

Community's City Center Plan

2016 – Year End Report

ACTIONS COMPLETED:

Two major partnership efforts support multiple catalyst projects:

1. **1 Gigabit Downtown** - created innovative public/private partnership with Antietam Cable to create a 1 Gigabit Downtown which will support business retention, expansion and attraction. This initiative is supportive of several of the Catalyst Projects.
2. **The Urban Improvement Project** – The City is working in partnership with Washington County, the Board of Education/Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, the Maryland Theatre, the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown (USMH), other community partners and private developers on the \$30-\$37 million Downtown Improvement Project. The project includes the expansion and renovation of the Maryland Theatre (\$11M), expansion of an educational complex to support Washington County Public Schools and USMH (\$14M for BISFA expansion), and an outdoor plaza and bridge connection (\$3M). In December 2016, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan pledged \$7 million towards this project over 5 years. This initiative is supportive of several of the Catalyst Projects.

Catalyst Project #1 – Office Development and Recruitment:

GOALS: To position downtown to compete for new office development using portions of Central Parking Lot to build 154,000 sf across three buildings.

1. **Class A Office Development on Central Parking Lot** - The City and Bowman Development are in the exploratory phase on the Class A Office Building project. The City applied to the Maryland Strategic Demolition Fund program on July 15, 2016 for grant assistance for the Pre-Development Phase of the project. The project was not awarded.

Catalyst Project #2 – Maryland Theatre Expansion Project:

GOALS: Expand and improve the facility, and grow from 150 to 225 performance days per year, increasing the audience by 60,000 annually.

1. **Back of the House Upgrades** – Theatre was awarded \$175,000 in State Bond Bill funding and it was matched with local Hotel Tax Funding. Dressing rooms remodeling is complete; updated stage lighting is complete; and completed modification to artist entry. Many electrical improvements completed throughout the facility. Two new water heaters were installed. Several safety updates to backstage rigging are completed. More rigging work will occur in January. The fire curtain was replaced. A new fire alarm system is in the process of being installed and expected to be completed in January. (Maryland Theatre)

2. **Expansion of Facility** – Theatre Board contracted with Grimm & Parker Architects to develop concepts and programming for the facility expansion project. The Theatre Board completed the programming phase and initial cost estimating for the expansion. The Theatre Board is working towards a design contract for a multi-phase expansion at the time of this presentation. Phases may include all sides of the existing theatre property. Connectivity and shared spaces are being considered between the theatre and adjoining buildings. (Maryland Theatre)
3. **Support for Expansion of Facility** – the Washington County Board of Commissioners and the Mayor and City Council of Hagerstown both approved providing \$500,000 by each entity towards the architectural services for the expansion of the theatre facility.

Catalyst Project #3 – USMH Expansion Support:

GOALS: Support USMH growth from 500 to 750 students through the addition of new program offerings, and capture student housing opportunities with three (3) upper-floor renovation projects. The three (3) upper-floor renovation projects are planned to be implemented separately, in sequence to each other and throughout the 10 year plan.

1. **USMH Programming Expansion** – USMH is continuing work on development of three new programs: Hospitality Management, Nurse Practitioners, and Physician’s Assistant. The B.S. in Hospitality Management and Tourism through UMES is scheduled to begin at USMH with the Fall 2017 semester. The interior demolition at 59 W. Washington Street is complete and agreements are being finalized for renovation of the BB&T Building for the future Hospitality Management space. The intended new program offerings at USMH are outlined in the following chart:

| Date | Program | Students per year over 2 years | Full Enrollment | Date | Anticipated Housing Demand |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Fall 2017 | BS in Hospitality Management and Tourism from UMEC | 15-18 | 30 | Fall 2017 | 6-7 units (12-14 students) |
| Fall 2018 - tentative | MS in Nurse Practitioner from FSU | 20 | 40 | Fall 2019 | 6-7 units (additional) |
| Fall 2019 - tentative | MS in Physician's Assistant from UMB and FSU | 35 | 70 | Spring 2021 | 6-7 units (additional) |

2. **Student Housing** – The first student housing project at Patterson Hall was completed in 2015 and the apartments are fully leased with eight students. The City was awarded \$200,000 in Community Legacy grant funds in late 2016 to assist with development of a second Student Housing project in 2017. City staff will work on the Request for Proposals for the developer partner for the second phase of the project for Mayor and City Council review in early 2017.

Catalyst Project #4 – Hotel/Conference Center and Heritage Center/Commemorative Park:

GOALS: Construct 200-room “Upper Upscale” hotel (ie: Sheraton, Wyndham, Hilton). Programmed with adjacent 20,000 square-foot conference center. Establish Civil War Heritage Center and Commemorative Park.

1. Exploratory conversations to date.
2. Project is much more long-term in nature.

Catalyst Project #5 – Linking City Park/The Washington County Museum of Fine Arts and A&E District with Trail and New Housing:

GOALS: Construct multi-use trail linking City Park/WCMFA with the Arts & Entertainment District, and add 31 new townhomes along trail and rehab buildings to create 85 loft apartments (in 10 years).

Hagerstown Cultural Trail

Funding and Plan Development

- Public input – Cochran Studio held a public input session for the Art Master Plan on January 11, 2016.
- Design – field surveys and design are complete.
- Property acquisition – acquisition of four donated land actions all complete through a combination of easements, quit claims and fee simple transfer.
- Branding and Signs – trail logo design complete, finalized agreement with Brookgreen Gardens for use of the Diana Image.
- Art along the Trail – Public Art Master Plan presented to the Mayor and City Council by William and Teresa Cochran on February 16, 2016 and accepted by Mayor and City Council on February 23rd. Funding to implement Phase I of the plan approved by Mayor and City Council on February 23rd.
- Construction Contract – in-house construction drawings complete; work bid; contract for construction awarded on February 23rd.

Trail Construction

- Construction of Phase I of the trail began in April 2016 and by November was substantially complete. The project was completed within budget, allowing addition of irrigation in Herald Mail park and the Housing Authority park.
- Over 60 boulders were harvested from the Edgemont Reservoir watershed and installed along the trail.
- Decorative lights have been installed and energized.
- Decorative crosswalks and pedestrian detection/beacon systems are installed.
- Security cameras were installed in November and are operational.
- Trash cans, a couple of benches, and dog mitt stations are ordered.
- Utilizing a grant from the Maryland Heritage Area Authority, entrance signs were being installed in December and the wayfinding signs will be installed this spring.

- Ordered granite insets for installation in early spring.
- This spring, the City will fabricate shade structures and install interactive history displays, etc.
- CSX Railroad sent us a letter stating that we cannot modify the sidewalk in their right-of-way UNTIL the State Highway crossing upgrade is completed in 2017.
- Staff is suggesting a ribbon cutting for the Trail on Saturday, June 10, 2017.

Art Installation

- Base painting for Mural of Unusual Size is completed. The contract was awarded to the muralist, Hense, and his design work is underway. City received an easement from the property owner for use of the building. The mural will be painted in the spring. The City prepared a \$5,000 public art grant application to assist with the mural and the Washington County Arts Council submitted it for the project to the Maryland State Arts Council.
- Engaged architect to design shade structures. Obtained Maryland State Arts Council grant to assist with wind screens and shade screens.
- Planning for “call for local artists” for the “Faces of Hagerstown”, microart, and “natural play items”. Teresa Cochran described the two-step review process by the jury. The calls will be released January 3.
- The Mayor and City Council approved a license agreement with Chic’s restaurant for the photo murals project along the wall on Lee Street.
- Studying possible donation of art from Chevy Chase property owner.
- Art Selection Committee has held monthly meetings to discuss all art-related issues.

Catalyst Project #6 – Expanded Downtown Arts/Events Programming:

GOALS: Leverage resources to produce more frequent events and build upon atmosphere created by popular downtown events.

Events

- Total of 119 individual event days occurred in 2016 including the introduction of three new events/festivals that had over 1,000 attendees.
- Wind Down Fridays – Six events held from May to October in 2016.
- Second Saturday series – In February 2016, Main Street Hagerstown was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the State of Maryland to support the Second Saturday Series. The series kicked off on August 13th in conjunction with the Washington County Free Library’s Comic Con event. Subsequent themes included End of Summer Fest in September, Fall Festival in October, Veterans Celebration in November with businesses offering specials and discounts during the day, and a Holiday Celebration in December. Future themed Second Saturdays include a January New Year and Frozen in February.
- Downtown Summer Slide Festival – an expanded Downtown Summer Slide Festival occurred in 2016 in conjunction with Porch Fest on S. Prospect Street and Second Saturday.

- Additional Pop Up Shop events occurred November 18th, 19th and 26th both in the City Center and at the City Farmers' Market.
- The annual New Year's Eve Donut Drop is planned for December 31, 2016.
- Event Guidelines – staff are finalizing new Event Guidelines to serve as a resource to event organizers. This will create more event opportunities while more efficiently using staff time and the resources the City can offer. Anticipate presentation to Mayor and City Council in early 2017.

Main Street Projects

- *Main Street Work Groups* – Currently more than 50 volunteers are supporting Main Street Hagerstown through five (5) Work Groups on projects and initiatives intended to attract and retain businesses, investors, and property owners.
 - The Organization Work Group has developed a web site to complement the City's and to help visitors, residents, and business owners quickly find information about the downtown, produced e-newsletters distributed to over 600 subscribers, developed volunteer and sponsorship forms, and began fundraising to support Main Street projects.
 - The Design Work Group developed more window scrims for vacant storefronts, is planning a Main Street Logo sign for the side of 53-55 N. Potomac Street, and is working long-range on a set of design guidelines for continuity in the downtown such as storefront signage, sidewalk displays, and approved paint schemes to be developed into a guidebook for the Main Street area.
 - The Clean, Safe and Green Work Group worked on ways to beautify and clean up city blocks by working with City Engineering staff to bring combined recycling/trash containers to the Main Street area, working with City Code staff to find ways for residents to more easily store their recycling and trash containers out of sight, and organizing a street cleanup and fall planting day along East Franklin Street. Additionally, Clean Safe and Green hosted a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design workshop and is looking to pursue seating and updated lighting in the Public Square area.
 - The Promotions Work Group created a brochure and business cards and re-established Second Saturdays monthly event series. Promotions also developed a marketing strategy that will be used in promoting the work of Main Street and has been building a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
 - The Business Relations Work Group held focus group meetings of downtown business owners to gather and synthesize information to improve and enhance the downtown business environment, established an ambassadorial committee to welcome new businesses to the Main Street area, worked in conjunction with Economic Development staff to refresh the database of businesses for Main Street area, conducted Property Investor Surveys and Contractor Code Surveys, and is working with City staff to brand and promote the 1GB internet fiber opportunity in the downtown as a business recruitment marketing strategy.
- *Façade Grant Program* – The City was awarded a \$25,000 Community Legacy grant in late 2016 to replenish the Façade Grant Program for Commercial and Mixed-use Buildings in the Main Street area. (City and the State)

- *Engine Room Art Space* – Open Thursday through Sunday with fresh exhibits opening regularly. Continues to grow and flourish with new and alternative exhibits. Gallery Coordinator is creating momentum through the use of exhibit space and creating opportunities for the community to interact with the art themselves. (City)

Catalyst Project #7 – Expanded Operations of the City Farmers’ Market:

GOALS: Expand operations from 7 to 35 hours per week. Implement private management approach. Make necessary capital improvements. Re-brand. Recruit additional tenants.

1. **Private Management Approach** – One proposal submitted by the deadline in the Request for Proposals of January 15, 2016; proposal was reviewed and staff determined it did not adequately address the submittal requirements. Staff held numerous meetings with individuals and companies with interest and ideas for the Farmers’ Market. Staff are continuing to work on drafting a modified RFP and re-posting the RFP for private management of the Farmers’ Market with modification based on Mayor and City Council feedback in August. Modifying the RFP to receive proposals on a rolling basis until a viable private operator is identified is one possible option. (City)
2. **Market Staff** – A part-time market assistant was hired in July. There have been 6 new vendors since August bringing the count of vendors from 11 to 17 (20% increase). (City)
3. **Events at the Market** – Pop Up Shop events were held in the market on November 19th and 26th. In prep for the Pop Up Shop events, the Downtown Movement is painted the booths, added signage, and prepared promotions. Seven Pop Up vendors remained in the market for Saturdays in December. (Downtown Movement and City)
4. **Partnerships** – Staff are engaged in collaborative meetings with the County to discuss multi-organization assistance with the market. (City and County)

Catalyst Project #8 – Expanded and Targeted Home-Ownership Support:

GOALS: Market home ownership incentives and support Neighborhood 1st programs. Establish annual rental licensing inspections, and continue excessive nuisance enforcement programs.

1. **Rental Registration Program** – annual exterior inspections to provide additional support to protect neighborhoods. Amendments adopted by the Mayor and City Council on November 22nd to make a couple of tweaks to the program to address a concern raised by a local realtor and to address a loophole to the process in the review of Section 8 units. (City)
2. **Vacant Structures Program** – on first year of program, provided update to Mayor and City Council on June 14, 2016. 1,034 vacant structures had been identified and 474 had active licenses in the program and 173 were pending. 387 identified structures were inactive either because were sold, had active building permit, registered in the Rental Licensing program, or were semi-occupied. Of the properties that became inactive due to sale, 70% are owner-occupied homes and 30% became rental properties. Proposed code amendments to enhance the program were approved on October 25th providing more flexibility for owners attempting to sell non-blighted structures, for owners attempting to

sell or lease renovated structures, and for new owners of blighted structures. Inspections of licensed vacant structures are ongoing to ensure protection of our neighborhoods and first responders from exterior blight and unsafe interior conditions. (City)

3. **Home-Ownership Program** – The City was awarded a \$150,000 Community Legacy grant in FY 2016 to assist with our acquisition/renovation efforts to create home-ownership opportunities. One of the two proposals for home-ownership submitted under the Competitive Negotiated Sales process for the City-owned 278 S. Prospect Street was selected and the property has been resold and is now owner-occupied. Architectural work is underway for creation of two condo units for home-ownership at City-owned 261 S. Prospect Street; rehabilitation expected to start in first quarter of 2017. Renovations at City-owned 64 E. Franklin Street are now complete and the property will be positioned for sale for home-ownership. Assessment ongoing of other opportunities for this program in the three target neighborhoods. (City and State)
4. **City Center Residency Initiative** – seven homes purchased with down payment assistance and 18 residents renting with rental payment assistance since December 2013. Program funding has been expended. The City was awarded a \$50,000 Community Legacy grant in late 2017 to replenish the Down Payment Assistance program. (City and State)