrations can successfully attract visitors to travel long distances in order to learn something new they can apply for years to come.*

# 17 Enhance the Current Wayfinding System for the City with a Focus on Downtown.

## Description:

The city has already begun the process of improving the directional signage in Ottawa. The new signs (with the Lincoln logo) will improve navigation to many of the existing public venues, attractions and accommodations currently in Ottawa. Now that a specific brand has been identified, new branded features will be added to the downtown and the process should be completed through a professional Wayfinding System Plan to direct visitors to these new sites. The Plan should incorporate graphics, imagery, and colors that portray the Gardening Brand for Ottawa.

## The plan should include the following:

- Design and locations of gateways for the city and for the downtown destination retail district as well as the new waterfront complex
- Design and location analysis of directional signage
- Wayfinding system: inventory of attractions, amenities, services; the placement on each sign; testing for readability at speed; fit; design
- Signage specifications for bidding purposes, cost estimates, phasing and bid documentation
- Decorative pole banner designs
- Coordination with city, county and state for setbacks, restrictions, and construction standards
- Design and placement recommendations for visitor information kiosks

The Wayfinding Plan should stipulate the precise wording and exact location for each new sign, as well as mounting options, so it can be used to obtain fabrication and installation bids from regional sign manufacturers.

Visitor information kiosks should be designed to complement local architecture, as well as to enhance the Gardening brand. The kiosks should provide weatherproof brochure holders for 24/7 visitor information, as well as display maps, a calendar of events, visitor attractions, local services and amenities, lodging and dining options, and cross-sell regional attractions. They should have adequate lighting and include prominent signs indicating “Visitor Information.”

## We recommend kiosks at the following locations:

- Washington Square Park/Reddick Mansion

- The revitalized Riverfront
- The Scouting Museum
- Skydive Chicago
- Starved Rock State Park
- Buffalo Rock State Park
- Heritage Harbor
- Lock 14 on the I & M Canal
- Utica, Illinois

We also recommend that Ottawa have a brochure exchange program with Utica, Peru, and other neighboring towns.

## Implementation:

Grow Ottawa Team, Ottawa Visitors Center, City of Ottawa.

## Approximate cost:

\$60,000 for design of the System

Approximately \$100,000 for fabrication and installation of the wayfinding system, depending on design

\$36,000 for construction of kiosks (\$4,000 per kiosk)

\$8,000 annually for maintenance of kiosks

## Possible funding sources:

Wayfinding System design and fabrication – Hotel Tax funds, TIF funds, grants.

(Kiosks included)

## Timeline for implementation:

Wayfinding System Plan – 2009/2010

Fabrication/installation – 2010/2012

Kiosk construction – 2009

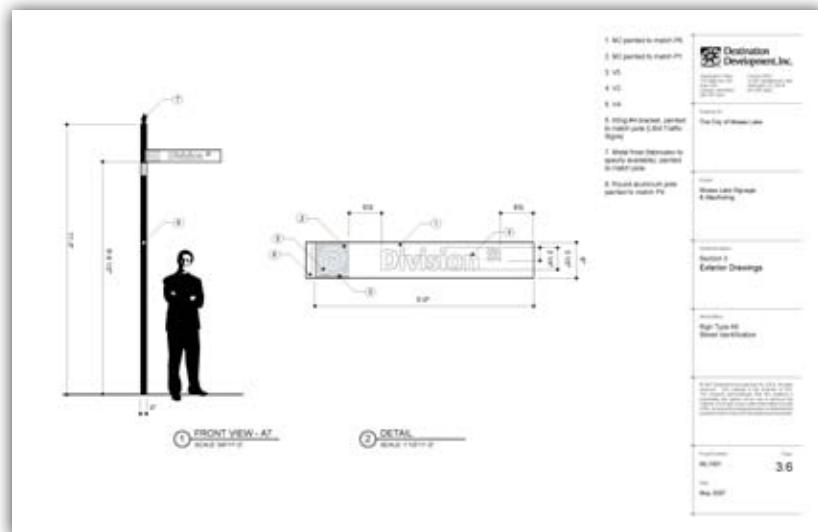
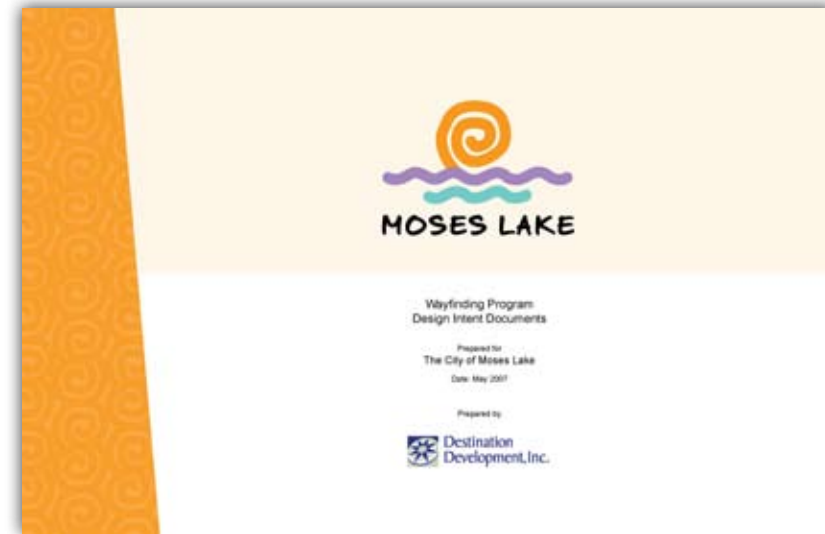
## Rationale for the recommendation:

Signage is critically important for any community, particularly one looking to bring residents into the downtown after significant improvements in new buildings and new attractions, not to mention boaters and visitors to the downtown.

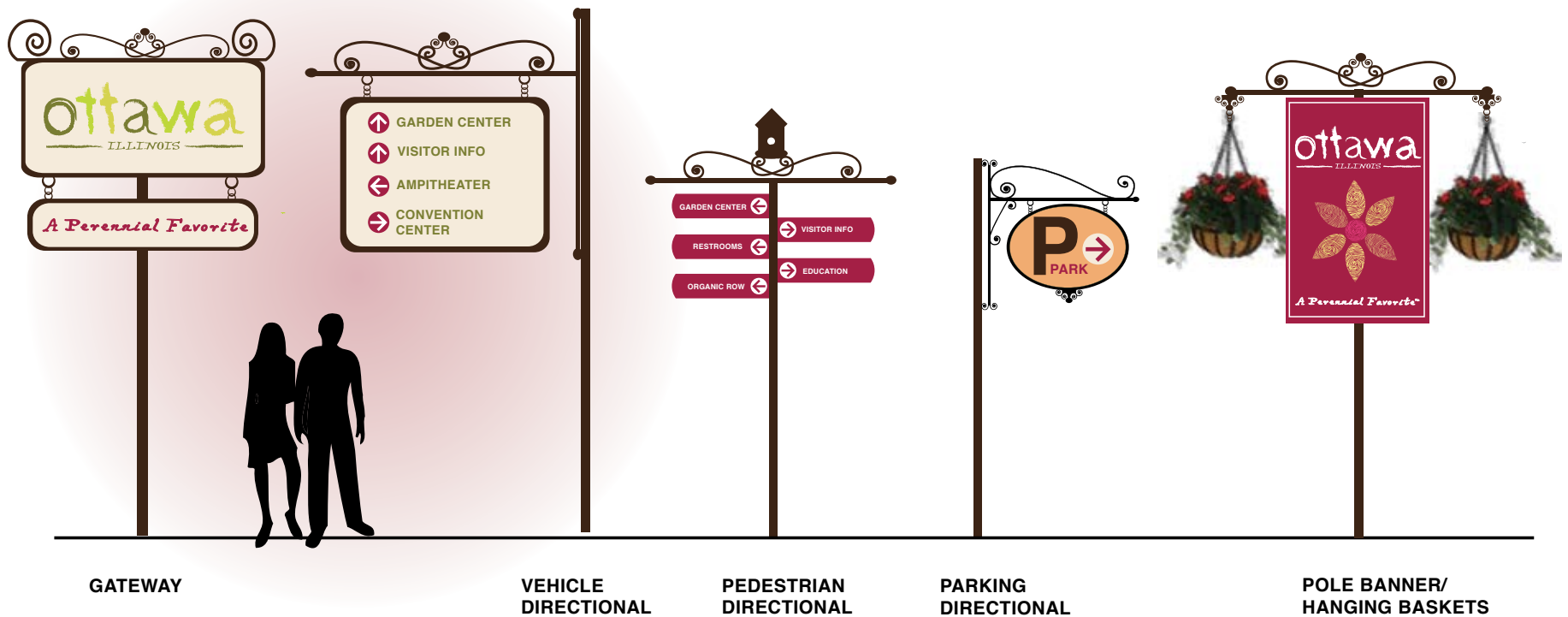
The easier it is for people to find attractions and amenities, the longer they will stay, and the more they will spend. It can be difficult for locals, who already know how to get from “point A” to “point B,” to see gaps and omissions in existing signage, so it’s best to use the services of a professional wayfinding firm. Gateway signs are a key component of the plan, and they need to make a powerful impression. Gateways create a sense of arrival and awareness of “place.” A beautiful gateway can elevate the appeal of the community, increasing its perceived value and instilling pride in the community.

Providing plenty of well-marked visitor information kiosks makes it easy for travelers to learn all that your community has to offer. Only about 5% of travelers stop at Visitor Information Centers, so placing kiosks with visitor information near major attractions and amenities makes it easy to cross-sell activities and help travelers find more to do.

*Below & Right: Example of a Gateway, Wayfinding & Signage System developed for Moses Lake, WA. These plans are detailed enough for a fabricator to bid on the manufacturing of the elements.*



*Below: One example of a potential direction for branded Wayfinding elements in Ottawa. The wrought-iron and whimsical feel is in keeping with the botanical theme.*



# 18 Recruit Garden-oriented Groups to Ottawa

## Description:

The Grow Ottawa Team, nor even the Chamber of Commerce, can hope to finance and create from scratch all of the events that will be needed to keep the town animated throughout the year. Ottawa should concentrate on directly producing only one or two signature festivals or events each year, possibly from the list in Recommendation 16. Your goal is to create a physical and operating environment within Ottawa that allows you to invite and attract outside event producers to bring their events to Ottawa because it is the best place to hold them. Essentially, this is leveraging Ottawa's existing and planned facilities to their highest and best use. If successful, it will create a demand for more hotels, at least some of which should be located in the downtown district.

In the Executive Summary, we demonstrated the wide popularity of gardening in the Midwest United States.

Invite regional garden clubs and garden industry-related trade organizations to hold their conferences, retreats, meetings and trade shows in Ottawa. The Illinois garden clubs alone have almost 10,000 members. Invite each club separately so as to spread out the impact on the downtown, and particularly on the limited number of hotel rooms that are available.

Plan to hold consumer garden-related shows and exhibitions in Ottawa – when you have the product and facilities to attract them. There is enough variety that you could hold a show every three or four months: spring, early summer, mid summer, late summer, fall, and winter (indoor plants).

Link up with Illinois and regional University extension programs in agriculture and plant study. Invite them to hold their meetings in Ottawa. This might be a valuable and free resource for Ottawa to tap into for gardening information and statistics. You might even find a Master Gardener with the personality for your TV productions.

After creating the riverfront mixed use project, invite family reunions and other affinity groups to hold their get-togethers in Ottawa. Affinity groups are always looking for new places to hold their reunions. The combination of the riverfront and small town atmosphere might be just the ticket.

If you invite groups to your town, you are their host. Make sure you facilitate their stay and provide for their needs. The money they will spend in town is the goal. Facilitate their permits for parades, picnics in public parks. If they want to block off a street, help them find a way to do it. If they need electricity or water at a particular site, assist them in getting it. The police department and city maintenance department need to be on board in order to make visitors feel welcome and appreciative.

## Implementation:

Ottawa Visitor Center

## Approximate cost:

To be determined

## Possible source of funds:

Hotel Tax., Chamber of Commerce

## Timeline for Implementation:

2011



**77th Annual Meeting**  
May 19, 2008  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

**Register Today**  
[Click Here](#)

**MICHIGAN GARDEN CLUBS, INC.**

MEMBER LOGIN  
USER:   
PASSWORD:   
[LOGIN](#)

**Welcome**  
Thank you for visiting this resource for promoting the love of gardening across Michigan. We intend for it to support the informational enrichment of our garden club members and to invite you and others to join a garden club in your local community and experience the pure satisfaction of nature.

**Come Join Us!**  
The mission of the Michigan Garden Clubs is "to provide education, resources, and network opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral and landscape design, and environmental responsibility." This is accomplished through the following major areas of interest:

- Flower Arranging
- Environmental Conservation
- Landscaping
- Horticulture
- Community Service
- Gardening Study
- Scholarships
- Youth Activities
- Social Activities

**Special Features**

- MGC History**
- A Tribute to Edna Rosenfield**
- Web Site Information**  
Read this on your first visit
- Web Site Welcome**
- Annual Meeting - 2008**  
Information and Registration Form
- Invasive Grass Advisory**
- Spring MGC Schools now Registering**  
Flower Show School Course I, Landscape Design School Course I, Gardening Study Course I, and Environmental School Course I are all ready to take applications
- Higgins Lake Scholarship**  
Information for 2008
- Sharon Yantis**  
Helps plant reforestation fundraiser

**Navigation Menu:**  
Home  
President's Message  
Join a Garden Club  
Calendar of Events  
About Us  
News and Events  
Education  
Projects  
Awards  
Forms  
Photo Gallery  
Links  
Plant Database Links  
Contact Us - Help  
Plant Database  
Member Registration

*There are many garden-related affinity groups available in the midwest that can be invited to hold their events in the newly branded Ottawa.*

- Winning Moments
- Schools
- Projects
- Photo Trail
- Articles
- Ways & Means
- "On The Wing"
- Links
- Memorials
- District News



**Mission Statement**  
The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc. promotes interest and education in Horticulture, Landscaping, Floral Design and Environmental Concerns.



**Welcome**  
Join our journey along the path of education, information and enjoyment.



**"Gardening... with a Native Palette"**

Members of the TGCI Board, club members, and friends, a heartfelt thank you for entrusting to me, the administration of TGCI for the next two years.

<b>Ottawa Recommendation List</b>					
<b>#</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Approx. Cost</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>Timing</b>
1	Memorize the brand promise	Everyone: Ottawa Visitor Center, Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, and City of Ottawa	None	None	2008
2	Create and empower the Grow Ottawa Team	City of Ottawa, Chamber Board, OVC Board	None	None	2008
3	Promote plan adoption by the community at large	City Council, Chamber Board, OVC Board, community	None	None	2008
4	Hire professional urban planning services to create a downtown masterplan.	City of Ottawa Grow Ottawa Team	\$80,000	TIF funds	2009
5	Adopt downtown ordinances that give structure to destination activities	City of Ottawa Grow Ottawa Team	None	None	2010
6	Enhance "Old Town" with additional features.	City of Ottawa Grow Ottawa Team	To be determined	TIF funds	2009-2012
7	Develop a brand and logo "Standards & Practices" Manual	Grow Ottawa Team OVC	\$25,000	TIF funds	2009
8	Create a "Best of Ottawa" guide	OVC	Development: \$15,000 Printing: \$20,000 Website version/updates: 3,000	Hotel Tax funds, grants private sector funds	2010
9	Conduct brand-building outreach in the community	Grow Ottawa Team OVC	Inhouse staff Poster: \$5,000 Bookmarks: \$5,000	Hotel Tax funds	2009
10	Hire a Retail Business Recruiter	Grow Ottawa Team City of Ottawa	\$75,000 annually for two years	TIF funds	2009-2010
11	Create a Technical Assistance Program for downtown merchants	Chamber of Commerce	Workshop/Training: \$10,000	Chamber funds, TIF funds	2009 forward
12	Designate "Old Town" boundaries and apply a special zoning ordinance	City of Ottawa Grow Ottawa Team	No specific costs for adoption	None	2009
13	Create a website focused on the gardening brand	OVC	\$15,000	Hotel Tax funds, grants	2010 forward

Ottawa Recommendation List					
#	Title	Responsibility	Approx. Cost	Funding Sources	Timing
14	Develop public relations resources	Grow Ottawa Team OVC	\$50,000 over two years	Hotel Tax funds	2009 / 2010 forward
15	Develop an E-newsletter program	Grow Ottawa Team OVC	\$10,000 annually	Hotel Tax funds, Sponsorships	when the product is ready
16	Develop visitor activities and events to support the brand	Grow Ottawa Team City Special Events Dept. OVC	To be determined	Hotel Tax funds	2009 forward
17	Enhance the Wayfinding System, including kiosks	Grow Ottawa Team OVC City of Ottawa	Design:\$60,000 Fabrication/Installation \$100,000 \$36,000 for construction of kiosks (\$4,000 per kiosk) \$8,000 annual maintenance of kiosks	Hotel Tax funds, TIF funds, Grants	Wayfinding System Plan – 2009/2010 Fabrication/installation – 2010/2012 Kiosk const. – 2009
18	Recruit garden-oriented groups to Ottawa	OVC	To be determined	Hotel Tax funds	2011

## **The Ottawa Downtown Idea Book**



The samples on these pages are designed to provide an "idea book" of concepts that downtown property owners and merchants can adopt. Nothing sells like beautiful places. Studies prove that beautification increases retail sales and property values. Shown on this page, clockwise from top left: Banff, Alberta; Carmel, California; York, Pennsylvania (taken in November); Victoria, British Columbia; Turlock, California; Whistler Resort, British Columbia; Battle Creek, Michigan. Tip for street trees: every 30', use shade canopy trees (bottom center).





Shown clockwise from top left: Storm Lake, Iowa; Solvang, California (three photos); Sisters, Oregon; Wickford, Rhode Island. The Peach Blossom in Storm Lake spent only \$100 on outdoor potted plants and the hanging elements. This modest investment increased the store's sales by nearly a third. These types of landscape enhancements do not need to be seasonal. The local garden club in Sisters, Oregon (bottom center) has adopted their downtown, which is now one of the most popular towns in Oregon even though it's situated in the Cascade Mountains several hours from Portland.





Shown clockwise from top left corner: Pittsburg, California (garden structures and water features are growing in popularity and create a sense of intimacy); The Pearl District in Portland, Oregon; downtown Oxnard, California; a retail shop in Pendleton, Oregon; a restaurant in Newport, Rhode Island; median landscaping (changed three times annually) including trees, annual color, decorative street lighting, and pole banners in North Adams, Massachusetts; a retail shop in Ottawa, Illinois.





Shown clockwise from top left corner: Nevada City, California where deer come into downtown and so the beautification is made up of non-food items; Nantucket Island, Massachusetts (taken during the winter months - both right photos); A downtown B&B in Marshall, Michigan; shops in rural Lancaster, New Hampshire. All of these examples show that, for little cost, merchants can make their shops inviting, while easily increasing the “perceived value” of not only the shops, but the entire downtown area.





Shown clockwise from top left: Marshall, Texas (in October); Manteca, California (top center and right); Lodi, California (center and bottom right); Marshall, Texas; Leavenworth, Washington.





Shown clockwise from top left corner:  
 Jonesborough, Tennessee (in October); Keystone,  
 South Dakota; Jonesborough; Jackson, Texas  
 (center and bottom right); Owen Sound, Ontario;  
 Jonesborough (the oldest town in Tennessee). In  
 every one of these examples the business took the  
 lead in the beautification efforts you see. All have  
 stated that the effort pays for itself in increased  
 sales.





Clockwise from top left corner: Greenville, South Carolina showing the buffer between parking and sidewalks; Grass Valley, California (is this inviting or what?); Fredericksburg, Texas (next four photos - Fredericksburg is one of the most popular destination communities in Texas); a restaurant in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Once again, in each of these cases, the businesses took the lead in the beautification efforts, which are year-round programs.





Clockwise from top left: Fallbrook, California; Fredericksburg, Texas; Fallbrook; Door County, Wisconsin; Ellensburg, Washington; Fredericksburg (bottom center and left).





Ellicottville, New York; Carmel, California; Cannon Beach, Oregon; Asheville, South Carolina (center and bottom right - showing the power of outdoor seating and dining areas); Blaine, Washington; Cambria, California. All of these places “look” upscale and inviting, and all are exceptionally successful and have a strong year round tourism industry. Their beautification efforts are also year round, not just seasonal.





Clockwise from top left corner: Asheville, North Carolina (top three photos and center right - showcasing outdoor dining areas); Cannon Beach, Oregon; Battle Creek, Michigan (bottom center and left); Banff, Alberta. In life we have a “First Place” which is our home, a “Second Place,” which is where we work, and the “Third Place” is where we go to hang out or to meet friends or family. Third Places are gathering places, frequently downtowns, and have key elements: after hours entertainment and activities, destination retail shopping, and beautiful surroundings.





Clockwise from top left corner: Carmel, California (top left and center. Even though Carmel is home to one of America's most spectacular shore-lines, for every person on the beach, there are an average of 150 people shopping downtown.) Covington, Kentucky (just over the river from Cincinnati, and an entertainment district - all three photos, right, and bottom center); Modesto, California; Cannon Beach, Oregon.





Clockwise from top left corner: The city of Fallbrook, California removed a dilapidated building and in its place (on a corner in downtown) developed a permanent home for a Farmers Market (top three photos); ambient street lighting in Florence, Italy (center and bottom right), Greenville, South Carolina (last three photos) showcasing buffer areas, photo opportunities, and plaza area dining. Whenever possible convert parks into public plazas, then bring them to life with activities and events.





Clockwise from top left corner: The Walking Mall in Helena, Montana; a plaza and stage in Kalamazoo, Michigan; Arcadia Creek Festival Place also in Kalamazoo (both photos right and center bottom); Lodi, California showing wrought iron dining area, attractive pole banners, street trees and decorative low-level street lighting.





The top left and large (lower left) photo showcase a small gathering area and stage in Lethbridge, Alberta. Stockton should have two or three places like this downtown. Modesto, California (top center and right) uses planters as a barrier between retail shops and restaurants and the street, without the use of curbs. Muskogee, Oklahoma (bottom right).





Clockwise from top left: Nelson, British Columbia where merchants put out temporary eating decks during the six month peak season, which are then removed and stored to make snow removal easier. Newport, Rhode Island (top center); Ojai, California; Olympia, Washington; Oxnard, California (bottom center and left); Pendleton, Oregon showing a small staging area downtown.





Clockwise from top left corner: Pittsburg, California; the use of bollards in Santa Monica and Stockton, California. The bollards in Santa Monica (top center) are remote activated and drop down to provide emergency or delivery access. Deliveries are limited to certain hours each day. In Modesto (top right) the bollards are manually removed for access to the plaza area. Sisters, Oregon; Solvang, California; shade cover seating in Stockton, California; outdoor dining in Santa Barbara, California and in Salem, Massachusetts.





The bottom left photo was taken in Turlock, California, while the other three are in downtown Stockton. The plaza area (top left) balls are actually fountains. The tented area is used for large concerts and events. The use of arbors, trellis and garden structures in downtowns is increasing and creates an exceptional environment and “sense of place.”



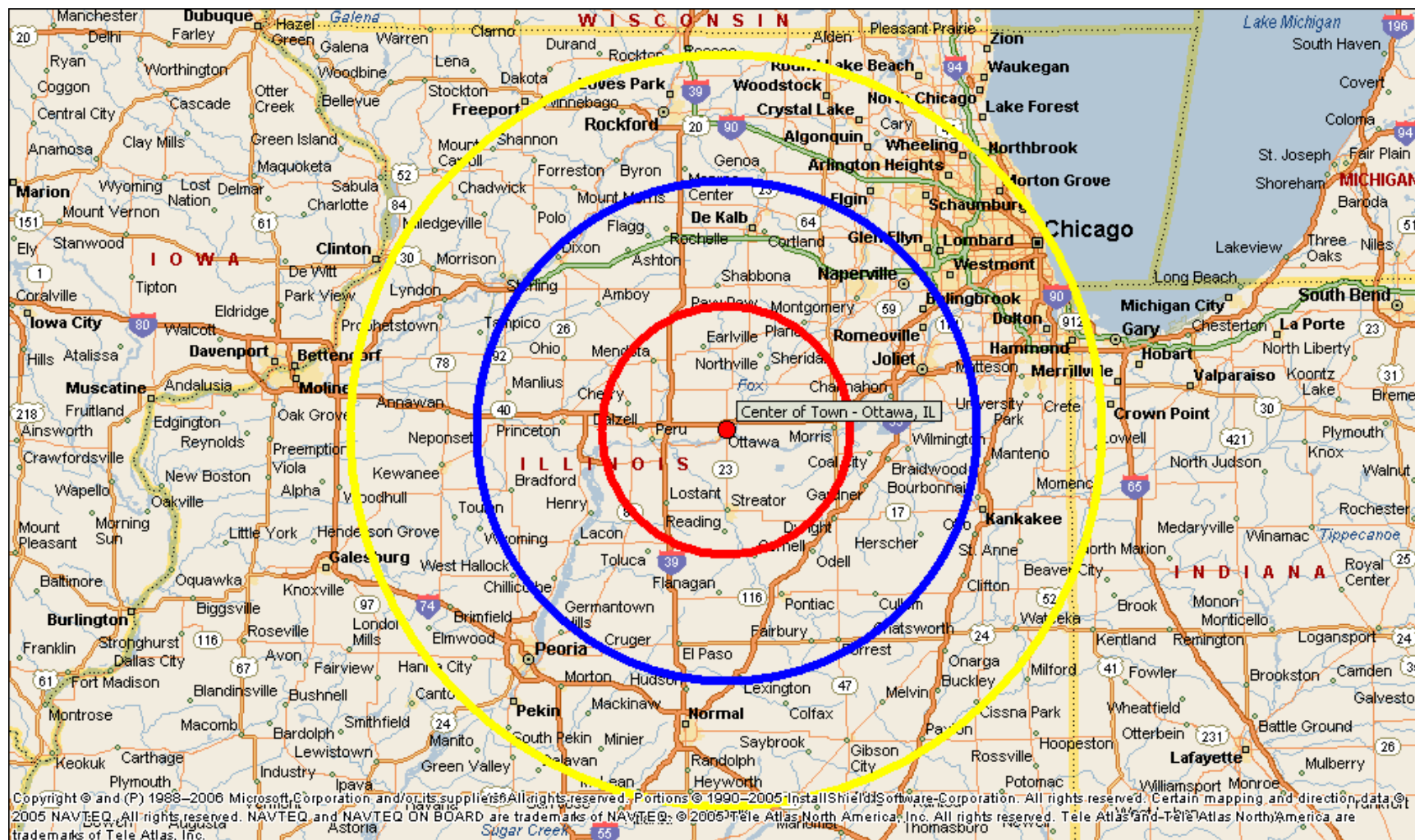
Clockwise from top left: Actual street in Stockton, with a conceptual drawing of how this street could be reconfigured. A restaurant in Whistler, BC; dining in Turlock, California; the gateway into downtown Lodi, California (bottom center and left); a village gateway in Woodlands, Texas approximately 30 miles north of Houston.



## Supporting Documentation



**Claritas Inc.  
Project 3140697 - Prepared for Destination Development  
Center of Town - Ottawa, IL**





**Prepared For Destination Development  
Project 3140697  
Center of Town - Ottawa, IL**

<b>Pop Facts: Demographic Quick Facts</b>	<b>Center of Town - Ottawa, IL 0.00 - 25.00 mi</b>	<b>Center of Town - Ottawa, IL 0.00 - 50.00 mi</b>	<b>Center of Town - Ottawa, IL 0.00 - 75.00</b>
<b>Population</b>			
2012 Projection	175,775	1,867,380	9,639,187
2007 Estimate	171,576	1,669,344	9,411,733
2000 Census	165,806	1,376,519	9,035,707
1990 Census	157,449	1,103,682	8,201,474
Growth 1990-2000	5.31%	24.72%	10.17%
<b>Households</b>			
2012 Projection	69,546	656,789	3,498,721
2007 Estimate	67,443	587,279	3,418,892
2000 Census	64,219	483,472	3,283,455
1990 Census	60,260	384,610	2,975,249
Growth 1990-2000	6.57%	25.70%	10.36%
<b>2007 Estimated Population by Single Race Classification</b>	<b>171,576</b>	<b>1,669,344</b>	<b>9,411,733</b>
White Alone	161,544 94.15%	1,365,824 81.82%	6,299,955
Black or African American Alone	2,344 1.37%	104,606 6.27%	1,609,527
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	319 0.19%	4,188 0.25%	26,995
Asian Alone	1,090 0.64%	62,485 3.74%	442,518
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	34 0.02%	705 0.04%	5,151
Some Other Race Alone	4,045 2.36%	96,511 5.78%	799,329
Two or More Races	2,200 1.28%	35,025 2.10%	228,258
<b>2007 Estimated Population Hispanic or Latino</b>	<b>171,576</b>	<b>1,669,344</b>	<b>9,411,733</b>
Hispanic or Latino	12,532 7.30%	238,916 14.31%	1,705,799
Not Hispanic or Latino	159,044 92.70%	1,430,428 85.69%	7,705,934
<b>2007 Tenure of Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>67,443</b>	<b>587,279</b>	<b>3,418,892</b>
Owner-Occupied	50,247 74.50%	455,413 77.55%	2,284,219
Renter-Occupied	17,196 25.50%	131,866 22.45%	1,134,673
<b>2007 Average Household Size</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>2.70</b>

## **Butterfly Gardens Research For Ottawa, IL**

### **Butterfly Gardens in Illinois Brookfield Zoo**

The Brookfield Zoo, just outside Chicago, has a screened, but outdoor, butterfly exhibit that is open seasonally – from Memorial Day through mid-September. The butterflies are raised there and visitors can see into the pupa room where they transform from caterpillar to butterfly. The garden is made up of flowers and plants that are native to Illinois.

### **Chicago Academy of Sciences/Notebaert Nature Museum**

The Notebaert Nature Museum located in Chicago has a year round, indoor butterfly exhibit. Located in a 2,700 square foot greenhouse, the habitat includes tropical trees, ponds, flowers and over 1,000 butterflies. It includes over 75 species of butterfly on any given day, including many that are not native to the area.

### **Henson Robinson Zoo**

The Henson Robinson Zoo in Springfield also has a seasonal, open-air butterfly exhibit.

### **Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden,**

The Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden, in Rockford Illinois, has a seasonal, outdoor butterfly garden. They state that “It is not difficult to attract these captivating insects into our yards and gardens. Nectar and host plants, sunlight, a water source, a rock or two and some shelter will do the job.”

### **Additional Information on Butterfly Gardens in Illinois**

The University of Illinois Extension has a webpage called “Gardeners Corner” and it has an article on creating a butterfly garden ([www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/gardenerscorner/issue\\_02/spring\\_04\\_06.html](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/gardenerscorner/issue_02/spring_04_06.html)). It includes a list of plants that will attract butterflies, as well as a list of the species of butterflies you might expect if you plant the right types of foods for egg laying. Species of butterfly include Black Swallowtail, Tiger Swallowtail, Monarch Butterfly, Great Spangled Fritillary, Buckeye, Morning Cloak, Viceroy, Red-Spotted Purple and Hackberry Butterflies.

[www.fpdcc.com/tier3.php?content\\_id=39](http://www.fpdcc.com/tier3.php?content_id=39)

This webpage details information about butterfly gardening in Cook County, IL. It includes a list of nectar flowers, information on garden design and a list of butterflies that occur in the area.

[www.possibilityplace.com/Knowledge/butterfly.asp](http://www.possibilityplace.com/Knowledge/butterfly.asp)

This is another article on butterfly gardening from the website of an Illinois nursery with information on the types of plants to attract specific species of butterfly.

[www.solutions.uiuc.edu/content.cfm?series=4&item=352](http://www.solutions.uiuc.edu/content.cfm?series=4&item=352)

Another University of Illinois page with information on butterflies and the larval food plants they require.

[www.solutions.uiuc.edu/content.cfm?series=4&item=353](http://www.solutions.uiuc.edu/content.cfm?series=4&item=353)

Nectar sources for butterflies – University of Illinois

## Notes for the Ottawa Brand

Formal gardens in Illinois – there are several. Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanic Garden, Anderson Japanese gardens, Ardens & Farms. See details in the doc “Illinois Gardens:.

### GARDEN CLUBS

Garden Clubs of Illinois – there are 206 clubs representing 9,648 members, plus 18 plant societies, arboretums, and 27 Junior Clubs. See tiff of the Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc. home webpage. [www.gardenglories.org/](http://www.gardenglories.org/)

Garden Clubs of Indiana – there are 106 clubs with 2,500 members, See tiff of the Garden Clubs of Indiana, Inc home webpage. [www.gardenclubofindiana.org/whoweare.htm](http://www.gardenclubofindiana.org/whoweare.htm)

Garden Clubs of Michigan – there are 189 clubs with 7,141 members. See tiff of the Garden Clubs of Michigan, Inc home webpage. [www.michigan-garden-clubs.org/](http://www.michigan-garden-clubs.org/)

Several national organizations to be aware of:

The Garden Club of America which is the parent organization of the State garden clubs. Their mission statement is to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, to share the advantages of association by means of N [www.gcamerica.org/](http://www.gcamerica.org/) See tiff of their home page.

The second one is National Garden Clubs which is the largest volunteer gardening organization in the world. They provide educational opportunities in all aspects of gardening, aids in the protection and conservation of natural resources, promotes civic beautification and encourages improvements of roadsides and parks. [www.gardenclub.org/home.aspx](http://www.gardenclub.org/home.aspx)  
See tiff of their home page.

The third is the National Gardening Association. “When you garden, you grow”. They serve a national audience with timely materials designed to foster an appreciation for the benefits of gardening. [www.garden.org/home](http://www.garden.org/home)  
See tiff of their home page.

The fourth is the American Community Gardening Association. The Mission is to build community by increasing and enhancing community gardening and greening across the United States and Canada.  
[www.communitygarden.org/](http://www.communitygarden.org/)

See tiff of home page.

The fifth is American Public Gardens Association [www.publicgardens.org/](http://www.publicgardens.org/). The APGA is committed to increasing the knowledge of public garden professionals throughout North America through information sharing, professional development, networking, public awareness, and research so they have the tools to effectively serve visitors and members. See tiff of website.

The sixth is National Garden Bureau [www.ngb.org/index.cfm](http://www.ngb.org/index.cfm) The National Garden Bureau is dedicated to the dissemination of accurate information so that home gardeners can successfully grow flowers and vegetables from seed. See tiff of website.

GardenWeb is a good commercial website devoted to gardening. [www.gardenweb.com/](http://www.gardenweb.com/).  
See tiff of home page.

### SOME REASONS FOR ADOPTING THE GARDENING BRAND

It supports the “Green” movement. Clean air (oxygen production), clean water, waste reduction, organic fertilizers, water conservation, natural pest management, composting, etc.

It supports Farmers Markets.

Garden Therapy – e.g. Fragrance gardens for the blind.

School gardening projects in elementary schools. Teaching organic gardening

Heirloom gardening – preserving original species.

Urban community gardens – providing garden plots for urban residents

Improves the quality of life for people in the garden

Provides a catalyst for neighborhood and community development

Stimulates Social Interaction

Encourages Self-Reliance

Beautifies Neighborhoods

- Produces Nutritious Food
- Reduces Family Food Budgets
- Conserves Resources
- Creates opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education
- Reduces Crime
- Preserves Green Space
- Creates income opportunities and economic development
- Reduces city heat from streets and parking lots
- Provides opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections.

### QUOTES ABOUT GARDENING PARTICIPATION

Quote: From “The Tourism and Leisure Industry: Shaping the Future” by Klaus Weiermair and Christine Mathies, Haworth Press, Inc. ISBN 0-7890-2103-X

“Using a framework that isolates the impacts of demographic change (including population aging) and incorporates life-course behavior, this chapter explores the impacts of demographic change on leisure futures. The framework is illustrated using data from a 1998 U.S. national health survey that includes both information on leisure activity participation and, conditional on participation, the frequency (or intensity) of participation.

The results reflect the aging of the U.S. population, especially the large baby boomer generation born between 1946 and 1964. The fastest-growing leisure activities on the list of twenty-one activities of the first two decades of the new millennium are walking for exercise and gardening or yard work.”

“In addition, the range of merchandise sold in support of these activities will change over time. Opportunities abound for businesses that incorporate these future leisure trends into their strategic plans. “

Quote: U.S. consumers now spend more than \$1.3 billion a year on container gardening, according to Container Gardening Associated.

Quote: Lawn and garden sales up 3 percent to more than \$35 billion in 2007

According to results of the recently completed 2007 National Gardening Survey retail sales of lawn and garden products to consumers totaled \$35.102

billion last year. That was an increase of 3 percent or \$1.025 billion more than the \$34.077 billion consumers spent on lawn and garden products in 2006. “That’s good news because it’s the first year we have seen overall retail lawn and garden sales increase since 2002,” said Mike Metallo, National Gardening Association President. Do-it-yourself lawn and garden activities that saw the biggest increase in spending in 2007 from the previous year included lawn care, vegetable gardening, ornamental gardening, and herb gardening.

Nationwide, 71 percent of all U.S. households or an estimated 82 million households participated in one or more types of lawn and garden activities in 2007 -- 3 million fewer households than the five-year average of 85 million participating households recorded from 2002 to 2006. The most popular lawn and garden activities in 2007 included lawn care (48% of households), growing indoor houseplants (31% of households), flower gardening (30% of households), and landscaping (27% of households).

Consumers spent an average of \$428 per household on do-it-yourself lawn and garden activities in 2007, or 7 percent more than the \$401 average spent in 2006. Households that spent the most on their lawns and gardens in 2007 included people 55 years of age and older, college graduates, married households, households with annual incomes of \$75,000 and over, households in the South, two-person households and households with no children at home.

NGA’s annual National Gardening Survey tracks household participation and spending on lawn and garden activities, lawn and garden product purchases, where people buy lawn and garden products, and consumer demographics. The 2007 study was based on a survey with a representative sample of 2,049 U.S. households conducted by Harris Interactive for the National Gardening Association. For more information please contact Bruce Butterfield, NGA Research Director, (802) 863-5251 ext. 113.

Fastest Growing Hobby???

On Google search many hobbies are calling themselves the “fastest growing hobby”. On the first few pages, gardening was not one of them listed.

### **Why Farmers Markets Fail:**

In a seven-year study of the performance of Oregon farmers' markets, 62 markets opened and 32 closed for a net statewide gain of 30 markets, said Larry Lev, a marketing economist in OSU's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

Nationally, more than 2,000 farmers' markets have opened since the mid-1990s. Oregon is a hotbed for this growth with 80-plus markets scattered around the state. However, the increasing popularity of the markets is in direct contrast with their surprisingly high failure rate.

"Farmers' markets are a great success story for Oregon agriculture," Lev said. "They connect consumers with farmers and increase local food security. But underneath that success is the hidden story that says for every two markets that opened during the study period, one closed."

New markets were most vulnerable to failure with 24 percent closing during or after their first year of operation. These failures represent almost half of all market failures in the state and illustrate the heightened vulnerability of first-year markets, said the researchers.

### **Other factors that increased risk of market failure, included:**

Small number of vendors;  
Need for a greater variety of farm products with specific emphasis on fruits and vegetables - products considered basic to farmers' markets;  
Lack of administrative revenue to meet operating needs;  
Low paid or volunteer market managers;  
High manager turnover.

These five factors are all connected to the supply and demand relationship between customers and farm vendors and can affect older markets as well, said Garry Stephenson, an Extension Small Farms specialist in OSU's Department of Crop and Soil Science. The smaller markets often fail to attract sufficient customers. Because there are few customers, fewer vendors are attracted to the market, resulting in a lack of products. In turn customers don't want to attend a market with a limited array of products.

"The relationship is different for farmers' markets than for most retail outlets," said Stephenson. "A viable farmers' market must have enough customers to be attractive to farm vendors. If the market is out of balance it may not succeed."

### **Examples of Permanent Farmers Markets**

See also: [farmersmarket.com/](http://farmersmarket.com/) - a list of farmers markets by state.

Google Images has dozens of great Farmers Market photos. See folder on Ottawa photos.

### **Ottawa, IL area plant nurseries and garden centers:**

#### **Garden Centers and Nurseries**

That Perennial Place

Ottawa, Illinois

3 miles away

Bennett Garden Center - Market

Utica, Illinois

8 miles away

That Perennial Place

Morris, Illinois

20 miles away

Bloomin Petals & More

Dwight, Illinois

22 miles away

Winding Creek Nursery & Garden Center

Millbrook, Illinois

23 miles away

Majestic Landscape

Newark, Illinois

23 miles away



Nicholas' Nursery  
Mazon, Illinois  
24 miles away

Larson's Family Farm  
Sandwich, Illinois  
26 miles away

Hinsdale Nurseries Inc.  
Plano, Illinois  
27 miles away

Jones Country Gardens  
Pontiac, Illinois  
28 miles away

Contrary Mary's Plants & Designs  
Minooka, Illinois  
30 miles away

Prairie Wood Nursery  
Minooka, Illinois  
30 miles away

#### **Ottawa Area Farmers Markets And Stands**

Knutson's Country Harvest  
Newark, Illinois  
19 miles away

Plow Creek Farm  
Tiskilwa, Illinois  
33 miles away

Keller's Farmstand  
Oswego, Illinois  
34 miles away

Jim Gorman Vegetables  
Wilmington, Illinois  
37 miles away

Keller's Farmstand  
Plainfield, Illinois  
37 miles away

Anderson Farm Produce  
Montgomery, Illinois  
38 miles away

Dunn's Farmstand  
Wilmington, Illinois  
38 miles away

Yaeger's Farm Market  
Dekalb, Illinois  
40 miles away

Kuipers Family Farm  
Maple Park, Illinois  
40 miles away

Keller's Farmstand  
Naperville, Illinois  
44 miles away

Theis Farm Market & Greenhouse  
Maple Park, Illinois  
44 miles away

Windy Acres  
Geneva, Illinois  
44 miles away

#### **Garden Products and Supplies near Ottawa**

Hinsdale Nurseries Inc.  
Plano, Illinois  
27 miles away

Contrary Mary's Plants & Designs  
Plainfield, Illinois  
38 miles away

The Red Geranium  
Batavia, Illinois  
42 miles away

Green View Nursery  
Lowpoint, Illinois  
44 miles away

Home Landscape Garden Center & Materials Inc  
Naperville, Illinois  
45 miles away

Smith & Hawken  
Geneva, Illinois  
46 miles away

Kestel Farm & Landscape Supply  
Manhattan, Illinois  
46 miles away

Home Landscape Materials Inc.  
Bolingbrook, Illinois  
46 miles away

## Ottawa Illinois Interview Summary

### Basic Facts

The City of Ottawa, Illinois is located in LaSalle County, Southwest of Metropolitan Chicago, about two hours drive. Linked by Interstate highways I-80 and I-39, the city population is recorded at 18,500, but 115,000 live within a 20-mile radius. The Illinois and Fox Rivers trisect the town. The average elevation is 480 feet above sea level. Land adjacent to the rivers is in a flood plain. The Illinois River is navigable and much industrial traffic uses it. There are locks both up river and down river from Ottawa.

Summers average about 82 degrees F in the summer and 21 degrees F in winter. Ottawa experiences about 35 inches of rain and 28 inches of snow each year.

During the 1830s, a settlement formed at the confluence of the Illinois and Fox Rivers around Fort Ottawa. The Green brothers cleared land and built a sawmill and a gristmill, grinding the first wheat by waterpower in northern Illinois in 1830. That year, the town of Ottawa was platted and, in 1831, with the creation of LaSalle County, was named the county seat. It consisted of Fort Johnston - the county court - and a plank-trading house. With the surrender of all native lands in Illinois to the federal government, the Ottawa area was opened to settlement. The rich soil in Illinois attracted the attention of European immigrant families, who began to arrive on a regular basis.

When work on the Illinois and Michigan Canal began in 1836, it attracted hundreds of Irish immigrants. Canal operations led to the growth and economic development of Ottawa. In 1837, Ottawa officially became a village. Sixteen years later, in 1853, it was an important industrial center and received its City Charter from the State.

By the 1850s, its population had grown to between 4,000 and 6,000. It attracted the first of a series of debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. By the turn of the century, Ottawa's population had reached more than 10,500.

Ottawa has a long history due to its location at the confluence of the Fox and Illinois Rivers. Industry has always been a driving force in the town, and was a significant destination along the Illinois & Michigan Canal, now the site of a bike path. The city continues to attract new businesses, with 10 new industries and 1,000 new jobs just in the past 18 months.

Politics also played a part in Ottawa with President Lincoln frequenting the area before his presidency, and holding debate with Mr. Douglas in Washington Square Park.

Ottawa is near popular Starved Rock State Park, Matthiessen State Park, Illini State Park and Buffalo Rock State Park. Most visitors come from Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Indiana and Michigan. LaSalle County ranked 16th in Illinois for counties that generate the most tourism-related revenue. Summer and fall are the most popular seasons for visitors.

### Ottawa Organizations

The City of Ottawa was incorporated in 1853 and operates as a non-home rule government. Ottawa is governed by a Council consisting of the Mayor and four Commissioners. Elections are held every four years. It has several Tax Increment Financing Districts one of which includes the downtown.

The Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry, has about 350 members, and in addition to focusing on serving its members, strives to increase economic development of the town and civic interests. The Chamber's five main fundraisers are: "welcome burger", "casual picnic", a golf outing, and the summer farmers market.

Ottawa Visitor Center, Inc. – the tourism marketing organization for Ottawa. Separate from the city and the chamber, all three work in tandem to develop Ottawa. The Center focuses on visitors and small meetings and conferences. Meeting facilities in town are small and few, as are the number of rooms.

### Ottawa Potential Attractions

Old Town Farmers Market – located on Jackson St. south of Washington Square Park, is successful and maintains its integrity as a true produce market of local goods. From May through October.

Riverfest is a multi-day event each summer largely organized and executed by the city. It has changed character over the years, takes a lot of time and energy, and draws thousands. Several days at the end of the festival there is alcohol served and this leads many to no longer regard it as a family festival. Most everyone I spoke with stays away from the festival. There is the opinion that the festival needs to be reduced to 3-4 days and upgraded. Others question the value to the retail community. Most stores do not stay open during the evening festival events, and some see the profile of the attendees as not the type that spend money in retail stores downtown.

An event sometimes associated with the Riverfest but no longer running is “Thunder on the River”, boat drag races. These were difficult to schedule because of industrial activity on the river.

- Cruise Night – essentially a car show on LaSalle St.
- Festival of Lights parade- the day after Thanksgiving. Stores close during the parade.
- Scarecrow Festival- moved to a Saturday, daytime when stores are open. Deemed successful this year.
- City Block Party in June in Washington Square. Friday night.
- Fourth of July Fireworks. On the river by the High School. Visible from both river shorelines.
- Music in the Park in Washington Square.

The local high school is known for its exceptional music program and is a state champion many times over. However, outside of a few local appearances, the band and chorale are not engaged in the community as attractions nor are the residents much aware of the music program as a cultural resource.

- Reddick Mansion – a historical building that houses the Visitor Center and Chamber
- Washington Square – one-block park and site of the Lincoln/Douglas debate in Ottawa
- Old Town/Murals – historic buildings and new murals depicting history
- Scouting Museum – not the official museum of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Illinois & Michigan Canal – filled in, now a bike path
- Riverwalk – a riverside promenade, incomplete at the moment

Within 10 minutes of downtown:

Skydive Chicago  
Canoeing/Kayaking opportunity  
Starved Rock State Park  
Buffalo Rock State Park  
Illini State Park  
LaSalle County Historical Society Museum

Within 20 minutes of downtown:

Lock 14 on the I & M Canal  
Hegeler Carus Mansion  
Mendota Museums  
Ted Weber House & gardens  
Mattheissen State Park

### **Opinions Regarding Tourism Development**

Overall the conventional wisdom is that the town has the basic resources to become a great little destination, and that the timing is right to do it now. The city politics are good, and there is a desire to focus on the riverfront. Industry is going well, storefronts are full, albeit not with the right kind of retail. Interestingly, there is little in the way of arts. History has a broader interest among the locals. More has happened in the last nine years to improve the town than in the previous ninety years.

The lifestyle is good, so far the national meth-drug problem has not scourged the town, and crime is low. Few homeless frequent the downtown. Shop owners deal with the issues of neglectful landlords, and consider rents as too high, even though they are very low.

The downtown parking situation leads to parking tickets and that keeps some people away. 2-hour parking is not working. Washington Park lighting is a real improvement. Residents do shop downtown, but it could be better. All the big box stores are in the neighboring town of Peru.

Many youth tend to gather in the downtown, which boasts three tattoo parlors, including one on LaSalle St. The location of the High School right across the bridge probably adds to this. High School students park in one of

the larger public parking lots near the river and walk over the bridge to the school. There is some anecdotal evidence of vandalism – not so much with graffiti, but with destruction of plant material, retailer's curb enhancements, litter, and broken glass. The police presence of downtown Ottawa is less than it was ten years ago. There used to be a cop that walked the downtown beat, but unfunded mandates to respond to domestic disturbances and the like have taken police away from their traditional role in the downtown and engaged them in a lot of residential coverage and paperwork. The number of policemen on staff don't provide for the downtown coverage Ottawa once had.

The long era of building code negligence is over. Time was that you could build just about any way you wanted, although few made improvements. A new sheriff is in town in the building department and codes will be enforced. This may affect the economics of improving buildings and attracting more upscale tenants.

### **The Downtown**

The downtown is approached by I-80, which runs east/west about 3 miles north of the downtown. Highway 23 runs north/south through the middle of town and across the Illinois River that runs east/west through the southern end of downtown. The state highway becomes LaSalle Street – the main street of the downtown and there are many big rigs that use it hourly. Traffic speed appears to be slightly faster than the speed limit. LaSalle is one way southbound and the corresponding northbound street one block over is Columbus St. Both are densely commercial/retail.

The downtown contains a number of stately churches, many of which are quite old, and historic buildings dating from the early to mid-1800's. The main retail streets of LaSalle and Columbus and the side streets that connect them are populated by retail, eating establishments and local services and offices. There are few empty storefronts. The core of the downtown is bounded on the north by the old Illinois & Michigan Canal strip (now filled in), on the south by the Illinois River, on the east by the Fox River, and on the west by the Illinois Railnet Railroad.

The middle of downtown contains the Washington Square Park block, recently landscaped, and upgraded with a refurbished Civil War memorial,

and statues of Lincoln and Douglas. The popular Farmer's Market takes place adjacent to the park and the historic Riddick Mansion is across the street to the north. Many of the buildings need façade improvements, and curb appeal of the retail stores is largely missing. Many of the restaurants are low or mid-range, with almost none achieving parity with the best restaurants of large metropolitan areas.

The downtown has great “bones” and there are already efforts by some property owners to upgrade their properties, but there is no separation of local services and destination retail or critical mass. A downtown cinema building is now a multiplex, owned by an absentee owner who has about ten theaters. It needs a good face-lift and new marquee.

The town did have a Main Street Program but no longer. Property owners were not engaged in it. There was also a downtown association but it faded away as well.

Two individuals own several of the downtown buildings and neither has taken the initiative to upgrade their buildings in any substantial manner. Concentration of ownership is not as severe as most of the town believes, and there should be plenty of opportunity to improve buildings in the downtown.

Downtown gardens, including parking lots are maintained on a regular schedule. There are some trees, and Honey Locust is used a lot. Sycamore would be good around the historic County Courthouse.

The city is beginning to orient itself to the Illinois River, after many decades of ignoring it because it was an industrial artery. There is great potential along the riverbank. A riverwalk from the Illinois River shore up and along the Fox River shore is being developed. Some sections are missing but this is currently being worked on. There are summer docks at the point where the Highway 23 bridge crosses the Illinois River, which is also at the point where the Fox River empties into the Illinois. A more substantial dock system is being planned.

Heritage Harbor has recently acquired the city block closest to the river and the bridge. It is available for a planned development. Most important,

the elementary school next to the river and partially in the 100-year flood plain may be available for purchase from the School District. This would allow a master-planned waterfront development in conjunction with the Heritage Harbor property and would allow a true riverfront orientation to the downtown.

Another important property is the old Ottawa Yacht Club building at the point of confluence of the two rivers.

#### Other Parts of Town

The north part of Ottawa surrounds exit 90 intersection of I-80. This area is characterized by big box stores, light industrial, shopping malls and strip malls mixed with some residential. State highway 71 leaves I-80 to the east of town, comes into town at a 45-degree angle and then heads west just north of the downtown core.

East Ottawa is separated from the downtown by the Fox River and is mostly old residential and the High School, which is bounded on the west by the Fox River and the south by the Illinois River. Further to the east is Heritage Harbor Ottawa, a new high-end residential community and marina, now under construction.

In the middle of the Illinois River are three islands, all privately owned, which could lend themselves to development. Heritage Harbor will likely acquire access to the one furthest east and closest to their marina/resort for use by their residents/guests.

South Ottawa is separated from downtown by the Illinois River and is essentially residential, with a conscious decision to not include retail and local services.

West of the downtown core, but connected is an older residential community.

The town was a large glass-making center because of the high quality of silica in the area, much of which was mined. Several glass factories sprung up and were successful in Ottawa and still are.

Heritage Harbor Ottawa is a marina resort community being developed a few miles east of the downtown along the Illinois River. It is expected to almost triple the assessed valuation of Ottawa. In a TIF zone, the appreciated value of the developed properties will contribute substantially to the ability of Ottawa to develop as a visitor destination and a gathering place for local residents. 750-900 homes will be developed around a marina, yacht club, and lifestyle town center. The investors and residents of this resort will expect to find a charming, interesting place to shop and dine. Ottawa has an opportunity to be that place, and must get ready.

#### Competitive Towns

Utica, IL is a village in the path of the most direct gateway to Starved Rock State Park off I-80. Utica has one short main street of middle to low-end retail shops and bars/restaurants. It received notoriety from a devastating tornado several years ago.

Galena, IL – near Dubuque, is a town that has developed as a major tourist destination based on history, art, architecture, dining, shopping and golf, weekend getaways, etc.

- Lake Geneva, WI - another town that has embraced tourism.
- Peru, IL – vibrant downtown
- Naperville, IL - great place to live.

#### Funding Resources

Ottawa has a Hotel Room Tax for the city that is 5%. The city has only 384 rooms.

Tax Increment Financing is available in Ottawa for business and industry to fund new developments. The increase in real estate taxes generated by any project—the increment—is shared with the Developer to defray eligible costs. The real estate tax increment includes all real estate taxes: school, county, townships, city, etc. The City's share of the state sales tax—1%—may also be used. Eligible TIF costs: professional & consulting fees, land, existing building rehab, job training, interest.

The Upper Illinois River Valley Community Development Corporation (UIRVDC) offers loans that generally will be at or below market rates of interest. The term is to be negotiated, and the loan amount based upon number of jobs created.

The Upper Illinois River Valley Development Authority (UIRVDA) has the power to issue taxable or tax-exempt revenue bonds on behalf of a company for the purpose of developing, constructing, acquiring or improving facilities within Ottawa. Interest on tax-exempt bonds is exempt from federal tax, maturity is flexible ranging from 10 to 30 years, and interest rates may be fixed or flexible. Such financing reduces the cost of a project by lowering the interest rate on the money loaned.

The Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) offers a variety of incentives and financing packages that will be researched for the developer by the Ottawa Economic Development Team. Illinois Valley Community College's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is also available to help create business and financial plans for the developer.

The Ottawa Industrial Development Commission offers low interest loans.

**Sales Tax Exemption** — A 6-1/2% state sales tax exemption on building materials that will be used in the Zone. Materials must be purchased from an Illinois business.

**Machinery/Equipment Sales Tax Exemption** — A 6-1/2% state sales tax exemption on the purchase of tangible personal property to be used or consumed in the maintenance of manufacturing and assembly equipment. Eligibility is contingent upon levels of business investment and the jobs created or maintained.

**A State Exemption on Utility Taxes** on natural gas, electricity and charges related to telecommunications. The business must make an investment of \$5 million that creates a minimum of 200 full-time jobs, or a \$20 million investment for the retention of 1,000 full-time jobs. The majority of the jobs must be in the Zone.

**Jobs Tax Credit** — A Developer may receive a \$500 tax credit for each job created in the Zone for which a dislocated or economically disadvantaged worker is hired. A minimum of five eligible employees must be hired.

**Investment Tax Credit** — A state investment tax credit of 0.5% is allowed a taxpayer who invests in qualified property in the Zone. Qualified property includes machinery, equipment and buildings. Credit may be carried forward for up to five years.

This credit is in addition to the regular state 0.5% credit, as well as a 0.5% tax credit for businesses that increase employment by 1% over the preceding year.

**State Income Tax Deductions** — Individuals, corporations, trusts and estates are not taxed on dividend income from corporations doing substantially all their business in the Zone.

**Interest Income** — Financial institutions are not taxed on interest received on loans for development within the Zone.

**Contribution Deduction** — Businesses may deduct, from taxable income, double the value of a cash or in-kind contribution to an approved project of a designated Zone organization.

**A Sales Tax Exemption** of 1-1/2% combined with the 5% state incentive provides a total of 6-1/2% on locally purchased building materials.

**A Partial Property Tax Abatement** is available for all commercial or industrial real estate property located within the Enterprise Zone that constitutes as new improvement or renovation.

**Fees** on all building permits for buildings, signs, plumbing, electrical have been reduced by fifty percent. A streamlined process reduces paperwork, reducing your costs and time.

## List of Interviewees

Tami Huftel  
City Planner  
City of Ottawa

Melissa Ruvalcaba  
Assistant Executive Director  
Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce  
& Industry

Bridget O'Brian  
Executive Director  
Ottawa Visitors Center, Inc.

Pat Graham  
Proprietor  
Bell's Clothing Store

Sharon Rossiter  
Proprietor  
Scrapbook Den

Paulette Sheedy  
Resident  
City of Ottawa

Dave Noble  
City Engineer  
City of Ottawa

Bob Eschbach  
Mayor  
City of Ottawa

Dale Baxter  
City Commissioner  
City of Ottawa

Eileen Bowen  
Proprietor  
Quilting Family Quilt Shop

Barb Mann  
Proprietor  
Mann Made

Heather Johnson

Lupe O'Leary  
President  
Historic Society

Alan Howarter  
Member  
Ottawa Planning Commission

Debbie Burns  
Member  
Ottawa Planning Commission

Dan Aussem  
City Commissioner  
City of Ottawa

Ed Whitney

City Commissioner  
City of Ottawa

George Cary  
Partner  
Basalay, Cary & Alstadt, Architects,  
Ltd.  
Wayne Eichelkraut  
City Commissioner  
City of Ottawa

Gary Osepic  
Officer  
Ottawa Savings Bank

Curt Sesto  
Owner  
Audio Plus

Nancy Stisser  
Administrative Assistant  
City of Ottawa

Bob Paglis  
Investment Broker  
Edward Jones

Tom Ganiere  
Planning Commissioner  
City of Ottawa

Eileen Fesco  
Proprietor  
Book Mouse Bookstore

Frank Pullen  
Owner  
Obée's (retaurant)

Mike Sutfin  
Building and Zoning Officer  
City of Ottawa

Brian Zellmann  
Police Chief  
City of Ottawa

Roger Amm  
Chorale Director  
Ottawa High School

Tom Heimsöth  
Developer  
Heritage Harbor Ottawa

## Sidewalk Cafe Design Guidelines and Standards

### 1. Space and Clearance

Sidewalk cafés are permitted only on sidewalks with a minimum width of 10 feet from the property line to the curb face. The area designated for the sidewalk café shall be considered an extension of the franchise, therefore the location of the sidewalk café must be directly in front of the franchise. In the interest of public safety, if a traffic lane occurs adjacent to the sidewalk, a sidewalk café will be permitted only if the minimum sidewalk width is 15 feet.

Sidewalk cafés must maintain a clear pedestrian path of at least five feet at all times. On sidewalks with an adjacent traffic lane, the clear pedestrian path must be 10 feet wide. This clear area must be free of any obstructions such as trees, parking meters, and utility poles to allow adequate pedestrian passage. Sidewalk cafés shall not interfere with any utilities or other facilities such as telephone poles, fire hydrants, parking meters, mailboxes, or signs located on the sidewalk and in the public right-of-way.

Sidewalk cafés may not impinge on required clear distances for maneuvering around entrances or exits. The outdoor dining area must be accessible to disabled patrons and employees. When a sidewalk café is located at a street corner, vision clearance requirements shall be in accordance with city ordinance. These regulations may also apply if a sidewalk café is adjacent to an alley or driveway.

### 2. Furniture and Other Elements

Tables, chairs, umbrellas, awnings, and any other elements associated with a sidewalk café must be of quality design, workmanship, and materials to ensure the safety and convenience of patrons as well as to enhance the visual and aesthetic character of the streetscape and adjacent neighborhood.

All sidewalk café elements will be reviewed as part of the sidewalk café permitting process. Sidewalk café tables and chairs must be placed inside the area designated for sidewalk dining only. Table size should be kept to a minimum to avoid crowding. Appropriate density of tables and chairs will be reviewed. Permanent structures are not permitted in sidewalk cafés. Elements cannot be attached permanently to sidewalks or public rights-of-way. The permit holder is responsible for the restoration of the sidewalk or public right-of-way if any damage is caused by the sidewalk café.

Temporary physical barricades to separate sidewalk cafés from pedestrian traffic are allowed if they are constructed of finished quality materials

including wrought iron chains, rope stanchions, picket fencing, planters, etc. Physical barriers are required if liquor is sold at a sidewalk café. No signs shall be placed on barricades. Paper products for the consumption of food or beverages are not permitted.

### 3. Overhead Structures

Umbrellas and other temporary overhead structures are subject to approval during the sidewalk café permitting process. No portion of any umbrella shall be less than seven feet above the sidewalk. Umbrellas and overhead structures cannot interfere with street trees, must be weather resistant, and designed to be secure during windy conditions.

Awnings, either permanent or temporary, are subject to approval during the sidewalk café permitting process. Awnings shall have no support posts located within the public right-of-way, and no portion of an awning shall be less than eight feet above the sidewalk.

### 4. Signage

Signs advertising the sale of goods or services at a sidewalk café are prohibited. This includes sandwich boards, banners, and signs on furniture or umbrellas. Menus are restricted to a maximum size of 9x12 inches. A sign must be posted in a visible location at every sidewalk café that states: "It is unlawful to consume alcoholic beverages not purchased at the permit holder's establishment or sidewalk café or to remove alcoholic beverages from the sidewalk café."

### 5. Lighting

Lighting for sidewalk cafés is subject to approval during the sidewalk café permitting process. Lighting must complement the existing building and sidewalk café design and shall not cause a glare to passing pedestrians or vehicles. Electrical wires are not permitted within the sidewalk café. Acceptable tabletop lighting includes candles and low-wattage battery-operated fixtures. Additional lighting may be attached to the adjacent franchise provided that approval is obtained from the city.

### 6. Outdoor Heaters

Outdoor heaters for sidewalk cafés are subject to approval during the sidewalk café permitting process.

### 7. Vending Machines, Cars

Vending machines, carts, or other objects for sale are prohibited.

### 8. Service and Use

All services provided to sidewalk café patrons as well as all patron activity (waiting, sitting, dining, etc.) must occur within the designated sidewalk café

area and not impinge on pedestrian traffic at any time. No alcoholic beverages may be stored or mixed in the sidewalk café. Equipment necessary for dispensing any other items is subject to review during the sidewalk café permitting process. The franchise must provide supervision of the sidewalk café to ensure that operations and the conduct of patrons are in compliance with this document at all times.

### **9. Insurance Requirements**

Every sidewalk café permit holder must furnish a certificate of insurance proving commercial insurance coverage of at least \$1,000,000 for bodily injury, death, disability, and property damage liability. The policy shall provide for 30 days' prior written notice to the city if coverage is substantially changed, cancelled, or not renewed. The city shall be named as an additional insured on a primary, noncontributory basis for any liability arising directly or indirectly from the operation of a sidewalk café. The permit holder shall indemnify, defend, and hold the city harmless from any loss that results directly or indirectly from the permit issuance or operation of the sidewalk café. If alcoholic beverages are served at the sidewalk café, the permit holder shall provide proof of liquor liability insurance for the sidewalk café with limits not less than \$1,000,000 in such type as shall be acceptable to the city. Each permit holder shall maintain the insurance coverage required during the permit period. The certificate(s) of insurance shall be presented to the zoning administrator prior to the issuance of a permit. Failure of the permit holder to maintain the insurance required by this document shall result in the revocation of the sidewalk café permit.

### **Rules and Regulations**

1. A sidewalk café permit is valid for one year from the date of issuance.
2. Sidewalk cafés shall not operate earlier than 7:00 a.m. or later than 11:00 p.m. unless the hours of the franchise are more restricted, in which case the more restrictive hours apply.
3. All sidewalk café employees must comply with all requirements and standards for a retail food establishment.
  - a) Patrons must wear shoes and shirts at all times.
  - b) All sidewalk cafés must have an opening for ingress and egress at all times.
  - c) At all times, sidewalk cafés must adhere to size, design, and other requirements approved by the city.
  - d) Strict adherence to hours of operation, approved layout, and clear space for pedestrians is mandatory.

4. All areas within and surrounding a sidewalk café must be maintained in a clean, neat, and sanitary condition and policed routinely by permit holder to ensure removal of all wrappings, litter, and debris. Daily sanitary cleaning is required. Sidewalks within and adjacent to a sidewalk café must be washed down on a daily basis. The permit holder shall not wash garbage cans or other containers on the sidewalks. All cleaning must be performed in accordance with city regulations.

5. Sidewalk cafés are prohibited from playing amplified music, whether live or recorded. No speakers, microphones, televisions, or other audio or video devices are permitted.

6. The operation of the sidewalk café must be clearly incidental to the associated franchise. The seating capacity of the sidewalk café cannot exceed 50 percent of the establishment's interior seating capacity.

7. Sidewalk café tables, chairs, and other elements must be removed immediately after the close of daily operations. Stacking or storing of tables, chairs, heaters, or any other element in the public right-of-way is prohibited.

8. City code enforcement officers will monitor sidewalk cafés after permits have been issued and cafés are in operation. Any violations of the provisions of these rules and regulations, or any deviation from approved plans will result in citations being issued and/or permit being revoked.

9. Any permit holder, or his or her employees, who violate or resist enforcement of any provisions of this document may be subject to immediate permit revocation by the city and subject to a fine provided that each day that such violation continues shall be deemed a separate and distinct offense. The fines shall be in addition to any expenses incurred for restoration or repair of the public right-of-way, which shall be the responsibility of the permit holder.

10. Permit holders shall be required to maintain a current city business license.

11. Permit holders shall be required to abide by all federal, state, and local laws.

12. If a permit is issued, the permit holder is required to pay an annual rental fee in the form of certified funds in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per square foot.

### **Permit**

In order to receive a permit for a sidewalk café on a public right-of-way, the applicant must demonstrate that the provisions of these guidelines will be met. Documentation demonstrating compliance with these guidelines must accompany the application in order to receive a permit. A sidewalk café

permit will not be issued until the zoning administrator and fire marshal have conducted a site inspection of the proposed sidewalk café and all elements to be placed therein to ensure that the sidewalk café is in compliance. The city will send an invoice to renew the sidewalk café permit annually. If the permit is not renewed or does not conform to the original conditions of the permit, a new permit may be required.

#### Sidewalk Café Application Form

Name of Franchise \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Owner/Proprietor \_\_\_\_\_

Owner/Proprietor Address \_\_\_\_\_

Owner/Proprietor Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated period of use each year \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed hours of operation \_\_\_\_\_

Total area of public right-of-way to be used for sidewalk café (in square feet)

Will liquor be sold or consumed in the sidewalk café? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Application must include both a site plan and seating plan with the following information:

#### SITE PLAN

\_\_\_\_ 3 copies (8.5x11)

\_\_\_\_ Legible

\_\_\_\_ Scale

\_\_\_\_ North arrow

\_\_\_\_ Name, address of franchise \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Width of sidewalk adjacent to café

\_\_\_\_ Name of adjoining streets, alley

\_\_\_\_ Size of area proposed for café

\_\_\_\_ Width of sidewalk adjacent to café

\_\_\_\_ Shows building entries and exits

\_\_\_\_ Location of existing improvements

\_\_\_\_ Location, number of tables and chairs (utility poles, parking meters, etc.)

\_\_\_\_ Location and dimensions of sidewalk area proposed for café and sidewalk width remaining for public access (min. 5 feet)

\_\_\_\_ Location and dimensions of any proposed improvements associated with sidewalk café (awnings, planters, barricades, etc.)

#### SEATING PLAN

\_\_\_\_ 3 copies (8.5x11)

\_\_\_\_ Legible

\_\_\_\_ Scale

\_\_\_\_ North arrow

## Street Performers Ordinance

The City should encourage such performances, while at the same time recognizing that they draw crowds that may create safety problems. An ordinance should be adopted by the City that stipulates rules and regulations governing street performance, so the safety of performers, their audiences, and the general public is ensured. All street performers should be required to obtain a permit. Street performers add a cosmopolitan flair to a community and entertain residents and visitors alike. The following Street Performer Guidelines stipulate rules and regulations governing this activity. This is a compilation of documents from several cities that recognize the value of street performance. A sample application is included at the end of the guidelines.

### Street Performer Guidelines

No person shall perform in a public area without a permit from the city. The permit must include the name and address of the performer, term of the permit, and the type and location(s) of the performance. A performer shall clearly display his or her permit while performing and allow inspection of the permit by any city official or police officer. All performances must comply with this document, state and local laws, and conditions of the permit. Permits are not transferable and each member of a group who perform together is required to obtain an individual permit.

Every person wanting to engage in street performance is required to make a written application for a Street Performer Permit from the city clerk accompanied by a fee established by the city. The application form requires the following information:

- Applicant's name, address, and phone number.
- Birth date of applicant.
- Applicant's driver's license or personal identification number.
- A description of the subject matter and method of performance.
- The period for which the permit applies.
- The location of areas in which the performance will be conducted.
- A statement as to whether the applicant has ever been convicted of a felony.
- A 2x2 inch color photo of the applicant's head and shoulders.

- A signed permission slip from the property owner, if performance is to occur on private property.

#### Rules & Regulations

#### LOCATION:

Performances may take place in the following locations:

- a) On private property, with the written permission of the owner or other person in control of such property.
- b) In public areas designated by the city.

#### TIME:

Hours during which performances may occur are determined by the city.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS:

Performers may accept, but not verbally solicit, contributions from audience members.

#### PROHIBITIONS:

No performer shall:

- a) Perform without first obtaining a permit issued by the city.
- b) Perform outside areas indicated on the map that accompanies this document or off the private property for which the performer has obtained written permission.
- c) Perform within 10 feet of any bus stop, street corner, pedestrian crosswalk, or the entrance to any business (during hours the business is open to the public).
- d) Block or obstruct the free and safe movement of pedestrians. If a sufficient crowd gathers to observe a performer and interferes with public passage, a city police officer may disperse that portion of the crowd that is blocking passage.
- e) Use any knife, sword, axe, saw, torch, flame, or other object that can cause serious bodily injury; any amplification device; any generator, battery, or power source that poses a fire or public safety hazard; any electrical connection to an adjacent building or city power source.
- f) Leave litter at his or her performance site.
- g) Utilize or prevent the public from using any public benches, waste receptacles, or other street furnishings during his or her performance.

h) Place any object on a public sidewalk that leaves less than a five foot passage for pedestrian traffic.

i) Place his or her instruments, props, equipment, or other items unattended on a public sidewalk or right-of-way.

j) Offer any items for sale. Performers who wish to sell items must first obtain a city peddler's license.

k) Display any sign other than the name of the performer(s) and the Street Performer Permit.

l) Include a minor under the age of 16 in the performance unless accompanied at all times by a responsible adult 18 years of age or older.

#### REVOCATION OF PERMIT:

A Street Performer Permit may be revoked by the city if the city clerk has reason to believe that a performer has:

- a) Violated any provisions of this document or any city or state laws.
- b) Made a false statement in the application.
- c) Conducted a performance adverse to public safety or prevailing community standards of public decency.

#### COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS:

If a written complaint is filed with the city alleging that a performer has violated any provisions of this document, the city clerk shall promptly send a copy of the written complaint to the performer, together with a notice that an investigation will be made regarding the truthfulness of the complaint. The performer will be invited to respond to the complaint, present evidence in his or her behalf, and respond to evidence produced by the investigation. If, after reviewing all relevant material, the city clerk finds the complaint to be valid, the complaint shall be certified. If a permit is denied or revoked by the city clerk, or if a written complaint is certified, the permit holder may appeal to a hearing before the city manager. After presentation by the permit holder and investigation by the city clerk, the city manager shall make a final written determination. If the city manager decides in favor of the city clerk, the action of the city clerk will be sustained and the applicant may appeal the decision to a court of jurisdiction.

**STREET PERFORMANCE APPLICATION**

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License or ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed hours of performance \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed location(s) of performance \_\_\_\_\_  
(note: written permission of property owner required if on private property)

Describe the subject matter and method of performance \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Applicant must include the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2x2 inch color photo of head and shoulders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's license or other photo ID
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written permission of property owner if performing on private property

**Peer-driven Retail Sign Ordinance**

A downtown district is an economic asset. Signage consistency will help maintain the value of this asset. Following is a recommended framework for the establishment of Sign Review Board. The Mayor will appoint the Sign Review Board, with confirmation by the City Council. It will consist of five voting members and one ex officio member. Voting members will be two commercial property owners and three representatives of commercial tenants from within the district. The Ex officio member will be a City Planner. Voting members will be appointed for a term of three years with the terms of initial appointment as follows: One commercial property owner appointed for two years and one commercial property owner appointed for three years. One commercial tenant representative appointed for one year, one commercial tenant representative appointed for two years, and one commercial tenant representative appointed for three years. Thereafter, all appointments shall be for a term of three years. Any person appointed to fill an unexpired term shall serve for the remainder of that term. The board shall elect a chairman and other officers it deems necessary. Each officer's term will be for one year. A City Planner shall serve as executive secretary of the Board and be responsible for all records, keeping minutes, and providing public notice of meetings and sign permit applications. The City shall provide the Board with necessary administrative support and expense budget to perform its functions. The Mayor, with the concurrence of a majority of the City Council, shall have the authority to remove, replace or terminate any Board members. Meeting times shall be established by the City Council with the provision that special meetings may be scheduled to accommodate workload or ensure that the cost to applicants and the City are as low as possible.

The Sign Review Board reviews the following:

1. Changes required for compliance of existing signs
2. Alternations to previously approved signs
3. Design and installation of new signs
4. Allegations concerning signs in violation of the design standards

For items 1, 2, or 3, after the pre-application process is completed, members of the Board will perform initial review of a sign permit application. If a majority of Board members finds that the proposed sign is consistent

with the design standards, no further review by the Board is necessary. The City Planner shall issue a written administrative decision within ten days of receipt of the Board's recommended findings and conclusions. This decision shall incorporate any Board recommendations, except for any condition that is contrary to law or the applicable design standards. Any aggrieved party to the City Planner's decision may appeal. For item 4, any person or entity alleging that a sign within the Main Street district does not comply with the design standards can submit a complaint form. The sign owner will be notified of the complaint and if the sign is not removed, the Board will render a determination.

#### Suggested Design Guidelines

##### A. Permissible Sign Types

###### 1. Wall signs

- a. Wall signs may be located near the primary entrance of a retail storefront as a secondary identity, menu board or thematic message or tag line.
- b. They should be well integrated with the existing or proposed building architectural features.
- c. The size and form must follow the guidelines illustrated in Figure 1.1

###### 2. Projecting Signs

- a. Projecting signs may hang from a canopy frame or incorporated with an ornamental metal bracket secured to a storefront wall.
- b. The size and form must follow the guidelines illustrated in Figure 2.1

###### 3. Sandwich Boards

- a. Double sided sandwich may be located directly in front of a storefront, within 10 feet of the primary storefront entrance.
- b. They may include a branded logo, theme graphics, tag line, products/services list and menu items (for restaurants and foodservice retailers).
- c. They may not project more than 42" from the storefront into the sidewalk or more than 42" from the street curb into the sidewalk.
- d. The size and form follow the guidelines illustrated in figure 3.1

###### 4. Window Signs

- a. Window signs may be applied directly to the inside surface of a window as a vinyl or screen printed application.
- b. It may include a branded logo, thematic message or tag line.

- c. Hours of operation, and credit card logos may be placed directly to the inside surface of a glass entrance door.
- d. The size and placement must follow the guidelines illustrated in figures below and next page.

##### B. Materials

1. Durable, high quality materials should be employed, compatible with the design and materials of the building.
2. Carved or dimensional wood signs are strongly recommended
3. Plastic materials may be employed if used in combination with higher quality materials, or as part of individual internally lit letters or symbols.
4. Live potted around the base of a sign is recommended to enhance the sign and the image of the business.

##### C. Colors

1. Signs should employ materials, colors and typefaces that complement the primary architectural style of the building.
2. Signs utilizing light-colored letters against a dark background are encouraged.

D. Illumination. Directly illuminated signage should be from a series of gooseneck or similar extended arm fixtures, which direct light to the façade and are compatible with the design of the building.

##### E. Form Guidelines

1. (Scaled drawings of various suggested sign forms go here).
2. (Sample photographs of existing desirable signs).

SEE ADD FIGURES 1.1 to 4.1 on next page)

#### Sign Design Approval and Permit Application Form Checklist

Site Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant:

- a. Completed Sign Permit Application
- b. Application Fee
- c. Sketch or photograph of sign (3 copies)
- d. Paint chips or color rendering of proposed colors
- e. Description of sign construction
- f. Description of type of attachment, if not free standing

- g. Description of sign materials
  - h. Letter from property owner giving permission for installation and detailing square footage allotment
  - i. If projecting over public right-of-way, signed and recorded Restrictive Covenant, Agreement, and Right of Way Use Permit
  - j. SITE PLAN (scale 20' = 1", minimum size 8 ½ x 11) Indicate the following
    - a. Proposed sign locations
    - b. Property lines, streets, north arrow
    - c. Lineal footage of building façade containing a public entrance
    - d. Indication that the sign does not create a sight obstruction
- Reviewer:
- a. Existing easements
  - b. Total square footage of ALL SIGNS on the property
  - c. Location of existing buildings, structures and all existing signs
  - d. Building signs: show that signs do not extend higher than allowed
  - e. Building signs: calculate and indicate sign-face area
  - f. Blade signs: calculate size and extension from building
  - g. Free-standing signs: required plans for ground-supported signs
  - h. Free-standing signs: distances from the proposed sign(s) to property lines and buildings on the site
  - i. Free-standing signs: foundation plan
  - j. Pole signs: measurement from grade to all portions of sign for vehicle clearance
  - k. Hanging or Projecting signs: distance from curb
  - l. Hanging or Projecting signs: measure from grade to all portions of the sign

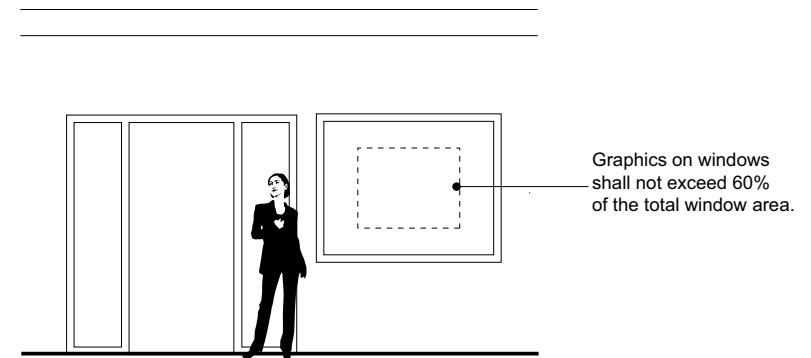


Fig. 4.1

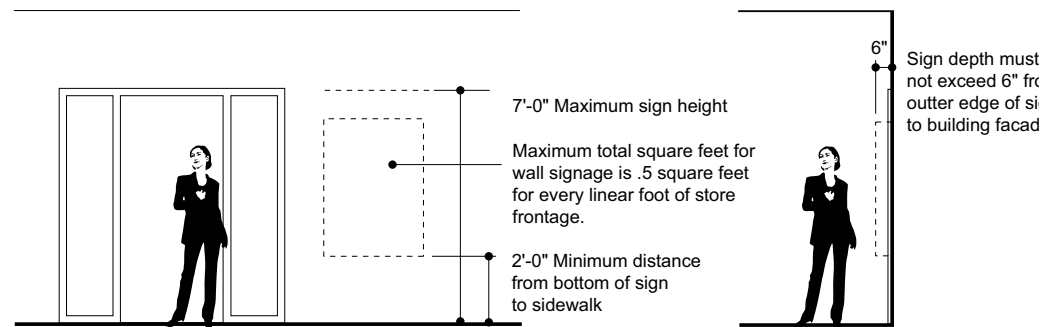


Fig. 1.1

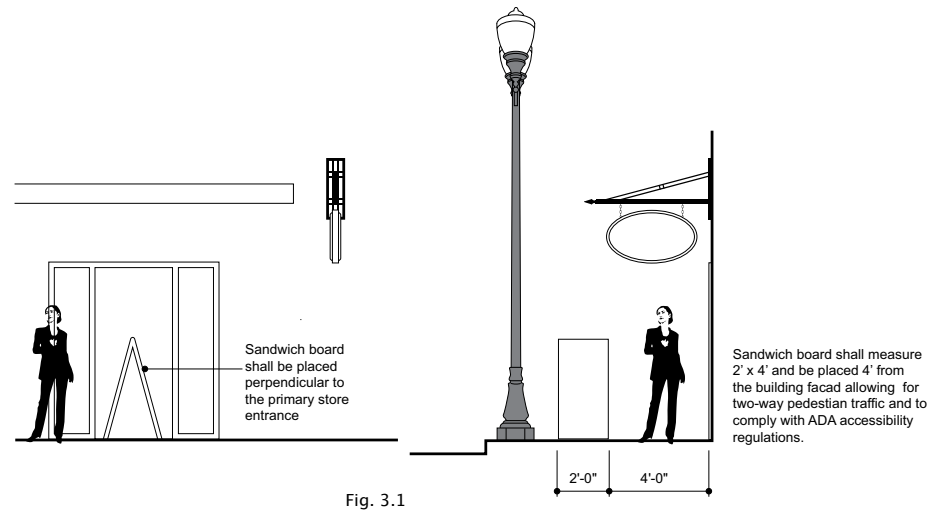


Fig. 3.1

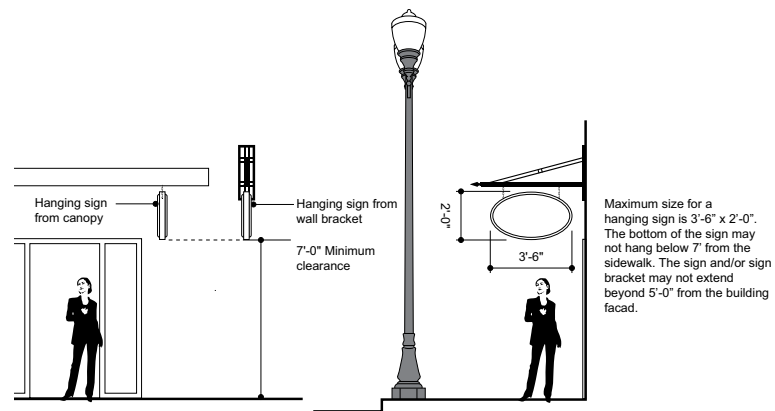


Fig. 2.1

## Ottawa, Illinois Downtown Plan (November 18, 2002, Volume II)

### Chapter 1: Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide direction for decisions related to the future growth and development of the City of Ottawa, and serve as a key reference point and basis for establishing, amending and interpreting regulatory tools.

### Chapter 2: Goals and Objectives

Revitalize and preserve – Ottawa’s downtown architectural heritage and traditional downtown atmosphere

Encourage – a vibrant cultural atmosphere and public involvement in downtown

Promote – public and private investment in the future of downtown

Reinforce – the sense of historical continuity and unique character and setting of downtown Ottawa

Increase and promote – residential uses in Ottawa’s downtown

### Chapter 3: History

Named after the dominant Native-American tribe living in the area, the city was first platted on December 5, 1830 by the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commission. As parts of the Illinois River were deemed to shallow to navigate, a canal was built from Chicago to neighboring LaSalle to expedite commercial transportation. Ottawa was positioned squarely between the confluence of the Illinois and Fox rivers with the canal serving as its backbone.

In 1858, Ottawa hosted the first debate of presidential candidates Abraham Lincoln and Steven A. Douglas in what is now Washington Square Park. A memorial plaque and bronze statues now stand in tribute to that historic event.

### Chapter 4: Downtown Ottawa Marketing Analysis & Recommendations

Factors that encourage demand or location strengths:  
relatively high volume of traffic downtown remains conveniently accessible to residents historic buildings provide unique sense of place downtown business are regarded as having a good reputation lawyers and other professionals have established offices historic value of Lincoln-Douglas debate

Factors that discourage demand or location weaknesses too extensive an area to support links to complementary use and activity areas real-estate professionals and merchants perceive the existence of a parking constraint much of downtown space is no longer physically attuned to the needs of users or their customers a high-proportion of vacant or under utilized ground-floor and above-ground space discourages strolling and window-shopping

Competing Supply of Options and Identification of Potential Market Niche  
“big-box” retailers on Highway 80 nearby Peru, IL shift of residential location is nearer to Highway 80 retailers market demand is focused on “big-box” retailers downtown should strategize with mixed-use concept no shortage of retail space downtown

Constraints on evolution of downtown to exploit market niche large supply of obsolete buildings properties with downtown may be too small and obsolete for even a relatively minor investment in remodeling some owners appear to be minimizing maintenance and remodeling in order to wring out whatever income can thereby be generated

Recommended priority strategies and actions expansion of firms and activities that derive a real advantage from a downtown association downtown will need to be programmed and supported to adapt to new opportunities that include specialty shops, dining, entertainment and unique experiences

development of “Lincoln Place” as a mixed-use area (and gateway to downtown) in-fill development should be encouraged for its direct and spillover economic impact cost-effective public capital should be added to facilitate the evolution of the downtown as a preferred location for housing, recreation, specialty retail and experience attractions

Tenancing, land uses and zoning policy recommendations grouped together eating establishments that serve food in a casual setting specialty retailers (grouped together) that offer unique/high-quality items not available in a mall discourage property owners from placing professional offices on ground-floor space, because it’s easier to prepare than second-floor spaces city may use its zoning power to enhance the profitability and feasibility of utilizing the main floors of buildings for retail and other customer servicing uses the city should encourage commercial property conversions to residential uses (lofts, live-work spaces, town homes) encourage artists to rent or purchase vacant building space that could be converted into artist live-work space

Improve parking and transportation  
a program of enhanced parking should be inaugurated to improve the perceived and actual convenience of shopping and patronizing downtown business and activities strategically located vacant lots or properties (at attractive prices) should be purchased (not in gaps that will impede pedestrian access between buildings) investigate the possibility of diverting one-way southbound traffic to Clinton Street, allowing LaSalle Street to be returned to a two-way street with added parking

Enhance way-finding, signs and downtown marketing downtown could benefit from a way-finding system that can capitalize on the destination institutions (such as courthouses) markers for historical events form a property owner and merchant’s association for promoting downtown engage a consultant to create visuals and marketing campaigns to promote downtown

Caution about actions to improve general appearances banners, street furniture, additional lighting could be added to enhance downtown’s appeal property owners should be encouraged to enhance facades and building appearances encourage planter boxes and shade trees that do not block

views of shop windows focus on keeping sidewalks clean and free of snow (wintertime) Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be used to further the priority strategies, including bridging the gap in feasibility of a desirable adaptive reuse project that would serve as an anchor or catalyst for private investment and development

## **Chapter 5: Downtown Plan**

The downtown area has been divided into eleven different districts, characterized by major land uses and/or features in each district. The purpose in defining these districts for this plan is to build upon the heritage, commonalities and strengths of existing conditions, or to move a district in a specific direction by promoting a common theme.

Canal District: currently comprised of residential and business uses should be encouraged to utilize the historic I & M Canal corridor as a greenbelt to define a unique neighborhood in close proximity to Ottawa’s Central Business District.

Arbor, River and Center Ottawa Residential Districts: opportunities for new infill and/or replacement of single-family and multi-family uses should be considered in these districts.

Downtown Residential District: opportunities to provide residential use above retail or office uses are strongly encouraged and can be accomplished through new construction or adaptive re-use projects.

Washington Park District: opportunities for infill development and/or adaptive re-use projects, which should orient new or modified structures to take advantage of the proximity to the park and views to the park.

West Main Street Business District: should look to enhance the aesthetics of the entire district with an emphasis on the Main Street corridor becoming more pedestrian friendly.

Clinton/Jefferson Business District: this district should encourage business retention by addressing aesthetics and streetscape design, and also encourage mixed-use development along LaSalle Street

Civic Center District: an increase of civic uses and the retention/enhancement of existing viable business uses should be encouraged within the district.

Courthouse Business District: any new development proposals will need to address views from the bridge looking north, respecting the proximity to the historic LaSalle County Courthouse, and providing strong visual and physical pedestrian access from the courthouse to the Festival Park area and the rivers.

Festival Park Riverfront District: the area would be an ideal place for redevelopment that would feature a marina, boat docks, festival park area, walking trails, restaurants, offices and cultural civic center.

#### Transportation

A safe, convenient and efficient circulation system is vital to the economic well being and quality of life in Ottawa. The total transportation system should be multi-modal including local and transient vehicular traffic, pedestrian ways and bicycle circulation, rail service for transport of goods, water transports, and the potential to restore commuter rail service to Ottawa.

Existing Primary Traffic Routes: Illinois Route 23 currently runs through downtown on LaSalle Street (one-way southbound) and Columbus Street (one-way northbound) with timed street lights that allows traffic to accelerate through the downtown area. This makes it difficult and unsafe for pedestrian activity and parking at peak hours.

Proposed Primary Traffic Routes: LaSalle Street should be reclaimed to provide a positive and pedestrian friendly corridor. A key proposal is to shift the south-bound traffic, including the truck traffic to Clinton Street (one block west of LaSalle Street). LaSalle Street would be turned into a two-way street with one northbound and one southbound lane with parking to be redesigned with either angle parking or parallel parking.

#### Physical Analysis

Building analysis: downtown has an excellent inventory of existing commercial buildings, which have retained their architectural character. The

following categories represent classifications created for this downtown plan document:

Reuse/Reconstruct: buildings in this category are in (typically) good condition, but need to be remodeled in a manner that contributes to the urban fabric of the original Ottawa Main Street façades in terms of massing, proportion and window placement.

Rehabilitate: buildings in this category are from the Victorian Era and are in need of significant repair and elements of that era have been covered or modernized.

Maintain: buildings are (generally) in good repair with intact historic facades and may require minor improvements.

Redevelop: buildings may include excess under-utilized land areas, and it is recommended that these buildings be replaced by new structures designed to contribute to the urban fabric of the original Ottawa Main Street facades.

Parking and open space analysis: an analysis of the existing and future parking locations was conducted through a general walking field survey. They are categorized as follows:

Parking Lots: existing parking lots include both municipal and privately owned parcels and vary in size and shapes.

Future Parking: if the areas that have been designated for future parking become available the city should look at purchasing these areas for parking

Parks: the parks category shows the existing urban parks or open spaces.

Future Parks: this category shows potential locations for new urban parks, linear open spaces/trail systems or other potential open spaces.

Downtown Existing Land Use: downtown consists of a variety of uses including commercial/retail, light manufacturing, banking, institutional, civic, government offices, and residential. It also features open spaces in the form of public parks and linear spaces along the Fox and Illinois Rivers.

#### Downtown Future Land Use Plan:

The future of Ottawa's downtown will be strengthened by utilizing a plan that moves downtown decision-making in a cohesive manner towards a consensus.

In conjunction with a parking study, the City should also attempt to acquire surface parking lots that can be converted to deck parking in the future. Civic buildings downtown contribute to the character of the area and further

expansion could happen in vacant areas, leading to desired "clustering" of buildings.

Future parks and open spaces are positioned along the former I & M Canal and the confluence of the rivers, with Festival Park "connecting the dots" to the LaSalle Street corridor.

New multi-family residential developments (in the form of condos, town homes and apartments) should be designed to be compatible with the historical architecture and can also be combined with ground-floor retail for a mixed-use building.

Found mainly on the edges of downtown, single-family residential developments are proposed for areas parallel to the canal.

#### **Chapter 6: Implementation of the Plan**

Viewed as the beginning of real effort to achieve the community vision, the plan identifies many implementation strategies and asks the city to commit various resources to the effort. Participants in this effort should include: the business community, local developers, local governments, local institutions, community and service organizations, and Ottawa residents. Implementation will require a blend of proactive and reactive activities and approaches. The Downtown Plan is a dynamic document and requires ongoing maintenance in order to remain an effective policy tool. The recommended approach to plan implementation is to establish priorities in order to focus the City's resources and energy on accomplishing the most important initiatives first. It

will be necessary to update both the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to effectively implement both the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Plan in a manner that will support (both) the goals, objectives and the visions of each document:

#### Zoning Ordinance Revisions

Zoning map needs to be corrected and updated

Nomenclature for zoning districts needs to be revised

Establish residential and commercial Planned Unit Development

Residential zoning standards: review lot area, setback, building types, bulk regulations and building height

Business districts review building types, parking area requirements, opportunities for mixed-use buildings, review permitted and conditional uses

Sign ordinance: standards to regulate size, lighting and aesthetics of downtown signage

Create incentives through zoning to promote investment in the downtown

Adopt the strategies of the Main Street Program: intended to improve all aspects of the downtown or Central Business District, they are built on downtown's best assets – architecture, personal service and traditional values.

Organization: building consensus and cooperation among public and private groups and individuals, and identifying sources of funding for revitalization activities

Design: enhancing the district's physical appearance through building rehabilitation, compatible new construction, public improvements and design-management systems

Promotion: marketing the commercial district through events and advertising to attract customers, potential investors, new businesses, residents and visitors

**Economic Restructuring:** Strengthening the district's economic base and creating new opportunities through careful analysis and appropriate mixed-use development

**Detailed Parking Survey:** will provide data on the best location for future parking lots and decks.

**Detailed Architectural Survey:** will provide data to make decisions on issues related to rehabilitation, remodeling, adaptive re-use or building replacement.

**Design Guidelines:** should educate owners and designers about the history and content of Ottawa's Main Street building heritage, and establish criteria for building façade massing proportion and window placement of existing and new structures.

**Riverfront Green Plan:** should address proposed re-use and enhancement of the riverfront to include new and upgraded park areas, and public spaces for events and entertainment.

**Streetscape Improvements:** can be accomplished by adding street trees, street furniture, landscaping (where possible), civic art, and creating guidelines to promote attractive signage.

**Façade Improvement Program:** beginning with the completion of architectural assessments and preliminary façade designs, a public/private partnership can help to define and fund improvements.

**Loan Program:** the Downtown Ottawa Comprehensive Loan Program offers applicants loans at attractive terms, placing five local institutions at the forefront of the development in the downtown area and demonstrates their commitment to the revitalization of downtown Ottawa.

**Apartment Licensing Program:** allows the city to maintain a list of property owners or managers for each building, maintain a map of the location and quality of apartments, and to understand the inventory of existing rental units to assist decision making for creating new rental units within the downtown area.

**Downtown Management Program:** funded by Special Service Area taxes (paid by property owners within a defined boundary), it should help to coordinate and manage the downtown area's marketing and special events, provide input on land use and development, remove snow from vacant areas, and plan and implement area beautification.

**Planning and Development Department:** required to handle a variety of assignments, this full-time employee of the City enforces codes, prepares and implements planning programs and assists the City Council and Plan Commission on issues related to proposed developments and applications.

**Create and Maintain City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP):** containing a detailed estimate of facilities' costs and helps to prioritize needs, this plan helps the City to determine its long-term capital needs and budget accordingly.

### **Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy (Adopted: October 30, 2006) (Prepared by: Vanderwalle and Associates)**

#### **Introduction to the Brownfields Prioritization Process**

In 2002, the City of Ottawa adopted a community-wide Comprehensive Plan to set forth goals, recommendations and policies for future growth and investment throughout the city. The City of Ottawa is now proactively taking the next steps to facilitate redevelopment in the community through the preparation of a Brownfield Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy.

In many instances, a barrier to redevelopment in communities can be the presence or perceived presence of environmental contamination at potential redevelopment sites. These sites with known or suspected environmental contamination, known as "brownfields," sometimes take years to redevelop, due to the time and expense associated with assessment and clean up. Ottawa had recognized that municipalities can take a leadership role in helping to facilitate these private-sector redevelopment transactions – either by purchasing potential brownfield sites or by contributing financial assistance for assessment and clean up at the site. Ottawa has decided to pursue state and federal grant resources to spearhead its proactive efforts.

The City of Ottawa commissioned redevelopment consultants, Vandewalle & Associates, to assist with the process of prioritizing potential brownfield sites and preparing redevelopment strategies for the sites with the greatest likelihood of near-term redevelopment success. The result of this prioritization and planning effort is intended to position the City of Ottawa for highly competitive brownfield assessment grants from USEPA and Illinois EPA, so that these leveraged resources can jump-start the City's active participation in community redevelopment.

### **Heritage Harbor Plan (Developed by Economics Research Associates, undisclosed date)**

Economics Research Associates (ERA) was retained by Heritage Harbor Ottawa LLC to test development scenarios for a site on the Illinois River in Ottawa, Illinois. ERA was tasked to ascertain: was the site along Canal Road suitable for development as a destination resort, is the "product mix" an appropriate one for the area and what kind of revenues would be generated from this project?

ERA found that the site is (indeed) suitable for the development of a destination resort with the appropriate "mix." They recommended the site could contain:

- a 410-slip marina
- a high-quality "second-home" development
- a 200-room resort
- 75 two-key investment condominium units adjacent to the hotel
- an indoor water amenity of (approx.) 50,000 square feet
- a retail/restaurant component
- a destination spa

Two prominent market features of the site are attractive frontage on the Illinois River and a sheltered marina contained within the development. Heritage Harbor Ottawa would be the first resort development (actually) on the Illinois River.

Other key potential aspects of the development include:

- A neo-traditional or similar town plan
- Water taxi service (on the Illinois River) to downtown Ottawa
- Walking, bike and gem car paths

While a high-quality second home development is the economic driving component of this project, second home unit sales values, as well as the overall velocity of the site development would be significantly enhanced by the addition of a waterfront resort component. A resort component would:

- Be profitable on its own
- Draw people to the site and be utilized as a marketing tool to attract potential investment unit and second home buyers
- Create a sense of energy at Heritage Harbor. This energy, the flow of people through the hotel would substantially support demand for other proposed on-site components like the spa, retail and restaurants
- Establish the site as a destination and permit the development to assume a higher marketing profile – thereby putting the site on the map

It is also ERA's conclusion that a major indoor water feature be incorporated into the development and be attached to the hotel and investment condo units. This will:

- Enhance the year-round appeal of the hotel and condo units. The year-round appeal will lead to higher occupancy and ADR's for the hotels and condo units.
- Allow a broader market to connect with the development since there are many successful condo/hotel projects in the Midwest with indoor water features
- Add an amenity that can help sell the second homes, as they (too) will have more year-round appeal

Based on a preliminary review of available sales and listing data, ERA estimates Heritage Harbor can achieve a sales price in the range of \$230-\$300 per square foot. As Heritage Harbor establishes itself in the market, these figures are likely to increase by up to 10-15 percent.

### **Design Guidelines for C-4 zoning**

**(Prepared by: Basalay, Cary & Alstadt Architects, Ltd., April 2003)**

The Central Core Business District of Ottawa is composed of many unique architectural characteristics from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and a significant number of later alternation and infills. Many of these later constructions were not appropriate for the maintenance of the architectural and cultural fabric of the downtown environment.

The following guidelines have been developed to enhance the individual character of each building, while strengthening the overall image of downtown.

Purpose of guidelines:

- To provide basic, common-sense advice on enhancing the design characteristics of buildings in downtown Ottawa.
- To provide a written framework for visual improvements that can be followed for years to come.
- To provide direction towards design compatibility within individual buildings and the entire downtown.
- To provide direction towards a quality image for downtown Ottawa
- To preserve those architectural features that are unique to the downtown and the to the heritage of the Ottawa Community.

## Standards for Rehabilitation

A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired. (Ignore this change – program did something weird).

## City of Ottawa Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance regulates structure and land uses in the City of Ottawa and in the 1.5 mile extraterritorial jurisdiction as depicted on the accompanying zoning map in order to preserve, protect, and promote the public health, safety and welfare. More specifically, this ordinance is intended to assist in achieving the following objectives.

## Section 1: Title, Purpose, Scope of Regulations and Definitions

- to encourage the development of buildings and uses on appropriate sites in order to maximize community-wide social and economic benefits, while

- accommodating the particular needs of all residents, and to discourage development on inappropriate sites
- to protect and enhance the character and stability of sound existing residential, commercial and industrial areas, and to gradually eliminate nonconforming uses and structures
- to conserve and increase the value of taxable property throughout this municipality
- to ensure the provision of adequate light, air and privacy for the occupants of all buildings
- to protect property from damage caused by fire, flooding, poorly controlled storm water runoff, and adverse soil and topographical conditions
- to provide adequate and well-designed parking and loading space for all buildings and uses, and to reduce vehicular congestion on the public streets and highways
- to guide the provision of water mains and other utilities and services, and to reduce the initial costs and future maintenance of expenses thereof
- to insure and facilitate the preservation of sites, areas and structures of historical, architectural and aesthetic importance
- to provide for the efficient administration and fair enforcement of all the regulations set forth herein
- to clearly and concisely explain the procedures for obtaining variances, special use permits, amendments and the like

## Section 2: General and Supplemental Regulations

General Regulations  
 Exceptions to Height Limits  
 Exceptions to Area Limits  
 Lots of Record (Districts “D” and “E”)  
 Front Setbacks – Corner/Through Lots  
 Accessory Uses  
 Landscaping Requirements  
 Fences and Walls  
 Junk or Salvage Yards  
 Home Occupation  
 Adult Uses

## Section 3: Districts

### Section 4: “A” Residence Districts “A-1” Single Family Residence District “A-2” Single Family and Two-Family Residence District

### Section 5: “B” Residence Districts “B” Single Family, Two-Family and Multi-Family Residence District

### Section 6: “C” Local Business Districts “C-1” Small Business District “C-2” General Business District “C-3” Special Business District “C-4” Central Core Business District “C-5” Secondary Central Business District “C-6” Downstate Transition District

### Section 7: “D” Commercial and Light Industrial District

### Section 8: “E” Industrial District

### Section 9: “M” Mining District

### Section 10: “R” Rural District

### Section 11: Non-Conformities

### Section 12: Planned Unit Developments

### Section 13: Certification of Occupancy and Compliance

### Section 14: Plats

### Section 15: Interpretation and Purpose

### Section 16: District Boundaries

Section 17: Signs (Reserved)

Section 18: Zoning Administration and Enforcement

City Council  
 Zoning Enforcement Officer  
 Certificate of Occupancy  
 Zoning Board of Appeals  
 Plan Commission  
 Appeals  
 Variations  
 Conditional Uses  
 Fees and Charges  
 Refiling

Section 19: Amendments

Section 20: Permits Already Issued

Section 21: Violations and Penalties

Section 22: Remedies

Section 23: Partial Invalidity

Section 24: Repeal

Section 25: Effective Date of Ordinance



**Riverview Plaza Suite 310  
16000 Christensen Road • Seattle, WA 98188  
(206) 241-4770 voice  
(206) 241-470 fax  
[www.destinationdevelopment.com](http://www.destinationdevelopment.com)  
[TheTeam@destinationdevelopment.com](mailto:TheTeam@destinationdevelopment.com)**

**Prepared by the Team at  
Destination Development, Inc.**