



CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning and Code Administration Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator

FROM: Kathleen A. Maher, Planning Director

DATE: March 4, 2013

SUBJECT: Downtown Master Planning

It has been stated quite frequently lately in various different venues that the City does not have a plan for the downtown and that we need a Downtown Master Redevelopment Plan to guide the revitalization of Downtown Hagerstown. While I support fresh opportunities to identify priorities for revitalizing the downtown and updating planning efforts, it would be erroneous to say that the City does not already have a plan for the downtown. The following provides info from our two most recent planning efforts that incorporate recommendations for the downtown (or City Center).

2008 Comprehensive Plan – The City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan has a Downtown Element that incorporates the many excellent suggestions for downtown revitalization that have been formulated over the years in the Downtown Master Plan of 1993, the LDR Downtown Enhancement Plan of 1996, the City's 1997 Comprehensive Plan, the A&E District Plan of 1999, the Community Legacy Plan of 2001, and the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan of 2006. The two principle goals of the Downtown Element are:

1. Reinforce downtown Hagerstown's role as the region's government, economic, institutional and cultural center.
2. Enlarge the City's share of regional retail and tourist revenue by concentrating specialized businesses and cultural amenities in the downtown.

After making a number of analyses and recommendations for enhancement and revitalization, the Downtown Element identified five specific Action Items:

1. Encourage the continued location and expansion of all levels of government and public users in the downtown.
2. Encourage revitalized downtown housing development with a diversity of price ranges.
3. Continue to work with organizations interested in the downtown, including
4. Strengthen downtown's role as a regional tourist destination by implementing the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area recommendations

- for new tourism support facilities, interpretive programs, infrastructure enhancements, and marketing endeavors.
5. Widen sidewalks in appropriate portions of the downtown, including in front of the businesses and restaurants along S. Potomac Street.

Hagerstown Sustainable Community Plan (2012) -- In 2011, the City formed a Work Group of City staff and members of the business community and public service providers to develop a Sustainable Community Plan for Hagerstown. This effort reviewed the recommendations of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and developed more detailed strategies to implement the Comp Plan's goals and to address needs identified by the Work Group. The State approved our plan in early 2012. Over the course of the summer and fall of 2012, City staff met on a regular basis to develop action items to implement the recommended strategies of the Sustainable Community Plan (see attached). The following are recommended specific capital improvement projects and recruitment efforts for the downtown:

1. Recruit businesses seeking new office locations in our region.
2. Relocate government offices to the City Center.
3. Facilitate creation and relocation of service sector, high tech businesses (broadband users).
4. Develop and encourage alternative housing types on upper floors to recruit "urban pioneers" and other "back to the city" migrators. Such housing types include artist live-work space, other types of live-work space, lofts, etc.
5. Enhance existing anchors (Maryland Theatre, BISFA, USMH, etc.) that attract patrons to the downtown.
6. Create new anchors and support facilities (MUSEC, heritage museums, parking deck, etc.).
7. Facilitate location of a small hotel with meeting space to accommodate small regional meetings and conferences.
8. Develop a community center to serve City Center and other nearby residents.
9. Create and facilitate location of amenities to serve City Center residents (grocery store, splash pad, pocket parks, skate park, wifi hot spots, sidewalk enhancements, etc.).
10. Explore opportunities to create green space, such as through removal of sub-standard housing.
11. Target areas for redevelopment to accommodate new construction of a suitable footprint to facilitate recruitment of certain prospects.

To address #11, as time permits, I have been working on an architectural analysis of the City Center and surrounding area and marking a map with potential redevelopment footprints.

Attachment

c: John Lestitian, Department of Community & Economic Development
Jill Estavillo, Economic Development Manager
Andrew Sargent, Downtown Manager
Alex Rohrbaugh, Planner

Make the City Center easier and "safer" to navigate for Business Patrons, Employees and Residents

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Implement Parking Plan recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New wayfinding signage - under development; close to new design. 2. Rate Change - staff exploration. 3. If Parking Kiosks are introduced, explore inclusion of City Center map and parking receipt shopper discount programs. 4. Review business discount program and consider making available no matter how many parkers are involved.
Develop a parking incentive program for City Center residents.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore possible companion program to Downtown Residency Initiative. 2. If meters are added near anchors, consider suitability of expansion of residential meter exemption sticker program to these areas.
Improve design features to allow for natural surveillance of public and private areas.	Organize night tour of E. Franklin and E. Washington Street to determine needs and opportunities in these blocks.
Improve way-finding to orient infrequent visitors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lower existing pedestrian wayfinding signs for better visibility. 2. Explore alternative system for even greater visibility. Study City of Frederick's recently rolled out comprehensive wayfinding system.
Create safe access routes between parking and destinations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exploring extension of the Market Walk to W. Antietam Street. 2. Organize night tour of downtown alleys to determine lighting needs. 3. Assess opportunities for Bikle's Alley model with public/private partnership for lighting wall-packs when no poles exist. 4. Make aesthetic upgrades to A&E Deck pedestrian way to S. Potomac Street.

Implementation Strategy for Hagerstown's 2012 Sustainable Community Plan

Page 2

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Address signs of disorder quickly (e.g., graffiti, broken windows, dog droppings, trash).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trash inspector ensures trash not set-out too early or late. 2. PCAD inspectors enforce property maintenance code. 3. Added 18 mutt-mitt dispensers in downtown area. 4. Organize HPD/SPCA walk to educate people on urban dog ownership etiquette.
Increase implied and/or explicit presence of authority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expanded Police Auxiliary hours. 2. Will add another HPD officer downtown. 3. Will add additional School Resources officer for BISFA and Antietam Academy. 4. Fire Door bays are open and uniforms visible. 5. Once the neighborhood identification map is officially adopted, HPD will assess coordination of boundaries between that map and the HPD reporting districts for patrol officers.
Explore funding opps for bus shelters along County Commuter routes.	Set up a meeting with County Commuter staff to investigate possibilities.
Implement Bicycle Master Plan recommendations for commuter bike routes.	<p>On-going.</p> <p><i>[Outside SC Area - investigate road diet possibilities for Northern Avenue and means to move sidewalk further from traffic.]</i></p>
Continue to fill gaps in city's pedestrian network and ensure that all new development includes sidewalks that connect to surrounding network.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wesel Blvd - paint a bike/pedestrian lane on undeveloped section of road. 2. Marsh Run walkway to connect parks along Memorial Blvd. 3. E. Wilson by Solliday Oil. 4. Reroute pedestrian traffic to front of Police Station on N. Burhans. 5. N. Burhans by TBH. 6. U.S. 40 - Washington & Franklin from Avon to Nottingham <p><i>[Outside SC Area - US40 between West End and Centre at Hagerstown; Broadfording Road between MD58 and Best Buy - sidewalks and lighting will be provided by developer when east side develops.]</i></p>

Implementation Strategy for Hagerstown's 2012 Sustainable Community Plan

Page 3

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Ensure adequacy of capacity of road network in the community to prevent over-loading of the SC area with region's through traffic.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. County's widening plans for Eastern Boulevard. 2. County's plans for Eastern Blvd extended. 3. Bridge rehab on N. And S. Burhans (3 bridges).

Recruit New Businesses and Jobs to the City Center

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Approach businesses seeking new office locations in region and facilitate location in City Center.	Seeking leads and canvassing other communities in the region. Have developed an outreach plan
Facilitate relocation of government offices into City Center.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop relationship with General Services Administration staff from State and Federal government to facilitate relocation efforts. 2. Continue to work with committee exploring potential to relocate BOE to the City Center.
Promote Community to potential investors and new businesses and residents and visitors	Develop marketing and promotion plan that coordinates with other entities and reaches outside our community to other regions.
Increase "economic development knowledge infrastructure" to underpin strategic planning efforts.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inventory of City Center businesses and job counts. 2. Local economic development indicator reports. 3. Demographic reports.
Recruit service sector, high tech businesses that offer higher wages and strengthen City's economic and fiscal base.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider adequacy of fiber to serve new tech-reliant businesses or on-line businesses. 2. Market broadband to private sector. 3. EDC Strategic Plan by Urbanomics 4. EDC study on suppliers for local businesses.
Support training programs to mentor start-up businesses on how to ensure success.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WMBE Training. 2. Continue outreach to WMBE's. 3. Partner with SBDC, SCORE and the Chamber to promote their training programs.

Implementation Strategy for Hagerstown's 2012 Sustainable Community Plan

Page 4

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Revamp and consolidate two existing City revolving loan fund programs for business assistance and building rehabs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upper Floor Renovations RLF on-hold until funds roll back in. 2. Tweaking guidelines for Business RLF to provide more flexibility for rehabs.
Explore new Public-private loan guarantee program in partnership between local gov't and lenders.	Follow-up with local banks.
Explore modifications to PEP program to encourage more investment and business recruitment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modifications to Upper Floor Rent Relief. 2. Create retail incentive.
Support efforts of local educational institutions to provide workforce training to retrain employees of departing or retracting businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HCC does customized training and Western Maryland Consortium provides training. 2. Partner with service providers to promote their training programs.

Upgrade Housing to Attract Residents who will support City Center events and businesses

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Devise zoning regs to allow artist live-work space in City Center and other appropriate districts.	Amendment to LMC
Continue to support endeavors to create wider mix of housing opps in City Center to attract more diverse income groups.	Promotion of PEP incentives.
Assess the need for different types of live-work space and explore mechanisms to fill need.	36-40 N. Potomac Street will be a pilot project.
Assess effective means to reduce residential density in substandard, over-occupied buildings and to improve such properties.	Explore funding sources and/or partnerships with lenders.
Improve quality of housing stock and adapt upper floors for non-traditional housing types.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 36-40 N. Potomac - artist loft housing 2. Exploring possibility for a second project.

Implementation Strategy for Hagerstown's 2012 Sustainable Community Plan

Page 5

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Revise zoning regs to allow for higher density SFR, DUP, and TWN developments in higher density zoning districts.	Included in comprehensive amendments to Land Management Code

Create and Support Efforts that Bring People Downtown for Events and to Patronize Businesses

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Support plans to enhance Maryland Theatre and WC Free Library, and other existing anchors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Maryland Theatre on development of plan for their sustainability. 2. Meet with Library director to determine any unmet needs for the new library. 3. Reach out to all anchors.
Assist with creation of new anchors and support facilities to attract patrons to City Center.	MUSEC and new parking deck.
Add permanent performance stage to University Plaza.	Received POS funding for the project. Plans are ready to submit for permits.
Explore opportunities to develop small hotel with meeting space for regional conferences.	Learn from other efforts in the region to recruit hotels. (e.g., Frederick's current activities, previous efforts by Carlisle and Lancaster).
Assist with efforts to expand or create additional heritage museums in SC area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Doleman Black Heritage Museum - will return to City and County with plan of action for desired location. 2. First Hose Fire Museum - completed renovation; ready to start setting up museum. Work with First Hose about possible grant projects. 3. Civil War History Museum - explore opportunity to partner with an existing museum for a satellite location in Hagerstown.
Support plans to expand BISFA	Meet with Superintendent to determine needs of school and long-range plans for expansion.
Promote available meetings spaces in City Center as venues for small regional meetings and conferences.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVB has created a brochure 2. Put together team to coordinate efforts.

Implementation Strategy for Hagerstown's 2012 Sustainable Community Plan

Page 6

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Develop and support initiatives that bring people to City Center and stimulate economy.	The City has a number of regularly scheduled special events and facilitates other entities' special events as the occasions arise.

Create Amenities to Make Hagerstown Place of Choice to Live by All Income Groups

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Explore opportunities to develop pocket parks throughout the SC area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Margaret Greenawalt Park - completed by end of 2012. 2. Memorial Park 3. Explore park options on E. Franklin Street.
Add new play equipment in under-served areas of the SC area: City Center, West End, South End.	Develop Parks Master Plan
Explore opportunities to create a dog park somewhere in the city.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assemble taskforce and study possibilities for dog park. 2. Implement recommendations of taskforce for dog park.
Explore creation of a "rail trail" or "rail by trail" along little used rail lines in the SC area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore acquisition of "abandoned" stretch of RR between Wilson and Frederick for "rail trail." 2. Consider safety factors and willingness of CSX or other carriers to contemplate idea of "rail by trail."
Explore replacement of Winter Street elementary school with n'hood park.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Park Concept Plan. 2. Consider community center option for old school building. 3. Explore implementation options.
Explore opportunities for Community Center in City Center.	Consider opportunities in MUSEC project, as well as other potential properties in the downtown area.
Replace/upgrade aging elementary schools to better serve Hagerstown.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replace Bester Street ES. 2. Replace Winter Street ES.

Implementation Strategy for Hagerstown's 2012 Sustainable Community Plan

Page 7

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Assess need for green space to serve SC area and consider removal of sub-standard housing and replacement with green space.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore how City of Baltimore was able to demolish areas in East Baltimore near Hopkins. 2. Develop plan for SC area.
Create and recruit features to attract target populations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate possibility of a small downtown Wal*Mart (their pilot program). 2. Investigate place appropriate for a downtown "splash pad." 3. Investigate possibility of skate park in City Center. 4. Add permanent seating at City Park Bandshell. 5. Provide Wireless Hot Spots in Public Open Spaces
Continue bricking and landscaping sidewalks in A&E District.	Monitor grant opportunities to expand this activity in priority areas.
Assist with relocation of Antietam Fire Company to new location in North End.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Site plan and building permits approved for new location on Potomac Avenue. 2. Renovations underway.
Assist with plans to replace/upgrade Municipal Stadium.	If MUSEC project is a go, explore re-use options for the old stadium.
Explore opportunities for stormwater retrofits as funding allows	Received a grant to evaluate stormwater runoff and degraded stream channels

Recruit Residents with More Discretionary Spending Power

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Promote and market SC area to "urban pioneers" and other "back to the city" migrators (e.g., young people, households without children, empty nesters, etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement Sage Report's recommendations for A&E District marketing. 2. Implement best strategies from Live-Baltimore and other models. 3. Develop Youth Vision Team to provide insights and ideas to City staff.

Implementation Strategy for Hagerstown's 2012 Sustainable Community Plan

Page 8

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Create target areas of strong architectural character for home-owner, tenant and investor recruitment programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek local ideas from LiveBaltimore model. 2. Planning and HPD collaborate on "neighborhood identification map" for promotion and planning purposes. 3. Provide realtor seminars and open houses to promote positive features of neighborhoods.

Turn Blighted Conditions into Opportunities for Economic Development

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Assist with planning efforts for redevelopment of former hospital lands.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meritus' consultant is developing market and feasibility study of possible redevelopment scenarios. 2. Schedule presentation with M&CC to determine their thoughts on redevelopment of the properties. 3. Learn how Carlisle, PA redeveloped their old hospital site.
Intercede with blighted properties to facilitate re-use by new businesses and/or residents that support goals for City Center.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rehab 36-40 N. Potomac into artist loft housing and new gallery space - facade is nearly done; upper floor work will be finished by Spring 2013; gallery renovation will be finished in Summer 2013. 2. Rehab 60 W. Washington – rear space for USMH ready in October; small business center with incubator space will be ready in Summer 2013. 3. Acquire and rehab Third Building (still confidential) 4. Examine ownership of blighted properties and develop techniques to encourage transfer. 5. Develop revitalization plan for first block of E. Franklin Street.
Target areas of SC area for redevelopment and facilitate planning efforts and investor recruitment.	Develop redevelopment plan for Vacant and Under-Utilized Lands/Bldgs Map

Implementation Strategy for Hagerstown's 2012 Sustainable Community Plan

Page 9

Plan Recommendation	Action Items
Update the City's Downtown Sign and Facade Grant Program and consider increasing grant maximums.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="792 327 1406 394">1. Increase facade grant maximum from \$1,000 to \$5,000.<li data-bbox="792 401 1382 468">2. Create new Facade Program for Mixed-use Buildings in City Center.

Department of Community and Economic Development

November 14, 2012