



DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN

CITY OF TRENTON, MISSOURI

FEBRUARY 2013



CITY OF TRENTON



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
FOR MISSOURI (DREAM) PROGRAM SPONSORS:



PLANNING CONSULTANT:



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DREAM Initiative Process



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of the Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri (DREAM) Initiative is to develop a strategic plan for Downtown Trenton that leverages and expands upon existing resources to support new public and private reinvestment in Downtown. The DREAM Initiative planning process reviewed numerous issues related to the function, structure, and image of Downtown Trenton. The process identified recommendations to address critical issues with the goal of implementing needed policies and programs, adjusting existing revitalization efforts, and developing sustainable plans for future improvements. DREAM began with several assessments of existing conditions in Downtown Trenton. These assessments were used as the basis for various analyses and recommendations developed in each DREAM task as described in this plan.

The DREAM Strategic Plan is not intended to replace previous planning efforts, such as the September 2007 Downtown Trenton Plan, but rather to function as a resource guide for community leaders as DREAM recommendations are implemented. The Strategic Plan provides a multi-year vision promoting innovative and attainable change for Downtown Trenton. Participants of the DREAM process, including numerous citizens, Downtown property owners, business owners, civic leaders and City staff, expect the Strategic Plan to be the blueprint that will help transform Downtown Trenton into a vibrant area in which people live, play and work.

The Downtown Strategic Plan describes the goals developed through the DREAM Initiative and suggests strategies to achieve those goals, including specific projects and action items. The major goals are listed in each plan section according to the DREAM task wherein they were developed, however high priority goals for Downtown Trenton include:

Goal One: Develop a long-term implementation plan to consider incentives for Downtown.

Downtown Trenton must identify sustainable funding to support the Trenton Downtown Improvement Association (TDIA) and Downtown revitalization efforts. The City has had some experience with incentives such as Tax Increment Financing

(TIF), tax credit programs, and Enhanced Enterprise Zone status. A previous attempt to establish an EDS was unsuccessful. DREAM marketing recommendations are focused on promoting the benefits of incentives for Downtown revitalization, businesses, and property owners, as well as the need for Trenton to develop local incentive sources to be leveraged for State and Federal funding programs. An incentive plan can help guide City leaders and monitor the impact that incentives have on local development. Such a plan should prioritize the mechanisms to be pursued, clearly identify projects to be funded, and allow for public involvement.

As a top priority of the incentive plan, the City should consider another attempt to establish an EDS. While an EDS is an additional sales tax, the funding generated for Downtown activities including marketing, grants or loans to companies, training programs, and legal or accounting expenses related to economic development projects is significant. This, voter-approved, tax is the best option for funding Downtown revitalization in Trenton.

A Downtown CID should be also be considered. A CID will provide dedicated funding for Downtown improvements and important organizational assistance for the TDIA. The CID will need to be supported by both a property and sales tax to generate adequate funding for revitalization activities.

Goal Two: Continue to develop Downtown organizational capacity

The City had previously obtained a grant for a full-time TDIA director. However, with the completion of the grant period, this position has recently been eliminated. The TDIA is collocated with the Chamber in Downtown Trenton. The TDIA should consider reinventing itself to increase its services to Downtown, including hiring a director again when a stable funding source has been addressed.

As the capacity and support for TDIA grows, the group should develop necessary committees, such as the proposed economic development committee. Committees should seek to include a broader representation and engage more volunteers, but not



Grundy County jail in Downtown Trenton.



Grundy County Court House.

every committee is appropriate for every volunteer and the TDIA Board should review these assignments carefully.

Additionally, the City Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was recently formed, although a historic district has not yet been designated. The HPC has specific responsibilities that are assigned by the City’s preservation ordinance. However, a collaboration of the TDIA, HPC, and Chamber can promote the benefits of Downtown historic rehabilitation and the preservation of Trenton’s unique “flat iron” buildings. These activities will help draw the groups together for the good of Downtown and solidify the TDIA as the Downtown leader.

Goal Three: Improve building conditions

The City of Trenton needs to review its codes, policies, and procedures to ensure that the conditions of Downtown buildings will improve and not be allowed to deteriorate further. The oldest buildings in Trenton are located Downtown and the City should provide extra attention to these properties so that minor maintenance issues do not turn into a high-cost repair or major structural problems. The TDIA and HPC can inform Downtown property owners of any procedural adjustments and City expectations. The TDIA can also organize safety walks to help City officials and property owners catch issues before they become serious.

Additionally, the City should adopt design guidelines for Downtown. With the emergence of the HPC, the City should work to designate the DREAM Study Area as a historic district. The preservation of the unique architectural features of Downtown Trenton’s buildings, such as the “flat iron” building construction, is critical to establishing a place and identity.

Improving building conditions will be the most effective way to increase Downtown property values and decrease the risk to potential investors. The presence of firm code enforcement and design guidelines sends a strong message to developers and property owners that the City is engaged and concerned about Downtown.

Goal Four: Raise the visibility of Downtown as a viable investment option

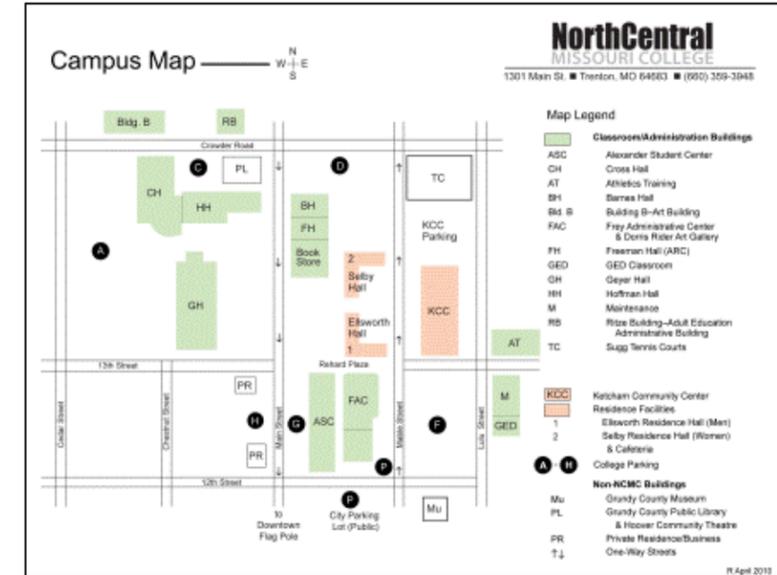
This goal has elements of several DREAM tasks such as the Retail Analysis, Residential Analysis, and Marketing Assistance. Each of these elements relates to Downtown being promoted as a good investment for potential developers, businesses, or residents. This perception is critical for Downtown Trenton revitalization efforts to be sustained well beyond the planning scope of DREAM.

The Retail Analysis demonstrates that a sizeable amount of additional retail demand exists that could be met by Downtown stores. However, there are existing Downtown vacancies and vacant or underutilized lots. The City and TDIA need to work together to promote these opportunities to potential developers and businesses, as well as to existing businesses that may be ready to expand.

While there have recently been some new residential units constructed in Downtown, the Residential Demand analysis estimates that there will be a fair amount of rental housing unit demand over the next few years. There are existing upper-floor opportunities to develop these units while preserving the ground floor space for retail uses. The City and TDIA should work together to promote these opportunities to potential mixed-use developers and encourage existing property owners to develop their upper-floors for residential use.

There are also several subpar buildings in Downtown Trenton that are located on larger lots. These buildings may be severely deteriorated and can be replaced with high-quality buildings that are sensitive to the historic context of Downtown. These are also opportunities to market to potential Downtown investors.

The promotion of retail, residential, and in-fill opportunities will require a marketing effort that should only be developed after funding is adequate for the TDIA. Among the businesses identified for attraction are restaurant and entertainment uses. Several comments made during the



Downtown Trenton is home to North Central Missouri (NCM) College

DREAM community and consumer survey task supported the desire for more restaurant and entertainment options in Downtown. The TDIA should work with the City to specifically promote these uses.

As Downtown advertises and promotes itself as a good investment, the TDIA must also make sure that the pieces are in place to back-up that message. Resources and incentives must be in place and ready to be deployed.

Goal Five: Continue the public streetscape improvement plan with particular emphasis on wayfinding

The City of Trenton has been working to follow a streetscape plan developed in 2007. The plan design is sound and proposes significant public projects in a historically compatible manner with the existing Downtown buildings. The City should continue with these improvements and work to establish gateways that announce to the traveler when they have arrived in Downtown. These areas should include signage, lighting, site furnishings, and landscaping.

Goal Six: Improve the residential neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown

As the City works to address commercial building conditions, an effort to improve the conditions of the housing around Downtown should also be launched. In general, the housing stock surrounding Downtown Trenton is fair, but by upgrading and renovating homes near Downtown, the community can ensure this neighborhood's stability. Improving homes in the blocks surrounding Downtown will help in the effort to revitalize Downtown, just as revitalizing Downtown will help to stabilize adjacent neighborhoods. The TDIA, City, and Chamber should collaborate to establish assistance programs such as the MHDC Home Repair Opportunity (HeRO) program and encourage property owners to participate. The TDIA and Chamber can also work to make sure that property owners have access to contractors and are provided important maintenance knowledge.

The City should continue to seek state grants and other external funding for housing rehabilitation programs. The funds generated through any local incentive may be leveraged as matching funds to help obtain these grants.



A variety of residential types and conditions were observed in Downtown Trenton.

INTRODUCTION

Through a partnership of state agencies that includes the Missouri Development Finance Board (MDFB), Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED), and the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC), the DREAM Initiative provides downtown-focused planning services over a three-year period to designated Missouri communities. The State partners retained PGAV Planners, a professional planning and design firm headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, to provide this planning.

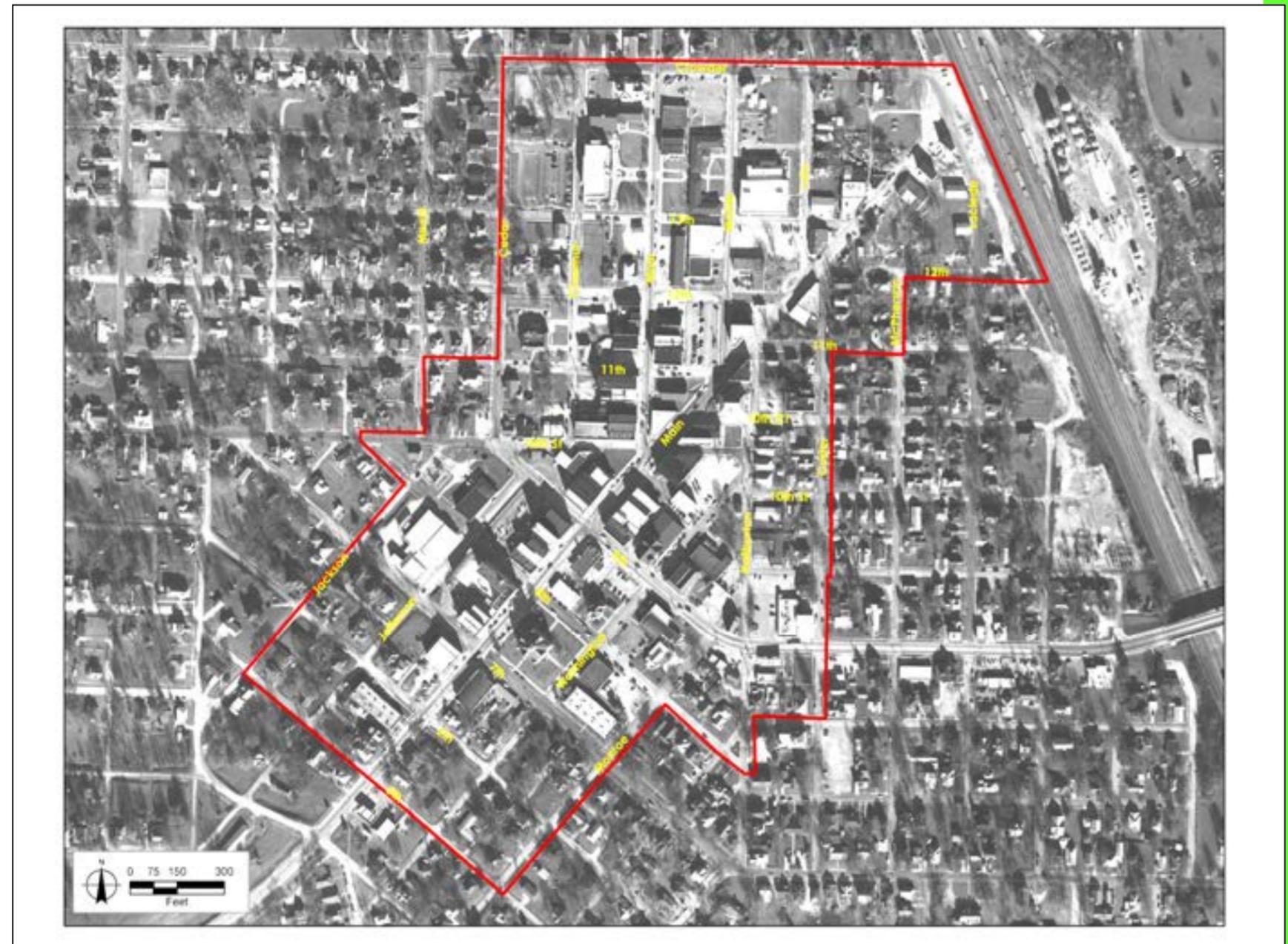
These Missouri State agencies recognize that substantial improvements and investments have already been made in Downtown Trenton. The purpose of the DREAM Initiative is to leverage local public and private investments to sustain revitalization momentum. The goal of the DREAM Initiative is to revitalize downtown districts and put them back into productive use. The process provides planning assistance that culminates in a Strategic Plan. The DREAM initiative begins with an assessment of the community that serves as the foundation for developing the DREAM tasks and analyses.

The Trenton DREAM program has resulted in several planning documents and analyses that include:

- Organizational Structure Review
- Land Use, Building & Infrastructure Survey
- Community & Consumer Survey
 - Focus Groups
 - Telephone Survey
 - Visitor Survey
- Building and Streetscape Design Guidelines
- Retail Market Analysis
- Residential Demand Analysis
- Financial Assistance Review
- Marketing Assistance with Incentive Programs
- Feasibility Study for a performing arts center

Additional DREAM Initiative tasks included work in community outreach and the creation of this Downtown Strategic Plan.

This strategic plan emphasizes the establishment of new local incentive mechanisms for future implementation, as well as the leveraging of these local sources to obtain funding from State of Missouri and Federal programs. Throughout the DREAM Initiative, ongoing project-specific support was provided by the State Partner Agencies and PGAV Planners.



Trenton DREAM Study Area.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Effective planning engages in meaningful discussion of important issues with the public. By encouraging and including responses from the public in the planning process, local officials can better support policy changes and projects that are necessary to drive Downtown revitalization forward. The DREAM Initiative used a comprehensive approach to interact with local citizens and civic leaders. The intent of this public outreach was to uncover issues and perceptions regarding Downtown Trenton. The planning process included surveys and other communications with the public. Public outreach was also a venue to introduce and build support for recommendations from the Downtown Strategic Plan.

Interviews with Downtown stakeholders and discussions with the public revealed great pride in Trenton’s heritage. Downtown Trenton assets include strong physical elements that present both opportunities and challenges. Downtown leaders must work to maintain positive elements while identifying efficient ways to deploy limited resources. Local leaders, property owners, and business owners have expressed their frustrations regarding the way Downtown is used and perceived and understand the need to make wide-spread changes for the good of Downtown. The DREAM Initiative builds on existing public sentiments to develop sound planning recommendations that are inspired by the public and outlined in this Downtown Strategic Plan.

The DREAM Initiative solicited public comments and engaged the community regarding Downtown Trenton through several activities and methods, including:

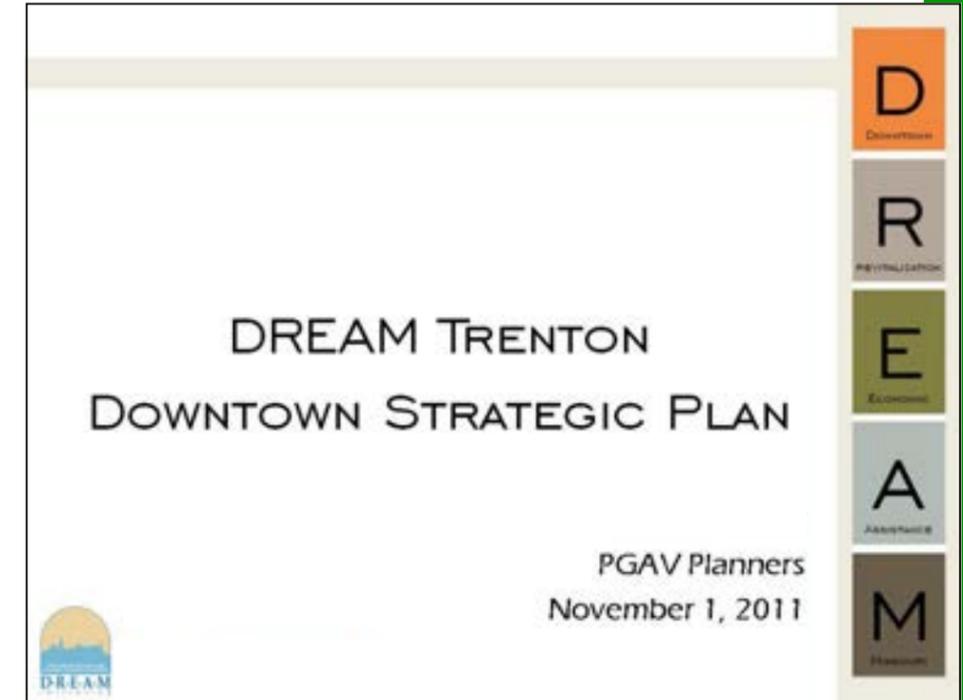
- **Initial Assessment Meeting**
Upon being selected as a DREAM community in August of 2007, an Initial Assessment Meeting was held later that fall. The meeting included representatives from the City, Trenton Downtown Improvement Association (TDIA), Grundy County Friends of the Arts, along with other business owners and residents. PGAV Planners staff and personnel from the DREAM State partner agencies were also in attendance. The City provided a presentation and tour that helped to identify the DREAM planning tasks from which the community would benefit.

- **Focus Group Meetings**
In early 2008, discussions of Downtown issues and ideas for improvements were facilitated with five focus groups: City and College Staff and Administrators; Elected Officials; Business Owners; Longtime Residents; and College Students.

The group facilitators encouraged discussion centered around how Downtown is perceived, used, and challenged. The groups suggested ideas as to what public and private improvements can be made to enhance Downtown Trenton.

- **Telephone Survey**
In the summer and fall of 2008, a telephone survey of residents asked respondents a series of questions about priorities for the improvement of Downtown. The survey tabulated three hundred responses from a randomly selected, statistically representative sample of residents. Less than a fourth of the respondents felt Downtown was moving in a negative direction. Respondents cited improvements to building façades as the most preferred improvement that would likely make them visit Downtown more. Respondents were least positive regarding the existing mix of businesses, occupied storefronts, and dining and entertainment options. This situation requires an active effort from the City, with support from TDIA, to attract new businesses and encourage existing businesses to expand.

- **Key Stakeholder Discussions**
Conversations were held with representatives of the City, TDIA, Chamber, Grundy County Friends of the Arts, Grundy County, Downtown property and business owners, and other members of the community to discuss issues uncovered during the various outreach methods. Discussions also occurred throughout the DREAM process and helped develop or influence the revitalization strategies in each DREAM task.



Presentation title slide from a Trenton DREAM Public Meeting.



Attendees of the DREAM Initial Assessment meeting tour the interiors of the Grundy County Museum.

- **Public Meetings**

Beginning with a DREAM Kickoff meeting in June of 2008, several public presentations and meetings were held to review progress on the DREAM Initiative work in Trenton. Meetings were publicized in the local newspaper and promoted on the City website.

- **Press Involvement**

At several of the Trenton DREAM public meetings, representatives of the local newspaper were in attendance. Additionally, sample press releases were provided to the City to help generate news stories about meetings and DREAM tasks.

- **Education and Communication**

The DREAM Initiative process also included seminars to educate and inform the City staff and officials on issues pertaining to Downtown revitalization and planning. The seminars were conducted by the State Partner agencies, PGAV Planners, and other entities, such as the State Historic Preservation Office. Leading practitioners and specialists participated in these workshops, which were held in Jefferson City. Seminar topics included organizational structure, adaptive reuse, retail business development, historic preservation, building design and renovation, façade loans and incentive programs and engaging public support and community organizations to lead downtown revitalization.



The Trenton, Missouri U.S. Post Office in Downtown.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The City of Trenton was designated a DREAM Initiative community in the late summer of 2007. The planning process commenced in the fall of 2007. The DREAM Initiative provided immediate benefits to Downtown Trenton through positive news articles and by increasing the City's ability to obtain State funding. Additionally, DREAM assisted with a feasibility study regarding a Downtown performing arts center. Other recent accomplishments in the DREAM Study Area include:

- NCM College campus expansion plans.
- Begun implementation of the Downtown Trenton Streetscape Plan from September 2007.
- Obtained a Community Development Block Grant for an Executive Director for the TDIA.
- Initiated improvements for Sesquicentennial Park at the Five Points intersection.
- Obtained a \$30,000 grant from the USDA for a Farmer's Market pavilion to be located Downtown.
- Launched several Downtown events to draw people back to Downtown.
- Replaced flag pole landmark.
- Developing plans for Veteran's Memorial Park.
- Recent public improvements in Downtown have prompted several private property rehabilitations that are completed or underway.
- DREAM Initiative – The DREAM planning process is a commitment of about \$250,000 in funding for Downtown revitalization planning services from the Missouri Development Finance Board, which was leveraged by a 20% local match paid over three years.



The "5 Points" intersection in Downtown Trenton demonstrates several examples of public and private improvements.

Task Summaries



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The DREAM Initiative included a review of the organizations involved in revitalizing Downtown Trenton. The purpose of this task was to understand the roles and responsibilities of these organizations and their impact on Downtown revitalization efforts. The goal of this task is to examine how these organizations may be improved or adjusted to ensure that there is an efficient structure with enhanced capacity that is prepared to implement the projects and recommendations outlined through the DREAM Initiative.

Organizations reviewed for this task included:

- City of Trenton
- Trenton Missouri Chamber of Commerce
- Grundy County Friends of the Arts
- Trenton Downtown Improvement Association (TDIA)

There is great opportunity in Downtown Trenton. The area includes stately buildings, natural beauty, and outstanding design assets. Existing Downtown revitalization efforts have centered around improvements to the nearby North Central Missouri (NCM) College campus improvements. While NCM College draws many visitors, Downtown has not been successful at capitalizing on their presence and getting them into other attractions and businesses.

As the City deploys its resources, it is critical that support for Downtown is provided. Downtown represents a large infrastructure investment that the City cannot afford to let deteriorate more than it already has. Trenton continues to enjoy development opportunities in other areas of the City, which should provide resources that can be allocated to Downtown revitalization. The City has demonstrated support to Downtown by helping to hire an Executive Director for the TDIA and leading the DREAM efforts. However, the City will need to continue its support to the TDIA and make visible, public improvements.

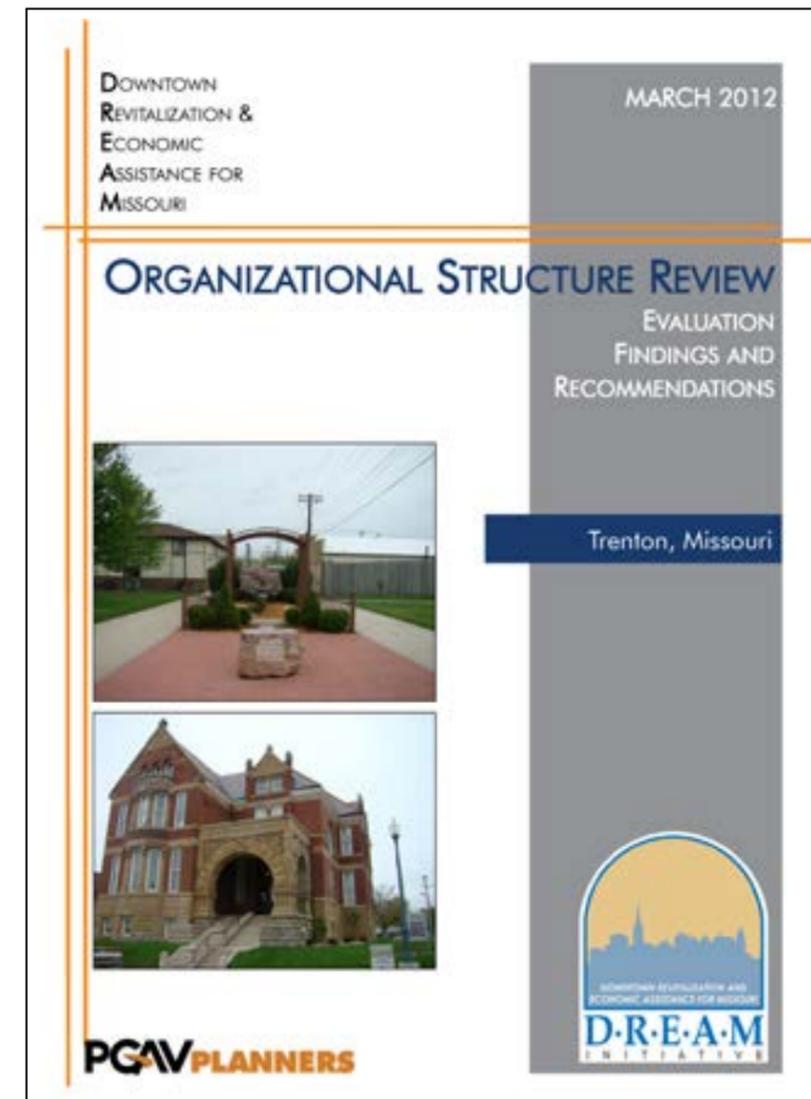
The Organizational Structure Review resulted, primarily, in recommendations to strengthen the existing organizations. Recommendations identified by this task include:

- **Renew the Trenton Downtown Improvement Association as the lead Downtown organization**
The TDIA is a non-profit organization that has been the driver of Downtown Trenton revitalization since its inception in 1991. During the DREAM Initiative, the City obtained a CDBG grant to hire an Executive Director for TDIA. However, recently the TDIA has faced some challenges including sustainable funding and reduced volunteerism. The group should consider rebranding the organization and refocusing efforts on promoting recent Downtown successes.

Rebranding can be a transformational tool for the TDIA. It is important for TDIA to monitor the community's changing attitudes toward Downtown, and to manage the attitude of Downtown itself. The TDIA must be prepared to adapt and adjust to new roles and responsibilities that better serve Downtown and its businesses. Rebranding, if necessary, will send a strong message to the community regarding the TDIA's commitment to Downtown Trenton.

- **Establish a stable funding source dedicated to TDIA and downtown improvements**
Member contributions will continue to be a key funding source for the TDIA program. However, a reliable permanent public funding source must also be established as part of the funding mix. Without solid local funding to staff the organization, execute core services, and achieve recommended projects, TDIA will not be able to fulfill its role as the driver of Downtown revitalization.

The City should initially consider a Local Option Economic Development Sales Tax (EDS) with a significant percentage dedicated for Downtown activities. Alternatively, and perhaps additionally, the City should pursue a Community Improvement District (CID) funded by sales and property taxes. Both of these tools are discussed in the Financial Mechanisms section on page 21 of this Strategic Plan.



The Trenton Organizational Structure Review.

• **Develop the organizational aspects of TDIA**

The TDIA must balance the organizational support it receives from the Chamber, with the need to be a strong, stand-alone group. The TDIA is the voice for concerns of Downtown property and business owners and must ensure that their needs are met. Keeping the focus on Downtown can be difficult if it is perceived that TDIA receives too much support from the Chamber, which supports a broader area in the community than Downtown. However, with the Chamber’s location Downtown, it makes sense to collocate these important community agencies.

There must be special efforts made to provide public outreach that helps define the two groups. Each organization will benefit from business and property owners having a clear understanding of the important roles the TDIA and Chamber have to play in the City. Some activities can, and should, be merged and collaborated upon. However, many activities are unique to the TDIA and as Downtown activity increases, responsibilities, volunteers, expenses, and funding will need to be more clearly defined to maintain harmony.

• **Energize the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)**

The HPC was recently formed by the Trenton City Council adopting a local historic preservation ordinance. A historic district, roughly equal to the DREAM study area was proposed, but has not yet been approved by the City. The HPC is assigned specific responsibilities under the City Code. However, additional activities should focus on promoting the benefits of historic rehabilitation and having a designated district. Commission members should help show that property values increase and investment risk decreases with historically rehabilitated buildings and that a district is a more efficient way to rehabilitate more Downtown properties.

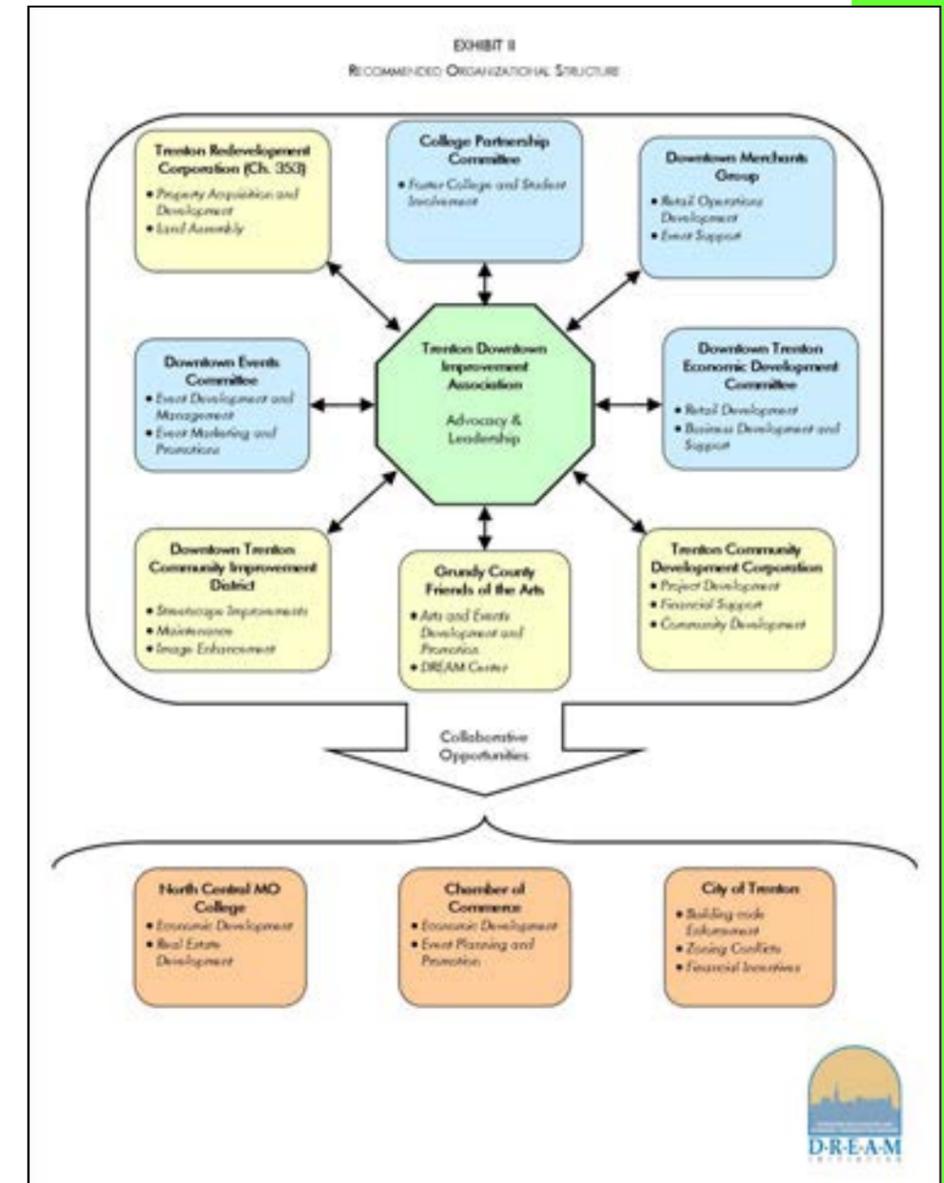
Additionally, the City should seek training for the HPC members. A knowledgeable commission will make sound recommendations and garner more respect

regarding plan and design review of historically sensitive properties. Buildings in Trenton are also fairly unique, with a street grid layout that has developed many “flat iron” buildings. These triangular-shaped buildings may require additional flexibility and innovative ideas regarding design and façade improvements. The HPC should be knowledgeable in “flat iron” building treatments.

The TDIA should lead an effort that involves the appropriate City staff and HPC members to prepare materials regarding the proposed district. Careful monitoring of the attitudes of Downtown property owners is required. Materials such as a brochure or display map showing the boundary and benefits can help communicate with the owners and move the effort to establish the district, and design guidelines, along.

These efforts should help the visibility of the TDIA and HPC, as well as assure residents and the development community of the City’s commitment to an improved Downtown Trenton. As will be noted in later sections of this Plan, the City can also work to demonstrate this commitment through enhanced code review and enforcement, developing incentive mechanisms, and implementing public improvement projects.

To see more information regarding the goals and objectives outlined in the Trenton *Organizational Structure Review, March 2012*, refer to the Schedule of Recommendations found in the Implementation Section on page 26 of this Strategic Plan.



Recommended Downtown Organizational Structure

LAND USE, BUILDINGS & INFRASTRUCTURE SURVEY

The Land Use, Buildings, & Infrastructure Survey is an inventory of Downtown Trenton’s existing land use, exterior building conditions, and the condition of public infrastructure. The survey was conducted in the spring of 2008. Conditions are documented in the *Map Reference Handbook* of November 2009, which contains 24 maps of the Trenton DREAM study area. The maps developed were used throughout the DREAM planning process. The survey will help identify Downtown’s most pressing issues regarding physical conditions and future development opportunities.

The maintenance of the information gathered for this survey, along with ongoing reassessment, will continue to provide insight for Downtown Trenton. The City can monitor progress and identify new development opportunities with this data. The City can also partner with Grundy County to maintain geographic data collaboratively.

While the goal of this task was to develop information that would feed into other DREAM Initiative tasks, several conclusions can be drawn from the data displayed in the Map Reference Handbook, including:

- Based on exterior observation, many Downtown buildings are in dilapidated or poor condition. In some cases this is due to deferred maintenance. The City needs to better monitor these base conditions and should consider adjusting inspection procedures and enhancing the implementation of maintenance and nuisance codes as found in the Building and Streetscape Design section on page 13 of this Plan.
- Downtown Trenton has several unique intersections and buildings (“flat iron”) that provide it with an identity, but also present challenges.
- The TDIA can help the City with property owner communications by promoting any code or policy changes and hosting seminars to provide information regarding the City’s expectations of Downtown property owners, procedures, design concepts, codes, and agencies such as the HPC.

- In addition to working with the County, the City should work to expand its mapping capabilities to build upon mapping provided by DREAM. Enhanced City capabilities and planning resources are critical for effective long-term initiatives.
- There are some vacant or underutilized lots in Downtown Trenton; particularly in the northeast area near the intersection of Tinsman and Crowder. Some of these lots are serving as green space, but there are some with buildings in poor condition that could be redevelopment areas. The City should work to assemble and market this property to potential developers.



Trenton DREAM Map Reference Handbook: Detail of Exhibit 3 Building Conditions.

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

The community survey process was conducted to uncover issues regarding Downtown and learn about local desires and needs. This task gathered information from community leaders, property owners, business people, residents, and visitors to Trenton, that was used throughout the DREAM planning process.

The survey process used three methods to obtain local views, perceptions and interests. First, the consultant conducted focus groups consisting of key Downtown stakeholders to allow for in-depth conversation on open-ended questions. Then a random-sample telephone survey was conducted to allow the widest possible public input on Downtown issues. Lastly, a visitor survey was conducted by local volunteers to learn about the City’s image and the needs and desires of Downtown Trenton visitors. The process and results of each method are summarized below:

- **Focus Groups**

Five separate focus groups were conducted to engage stakeholders in open discussion regarding Downtown Trenton. The groups consisted of: City and College Staff and Administrators; Elected Officials; Business Owners; Longtime Residents; and College Students. In each of the groups, discussions included participant’s perceptions of Downtown, priorities for improvements, and desires for additional businesses or services.

The groups described Trenton as a friendly, small town with excellent access to healthcare for a town its size. Participants also noted Trenton benefits from being the Grundy County Seat, a good industrial base, high-quality K-12 schools, and a higher education facility in NCM College. Trenton attracts people come from surrounding Missouri towns, as well as towns in southern Iowa for employment, entertainment, and shopping.

Participants felt that Trenton is moving slowly in the right direction, particularly regarding Downtown

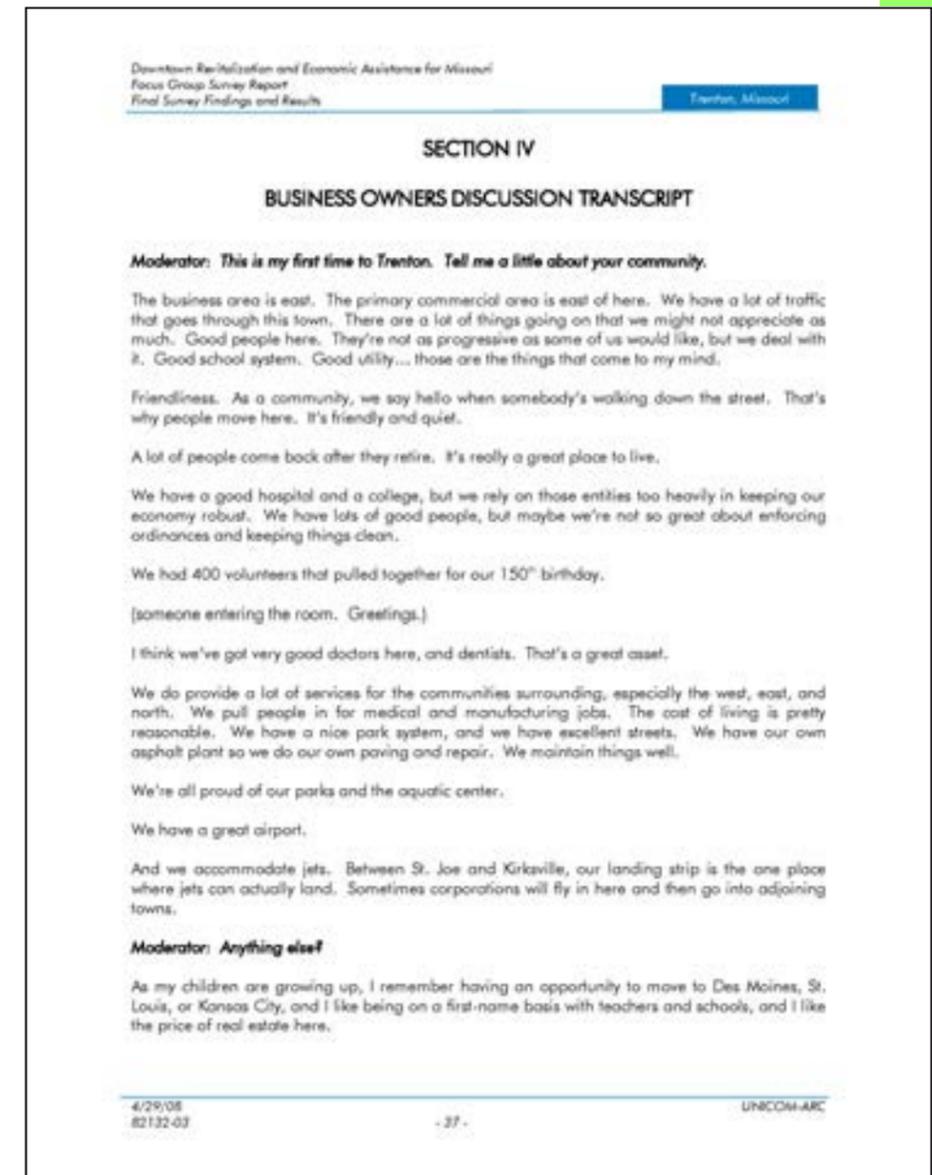
development. The groups felt that, for the City, the new aquatic center and sesquicentennial park initiatives are positives. The groups also noted the existing Downtown Trenton Plan from September 2007. They felt the progress made on this plan is a significant boost to Downtown.

For the complete report, please see the Trenton DREAM Focus Group Survey Report dated April 29, 2008.

- **Community Telephone Survey**

In the summer and fall of 2008, a telephone survey was conducted to interview a random sample of Trenton residents regarding their perceptions of Downtown. Three hundred (300) interviews were completed and a sample of this size yields an overall effort margin of $\pm 5.7\%$. Key points from the survey results include:

- A majority of respondents felt that Trenton is moving in the right direction; and less than one-quarter of respondents felt that Trenton is moving in the wrong direction.
- Among several possible areas of improvement for the City of Trenton, respondents placed the highest priority on repairing major streets.
- Three-quarters of respondents indicated that they visit Downtown once a month or more.
- Over two-thirds of respondents said they most often utilize Downtown to visit a government office or the post office.
- A majority of respondents felt “excellent” or “good” about many characteristics of a downtown as they relate to Trenton.
- Respondents felt least positive regarding the existing mix of businesses, occupied storefronts, and dining and entertainment options.



Sample from the Business Owners Focus Group Transcript.

- Almost eight in ten respondents felt that retaining the historic character of Downtown Trenton is "very" or "somewhat" important.
- Respondents placed high priorities on adding family or casual dining options, clothing stores, and an arcade or other attraction aimed at teenagers to Downtown.
- Respondents indicated they most wanted to see improvements to building façades, keeping streets and sidewalks cleaner, and making the area more pedestrian-friendly.
- A majority of respondents felt that upper-floor living space, either rental units or condominiums, would be a positive Downtown improvement.
- Most respondents said that they receive their information about Downtown Trenton through the local newspaper and word-of-mouth.

- More than seven in ten (73.6%) answered that they were not staying overnight in Trenton.
- Of the one in four that were staying overnight in Trenton, a large majority (76.9%) were staying overnight with "family and friends" and (12.8%) answered "hotel/motel/bed and breakfast in Trenton area."
- More than four in five (83.6%) respondents said that they had visited Downtown Trenton before, and 28.1% of respondents had come to Downtown Trenton on a regular basis (more than 5 times a month).
- A small percentage (16.5%) said that they come Downtown "one to five times per month," while 26.4% respondents reported visiting Downtown "more than once a year but less than once a month."
- About one in five (19.8%) said that they come Downtown "once a year or less."

Refer to the complete Trenton DREAM Community Telephone Survey Report from January, 2009.

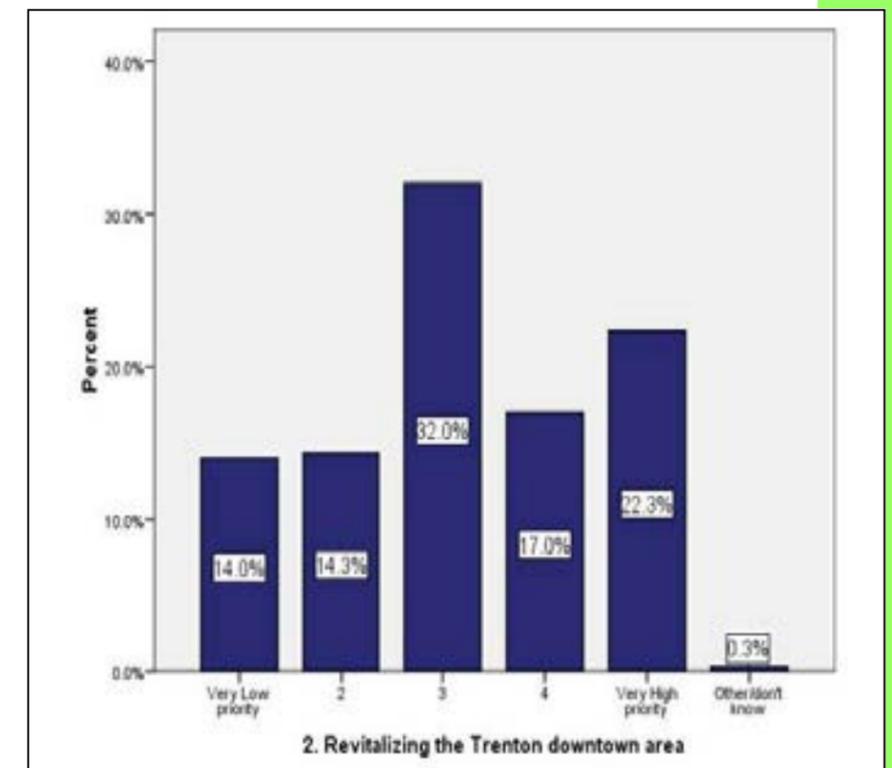
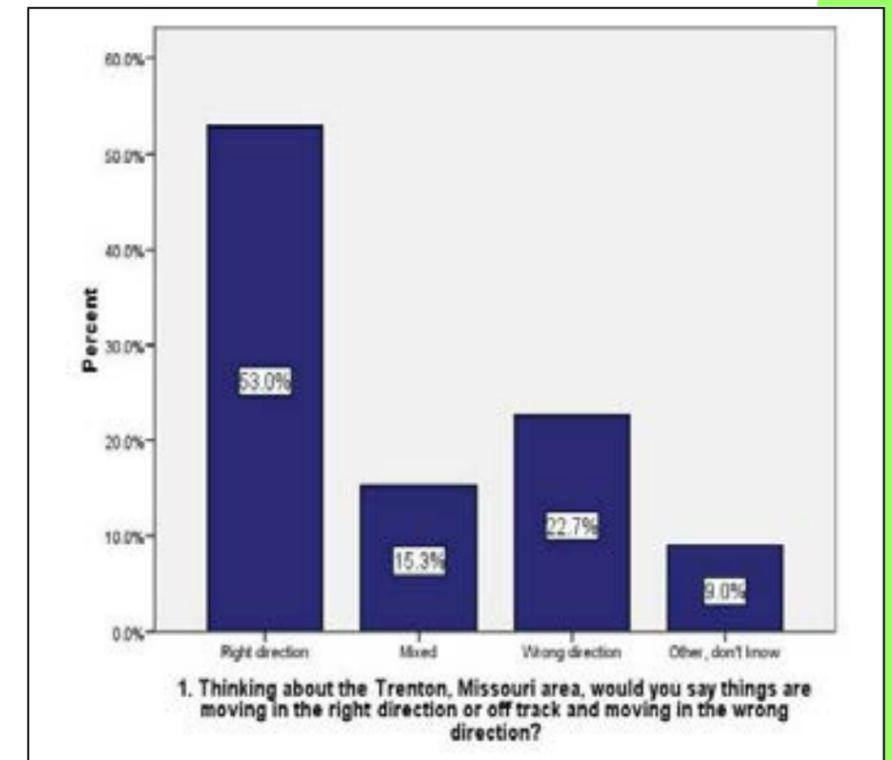
• **Visitor Survey**

Throughout the three years Trenton was a DREAM community, volunteers conducted a survey of visitors at various locations throughout the City. 148 visitors were interviewed and their responses entered into either tablet computers or a website provided for the volunteers. The purpose of the survey was to learn about the perception of Downtown Trenton and the needs of the City's visitors. The responses of people residing within the Trenton zip code were not tabulated. Key points from the survey include:

- More than half (50.4%) indicated a "special event" was their main purpose for visiting Downtown. Very few (13.5%) answered "visiting family and friends" and "shopping" (10.6%).

The TDIA should work to periodically update these surveys and communicate the results to local leaders and businesses on an ongoing basis to help monitor progress and changing attitudes toward Downtown Trenton.

For complete responses, please refer to the Trenton DREAM Visitor Survey Report from December, 2011.



Sample results from the Trenton Telephone Survey.

BUILDING AND STREETScape DESIGN

The historic character of Downtown buildings is a distinctive feature that helps to provide Trenton with an identity. The public features of Downtown include the streets, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and other furnishings. The City of Trenton has been following a Downtown Plan to improve its streetscape. DREAM seeks to combine the intrinsic historic character found in Downtown’s buildings with attractive public investments, such as those that the City is pursuing. These elements are then leveraged to induce additional revitalization projects and private investment.

While historic preservation and streetscape improvements play an important role in Downtown revitalization, the City must also address the conditions of its existing Downtown buildings, whether historic or otherwise. Some Downtown commercial buildings are suffering from years of deferred maintenance. In some cases, the building has been altered so extensively, that is if impossible to assess the true condition of the building because of inappropriate covering materials. Concern over building conditions should not stop with the commercial properties. This problem extends to the conditions of the surrounding housing stock.

As the HPC promotes historic rehabilitations and begins to implement design guidelines in Downtown, the City should develop funding mechanisms to assist existing Downtown building owners with improvements. The TDIA should also get involved to promote the positive aspects of building maintenance, historic preservation, and increased code enforcement. City inspectors and code officials should be well-versed in any new financial programs so they can easily connect owners with potential funding programs to help them fix the deficiencies noted in their buildings and property.

Property owners that are not supportive of efforts to improve Downtown buildings, will likely be the ‘problem’ property owners. Years of disinvestment, and too little attention from the City, have likely developed a feeling of entitlement with these owners and they will need special attention.

The design concepts expressed in the DREAM Initiative suggest specific recommendations to buildings that were selected by the community. Illustrations of buildings along Main Street in Downtown Trenton are shown on pages 14 and 15 of this Strategic Plan.

Recommendations regarding issues related to Downtown Trenton buildings include:

- **Adopt Building Design Guidelines for Downtown**
Through a collaboration of the TDIA, HPC, and the City, Downtown should designate a historic district and adopt building design guidelines. The City has already passed a Historic Preservation Ordinance and several Downtown buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places. With the emergence of the HPC, work should continue to designate Downtown as a historic district and adopt guidelines to preserve the architectural features of the buildings. This activity is critical to maintain the integrity of properties already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the numerous examples of “flat iron” triangular buildings that make Downtown Trenton unique.

The TDIA should develop methods to communicate with Downtown property owners, contractors, and real estate professionals on a regular basis. Through seminars with these audiences, the TDIA and HPC can distribute information regarding the history and heritage of their property, as well as connect them with reputable and knowledgeable contractors. City staff should also be included to help convey the City’s expectations of property owners regarding inspections and maintenance of property.

- **Review City Codes, Policies, and Procedures with Regard to Downtown Buildings**
The City should provide an extra measure of firm, yet fair, code enforcement for Downtown. The oldest buildings in Trenton are located in Downtown and they require thorough inspections. The City should review its codes, policies, and procedures to determine if



Examples of architecture observed in Downtown Trenton

adjustments are needed. Too often, code enforcement personnel can fall into a reactive mode, rather than taking a proactive approach. For aged downtown buildings, this can mean the difference between simple maintenance or severe structural repairs. Inspections should also include rear façades and upper floors. As the City focuses on these codes and practices, the TDIA and HPC can assist by informing the public and property owners about any procedural adjustments and City expectations. As with historic rehabilitation, stronger attention to City codes sends potential Downtown investors a positive message that the City will work to protect their investment.

The TDIA can also organize monthly 'safety walks' with the City's code enforcement staff and other officials. These walks should provide a regular review and assessment of Downtown property and help uncover potential problems while they are still minor. However, it is important that this effort come from the TDIA and not the City. Issues can be better communicated by a group of peers, than by City inspectors and officials.

- Develop Façade and Building Rehabilitation Incentives**
 The Financial Mechanisms section on page 21 of this Plan will include more detail regarding the specifics of establishing Downtown incentives. However, the recommendations that affect Downtown buildings bear repeating. The City should consider developing incentive programs to encourage greater compliance with Downtown design guidelines. A program to help existing building owners and attract private, high-quality investment can be developed from several local sources. In many cases, building rehabilitation efforts are also necessary to attract a new business to a Downtown location.

Any local incentive program regarding façade or building rehabilitation should ensure that funded improvements have the approval of the HPC. A property owner that is not going to comply with the design standards that Downtown has established, should not receive an incentive.

Recommendations to address issues regarding Downtown Trenton's streetscape efforts generally follow the already established Downtown Plan. However, major DREAM recommendations include:

- Establish Gateways to Downtown**
 While an overall wayfinding system design can also be implemented, the City should work to develop and install gateway monument signs at entrances to Downtown Trenton. This signage should be located at a major intersections as identified in the Sub Area Development Concept Map in the Implementation section on page 25 of this Strategic Plan. These signs should coordinate with and reinforce Downtown Trenton's character and streetscape design to help provide an important identification method for Downtown visitors.
- Develop a Donation Program for Downtown Streetscape Elements**
 The TDIA should work with the City and Chamber to develop a sponsorship program for individuals and groups to 'buy' various streetscape furnishings. A catalog of specific items should be printed that shows the cost of the items, including a recognition plaque. The City should install and maintain all items, while the TDIA can support and promote the program.

More conceptual building and streetscape design guidelines for Downtown Trenton are found in the *DREAM Building and Streetscape and Design Guidelines* from March 2012.



Façade incentives coupled with simple design standards could enhance this Downtown Trenton building.



Existing streetscape lighting and banners in Downtown Trenton.

Main Street East

- Restore masonry veneer
- Use compatible paint colors
- Restore transoms
- Remove siding/wood coverings from windows
- Restore original windows
- Provide appropriately scaled area for signage
- Streetscape of lights, trees & site furnishings

Existing Conditions

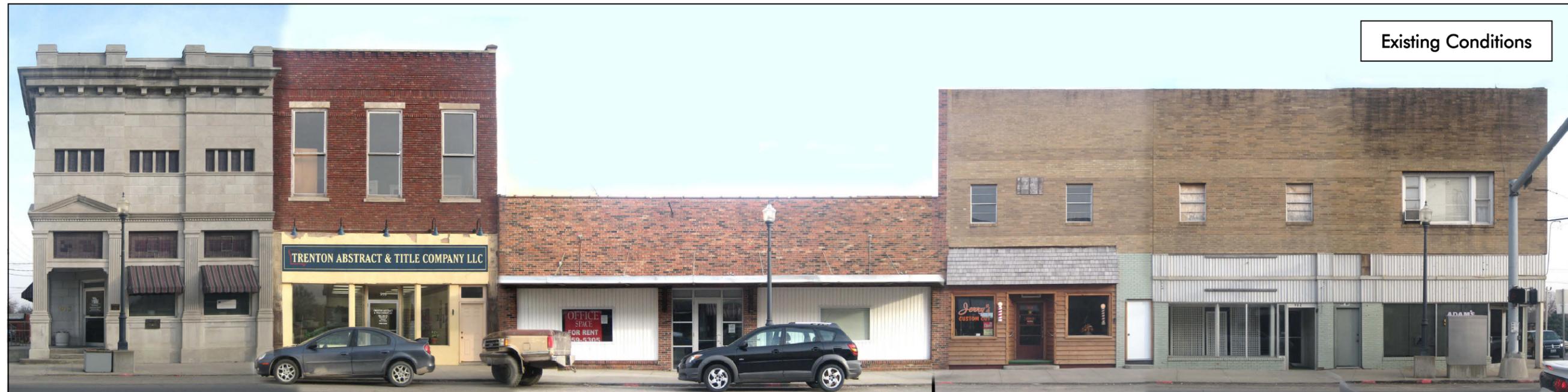


Illustration Showing Improvements



Main Street

- Remove frame & metal canopies
- Restore masonry veneer
- Use compatible paint colors
- Restore transoms
- Remove siding/wood coverings from windows
- Restore original windows
- Provide appropriately scaled area for signage
- Streetscape of lights, trees & site furnishings



Existing Conditions



Illustration Showing Improvements

RESIDENTIAL MARKET

The residential market surrounding Downtown Trenton has a strategic relationship to Downtown. It is from these residences that businesses will draw regular customers. Visitors must also pass through the residential areas to reach Downtown. DREAM provided an opportunity for the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC) to review the residential market demand of the City. Recommendations were then developed to encourage Trenton leaders to promote Downtown residential projects that can meet future housing demand. Additional recommendations include enhancing quality-of-life amenities in Downtown to attract more residents and a review of multi-family zoning codes regarding the conversion of large single-family homes to multi-family use. Recommendations regarding these and other residential issues for Downtown Trenton include:

- **Encourage New, High-Quality, Rental Units**

After implementing improved code enforcement procedures and inspection policies, City officials and staff should work to identify housing developers that may be interested in existing sites or available buildings. Additionally, Downtown Trenton benefits from the unique housing market of NCM College and a recent increase in the employment market in Chillicothe, Missouri due to the construction of a new correctional facility. These markets represent potential residential demand that Downtown Trenton could meet with upper-floor apartment rental units.

Apartment rental units are an important part of the residential cycle that will help bring people back to Downtown. Typically a strong rental market precedes the development of loft-style condominium units that have assisted in the resurgence of downtowns across the country. The MHDC analysis indicates that the City of Trenton is exhibiting strong demand for available rental units. However, the City must insist that new residential development is of high-quality to maintain a high-value Downtown housing market.

The MHDC residential demand analysis indicated there is potential housing demand for 44 affordable

family and senior units and 31 market rate units over the next few years. However, there are some recently constructed developments that have begun to meet this demand. Additionally, family units may not find Downtown living desirable. However, if these new units are developed nearby Downtown, they will still have the opportunity to patronize Downtown stores.

As the City encourages development of Downtown properties for residential uses, prime, ground floor spaces should be reserved for retail stores.

- **Develop Added Downtown Amenities**

In addition to encouraging residential projects that can meet the housing demand identified by the MHDC analysis, the City and TDIA should work to improve Downtown living conditions. Downtown features that residents find appealing include improvements to police enforcement, street lighting, the business mix, building conditions, events, and the streetscape. Enhancements to these aspects of Downtown will encourage new residents and develop demand for more housing units. Most of these amenities, such as building conditions and adjusting the business mix, also feed into other DREAM tasks to create a vibrant Downtown atmosphere in which people want to live.

- **Encourage Residential Maintenance and Improvement**

The City and TDIA, while maintaining a focus on commercial buildings, should also encourage residential property owners to properly maintain and upgrade their buildings. The TDIA should research and develop a Home Improvement and Repair Program to involve local charities and volunteers willing to help residents learn to care for their homes. The MHDC Home Repair Opportunity Program (HeRO) should be applied throughout Downtown Trenton.

Complete information on the City's housing market can be found in the Trenton DREAM Residential Demand Analysis, January 2009.



A Downtown Trenton property with upper-floor living potential.

RETAIL MARKET

Retail development is an important and visible component of a successful downtown. The *Retail Market Analysis Report* undertaken as part of the DREAM Initiative identified challenges and opportunities of retail development, including a detailed analysis of retail supply and demand in Trenton.

Downtown Trenton consists of 78 acres with 204,000 square feet of existing first-floor commercial space. This space is comprised of:

- 8,000 square feet of restaurant space
(4,800 square feet vacant)
- 66,100 square feet of retail space
(16,800 square feet vacant)
- 129,900 square feet of office/service space
(12,500 square feet vacant)

The total amount of this first-floor vacant space is about 34,000 square feet and represents the existing opportunity for Downtown to expand its retail base. The retail analysis conservatively estimates average retail sales per square foot at \$25 and average restaurant sales per square foot at \$45. Depending on the types of businesses attracted, or that expand, the vacant first-floor space of 34,000 square feet represents an additional \$850,000 to \$1.5 million in annual sales to the City of Trenton.

To analyze retail demand, spending patterns were examined for households in a primary trade area (City limits of Trenton) and a secondary trade area (households within a modified 30-minute drive of Downtown Trenton). Comparing sales data to demand provides a measure of the performance of the Downtown retail sector and identifies unmet demand. Unmet demand is then compared to categories of retail products.

A potential opportunity for Trenton is to attract retail stores which can make use of the existing vacant properties in Downtown. The Downtown Trenton vacant first-floor space observed during this analysis was typically a smaller storefront space. The average size of the vacancies was about 2,200 square feet with the largest being 8,000 and the smallest being 300.

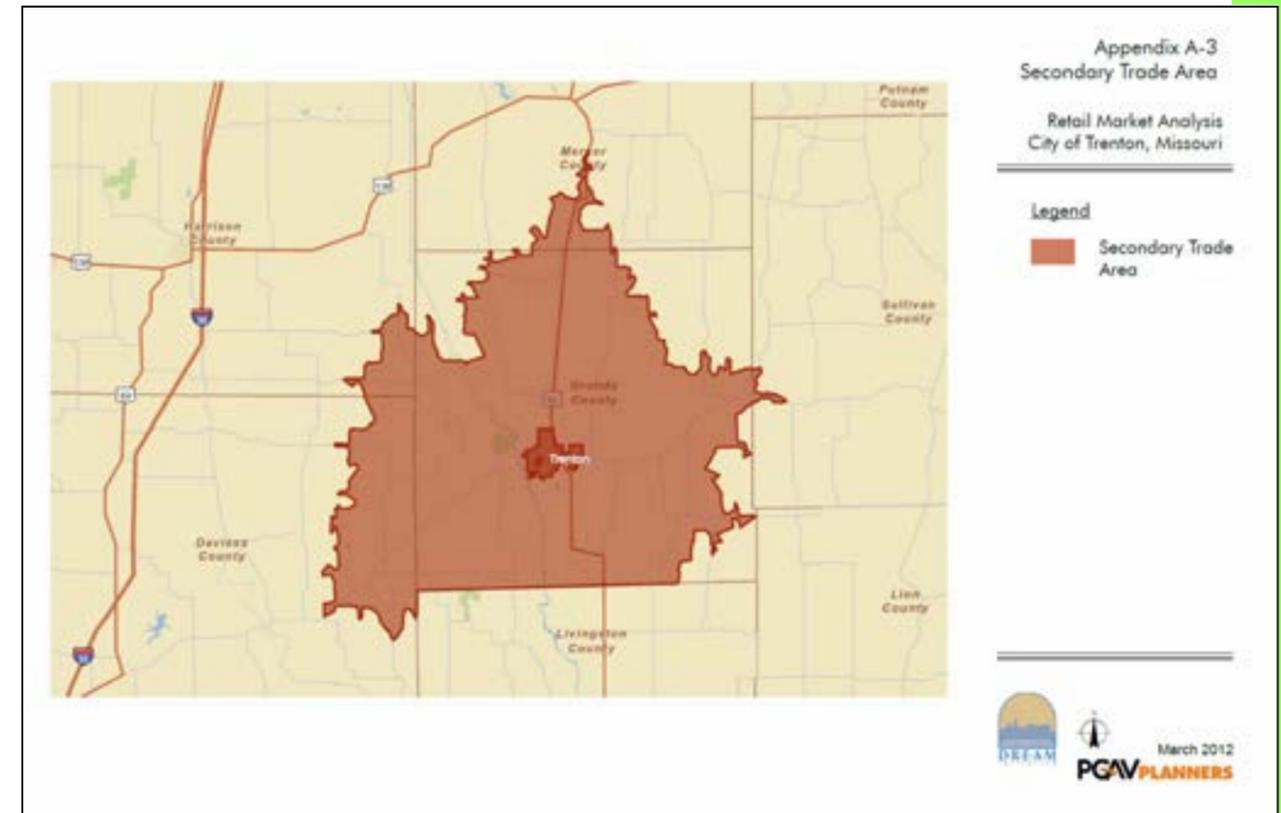
The smaller locations are suitable for specialty and boutique-type retail stores. However, there are opportunities where spaces can be combined to accommodate larger retail or restaurant needs. To expand available first-floor space, the City should encourage office and service uses to occupy upper-floors and reserve the ground floor for retail. There are also some vacant or underutilized lots in Downtown Trenton, upon which new mixed-use buildings can be constructed.

The Analysis estimates that Downtown Trenton could support an additional 508,000 square feet of restaurant and retail space by capturing the secondary trade area's unmet demand in specific retail sectors. This amount far exceeds existing vacant space.

These categories represent opportunities for new merchants, as well as for existing retailers to expand their floor area or add new product lines. The categories demonstrating the highest unmet retail demand include:

- Food & Beverage Stores: \$3.5 Million
- Department Stores: \$3.3 Million
- Limited Service Eating Places: \$2.3 Million
- Full-Service Restaurants: \$1.7 Million
- Electronics & Appliance Stores: \$1.5 Million
- Clothing Stores: \$700,000

The unmet demand for retail goods and services, including those listed above, represents a total of \$14 Million in lost sales for the Trenton Area. While not all of this demand can be satisfied within Downtown, even satisfying a portion of this retail demand would provide multiple benefits to Downtown in terms of both retail dollars and increased activity.



The Secondary Trade Area considered for the Retail Analysis..

Sectors highlighted within the retail analysis include:

- “Food and Beverage Stores” is the largest retail sector that is underserved in Trade Areas. While it may be difficult to find the available space to support a full size grocery store, significant demand exists for a smaller or more specialty food store that could offer anything from convenience food items to some high end items such as health/organic foods, prepared foods, wine and beer, and produce. This type of store would offer options to those looking for a higher quality item. Grocery products could also be sold in combinations with a casual or family dining establishment, such as a deli. Participants of the Trenton Focus Groups, Community Survey, and Visitor Survey indicated increased dining variety as a top priority for Downtown.
- Affirming the feedback received during the public outreach, the retail analysis found that demand for dining options is not currently being met. The portion that is being met is served primarily by restaurants outside of Downtown. There is an estimated \$4 Million in unmet restaurant demand within the Trenton area. This is perhaps the greatest existing opportunity for Downtown. Not only does the demand exist, but Downtown is situated close to NCM College and other major employers. Both lunchtime and evening dining markets should be tapped by new restaurants filling available Downtown vacant spaces.
- “Department Stores” has almost the same amount of amount of unmet demand as the food and beverages sector in the Trade Areas. This sector, in combination with the clothing stores sector, represent over \$4 Million in unmet demand. There are currently a few stores in Downtown catering to this need, including Howard’s Department Store. However, the market demand data indicate that many residents in Trenton are shopping elsewhere for department store and clothing sector items. In part, this may be due to the fact that this sector is changing as consumers are purchasing more goods online. However, existing Downtown stores could expand their product lines to meet some of this demand. Downtown Trenton should work to retain these existing businesses,

while encouraging stores to expand their existing inventory. There appears to be an opportunity for more boutique or specialty stores to meet a portion of this demand.

Recommendations for improving Downtown’s retail sector are found in the Trenton DREAM Retail Market Analysis Report, March 2011. Primary recommendations include:

- **Create a Downtown Economic Development Committee**
In order to have the capacity necessary to develop Downtown’s retail market, there must be a committee in charge of the effort. This Committee would operate under auspices of the TDIA and would be in charge of identifying the appropriate retail mix, attract new retailers, and focus on filling existing vacancies. For information on committee formation and responsibilities, please see the Trenton DREAM Organizational Structure Review Report.
- **Create a Downtown Business Attraction Program**
The TDIA should encourage retail uses on the ground floor of all mixed-use and commercial buildings. In the short-term, it is important to focus on filling Downtown vacancies with retail stores. In the long-term, the focus should be on creating the right mix of retail stores, with the TDIA becoming more selective in retail recruitment.

The Downtown Economic Development Committee should lead the effort in recruiting new businesses to the area by utilizing retail market information and developing a Retail Attraction Program. The program should include the following:

- Goals for attracting targeted retail stores and filling vacant first floor spaces
- Information on the existing incentives to assist start-up of new businesses
- Streamlining of the business permitting process
- Work with landlords to encourage filling first floor spaces with the targeted retailers, and
- Create and maintain information about the Downtown retail market.



A view of a portion the Downtown businesses district.

- Strengthen Existing Businesses**
 Develop a program to help existing businesses succeed and grow, mainly through improving business operations and customer service. The TDIA can launch a seminar program to educate and inform retail business owners about product differentiation, product presentation, window displays, and importance of hours and days of operation, and how service and quality of product differentiate them from big box or franchise stores. Special focus should be spent on providing support for developing restaurateurs. Funds for these activities could come from a local incentive, such as those described in the Financial Mechanisms section on page 21 of this Plan. However, local banks and manufacturers will also be a good source for support.

- Develop a Marketing Campaign for Downtown Retail**
 The TDIA should work to increase marketing and promotional programs for Downtown retailers and events. These promotional efforts should target residents of the secondary trade area as defined in the Retail Market Analysis.

The TDIA should create brochures that highlight the unique experiences and retail stores found in Downtown. These brochures should be distributed to residents and visitors to inform the public about existing stores, new stores, hours of operation, and special events.

The TDIA should also promote Downtown Trenton businesses through local newspapers, magazines, websites, radio, television ads, and flyers. The TDIA should consider retaining a professional advertising service to ensure the broadest and most effective coverage of limited advertising funds. However, funds for marketing activities may be provided from a locally established incentive, such as those described in the Financial Mechanisms section on page 21 of this Plan.



Existing retail location map is shown at top, commercial & service locations are shown at bottom..

FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

The Financial Assistance Review analyzed several funding mechanisms that are available to Downtown Trenton to encourage business development, and public or private investments. The intent of this DREAM task was to provide funding concepts for potential projects and programs, along with the preliminary financial data necessary to support the further exploration of these incentives.

There are several potential financial tools available to support Downtown revitalization efforts in Trenton. These include mechanisms such as a Local Option Economic Development Sales Tax (EDS), a Community Improvement District (CID), a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, historic tax credits, low income tax credits, and participation tax credits. While the Financial Assistance Review does not make definitive recommendations about which tools the City should establish, this Strategic Plan acknowledges that some specific funding source should be designated to support ongoing Downtown revitalization efforts.

The Financial Assistance Review provides a catalog of funding options to be considered in brainstorming how to implement various recommendations in this Strategic Plan. The decision on which financial tools are appropriate is determined, in part, by the nature of the potential projects and the willingness of local officials and decision makers to engage in public-private partnerships. Regardless of the specific financing mechanism, a general goal of DREAM is to leverage public funds to attract private investment that leads to job creation, business growth, and attractive Downtown buildings and public spaces.

The City of Trenton has had experience with several incentive programs. A TIF district was formed, but later disbanded and the City has used historic and low-income tax credit programs. Additionally, Grundy County is an Enhanced Enterprise Zone. The City also, unsuccessfully, attempted to implement an EDS.

In spite of some unsuccessful efforts, the City should work to develop a financial mechanism for Downtown development activities. This mechanism should include leverage funding

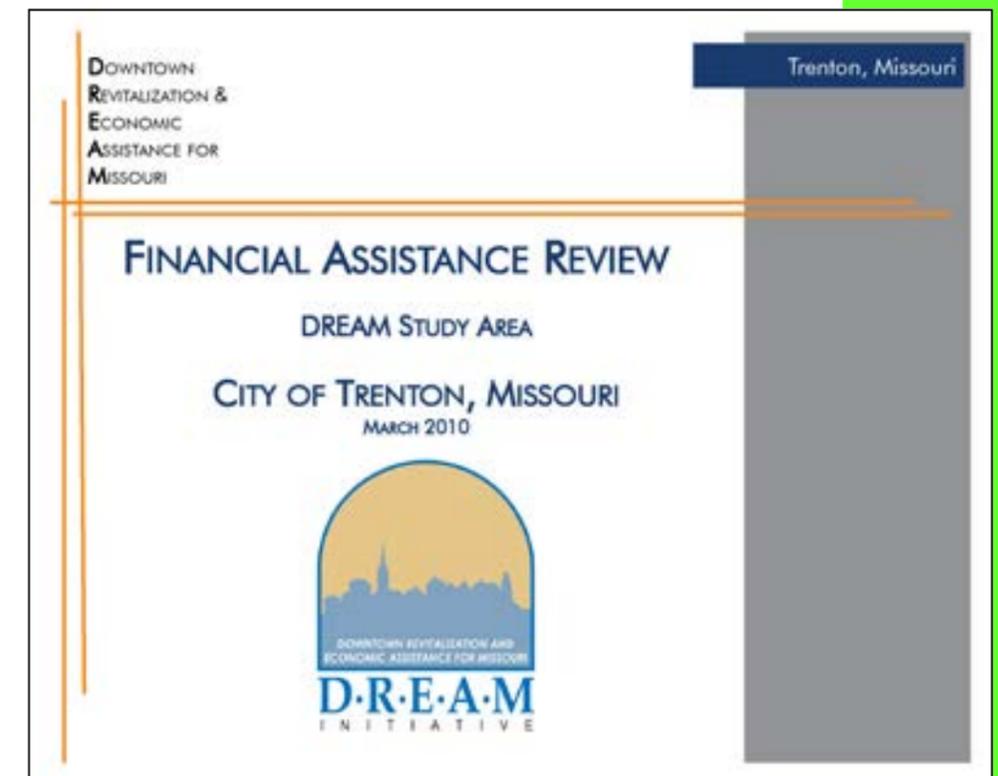
from the City's general funds. However, an incentive focused on Downtown properties and businesses will support the core of the City and, in turn, may garner more support from residents. A summary of EDS, CID, and TIF are included in the recommendations below:

- **Reconsider the establishment of a Local Option Economic Development Sales (EDS) Tax**

An EDS is additional sales tax, up to one-half of one percent, imposed by cities in the State of Missouri to fund economic development initiatives. This tax requires voter approval by referendum. An EDS is relevant to downtown revitalization because the statute provides the municipality with broad discretion in the use of revenues beyond limits on administrative spending and certain other requirements. Establishing this tax can allow for allocating a portion of the revenue to assist in Downtown revitalization efforts and support other economic development projects in the City. An EDS is Downtown's best opportunity to generate significant revitalization funding.

The Financial Assistance Review projects EDS tax revenue for Trenton based on the assumption of a one-half of one percent sales tax. This Strategic Plan proposes a structure slightly different than that of the Financial Assistance Review, but still within the State Statute requirements. The 2011 City-wide taxable sales were also obtained for the estimates on the following page. The proposed EDS structure includes not more than 25% of the revenues be used for administrative expenses and at least 20% used for City-wide economic development activities such as:

- Land Acquisition
- Infrastructure for industrial or business parks
- Extension of streets
- Public Facilities directly related to economic development and job creation
- Providing matching dollars for state or federal grants



Trenton DREAM Financial Assistance Review.

Some, or all, of the remaining 55% could be dedicated to Downtown projects in the areas of:

- Marketing
- Providing grants or loans to companies for job training, equipment acquisition, site development, and infrastructure
- Training programs to prepare workers for advanced technologies and high skill jobs
- Legal and accounting expenses directly associated with the economic development planning and preparation process

Based on Trenton’s 2011 sales tax generation data and the most recent sales tax rate of 7.725%, an estimated \$375,000 could be generated annually from a one-half percent EDS to be used in the above manner. If the entire 55% were allocated to Downtown, about \$206,000 could be available. This revenue source would also be expected to grow over time and the City could borrow against this revenue by issuing bonds to fund a large project.

Raising the sales tax in the City must be weighed carefully and would require voter approval; Successful votes for an EDS in other communities have occurred when the voters are given clear information on how the money will be spent with links to specific projects. It is important that the TDIA work to communicate that the benefits of a more vibrant Downtown with greater retail variety and visitor draw will far outweigh any loss of business due to a higher sales tax rate. The EDS is an ideal tool to fund certain Downtown revitalization efforts and will refocus attention on the core of the City. By following the recommendations in this Strategic Plan, the entire City will take ownership in Downtown improvements.

- **Establish a Downtown Trenton Community Improvement District (CID)**

Following an EDS, the next, best solution to generate funds for Downtown revitalization projects is to establish a CID based on the DREAM study area.

With a CID, the municipality, in cooperation with property owners can establish either an additional sales tax within the District boundary, an additional property tax levy, or some combination of both. The funds may be used in the district for a variety of public facilities or improvements, and programs and services such as, business and tourism promotions, refuse collection, and maintenance of public facilities. A CID in Downtown Trenton will provide an extra level of public service and will help channel private sector energy toward the solution of public problems.

A CID can be organized as a non-profit corporation or a political subdivision, however forming a political subdivision is recommended for the Downtown Trenton CID, as it provides a more flexible and robust revenue source. Forming a CID requires a signed petition submitted to the hosting municipality with information that includes:

- Approval of property owners owning more than 50% of assessed value of real property
- Approval of owners representing 50% per capita of all owners
- The proposed boundaries of the district
- A 5-year capital and service plan outlining the purposes of the proposed district
- Cost estimates of improvements required in the proposed district

A political subdivision CID may be funded by levying a tax on property, charging a fee for a business license, or charging an additional sales tax. Funding provided by a Downtown Trenton CID to TDIA will strengthen the capacity of the group to expand its marketing and promotion programs and materials, increase business attraction efforts, strengthen existing businesses, and help the City develop a Façade Improvement Program to encourage building rehabilitations.

The City should begin the process to form a CID, with assistance from TDIA mainly in the form of public outreach to obtain the petition signatures required.



An example of the promotion of a Downtown project funded with local incentives, from Kirksville, Missouri.

The March, 2010 *Financial Assistance Review* considered historical sales and property tax data for the DREAM Boundary. A CID with a one percent sales tax is estimated to generate about \$16,000 annually based on recent taxable sales in the Study Area. The CID could also levy a \$1.00 property tax assessment to generate another \$15,000 annually for a total of \$31,000 for annual Downtown revitalization efforts. However, a CID does carry an annual administration cost. The amount of funding generated is anticipated to grow as revitalization projects increase both the sales activity and value of real property in Downtown.

- **Consider Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

TIF leverages future public tax revenues in a specific area that is determined to be “blighted” or a “conservation” area, and that is not expected to develop on its own and to attract new private investment to that area. Property tax, sales tax, and certain other tax revenue from new improvements that occur after establishment of the TIF are paid into a fund to be used by the City to pay eligible project costs. TIF is established in a particular district for a maximum of 23 years. No existing annual revenues generated at the time of TIF establishment are captured for TIF redevelopment purposes.

TIF could be used in two basic situations. The City could use this incentive to assist a large private development project; an especially useful tool if there are extraordinary expenses associated with developing the property such as building demolition, major rehabilitation, negotiating with multiple property owners, or environmental clean up. Alternatively, the City could establish a TIF district that would cover a specific geographic area, such as the DREAM Boundary. TIF revenue could fund public infrastructure improvements, façade improvements and other public and private projects in the district.

The DREAM *Financial Assistance Review* includes revenue projections based on the assumption that a TIF would be established for the DREAM Study Area. Renovation and improvement of private properties would gradually increase the equalized assessed valuation of this area and generate more property tax revenue for the TIF fund, in addition to capturing sales tax increment. Since TIF captures incremental revenues, the initial amounts generated for a Downtown district are projected to be minimal. However, with the completion of some modest projects, the TIF revenue could eventually generate between \$30,000 to \$100,000 annually. If possible, the TIF District should be established before sizeable improvement projects take place, to set the base tax year at a lower value.

Implementation of a TIF District in an area with an existing CID, will also require coordination as some of the CID revenues will be captured as TIF funds. This situation can work nicely as the City of Trenton transitions from public projects into private incentives.

Detailed statutory requirements and procedures regarding incentive tools available to Trenton are provided in the DREAM *Financial Assistance Review* March 2010.

MARKETING

Effective revitalization efforts acknowledge the need to promote Downtown using a coordinated strategy. Marketing efforts involve a variety of methods and a variety of media. Marketing methods such as paid collaborative advertising will help demonstrate that Downtown is a unified shopping district. Utilization of various kinds of traditional media, as well as new media such as internet and social networking, will help ensure Downtown’s marketing messages reach the intended audiences.

The TDIA should consider launching marketing efforts after funding has been obtained and necessary public improvements have been implemented. Downtown Trenton needs to launch its own marketing efforts. The TDIA should form a marketing committee to attract volunteers proficient in a variety of methods and media to promote Downtown. DREAM marketing efforts focused on community outreach to enhance the City’s efforts to establish Downtown incentives. Once a stable funding source for Downtown is obtained, the TDIA should implement some general marketing efforts with this funding, to include:

- **Establish a Downtown Website**

Downtown Trenton must be considered a viable place in the minds of potential investors, businesses, residents, and visitors. The TDIA needs to promote Downtown to these markets. A basic website is a cost-effective and visible way to build upon the TDIA as the lead Downtown organization and promote Downtown opportunities in the process. A website should include information about festivals, businesses, shops, and entertainment, as well as redevelopment opportunities, retail development opportunities, and economic development activities. Downtown residential information should also be included, both as a service to existing residents and to attract new residents.

Additionally, the TDIA should implement social networking tools and link to the main website. Sites such as Facebook, You Tube, and Twitter provide access to a, typically, younger population.

- **Develop Signature Downtown Events and a Calendar of Events**

The TDIA should develop a few signature special events to help identify Downtown and promote its businesses. Events can be volunteer intensive, and the results for businesses may not be immediate, but they draw people into the area. Markets to capitalize on include NCM College students, sportsmen, and Trenton families. The TDIA should also develop a strategy to monitor the effectiveness of Downtown events and be prepared to adjust activities as needed. Events also can help engage the community as residents, NCM College students, and Trenton High School students can all be tapped to provide assistance if the event appeals to them.

The TDIA should also create a Calendar of Events to promote events, but also to identify gaps in activities for future event development. The Calendar of Events should also be featured on the TDIA, City, and Chamber websites. Currently the City and Chamber have calendars, but the are outdated or specific to their events. The TDIA calendar should include any activity occurring in Downtown to showcase the area as a venue of activity and vibrancy.

These two activities represent a basic level of marketing that Downtown Trenton should be able to attain. The collaborative promotion and advertisement of Downtown businesses as a unified shopping district is critical to changing the image of Downtown. As the TDIA solidifies and develops more capacity, both volunteer and financial, the group should consider focusing marketing efforts on developing a Downtown brand, collaborative business advertising and promotions, expanding Downtown’s marketing reach, and developing additional support materials.



The City of Trenton, Missouri Website homepage.



The Trenton, Missouri Chamber of Commerce Website homepage.

Implementation



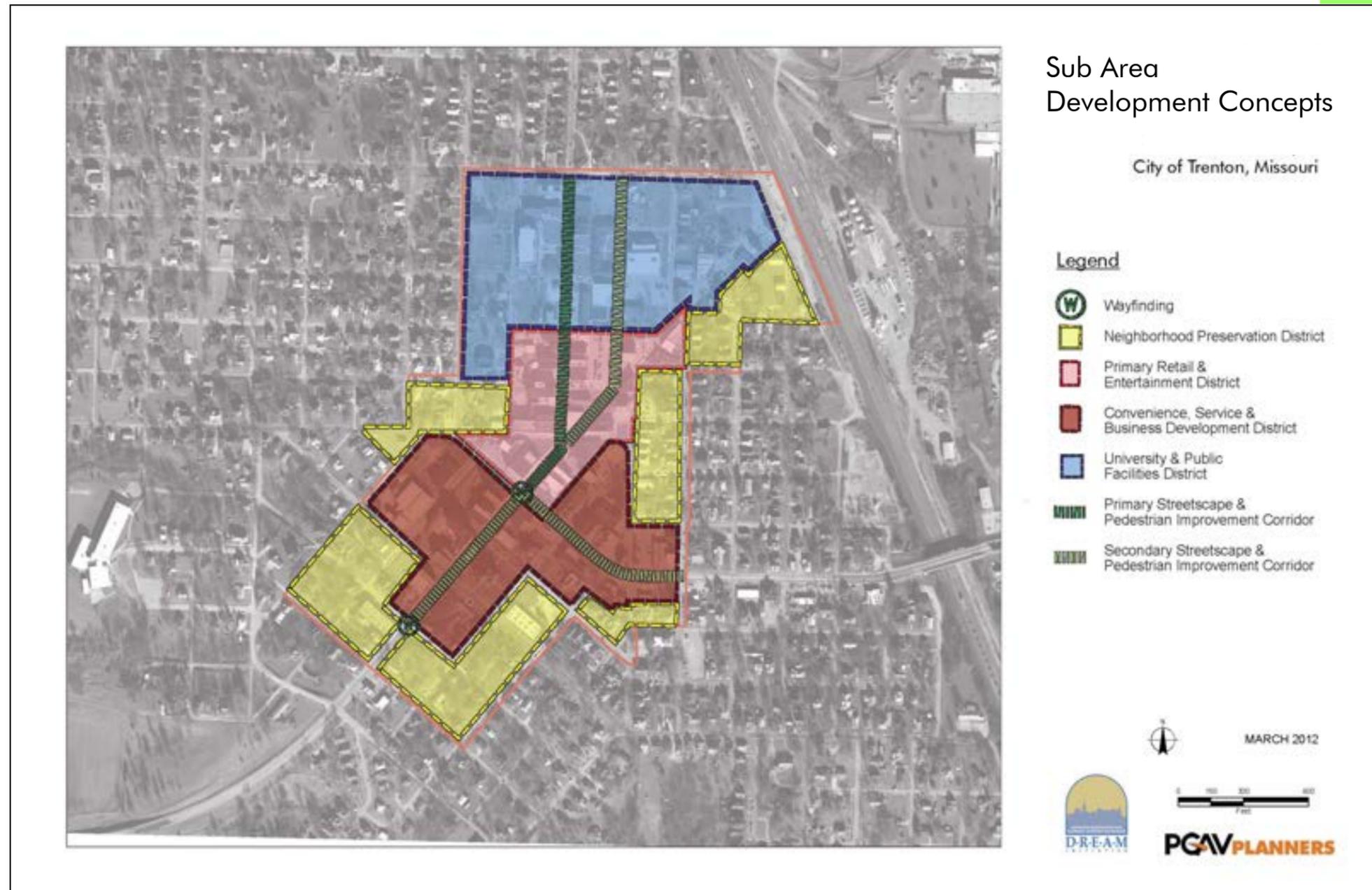
SUB AREA DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The DREAM Initiative planning process involved a series of analytical and planning activities for Trenton that have been outlined in the previous sections of this document. This Downtown Trenton Strategic Plan ties together all of the recommendations from the various planning components with a set of key goals that will drive Downtown revitalization.

Included in this section is a schedule of recommendations. These recommendations will give community leaders a catalog of action items that will comprise the agenda for Downtown over the next several years.

Included at right is an illustration that provides the sub area development concepts of the Downtown Trenton Strategic Plan. This map demonstrates, in general, the various identities of the neighborhoods that comprise Downtown. The northern part of Downtown includes the University and various municipal building. The middle portion provides the primary retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses. The southern portion tends to be more focused on convenience and service businesses. The residential uses surrounding Downtown Trenton are shown as Neighborhood Preservation Districts to provide the concept of buffering these areas from more intense business uses. The main corridors and suggestions for prime locations for wayfinding are also depicted. These distinct areas of Downtown can be encouraged and supported, with particular attention provided to the corridors that connect NCM College with Downtown.

The individual streetscape improvements suggested by DREAM should mesh with the September 2007 Downtown Trenton Plan that the City is implementing. However, future phases may require a review of concepts expressed in this DREAM Plan, as well as added public input, technical services, and funding mechanisms. It is imperative that the City conduct feasibility analyses to efficiently deploy its resources while pursuing Downtown projects and that the TDIA play a major supporting role in these projects.



SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation schedule located on the following pages organizes the projects and programs in categories that relate to the Trenton DREAM Initiative tasks.

These tasks include: Organizational Structure, Land Use & Building Survey, Community Surveys, Building and Streetscape Design, Retail Market Analysis, Residential Market Analysis, Financial Mechanisms, and Marketing.

Each recommendation is listed by objective, description, responsible party, support groups, starting timeframe, and tools, techniques, and resources. Each of these aspects is proposed for planning purposes and is considered in the context of their relationship to each other and Downtown Trenton's needs. In some cases, a particular recommendation must be completed before another can begin.

It is not expected that the City would be able to implement all of these projects in the timeframe of this Strategic Plan. Initially, resources will be scarce and Downtown leaders may encounter resistance to their attempts to increase dedicated resources or implement financing mechanisms. Any such resistance will lengthen the time period required for the completion of the recommended public projects.

Organizational Structure

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Time Frame	Tools, Techniques & Resources
1 Renew the TDIA as the lead Downtown organization	The TDIA has long been the Downtown group and the City had obtained a grant for a full-time executive director. However, after the grant period expired, the director position was eliminated. The TDIA should work to rejuvenate itself. Additionally, the TDIA is located within the Chamber offices, yet needs to be certain it is perceived as separate from the Chamber.	TDIA	City/Chamber	NOW	The TDIA could conduct a rebranding campaign by surveying its members and the Downtown businesses that it serves. It is critical that the TDIA is meeting the needs of Downtown, whatever they may be. The TDIA should be a nimble organization, ready to change its roles and responsibilities if necessary.
2 Form a Downtown funding exploratory committee	The TDIA needs to identify a stable funding source for the organization and for Downtown revitalization projects. A committee should be formed that includes representation from Downtown businesses, property owners, residents, the City, and the County.	TDIA	City/Chamber/County	Quarter 3 2013	This committee will become an important piece of the public outreach effort for any incentive that is decided upon. The group should explore EDS and CID initially as these tools have shown the greatest ability to generate funding. The committee should interview other communities that have implemented these incentives.
3 Increase resources available to the TDIA	Ideally, the stable funding source is established. However, the City should maintain and increase its support if possible. The City should continue to seek other resources to encourage TDIA. The TDIA cannot lead Downtown revitalization efforts if it is constantly trying to find funding. Other resources include in-kind assistance and personnel, and as TDIA grows, volunteers.	City	Chamber	NOW	The City needs to set an example that will send the message to private investors and the rest of the City that Downtown is important and worth improving. This message is received by potential investors as a signal that the City is willing to be a partner in Downtown revitalization and will help protect their investment. The Chamber should help send a similar message to the community regarding Downtown as a viable business opportunity.
4 Establish a Downtown Economic Development Committee	A committee of the TDIA should be formed to help the City conduct economic development activities where Downtown is involved. The City Manager could use this support to attract retail and compatible uses to available Downtown locations.	TDIA	City	Quarter 1 2014	This is a critical committee and should be composed of volunteers that the TDIA and the City can trust to interact effectively with interested prospects. The members of this committee will also need to exercise discretion with development plans. The group should work on the business mix in Downtown; adjusting it to add more retail and restaurant uses.
5 Energize the Trenton Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)	The City passed a local historic preservation ordinance and created the HPC. A historic district, roughly equal to the DREAM Study Area has been proposed, but not approved. The HPC has the potential to be an important organization as there is a wealth of historic architecture and heritage to preserve in Downtown.	City/HPC	TDIA	NOW	The HPC should begin developing strategies to promote the benefits of historic preservation with an eventual goal of building support for the proposed district. The City should ensure the HPC committee is well-trained to understand and promote Trenton's unique heritage and flat-iron architecture. The TDIA should assist by helping develop required materials and events.
6 Develop a Downtown Events Committee	As the TDIA adds volunteers, an events committee could help coordinate, expand, and promote existing events. If signature events are created, as proposed in the Marketing recommendations, this committee will be valuable in assessing their effectiveness.	TDIA		As Needed	This committee may also handle marketing for Downtown as a unified shopping destination. Developing committees of the TDIA is important to draw-in volunteers from other areas of the community such as residents, NCM College, or the High School.
7 Develop a College Partnership Committee	The TDIA should work to strengthen the relationship with NCM College by forming a committee to help connect the College's students, faculty, and visitors with Downtown businesses and stakeholders.	TDIA		Quarter 3 2015	This is an activity that a reinvented TDIA can undertake. The College student market can be capitalized upon by Downtown businesses. However, the businesses must be prepared and understand how to meet the College's needs.

Land Use & Building Survey

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Time Frame	Tools, Techniques & Resources
8 Monitor building and infrastructure conditions.	The City should develop mapping that allows for the local monitoring of the physical conditions of property and public infrastructure. Building and street complaints should be tracked and mapped to determine areas that require priority improvements and buildings that require a more aggressive approach by code enforcement officials.	City		NOW	Mapping tools of these sort can be invaluable to City Staff and allow a more efficient use of their time and the City's limited resources. Building conditions should be assessed using the DREAM data as a base.
9 Improve City mapping capabilities for online access.	The City should work with Grundy County to provide mapping data regarding parcels, infrastructure, utilities, land-use, and zoning information online. Prospective businesses and developers often conduct most of their research online and if a community does not have data available, the community is not considered.	City	County	NOW	Utilize DREAM GIS mapping and find regional or county partners to work with to develop a GIS database with online access.
10 Develop a database of first-foot Downtown space.	The TDIA should work with the City to develop an inventory of this space. Vacancy information can also be linked to national online databases such as Location One. Basic information regarding size, descriptions, and contact information is needed. Price or rental data should be avoided unless provided by the seller or agent.	TDIA	City	Quarter 2 2014	These efforts should build on the DREAM data collected. Information should be available to City departments and the Chamber to assist in generating leads. The proposed Downtown website should also list the vacant properties and this information should mesh with the City and County mapping capabilities.
11 Develop a listing of available building sites.	The TDIA should also develop a site listing, similar to the building database. New investors will be interested in utilities and planned infrastructure projects as well as contact information. Price data should be avoided unless provided by the seller or agent.	TDIA	City	Quarter 2 2014	In-fill developers should also know that there is an expectation that new construction is complementary to existing Downtown buildings. Illustrations from the DREAM design work should underscore this point. However, to secure such development, the City will have to adopt Downtown Design Guidelines that are implemented by the HPC and City.
12 Allow for innovative design ideas that build upon Downtown Trenton "Flat Iron" buildings.	The City, through the HPC, should promote the heritage of these unique buildings. The TDIA should help with the marketing.	City/HPC	TDIA	NOW	Information regarding the Downtown street grid, cow track, and other heritage should be assembled in a brochure. Residents should also be an audience for this information so they understand why Downtown's buildings have such a distinct look.

Community Surveys						
Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Time Frame	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
13 Reconvene the DREAM Focus Groups	The groups included City and NCM College staff and administrators, elected officials, business owners, longtime residents, and college residents. It is critical to revitalization efforts that these interested individuals are given future opportunities to volunteer and connect with Downtown activities. They may also be a source of committee members for the TDIA.	TDIA		Quarter 2 2014	By planning a 5-year follow-up schedule, the groups can discuss achievements since the DREAM program began and note challenges for the future. An outside, impartial facilitator to conduct the sessions is best so individuals will feel free to speak about any topic.	
14 Conduct a telephone survey	TDIA should revise the DREAM telephone survey questions and resurvey the City's residents.	TDIA		Quarter 2 2016	This survey should occur after the funding source has been obtained. The timeframe is approximately 7 years after the DREAM survey. TDIA may need to use a surveying firm and phone bank to reach the quota levels for a random sample.	
15 Include ongoing web surveys and polls on the proposed TDIA website	As an alternative, or in addition to, the telephone survey, TDIA should conduct surveys on the proposed website once it is active. These will provide perceptions of Downtown, but may not be as accurate as a conventional survey instrument.	TDIA	City/Chamber	Quarter 3 2014	The City and Chamber should assist in this effort by providing links to the surveys on their websites.	
16 Develop a survey tool for students at NCM College on an ongoing basis.	NCM College draws a large amount of visitors to Downtown and TDIA should monitor the trends and needs of these visitors to understand how Downtown can serve them.	TDIA		Quarter 3 2014	Such a regular survey instrument can also be adjusted slightly and administered by volunteers at City events and attractions. This tool will also serve to advertise Downtown a little. TDIA will need to develop the survey and coordinate with NCM College for implementation. A few simple, focused questions about Downtown may gather more responses than the longer survey conducted for DREAM.	
17 Develop a regular method of communicating survey results to Downtown businesses	TDIA will need to understand and transmit the survey results to the people that can most use the knowledge; Downtown store owners. The TDIA should encourage and lead the Downtown businesses to act upon the new knowledge of their markets. Information may also be of interest to the Chamber.	TDIA	Chamber	Ongoing	The TDIA and the Chamber could provide this information in seminar formats at the same time they conduct customer service training. Additionally, the two groups may consider adjusting their events based on the survey data.	

Building and Streetscape Design						
Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Time Frame	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
18 Develop building design guidelines for Downtown	The TDIA, HPC, and City should renew the effort to designate Downtown as a historic district and establish design guidelines to preserve character such as the "flat iron" buildings.	TDIA	City/HPC	NOW	The TDIA should coordinate the effort and work with the HPC to develop broad input. Regular communication with property owners should help promote the benefits of preservation and the expectations of the City if the district and guidelines are approved. The TDIA can also provide seminars to help property owners comply. The preservation of existing historic and architectural character is critical.	
19 Review building codes, practices, and policies to ensure Downtown building conditions improve.	Downtown Trenton is the location of the oldest buildings in the City. This requires added attention from the City to ensure that maintenance issues do not grow into major problems.	City	TDIA	Quarter 1 2014	The City should review its codes and processes, but the TDIA can help by organizing walks in Downtown or seminars for property owners. It is vital that communication lines remain open so that owners understand the improvements the City is trying to make and are aware of the positive impacts they will have on their property values and building rents.	
20 Add gateway monument wayfinding signs to the Downtown streetscape plans	This important signage helps to clearly defined Downtown as a district. The City is working to implement other streetscape improvements, but can easily add these signs intersections along Main as proposed at 6th and 9th streets. Another possibility is a gateway in the northern area at Main and 13th.	City		Quarter 3 2014	This project is eligible for EDS or CID funding, but should be fairly inexpensive to implement and can provide a great benefit to Downtown businesses. This is also a project that can be conducted immediately to help develop momentum for Downtown.	
21 Develop façade and building rehabilitation incentives	It is necessary for the City to develop mechanisms to reduce the costs, and thus encourage, historic rehabilitation. By making a commitment to high-quality Downtown improvements the City will also encourage new investors.	City		Quarter 1 2016	The proposed local mechanisms can help encourage building owners. As the City increases its expectations of owners through design guidelines and enhanced code enforcement, it will need to offer a mechanism for funding, such as a revolving loan fund tool.	
22 Develop a donation program for streetscape elements	Downtown property owners can take an involved role by helping to donate City installed and owned Downtown improvements.	TDIA	City/Chamber	NOW	The TDIA should work with the City and Chamber to develop an easy sponsorship program and booklet.	
23 Improve parking lots and service areas	An issue voiced by participants in the DREAM community survey work included parking availability. If the City can improve the quality of parking lots and other service areas, people using these areas can feel more secure and the walk to the businesses may seem shorter. Parking is a critical piece of Downtown and often provides the first impression to a visitor. Public parking lots should match the streetscape and be included in improvement phases, just as a street or sidewalk would be.	City	TDIA	Quarter 3 2016	These projects are eligible for incentive funding and should include landscaping within the areas to 'soften' the impact of the impervious pavement. The City has an opportunity to impress visitors of NCM College, but will not do so with poor parking conditions. The TDIA can help maintain landscaping once it is installed. The City should also install wayfinding from the lot to Downtown attractions.	
24 Promote the conservation and efficient use of resources and green building techniques	The City should review sustainable design concepts and work to adjust its codes, building requirements, and site review procedures to encourage future developments to approach a more efficient design.	City		Ongoing	The City and its review committees need to monitor building activity in Trenton. Businesses and developers cannot be expected to develop high-quality projects on their own. Often, investors must be educated about innovative design techniques and efficiency methods. It falls to the City to make certain construction is sustainable and positive.	
25 Develop a program to encourage Trenton organizations to maintain Downtown landscaping	The City can increase landscaping and other streetscape installations and services if maintenance costs can be shared. If a bench is placed in front of a store, it is to the benefit of the stores to help maintain that bench.	TDIA	City	NOW	The TDIA should work with the City to develop a program where groups can adopt blocks or landscaping beds in Downtown. The City may wish to supervise or train the volunteers, but should then allow the groups to provide ongoing assistance. The TDIA should take opportunities to recognize the groups at meetings and through press releases.	

Retail Market Analysis						
Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Time Frame	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
26 Create a Downtown Economic Development Committee	A Committee of the TDIA should be formed to assist the City in Economic Development efforts.	TDIA		NOW	The TDIA should develop the information that the City will need to attract businesses to Downtown. Compelling data that shows why a business should choose Downtown, as well as available space and contact information is needed. Committee members should be chosen carefully. If the City needs to introduce prospects to the Committee, the confidentiality of the project must be maintained.	
27 Develop a Downtown Business Attraction Program	The TDIA Economic Development Committee should continue to develop needed information and seek ways to add other benefits to locating a business in Downtown Trenton.	TDIA		Quarter 2 2014	The Committee should take training classes if necessary and focus on expanding the retail base on the first-floor of Downtown buildings. The program should include goals for attracting businesses, incentive information, a streamlined process working with the City, encouragement and positive relationship with Downtown landlords and property owners, and other important market information.	
28 Attract businesses that provide products and services that can meet demonstrated unmet retail demand.	Some specific retail categories demonstrate unmet retail demand for the Downtown Trenton trade area. Businesses that open or expand their product lines to include these categories make good targets for attraction to available Downtown buildings. The City and TDIA should refine their economic development efforts to focus on these areas.	City	TDIA	Ongoing	These categories include products sold in: Food and Beverage stores; Department stores; Restaurants; Electronics and Appliance stores; and Clothing stores. Attracting these businesses to Downtown will begin to adjust the business mix and lessen the effect of non-retail first-floor uses. In addition to seeking prospects offering these products, the TDIA should seek to educate existing stores and landlords about the retail gaps that exist in Trenton so they can adjust their marketing activities, expand sales floor-space, or add new product lines.	
29 Increase the variety of restaurants in Downtown.	Consumers travel for variety. Downtown competes with other areas within the City for restaurant variety. For Downtown to become more of a shopping destination, restaurant variety needs to be increased. Restaurants were overwhelmingly identified during the community survey process as a desired improvement to Downtown.	City	TDIA	Ongoing	The TDIA can act as a business advocate and walk potential new restaurants through City processes. The City can ensure that health and building code inspections for Downtown locations get top priority. These efforts are needed for Downtown to be seen as a viable place to locate and can help offset other start-up issues that restaurants face such as insurance and access to credit and conventional funding.	
30 Strengthen existing businesses.	The TDIA should also provide a focus on existing businesses that will encourage them to thrive and grow, mainly through improved business operations and customer service.	TDIA		Quarter 1 2015	Seminars to educate and inform the business regarding product differentiation, displays, hours of operation, and other customer service techniques are critical to Downtown businesses.	
31 Market Downtown Trenton businesses as a unified shopping destination	As the service ability of Downtown Trenton's businesses improves, the TDIA will need to fully step into the role of the Downtown champion and develop advertising campaigns and other techniques to market Downtown just as any mall or shopping center would market itself.	TDIA		Quarter 3 2015	This activity will be a highly visible program that TDIA needs to activate and operate successfully. Funding can be provided from the local mechanisms if they are in place. However, the businesses should participate in cooperative advertising until other funding is obtained. This step is critical for Downtown to become known as a district and shopping destination, rather than just a grouping of stores.	
32 Increase available first-floor retail space	The City should consider methods to preserve first-floor spaces for retail as well as encourage in-fill development that promotes mixed-use within a building with first-floor as retail and upper floors as residential or office use.	City		Ongoing	This can be accomplished with a zoning overlay, conditional incentive use, or by adjusting other regulations governing Downtown buildings. Office and service uses are needed in Downtown Trenton, but not in prime retail locations along main streets.	
33 Develop a Downtown Directory	The TDIA should create materials such as a Downtown business directory that details the businesses and restaurants in Downtown.	TDIA		NOW	The directory can be a map and include other information such as transportation and parking. The brochure should be widely available in the City and an electronic version on the TDIA, City and Chamber websites.	
34 Develop shopping-oriented events for Downtown	The TDIA should work to bring people to Downtown. The street should be seen as a public space and festivals provide a positive use of public space. Businesses may not see an increase in their sales immediately, but visitors should come back at a later date.	TDIA	Chamber	Ongoing	The TDIA and Chamber can collaborate on these events. Events such as sidewalk sales, monthly shopping nights with music, storefront display contests, and other festivals can all help add to the vibrancy of Downtown and capitalize on existing visitors.	
35 Encourage residential development on upper-floors of Downtown commercial buildings.	While this recommendation is also noted in the Residential Market section, upper-floors filled with residents are important to Downtown businesses and the City should encourage and seek this type of mixed-use development.	City		Ongoing	The City should attempt to attract developers interested in housing and commercial property. More residents mean a larger market upon which businesses can draw as well as more eyes on the street, making Downtown a safer place to live.	

Residential Market Analysis						
Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Time Frame	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
36 Encourage the development of new, high-quality, rental units in Downtown.	The City should work to identify developers that may be interested in existing sites or buildings for apartments and lofts. Downtown Trenton will benefit from having these residents nearby and can also benefit from the nearby NCM College market, as well as the recent increase in the Chillicothe labor market. Downtown Trenton can meet this demand with upper-floor apartment rental units.	City	TDIA	Ongoing	The rental demand identified included 44 affordable family and senior units and 31 market rate rental units. Family units may not fit well in Downtown, but if the units are developed nearby Downtown the benefits can still apply to Downtown businesses. However, first-floor property should always be reserved for retail uses.	
37 Develop added amenities such as pedestrian walkways and plazas and mitigate issues such as parking and traffic, to increase demand for Downtown living options.	As Downtown encourages residential development, many revitalization projects that apply to other DREAM tasks will also appeal to potential new residents.	City	TDIA	Ongoing	The TDIA and City should always consider how a Downtown resident would feel about an improvement. Added amenities increase the marketability of Downtown property and raise the demand for Downtown living options. The TDIA can also sponsor home tours as lofts and other high-quality units are produced.	
38 Encourage the improvement and maintenance of residential property.	The City and TDIA should also provide a focus on residential properties and help property owners learn how to maintain and upgrade their buildings.	TDIA	City	Quarter 3 2014	The TDIA should work to connect residents with reputable contractors through seminars and the City can work to help explain its procedures and expectations. Other programs to help residents should always be pursued.	
39 Review zoning codes to consider if multi-family is an acceptable use in large houses that were originally single-family and if the codes present any barriers to Downtown residential development.	There are a few large houses in, or near, Downtown that have been converted to multi-family units. This is typically not a positive conversion for these properties. The City should consider the codes that allowed these situations to occur and determine if this should be allowed to continue.	City		NOW	Some of this converted housing is large and architecturally intricate, and not all is within the DREAM boundary. The City can adjust its zoning, which may cause some vacancies initially, to protect these properties and create opportunities for home ownership.	

Financial Mechanisms						
Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Time Frame	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
40 Using the materials and concepts from the DREAM Marketing assistance task, the City should develop a long-term plan for implementing Downtown incentives.	The City and TDIA should coordinate efforts to implement the incentive programs necessary for Downtown revitalization efforts. The initial focus should be on funding for visible public infrastructure, with private funding provided at a later date.	City	TDIA	NOW	The City will need to initiate the incentives, with TDIA providing public outreach. TDIA should begin to immediately develop volunteers with funding mechanism knowledge. Incentives to consider should include an EDS, CID, and TIF.	
41 Establish a Local Option Economic Development Sales Tax (EDS) with a set allocation for Downtown projects.	Although the City has attempted this incentive, it remains the best option to generate funding for Downtown revitalization as well as economic development City-wide. The DREAM marketing assistance included information on how the City should engage the public about this incentive.	City	TDIA/Chamber	Quarter 1 2015	The City could delay this initiative to allow for adequate public outreach. The DREAM Financial Assistance Review estimates that over \$200,000 annually could be dedicated to Downtown projects and the TDIA and the City should clearly define those projects. It is vital that this information is clearly communicated to the public before the vote.	
42 Establish a Downtown Community Improvement District (CID)	The second-best option for Downtown is the establishment of a CID funded by a sales tax and a property tax levy. A CID may be easier to implement as residents and voters will identify that the mechanism and taxes are only in effect in the Downtown.	City	TDIA	Quarter 1 2014	The City will initiate this incentive and pass the appropriate ordinances, but the TDIA will need to provide the public outreach and secure petition signatures. A CID structured as proposed could generate about \$30,000 annually for Downtown revitalization and TDIA activities.	
43 Consider establishing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for Downtown	This incentive could be important, but relies on incremental revenues. Therefore, initially, a TIF is very limited in its ability to generate funds. For this reason, TIF is a lower proposed priority for Downtown Trenton than a EDS or a CID.	City	TDIA	As needed	The City has experience with TIF, however not in Downtown. The City should be prepared to use this tool, but needs to generate more activity and find a better, more sustainable funding source for initial Downtown projects.	
44 Develop additional programs to address the conditions and preservation of Downtown commercial buildings	TDIA will need to fill an advocacy role in relations with the City to identify these common issues and encourage the pursuit and development of new mechanisms, such as a Downtown façade loan program, to address these concerns.	TDIA	City	NOW	City led initiatives such as a façade loan program can provide a small amount of public funding focused on important issues that can be slowly improved. Concerns like metal façade covering, tuckpointing, electrical wiring, and roofing are examples that the City can slowly help Downtown property owners address. The City can allocate this funding now, develop criteria for the building owners to include a match, identify eligible improvements, and allow TDIA to promote the program. With limited funding, maybe the City only does one or two facades a year. However, if a local funding mechanism is developed, the loan program could take-off.	
45 Leverage local funds to obtain State and Federal funding for projects	The City and TDIA should remain vigilant regarding the leveraging of local sources, such as the EDS, CID, and TIF, for State or Federal funding.	City	TDIA	Ongoing	As State and Federal funding is declining, Downtown should rely on local funding sources, but still apply for any program into which projects and plans may fit. Plans are critical and if the City can show that the projects address a local need, grant opportunities will come.	

Marketing						
Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Time Frame	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
46 Follow the Marketing concepts and use the materials provided to establish a Downtown incentive.	As noted under Financial Mechanisms, this information is vital for the City to be more successful implementing Downtown mechanisms.	City	TDIA	Ongoing	The City and TDIA should focus on clearly explaining the projects to be paid for by the incentive funding and addressing the benefits that all City property owners will enjoy. It is important that benefits are shown to far outweigh any costs and that a broad base of support is built. Overall, ALL Trenton residents and businesses need to understand why Downtown and the TDIA is important to them...and to the entire City.	
47 Establish a Downtown website.	This is a general marketing recommendation that the TDIA needs to address. A website is an efficient way to reach many people across numerous audiences and will help the TDIA communicate with its members, donors, and supporters, as well as raise the visibility of Downtown and its businesses	TDIA		Quarter 1 2014	Funding will be required, however a website is critical and there are low cost options that can at least earmark a place for Downtown Trenton on the web. Social sites such as facebook, you tube, or twitter can also be used.	
48 Develop signature Downtown events and a calendar of events.	Downtown should be known for a few events and the TDIA should promote those events and more with a calendar of Downtown activities. In particular, the students of NCM College should be drawn to Downtown events and can also be engaged as volunteers.	TDIA		Quarter 1 2014	This effort should be launched by the TDIA and should consider the signature events to be developed. The TDIA should work to establish and distribute the calendar, including upon the proposed Downtown website.	

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