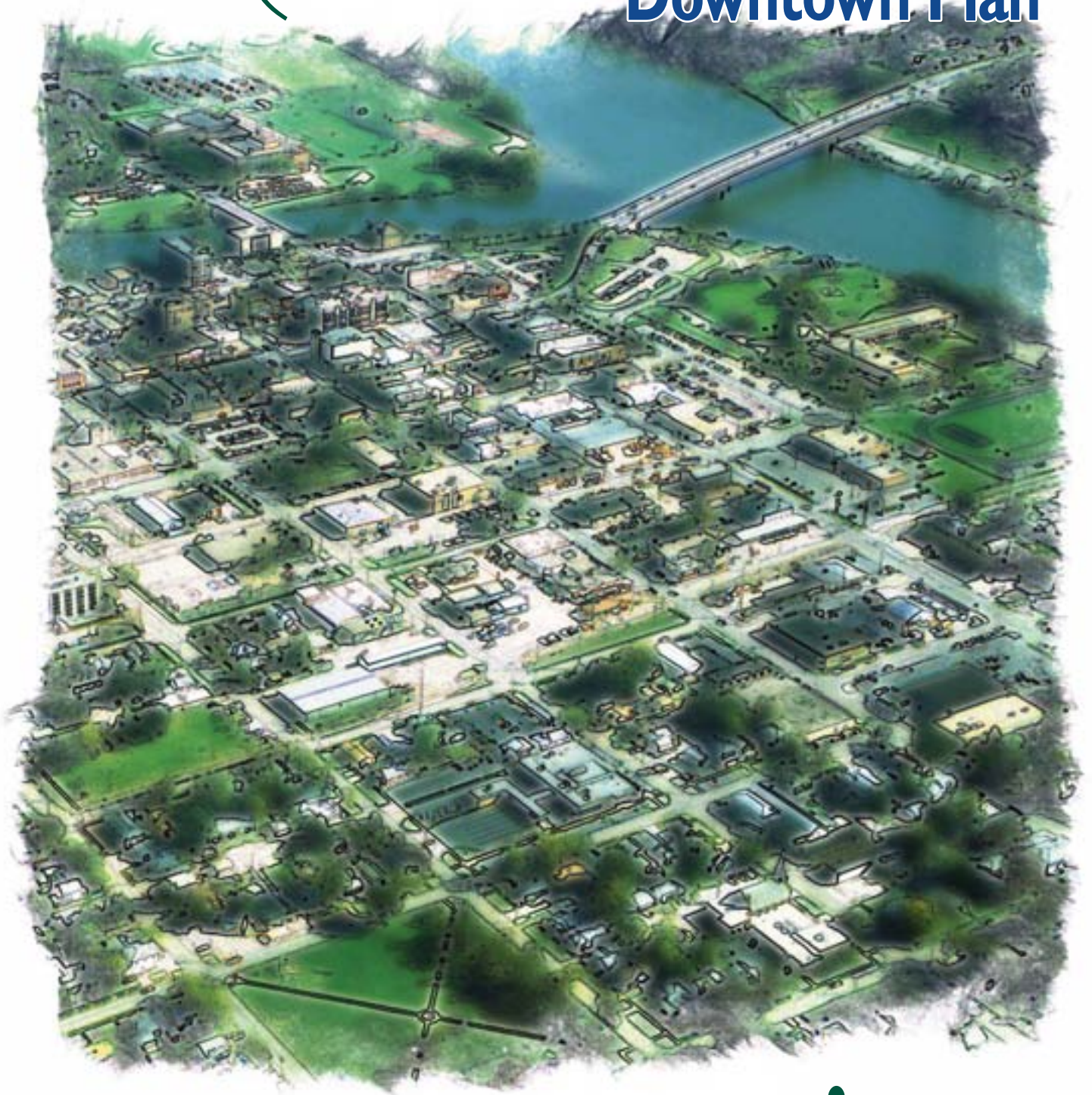


Ottawa Illinois

Downtown Plan



Volume II

the city of
two rivers



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Chapter • 1

Introduction

This document represents Volume II of the Ottawa, Illinois Comprehensive Plan. This Volume II document is a detailed Sub-Area plan for Ottawa's Downtown. Volume I of the Ottawa Comprehensive Plan includes a Future Land Use Map and planning goals and objectives covering the area within Ottawa's corporate limits, as well as the land areas outside the corporate limits including the one and one half mile planning jurisdiction. The Volume I, Comprehensive Plan document also includes five Sub-Area Plans for specific locations that require a greater level of detail planning. This detailed Sub-Area Plan, Volume II, is limited to Ottawa's Central Business District (CBD) and nearby adjacent residential areas, and includes measures to preserve and enhance the cultural and historical heritage, while promoting the economic potential within the downtown. This document will provide direction to the City of Ottawa to promote a continuous positive evolution of Ottawa's downtown in a manner that retains the downtown's vital role as the heart of the entire community.

The intent of both volumes of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide direction for decisions related to the future growth and development of the City of Ottawa. The Plan provides the basis for rational decision-making, but does not replace the decision-making process, nor does it take the place of the City's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and other ordinances regulating the use and development of land in Ottawa. It establishes a vision for development within the community and describes policies, programs and projects that will enable the vision to be realized. The Comprehensive Plan helps local officials coordinate their decisions so they can anticipate how one decision may impact another. The Plan is also a key reference point and basis for establishing, amending and interpreting regulatory tools.

As most communities, Ottawa has its own strengths and areas for improvement. Among the strengths that define the City of Ottawa are its rich history, its location in LaSalle County, and specifically the downtown area located at the confluence of the Illinois and Fox Rivers, which provide scenic views and recreational opportunities. Additional strengths of the Central Business District include a very intact inventory of Victorian era architecture with a diverse mixture of retail and office space, numerous financial institutions, city, county, state and federal governmental institutions, as well as a number of churches, civic clubs and several schools adjacent to the downtown area.

A truly unique dynamic of the location of this diverse downtown area is the fact that the south and east boundaries are defined by the confluence of the Illinois and Fox Rivers. This not only has created a physical boundary which continues to keep the historic central business district intact, but has created an opportunity for downtown businesses to remain immediately adjacent to not one, but two substantial recreation and scenic corridors.

As a foundation for planning, goals for the community were formulated to guide the preparation of the Plan. Community goals are general statements that indicate the type of community that is desired. The development of goals and the implementation of policies are the keys to the success of the Comprehensive Plan.

Goals and objectives were formulated using recommendations for the future and information gathered from the community. These objectives and recommendations for future actions have been used to form each element of the plan.

It should be mentioned that in order to achieve some of the goals specified in the Comprehensive Plan, more detailed studies will be needed. These additional studies will provide the necessary detail and direction needed to meet those goals and should be adopted as amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

The goals formulated to guide the preparation of this planning document for Ottawa's downtown are:

Ottawa's Downtown Goals

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



The City of Ottawa Plan Commission

The Plan Commission consists of nine members who are appointed by the City Council of the City of Ottawa. The Plan Commission is an advisory committee that gives written recommendations to the City Council on issues including amendments and applications to the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances. The City Council makes all final decisions.

The Ottawa Plan Commission has been given the responsibility to lead the city through the process of creating a Comprehensive Plan. City of Ottawa Comprehensive Plans have been created in past years. Other than a miniplan for the one and one half mile extra territorial jurisdictional area, no plan was ever adopted by the city as an official planning document. The current City Council formally adopted Volume I of the Comprehensive Plan on June 4, 2002, and is expected to adopt Volume II in the fall of 2002. The preparation of this document is the result of much time and effort by the Planning Commission and City staff during the planning process. Special recognition is given to the following Plan Commission members:

Plan Commission

Scott Anderson	Fred Gray
Dan Aussem	Alan Howarter
Brent Barron	Mike Pubentz
John Blossy	Debby Reagan, Chair
Debbie Burns	

Special thanks are also given to past Plan Commission members:

Bill Quigley, Rev. Gerald Meyer, and the late Pat O'Brien.

City Council

Mayor Robert M. Eschbach
Commissioner Randy Constantine
Commissioner Wayne Eichelkraut
Commissioner Daphne Mitchell
Commissioner Ed Whitney
Gary Pike, P.E., City Engineer
Doug Carroll, City Planner
Kim Czyz, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor

The hundreds of citizens and others who participated in numerous meetings and assisted in the development of this document are also commended for their hard work.



Planning Team

Land Vision, Inc.

Project Management, Public Participation, Land Use and Urban Design

Land Vision is a land planning firm providing town planning, zoning, visioning programs, streetscape design and design guidelines services. The firm is an advocate of traditional neighborhood development principles and its work reflects this passion. Land Vision views planning as a collaborative effort between the consultant, elected officials, citizens and merchants. Land Vision believes that involving people is the key to better community planning and implementation of plans and encourages hands-on involvement by all participants. Land Vision served as the project manager, in addition to playing a key role in the public participation process and urban design issues.

SmithGroup JJR

Smith Group/JJR (JJR)

Streetscape and Urban Design, Implementation Strategies

Smith Group JJR (formerly JJR, Inc.), is an international urban design firm responsible for designing a number of noteworthy projects across the country. The firm has received numerous awards and recognition for its design work, which is characterized by its high quality, comprehensiveness, and innovation. JJR is widely recognized for their ability to create vital and livable downtowns, urban neighborhoods, and integrating natural landscapes into parks and public spaces for people in cities and communities of all sizes.



Gruen Gruen + Associates (GG+A)

Market Evaluations and Implementation Strategies

Gruen Gruen + Associates (GG+A), is a firm of urban economists, financial, fiscal and market analysts, and other professionals dedicated to helping clients make the best possible use of land. The firm has been describing and forecasting the market and real estate economic realities of specific areas in order to identify implementable programs, plans, and policies that will achieve the redevelopment objectives of cities, neighborhoods, and the communities that adjoin them since 1970. GG+A has conducted feasibility studies, due diligence analyses, and assisted in the implementation of many real estate projects both by private developers and joint public and private partnerships.

Location

The City of Ottawa is located in LaSalle County, Illinois and is the county seat. Ottawa is approximately 75 miles southwest of Chicago, 29 miles from the western suburbs, 80 miles southeast of Rockford, 90 miles east of the quad cities, and 76 miles northeast of Peoria.

The Illinois and Fox Rivers converge in Ottawa, meaning convenient transportation of people and goods. These rivers, combined with their tributaries, also make the region aesthetically attractive. People looking for outdoor beauty find it here in the rolling hills, the winding rivers, the sandstone bluffs and the peaceful valleys.





Chapter • 2

Goals & Objectives



Washington Square



Gathering in Washington Square



Aerial of Downtown

Goal 1

Revitalize and preserve Ottawa's downtown architectural heritage and traditional downtown atmosphere. A healthy downtown is vital to Ottawa's character, image and economy. The downtown is the central focal point for the community including entertainment, shopping, recreation and historic interests for residents and visitors alike.

Objectives

- Encourage building owners to maintain and update existing downtown structures
- Promote facade and signage improvements to existing buildings with historic architectural integrity
- Reclaim primary downtown streets to calm traffic and create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere
- Promote existing and new businesses

Goal 2

Encourage a vibrant cultural atmosphere and public involvement in downtown.

Objectives

- Have a reason for the public to come downtown such as having a variety of shops and restaurants
- Promote civic art in the downtown
- Promote cultural events in the downtown
- Promote entertainment events and establishments in the downtown
- Coordinate businesses and cultural events through a Downtown Management Program



Renovation and Improved Facade



Renovation and Improved Facade



Limited Public Access to Water



Ottawa Riverwalk

Goal 3

Promote public and private investment in the future of downtown to achieve an economically stable Central Business District.

Objectives

- Support and promote existing businesses
- Recruit new business into the Central Business District through a coordinated management program
- Develop strategies for infill development
- Buildings should be built as high-quality, long-term components to the urban fabric
- Architecture should respond to functional needs and reinforce downtown activities
- Parking needs should be evaluated to support downtown redevelopment with sufficient on-street and off-street parking

Goal 4

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

Objectives

- Provide connections to the rivers and parks
- Maintain existing views to the rivers as well as key architectural features of the downtown
- Identify and create opportunities to strengthen and increase linkages between the downtown area and residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Fox and Illinois Rivers, the I&M Canal and the Lateral Canal
- Respect the architectural heritage of downtown
- Promote the historical connection that downtown Ottawa has with Abraham Lincoln



Columbus Street Apartments



LaSalle Street

Goal 5

Increase and promote residential uses in Ottawa's downtown.

Objectives

- Increase the population of residents that can easily walk to the Central Business District.
- Encourage building owners to capitalize on second and third floors of existing structures to be utilized for residential uses
- Introduce new infill development into the Central Business District with office and /or residential uses occupying the upper floors
- Encourage infill redevelopment or adaptive reuse to connect existing residential neighborhoods to the Central Business District
- Evaluate and improve pedestrian linkages from existing and proposed residential areas to the LaSalle Street corridor



Chapter • 3

History



Appellate Court Building (1893)



LaSalle St. South from Jefferson St. (1893)



LaSalle St. North from Madison St. (1893)

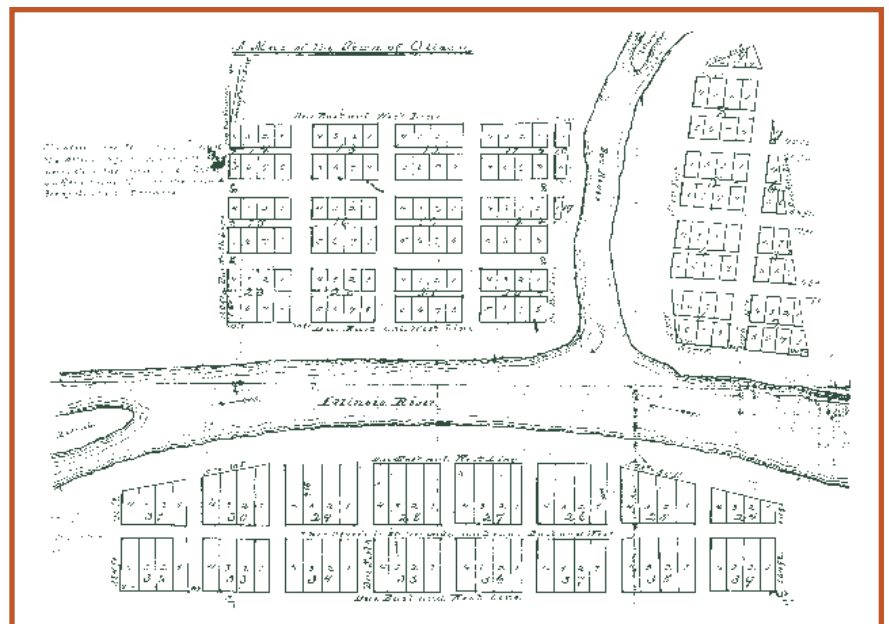


Aerial Photo of the I&M Canal and Aqueduct

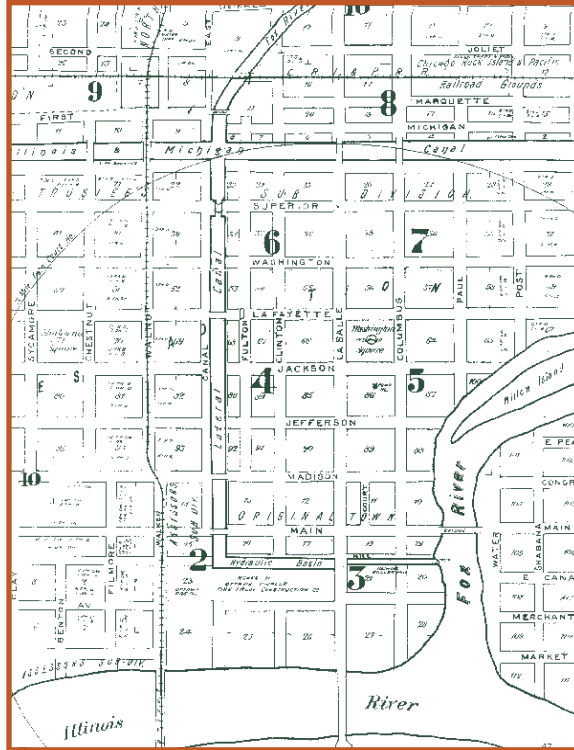
Historically, the attraction of Ottawa was and still is its location. The confluence of the Fox and Illinois Rivers ensured that travelers and traders would pass by this land. The beautiful prairies and valleys encouraged people to stop and consider this area. What they found was rich soil for agriculture and mining, and the convenience of the rivers for transporting goods east to Chicago and west to the Mississippi.

The dominant Indian tribe in this area was the Ottawa. They and other Native American tribes lived and hunted and died on the land now called Ottawa. Starved Rock especially was used as a lookout for bison, deer and enemy tribes.

The City of Ottawa was platted by the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commission and recorded in the county seat of Peoria County on December 5, 1830, and established in 1839. The City was first surveyed by James Thompson, a surveyor and engineer for the Canal Commission. James Thompson also surveyed and platted the Canal which originally was to end in Ottawa but was extended to LaSalle sixteen miles west of Ottawa. It was determined that the extension was necessary to bypass portions of the Illinois River west of Ottawa that were too shallow to navigate.



First Plat of Ottawa by Thompson (Canal Town)



Lincoln & Douglas Statues



Artistic Rendering of
Lincoln & Douglas Statues

Lateral Canal (Canal Town)

The construction of the ninety-six mile I&M Canal began in 1836 and was completed in 1848 at a cost of \$6.1 million. It was the last major canal constructed in the United States. After the first year of operation, the Canal helped Chicago become the nation's largest inland port. With the construction of the canal came the influx of Irish workers. That group provided the majority of manual labor needed to construct the canal. A vast majority of those laborers and their families stayed in the community following the completion of the canal.

In 1914, several years after the Rock Island and LaSalle Railroad was constructed, the I&M Canal was closed to traffic. Over the years, the abandoned Canal was thought to be undesirable. In the 1930s, the City's administration conducted projects to fill it. The Canal is now becoming a main feature in the redevelopment of Ottawa and other communities due to its historic and recreational value. Many areas are rediscovering the importance that the Canal had in the development of their community and are trying to preserve the heritage associated with it.

On August 21, 1858 over 10,000 people attended the first senatorial debate in Ottawa between candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas. The series of debates on the issue of slavery brought Lincoln the national spotlight that would later carry him to the presidency. The Ottawa debate was held in Washington Park with a platform located on the east side of the square. There is a boulder and plaque to mark the site of this historic debate. The city commissioned sculptures of Lincoln and Douglas which were dedicated in Washington Park on September 14, 2002.

Ottawa Today

Today, Ottawa remains an important and ideally situated city in the context of the regional area and along a major transportation corridor. Ottawa's unique setting at the confluence of the Fox and Illinois Rivers, as previously described, continues to impress visitors and residents with an abundance of scenic vistas and natural areas extending through the established neighborhoods and central business district. These natural corridors link Ottawa to several significant regional and state parks, adding to this unique environment, and giving Ottawa the name of "The City of Two Rivers."



Aerial Photograph of Ottawa Today

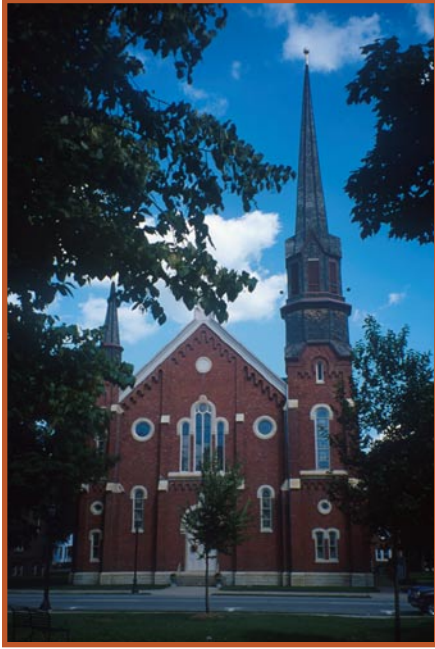
Ottawa's geographical setting in LaSalle County allows the city to physically function as a self-contained community with an established center and clearly defined edges. These factors are important components in maintaining a strong community character and identity.

The locational and physical qualities described above, and Ottawa's ability to draw on its rich heritage at the turn of a new century, will increase interest in Ottawa as a place to live and work. Ottawa is in a position to attract new business and expand existing

businesses. Ottawa's present population of 18,307 residents is expected to increase in the next decade for all of the reasons described above. Ottawa is on the verge of being rediscovered as a truly unique environment in which to live and conduct commerce.

The downtown is undergoing revitalization with many completed and ongoing building and façade renovations and streetscape and public artwork. There is also ongoing interest in creating new residential neighborhoods with current development interest in nearly all quadrants of the community.

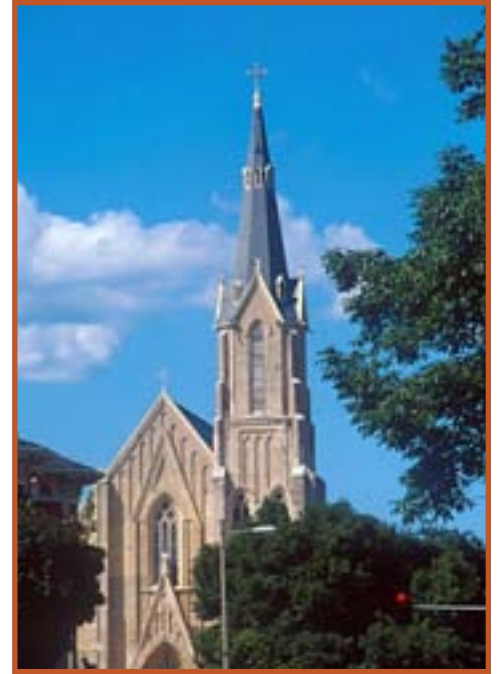
Ottawa retains its important role as home to the Third District Appellate Court for Illinois as well as the county seat for LaSalle County with the historic county courthouse located in the Central Business District.



First Congregational Church

As work began on the Comprehensive Plan, the city was already in the process of studying the downtown. The statement below was part of the Competitive Communities Initiative “An Ottawa Blueprint For Progress”, a report compiled by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce and the City of Ottawa in November 2001.

A Competitive Communities Initiative Steering Committee was formed to create an Action Plan that can be used as “a practical tool for identifying needs, assigning responsibility, time frames, status of activities and measurements of progress.”



St. Columba Church

The action plan is divided into six sections:

- 1) Needs and Skills Assessment,
- 2) Basic and Advanced Infrastructure,
- 3) Access to Capital,
- 4) Access to Technology and Business Modernization Resources,
- 5) Pro-Competitive Business Policies, and
- 6) Social Infrastructure and Quality of Life.

Each section addresses needs, the team, goals and proposed projects. A copy of this document can be found on the city of Ottawa’s website: www.ottawa.il.us/ccireport.



Peltier Mural on Jefferson Street

“Ottawa had, over the past years, remained stagnant in population, jobs, industry, tourism and other areas that make a city a desirable place to live and work. We have watched our neighboring communities capture opportunities that could have been ours. Holding on to the memory of its onetime, strong industrial, retail and employment base, Ottawa had become complacent in preparing for its future. Not until these foundations began to disappear did the citizens become concerned.”



First United Methodist Church

An Ottawa Blueprint for Progress, 2001

Downtown Ottawa Today





Chapter • 4

Downtown Ottawa Marketing Analysis & Recommendations



LaSalle Street Businesses



Farmer's Market

Introduction

This chapter presents key findings, conclusions and recommendations for the planning and implementation of the enhancement of downtown Ottawa. The findings were drawn from intensive in-person and telephone interviews with downtown merchants, property owners and bankers as well as public officials and staff, and Chamber of Commerce representatives. Inspection of the downtown as well as an analysis of available demographic and employment data were included as were prior research and implementation assistance for the revitalization of a variety of other downtowns.

Market Niches and Demand Opportunities

Identification of Market Opportunities and Constraints

The results of the research and analysis, including interviews are divided into the following sections:

1. Factors That Encourage Demand or Locational Strengths
2. Factors That Discourage Demand or Locational Weaknesses
3. Competing Supply Alternatives and Identification of Potential Market Niche
4. Constraints on Evolution of Downtown to Exploit Potential Market Niche
5. Recommended Priority Strategies and Actions.

Factors that Encourage Demand or Locational Strengths

Those interviewed concurred that a primary advantage of the downtown is the relatively high volume of daily traffic that passes through. (As reviewed below, however, the high speed of that traffic, especially truck traffic is perceived as a disadvantage). While much of the residential growth is to the north and south, and employment growth has shifted north closer to Interstate 80, the downtown remains conveniently accessible to residents. In addition, they perceive the downtown as safe.

The proximity to the Fox and Illinois Rivers and presence of historic buildings provide the downtown with a unique sense of place and physical character. As reviewed below however, much of the building inventory is functionally obsolete.

Another demand-inducing factor is that some of the businesses in the downtown have significant reputational value or good will. Existing apparel stores with accessories, including jewelry were cited as examples of well-established stores that provide uniquely good products, service and value to their customers. These businesses differentiate themselves from “big-



Big-Box Example

box” (larger stores in excess of 75,000 square feet) stores through superior service. Superior service refers not only to being courteous and responsive to customer requests, but also means these differentiated businesses provide types of goods and services that respond unusually well to the preferences of consumers so as to draw individuals from a larger area.

The presence of two courthouses in the downtown has served to help retain a base of lawyers located in the downtown. The downtown also continues to attract other professional and personal service providers that cater to area households and local businesses.

Events important to the history of Ottawa include the Lincoln-Douglas debate that took place in downtown Ottawa, and the construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. These events could be more fully capitalized upon by memorializing the events through education and monumentation, as well as reinforcing the presence of the canal and lateral canal locations in the downtown.



LaSalle Street South

Factors that Discourage Demand or Locational Weaknesses

A significant disadvantage is that the downtown is too extensive an area to support concentrated linkages of complementary uses and activities. The downtown lacks a concentration of either major office space users, or residential units, which would serve to establish the image of the downtown as a vibrant, hip or chic place to work, live, shop and play and augment demand for goods, services and activities in the downtown.

The interviews suggest that real estate professionals and merchants perceive the existence of a parking constraint. This constraint appears to relate not so much to the number of spaces, but to the accessibility or placement of parking spaces relative to stores and offices. Without the advantage of seeing detailed traffic studies it may be noted that downtown is bisected by Illinois Route 23, which is configured as two one-way, three-lane roads. This road system appears to: (a) facilitate truck and automobile traffic speeding through the downtown; (b) limit the amount or convenient placement of off-site, street parking; and (c) discourage pedestrians from crossing and walking the length of the streets in downtown.

The combination of an extensively spread-out downtown and the high proportion of relatively high speed through traffic combine to create parking inefficiencies that lead to the perceptions noted above. A stronger core to serve as a critical mass for the downtown, with parking sufficiently close to that core to support it is needed.

Another important disadvantage for the downtown is the obsolescence of some space. Much of the downtown space is no longer physically attuned to the needs of users, or their customers. Some buildings with office space have outdated mechanical systems and tenant improvements. There does not appear to have been any recent construction of new office buildings except for the Fox River Center. Related to this is a high proportion of vacant or under utilized ground floor and above ground floor space. This high level of vacancy discourages strolling and browsing and diminishes the locational image or desirability of the downtown.



Big-Box Example



Renovation & Improved Facade



Reconstruction & Improved Facade



Parking Example

Competing Supply Options and Identification of Potential Market Niche

Results from the interviews suggest that two geographic areas primarily compete with downtown businesses for the dollars of area residents and workers. The first is a cluster of “big box” retailers and chain restaurants located along or near Interstate 80 within Ottawa. Anchor stores include a K-Mart, Value City, Wal-Mart and Farm and Fleet. The second primary competing shopping location is in nearby Peru.

The interviews suggest that the number of area residents and the frequency with which they shop downtown has decreased. That is consistent with the growth of competing supply and a shift in the location of residential and employment growth up to Interstate 80.

Analysis of demographic and income characteristics and resulting estimates of purchasing power or potential demand for shopping center-type goods within a three and five mile radius suggest an absence of unmet demand, or in other words, no shortage of retail space. Because the downtown cannot directly compete with the “big-box” power center and regional mall space, the challenge for the downtown will be to attract unique retail, restaurant and entertainment tenancies that are not also located in nearby shopping locations. The advantages, disadvantages and supply competition summarized above suggest a strategy of encouraging the development of the downtown as a mixed-use specialty center. It would include offices, housing and shops offering a range of specialty goods and services.

Constraints on Evolution of Downtown to Exploit Potential Market Niche

Some properties within the downtown may be too small and obsolete for even a relatively minor investment in remodeling to prove rewarding. Some owners of these properties appear to be minimizing maintenance and remodeling in order to wring out whatever income can thereby be generated. This is not surprising given the extensive size of the downtown and the supply of so many obsolete buildings.

In these cases, combining adjacent lots at prices that make redevelopment feasible should be encouraged. Based on the interviews, it appears that a very small number of owners control a large proportion of downtown properties. The cost basis or net investment in properties these owners control tend to be low because many were purchased many years ago.

All other factors being the same, a small number of owners would tend to facilitate the assembly and redevelopment of properties. The interviews, however, suggest that in at least the short-run, under present ownership patterns, it is more profitable or economically prudent to maintain relatively high vacancy rates and higher rents than engage in the marketing and renovation that would be required to achieve lower vacancies. If the downtown market contained a greater number of distinct property owners and therefore a more competitive market existed, in conditions of excess supply relative demand, individual property owners would normally have an incentive to accept a lower price for space in order to lease or sell vacant space. The interviews, however, suggest that rather than the price of space falling in response to reduced demand and increased vacancies, the price of space has actually increased.



Lincoln Place (Jordan Block)



Lincoln Place (Jordan Block)



LaSalle Street East



Fox River Center

The interviews suggest another factor that has served to keep the price for space higher than would normally occur given the demand-supply conditions prevailing in the downtown. The use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to facilitate the revitalization or enhancement of the downtown has led to the raising of reservation prices. Reservation prices refer to the minimum price an owner must receive in order to be willing to sell property. These conditions have served to raise costs without increasing demand for space so that the prevailing rent levels are currently not as significant a competitive strength as they would normally be. Low rents can be used to induce unique and interesting retail or other incubator entrepreneurs to the downtown.

Recommended Priority Strategies and Actions

Several kinds of actions will encourage the evolution of downtown from its historic functions to the newer functions that the downtown can play to the benefit of the City and its citizens. The focus should be on cultivating existing or potential strengths to attract and encourage the expansion of those types of firms and activities that derive a real advantage from a downtown location. This focus will result in a mix of land uses and activities that differ significantly from the historic combination of uses that once thrived downtown. The past is not likely to be recreated with general retailing uses that serve the entire region with basic goods of the kind found in the traditional department stores once found in the downtown. Instead, the downtown will need to be programmed and supported to adapt to new opportunities that can be expected to include specialty stores that complement eating and drinking-related and entertainment or cultural attractions as more of the area's population and out-of-town guests visit downtown for entertainment and unique experiences. An example of a potential mixed-use, entertainment redevelopment opportunity is the Lincoln Place (the Jordan Block). This block can become a landmark development that will anchor the southern terminus of LaSalle Street with a significant and vital new multi-level complex. This potential redevelopment would become the gateway to Ottawa's revitalized downtown area.

New market responsive, in-fill development should be encouraged for its direct and spillover economic impact and confidence sustaining effect. Cost-effective public capital should be added to facilitate the evolution of the downtown as a preferred location for housing, recreation and specialty retailing, eating and drinking places and "experience" attractions.

Tenancing, Land Uses and Zoning Policy Recommendation

The challenge will be to attract a critical mass of food-related and agglomeration of specialty stores or services that have unique attractions or drawing power and are not readily duplicated in competing locations.

As suggested above, resurgence of areas like downtown Ottawa is frequently keyed to eating and drinking places. The recent facade and building interior restorations housing eating and entertainment establishments is a positive indication of the potential of attracting a wider selection of restaurant and food-service options, other than fast-food franchises. Some examples of other food-related tenancies for which demand may be cultivated include bagel and bread stores, ice cream/yogurt and coffee and tea shops, and "burrito



Renovation & Improved Facade

wraps” or “healthy” Mexican outlets. These types of tenancies are today’s increasingly preferred “fast-foods”. Restaurants and other eating and drinking places would do better if grouped together.

Retail stores, particularly specialty stores, depend upon foot traffic and visibility as a primary advantage in attracting customers. It is important for retailers to be near other stores, to be visible, and to offer an inviting street presence. Smaller, but specialized apparel, and accessory tenancies such as higher-quality sweater or sportswear stores, shoes stores, unique gift and flower shops are examples of the kinds of tenancies if grouped together, that will be more likely to succeed than general merchandise stores that are unlikely to be able to compete with the general merchandise tenancies located near Interstate 80 or the kind of standard chain stores found at the Peru Mall. Existing specialty shop merchants already attract a higher percentage of customers from beyond the local area (including customers from the City of Chicago and Chicago area suburbs). If downtown is able to create a more significant grouping of such specialty tenancies it will be likely to attract a greater number of customers from beyond the local market area and to attract more frequent visitation from within the market area because of the availability of uniquely responsive merchandise and customer-oriented service in a fun, pedestrian-oriented pleasant environment.



Court Street Businesses

Field research and interviews suggest that the on-going economic dynamic indicated by the high vacancy rate creates an economic incentive for property owners in downtown to rent the ground floors before second floors, whether the users be retail, restaurant or office activities. This leasing approach reflects that ground floor space is typically less expensive to prepare for occupancy than second floor space, which typically has not been as recently upgraded as main floor space. This also tends to maintain somewhat higher rents for retail users, including the smaller specialty store space that the downtown must attract if it is to develop a sufficiently powerful critical mass of stores to be successful. In addition, the placement of offices in first floors frequently limits the kind of window shopping that encourages walking and browsing in the downtown, while spreading out the retailing activities that do locate in the downtown.

The City may wish to use its zoning power to enhance the profitability and feasibility of utilizing the main floors of buildings for retail and other customer serving uses. Increasing the attraction of the downtown by creating passer-by interesting space could help to produce a change in the economics of the downtown. For the time being, the City may wish to consider encouraging upper floor rehabilitation while simultaneously precluding first floor offices in key downtown blocks such as LaSalle Street and Main Street. These blocks already contain several specialty apparel and jewelry stores so precluding first floor offices may encourage retail concentration. The City should provide financing, marketing support and planning assistance for the rehabilitation of upper floor space within those blocks. Ground floor office uses, however, could be encouraged in other downtown locations. As the downtown attracts more retailers, particularly within a concentrated area, expands the number and type of food service establishments and adds office space users and residential uses, these additions will reinforce each other, creating a positive cycle of increasing valuation and desirability of the downtown for all users.



LaSalle Street



Sheriff House



LaSalle Street

Given that more commercial building space exists than the city can support, the city of Ottawa should encourage commercial property conversions to residential uses. Residential lofts units, live-work spaces, as well as town homes can be created within existing structures or with new infill construction. Such development would signal a changing locational image for the downtown, while also helping to build a population base to support commercial uses. At this point in the evolution of the downtown, the importance of creating up-scale housing in downtown relates less to potential market demand than it does to establish a desirable location image – that it is hip or chic to live in downtown. To attract such households however, would require signs and the expectations of the targeted households that the downtown is evolving into the center of cultural, entertainment and recreational activities.

The property owners, City and Chamber of Commerce may wish to consider attempting to encourage and attract artists to rent or purchase vacant building space that could be converted into artist live/work space. While we have not studied the market feasibility of such a strategy, the attraction of artists seeking a lower cost, scenic environment within driving distance of the Chicago metropolitan area may facilitate the reuse of older buildings not well positioned to compete for firms in the professional, business and technological service industries. Most important, the attraction of artists would serve to create a chic image or cache for the downtown. The nurturing of the downtown as a location for cultural activities will increase the potential for establishing residential uses in the downtown and attracting visitation. Another benefit of attracting artists to downtown Ottawa is that unlike many entertainment options that some local governments are pursuing to give a boost to their downtowns by their very nature, the activities of artists tend to change and retain their freshness. This strategy should be pursued in conjunction with adopting policies encouraging the types of tenancies, renovations and ground floor uses previously discussed.

Improve Parking and Transportation

A program of enhancing parking should be inaugurated to improve the perceived and actual convenience of shopping and patronizing downtown businesses and activities. To the extent strategically located vacant lots or properties are available for attractive prices they should be purchased. Strategically located property is situated so as to provide parking in the short-run and have the potential of facilitating access, enhancements or needed building space for adjoining or potential uses. Care, however, should be taken to avoid providing parking that creates gaps along certain street frontages, disrupting pedestrian flow between buildings.

In addition, investigate the possibility of diverting one-way southbound traffic to Clinton Street to allow for LaSalle Street to be returned to a two-way street with added parking.



Example of Way Finding Sign

Enhance Way-finding and Signage and Downtown Marketing

The downtown would benefit from a way-finding system that can capitalize on the destination institutions such as courthouses, City Hall, Washington Park and the Riverwalk. An exciting signing/way-finding system, including visible symbols of the courthouses and other institutions and markers of significant historical events such as the Lincoln-Douglas debate should be provided in combination with a better coordinated marketing of the downtown.

The City, in conjunction with the Downtown Development Team, Downtown Business Association, Ottawa Visitors Bureau, and Chamber of Commerce, may wish to consider assisting with the formation of a property owner and merchant's association for promoting downtown. Activities could appropriately include the engagement of a consultant expert in the creation of signage (most prominent signs should promote the brand names the store carries) display windows and life-style messaging and other sophisticated marketing techniques employed by the leading malls.



LaSalle Street

Caution About Actions to Improve General Appearance

Banners, planters, additional lighting, outdoor seating and other amenities, which improve the general appearance to the downtown, should be added in conjunction with property owners actions to improve their facades and make other physical and tenanting enhancements. Be sure that the contemplated shade trees and planter boxes do not block the views of shop windows and signs. Avoid the temptation of installing expensive trash cans, distinctive paving stones and related streetscape improvements and furniture as they are costly to amortize and maintain and distract from store fronts. Focus on keeping sidewalks clean (and snow free). In addition, it is important at this stage of the downtown's evolution to not significantly raise costs as low rents are needed to incubate the downtown with new entrepreneurs.

As part of the actions, programs and policies suggested above, the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be used to further the priority strategies, including bridging the gap in feasibility of a desirable adaptive reuse or redevelopment project that would serve as an anchor or catalyst for additional private investment and development. Such a project should include provisions for well-integrated parking.



Chapter • 5

Downtown Plan

As mentioned earlier in the Introduction, goals are general statements that indicate the type of community that is desired. The development of goals and the implementation of policies are the keys to the success of the Downtown Plan.

Goals and objectives were formulated using recommendations for the future and information gathered from the community. These objectives and recommendations for future actions have been used to form each element of the plan.

In order to achieve some of the goals specified in the Downtown Plan, more detailed studies will be needed. These additional studies will provide the necessary detail and direction needed to meet those goals and should be adopted as amendments to the Downtown Plan.

Aerials of downtown



TIF District Map

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development tool created by the Illinois legislature in 1977. Its premise is that through undertaking a given economic development project, one can expect the property value of the project site and some amount of contiguous property to be enhanced as a result of the project. The tax increment represents the additional tax revenue from the project site and contiguous properties that is the result of the increase in property value after the project, as compared with property value prior to the project.



Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Map

Operationally, the pre-project property value is calculated and certified. This property value becomes the basis upon which future tax increments are calculated. Tax increment financing can be used not only with property taxes, but also under certain circumstances with sales taxes.

After the declaration and certification of the TIF, all taxing districts still receive their full pro rata share of the portion of the property taxes attributable to the pre-project certified equalized assessed value. The tax increment is captured exclusively by the municipality for use in the TIF district. Thus, the tax increment attributable to the property taxes for non-municipal local government jurisdictions is diverted by TIF into a fund which is used by the municipality to pay for TIF development project costs or other ancillary expenses in the TIF. After the expiration of the TIF district, all tax revenues from the district are once again distributed on a pro rata basis to local taxing districts. In Illinois, the tax increment can be captured for up to twenty-three years based upon an approved redevelopment plan.

See Exhibit 1

Downtown Districts

The Downtown area has been divided up 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.

LaSalle Street and Main Street corridors have been highlighted on the Downtown District Map to emphasize their importance as primary activity corridors traversing various districts. First floor retail uses should be emphasized along the LaSalle Street corridor from Washington Park to Festival Park, and along the Main Street corridor from LaSalle Street to Sycamore Street.

In the following pages are descriptions of each district. *See Exhibit 2*





Canal District



Riverwalk



Rigden Park



River Residential District

Canal District

The Canal District surrounds the I&M Canal with Superior Street being the southern border and the CSX Railroad being the northern border. The district extends about five blocks on either side of LaSalle Street.

The Canal District is currently comprised of a mix of residential and business uses. The route of the I&M Canal corridor is proposed to be enhanced into an attractive amenity and trail system. Upgrading the structures immediately adjacent to the corridor, and throughout the Canal District should further enhance this amenity, which has significant historic meaning to Ottawa. In the future, this district should move further towards a residential area (especially south of the canal corridor) with the revitalization of existing architecturally contributing residential structures, replacement of non-contributing structures, infill opportunities on vacant lots, as well as the replacement of functionally obsolescent commercial buildings. Locations with existing viable commercial establishments within the Canal District should remain in place especially along busier vehicular transportation routes.

The Canal District should allow for business retention or creation which will provide local residents and tourists access to cultural and entertainment establishments along the canal corridor. The Canal District presents an opportunity 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 Residential District

River Residential District

Center Ottawa Residential District

The Arbor Residential District, River Residential District and the Center Ottawa Residential District are areas comprised predominately of existing single-family residential structures. There are many multi-family structures and many businesses located within these districts along with Marquette High School in the Center Ottawa Residential District. In the future, these districts should move towards an increase of single-family structures, with multi-family structures appropriately mixed in, and with a concentration of commercial uses. The existing commercial areas should be evaluated for compatibility with the proposed increase in single-family uses in these districts. Opportunities for new infill and/or replacement of single-family and multi-family uses should be considered in these districts. Additional housing created by new construction or adaptive re-use projects will increase the population near the downtown.



Reddick Mansion

Downtown Residential District

The Downtown Residential District is located at the northern edge of downtown. This district is currently made up of existing commercial and institutional uses. Existing viable businesses and established institutional uses should be encouraged to remain, while opportunities to increase higher density housing should be considered when and where the opportunity presents itself. Adaptive re-use of existing architecturally contributing structures should be considered as well as opportunities for new replacement / infill structures. This district could also provide diverse housing opportunities to increase the population of residents living in very close proximity to the Central Business District. Opportunities to provide residential use above retail or office uses are strongly encouraged. This can be accomplished through new construction or adaptive re-use projects.



Washington Park District

Washington Park District

The dominant feature in this district is the preservation of Washington Park in the center with the historic buildings and civic uses on the north and east edges. Most of the buildings around the Square are on the National Register of Historic Places. The proposal for this district is to preserve the character of the existing historic and architecturally significant governmental, institutional, and residential structures, which define the north and east park edges. The park's west and south edges along LaSalle Street and Jackson Street, have 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 as well as views into the park. New infill development or adaptive re-use of existing buildings should provide for new housing opportunities on the west and south edges of the park.



West Main Street Business District

West Main Street Business District

The West Main Street Business District is currently comprised of commercial/retail uses serving the adjacent residential districts and the transient traffic along Main Street. This district should look to enhance the aesthetics of the entire district with an emphasis on the Main Street corridor. The Main Street corridor should become more pedestrian friendly and aesthetically pleasing. This can be accomplished by adding street trees, landscaping where possible, street furniture and civic art. Design Guidelines should also be implemented to promote attractive business signage. Opportunities to provide residential use above retail or office uses are strongly encouraged. This can be accomplished through new construction or adaptive re-use projects. The West Main Street Business District should take advantage of the close proximity of residential areas to the north, south, and west, which include a significant population within close walking distance to this district. Pedestrian linkages between residential areas and businesses need to be assessed to allow for safe and easy access. For example, narrow sidewalks, sidewalk obstructions, uneven pavement and difficult curb crossings diminish pedestrian activity.



Clinton/Jefferson Business District

Clinton/Jefferson Business District

This district is comprised primarily of commercial, retail, and institutional uses with some existing residential uses. It includes a two-block section of LaSalle Street and Columbus Street connecting to the Washington Park District to the north and the Court House Business District to the south. The LaSalle Street improvements should be consistent through the various districts.

This district should encourage business retention and new businesses addressing aesthetics and streetscape design when changes are made. This district should also encourage mixed-uses including offices and residential uses above the street level along LaSalle Street. In other areas, it is appropriate to include office uses on the first level.

Civic Center District

The Civic Center District currently contains Ottawa's City Hall, the Ottawa Elementary School District administrative offices, several financial institutions and many existing businesses. This district's eastern boundary is Clinton Street, which is proposed to be the southern traffic flow for Illinois Route 23 as a replacement for the current southern traffic movement along LaSalle Street. The Lateral Canal corridor defines the west edge of this district.

An increase of civic uses and the retention/enhancement of existing viable business uses should be encouraged within this district. The Civic Center District includes a two-block section of the Main Street corridor, which connects to the Court House District to the east, and connects to the West Main Street District on the west.



LaSalle County Courthouse

Courthouse Business District

The Courthouse Business District contains the LaSalle County Courthouse structure, built in 1889. This district currently contains several restaurants and existing commercial / retail establishments with the attraction of the historic Courthouse, as well as the workday activities centered around this structure. It is anticipated that new dining establishments will migrate north along LaSalle Street. Additional court support services and allowances for expansion of government related services should be encouraged within this district. For example, additional government office space could be created as an alternate to relocating government uses outside the Central Business District.

The Courthouse Business District also contains an area known as the “Jordan Block” named after the Jordan Hardware store on Main Street. The Jordan Hardware store was located immediately south of the courthouse,

and burned down in March of 1998. The Jordan Hardware building site, as well as several adjacent structures, currently remain vacant. Several concept plans have been proposed or studied which all call for a unified plan for this development area. This area which is bounded by Columbus Street and LaSalle Street, Main Street to the north and the bridge approach on the south is a primary gateway entrance into Ottawa’s downtown. Proposed uses for this development block to be renamed “Lincoln Place” include entertainment, hotel/ convention center and restaurant uses. 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.



Aerial of Jordan Block



Renovation & Improved Facade



Festival Park Riverfront District (Riverwalk)

Festival Park Riverfront District

The Festival Park Riverfront District contains the eventual terminus of the Fox River Walk, Central School, parking areas, the Ottawa River Rescue Squad building and boat launch, and a park area. This district is proposed to be enhanced by the addition of parks, trails, a multi purpose festival area as well as potential for a marina to increase boat access and docking. The overall goal is to strengthen pedestrian connections from the river into the Central Business District. An S-curve is being proposed at the north end of this district, connecting Clinton Street with existing southbound Illinois Route 23 and 71 (LaSalle Street). After intersecting the new S-curve, it is



Riverfront Illustrative Concept Plans
(Smith Group JJR)

proposed that LaSalle Street will terminate in a large turn-around “Public Square” park that would feature a landmark such as a statue or pavilion. The north and west banks of the Illinois and Fox Rivers would include an increase of boat docks along with the improvements and extensions of the Ottawa Riverwalk. The expanded Riverwalk would begin at the I&M Canal Aqueduct and follow the west bank of the Fox River south and west to the proposed festival

park area. Once the Riverwalk reaches the Festival Park area the Riverwalk will pass near Central School and traverse the former Lateral Canal located along Canal Street.



If the Central School property should ever become available, it should be incorporated into the Festival Area. The school building could be redeveloped into restaurants, a cultural civic center, corporate offices, or a combination of each. The track area between the west side of the school building and Walker Street could be converted into multi-family residential and/or single-family residential developments. The area along the north bank of the Illinois River could be redeveloped into a marina.

Several concept plans have been completed and they illustrate preliminary designs for the Festival Park.

See Exhibit 3

Riverfront Illustrative Concept Plans (Basalay Cary & Alstadt)



LaSalle Street Traffic



Aerial of Downtown

Transportation

A safe, convenient, and efficient circulation system is vital to the economic well being and quality of life in Ottawa. An effective system must not only be capable of accommodating present and future traffic volumes, it should also serve the public by connecting living areas with employment, shopping, medical and recreational facilities. The transportation system must meet the needs of business and industry by linking those activities with essential services and distant markets. 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, as well as the potential to restore commuter rail service to Ottawa.

Several federal and state highways run through Ottawa. I-80 is located in the northern portion of the City, and Illinois Routes 23 and 71 transect the City. Illinois Route 23 runs north-south while Illinois Route 71 runs from the northeast to the southwest. Illinois Routes 23 and 71 travel directly through the downtown bringing a large amount of traffic through the center of Ottawa. U.S. Highway 6 is located slightly north of the downtown and travels east and west. The development of these major roadways combined with the earlier means of transportation and the Illinois and Fox Rivers, helped Ottawa gain importance as a regional transportation hub.





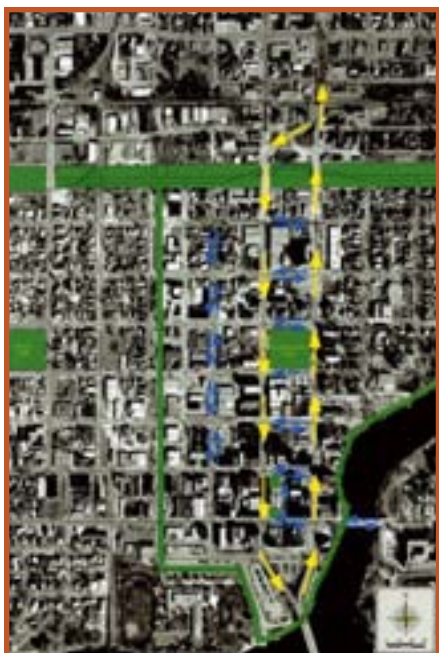
I&M Canal Trail

One type of circulation that Ottawa should promote and utilize to its full potential is the I&M Canal Trail that is used by bicyclists, hikers, cross-country skiers and snowmobiles. The trail uses the historic I&M Canal tow path, and is part of the Grand Illinois Trail. The Canal Trail will be connected to the downtown through the Riverwalk Trail to help link pedestrians to the downtown.

The City of Ottawa is currently working on several projects dealing with transportation in and around Ottawa. The first is the potential for a commuter rail line that would utilize the existing train station and CSX line. A feasibility study is underway to determine the potential need for commuter rail service. The counties involved are Will, Grundy and LaSalle. The proposed commuter rail service would run 59 miles from Joliet Union Station to a terminal station in the LaSalle-Peru area, passing through Minooka, Channahon, Morris, Seneca, Marseilles, Ottawa and Utica.



CSX Train Station



Existing Primary Traffic Routes

Existing Primary Traffic Routes

As it exists today, Illinois Route 23 is the primary north/south state route and truck route running through Downtown Ottawa. Illinois Route 23 is split into two one-way roadways. LaSalle Street carries three lanes of south-bound traffic and one block to the east, Columbus Street carries three lanes of north-bound traffic. Each of the cross streets have two way traffic with the exception of two blocks of Jackson Street, which are one-way going west to Clinton Street. The northern gateway to the Central Business District begins at a newly constructed S-Curve that routes southbound traffic to LaSalle Street. The southern gateway to the Central Business District begins with the Illinois River (Veterans Memorial) bridge descent putting northbound traffic onto Columbus Street. LaSalle Street and Columbus Street have seven traffic signals through the Downtown District, allowing for safe turning movement and east-west traffic flow through the Downtown. These traffic signals on LaSalle Street and Columbus Street are timed and sequenced so traffic moves continually. This allows traffic to accelerate through the Downtown area.

With the combination of three lanes of moving traffic and time sequenced stop lights, LaSalle Street and Columbus Streets can be difficult for pedestrian activity and parking at peak hours. With LaSalle Street remaining as the central spine of Ottawa's Downtown, it becomes difficult to cross laterally as a pedestrian. LaSalle Street traffic will only increase in the future, exacerbating the difficulties described above. *See Exhibit 4*



Proposed Primary Traffic Routes

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 which is one block west of LaSalle Street. A new S-Curve could begin just north of the intersection of Washington and LaSalle Streets connecting with Clinton Street near the intersection of Lafayette and Clinton Streets.

The exact location of the proposed S-Curve has not been determined at this time nor has a feasibility study been initiated to study this proposal in detail.

Clinton Street would either become two or three lanes of southbound traffic including truck traffic, depending on the potential for parking on the west side of Clinton Street. As the traffic flow would continue south it would reconnect with LaSalle Street near Woodward Memorial Drive on the block south of Main Street.

At the southern border of the Central Business District, Clinton Street would turn east and create a four-way intersection with LaSalle Street extending into Festival Park. New traffic signals would be placed at each intersection along Clinton Street. These new traffic signals should be sequenced to allow for efficient southbound traffic flow with consideration for lateral pedestrian movements. The existing traffic signals on LaSalle Street would be removed and replaced with stop signs. LaSalle Street would be returned to a two-way street with one northbound, and one southbound traffic lane. Parking along LaSalle Street will be redesigned to add or modify parking as permitted based on a reduction of one lane of through traffic.

Each of the cross streets would be two-way with either angle parking or parallel parking. *See Exhibit 5 & Exhibit 6*



Exhibit 7

Physical Analysis

Building Analysis

Downtown Ottawa has an excellent inventory of existing commercial buildings which retain their architectural character from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. While many building facades remain in a good state, there are varying degrees of facade changes over time and varying degrees of maintenance. The following categories represent classifications created for this downtown plan document. These categories begin to identify groups of buildings to be reused, rehabilitated, maintained, and redeveloped. An analysis of the buildings in their current condition was conducted through a general walking field survey. The Physical Analysis map does not represent a detailed architectural survey. It is recommended that a more detailed survey be completed of the existing buildings to provide a more accurate classification of individual structures. *See Exhibit 7*

Physical Analysis Map With Building Categories

Reuse/Reconstruct

Buildings in this category are in good condition, but are in a modern style lacking the details and architectural elements of the Victorian Era Main Street Buildings. Buildings in this classification are typically in good condition and merit consideration for interior adaptive reuse and exterior remodeling. Exterior remodeling should be done in a manner that contributes to the urban fabric of the original Ottawa Main Street facades 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 or restoration of architectural details that may have been removed or covered by previous attempts to modernize the facade.

Maintain

A maintained building is a building that contributes to the overall architectural fabric of Downtown Ottawa. These buildings are generally in good repair with intact historic facades. These buildings may require minor improvements and generally require ongoing maintenance.

Redevelop

The building is in poor condition, and does not contribute to the desired streetscape aesthetic. These buildings may include excess under utilized land areas. 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 in terms of massing proportion and window placement. These redevelopment opportunities may include buildings on individual parcels or the assembly of several parcels to create a larger redevelopment opportunity.



Photo Simulation—Northeast corner of Clinton Street and Madison Street



Photo Simulation—LaSalle Street Across From Court House



Exhibit 7—Downtown Physical Analysis

Parking and Open Space Analysis

The following descriptions identify existing and proposed parking lots/structures, as well as existing and proposed parks or urban open space corridors. An analysis of the existing and future parking locations was conducted through a general walking field survey. The Physical Analysis map does not represent a detailed parking survey. It is recommended that a more detailed survey be completed for the parking needs to provide a more accurate study. *See Exhibit 7*

Physical Analysis Map With Parking and Open Space Categories

Parking Lots

This category is used for the location of existing parking lots. These existing parking lots include both municipal and privately owned parcels and vary in size and shapes.

Future Parking

The future parking category is a general location for potentially new parking lots or parking structures within the downtown. 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 space areas.

Future Parks

This category shows potential locations for new urban parks, linear open spaces/trail systems or other potential open spaces.



Skate Park



Downtown Existing Land Use

Ottawa's existing downtown consists of a variety of uses including commercial/retail, light manufacturing, banking, institutional, civic, government offices, as well as multi-family and single family residential. Ottawa's downtown also includes open spaces in the form of public squares and linear open space along Fox and Illinois Rivers. Information from Ottawa's current Zoning Map, aerial photography, as well as a limited field study has been combined to create the Downtown Existing Land Use Map. It is recommended that a more detailed, block-by-block, land use study be completed in order to update the Ottawa Zoning Map. *See Exhibit 8*



Downtown Existing Land Use

Downtown Future Land Use Plan *See Exhibit 9 & 10*

The Downtown Future Land Use Plan illustrates proposed land uses to assist in decision making as parcels of land develop over time. It is important to indicate the desired land uses in the Central Business District and nearby blocks to establish a plan that will be implemented incrementally by different entities or individuals. In cases where the Future Land Use Map recommends changes from existing conditions it is assumed that the consideration for changing the land use will be made at a property owners discretion or at a time when properties changes ownership. 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 plan. The Future Land Use Plan in combination with the designation of districts described earlier, provides a framework to evaluate the on going evolution of Ottawa's downtown, ensuring its viability as the heart of the community.

The City of Ottawa should also conduct a study to assess the supply and demand of parking in downtown Ottawa. This study will provide the City with the number of existing off-street and on-street parking spaces and what the number of spaces should be.

In conjunction with the parking study, the City of Ottawa should also attempt to acquire surface parking lots that can be converted to deck parking in the future. This strategy will provide a greater degree of flexibility in meeting future parking demands. If parking demands remain relatively low the surface parking will be adequate. If parking demands in a particular area of downtown increase, perhaps because of an increase in land uses such as restaurants, which have higher parking demand, then these City owned surface lots could be converted to deck parking.

Note: The S-curve location shown on the Future Land Use plan and the Illustrative Plan are subject to review.

Legend

- Civic
- Open Space/Parks
- Parking
- Commercial
- Multi-Family
- Single Family

Downtown Illustrative Future Land Use Plan





Downtown Proposed Land Use Plan

Legend

- Civic**
- Open Space/Parks**
- Parking**
- Commercial**
- Multi-Family**
- Single Family**

In the Downtown Plan we have designated areas that are potential locations for future decks. These areas vary in size and are in various locations. A parking deck requires a minimum dimension of approximately 140 by 190 feet. The 140 foot width allows for two aisles of parking. These dimensions do not include additional areas to accommodate sidewalks and landscaping around the exterior of the parking deck. The street frontage of any parking structure should have retail space on the street level.

Downtown redevelopment is not driven by an increase in the supply of parking for the downtown. Instead, an increase in the vitality of the downtown shopping district can increase the demand for downtown parking beyond the available supply. When a community has an adequate or more than adequate supply of parking to support the current activities in the downtown, this situation is a positive attribute and should be emphasized in marketing campaigns promoting the downtown.

Civic

Many existing civic buildings remain significant historic structures that contribute to the definition of Downtown Ottawa's character. The Downtown Ottawa Proposed Land Use Plan identifies existing civic uses to remain as well as illustrating proposed new civic uses. Civic uses are shown between Clinton Street on the east and Canal Street on the west, and between Washington Street on the north and Jackson Street on the south. This additional civic use area allows for future expansion of the existing Ottawa library and existing safety services buildings. Additional civic uses are also shown in the block that contains the existing City Hall structure. This allows for potential expansion and/or clustering of City Administrative services.

Parks and Open Space

The proposed Ottawa Downtown Plan illustrates a linear open space park which utilizes the site of the Lateral Canal that parallels Canal Street and connects the I & M Canal to the proposed Festival Park area along the Illinois River. The plan also illustrates a potential design renovation for the Festival Park area. Several other concept plans have been studied for the Festival Park area, however, no particular design has been finalized.

The Future Ottawa Downtown Plan also illustrates a linear park along the east side of LaSalle Street. This linear park will connect Festival Park to the site of the historic LaSalle County Courthouse. The connection will facilitate an attractive pedestrian way extending the LaSalle Street streetscape to the rivers edge.

Parking

As Ottawa's downtown businesses, new residential uses, and/or civic uses increase, the need for parking sites should be identified for future parking lots or parking decks. The Ottawa Downtown Future Land Use Plan illustrates potential sites for parking lots/decks; portions of these sites include existing surface parking lots. In general, parking areas should be considered west of and in close proximity to the LaSalle Street corridor. Existing off-street parking areas can be expanded or new parking areas created when land acquisition opportunities exist. Larger parking areas can be considered for parking decks construction when warranted in the future.



Downtown Proposed Land Use Plan

Legend

- Civic**
- Open Space/Parks**
- Parking**
- Commercial**
- Multi-Family**
- Single Family**

Commercial

Ottawa's downtown area includes a variety of commercial and retail businesses including stores, restaurants, taverns, banking institutions, professional service businesses, entertainment businesses, personal care businesses, healthcare, automobile oriented businesses, as well as a fitness club. The predominant area for existing commercial retail businesses is the LaSalle Street corridor and the Main Street corridor. Secondary areas of commercial retail activities include the Columbus Street corridor, and several east-west streets within the downtown area. Downtown Ottawa also has many service businesses located west of the LaSalle Street corridor along portions of Clinton, Fulton, and Canal Streets.

The Downtown Proposed Land Use Map illustrates land use changes that add additional residential uses in closer proximity to the LaSalle Street corridor. The purpose of these changes is to promote new housing opportunities that will increase the population located within a short walking distance to the LaSalle Street corridor, and to further emphasize the LaSalle Street corridor as the primary shopping and entertainment street running throughout downtown Ottawa.

Other areas such as the Main Street corridor, Court Street and portions of Columbus Street should continue to include, and enhance the existing businesses, as well as adding business in the future. Downtown Ottawa should continue to maintain a broad cross-section of business activities to avoid becoming only a "specialty retail" district. While the downtown area will have a niche in specialty shopping as compared with highway oriented retail areas, Ottawa's downtown is currently, and should remain as a "complete service" downtown with a variety of businesses which provide employment, daily services for Ottawa's citizens, dining and entertainment activities, as well as, alternative civic structures and parks.

A particular need for downtown Ottawa is to attract the return of retail clothing shops, shoe stores, and accessory shops. This need is currently being served by highway-oriented businesses in Ottawa, and by regional mall locations far from Ottawa. As Ottawa's population increases and Ottawa's downtown continues to evolve an effort should be made to attract national chain retailers, as well as local merchants to assemble a strong core of clothing and accessory retail businesses. As attested to in surveys completed as part of this planning study attractions for young citizens/patrons are needed to bring additional shopping dollars into the downtown area. In summary, Ottawa's downtown should remain the heart of the entire community, and continue to improve and evolve over time as a functional, vibrant, and attractive district serving Ottawa's residents of all ages and attract visitors who may return many times.



Downtown Proposed Land Use Plan

Legend

- Civic**
- Open Space/Parks**
- Parking**
- Commercial**
- Multi-Family**
- Single Family**

Multi Family

Multi-family Residential development includes town homes, condominiums, and apartments. These buildings can be two to three stories in height and should be built along the street with parking in the back of the building. Multi-family housing can also be constructed over retail or office uses as determined by location on a case-by-case basis. New multi-family structures should be designed to be compatible with the historical architecture in downtown Ottawa. New multi-family uses have been shown on the Downtown Proposed Future Land Use Map replacing existing non-residential uses along LaSalle Street north of Washington Park, along Fulton Street between Lafayette and Madison Streets, and along the east side of Columbus Street between Superior and Washington Streets.

Single Family

Single Family Residential Development is a single dwelling unit where persons of the same family live. Single Family Residential is found mainly on the edges of the downtown along Canal Street to the west, north along Washington Street, Paul Street to the east. There are some neighborhood commercial uses mixed in with the single family residential, such as specialty shops, and a variety of other commercial uses. Most areas that have been designated and areas identified on the existing Downtown Land Use Map remain as single family on the Downtown Proposed Land Use Map. New single family has been designated in areas along the I & M Canal.



Legend

- Civic
- Residential
- Commercial

Downtown Existing Land Use



Legend

- Civic
- Open Space/Parks
- Parking
- Commercial
- Multi-Family
- Single Family

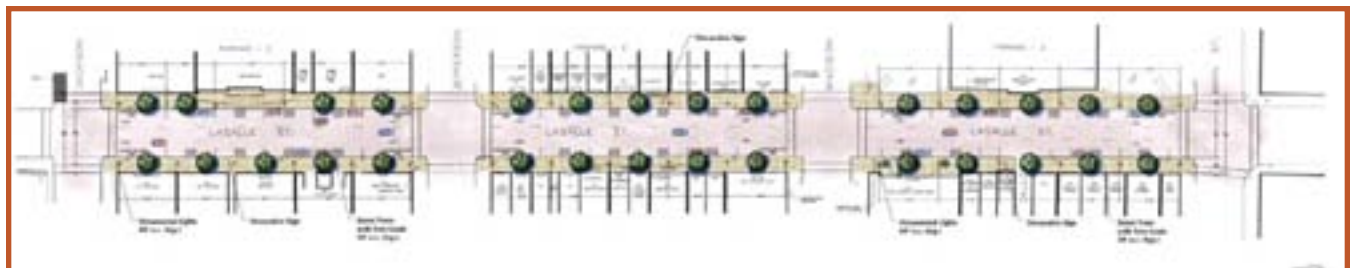
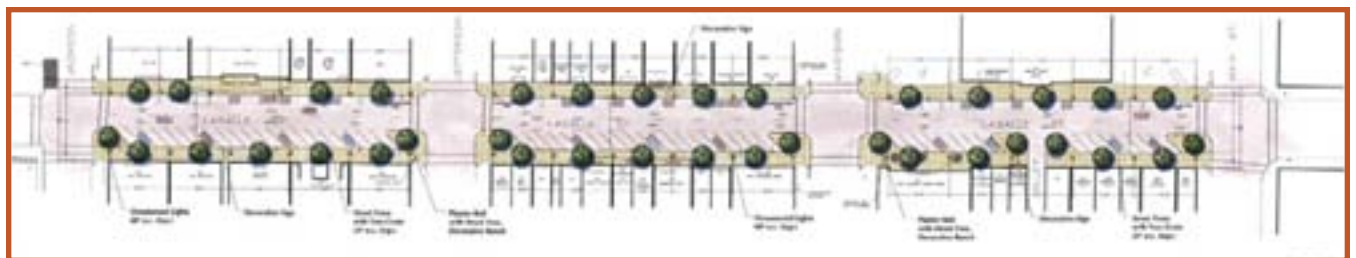
Downtown Proposed Land Use

Note: The S-curve location shown on the Future Land Use plan and the Illustrative Plan are subject to review.

Streetscape

Ottawa is currently working on a streetscape and parking plan for the downtown to upgrade the streetscape atmosphere and aesthetics. The public sidewalks between the roadways and the building/store fronts remain in Ottawa, as in many downtowns, a primary part of the public realm. This pedestrian system must be a safe and attractive place to promote pedestrian activity and public enjoyment throughout the downtown district. This can be accomplished by adding street trees, landscaping where possible, street furniture and civic art, as well as creating guidelines to promote attractive business signage. The project area, shown below, consists of three blocks on LaSalle Street in the downtown area that would serve as a prototypical design for future phases for other parts of downtown. Alternatives for parking configuration within the project area include standard parallel parking on both sides of the street and “California” style with angled parking on one side and parallel on the other. Pedestrian scale streetlights have been installed along the three block area to create an attractive character and make the sidewalks more pedestrian friendly. Other recommendations include the addition of streetscape enhancements such as new, healthy trees, benches, trash receptacles, decorative paving, and planters.

LaSalle Street Concept Plans (Smith Group JJR)



Rigden Park Illustrative Concept Plans
(AI Davis & Associates)

Riverfront Illustrative Concept Plans (Basalay Cary & Alstadt)



Sketch of LaSalle Street



From: Ottawa Central District Urban Design Plan (Brown/Heldt Associates 1977)

LaSalle Street Concept Photos (Smith Group JJR)



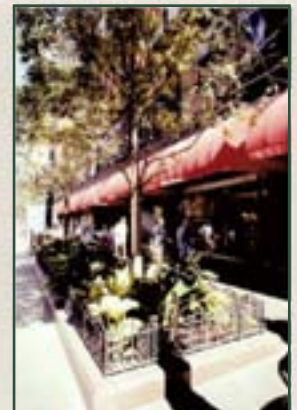
Ornamental Street Lighting



Lighting Enhancements



Historic Pedestrian Sign



Enhanced Planter



Decorative Tree Grate



Streetscape Character



Decorative Seating



Chapter • 6

Implementation of the Plan

Adoption of the Ottawa Downtown Plan does not mark the end of the comprehensive planning process. Rather, it should be viewed as the beginning of the real effort to achieve the community vision. This document has identified numerous implementation strategies in each of the various plan elements needing to be initiated and completed. Many of these implementation strategies will be ongoing activities. All of the implementation strategies will require the City to commit various resources to the effort.

The intent of this chapter is to describe a series of initiatives the City can undertake to help achieve the community vision. Achieving this vision requires the effort of all segments of the community. The City government is but only one small part of this effort. Other participants in the effort to achieve the community vision must include the business community, local developers, other local governments, local institutions, community and service organizations, and Ottawa residents themselves.

Implementation of the Ottawa Downtown Plan will require a blend of proactive and reactive activities and approaches. Proactive measures would be those in which the City initiates the action or change such as through public initiative, code change, or some public improvement. Reactive measures are those in which the City is presented a proposal by other parties requiring action or a decision by the City. The City's development review process is one example of a reactive measure. This chapter identifies only the proactive measures since it is only these the City can control.

The Ottawa Downtown Plan is a dynamic document and requires ongoing maintenance in order to remain an effective policy tool. Periodic review and appraisal of the Plan is recommended to protect the Plan from becoming obsolete and unused. It is recommended that the Ottawa Downtown Plan and various maps be reviewed approximately every year. Monitoring can identify when the assumptions used in the preparation of the Downtown Plan appear to be at odds with reality. It can also identify whether external or market pressures suggesting change should be responded to. When a problem is identified, the Downtown Plan must be adjusted, amended or revised. Too many communities begin to diverge from their plan without identifying the problem and, in so doing, discredit the plan.



LaSalle Street

The Plan should not be revised on a whim. Nor should the Plan be considered the absolute final word. It is difficult and, sometimes, bewildering for communities to engage in a large number of plan implementation initiatives. The ability to sustain numerous ongoing implementation measures is difficult for most communities. 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. Following are sixteen initiatives identified by the Plan Commission as implementation strategies. The first two implementation strategies (revisions to the Zoning/Subdivision Regulations and completion of a Traffic Study) are the two highest priority tasks identified. 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 the goals, objectives and the visions of each document. The Traffic Study for Ottawa's Downtown is necessary in order to begin the process of evaluating changes required to modify traffic patterns and restore LaSalle Street to a two-way roadway with improved parking and pedestrian atmosphere.

Revise Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

The City will need to revise the City Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance in order to make them consistent with the recommendations of the Ottawa Downtown Plan. New ordinance regulations should be created and adopted to allow the types of special zoning considerations necessary to evolve Ottawa's downtown as envisioned. Updated regulations will need to consider mixed-use structures, vertical zoning regulations, and parking standards that may be addressed at a municipal level.

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 (P.U.D.)
- Residential zoning standards: review lot area, setbacks, 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

Detailed Traffic Study

A traffic study must be completed for the Downtown area to quantify traffic movement and directions. This study will be utilized to proceed with a detailed design to move the southbound Illinois Route 23 transient traffic to Clinton Street and to make the modifications to LaSalle Street as described in previous chapters.



Mural on LaSalle Street



Parking Example



Proposed Festival Park Area

Adopt the Strategies of the Main Street Program.

Main Street Programs are designed to improve all aspects of the downtown or Central Business District. Improving the economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to visit are as critical to the Main Street or downtown's future as recruiting new businesses, rehabilitating buildings, and expanding parking. Main Street programs build on the downtown's 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

A detailed parking survey must be completed on a block-by-block basis to determine the needs for expanding or revising parking. This survey will also provide data on the best location of future parking lots/decks.

Detailed Architectural Survey

A detailed architectural survey must be completed by a licensed architect on a block-by-block basis to gain a comprehensive analysis of individual structures. This analysis will provide data to make decisions on issues related to rehabilitation, remodeling, adaptive re-use or building replacement.

Design Guidelines

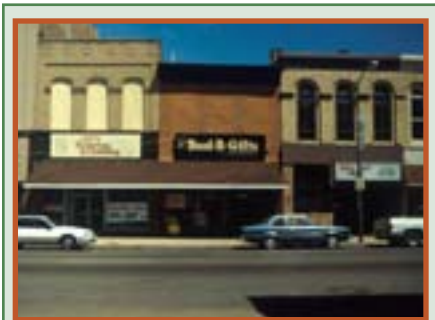
Following the completion of the detailed architectural survey, architectural guidelines must also be completed to establish standards for exterior building designs to be harmonious with the Victorian Era original Main Street in Ottawa. These guidelines should educate owners and designers about the history and content of Ottawa's Main Street building heritage, and establish criteria for building facade massing, proportion and window placement. The guidelines should address both preservation issues and design of new structures. The design of new structures should allow for contemporary expression of design and detailing, while making allowances for compatibility with existing historic structures.



Examples of Riverfront Improvements



Examples of Capital Improvements



Example of Existing Facade



Example of Proposed Facade

Riverfront Greenway Plan

An assessment of the existing conditions of the riverfront, defining the eastern and southern boundaries of the downtown area, should be completed. A detailed comprehensive riverfront plan should be assembled to identify potential public acquisitions, potential for additional trail connections from the river edges to the downtown pedestrian walks and opportunities to create and enhance key views from the downtown to the rivers. A comprehensive riverfront 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. Consideration should be given to an adaptive reuse/redevelopment of the Central School site if the property becomes available. The Central School building and site could include a conversion into restaurants, a cultural civic center, corporate offices, or a combination of each. The rest of the site could be converted into multi-family residential and or single-family residential developments with a marina along the north bank of the Illinois River.

Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements should be continued and expanded on a block-by-block basis on the major block of the downtown. This can be accomplished by adding street trees, street furniture, landscaping where possible and civic art, and creating guidelines to promote attractive signage.

Facade Improvement Program

Initiate a facade improvement program on a block-by-block basis. This begins with completion of architectural assessments and preliminary facade design of an entire block of building facades. A program is then developed to create design and construction standards and to define the private/public partnership. Many times the public sector will produce the preliminary architecture designs, and then provide a matching grant to assist a property owner with facade improvements. This incentive program can be very successful to initiate improvements in a manner that insures that improvements will contribute to the streetscape.

Loan Program

The Downtown Ottawa Comprehensive Loan Program should be promoted to inform businesses of the potential financial assistance that has been offered by local banks. The Loan Program is a new project initiated by Ottawa Savings Bank, First Federal Savings Bank, Yorkville National Bank, First National Bank of Ottawa and Union Bank. The five banks have agreed to provide a pool of loan funds to encourage individuals to invest in the downtown area. The program encourages local businesses and building owners to rehabilitate their buildings or to develop new properties in the downtown TIF district of Ottawa. The Downtown Ottawa Comprehensive Loan Program offers applicants loans at attractive terms. This program places these five local financial institutions at the forefront of the development in the downtown area and further demonstrates their commitment to the revitalization of downtown Ottawa.



Original Architecture—Northeast corner of Clinton Street and Madison Street



Photo Simulation—Northeast corner of Clinton Street and Madison Street



Example of Rowhouses

Apartment Licensing Program

An apartment licensing program should be adopted to establish minimum criteria for apartment uses in terms of occupancy ratings and building code standards. A 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. The Apartment Licensing Program is implemented by having all residential rental property owners complete a survey to verify compliance with building code standards. The survey also includes information about the number of units, the number of occupants, the owner or manager contact information as well as other relevant data. Apartments are periodically inspected to ensure compliance to building codes and licensing regulation as adopted by the city.

Downtown Management Program

A program should be developed to coordinate and manage the downtown area, to collectively promote the downtown shops, promote special events, and provide input in land use and redevelopment decisions. It should also assist business owners in promoting services and products, develop a plan for coordinated snow removal (including snow removal in front of vacant buildings), develop a plan for the installation and ongoing maintenance for landscaping including urban forestry for tree installation and maintenance. Eventually a part time or full time downtown manager position could be established. This position and related office needs can be permanently funded by establishing a Special Service Area (SSA) tax. This SSA tax is paid by property owners within a defined boundary, and is voted on by the effected owners. A Business Improvement District (BID) is similar to an SSA as described above. A BID is also a revitalization tool in which property owners in a commercial area agree to levy an assessment on their properties to generate revenue to pay for capital improvements or for services above and beyond those provided by local government.

Design Review Process

The City established a development design review process on March 5, 2002. Ordinance number 09-2002 created a design review committee and provided procedures for its operation. The Design Review Committee was established with a Building Department Official, Director of Community Development, City Engineer, City Planner, Water Department Assistant Superintendent, Sewer Department Assistant Superintendent, Street Department Assistant Superintendent, Police Chief, Fire Chief, a member of the Plan Commission, a member of the Tree Board, and an architect appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Council for two years. The purpose of the Design Review Committee is to encourage high quality design of new residential, commercial and industrial developments for the advancement of aesthetic values and the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens of, and visitors to, the City of Ottawa. The Plan Commission and City Council should evaluate this Committee and review standards to maintain the quality the City is trying to achieve. The Design Review Committee should strive to be proactive in offering design solution alternatives when required.

Consideration should be given to establishing residential and commercial Planned Unit Development (P.U.D.) Ordinances to allow the outcome of the design review process to be continued further in the zoning approval process.

Planning and Development Department

The City has hired a full time City Planner to be a member of the staff. The Planner is required to handle a variety of assignments in this department including code enforcement, preparing and implementing planning programs, and assisting the City Council and Plan Commission on issues related to proposed developments and applications. The Planner will also write staff reviews on projects and applications dealing with zoning to help guide the City Council and Plan Commission.

Create And Maintain City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Because the capital improvement plan, or program, is intended to guide the City's investments in infrastructure and capital outlays over the foreseeable future, this budgeting tool should be established and updated regularly. The capital improvement plan usually contains a detailed estimate of facilities' costs and a prioritizing of the most critical needs over an extended period of time, usually five or six years. The City Council and administration consults the capital improvement plan during preparation of the City's annual operating budget in order to fund the highest priority projects.

This approach allows the City to determine its long-term capital investment needs and budget accordingly. This planning process also allows the City to identify and evaluate the best sources or methods of funding specific projects. Many of the implementation strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan are directly related to the capital improvement program.

Amendments

Although the Downtown Plan is an adopted policy document, changing conditions and community values will make it necessary to re-examine the various goals and objectives and implementation strategies included in it. Technical data will be updated as new information becomes available. It is good practice to review and update the Downtown Plan periodically, and the Plan Commission should make it its mission to review the Plan every year and report to the City Council whether changes or amendments should be considered.

It is possible that a proposal could be made to the City which is not consistent with the Plan, but which is viewed as desirable and appropriate by the City Council and community. In such a case, if it is obvious that the Plan does not accurately reflect a new goal or objective, it may be necessary to amend the Plan. To the extent that the City Council adopts other policies affecting land use or the City's goals and priorities change, the Plan should be amended.



Appendix • A

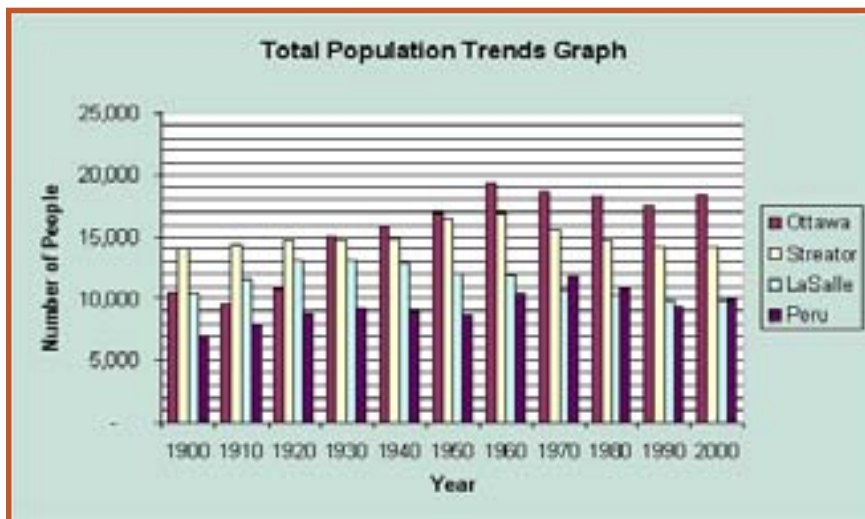
Demographics



	LaSalle County	Ottawa	Streator	LaSalle	Peru
1900	87,776	10,588	14,079	10,446	6,863
1910	90,132	9,535	14,253	11,537	7,984
1920	92,925	10,816	14,779	13,050	8,869
1930	97,695	15,094	14,728	13,149	9,121
1940	97,801	16,005	14,930	12,812	8,983
1950	100,610	16,957	16,469	12,083	8,653
1960	110,800	19,408	16,868	11,897	10,460
1970	111,409	18,716	15,600	10,736	11,772
1980	112,033	18,166	14,791	10,347	10,886
1990	106,913	17,451	14,121	9,717	9,302
2000	111,509	18,307	14,190	9,796	9,835

Source: U.S. Census

Table I. Total population trends. **Ottawa, Illinois and surrounding areas.**



The population in Ottawa has been relatively unchanged since 1960 when the population was 19,408. By 2000, it dropped to 18,307. The lowest it has dropped since 1950 was in 1990 when the population was 17,451. This has been the trend for most of the surrounding communities. Census figures do not include residents of nearby unincorporated subdivisions.

Graph I. Total population trends. **Ottawa, Illinois and surrounding areas.**

Table 2. Age Distributions, Ottawa, Illinois

Year	1970		1980		1990		2000	
Total Population	18,716		18,166		17,451		18,307	
0 – 4 Years	7.5%	1,399	6.5%	1,188	7.0%	1,222	6.4%	1,180
5 – 17 Years	26.8%	5,012	20.6%	3,745	17.0%	2,967	18.6%	3,396
18 – 24 Years	8.8%	1,656	12.7%	2,307	7.9%	1,379	8.1%	1,483
25 – 44 Years	22.0%	4,110	24.1%	4,377	29.7%	5,183	28.2%	5,163
45 – 64 Years	22.1%	4,140	22.0%	3,994	19.6%	3,420	20.8%	3,808
65 & Over	12.8%	2,399	15.9%	2,886	8.9%	3,298	17.9%	3,277
Median Age	31.9		32.9		36.2		38.2	

Table 3. Median Age of Ottawa, Illinois and Surrounding Areas

	Illinois	LaSalle Cty	Ottawa	Streator	LaSalle	Peru
1970	31.0	31.4	31.9	37.7	32.2	***
1980	29.9	32.2	32.9	33.9	35.0	34.4
1990	32.8	35.5	36.2	36.1	37.1	38.4
2000	34.7	38.1	38.2	38.1	38.1	40.9

Table 4. Total Number of Housing Units for Ottawa, Illinois

Year	Units
1990	7,148
2000	8,030

Table 5. Total Number of Households for Ottawa, Illinois and Surrounding Areas

	LaSalle Cty	Ottawa	Streator	LaSalle	Peru	
1990	41,284	7,148	5,665	4,201	3,787	
2000	43,417	7,510	5,746	4,161	4,143	

Source: U.S. Census



Appendix • B

Public Involvement

The process for developing a comprehensive plan should include the community's needs and expectations.

An Image Preference Survey and a Visioning Questionnaire were conducted as part of the public involvement process at the outset of the planning process. The Image Preference Survey is a tool used to help the community to identify preferred forms and appearances of development. The Questionnaire was made up of questions asking community preferences for the future of Ottawa.

The purpose of the Image Preference Survey and Visioning Questionnaire are to forge a consensus about choices affecting the future. The images (and their associated scores) are indications of core community values and the vision citizens have for Ottawa for the future. From this vision, principles to guide future growth and (re)development strategies and decisions can be derived.

Two Charrettes or design workshops were also conducted. The purpose of the Charrettes are to involve everyone in intensive, collaborative workshops with the intention of getting community direction concerning the shape, form, location and appearance of development.



Image No. 101 +4.23



Image No. 16 +3.85



Image No. 69 +3.61



Image No. 18 +3.32

Image Preference Survey

The Image Preference Survey was administered on four separate occasions in the fall of 2000. Two were administered in the high schools with the participation of about 160 students. The third was administered to the Ottawa Golden K Club and the fourth at a public meeting. Overall there were about 270 participants in the Survey.

The participants were shown images or photos of development designs found in and around Ottawa. These images were added to images from other regions around the country to provide a greater variety of choices. These images showed alternatives and solutions used elsewhere. The images were intended to cover a broad range of development applications and to represent good and bad examples. The images were grouped into the following categories: Commercial, Parks and Open Space, Streets and Alleys, Single Family and Multi-Family. The participants were instructed to rate each image on a scale with -5 representing complete disapproval and +5 representing complete approval. Zero indicated a neutral response.

All positive scores are considered positive or desirable. All negative scores are considered negative or undesirable. The values represent varying degrees of approval or disapproval of the images. The most positive images, in effect, are the building blocks for the Plan.

None of the ten most desirable images or photos were taken in Ottawa. These ten photos show three major items: some type of water feature, parks, and inviting and pedestrian-friendly downtown areas. Image No. 101 (+4.23) and Image No. 16 (+3.85) were the two highest scores. The other favorable images dealt with vibrant downtowns with landscaping, and people as shown in Image No. 69 (+3.61) and Image No. 18 (+3.32).

Images that scored the lowest were photos showing empty stores, storefronts, and streetscapes that lacked landscaping. Also included were commercial parking lots that also lacked landscaping and variety, busy intersections, and signs. Images that incorporated pedestrian friendly designs and landscaping scored higher than those that did not. The higher rated images included a variety of new and old designs. The use of land or buildings did not influence scores as much as the appearance of the pedestrian or public realm.



Image No. 101 +4.23



Image No. 39 -1.77



Image No. 76 +3.15



Image No. 40 +3.13

Commercial

The first set of images that was shown represented commercial scenes, commercial strips, parking lots, public uses, and streetscapes. Scores ranged from Image No. 101 (+4.23) to Image No. 39 (-1.77). The highest rated images indicated a very strong preference for pedestrian-friendly environments. For example, Image No. 76 (+3.15), Image No. 40 (+3.13), Image No. 30 (+3.05) and Image No. 26 (+2.96) included the presence of pedestrians and some type of landscaping. Features contributing to a positive score included shade trees along the streets, open space, pedestrian friendly sidewalks, some type of water feature, streets that were not busy, easy parking and architectural features, or details on store fronts.

The features contributing to the negative scores in this section included a lack of landscaping, busy streets, empty storefronts, and large signs. Image No. 80 (-1.61), Image No. 58 (-1.23), Image No. 37 (-1.50), Image No. 39 (-1.77) represent negative features for the commercial section of the survey.



Image No. 26 +2.96



Image No. 80 -1.61



Image No. 30 +3.05



Image No. 37 -1.50



Image No. 58 -1.23



Image No. 113 +3.56

Parks and Open Space

The scores for the parks and open space images ranged from Image No. 113 (+3.56) to Image No. 111 (-1.07). Many of the highest rated images featured water.

Festival areas and walkways rated high as depicted in Image No. 138 (+3.51), Image No. 114 (+3.43), Image No. 137 (+3.51), and Image No. 130 (+3.14). The reasons that participants cited for giving certain images high scores was that they could see Ottawa with the same type of features. These participants would like to create a festival area and riverwalk to bring people back to the river.



Image No. 111 -1.07



Image No. 130 +3.14



Image No. 138 +3.51



Image No. 137 +3.51



Image No. 114 +3.43

Would you use a train if service were available, or more convenient?

- 1. Yes – 68%**
- 2. No – 18%**
- 3. Don't Know – 14%**

Visioning Questionnaire

The Visioning Questionnaire was administered on four separate occasions in the fall of 2000. Fifty-one high school students participated in the questionnaire along with the Image Preference Survey. The questionnaire was also administered to the general public, Ottawa Golden K, and at a public meeting. Of the general public there was just over 100 participants that filled out a complete questionnaire. The average age of the general public was 57.8 years and their average length of residency in Ottawa was 34.1 years.

The participants of the questionnaire were given forty questions. The first set of questions was demographic in nature including age, area they live in, income per household, and the number of vehicles per household. It was found that 47 people lived in Single Family Housing on a lot having more than 10,000 square feet. The largest number of people (22) had a household income from \$50,000 to \$74,999, the next largest group was \$100,000 to 150,000 (14). Of the responses from the general public, 60 people worked within Ottawa and 34 people work outside Ottawa.

The next group of questions dealt with what items the citizens believe are Ottawa's strengths. The highest rated strength of downtown Ottawa was the rivers, followed by the beautiful buildings and the architecture. 102 people from the general public indicated that they thought that community opinion was important in determining the future visual appearance and character of Ottawa. Regarding areas that the public would improve upon or like about Ottawa were another set of questions, 61 people responded that they would improve the visual appearance and design.

Questions were asked in the questionnaire about the types of uses the people would like to see for the downtown area. Specialty shops were rated the highest followed by clothing, retail and upscale restaurants. A question was asked about how often you shop in downtown Ottawa, 33 people responded with "occasionally."

Questionnaire Results

What would be your first priority for new land use or development in Ottawa?

1. Single family homes – **8%**
2. Multi-family homes – **4%**
3. Mixed-use buildings, e.g., retail or offices on the ground level with housing or other uses above – **18%**
4. Single use retail buildings – **6%**
5. Restaurants – **7%**
6. More open space and parks – **18%**
7. More industry – **38%**
8. Downtown, Kid Places, a Combination, Tourism, Zoned Property, Access to Chicago

It is important that Ottawa control the location and design character of all new buildings and rehabilitated buildings.

1. Strongly agree – **32%**
2. Agree – **42%**
3. Neutral – **21%**
4. Disagree – **4%**
5. Strongly disagree – **2%**

Good neighborhoods include a mixture of housing types, shops, open spaces, places of worship, civic institutions, places to work, schools, transit stops, and public gathering places such as a local park or community center. All of these neighborhood elements should be within a short walking or bicycling distance of every home in the neighborhood.

1. Strongly agree – **33%**
2. Agree – **39%**
3. Neutral – **18%**
4. Disagree – **9%**
5. Strongly disagree – **1%**

Do you think that community opinion is important for determining the future visual appearance and character of Ottawa?

1. Yes – **92%**
2. No – **3%**
3. Don't Know – **4%**

What would you improve upon the most in Ottawa?

1. Road system – **21%**
2. Parks – **6%**
3. Schools – **6%**
4. Transit – **6%**
5. Visual appearance and design – **61%**

The strengths of Downtown Ottawa are (the top five)...

- 5% Access from E-W to South
- 13% Beautiful buildings/architecture
- 8% Parks /Washington Park
- 18% River
- 11% Historical character

I would spend more time in Downtown Ottawa with the following improvements...

- 5% Easier parking
- 8% Good restaurants
- 7% Landscaping
- 12% Specialty shops (Naperville)
- 18% More retail

During the past few years, Ottawa as a whole...

- 1...has continued to be the type of community in which I want to live. – **41%**
- 2...has changed to be less of the community if which I want to live. – **13%**
- 3...has remained pretty much the same. – **46%**

Bike paths and lanes should be provided in neighborhoods...

- 1. Strongly agree – **29%**
- 2. Agree – **35%**
- 3. Neutral – **26%**
- 4. Disagree – **7%**
- 5. Strongly disagree – **3%**

I shop in Downtown Ottawa...

- 1. Daily – **11%**
- 2. Weekly – **18%**
- 3. Once a Month – **14%**
- 4. Occasionally – **49%**
- 5. Never – **9%**

Ottawa's greatest assets are ...

- 11% Church
- 8% People
- 12% History / Character
- 23% River
- 7% Location

The primary reason I go to Downtown Ottawa is for...

- Work 16%
- Dining 26%
- Shopping 22%
- Church 14%
- Municipal 12%
- Services 10%
- Post Office 10%

Other_____ **Walking, Business, Banks, Medical Services, Work & Live There, Theater, Entertainment**



Charrette

The design workshop or *charrette* is a process in which residents are given the opportunity to develop their own plans and recommendations for Ottawa. The *charrette* is designed to encourage freethinking and creativity. This not only helps the community to get involved but it also produces wonderful ideas and recommendations.

This exercise was intended to determine what residents wanted the City of Ottawa to become in the future.

There were two *charrettes* conducted on two different Saturdays. The first *charrette* addressed the design of the entire planning area outside the corporate limits. The Ottawa planning area was broken into three different planning areas; north, central, and south. Along with the three planning areas, there was a table for open space and parks. The second *charrette* focused on the downtown area of Ottawa.



For each *charrette*, groups were formed for the various planning areas and one for the downtown *charrette*. Each group came up with their own plan, presented their recommendations to the entire group, and responded to questions and comments after everyone was finished.

Afterward, a consensus plan was prepared by the consultants using the recommendations from all the *charrette* plans. The consensus plan attempts to clarify ideas and concepts, and expand upon recommendations that were common among the various *charrette* plans, and to focus on particularly intriguing suggestions. The consensus plan was presented to the public several weeks following the *charrette* for input and direction. These comments and suggestions were considered along with other information collected during the planning process in the preparation of the final Comprehensive Plan.



For the downtown charrette, each group discussed what they would like to create, preserve, enhance, what the threats of the downtown are, opportunities, and what the downtown is known for. Below are the results of the discussion.

Preserve

Parks and Open Space	The Row Houses
The Courthouse	Historical Values and Nature
City Hall and other Govt Buildings	Historical Architectural Character
Canal	Traditional Downtown Feel
Riverfront	Existing Businesses
View to the Courthouse from the Bridge	



Create

Soften Street Design	Ornamental Lighting
Pedestrian Friendly Environment	Riverfront Magnets
2nd Fox River Bridge	Railroad Overpass (Norris to Clinton)
Place to Socialize	Thriving, diverse Business Community
24 Hour Neighborhood (hotel)	Widen Sidewalks
Second Floor Rehab Interest	
Brick Stamped Streets around Courthouse	



Opportunities

Literature Distribution	Encourage Absentee Landlords to sell
Downtown Residential	Store to Store Openings
Improve Street around Marquette	Riverfront and Bike Path
Washington Park	Interurban Renewal
Canal, Tourism	Empty Buildings
Businesses for Ottawa Residents	
Relationship between owners and Planning Commission	

Threats

Uninterested Property Owners	Lack of Cooperation
Traffic – Route 23 – Speed	Business Owners Independency
Lack of Parking	Stores Closing Early
No Change	Over Valued Property & Rental Rates
General Deterioration of Buildings	Lack of Diversity of Businesses
No Incentives for Property Improvements	



Enhancements

Small Town Image	Facades/ Storefronts
Consumer Spending	Canal
Library Growth	Riverfront
Streetscapes	Signage
Parking	Walkways
Develop Commercial Properties on Columbus to the Fox river	
An Overall Theme for the Community to Unify	

What is the Downtown Known For

Riverfront	Lincoln - Douglas Debate
Historic Buildings	County Seat
Canal Town	Appellate Court
Friendly City	Quaint Town
Place to Spend Money	Good Restaurants with Diverse Menus
Attractive Beautiful Downtown	Activities Sponsored by the City
Destination for Boaters	







Downtown District Map



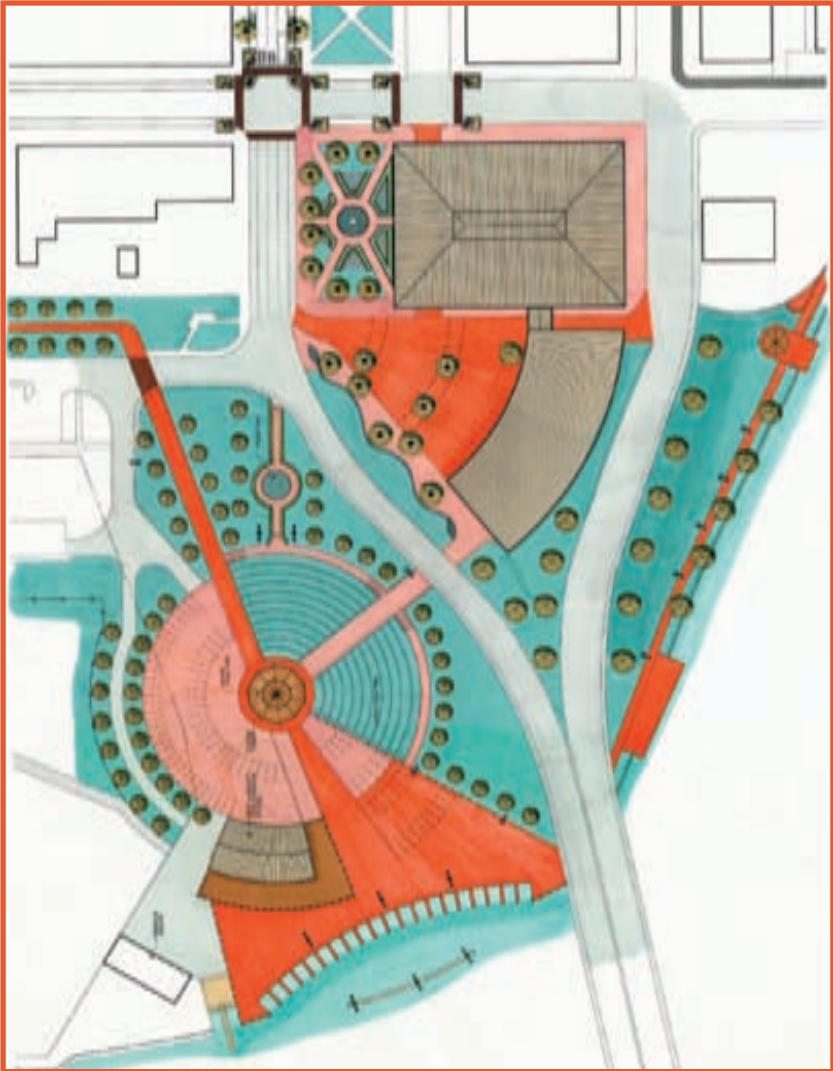
Illustrative Concept Plan of Riverfront Park



Illustrative Concept Plan of Riverfront Park by (Smith Group JJR)



Illustrative Concept Plan of Madison Street Park



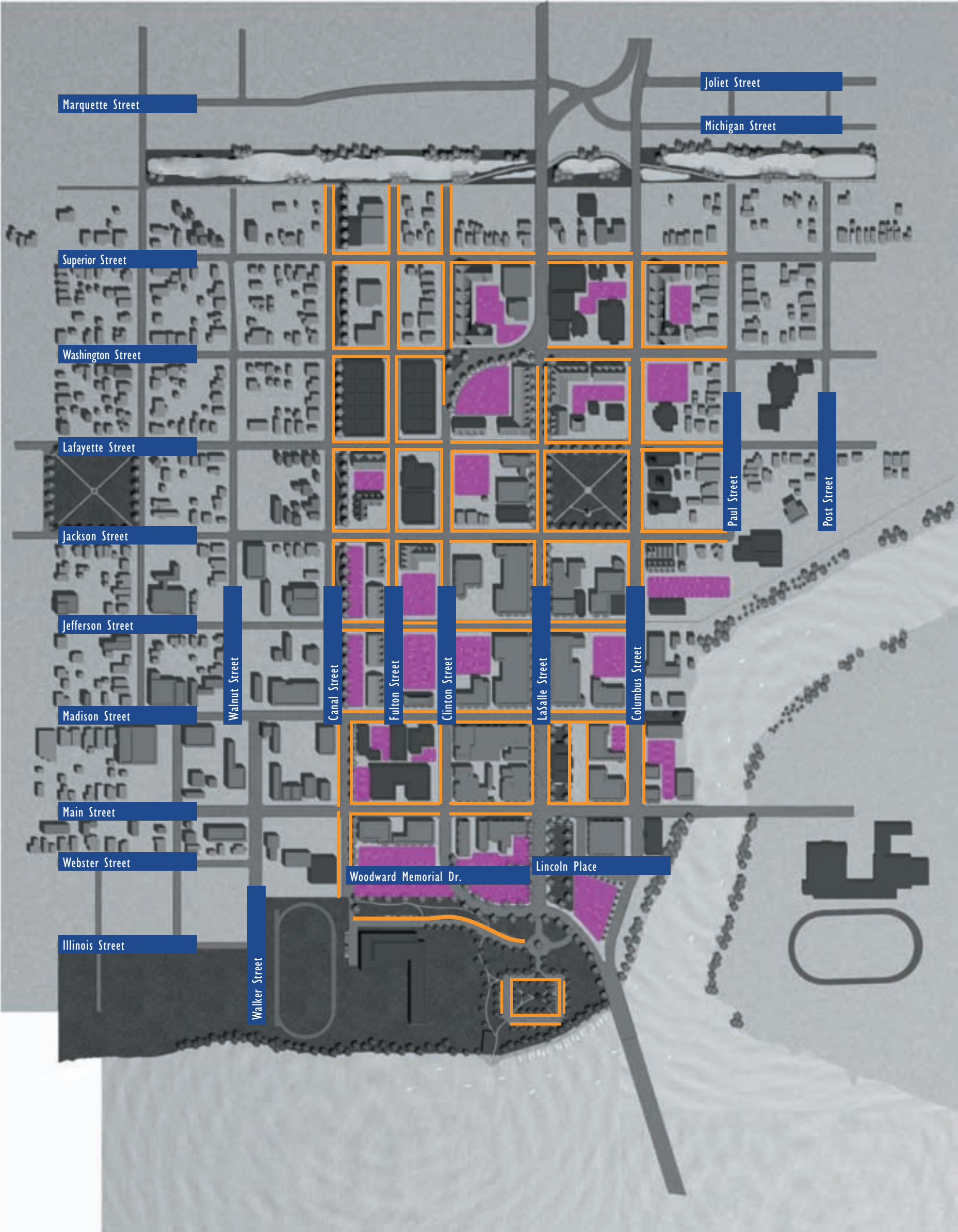
Illustrative Concept Plan of Riverfront Park by (Basalay Cary & Alstadt)



Existing Primary Traffic Flow



Proposed Primary Traffic Flow



Legend

Parking Lots

Street Parking





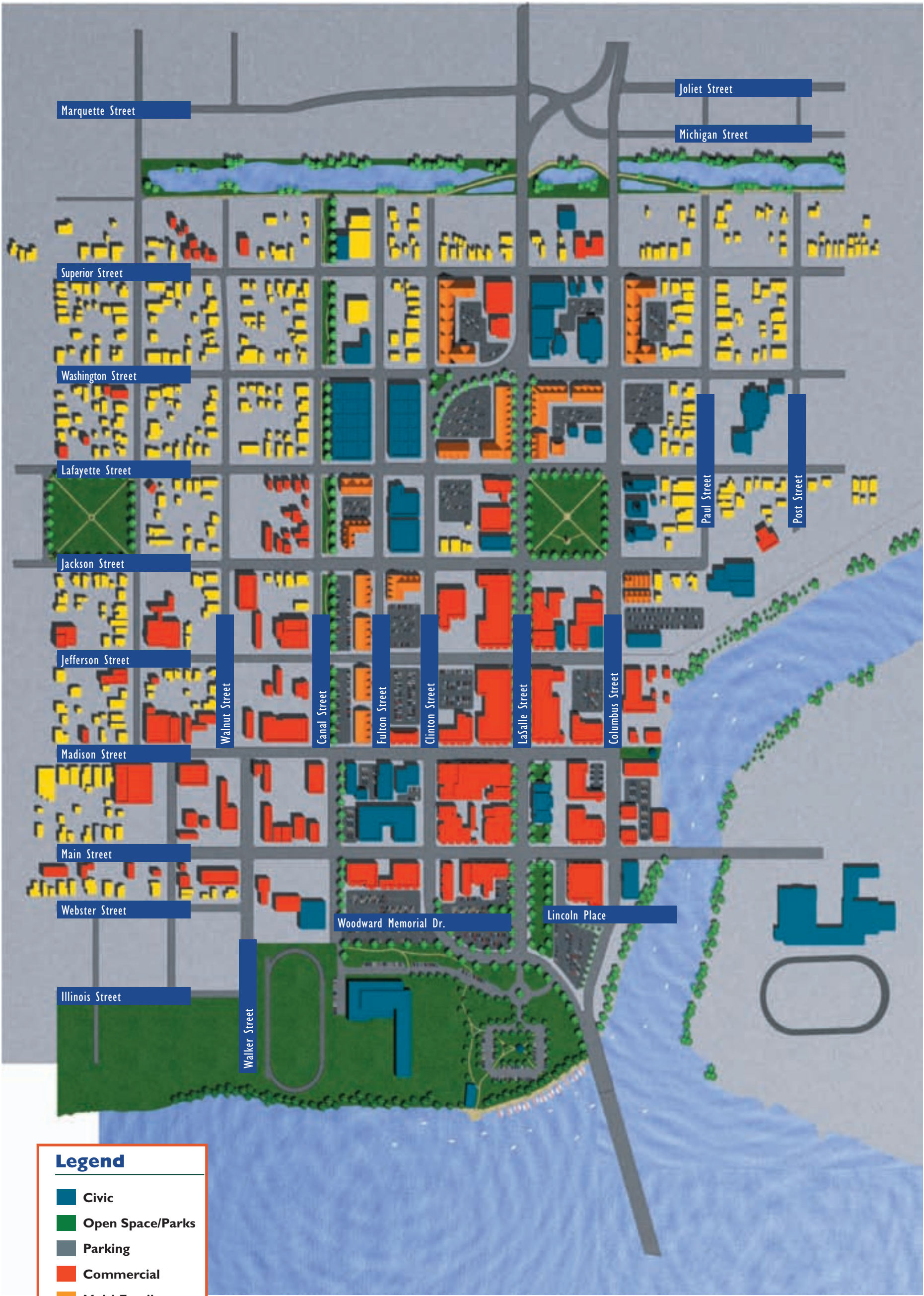
Legend

Civic

Open Space/Parks

Commercial

Residential



Note: The S-curve location shown on the Future Land Use plan and the Illustrative Plan are subject to review.

