

City of Hastings
d o w n t o w n
REVITALIZATION
p l a n

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Field Day Development
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“... to establish Downtown Hastings as a regional urban mixed-use center that provides goods and services, as well as culture and living opportunities.”

- City of Hastings

introduction

project overview

The City of Hastings retained the services of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture to facilitate the creation of a Downtown Revitalization Plan.

This study is a part one of a two-phase process funded by a state-administered Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Phase I, planning, establishes short and long-term goals and objectives for future downtown development, along with prioritizing these goals with regard to impact and cost. The Downtown Revitalization Plan can then be used to guide development as well as provide recommendations for the use of Phase II CDBG Funds.

Phase II, implementation, will provide Downtown Hastings with funding to pursue the goals and recommendations of this study. These funds, which are to be matched by the community, can be used in a number of applications.

study objectives

- Analyze the existing downtown area with regard to population, function, infrastructure, capacity, and barriers to development.
- Review previous studies and planning documents.
- Identify opportunities for increased commercial and retail development, occupancy and investment.
- Determine strategies for increasing downtown housing.
- Identify tourism, marketing, cultural and entertainment opportunities.
- Identify additional funding strategies for renovation of existing buildings along with incentives for occupancy.
- Create realistic recommendations that will facilitate future development.

Downtowns are . . .

- *A reflection of the community's heritage*
- *A significant contributor to a community's tax base*
- *The ideal location for independent businesses*
- *Tourist attractions*
- *Walkable*
- *Mixed-use*

project team

In addition to Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, the consultant team included Marvin Planning Consultants, Field Day Development and Olsson Associates.

process

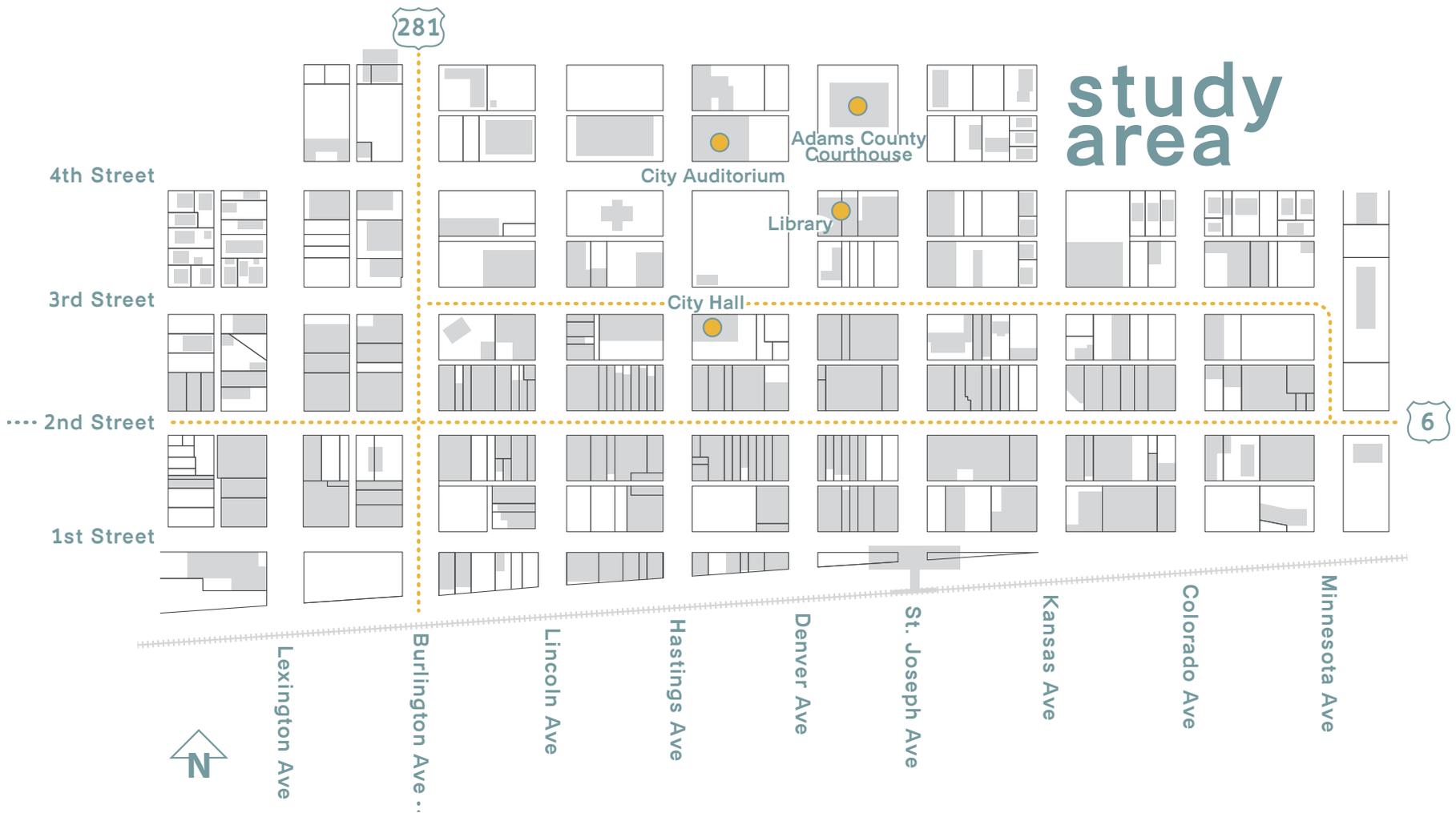
This study was developed as a collaborative effort between Alley Poyner Macchietto, our consulting team, and Hastings stakeholders, including the City of Hastings, the Downtown Business Improvement District, the Community Redevelopment Authority, the Downtown Center Association, the Hastings Economic Development Corporation, the Adams County Convention and Visitors Bureau, downtown business owners, downtown residents, and the citizens of Hastings.

In addition to numerous steering committee meetings, walking tours of the downtown, and individual conversations with stakeholders, four public outreach/visioning workshops were held on November 7th and 8th, 2012.

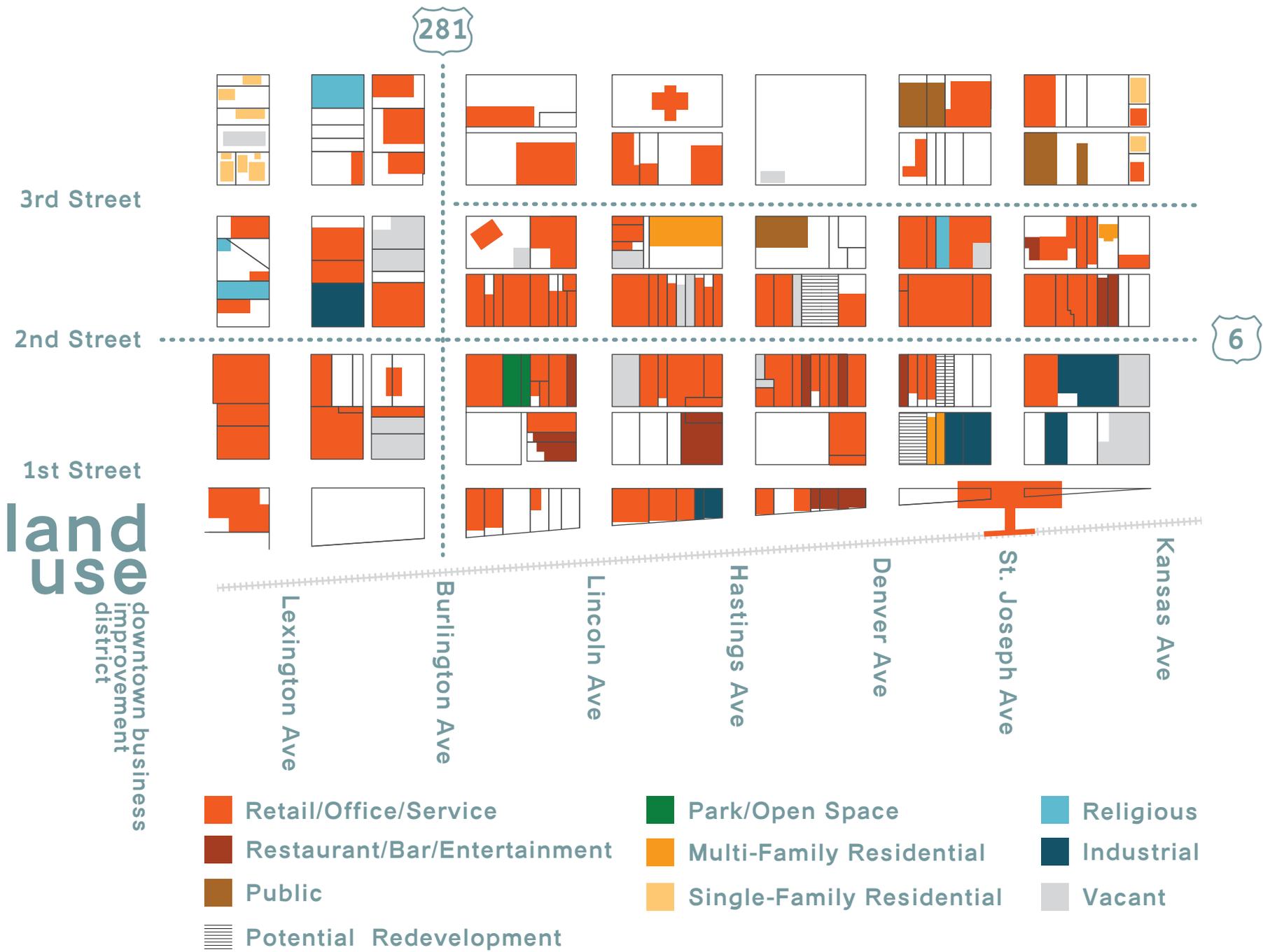
study area and summary

Downtown is the City of Hastings's historic, cultural and civic core. As with most cities of Hastings's size, certain commercial and social functions have, over recent decades, shifted from the city's center to outer developments, leading to the need to initiate revitalization efforts. The downtown area has already seen significant redevelopment, including renovated upper-level housing and main floor retail space, and the development of new cultural institutions and social attractions. This study will focus on identifying the next steps for an even more vital, attractive and functional downtown.

study area



context



history and setting

The City of Hastings has long been tied to the transportation routes that pass through its boundaries. It was established at the point where two railroads crossed--the St. Joseph and Denver City Railroad intersected the already existing Burlington line. Reminders of this piece of history can still be seen today in the street names within the downtown district and heard as trains pass through downtown.

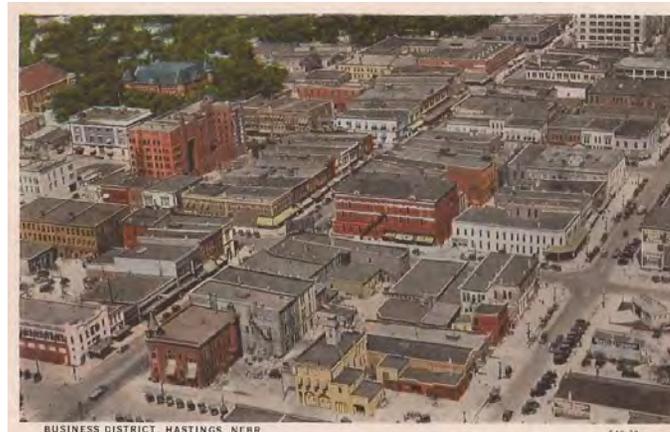
Downtown Hastings is also situated at the intersection of Highways Six and 281. Originally the OLD (Omaha-Lincoln-Denver) Highway and later the DLD (Detroit-Lincoln-Denver) Highway, Highway Six passed directly through the downtown corridor. However, in the mid-1900s the highway was rerouted to the south, and while a business spur was created to continue along 2nd Street, it hurt downtown businesses.

Hastings experienced a number of “boom and bust” periods that can be seen in the downtown structures. Prior to 1879 there were approximately 150 wooden buildings downtown. It was “. . . a jumble of wooden buildings of all sizes and styles crammed together. Shops were

filled with goods, sometimes spilling out into the streets. Growth was so rapid that clerks were selling goods in the front of a building while carpenters were still pounding away on the rear.”

That all changed in 1879 with a fire that destroyed 33 buildings and their contents. After the fire the city passed an ordinance requiring all buildings to be made of fire-resistant materials, and the city was rebuilt between 1880 and 1890. Many of the remaining historic masonry buildings are from this time period.

During the latter half of the 20th century a new mall along with big box developments on



*Historic Downtown Hastings,
Courtesy of Hastings
Community Redevelopment
Authority*

the 281 corridor took many businesses and their customers out of downtown. Businesses affected by the decline closed, leaving vacant structures; others maintained the first-level stores and businesses but boarded up the upper stories.

Today, due to active and engaged downtown organizations and citizens, Downtown Hastings is ahead of the curve on redevelopment, having already renovated a large number of buildings downtown to include both retail on the main floors and housing in the upper stories. A large part of this success lies in the willingness of organizations and individuals to buy properties when they become available and hold them until finding an interested and suitable developer. This approach prevents buildings from cycling through owners who under utilize and may not maintain the building while creating a small revolving inventory of building stock that is available for redevelopment.

Additional improvements including landscaping, art installations, and community spaces and events add to the excitement surrounding downtown. Continued redevelopment will move the district further on its path to becoming a

prime location for businesses and a regional cultural center.

current occupancy and use

As noted, many buildings in Downtown Hastings have been renovated to maximize the use of both their main floors for retail and service uses and the upper levels for housing. Reviewing the land use maps on the previous page, most buildings are occupied, at least on the main floor. Hence, the focus for the continued development of the downtown area will be to increase the use of the upper levels of existing buildings and to create an increase in the activity associated with the main floor businesses and occupants.

While many buildings may be occupied, they may not be occupied by businesses or services that complement the goals of the downtown district. For example, if a current building is being used as storage space, it is not maximizing its contribution to the district. If it were a restaurant or shop instead it would increase the value of the property while activating the downtown environment.

building stock condition

Constructed of masonry during the late 1800's and early 1900's, the historic building stock of Downtown Hastings is generally sound. Interspersed among the older historic buildings are a few relatively modern commercial buildings. However, the older building stock, most of which is within the range of 100 years old, is the critical mass that give the downtown district its character and unique qualities.

That said, during the latter half of the last century, many of the buildings were given facelifts, applying more modern building materials or painting over the historic facades. These renovations tended to coincide with the decreased use of the second and third stories of the buildings. The lack of use and maintenance has caused many of these spaces to deteriorate significantly.

Most of the main floor spaces have remained in relatively consistent use throughout the buildings' life cycles. However, there are a number of spaces that have sat vacant, been used for storage, or that have simply not been maintained.

The existing masonry buildings have received varying degrees of upkeep and maintenance. Some, recently renovated or maintained throughout the years, are in good quality. Others require a varying amount of repair including tuckpointing of mortar joints, painting of architectural details, and the replacement or repair of windows.

As a whole, Downtown Hastings has already seen significant redevelopment of its existing building stock. Within the last five years numerous buildings have been renovated, adding housing and updated retail space to the downtown district as well as improving the overall street quality through facade improvements. In the core of downtown, most buildings are of a scale and quality that they can be renovated without excessive costs outside of the typical range for buildings of this age.

The larger challenges lie in the east end of the downtown corridor. As you travel east on 2nd Street, the building stock evolves from primarily two-story retail-oriented buildings to larger and more use-intensive industrial buildings. These buildings, including a historic brewery and other manufacturing-related structures, present

a much larger challenge for redevelopment because of their size and the significant renovations that would be required to both the structures themselves and their electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems.

the continued need to revitalize

The following text was taken from *What Happened to America's Main Street?*, published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program.

“Before World War II, Main Street was the community’s primary commercial hub. Downtown buildings usually had several tenants, typically a ground floor retailer and, frequently, several upper floor offices or apartments; together, these tenants provided enough rent for property owners to keep their buildings in good condition. The presence of the post office, library, banks and local government offices added to the steady flow of people downtown. Not only was Main Street the center of the community’s commercial life, it

was also an important part of its social life; people thronged the streets on Saturday nights to meet friends, see a movie and window shop.

In the past 40 years, America’s downtowns have changed drastically. The creation of the interstate highway system and subsequent growth of suburban communities transformed the ways in which Americans live, work and spend leisure time. With improved transportation routes, people found it easier to travel longer distances to work or shop. Roads that once connected outlying towns and neighborhoods to downtown now carried residents to larger cities with shopping strips and regional malls.

Throughout the nation, in town after town, the story repeated itself. Downtown businesses closed or moved to the mall or larger cities, shoppers dwindled, property values and sales tax revenues dropped. In many communities downtown merchants and property owners, attempted to modernize by covering

traditional building fronts with aluminum slipcovers. People forgot how important their downtown and its historic commercial buildings were in reflecting their community's unique heritage."

The challenges downtowns face do not outweigh the importance these districts have in their community. They continue to serve as the civic, social and entertainment hub of the community. Today's downtowns are important because they are:

- A reflection of the community's heritage
- A significant portion of the community's tax base because they retain property values
- An ideal location for independent businesses
- The historic core of the community
- A major tourist attraction
- Walkable and offer convenient shopping

Downtown Hastings exhibits each of the six characteristics mentioned above or has the potential for those characteristics. In addition, it is easily accessible from within Hastings and the surrounding region via its well-traversed highways. Despite some building modifications,

the downtown retains its historic character and continues to serve as the center of civic and government functions. Maintaining and continuing to improve on those downtown qualities can result in long-term economic competitiveness for attracting and expanding market opportunities.

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community vision

The City of Hastings Comprehensive Development Plan, adopted in 2009, states:

“Imagine Hastings . . .

A progressive, diverse community rooted in hometown values and civic pride that maintains an enhanced quality of life through special places, cultural offerings and a balanced economy.”

While the above was written for Hastings as a whole, Downtown Hastings reflects the same core attributes, and has the potential to serve as the cultural and economic heart of the city. Downtown can provide unique spaces and services for a broad spectrum of Hastings’ population; the key is finding a way to further fulfill the neighborhood’s potential and then publicize this great asset to the greater community and region. The development plan continues:

“We see a healthy, vibrant downtown with active streets, sidewalks and storefronts, and well-maintained, quality buildings as the . . . social, cultural and business center of the community . . . This is the Downtown Hastings that we desire.”

short and long-term goals

- Bring additional retail and hospitality oriented businesses to downtown.
- Increase the number of upper-level housing units and the residential population of downtown as a whole.
- Maximize the potential of the existing building stock by pairing buildings with appropriate occupants that increase the vitality of the district.
- Apply strategic improvements to the public realm which will help increase the downtown district’s appeal to residents, businesses, customers, and local and regional visitors.
- Create or improve existing public spaces and policies to increase the number of public events held downtown.
- Modify zoning and building codes to promote the overall goals of downtown redevelopment and ensure the physical qualities of the district are maintained and enhanced.
- Promote the downtown as a destination for specialty retail, cultural events, and

entertainment and hospitality options within Hastings and the surrounding region.

- Provide additional tools and resources for potential downtown developers along with existing development, tourism, and cultural organizations.
- Increase the use of the downtown district after business hours by promoting and attracting more restaurants, lounges, and entertainment venues.

The key to a successful redevelopment is to focus on a range of goals, both short and long-term, and then analyze their impact and priority. Short-term, medium-impact improvements like signage and landscaping can go a long way to improve public perceptions of the downtown area and generate interest, and hence may be of high-priority. Projects of this nature should then be paired with long-term, high-impact projects like building renovations and policy implementation that increase the residential population, provide additional commercial space and encourage further redevelopment.

recommendations from previous studies

- *2006 Hastings, Nebraska Housing Study - 2016*
- *2007 Consumer Perceptions & Behavior Related to Retail Activity in Hastings, Nebraska*
- *2009 City of Hastings Comprehensive Development Plan*

Following is a compilation of the recommendations from each of the previous studies listed above. Actions recommended by the railroad quiet zone study and the one-way street study will be covered later in this report.

housing

- Inform community, both homeowners and developers, of available housing
- Educate housing developers on financing options
- Maintain available future housing sites, and quality/safety of existing housing

- Develop new and renovated housing options for specific demographics currently lacking in options, such as housing for elderly & disabled and various income levels. Include downtown housing options for these demographics.
- Encourage private investment and development that builds on the public infrastructure and investments made in Downtown.
- Maintain the urban form and character of development in the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

strengthen downtown business

- Increase variety in downtown businesses, both retail and non-retail
- Develop niche strategy – obtain new unique businesses, promote those already there
- Encourage relationships between businesses, including non-retail
- Promote Hastings' unique downtown experience throughout the region
- Continue assessments of strategies to assure positive progress is being made
- Encourage the investment and revitalization of neighborhoods surrounding Downtown

community needs and capacity: housing

The Hastings Downtown Housing analysis is part of a larger project being undertaken by the Hastings Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) and the City. The intent is to examine the potential demand and to evaluate the existing housing downtown with other areas within the Midwest.

Housing Rental Rates and other Characteristics

The research examined downtown units in other communities as well as Hastings. The outcome includes a number of positive findings for Hastings. The research also includes specific data from the US Census Bureau on Hastings as a whole and specific areas around downtown.

The research focused on housing rents for market-rate housing in both upper level and redeveloped high-rise structures. Market-rate, for purposes of this study, is any unit constructed without specific funding sources requiring all or some unit rents to be controlled by income levels. The research did not include subsidized and condominium style housing due to large discrepancies in the condominium market

TABLE 1: COMMUNITY COMPARISONS

	Hastings	Grand Island	Lincoln	Omaha	Davenport
Average Square feet (Downtown)	778	916	843	1,045	810
Average Rent (Downtown)	\$794	\$558	\$877	\$1,154	\$831
Rent/Square foot (Downtown)	\$1.02	\$0.61	\$1.04	\$1.10	\$1.03
Median Contract Rent (Community-wide)*	\$603	\$612	\$689	\$735	\$644
Difference in Downtown Rent vs. Median Contract Rent	+\$175	-\$54	+\$188	+\$419	+\$187.25
Percentage difference over Community	131.7%	91.2%	127.3%	157%	129%
Rental Occupancy Rates (community-wide)*	93.1%	98.5%	93.2%	91.3%	92.9%
Average Population size - Rental Occupied (community-wide)*	2.05	2.29	2.12	2.19	2.08
Mean travel time to work* (min.)	13.6	14.2	17.4	17.8	16.9
Median Household Income 2011*	\$42,342	\$44,638	\$48,203	\$45,115	\$42,475

Source: *US Census American Community Survey 2007-2011

as well as variable rent controls on subsidized units.

Table 1 is a summary of the information collected from the five communities. The table compares Hastings, both downtown and community, with the other four communities.

The table indicates Hastings is on the lower end of the average square feet per unit; Hastings' downtown rentals are slightly less than three of the downtowns', averaging \$794 per unit, or \$1.02 per square foot.

Table 1 also compares the median household incomes for each community. Hastings has the lowest median household income of the five communities in the comparison. In addition, it has one of the highest occupancy rates.

Table 1 shows the average rent in each downtown area with the corresponding median contract rent for the community. The results in every one of the downtowns--except Grand Island--indicate the average rent in downtown is at a premium compared to the community at large. The average rent in downtown Hastings compares well with Lincoln, Omaha and Davenport in nearly all of the categories.

Rental Rates Conclusion

Comparing the five communities, Hastings' average rent per square foot is in line with Omaha, Lincoln and Davenport, Iowa. Based upon these findings, the recommendations for rental properties in downtown Hastings are:

- Maintain the current rent structure as occupancy levels are high.
- Continually evaluate and increase rent to meet the increasing costs of maintenance.

TABLE 2: HASTINGS CENSUS DATA IN PROXIMITY TO DOWNTOWN HASTINGS

	2012
Population	
Downtown Study Area	147
Within ¼ mile	295
Within ½ mile	2,213
Within ¾ mile	6,834
Within 5 miles	26,402
With 25 miles	95,091
Median Age	
Downtown Study Area	36.4
Within ¼ mile	33.8
Within ½ mile	34.4
Within ¾ mile	34.9
Within 5 miles	37.2
With 25 miles	36.8

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Data compiled by Olsson Associates using ESRI Business Analyst

TABLE 3: CITY-WIDE NEED FOR RENTAL UNITS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Population and Projections	24,907	24,982	25,057	25,132	25,207	25,283	25,359	25,435	25,511	25,588	25,664	757
Rental Population (est) 36.2% Renter Occupied	9,016	9,043	9,071	9,098	9,125	9,152	9,180	9,207	9,235	9,263	9,291	274
New Renters		27	27	27	27	27	27	28	28	28	28	274
Average Household Size	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06
Average Annual Need		13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	133
Total Renter Occupied Units	3,658	3,671	3,684	3,698	3,711	3,724	3,737	3,751	3,764	3,778	3,791	3,791
Rental Occupancy Rates	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%	93.10%
Vacant Units	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	262

Source: MPC and US Census 2010

Downtown Population and Household Characteristics

The success of residential property in downtown areas is dependent upon the population base of the area. The following section will evaluate the existing population base of the downtown area, the immediately-adjacent area, the community at large, and the surrounding region.

Table 2 examines the population base around downtown Hastings as well as the median age within these areas. The table indicates there are 147 people living within the study area, and 295 people living within a ¼ mile of the

intersection of 2nd and Hastings Avenue; the Median of these individuals is 33.8 years of age. The population and median age continue to increase with each individual ring. The 5-mile ring represents the entire population of Hastings plus approximately 1,000 more people.

The population within the 25-mile radius is much higher due to its intersection with the corporate limits of Grand Island to the north. It is not likely that downtown Hastings’ residential market receives a lot of benefit from the northern portion of the 25-mile radius as Grand Island is a larger, regionally-prominent retail and housing market.

Hastings Downtown Population Base

Housing and retail markets projections depend upon a variety of population characteristics. The data in Table 2 examines population, housing, and household income within the study area, as well as ¼ mile-, ½ mile-, ¾ mile-, 5 mile- and 25 mile- radii of the intersection of 2nd and Hastings Avenue. The study area, as of the 2012 data, had 147 people; while the immediately adjacent, ¼ mile area increases to 295 people.

As shown in Table 2, the median age within the study area was 36.4 years old in 2012. However, the lowest median age in the Hastings area exists within ¼ mile of 2nd and Hastings Avenue; after which the median age increases gradually as you move away from this intersection.

Table 3 contains population projections through 2020 and examines the potential impact on the rental market in Hastings. The table assumes factors such as persons per rental unit and occupancy rates will remain constant for this period. The table projects Hastings will have 757 new people by 2020; considering a current renter percentage of 36.2%, there

will be 274 new renters in the community by this time. Based upon an occupancy level of 2.06 persons per household, city-wide, there will be the potential for 133 new units to be constructed between 2010 and 2020 within the city. Even though city-wide 36.2% of the units are rental units, it is important to note in the downtown area the percentages is approximately 67.5%.

Downtown Hastings must attract as many of the new rental units as possible into the area. According to “Downtown Planning for Smaller and Midsize Communities” Donovan Rypkema in 2005 stated that downtown residents spend three to four times more in a downtown area than do those who just work in the downtown (2009 APA Press). Therefore, increasing the active population in downtown Hastings is critical to expanding the retail and service base of the area.

As the rental population increases in Hastings, the downtown area needs to be positioned to accommodate this growth. This is an opportunity for the downtown to increase its population as well as its market share of Hastings’ overall rental population.

Based on the existing market, new units in downtown should have an average square feet per unit of approximately 850 to 1,500 square feet. Assuming a cost of \$80 to \$120 per square foot for rehabilitating upper level space to rental units, the resulting investment in downtown housing (rental only) would range from \$68,000 to \$180,000 per unit depending upon a number of factors. New rental units should also be rented at rates similar to those in the sampling, approximately \$1.02 per square foot. Monthly rents for these units could be approximately \$860 to \$1,050 per month.

Table 4 shows the household income of the area in more detail. The dominating fact seen in Table 4 for 2012 is that 41.8% of the households located within ¼ miles had incomes less than \$15,000; this is due to the fixed income units of the Kensington Apartments. Another dominant income group were those earning between \$35,000 and \$74,999 which accounted for 30.9% of the households. Within a ½ mile radius this decreased to 26.5% for those earning less than \$15,000 and increased to 36.7% for the \$35,000 to \$74,999 groups. There is a strong income base located within close proximity to the downtown area.

According to Table 4 (those within ¼ mile), the \$15,000 and less group will drop slightly to 41.2% by 2017; while the \$35,000 to \$74,999 will increase to 33.3%. Finally, those earning between \$35,000 and \$74,999 and living within ½ mile will make up nearly 40.0% of the households by 2017. These income levels indicate a strong opportunity to attract more middle income households to live in the downtown area.

Rent

Based upon the data in Table 1, downtown units carry a premium and can command higher rents. The units in downtown Hastings, as a whole, appear to be near the average value within four of the comparison communities. Based upon the research shown in Table 1, downtown Hastings properties are above the overall average of \$0.96 per square foot (average includes Grand Island).

Other factors to consider

There are a number of factors beyond the projected demand that can influence the demand for rental units in downtown Hastings. Such items include:

TABLE 4: HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY DISTANCE FROM DOWNTOWN

Household Income - 2012	1/4 mile	% in 1/4 mile	1/2 mile	% in 1/2 mile	3/4 mile	% in 3/4 mile	5 miles	% in 5 miles
<\$ 15,000	69	41.8%	264	26.5%	625	21.9%	1,606	15.2%
\$ 15,000 - \$ 24,999	15	9.1%	133	13.4%	411	14.4%	1,481	14.1%
\$ 25,000 - \$ 34,999	21	12.7%	125	12.6%	343	12.0%	1,211	11.5%
\$ 35,000 - \$ 49,999	36	21.8%	199	20.0%	535	18.7%	1,887	17.9%
\$ 50,000 - \$ 74,999	15	9.1%	166	16.7%	549	19.2%	2,138	20.3%
\$ 75,000 - 99,999	4	2.4%	60	6.0%	203	7.1%	1,127	10.7%
\$ 100,000 - \$ 149,999	3	1.8%	35	3.5%	143	5.0%	790	7.5%
\$ 150,000 - 199,999	0	0.0%	3	0.3%	21	0.7%	128	1.2%
\$ 200,000 +	2	1.2%	10	1.0%	26	0.9%	167	1.6%
	165		995		2,856		10,535	
Household Income - 2017	1/4 mile	% in 1/4 mile	1/2 mile	% in 1/2 mile	3/4 mile	% in 3/4 mile	5 miles	% in 5 miles
<\$ 15,000	68	41.2%	258	25.9%	605	21.2%	1,552	14.7%
\$ 15,000 - \$ 24,999	12	7.3%	101	10.2%	300	10.5%	1,089	10.3%
\$ 25,000 - \$ 34,999	17	10.3%	107	10.8%	290	10.2%	931	8.8%
\$ 35,000 - \$ 49,999	35	21.2%	196	19.7%	530	18.6%	1,838	17.4%
\$ 50,000 - \$ 74,999	20	12.1%	199	20.0%	657	23.0%	2,599	24.7%
\$ 75,000 - 99,999	6	3.6%	74	7.4%	249	8.7%	1,357	12.9%
\$ 100,000 - \$ 149,999	4	2.4%	41	4.1%	168	5.9%	895	8.5%
\$ 150,000 - 199,999	0	0.0%	4	0.4%	28	1.0%	164	1.6%
\$ 200,000 +	3	1.8%	12	1.2%	30	1.1%	179	1.7%
	165		992		2,857		10,604	

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Data compiled by Olsson Associates using ESRI Business Analyst

- Proximity of Allen's, Walgreen's and Russ' to the downtown area; however, walkability needs to be improved between downtown and the three stores.
- Open space in the downtown area.
- Additional rental demand within the community can be absorbed into the downtown core or on the perimeter of downtown via the redevelopment of existing properties or vacant lots.
- New construction of first floor retail and upper level housing.

Summary

The following section addresses the future needs of downtown Hastings in the short-term. These recommendations are based upon the data collected for this report as well as the information obtained in discussions with key individuals.

Demand/Impact

- The current demand for rental units is very high.
- Market rate units within the downtown area are at \$1.02 per square foot.

- The population projections generated in Table 3 indicate there will be an increase in population throughout Hastings through 2020.
- The square footage demand for the new units will continue to be similar to the existing units. Larger units may be appropriate in a condominium setting.
- New rental properties in the downtown area have the ability to add between \$68,000 and \$180,000 per units of new investment into downtown.
- Based on the high occupancy rates for the city of Hastings and the even higher occupancy rates in downtown Hastings, there is a market for more units to accommodate the city's overall projected population base in 2020.
- Demand can be increased by redevelopment of properties within the downtown area or on the perimeter of the downtown to accommodate the additional rental demand identified in Table 3.

Housing Demand – type/amenities

Data collected from property owners in Downtown Hastings and the other four communities indicates:

- A need for a mix of market rate units and condominiums. Both of these housing types are extremely popular in all of the downtowns researched.
- “Corporate-Style Units”.
 - The corporate style unit is capable of being rented out as an apartment or on an extended stay “hotel style” unit.
 - The corporate style unit is fully furnished including a full kitchen, dishes, flatware, cooking utensils, towels, etc.
 - The current units in Hastings have seen considerable success and have an average rent of over \$2.00 per square foot, almost double the rates of traditional apartments.
 - Reported vacancy rates have been minimal.
 - To evaluate the market for additional corporate units, additional conversations need to occur with local employers.
- The units researched within the other four cities have common traits:
 - A focus on modern amenities with designs that respected the historic qualities of the building.

- Exposed brick on exterior and/or interior walls where possible.
- Modern kitchens and bathrooms.
- Additional housing constructed on redeveloped properties or on the perimeter of downtown should be a mixed-use to accommodate retail/office on the first floor and residential units above.

Rent

Based upon the data in Tables 1 and 4, the future rental rates of the existing units should:

- Be maintained if not increased annually to match up with the cost of living.
- New units should be brought on-line for \$860 to \$1,050 depending upon the square footage and amenities.
- In cases where existing unit rents can be brought to the \$1.00+ per square foot level the cash flow of these projects will aid in leveraging future projects.

community needs and capacity: retail

A retail marketplace evaluation is critical to understanding the complexities of a retail area and its market. Table 5 is a summary of the retail marketplace for downtown Hastings. The data in the Table are from an analysis generated by ESRI's Business Analyst software and represents the study area shown on the map to the right.

Retail sales represent the known or estimated sales occurring in the Study Area. The retail potential is equal to the possible sales to be spent by consumers at retail establishments within an area. Therefore, the retail gap is the difference between the two: a positive number indicates the retail establishments are serving their immediate area and are acting as a retail trade area by attracting other consumers into the area; a negative number in the retail gap would indicate a leakage of those retail industries into another market area.

Table 5 indicates Downtown Hastings is serving a consumer base plus an additional area beyond. Overall, the downtown area has a sales



surplus of \$23,558,562. Retail trade has the predominate share of the surplus with \$21,045,797, or 89.3%, of the total. Food and drink sales accounted for the remaining portion of the sales.

Table 6 breaks out the retail trades into more detail. The top five industries have been highlighted in the table.

These five industries make up 75% of the retail sales in Downtown Hastings. Therefore, 3 out

TABLE 5: RETAIL MARKETPLACE SUMMARY – DOWNTOWN HASTINGS

Industry Summary	Retail Sales*	Retail Potential*	Retail Gap*	Number of Establishments*
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$ 24,728,972.00	\$ 1,170,410.00	\$ 23,558,562.00	48
Total Retail Trade	\$ 22,037,907.00	\$ 992,110.00	\$ 21,045,797.00	40
Total Food & Drink	\$ 2,691,065.00	\$ 178,300.00	\$ 2,512,765.00	8

Source: OA and ESRI Business Analyst

TABLE 6: RETAIL MARKETPLACE BY INDUSTRY

Industry Summary	Retail Sales*	Retail Potential*	Retail Gap*	Number of Establishments*
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$ 24,728,972.00	\$ 1,170,410.00	\$ 23,558,562.00	48
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$ 2,529,047.00	\$ 194,146.00	\$ 2,334,901.00	3
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$ 1,063,786.00	\$ 23,761.00	\$ 1,040,025.00	2
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$ 229,361.00	\$ 25,644.00	\$ 203,717.00	2
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$ 580,818.00	\$ 38,871.00	\$ 541,947.00	5
Food & Beverage Stores	\$ 7,332,703.00	\$ 149,725.00	\$ 7,182,978.00	3
Grocery Stores	\$ 7,103,657.00	\$ 141,572.00	\$ 6,962,085.00	2
Specialty Food Stores	\$ 80,546.00	\$ 2,998.00	\$ 77,548.00	1
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	\$ 148,500.00	\$ 5,155.00	\$ 143,345.00	1
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$ 3,083,851.00	\$ 44,844.00	\$ 3,039,007.00	5
Gasoline Stations	\$ 3,155,074.00	\$ 211,121.00	\$ 2,943,953.00	1
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$ 728,400.00	\$ 17,759.00	\$ 710,641.00	6
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$ 729,415.00	\$ 17,985.00	\$ 711,430.00	5
General Merchandise Stores	\$ 2,046,573.00	\$ 204,129.00	\$ 1,842,444.00	1
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$ 1,256,373.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 1,256,338.00	8
Florists	\$ 68,076.00	\$ 875.00	\$ 67,201.00	1
Office supplies, Stationary, and Gift Stores	\$ 292,804.00	\$ 4,695.00	\$ 288,109.00	2
Used Merchandise Stores	\$ 34,484.00	\$ 1,179.00	\$ 33,305.00	2
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$ 163,515.00	\$ 11,973.00	\$ 151,542.00	3
Nonstore Retailers	\$ -	\$ 10,901.00	\$ (10,901.00)	0
Food Service & Drinking Places	\$ 2,691,065.00	\$ 178,300.00	\$ 2,512,765.00	8

Source: OA and ESRI Business Analyst

of 4 dollars spent in downtown is with a business falling into these five industries. Downtown merchants need to develop strategies to capture more of the consumers coming to downtown for these five industries. However, a couple of the industries in Table 6 may have difficulty increasing their share based upon the different businesses established in the north Burlington Avenue Retail Trade Area (Wal-Mart, Ace, Tractor Supply and Menards).

There are number of subgroups within the industry groups not getting their project share of revenue. These include with the additional retail potential:

- Other Motor Vehicle Dealers \$ 12,751
- Department Stores \$119,317
(excluding leased departments)
- Electronic Shopping and Mail-order Houses \$ 685
- Vending Machine Operators \$ 1,115
- Direct Selling Establishments \$ 6,764

Table 7 compares the retail sales within the downtown area and the area included in a 5-mile radius from 2nd and Hastings Avenue, which includes all of Hastings plus some additional

area. The table determines the percent of sales in downtown versus the retail sales within the radius. Those industrial classifications that met or exceeded 20% of the retail sales of the 5-mile radius are highlighted and are considered to be key to the retail success of Downtown Hastings.

The retail businesses having a 20% or more share of the entire Hastings area are businesses that need to be built upon and used to attract more customers thus sales to the downtown area. A combination of enhancing these existing businesses as well as recruiting retailers that can build upon and capture a similar customer base should be undertaken. Red text indicates a leakage in actual sales versus sales potential for the 5-mile radius

Table 7 also has a number of retail types that the downtown may not be able overtake due to the level of businesses and type of companies outside of the downtown area, especially Wal-Mart, Menards, Tractor Supply, Casey's, Spady's, etc. However, some of the categories within the 5-mile radius are actually seeing leakages (in red), most likely to Grand Island, some of which could be filled by businesses in Downtown Hastings.

TABLE 7: RETAIL MARKETPLACE- DOWNTOWN VS. 5-MILE RADIUS

Industry Summary	Retail Sales - Downtown*	Retail Sales - 5 mile radius	% Downtown/5-mile
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$ 24,728,972.00	\$ 258,719,612.00	9.6%
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$ 2,529,047.00	\$ 58,692,076.00	4.3%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$ 1,063,786.00	\$ 3,679,661.00	28.9%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$ 229,361.00	\$ 3,393,661.00	6.8%
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$ 580,818.00	\$ 11,426,274.00	5.1%
Food & Beverage Stores	\$ 7,332,703.00	\$ 17,220,536.00	42.6%
Grocery Stores	\$ 7,103,657.00	\$ 16,146,933.00	44.0%
Specialty Food Stores	\$ 80,546.00	\$ 396,010.00	20.3%
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	\$ 148,500.00	\$ 677,593.00	21.9%
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$ 3,083,851.00	\$ 10,815,824.00	28.5%
Gasoline Stations	\$ 3,155,074.00	\$ 63,319,947.00	5.0%
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$ 728,400.00	\$ 2,758,078.00	26.4%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$ 729,415.00	\$ 2,709,502.00	26.9%
General Merchandise Stores	\$ 2,046,573.00	\$ 38,689,090.00	5.3%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$ 1,256,373.00	\$ 4,481,350.00	28.0%
Florists	\$ 68,076.00	\$ 397,934.00	17.1%
Office supplies, Stationary, and Gift Stores	\$ 292,804.00	\$ 673,212.00	43.5%
Used Merchandise Stores	\$ 34,484.00	\$ 224,462.00	15.4%
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$ 163,515.00	\$ 3,185,742.00	5.1%
Nonstore Retailers	\$ -	\$ -	-
Food Service & Drinking Places	\$ 2,691,065.00	\$ 41,533,612.00	6.5%

Source: OA and ESRI Business Analyst
 Red text indicates a leakage in actual sales versus sales potential for the 5-mile radius

Table 8 uses the same data from Table 5 but examines the population base within the Primary Trade Area, the Secondary Trade Area, and the Tertiary Trade Area. The population and sales are converted in a per capita figure.

The Per Capita spending found in the Primary Trade Area provides solid evidence that downtown is attracting consumers from the other areas. However, the Tertiary Trade Area examined is considerably less than would be expected. This indicates that the Secondary Trade Area is the primary market for downtown sales..

Table 9 compares the retail sales determined through Business Analyst with the net taxable sales reported to the Nebraska Department of Revenue for Hastings as a whole. However,

the amount of sales under grocery stores was eliminated from the downtown figures since groceries are exempt from sales tax in Nebraska. Comparing the downtown sales with the community as a whole, downtown is getting 5% of the total sales in the community; this equals approximately \$704 per capita spent in downtown compared to \$14,161 community-wide.

Based upon the information in Table 9, there are five different approaches to increasing sales in the downtown district; these are:

1. Develop strategies to obtain a larger share of the community's total sales.
2. Develop businesses to tie into the markets that are currently strong in the downtown district.

TABLE 8: RETAIL MARKETPLACE/RETAIL TRADE AREA

Industry Summary	Retail Sales*	Retail Gap*	Primary	Per Capita	Secondary	Per Capita	Tertiary	Per Capita
			Trade Area	Spending*	Trade Area	Spending*	Trade Area	Spending*
			Population*		Population		Population	
			(5 miles)		(25 miles)		(25 miles)	
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$ 24,728,972.00	\$ 23,558,562.00	164	\$ 150,786.41	26,402	\$ 936.63	95,091	\$ 260.06
Total Retail Trade	\$ 22,037,907.00	\$ 21,045,797.00	164	\$ 134,377.48	26,402	\$ 834.71	95,091	\$ 231.76
Total Food & Drink	\$ 2,691,065.00	\$ 2,512,765.00	164	\$ 16,408.93	26,402	\$ 101.93	95,091	\$ 28.30

Source: OA and ESRI Business Analyst

TABLE 9: RETAIL SALES IN DOWNTOWN VS. NET TAXABLE SALES CITY-WIDE

Retail Sales Downtown*	Net Taxable Sales - Hastings 2011	Downtown portion of Community-wide	Population Hastings 2011	Average spent per resident of Hastings "\$" Downtown	Average spent per resident of Hastings "\$" Community-wide
\$ 17,625,315.00	\$ 351,035,322.00	5.0%	24,788	\$ 711.04	\$ 14,161.50

Source: OA and ESRI Business Analyst and Nebraska Department of Revenue

* Downtown Retail Sales were modified by removing Grocery sales from the total since groceries are not subject to sales tax.

3. Develop strategies that will capture more sales from people already shopping downtown.
4. Develop and populate the downtown with more housing than what is projected.
5. A combination of all of the above.

Any one of the strategies can have a dramatic positive impact on the retail sales in downtown Hastings.

Example:

Assuming a 50% increase in downtown population (147 people in 2012), to 220 people, in the downtown area and an average spending level of \$950 per person times a factor of four (Donavan Rypkema), downtown could add an approximate \$275,000 to the overall spending in downtown Hastings or about 1.1% overall. However, with the addition of other retail goods and services these numbers could increase even more significantly.

Existing Land Uses In Downtown Hastings

Occupancies and land uses within the downtown district can influence the effective sales of retailers and the entire district. Certain uses typically need to have ground floor access while others can be accommodated in upper levels. Typically, retail and services (barbers, hair salons, etc.) should be located on the ground level, while less user-intensive occupancies such as offices and residences should be located in upper floors.

Examining existing land uses in downtowns requires a more detailed approach than a community-wide analysis. For purposes of the land use analysis in downtown Hastings, the following categories were used:

- Retail, Office, and Services
- Churches
- Restaurant/Bar
- Parking
- Public (City and County government)
- Quasi-public (Fraternal organizations, VFW, American Legion, etc.)
- Single-family residential
- Multi-family residential

- Industrial (manufacturing, warehousing, etc.)
- Parks/Open Space
- Vacant

For purposes of this study the ground level and the upper levels were surveyed from the street. None of the upper levels were entered to determine the existing use. As in several cities in Nebraska and the U.S., there is considerable potential for upper-level development downtown Hastings.

Retail/Office/Service

The existing land uses in downtown Hastings are dominated by the Retail, Office and Services (ROS). The vast majority of the square footage is retail space, especially with larger space users such as Dollar General, Gary Michaels Clothiers, Jacobi's Carpet One, Brown's Shoe Fit and more.

According to *"Downtown Planning for Smaller and Midsize Communities"* :

"Here are two important principles to consider when planning for retail and service uses:

1. *Unless enough population density and market strength exist to make upper-floor retail and services uses viable, these uses need to occur on ground floors to help activate the street.*
2. *Retail and service uses should be located on discernible shopping streets in order to receive sufficient visibility and traffic to succeed.*

Therefore, the retail and service uses in downtown Hastings need to be on the ground level of the buildings in the area. Based upon observations of downtown Hastings the retail and service uses need to remain along 2nd and 3rd Streets and the connecting side streets from Burlington Avenue to Kansas Avenue. In addition, the area along 1st Street can support retail but this street should also be targeted as an entertainment, restaurant and bar venue.

Within the “ROS” mix there is a considerable amount (not a majority) of spaces being used as office space. In the long term, a strategy for relocating these offices from ground level, prime retail space, to vacant upper levels needs to be developed. This will be especially important as there is more vacant upper level space than new residential development will

support. Furthermore, where there are more than two floors in a structure the ideal makeup is retail (ground floor), office (second floor) and residential on subsequent floors.

According to “Downtown Planning for Smaller and Midsize Communities” :

“For purposes of downtown planning, most office uses should be located in the upper floors of buildings because, relative to retail and service uses that can stimulate considerable foot traffic, offices tend to dampen street-level vitality. In fact, some communities preclude ground-floor office uses within their downtown core through special zoning measures. Banks which function as tremendous activity generators for downtown streets, are at least one glaring exception to the principle of restricting office space to upper levels.”

One strong use that is present in downtown Hastings is banking. These facilities offer both walk-in and drive-thru service and are a critical traffic generator in the downtown area. These uses are located primarily along 3rd and 4th Streets between Burlington Avenue and Hastings Avenue. The traffic generated

by these facilities needs to be captured and kept within the downtown, however drive-thru facilities should be kept on secondary streets.

Restaurant/Bar

Downtown Hastings is seeing a growth in specialty restaurants and bars. Currently these uses integrate well with downtown retailers and services, providing several choices within a short distance. The key to their long-term success will be the continued growth of downtown housing, retailers and businesses.

The bars in downtown are attracting people not just from the downtown area but from across Hastings. Downtown has a variety of bars ranging from specialty bars to restaurant/bar combinations. This mixture will be critical in the future to continue attracting people and supplying the live-in population base. As new venues open up in the downtown area, 1st Street has the potential to become an entertainment core for the City of Hastings, creating an environment unique to the downtown district, the city and the region.

Summary

The following section is a summary of the findings as well as addressing the future needs of downtown Hastings regarding retail markets.

Retail Trade

- Currently downtown Hastings is losing a large amount of market sales in the primary industrial categories but there are some small losses in the industrial sub-categories.
- There is minimal vacancy on the ground floors of the buildings along 2nd and 3rd Streets, however occupancy types need to be evaluated
- There is a substantial number of vacancies in the upper floors of the structures downtown, especially along 2nd and 3rd Streets.
- Future retail, hospitality and service development will be tied to an increased population base in the downtown area.
- The downtown area has several significant business anchors that will allow the daytime traffic and sales to continue and thrive.

- The downtown area is capturing between 20% and 50% of certain markets compared to the retail sales within a 5-mile radius of the intersection of 2nd and Hastings Avenue.
- As new retail establishments increase in the downtown area, existing office space will need to be relocated to the upper levels of the buildings.



Downtown Hastings

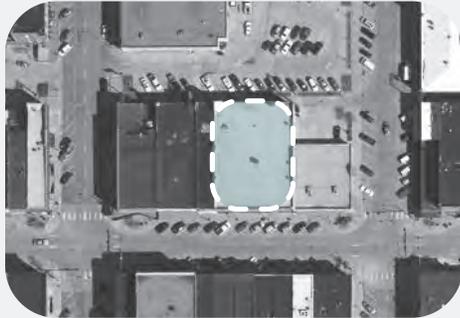
physical and strategic catalysts

There are two general types of projects that can spur revitalization in downtown areas: the physical and the strategic. Physical projects are actual construction-related improvements which are either specific to individual buildings or to the public realm. Strategic projects include developing key partnerships with community groups and creating specific tools to aid in the fostering of development as well as influence the types of development that are to occur.

Input from the community, via public meetings and conversations with stakeholders, led to the creation of the matrix of projects shown to the right. The projects include case studies of development projects that exhibit the potential to have high impact on downtown; public realm modifications that can help improve the overall downtown environment; strategic tools that can help individuals as well as organizations; and partnerships that will fuel further revitalization.

Physical Projects	Strategic Projects
<p>Building/Site Specific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stein Building • Auditorium Green • Block 24 Redevelopment • Public Parking/Flex-Space 	<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding Downtown • Developer's "How-to" • Funding Sources • Entertainment District • Zoning and Design Guidelines • Building Stock Inventory
<p>Public Realm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Gateway" Designators and Wayfinding Signage • Public Parking • Trail Head • Streetscaping on 1st Street • Intersection at 2nd and Burlington • Traffic Signalling and Quiet Zone 	<p>Partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Incubator • Art Incubator • Regional Tourism • Educational Institutions

the stein building



2nd Street

Hastings Ave

Denver Ave

The Stein Building, located on the north side of 2nd Street between Denver and Hastings Avenues, is an architecturally prominent piece of the downtown urban fabric. Originally a department store, the building's scale and existing amenities make it a great candidate as a catalyst project. It's 88' long brick facade features graciously sized windows along the second floor and storefront accentuated with original stained glass on the main, street-level.

The building's current owner has begun planning for a renovation of the structure that will include five to eight residential units on the second floor, and updates to the main floor to accommodate retail and service businesses in build-to-suit bays.

Renovation of the building will be costly as the reconfiguration of both floors will require the installation of an elevator along with substantial improvements to the plumbing and mechanical systems. In addition to the internal work, renovations and repairs to the existing facade will be required, including the replacement of the second story windows on both the south and north faces of the building, cleaning and repair of the existing stained glass, and the design and construction of a new entrance on the north side of the building for upper-level residents. Exterior facade renovations have been preliminarily estimated at \$130,000, which, when combined with the costs of the interior renovation, create an overall cost that will make funding purely through a traditional financial institution difficult. Supplemental funding sources will be necessary for the successful renovation of this building.

The renovation and eventual occupancy of The Stein Building will be a great asset for Downtown Hastings; it will add 11,000 additional square



The Stein Building, viewed from 2nd Street

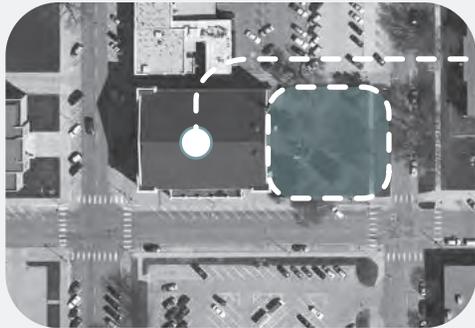
feet of upper-level housing along with 11,000 square feet of retail space. The retail space to be included in the project is of particular interest as there is currently a lack of ready-to-occupy first floor spaces downtown; build-to-suit retail bays will be a feature that can help draw new businesses to 2nd Street.

A secondary condition that this project reveals is the lack of close public parking on the north side of 2nd Street. The majority of housing renovation in the downtown district has occurred on the south side of 2nd Street, and these units benefit from proximity to the parking lots on 1st Street. A partial solution for this problem would be to designate the current city hall parking lot as downtown customer and resident parking, while shifting employee parking to the main city parking lot opposite city hall to the north.

The Hughes Iron block in downtown Council Bluffs, Iowa, is an example of the positive impact a large-scale renovation can bring to a downtown district. In addition to restoring the facade and adding to the aesthetic and historic qualities of downtown, it also brought new retail businesses and residential units, which bring in the highest rents for the entirety of Council Bluffs.



auditorium green



City Auditorium

4th Street

Hastings Ave

Denver Ave

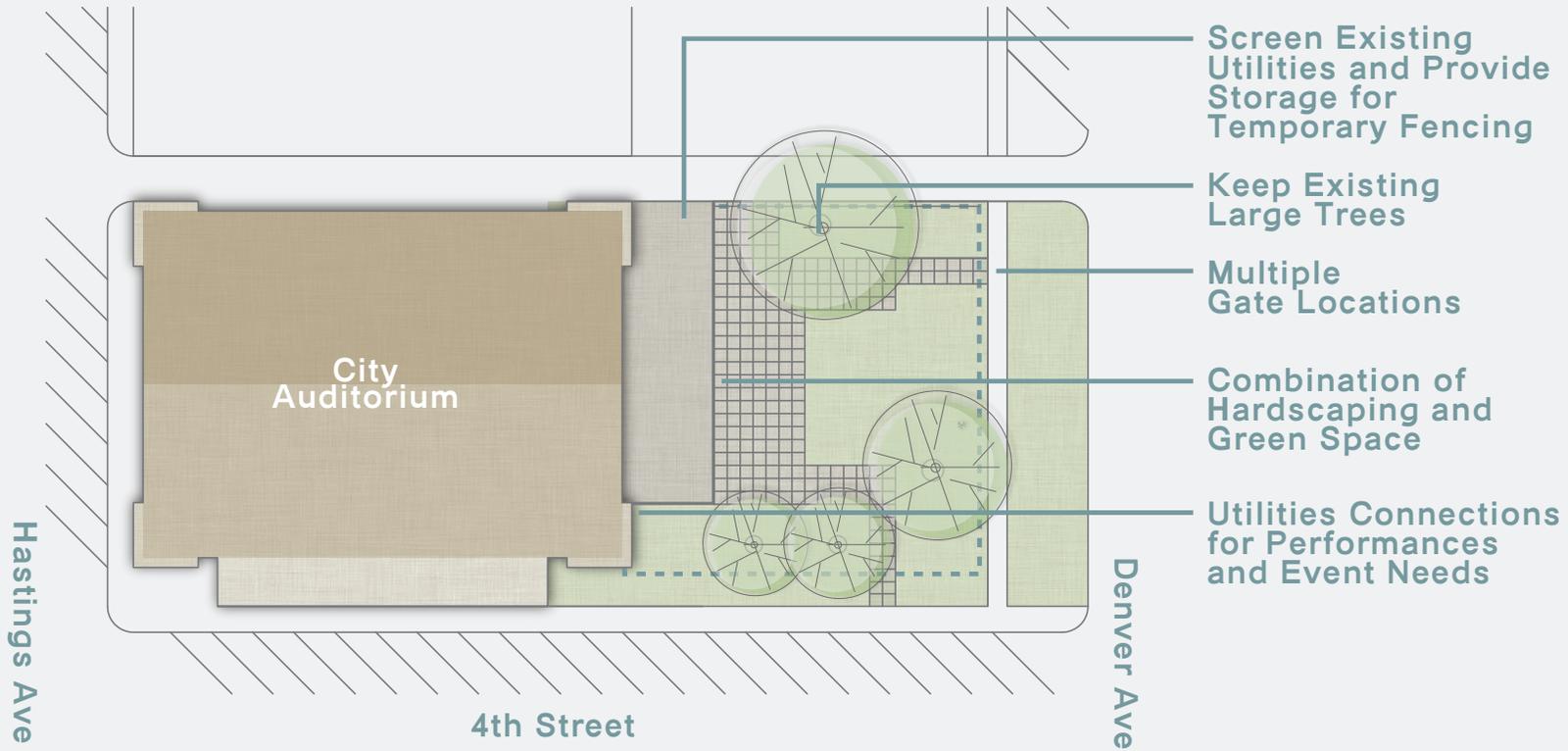


The recently-renovated City Auditorium is a significant asset for Downtown Hastings and contributes the vitality of the district by hosting numerous events. Adjacent to the auditorium is what this study refers to as the Auditorium Green. Currently used for some outdoor events, this space has the potential to provide an additional programmable and publicly-available event space to downtown. With some physical improvements, the space could host receptions, both in conjunction with and independent of the auditorium itself, small performances and more events such as the Do the Brew, which is currently held on the green.

Strategic improvements can increase the aesthetics and function of the space, allowing it to attract and host a larger range of events. These include:

- A screen wall for the auditorium utilities and mechanical equipment on the north end of the auditorium's east wall.
- A temporary fencing system that can be set up for events serving alcohol. This could include the installation of permanent sleeves along the perimeter for a fencing system that could be stored on-site within the above-mentioned screen wall, or the design of a permanent, elevated landscaping bed of a height and width that meet's the city's requirements for outdoor beer gardens.
- The installation of a small area of hardscaped pavers or concrete that could be used for more formal events, such as weddings or receptions. This space could host tables, dance floors and the like.
- Utilities hook-ups, particularly for electrical service to a designated stage area. The stage itself could be rented rather than be a permanent installation, but a predetermined location can assure that all required services are provided in one location.

The green space could also benefit from the implementation of and inclusion within an entertainment district ordinance by the City of Hastings. For more information regarding entertainment districts, please see the “Strategic Catalysts: Tools” section of this report.



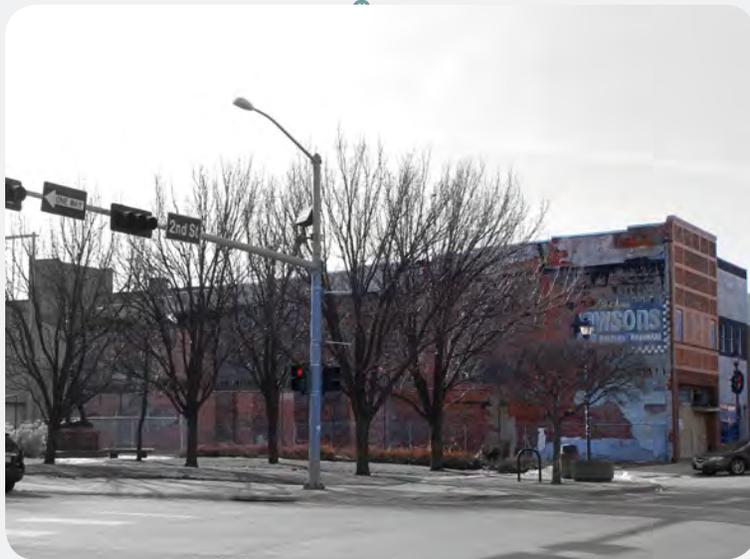
block 24 redevelopment



2nd Street

Denver Ave

St. Joseph Ave



The Block 24 project is located on the east end of the downtown core. The project consists of two buildings adjacent to the pocket park on the corner of St. Joseph Avenue and 2nd Street. A fire destroyed the building that previously occupied the site to the east of the project, exposing the east building's shared wall.

Currently under review by a local developer, the project proposes to renovate the buildings, creating updated, leasable retail and service spaces on the ground floor and five housing units on the second. The two buildings would remain separate properties, with an agreement to share second floor circulation.

The impact of this project on Downtown Hastings would be considerable. The buildings sit on the perceived east end of downtown, where traditional commercial building styles transition into a more industrial uses. The buildings, in their current state, create a eyesore and act as a barrier between the historically and architecturally significant Dutton Lanson building located on the corner directly to the east and the rest of the businesses on 2nd Street. The development of these two buildings will help tie the downtown district back together and improve the overall aesthetics of the area.

Also, just as importantly, the renovations would treat the exposed east wall of the east building. Originally a shared wall with the neighboring building, examinations indicate that it is not securely tied structurally to the remaining building and the facade is constructed of a soft brick not intended for exterior exposure. Renovating the building to ensure its structural integrity and treating the exterior wall to prevent deterioration are critical actions to keeping these buildings out of disrepair. Overall, the two buildings, if developed, will add approximately

5,000 square feet of retail and service space to downtown, and approximately the same in housing on the second floor. The development will improve the aesthetics and street facade quality of the surrounding blocks and prevent the further deterioration of the buildings.

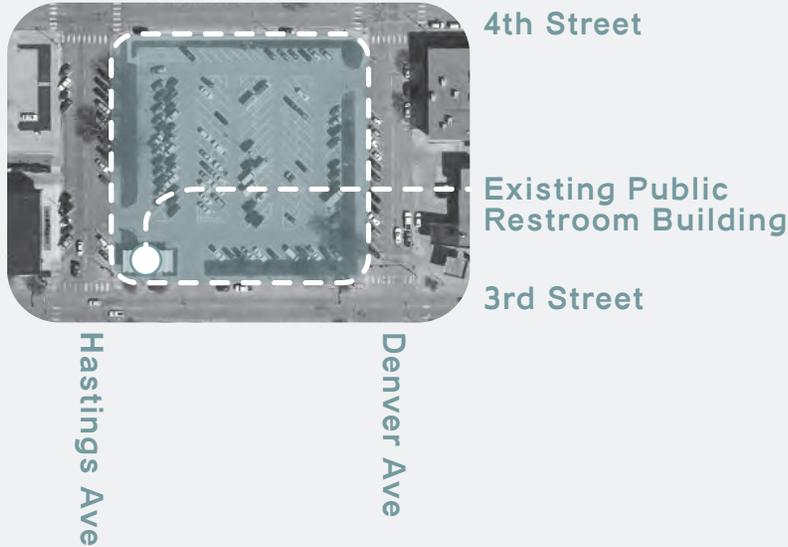
As the west building's existing facade will need to be replaced in its entirety due to existing conditions, the redevelopment will restore the west building's facade to a configuration more consistent with the building's original construction date, as well as the scale and context of surrounding downtown buildings. The east building's facade renovations focus on the treatment of the east wall to prevent further deterioration, and the modification of the first floor entry to cater to a restaurant occupancy. Due to the extent of the work and the prominence of the project, the use of supplemental funding to assist the project's design and construction is recommended to assure the quality and style is consistent with the goals of Downtown Hastings' redevelopment. Preliminary estimates indicate renovating the two buildings' facades will cost approximately \$180,000 (a line-item break down of this estimate can be found in the appendix).



Above: the existing front facades of the two buildings being considered for the Block 24 Redevelopment Project.

Left: Rendering of exterior improvements.

public parking/flex-space



The public parking lot north of city hall can act as a potential “flex-space” for Downtown Hastings. The downtown district has a number of smaller green spaces--like the pocket parks on the east and west ends of 2nd Street and the City Auditorium park to the north of this lot--that can host smaller events, while closing streets allows for downtown to host larger events. The parking lot, however can add another layer of possibility to events in Downtown Hastings by providing a vast, centrally located and easily accessible space for large events.

First, in its primary role as a parking lot, this project could benefit from some updated landscaping. The lot already has landscape beds around the perimeter with a number of trees and a grass ground cover. However, as noted later in the parking lot landscape section of this study, the perimeter could benefit from plantings that act to screen the parking lot more effectively than what is in place now. Also, landscaping that requires little maintenance and watering is preferred to ensure that the plants look good even during dry summers.

To achieve this, tall grasses and a mulch or rock groundcover can be used in conjunction with the existing trees. The grasses only need to be cut down at the start of the growing season, and grow back very quickly, meaning there is only a small time period when the visual screen between the street and the cars will be compromised. Options like these are preferable to deciduous trees and shrubs which lose their leaves and create a barren landscaping bed over the winter.



For its secondary role as a flexible festival space, there is actually very little that needs to be done infrastructurally. Ensuring there is power available for the audio/visual components of an event is the primary concern in this regard. Other, aesthetic improvements that would distinguish this block, such as banners or specific lighting, could be considered but are secondary to just focusing on programming the space.

Organization and programming really are key to maximizing this space; for it to be physically ready to host an event all that needs to occur is the coordination with neighboring businesses to ensure that the cars are removed from the lot. To ease the task of planning and attracting events, the parking lot can also be included in an entertainment district with the adjacent Auditorium Green. However, the real key is to promote and market the lot as an option for event organizers, locally and regionally, as any additional event that is brought or started downtown will benefit the district through increased foot traffic and awareness of downtown businesses and amenities.

Lastly, on this site there is also a public restroom building which could work well both in conjunction with any festivals on the lot and independently if renovated and re-programmed. During the public meetings held for this study, there were a variety of comments about the potential of downtown to promote local businesses, goods and services. The restroom building, if renovated, could provide single-user, ADA restrooms for use by the public during events downtown while also hosting a flex-space of its own.

In a similar concept to the business and art incubators discussed later in this study, a small space within this building could act as a host for rotating programs--one month it could host a pop-up retail shop, the next, an artist's exhibition, and the week after that, a display of products "Made in Hastings." As a public building, applicants could submit proposals for creative, community-building ways to use the space.

It's a small concept in a small, quirky building, but one that the writers of this study appreciate for its unique quality, the community enthusiasm it evoked, and its creative re-imagining of a building some consider a blight.



“gateway” designators & wayfinding



An example of gateway signage in Hamilton, Ontario. Photo from The Hamilton Spectator.

Creating a spatial and visual brand for downtown, that works in conjunction with the marketing efforts and graphic branding being pursued by numerous Hastings organizations, can help create a cohesive, lively and unique district that can help tie businesses in different locations together and aid in promoting the pedestrian activities that are necessary for a vibrant downtown.

Gateway designators can help to define the extents of the district and provide a sense of arrival. Hastings has a particular need for such designators as its downtown is tied to and originates at the intersection of two major highways. The intersection of 2nd and Burlington, which has some spatial shortcomings of its own, is a high-traffic and high-speed node on the west side of downtown. There is a large, untapped potential in the traffic on Highway 281, but it comes with some challenges, one of which is getting the people passing through on the highway to recognize that they are passing through the downtown district. As it is now, there are no specific visual indicators to tell someone they are crossing main street.



To help with this issue, architectural and graphic designators can be used to draw passerbys' attention to the historically and socially prominent district they are passing through (and potentially draw them into it as well). Such designators can be very deliberate--think a big sign that exclaims “Downtown Hastings!” to passing traffic. But they can also be more subtle, and focus on improvements like building massing and articulation at key intersections, enhanced sidewalks and landscaping, or historically evocative detailing. The most successful implementations tend to be a combination of both approaches.

With an eye toward cost, installations that don't require extensive modifications to the existing conditions are preferred. Vertical prominence will help to draw the eye of traffic

Architectural gateway elements and hardscaping can provide a visual identity for downtown and should be considered for key intersections, particularly at 2nd Street and Burlington Avenue. Example shown is a historic district marker located on the 100 Block of Broadway, Council Bluffs, IA.

on Burlington, as well as other characteristics such as color and scale. The design of the gateway designators should be consistent with the marketing branding of downtown as well as the City of Hastings as a whole.

Way-finding signage and components help to orient people once they are already downtown, and out of their cars. Key to the overall success of downtown is getting people to walk--between businesses, from their apartment, from their car to their destination. Perception is reality, and even if there is an abundance of parking, and even if the two businesses a person needs to visit are only a block apart, if those distances seem daunting and the walk seems uninviting, people won't use downtown to its full capacity and potential. Streetscaping and way-finding can help to shorten those perceived distances.

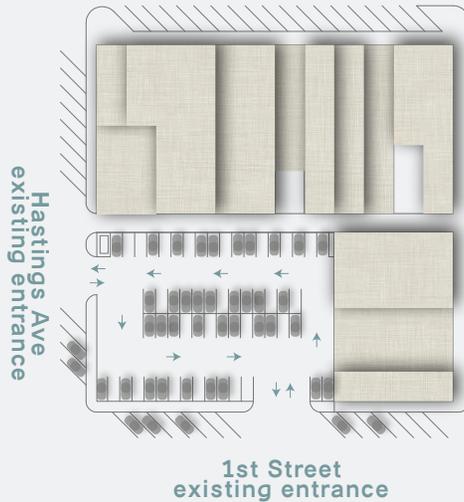
Like the gateway designators, a way-finding system can run the spectrum from blatant to subtle, and the best are a combination of the two. Kiosks with maps and an inventory of downtown amenities--along with active display surfaces that can be updated to show relevant events, news and information--should be placed at key locations throughout downtown. Overall branding and the gateway installations will help bring people downtown, but the kiosks will help visitors to maximize their stay.

Branding, way-finding and downtown designators can and should be integrated via mediums that aren't all sign-related. Signage can become dated and is expensive to install, repair and replace--and kiosks will require maintenance. So these installations should be minimal and strategic, and be complemented by infrastructural consistency throughout the district--improvements such as sidewalk treatments, light posts, landscaping and the implementation of general design standards. These "soft" way-finding tactics can help define the district while also directly improving the spatial and visual experience of its users.

Additional elements such as signage, banners and historic lighting can help define the downtown district.



public parking landscaping



Parking lots in downtown districts can be a potential eyesore if not maintained. The implementation of design standards specific to any new parking lots created in the downtown district along with methodical upgrades to existing parking lots can drastically improve the downtown environment.

Using landscaping buffers in parking lots has a number of added benefits. Perimeter trees can help to maintain the street facade both by defining the lot lines and providing height to correspond to neighboring buildings, which helps to offset the perception that a parking lot is just a void in the surrounding urban fabric. The buffers also create a more pedestrian-friendly environment by defining and improving the sidewalks. Because Hastings has relatively narrow side-walks and right-of-ways--and hence adding landscaping to the sidewalks themselves may be difficult--parking lot landscaping can be a good way to bring soft, green features to streets like 1st Street.

Street Section

A landscaped buffer between the parked cars and the sidewalk creates a more pedestrian-friendly street. It also improves the overall aesthetics of the neighborhood by adding greenery and shade. Whether using planters or plantings, as shown, the landscaping should be on two levels--trees for height, and shrubbery or tall grasses to screen the view of the parked cars from the street. When choosing plants, special consideration should be paid to ensure they still provide screening and are aesthetically pleasing in the winter as well as their primary growing season. Attention should also be paid to any fruit, blossoms or leaves that may fall on the adjacent surfaces.

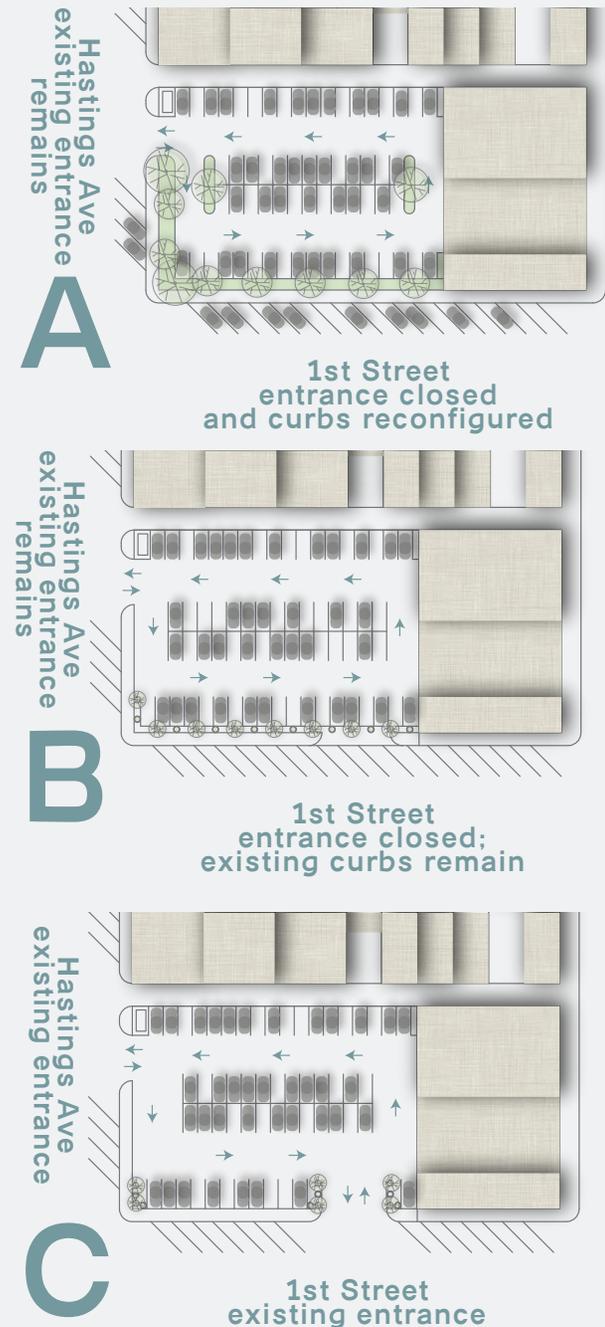


As a case study, APMA looked into the potential reconfigurations of an existing 1st Street parking lot and the various ways landscaping can be incorporated. The specific parking lot, located at the corner of 1st Street and Hastings Avenue, is shown in its existing configuration on the facing page. Three potential reconfigurations are shown to the right.

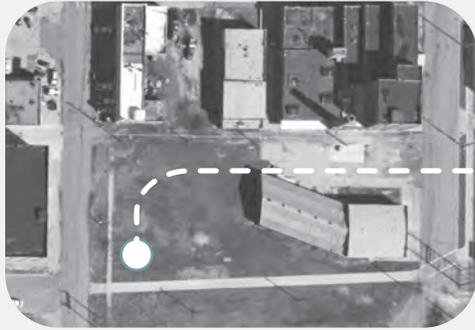
Parking Lot @ Hastings and 1st, Reconfiguration Options

- A. Maximized** - This option shows how the parking lot could be reconfigured to include a six foot band of landscaping around the street sides of the lot. It also includes reconfiguring the curb cuts for the 1st street entrance to allow for more parking within the lot as well as along 1st Street. Even with the additional landscaping, this option provides 62 parking spaces, an increase of three from the current lot.
- B. Moderate** - This configuration explores the use of tree planters and the re-striping of the parking lot to provide a five-foot gap between the sidewalk and the parking stalls, providing a space for the planters. This provides for some greenery as well as a more defined street facade, while requiring little modification to the existing curbs. In this situation, the existing 1st Street entry could be closed by simply placing the large planters in its location and re-striping both the lot and the diagonal parking on 1st Street. This option provides 66 parking stalls.
- C. Minimal** - For cases where there is no funding for infrastructural changes or striping, this option shows how the same planters as found in Option B can be placed within the existing layout to provide some foliage and definition at the street corner and at one of the entries. This option provides 56 stalls, a decrease of three from the current lot, as three existing stalls are used to host the planters.

* 48" diameter, 30" high concrete planters can start at 500 dollars. Including labor and plant costs, each planter can cost approximately 2000 dollars depending on material choice, tree caliper, etc.



trail head



Trail Head

1st Street

Colorado Ave

Minnesota Ave

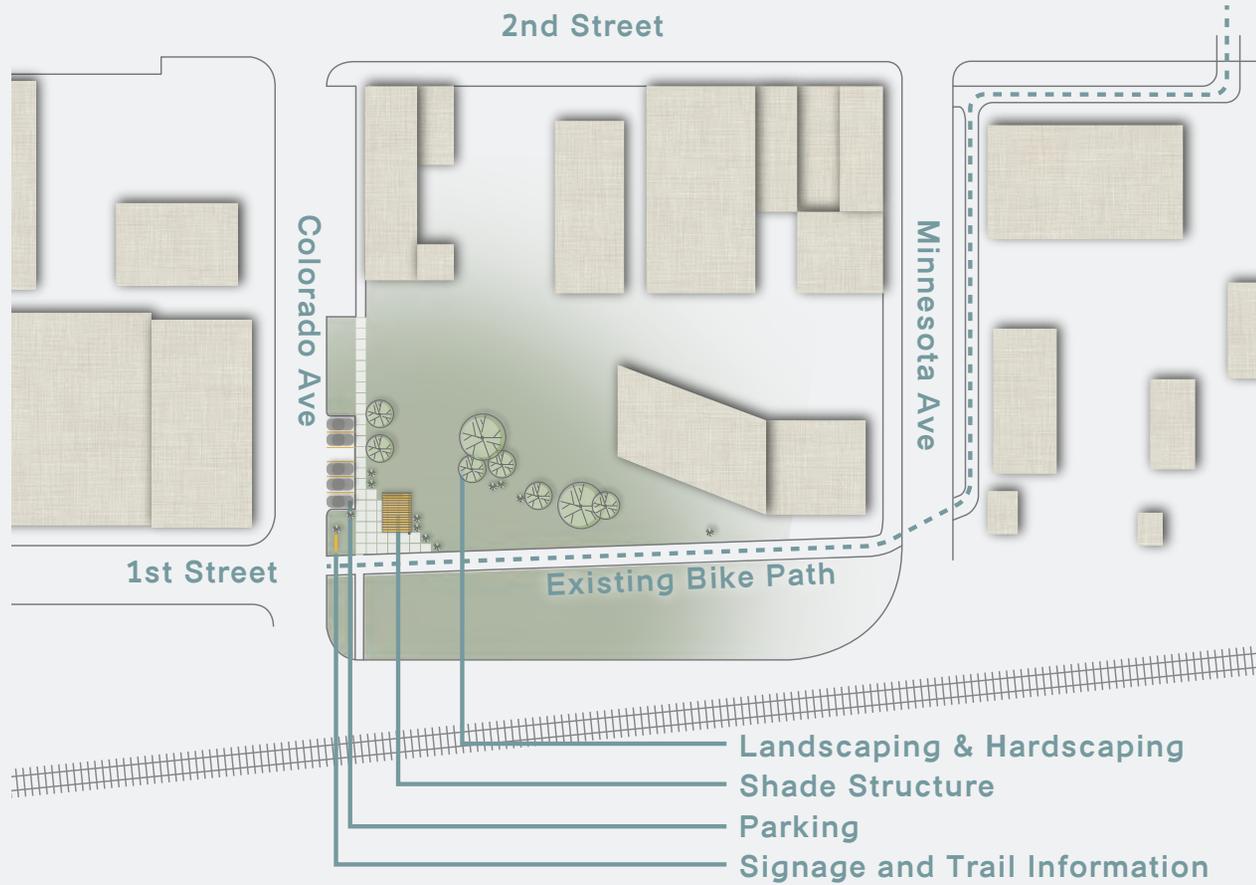
The Pioneer Spirit bike trail starts on the west side of 1st Street and Colorado Avenue and runs for approximately five miles, connecting downtown to Hastings College, Lake Hastings and all the residential neighborhoods between. Currently the trail head lacks any designation or way-finding signage informing potential users where it will take them.

Connectivity is a key component of all successful neighborhoods; downtowns can particularly benefit. Downtown Hastings is the hub of the city--all roads lead downtown, the city started there and grew outward. It should be the same today as it was in the downtown district's prime. Alerting users along the length of the trail to the amenities it connects, including those downtown, can help increase the use of the trail. Ideally, the trail will act as a community and transportation option for the city's citizens as well as a recreational trail. Way-finding signage can help by reminding people where the trail goes and reinforcing its usefulness by stating distances and travel times between destinations.

At the trail head itself, signage should provide information for those starting their trip from downtown, as well as those arriving via the trail. An inventory of downtown amenities as well as postings about events can help bring trail users into downtown and its businesses. A map of the trail itself, showing local institutions, parks and other attractions along the route, paired with built features such as a shade structure and parking stalls, can help make it a meeting point for events and advertise the trail to passing traffic.



Successful signage and trail head design has the potential to benefit both downtown and the rest of the trail. In the future, an extension of the trail into downtown itself, including designated bike lanes, would provide for full integration between the downtown district and the further extents of the trail.



streetscaping on 1st street

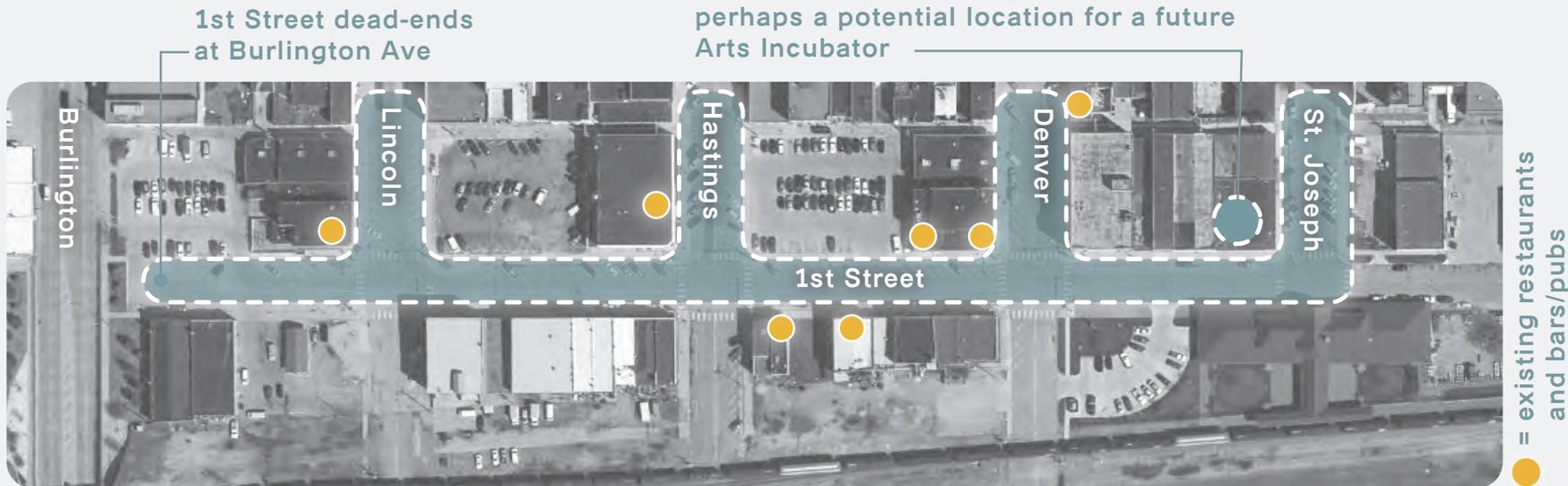


First Street looking West

2nd Street has a number of features that help to create a sense of place, a feeling of being on “main street”--curb extensions at intersections, landscaping and art installations to name a few. 1st Street, however, lacks similar features and does not benefit from the same quality of place. Narrower, and with little to no “streetscaping,” 1st Street could benefit from some public realm improvements.

During the early community meetings, participants expressed an interest in creating a restaurant and entertainment core downtown. Already featuring a number of restaurants and bars, 1st Street has the potential to become such an attraction. With some improvements and more hospitality-focused businesses, 1st Street could be key to getting more people downtown after business hours.

Promote/Create the development of an anchor for the east termination of 1st Street; perhaps a potential location for a future Arts Incubator



● = existing restaurants and bars/pubs

First Street needs visual and spatial improvements. As noted in the parking lot landscaping section, 1st Street's narrowness and the tight sidewalk dimensions can make integrating landscaping difficult. Hence, the inclusion of landscaping within the public and private parking lots can help to soften and beautify the street. Smaller planters and other installations that require little infrastructural modifications can also be implemented.

The potential of 1st Street to be an entertainment and restaurant destination can be helped by streetscaping features in two ways, and in two phases. First, visual improvements to the street can help to include it and tie it into 2nd Street, creating a more inclusive, overall downtown district (rather than just one "main street"). This can be accomplished through the landscaping options already discussed as well as the extension of 2nd Street programs such as the art installations.

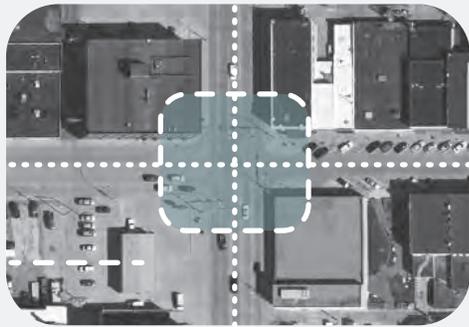
The second phase would be to work to create an identity specific to 1st Street. If and when 1st Street does become an entertainment destination, features that are specific to that environment can be implemented. Street parking in select locations could be sacrificed to create wider sidewalks--and hence create the potential for outdoor seating and small public gathering spaces. Special lighting--an improvement specific to defining a nightlife district--could be implemented to create an atmosphere unique to 1st Street, and unique in Hastings and the region.



Strategic curb extensions can help to create a more comfortable pedestrian experience along 1st Street by providing more gracious sidewalks and additional opportunities for trees and landscaping. As the number of entertainment and restaurant establishments increase, the additional space can also be used for outdoor seating. Additional streetscaping components, such as light fixtures and signage, can help to give 1st Street a unique identity.

Photos from DwellArizona

intersection @ burlington and 2nd



6 2nd Street

281

Burlington Ave



The intersection of 2nd Street and Burlington is unique in that it acts both as a gateway and a barrier to downtown. Highway 281 (Burlington Avenue) is a major transportation route and brings a large amount of traffic through the downtown district. However, this intersection can be difficult for pedestrians to navigate and provides few visual cues to vehicular traffic that they are passing through an area of civic, social and cultural importance.

Burlington Avenue is a four-lane highway with a turn lane, and the vast expanse of concrete and the high speeds of oncoming traffic can be intimidating to pedestrians. This is critical as the street currently divides the east and west sides of downtown. A lack of pedestrian access can cut off potential development west of Burlington, or at the minimum continue to be a barrier to a cohesive downtown district.

Improving this intersection will not be an easy task as it is the junction of two state highways. However, the first and most pragmatic step is to review the timing of the crosswalk indicator

lights. While the length and timing of “walk” signals was noted during public meetings as an issue throughout downtown, other intersections are comparatively easier to navigate due to fewer cars and slower speeds. This intersection, however, feels unsafe and the indicators don’t allow enough time to comfortably cross Burlington.

Softening the environment around the intersection may also help lessen pedestrian unease. It is, comparatively, a stark and harsh portion of downtown. Landscaping, architectural features such as the gateway designators discussed later in this report, and hardscaping treatments such as raised crosswalks can help.

Physical improvements to the intersection will not only help pedestrians to feel more comfortable, but also make drivers on Highway 281 more aware that they are passing through an important intersection and hence, should be more attentive to pedestrian activity.

Additionally, architectural and soft-scaping improvements can help to indicate to passing traffic that they are crossing “main street.” Extending such features to the north and south can provide the visual indication that they are approaching the downtown area, giving them enough time to turn onto 2nd Street.

Due to its location on two state highways, improvements and modifications to this intersection will require coordination with and approval by the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR). Additionally, any directional or advertising signage, whether in the highway right of way or the adjacent properties, will need NDOR approval.

traffic signaling and quiet zone

Central Business District Street Conversion Study

This study, completed in 2005, analyzed the costs and impacts of converting the existing one-way streets within the downtown district to two-way traffic. Within this analysis, two options were reviewed: the total conversion of all one-way streets and the partial conversion of only the north-south streets.

Within the current configuration, the one-way streets detract from the traditional main street environment of Downtown Hastings and reduce the vehicular connectivity within the district. During a number of this study’s early public meetings, dislike of the one-way system was expressed. Participants noted that the system often creates confusion among out-of-town visitors and doesn’t contribute to the character of downtown.

Key points within the CBD Street Conversion study:

- Within the first option (total conversion) a small number of intersections would have longer queuing and wait times. Some intersections would benefit from redesigns to include left-turn lanes.
- The second option (partial conversion of only the north/south streets) would improve intersection functions compared to the first option due to the remaining two-way system on 2nd and 3rd Streets.
- Both options would create a net loss in parking stalls, including the conversion of the existing angled parking on 2nd Street to parallel stalls.
- New traffic signals would need to be installed at intersections that are currently signalled.
- Estimated costs, calculated in 2005, would be approximately \$400,000 for the partial conversion and \$930,000 for the total conversion.

The costs associated with either option are relatively substantial, and a critical component in considering and comparing the benefits of total conversion, partial conversion and the existing configuration. While two-way street conversions may not be the highest priority for the revitalization of downtown, they will play a crucial role in achieving the overall goal of a well-connected, pedestrian-focused district.

Another item of note within the study--and that aligns with the goals of this study, the downtown and the public contributors--is the removal of traffic signaling at intersections that lack sufficient traffic to warrant them. A number of intersections along 2nd Street, including the Kansas Street intersection, do not require signalling, and the study recommends that these intersections be redesigned with through-traffic on 2nd Street and stop signs at the north/south streets.

Hastings Railroad Quiet Zone Feasibility Study

Conducted in 2008, the Quiet Zone Study evaluated the potential, costs, and implications of a quiet zone along the BNSF Railroad tracks within the downtown district, as well as within other areas of

the City of Hastings.

“Implementing a quiet zone will greatly improve the quality of life for the businesses and residents located along this corridor.”

Specifically, the study reviewed modifying the crossings at Lincoln, Hastings, Denver and Colorado Avenues. A quiet zone would reduce the number of horns sounded along this stretch of tracks by modifying the crossings. Options for crossing modifications include:

- Wayside Horn Systems
- Median Construction
- Permanent Crossing Closure
- Grade-Separated Crossings
- Conversion of Two-Way Street System to One-Way Street System
- Four Quadrant Gate System
- Temporary Night Crossings

Additional information for each of these options can be found within the original study. For all four intersections reviewed within downtown, the implementation of the quiet zone was recommended. However, it should be noted that the recommended action for each intersection included a conversion of the streets to one-way, in contradiction to the recommendations of the street conversion study reviewed previously. Hence, if a quiet zone is to be implemented--which is recommended--alternate modifications that do not require one-way conversions, such as four quadrant gate systems, should be used.

Lastly, while a quiet zone would reduce the frequency and number of horns sounded, it would not remove them entirely. Horns have to be sounded when workers or trespassers are present, when an AmTrak train leaves the station, and during any switching activity. As the the switching operation of this railway corridor is within the downtown district, there may still be a relatively large number of horn soundings.

strategic catalysts: tools

strategic tool: branding

An essential part of any successful downtown district is a positive image of the area shared by residents, visitors, and business owners. Creating a brand for Hastings' Downtown District will define that image and provide the area with an identity with which visitors and residents can connect and of which local businesses will be proud to be a part.

There are a number of positive impacts branding can have on an area, including giving the revitalization effort credibility, which could in turn increase community support of the endeavor in both volunteers and financial contributions. Additionally, good community branding will allow the area to utilize consistent messaging and imagery in its marketing endeavors; this can increase exposure for existing businesses while enticing new businesses to the area, increase retail traffic; and attract residents to downtown.

Because a brand is a long-term concept of what a place should be, a great deal of planning and collaboration between all stakeholders is essential to creating a cohesive image that embodies the goals of a community. Typically, there are four steps necessary for a successful branding effort: research, design, education, and maintenance. Research must be conducted to identify what it is about that area that makes people want to be there. Once the brand concept is identified, design of the graphics, often including a logo and tagline, can be created. These items should be used on all marketing materials for the area. Educating the businesses and organizations of the area on how to utilize these design materials is essential to maintain a consistent brand concept. Finally,



Developing a clear identity for Downtown Hastings can help to draw more businesses and visitors to the district. Brands such as Lincoln's "Haymarket" (above), Omaha's "Old Market," and Kearney's "On the Bricks," have been key in the redevelopment and continued success of the districts they represent.

though an area's branding may prove a success early on, it must be maintained and assessed regularly to assure its continued success as the community evolves over time.

The City of Hastings and four of its core organizations--the Community Redevelopment Authority, the Adams County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Hastings Economic Development Corporation, and the Hastings Chamber of Commerce--are working toward unifying their websites and overall image to create a cohesive presence and information portal for the city. Any branding developed for the downtown should be a natural extension of the city-wide effort, for brand consistency and reach. Downtown Hastings should be seen as the embodiment of Hastings as a city--its civic, social and cultural core.

strategic tool: developer's "how-to"

Every real estate project is different--new construction versus old building restoration, tax credits or no tax credits, professional developer or weekend warrior. All these factors will determine how a project gets developed.

The most important element of a good project is a qualified team. The team will assist with the due diligence list and provide much needed support and expertise throughout the project. The following guide can be applied to any project, however some steps may come before others, happen at the same time or might not happen at all.

Concept-- The first step is ideation and a concept. Is it going to be housing, commercial or both? In other words, take an idea and cultivate it into a preliminary project scope.

Feasibility - Do the numbers work? Is there a demand for that use? Is it zoned correctly? There are several questions in this phase that should be answered to see if acquiring a building or moving forward on a project is worthwhile. This is the time to begin your due diligence. The following are activities that should occur:

- Research building ownership and if it is for sale
- Develop preliminary development budget, sources of funds and operating pro forma (Operating pro forma includes income, expenses and basic project assumptions)
- Research different funding options
- Check zoning
- Building Analysis (structural issues, etc)
- Identify legal issues
- Develop preliminary layout and floorplans
- Market Analysis
- Identify public participation opportunities

Site Control & Due Diligence – If the feasibility of the project is favorable, then buying the property or obtaining an option is the next step. During this step, due diligence continues. Below is a list of activities that are important for acquisition.

- **Appraisal** – Typically ordered by the bank that you are working with for financing. Acquisition financing is usually financed at 75-80% of appraised value or agreed upon purchase price whichever is lessor. The percentage of financing is determined by the purchaser's financial strength.
- **Environmental Phase 1** – A Phase 1 is the first step in the environmental due diligence process. At a minimum a Phase 1 should be completed prior to closing on a property. A Phase 1 looks at the history and prior uses of the building. If recommended, a Phase 2 may be required.

- **Financing** – Work with a bank(s) to obtain initial financing for acquisition and start the conversation about financing for the construction of the project.
- **Pro forma** – Continue refining the operating pro forma, development budget and sources of funds.
- **Ownership Entity** – Choose ownership form. Establish a separate entity to acquire and hold the real estate to reduce personal liability. Typically LLCs are created to hold real estate.
- **City Officials** – Meet with City officials early and often to ensure your general plan is acceptable with the various departments. Potential problems can be rectified early in the project.

Create a development team – This step will start at the beginning of the project, but here is a list of team members that should be included. Depending on the project size and type and financing used, not all of the professions below will be utilized, or some roles may be performed by a single entity.

- Architectural & Engineering
- Contractor(s)
- Legal
- Accounting
- Environmental
- Marketing
- Bank
- Appraiser
- Developer
- Tax Credit Investor
- Property Management Company

Financing – While architectural plans and specifications are being developed, financing should be top priority. This step includes:

- Finalize development budget (work with the architects & contractor on construction costs)
- Finalize sources of funds
- Finalize operating pro forma
- Obtain letter of commitment for bank financing on construction and permanent loan
- Tax credits: Obtain approval and letter of commitment from investor
- Finalize owner equity requirements

Marketing & Property Management – Create a marketing plan and find a property management company to manage the project once construction is complete.

- Create a “Brand” for the project so that it stands out from the competition
- Based on your Brand, create marketing materials, website, Facebook page, etc.
- Hire a property management company that is qualified to manage your specific type of project.
- Work with the property management company to pre-lease the building while it’s under construction.

Construction Phase – Once plans and specs are complete and financing is finalized, the project should be put out to bid and a General Contractor hired. The following are steps that should be taken during construction and some tips for easier flow:

- Schedule a pre-construction meeting to discuss responsibilities of key players, change orders, etc.
- Discuss schedule of work and inspection schedule

- Discuss payment and draw schedule
- Set a standing meeting, weekly, until construction is complete

Operation - Once construction is complete, the project starts its operations phase.

- Once the project achieves substantial completion, a punch-list should be created so that all construction related issues are taken care of.
- Throughout the project, branding, marketing, and pre-leasing should occur. You want your project to stand out from the others, so devoting money to this is vital to set your project apart.
- Now is the time to finalize leases, move tenants in and start operating the building.
- Convert the construction loan to permanent loan. Banks typically provide a grace period from the time of substantial completion/Certificate of Occupancy to when the project is partially leased.

strategic tool: funding sources

The following are specialized funding sources that can assist with redevelopment of downtown buildings. These funding sources do not include specific funding sources for housing; for housing sources please refer to the “City of Hastings – Affordable Housing Market Study”. Additional funding sources are listed in the appendix of this study.

local funding

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The Hastings CRA uses Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fund commercial, industrial, and residential improvements. Tax Increment Financing uses the additional tax revenue created by development within the aforementioned areas to finance additional improvements in the blighted area. Up to 100% of this additional tax revenue can be used for up to 15 years for public improvements within the redevelopment area.

Façade Improvement Program

The Hastings CRA administers a facade improvement program with the goal to “restore, improve or create historic architectural features to facades of commercial buildings within the downtown Central Business District.” Building owners and tenants can apply, assuming tenants have the consent of the building owner. Use of grant funds--including up to \$7,500 for facade improvements and up to \$1,000 for signage--requires dollar-for-dollar matching funds for related improvements. Contact the Hastings CRA for more information.

Revolving Loan Program

Also administered by the Hastings CRA, the revolving load fund aims to “assist businesses and developers by providing low interest loans for business start-ups, business expansion, building rehabilitation and other designated uses.” The loans’ interest rates range from 0% to 5% and often the CRA will partner with financial institutions to buy-down the borrower’s overall interest rate. Contact the Hastings CRA for more information.

Adams County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Improvement Fund

This improvement fund supports the development and improvement of new visitor attractions within Adams County. The funds are to be used for “capital improvements to attractions or recreational facilities,” and are specific to public and non-profit organizations and properties. In addition to meeting the project requirements of the grant (funds are not to be used

for operating expenses, general maintenance, etc.), Access to CVB grants requires that matching funds be provided by the applicant. The improvement fund collects approximately \$50,000 annually, however the amount of funding available is dependent upon number of applications, type of project and the effectiveness of the proposed use of funds. Deadlines for application are June 30 and December 15 of each year; additional information is available through the CVB.

state funding

Valuation Incentive Program (VIP)

VIP assists in the preservation of Nebraska's historic places. The program allows a property tax "preference" for a historic property that has been rehabilitated. The preference can be described as a temporary "hold" on increases in property tax assessment that result from improvements made to preserve a historic property.

What requirements must a property meet to be eligible for VIP?

- Eligible properties are those individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places or historic properties that contribute to a district listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Under certain provisions, historic properties can be designated under a local government preservation ordinance.
- The property must be designated as a "historically significant real property" before work on a project begins. A historically significant real property is one that is listed on the National Register of Historic places and is taxable.
- The historic property must be taxable.¹

1 State of Nebraska, State Historical Society, Valuation Incentive Program (VIP), <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/>

Project Requirements:

- The cost of the rehabilitation must be 25 percent or greater of the “base-year” assessed value of the property. The base-year is the last assessed value of the property at the time an application is submitted to the Nebraska State Historical Society.
- All work done to rehabilitate or improve the property must meet the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
- All work must be done during a two-year period. In certain circumstances this period may be extended with the approval of the Nebraska State Historical Society, such as when the size of the project is such that a good faith attempt to complete the rehabilitation in two years would not succeed or when it is economically unfeasible.
- Certain types of work are not eligible. These include landscaping, new construction, driveways and sidewalks. For owner-occupied single-family residences, no more than thirty percent of the dwelling space can be new construction outside the existing building.

federal funding

Preservation Tax Incentives

The Federal government encourages the preservation of historic buildings through various means. One of these is the program of Federal tax incentives to support the rehabilitation of historic and older buildings. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program is one of the Federal governments most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs. The National Park Service administers the program with the Internal Revenue Service in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices. The tax incentives promote

histpres/vip/index.htm (Accessed January 18, 2013)

the rehabilitation of historic structures of every period, size, style and type. They are instrumental in preserving the historic places that give cities, towns and rural areas their special character. The tax incentives for preservation attract private investment to the historic cores of cities and towns. They also generate jobs, enhance property values, and augment revenues for State and local governments through increased property, business and income taxes. The Preservation Tax Incentives also help create moderate and low-income housing in historic buildings. Through this program, abandoned or under used schools, warehouses, factories, churches, retail stores, apartments, hotels, houses, and offices throughout the country have been restored to life in a manner that maintains their historic character.

Current tax incentives for preservation, established by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (PL 99-514; Internal Revenue Code Section 47 [formerly Section 48(g)]) include:

- a 20% tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures.
- a 10% tax credit for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936.

From time to time, Congress has increased these credits for limited periods for the rehabilitation of buildings located in areas affected by natural disasters. For more information, see the instructions on IRS Form 3468, Investment Credit, or contact your State Historic Preservation Office.

In all cases the rehabilitation must be a substantial one and must involve a depreciable building. (These terms will be explained later.)

What is a Tax Credit?

A tax credit differs from an income tax deduction. An income tax deduction lowers the amount of income subject to taxation. A tax credit, however, lowers the amount of tax owed. In general, a dollar of tax credit reduces the amount of income tax owed by one dollar.

- The 20% rehabilitation tax credit equals 20% of the amount spent in a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure.
- The 10% rehabilitation tax credit equals 10% of the amount spent to rehabilitate a non-historic building built before 1936.

20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit

The Federal historic preservation tax incentives program (the 20% credit) is jointly administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Department of the Treasury. The National Park Service (NPS) acts on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior, in partnership with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in each State. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) acts on behalf of the Secretary of the Treasury. Certification requests (requests for approval for a taxpayer to receive these benefits) are made to the NPS through the appropriate SHPO. Comments by the SHPO on certification requests are fully considered by the NPS. However, approval of projects undertaken for the 20% tax credit is conveyed only in writing by duly authorized officials of the National Park Service.

The 20% rehabilitation tax credit applies to any project that the Secretary of the Interior designates a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The 20% credit is available for properties rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but it is not available for properties used exclusively as the owner's private residence.

What is a “certified historic structure?”

A certified historic structure is a building that is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places

OR

a building that is located in a registered historic district and certified by the National Park Service as contributing to the historic significance of that district. The “structure” must be a building—not a bridge, ship, railroad car, or dam. (A registered historic district is any district listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

A State or local historic district may also qualify as a registered historic district if the district and the enabling statute are certified by the Secretary of the Interior.)

Obtaining Certified Historic Structure Status

Owners of buildings within historic districts must complete Part 1 of the Historic Preservation Certification Application—Evaluation of Significance. The owner submits this application to the SHPO. The SHPO reviews the application and forwards it to the NPS with a recommendation for approving or denying the request. The NPS then determines whether the building contributes to the historic district. If so, the building then becomes a certified historic structure. The NPS bases its decision on the Secretary of the Interior’s “Standards for Evaluating Significance within Registered Historic Districts”.

Buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places are already certified historic structures. Owners of these buildings need not complete the Part 1 application (unless the listed property has more than one building). Property owners unsure if their building is listed in the National Register or if it is located in a National Register or certified State or local historic district should contact their SHPO.

What if my building is not yet listed in the National Register?

Owners of buildings that are not yet listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or located in districts that are not yet registered historic districts may use the Historic Preservation Certification Application, Part 1, to request a preliminary determination of significance from the National Park Service. Such a determination may also be obtained for a building located in a registered historic district but that is outside the period or area of significance of the district. A preliminary determination of significance allows NPS to review Part 2 of the application describing the proposed rehabilitation. Preliminary determinations, however, are not binding. They become final only when the building or the historic district is listed in the National Register or when the district documentation is amended to include additional periods or areas of significance. It is the owner's responsibility to obtain such listing through the State Historic Preservation Office in a timely manner.

What is a "certified rehabilitation?"

The National Park Service must approve, or "certify," all rehabilitation projects seeking the 20% rehabilitation tax credit. A certified rehabilitation is a rehabilitation of a certified historic structure that is

Some Additional Tax Credit Commentary:

The 20% historic tax credit program is often vital to large rehabilitation projects--it can mean the difference between a project moving forward or stalling. However, the 20% project works better with projects that have \$2 Million or more in qualified rehabilitation costs (QRC). A project of this size or larger can help to attract a tax credit investor. Tax credit investors will provide equity in exchange for the benefit of the tax credits. That said, there are additional due diligence steps required in this process as well as additional funds necessary to complete the process of obtaining tax credits.

Other tax credit sources such as New Market Tax Credits or Low Income Housing Tax Credits (see appendix) also require additional due diligence and funds to complete the transactions. The process in any tax credit transaction can be cumbersome and require team members with tax credit skills, which should be considered when contemplating these funding sources and be weighed against the potential benefit. Depending upon the size and type of project, and other outside factors, the challenges involved with obtaining tax credits may not be worth the benefit.

approved by the NPS as being consistent with the historic character of the property and, where applicable, the district in which it is located. The NPS assumes that some alteration of the historic building will occur to provide for an efficient use. However, the project must not damage, destroy, or cover materials or features, whether interior or exterior, that help define the building's historic character.

10% Rehabilitation Tax Credit

A 10% rehabilitation tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of buildings placed in service before 1936. The 10% credit applies only to buildings rehabilitated for non-residential uses. Such projects must retain a percentage of the buildings external walls and internal structural framework to qualify.

Community Development Block Grants

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides Nebraskans with safe, affordable, accessible housing, infrastructure, quality jobs and investment through financing new and expanding businesses. Since Hastings is currently utilizing the CDBG Downtown Revitalization Program, it is not discussed at length in the course of this document. Although the Department of Economic Development does have threshold expenditure requirements within each category before you can apply for another project within that category, it doesn't prevent you from applying for other categories. Therefore Hastings is eligible for the other applicable grant categories listed below:

- Economic Development offers loans to for-profit businesses for a variety of business purposes. Public facilities (infrastructure) projects where a benefiting business agrees to locate or expand premises on the infrastructure are also eligible.

- Water or Wastewater Systems and Other Public Works/Facilities. The following Public Works activities would be eligible: community centers, senior centers, nonprofit centers for day care, parks, water distribution and/or sewer collection, street, curb, gutter, sidewalk, or storm sewer, flood control and drainage. Maximum grant size is \$350,000 with a required minimum of 25% match.
- Tourism Development. Funds are awarded for certain types of tourism attraction activities: historic restorations; interpretive sites, museums, cultural heritage recreational sites and facilities. Maximum grant size is \$200,000 with a match equivalent equal to at least 50% of the total project cost.

strategic tool: entertainment districts

Adopted by the Nebraska legislature in March of 2012, LB 1130 allows for the designation of entertainment districts by local municipalities. The provisions of this bill allow for the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages in limited-access, open-air common spaces. The adoption of a local entertainment district ordinance and designation could be beneficial to both the Auditorium Green and Public Flex-Space previously noted within this study as well as other strategic locations throughout downtown, such as the 2nd Street pocket park and areas around existing entertainment establishments on 1st Street.

The hours and time-periods during which a designated area can function as an entertainment district can be limited, and the designated spaces need to have limited pedestrian access. Also, entities selling or distributing alcoholic beverages within the district will have to obtain an additional license. That said, the implementation of entertainment districts within Downtown Hastings can aid in the programming of more events, maximize the use of public spaces, benefit existing and potential businesses, and create a unique entertainment environment--all of which are key goals for the continued revitalization of downtown.

strategic tool: zoning and design considerations

This plan is intended to create a development environment that invites revitalization. Design Guides such as Pattern Books and Form Based Guidelines along with Zoning Overlay Districts are local government tools that affect development demand, densities and patterns. A brief description of these components follows, along with specific recommendations for Downtown Hastings.

zoning overlay district

Zoning Overlay Districts allow property owners and community leaders to agree upon features to be protected. Through a process of meeting with area property owners and the public, presenting information on an area's unique importance, and determining areas of agreement on features to protect, Zoning Overlay Districts allow for a level of protection for areas lacking a historic district designation.

Today the zoning code does not differentiate between the historic core of downtown and other areas. The creation of an Overlay District would be an appropriate way to address the special needs of the historic downtown core. An Overlay District supplements existing land use regulations; it does not replace them. This approach avoids the need to completely re-zone the district and allows a city to maintain or update current codes while addressing the special needs of particularly sensitive areas that either exhibit unique characteristics or require additional protection. This could work hand in hand with a Historic Resources Commission or a Historic District.

An Overlay District would provide guidance encouraging new development to protect and enhance desired density. It could define maximum front yard depth, building height, setbacks, maintenance of public views, streetscape, signage, lighting, pedestrian access, parking lots, and screening

regulations. Currently the majority of Downtown Hastings consists of either Commercial-2 (Central Business District) or Industrial-1 (Light Industrial) zoning designations. While many of the key spatial regulations listed above are addressed in the existing C-2 zoning requirements, the implementation of an overlay district can help to unify the entire downtown district through consistent building standards that are specific to the need of downtown. In Hastings, particular attention should be paid to how an overlay district will incorporate and apply to the east end of the downtown corridor. Existing industrial uses should be acknowledged and incorporated.

Additionally, preservation of the historic building stock and public realm qualities of Downtown Hastings is critical for both maintaining the district's links to the past as well as ensuring the unique qualities of downtown are secured for the benefit of future generations. The inclusion of renovation guidelines specific to historic (locally-designated) structures as well as more restrictive demolition and removal regulations for downtown properties can offer further protection of the building stock which is so important to downtown Hastings's identity. Demolition guidelines could include requirement of a formal independent consultant's report on the physical condition and economic viability of retaining a building proposed for demolition. Any such recommendation understands that demolition or removal of such properties is permitted when there is an immediate hazard to public safety.

design guidelines

Ensuring that the downtown district retains the qualities that make it attractive--pedestrian scale, buildings constructed at the lot line, horizontal and vertical articulation consistent with the surrounding buildings--is key for both maintenance and continued development. Design guidelines are useful tools for implementing consistent quality standards on renovations and new construction alike, which can help to advance the overall goals for downtown redevelopment and increase property values as well as insure neighboring building owners' investments in their properties.

Ideally such guidelines should address building placement, building materials and articulation, circulation and parking, landscaping, signage, pedestrian access and lighting. The City of Hastings has adopted design guidelines that apply to Pedestrian Overlay Districts, defined as “compact commercial or mixed-use development patterns.” While the standards have been defined in the code (see appendix), and are generally consistent with the design goals of this study and the downtown as a whole, the overlay has not yet been applied to the Central Business District and adjoining industrial zones that make up the overall downtown district. To adopt the overlay, the district will require re-zoning--individual downtown properties will maintain their existing zoning designation (primarily Commercial-2 and Industrial-1, with a couple of outliers) and will simply have the overlay design standards applied to the existing zoning ordinances.

Building Design Guidelines - Wall Materials	
Primary Materials (see note 1)	Complementary Materials
Natural or Cast Stone	Concrete Masonry Units, Integral Finish/Texture(see note 2)
Brick	Concrete Masonry Units, Non-integral Finish/Texture (see note 3)
Glazing/Curtain Wall	Cementitious Panels
Architectural Grade Metal Panel or Metal Cladding	EIFS/Stucco (see note 4)
Architectural Grade Precast Concrete	Corrugated Sheet Metal Siding (see note 5)
Other Similar Grade Materials	Architectural Grade Vinyl Siding (see note 6)
	Other Similar Grade Materials
1. Industrial/agricultural grade wall systems or other similar grade materials are prohibited as a Primary Material.	
2. May be used as a primary material on Large Retail Buildings.	
3. May be used as complementary material on Large Retail Buildings or non-visible elevations of General Buildings only.	
4. When EIFS is used, it generally should be placed a minimum of eight feet above grade and be applied in an articulated fashion. The placement of EIFS may be varied so as to average a minimum of eight feet above grade, but in no case shall it be placed closer than three feet above grade unless specified as impact resistant and includes an additional layer of 20 oz. mesh.	
5. Corrugated sheet metal siding may be used as a complementary material provided it is specified as a concealed fastener system. A non-concealed fastener system may be used as a miscellaneous material in limited application and is subject to approval.	
6. Vinyl siding may only be used on residential use only buildings as a complementary material and must be specified to be (.050) inches thick or greater.	

Building Design Guidelines - Wall Materials, take from the Omaha Municipal Zoning Code and Urban Design Standards.

As noted, the existing design guidelines are in line with the general goals of downtown. Primary and secondary materials, however, could benefit from additional notation. Referenced with regard to facade articulation, there are currently no specific designations for what the allowed primary and secondary materials are. Defining these materials can help with enforcement of the guidelines. An example of material designations, taken from the Omaha Zoning and Urban Design Standards, is shown to the left.

Additionally, the Pedestrian Overlay District standards are not specific to downtown, but rather guidelines for any and all pedestrian-oriented districts. Downtown Hastings could potential benefit from some additional guidelines with regard to historic structures. For this, coordination with the Adams County Historical Society is recommended.

additional zoning tools

Form-based Codes

Form-based codes and guidelines are used as an alternative to land-use oriented zoning codes and provide design parameters for new development in already existing neighborhoods, particularly those that include historic properties.

These codes are a new response to the modern challenges of urban sprawl and the deterioration of cities' historic cores, as well as a way to address the needs of pedestrians in new development. Form-based codes were developed as an alternative to the single-use zoning regulations that, over the last half-century, have been adopted by cities across the country. Single-use zoning codes discouraged the development of compact, mixed-use, and walkable neighborhoods; form-based codes are a tool to address these deficiencies in traditional zoning codes and give local governments the regulatory means to promote mixed-use development.

The Form-Based Codes Institute lists the following as key components commonly included in form-based codes:

- **Regulating Plan** A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply, based on clear community intentions regarding the physical character of the area being coded.
- **Public Space Standards** Specifications for the elements within the public realm (e.g., sidewalks, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees, street furniture, etc.).
- **Building Form Standards** Regulations controlling the configuration, features, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.
- **Administration** A clearly defined application and project review process.
- **Architectural Standards** Regulations controlling external architectural materials and quality.
- **Landscaping Standards** Regulations controlling landscape design and plant materials on private property as they impact public spaces (e.g. regulations about parking lot screening and shading, maintaining sight lines, ensuring unobstructed pedestrian movement, etc.).
- **Signage Standards** Regulations controlling allowable signage sizes, materials, illumination, and placement.
- **Environmental Resource Standards** Regulations controlling issues such as storm water drainage and infiltration, development on slopes, tree protection, solar access, etc.²

² Form-Based Codes Institute, What are Form-Based Codes, <http://www.formbasedcodes.org/what-are-form-based-codes> (accessed January 18, 2013).

Pattern Book

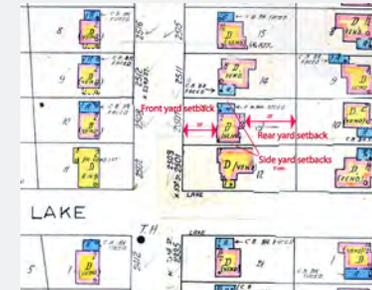
In conjunction with form-based codes, a pattern book can be developed as a tool to document the physical characteristics of historic sites and buildings and provide clear guidance for their preservation. Pattern books focus on the scale, design and materials of surrounding buildings to help guide the design of new buildings and the renovation of existing structures within the context of the neighborhood.

Pattern Book Components:

- Documentation of the key components of the historic area including site plans, drawings, photos, and written descriptions.
- Guidelines to maintain, preserve, and restore the physical character of the district.

Pattern Book Development:

- Public Record Search to document the physical characteristics of the neighborhood and buildings, public infrastructure/spaces, architectural styles, building floor plans, and elevations.
- Photo Survey documenting the existing characteristics of the area and its buildings
- Physical Measurements of the area and buildings



Pattern Book Examples

zoning recommendations

For Downtown Hastings, the critical first step will be the application of the Pedestrian Overlay District to the downtown core. As noted, special consideration should be given to the existing uses within downtown, particularly industrial uses, when determining the extents of the district. That said, the district also needs to encompass areas critical for downtown's future development. Adoption of specific primary and secondary material designations is also a priority.

The application of additional design guidelines and requirements (such as those specific to historic buildings and demolition) should be considered and adopted at a later date. To achieve a consensus among key stake holders, when creating an overlay district it is critical to:

- Meet with area property owners and the public.
- Present information to help inform them of the area's unique character and importance.
- Determine areas of agreement on features to protect.
- Designate extents of the overlay district.

It is important to emphasize that the district's limits and requirements address both the long-range goals of the downtown district as well as the current concerns of existing building owners, users, businesses and the public.

As with all public ordinances, enforcement is key. Acknowledging that any additional zoning requirements within the district will increase the workload of city officials and departments, the development of additional enforcement mechanisms, whether through volunteers or other city organizations, may be necessary. In the end all legal enforcement lies with the City of Hastings, but as in other cities, outside organizations and volunteer groups can help to conduct preliminary reviews, or, in some cases, even supplement the city's staff.

strategic tool: building inventory

Creating and maintaining an accurate inventory of downtown buildings, with emphasis on available properties, can be a great tool for development agencies, such as the Community Redevelopment Authority, as they recruit businesses and developers. Much of Downtown Hastings' success has been a direct result of the CRA's vested interest in its revitalization; the willingness of the CRA to purchase and hold properties has been a key factor in the renovation of a large number of buildings in the district. These redevelopment properties then spur further development through the residents and businesses they attract. An accurate building inventory can be a useful tool in the continuation of these practices; knowing the size, status and state of the buildings within the downtown can help pair potential buyers or tenants with appropriate properties. It can also help organizations or individuals that have the funds and an interest in holding properties to make informed decisions.

strategic catalysts: partnerships

commercial Incubator

Downtown areas are natural starting points for entrepreneurs and Hastings is no exception. Creative individuals looking for stimulating environments will more often than not gravitate toward the urban core of the city they live in. Existing buildings and less expensive rents, combined with an engaged population make downtown the place to be.

Commercial Incubators build and expand on the existing benefits of downtown and make it easier for a start-up to get started. Often, for someone looking to start a business, the costs of rent and setting up an office can be prohibitive, and the challenges of learning to run a business can seem daunting. Incubators can help solve both problems. They can range in the level of service available, but in general they provide:

- Shared services and spaces; meeting rooms, reception, kitchen, etc.

- Business support; often provided via economic development organizations or local educational institutions.
- Peer support; sharing a space with other start-ups allows for networking, collaboration and learning.
- Short-term, minimal commitment leases, typically on a month-by-month basis.
- 24 hour access to the facility.

An incubator creates a dynamic environment where new businesses can benefit from their proximity to other start-ups and have the freedom develop without the high overhead costs of renting their own space. They can help stimulate the downtown economy and entice new businesses, that, once graduated from the incubator, can become active fixtures in downtown.

Taking the incubator concept one step further, a Business Accelerator acts as a type of “boot camp” for new businesses. Where an

incubator provides new businesses with space and infrastructure, and some advice along the way, an accelerator is a much more structured program that challenges businesses to develop their plan and get started in a shortened time period. Because of this, an accelerator requires more rigorous administration, and often works well paired with an educational institution, like Hastings College or Central Community College. A regional example of an accelerator is the Halo Institute, association with Creighton University in Omaha.

Whether an incubator or accelerator is developed, paring with the local colleges is a great opportunity for both entities. Educational partners can provide knowledge to the incubator businesses, while pairing students with start-ups can be a great educational opportunity.

art incubator

Currently Hastings has an active arts community downtown; new institutions like The Lark along with the existing network of galleries and public art installations indicate that Hastings would be a great location for an Art Incubator program.

An Art Incubator can provide the same opportunities as its commercial version. Art

incubators can take on a physical form, similar to the business incubator, or can be more nimble to take advantage of vacant spaces, and in turn animate otherwise empty portions of downtown.

In the first version, an existing building can be turned into a series of studios that can be rented to artists of any medium. Often, such an institution will have shared spaces such as a wood working shop, a metal shop, and galleries for display. Hot Shops, in North Downtown Omaha, is a precedent for this type of development. Institutions of this type work well in industrial buildings and areas, and in Hastings, an art coop would be a great way to link the core of downtown to the more industrial east end of the district.

The second version of an art incubator focuses on creating a program to take advantage of any vacant properties or storefronts and create a partnership with local and regional artists to activate the voids. Empty properties can be leased as studio spaces for lower than market rents, again on a month-by-month basis, while the property owner negotiates a new commercial lease. Vacant storefronts can act as galleries for passing by pedestrians.

In either scheme, Hastings has a great potential for creating an even more vibrant art community. Through marketing, the net can be cast for not just local artists; the low-rents and burgeoning arts culture in Downtown Hastings can draw artists from all over the country.

regional tourism

The character, businesses and events of Downtown Hastings create a unique environment that can draw visitors from throughout the region. And with further development the potential to draw from a wider and wider radius grows.

To take advantage of this, downtown organizations need to collaborate closely and communicate frequently with the Adams County Convention and Visitors Bureau along with other organizations throughout Hastings. Promoting a consistent image of downtown in all marketing materials is key so that the downtown district becomes a distinguishable and recognizable brand among its neighboring communities. The administration and promotion of events that draw first-time visitors is also important--antique walks, festivals, etc. Once again, all promoted within the spirit of the downtown brand.

Lastly, Downtown Hastings should also focus on drawing visitors that are in town for other events, such as softball tournaments. Coordination between event organizers and downtown promoters can help integrate downtown businesses into these events and their promotional materials.

educational partners

Hastings College and Central Community College are great assets for Hastings and can be very beneficial as partners for downtown. As indicated, educational institutions can play key roles in downtown incubators but the potential benefit for downtown extends past any specific programs. Engaging the colleges and their students in downtown programs can help introduce students to the community and convince some to stay after graduation. And there is no better indicator of a vital and growing community than the retention of its young professionals.

catalysts: next steps

The Catalyst Projects developed on the previous pages are appropriate, realistic and effective projects to help continue the revitalization of Downtown Hastings. However, an eye must always be kept on the future and the long-range goals for downtown.

While this study has predominately focused on the renovation of existing buildings and the augmenting of existing public spaces, new development will be a critical next step for downtown. This includes the expansion of current downtown occupancies through new construction as well as the active recruitment of additional use-types, such as hospitality and larger office and commercial uses.

The east end of the downtown corridor will be a critical component of any future development as it currently hosts larger portions of real estate without historically or contextually important buildings, and properties that can be more easily assembled in to larger pieces of real estate. Additionally, new developments in this portion of downtown can help tie the central downtown business district with the more industrially-oriented businesses and properties to the east.

Within the housing sector, the more active the downtown district becomes the more appealing it will be to live in close proximity. While the existing apartment and condominium housing types are appropriate for the demographics currently residing downtown, an expansion in housing types will broaden the spectrum for potential downtown residents. Appropriate new forms of housing may include single-family townhouses with attached garages, a larger development of live/work apartments or new, fully accessible housing for senior citizens.

The key to any new housing will be meeting the needs of those within the “demographic spectrum” that don’t currently reside downtown by appeasing some of the shortcomings of the existing housing options. These needs include housing for families, parking, and shared amenities such as gyms. Ideally, Downtown Hastings will eventually offer housing options of all types so that a resident can stay within the district through all phases of their lives--from college through retirement.

Parallel with new housing is the need for additional retail, service and commercial businesses. Both residential and commercial developments have a reciprocal effect on the other: an increase in residents leads to an

increased need for commercial services, while an increase in commercial services increases the neighborhood appeal for residents. Hence, to fulfill the commercial portion of the equation, additional commercial space and opportunities need to be created downtown.

There are a number of gaps within the downtown district's business inventory. The downtown can support a range of specialty retailers and restaurants that enhance the unique shopping experience of downtown, however focus should also be placed on employers. Healthy commercial cores tend to host key community employers which bring large numbers of employees into the district--as well as provide the option for employees to live within a walkable radius.

In order to appeal to a variety of businesses, Downtown Hastings will need to diversify its available properties. The existing building stock offers few opportunities for larger retailers, and there is little commercial space of the scale and type to host a large office. So future growth may include infill development that can provide for these larger entities while integrating into and extending the existing urban fabric of downtown.

An additional sector of the Hastings economy that is missing from downtown is a hotel. Within the city there is currently an interest

in developing a hotel and convention center; downtown would be an ideal location for such a project. Downtown offers close proximity to retail, restaurants and services while presenting visitors with easy access to the cultural and civic core of the city. Downtown would benefit from the the increased number of visitors and their use of the district after business hours. The construction of such a project would be mutually beneficial to both the convention center and the district.

Within this long-range vision for downtown, the success of these new developments will hinge on mixed-use developments. To remain in context with and extend the existing characteristics of downtown, it is necessary that a high percentage of any new construction have public and commercial uses on the first floor along with residential or office uses on the upper floors. Downtown should remain a mix of uses that maximize the properties within the district, and promote an active community.

It is also important to emphasize that any new development be consistent with the design goals, density and context of the neighborhood; the appeal of locating downtown lies in its character and walkability. New development should only enhance these features.

implementation

prioritizing enhancement opportunities

Recognizing that, due to financial and time constraints, not all of the components of the plan will be completed at one time, a phased approach is recommended. As each phase is completed, a contiguous unit of the overall design will be complete thus maximizing the effect for the public's benefit and the efficiency of utilizing available funding.

When considering the value of a potential project, it is critical to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving the overall goals for downtown. Some considerations:

- Does the project attract more residents, businesses and/or potential customers?
- Is the investment proportionate to the benefits?
- Does the development improve the aesthetic and spatial qualities of the public realm?

recommended actions

The following recommendations have been provided as guidelines to utilize and implement the highest priority, most effective improvements to the Downtown Hastings district:

physical investments

1. **Support and promote the redevelopment or renovation of existing buildings** into commercial and residential properties by providing supplemental funding for qualified improvements, such as facade renovation (including items such as window replacements, brick tuckpointing and the restoration of historical building components), life safety and code-required modifications, and infrastructural improvements.
2. **Invest in public improvements which will help to market the downtown and attract outside visitors.** These include event spaces and streetscaping improvements.

3. **Invest in public improvements which increase connectivity and usability within the downtown district, particularly for pedestrians.**
4. **Ensure that any redevelopment or new developments within downtown are physically and programmatically appropriate.**

Within each recommendation it is key to evaluate any potential projects with respect to their cost (both in time and monetary investment) and their overall effectiveness in promoting and achieving the goals for the revitalization of Downtown Hastings.

strategic motions

1. **Adopt and implement recommended zoning and design guidelines** for the downtown district.
2. **Develop and promote a brand identity** consistent with the goals of downtown and the City of Hastings.
3. **Develop and invest in critical community partnerships** which promote and enhance the downtown district.
4. **Continue to actively recruit businesses, developers, investors and cultural institutions.**

appendix

block 24 preliminary cost estimate

This estimate is a preliminary study of the assumed costs for the design shown in the Block 24 facade sketch included in this study. All estimates are approximate and are for information purposes only.

East Building	New entry:			
	Footings	4 footings @ \$875.00 ea	\$3,500.00	
	Miscellaneous steel	1 lump sum	\$5,000.00	
	Brick work	400 sf @ 10.20 sf	\$4,080.00	
	Storefront systems:			
	Aluminum storefront	288 sf @ 45 sf	\$12,960.00	
	New windows:			
	Aluminum clad Larger	10 @ \$500.00 ea	\$5,000.00	
	Aluminum clad Smaller	5 @ \$435.00 ea	\$2,175.00	
	East façade skim coat:			
	Plaster protection course	3950 sf @ \$3.00 sf	\$11,850.00	
	North façade tuck pointing:			
Tuck pointing	1000 sf @ \$7.00 sf	\$7,000.00		
Miscellaneous Brick Repair	1 lump sum	\$10,000.00		
New balconies:				
Steel balconies	2 ea @ \$5,000.00 ea	\$10,000.00		
West Building	Storefront system:			
	Aluminum storefront	180 sf @ 45 sf	\$8,100.00	
	New windows:			
	Aluminum clad	4 @ \$570.00 ea	\$2,280.00	
	New façade work:			
Metal stud framing, sheathing, weather barrier and brick veneer	700 sf @ \$40.00 sf	\$28,000.00		
Lintels and cornices	70 lf @ \$35.00 lf	<u>\$2,450.00</u>		
			Total	\$112,395.00
			10% Contingency	\$ 11,239.50
			General conditions	\$30,000.00
			Taxes	<u>\$10,115.55</u>
			Total Construction costs	\$163,749.55
			10% Design and Construction Fees	<u>\$16,374.95</u>
			Total Project Cost	\$180,124.50

additional funding sources

Transportation Enhancement Activities

Administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads, the Transportation Enhancement Program provides funding to local, state, and regional governmental entities to build and restore transportation infrastructure. Examples of transportation infrastructure projects that are eligible under this program include non-motorized facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, development of scenic byways, restoration of historic transportation facilities, and other projects directly related to the historic, current, or future transportation infrastructure.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Programs

This program offered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development provides developer tax credit incentives. At least 20% of residential units constructed or renovated must be reserved for persons with incomes at/or below 50% of area median income (50% AMI for 1 and 2 person is \$38,500) adjusted for family size; or at least 40% of units must be made

affordable for persons with incomes at/or below 60% of AMI adjusted for family size. Project must be retained as low-income housing for at least 30 years with loan terms of up to 40 years.

New Market Tax Credits

The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program administered by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund permits taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities. The credit provided to the investor totals 39 percent of the cost of the investment and is claimed over a seven-year credit allowance period. In each of the first three years, the investor receives a credit equal to five percent of the total amount paid for the stock or capital interest at the time of purchase. For the final four years, the value of the credit is six percent annually. Investors may not

redeem their investments in CDEs prior to the conclusion of the seven-year period.

Challenge Grant Program

Offered through the Kresge Foundation, the Challenge Grant Program provides capital grants that range from \$50,000 to \$2.5 million. There are 50% matching funds for health, the environment, arts and culture, education, human services, and community development.

Housing Preservation Grants

The HPG program offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture is a grant program which provides qualified public agencies, private non-profit organizations, and other eligible entities grant funds to assist rental property owners and cooperative housing complexes in repairing and rehabilitating their units if they agree to make such units available to low- and very low-income persons. The term of the grant can vary from 1 to 2 years, depending on available funds and demand. No maximum or

minimum grant levels have been established at the National level.

Rural Economic Development Loan and Grants

The primary objective of the U.S. Department of Agriculture program is to promote rural economic development and job creation projects. Assistance provided to rural areas may include business startup costs, business expansion, business incubators, technical assistance feasibility studies, advanced telecommunications services and computer networks for medical, educational, and job training services and community facilities projects for economic development. The maximum loan award is anticipated to be \$740,000 and the maximum grant award is \$300,000. At least 20 percent of the loan or grant must be matched.

HOPE VI Main Street Program

The purpose of the HOPE VI Main Street program offered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development is to provide

grants to small communities to assist in the rejuvenation of an historic or traditional central business district or “Main Street” area by replacing unused commercial space in buildings with affordable housing units. The objectives of the program are to (a) Redevelop Main Street areas; (b) Preserve historic or traditional architecture or design features in Main Street areas; (c) Enhance economic development efforts in Main Street areas; and (d) Provide affordable housing in Main Street areas. A match of cash or in-kind services of five percent of the requested grant amount is required in order to be considered for grant award. There are four \$1,000,000 grants of up to \$1,000,000 awarded.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

HOME is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households. The funds are awarded annually as formula grants to participating jurisdictions. Eligible activities include building or rehabilitating housing for rent. A 25% match is required.

Green Approaches to Revitalization

Hastings has an opportunity to embrace techniques for revitalization that will reduce the use of fossil fuels, improve public health, and provide sustainable improvements for the community. Recommended techniques for achieving these “green” goals are outlined in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, (LEED) Green Building Rating System as published by the U.S. Green Building Council. There are many potential LEED “Points” for Innovative, Sustainable Design that could be applicable such as: Sustainable Sites: Sedimentation Control, Alternative Transportation, Bicycle Storage; Alternative Transportation Parking, Storm water Management (rain gardens etc), Landscape to Reduce Heat Islands, Minimizing Light Pollution, Water-Efficient Landscaping, Water Efficiency: Water-Use Reduction Energy and Atmosphere: Optimum Energy Performance, Renewable Energy sources Materials and Resources: Storage and Collection of Recyclables, Building Reuse, Resource Reuse

(building materials), use of Local/Regional Materials, Renewable Building Materials.

There are a number of funding mechanisms and grants available to facilitate Green Design and implementation. They are as follows:

Rural Energy for America Program Grants

This program offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture is designed to assist farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses. Most rural projects that reduce energy use and result in savings such as retrofitting lighting or insulation, or purchasing or replacing equipment with more efficiency units. Eligible renewable energy projects include projects that produce energy from wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydro power and hydrogen-based sources. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis and can be up to 25% of total eligible project costs. Grants are limited to \$500,000 for renewable energy systems and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements. Requests as low as \$2,500 for renewable energy systems and \$1,500 for energy efficiency improvements

will be considered. At least 20% of the funds awarded must be for \$20,000 or less.

Dollar and Energy Saving Loans

The program offered by the Nebraska Energy Office is a revolving fund that reduces the interest payments for energy-related projects that meet minimum efficiency standards. The energy office purchases half the loan at zero interest and a commercial lender provides the other half at market rates. The loan program, which was originally funded with oil overcharge dollars, is replenished with loan repayments. The loan amounts vary and include projects such as adding insulation to walls, floors, ceilings, attics and other building envelope surfaces, installing high efficiency heating and cooling equipment, lighting and controls, renewable wind, solar and fuel cell projects, and windows and exterior door replacement.

Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program

open to 501 (c)(3) nonprofits, public housing authorities and for-profit entities.

Offered through the Nebraska Energy Office, the weatherization program enables low-income families in Nebraska to reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. Downtown Hastings properties could apply if the upper stories are renovated to provide housing for low-income families. If the property qualifies, it will be evaluated to identify the most effective energy and dollar saving improvements which can be made. Pending those recommendations this program could be used to provide financial assistance to add insulation, improve the efficiency of current heating and cooling systems, window replacement, etc.

Enterprise Green Communities

This program offers grants to help cover the costs of planning and implementing green components of affordable housing developments as well as tracking their costs and benefits. Planning and Construction grants up to \$75,000 can be used for design work, efficient HVAC systems, green materials and energy efficient appliances. The program is

34-316. pedestrian overlay standards

(1) Design Objective. The Design Objective of the Pedestrian Overlay Design Standards is to:

- (a) Enhance the community character in more compact commercial or mixed use development patterns;
- (b) Improve the design of commercial and mixed use areas to allow a close relationship to supporting neighborhoods;
- (c) Create character and identity through a wide variety of diverse architectural details within a range of compatible building forms and scales;
- (d) Integrate new buildings into the existing context of the community;
- (e) Emphasize the relationship and orientation of buildings and sites to public streetscapes and open spaces, and to compliment investment in the public realm.
- (f) Improve the pedestrian level of service through directness, continuity, street crossings, visual interest and amenity, and security.
- (g) Encourage quality construction and improve sustainability with durable, adaptable, and re-usable buildings.

(2) Applicability. These standards apply to mixed-use activity centers, small scale commercial districts near neighborhoods, other similar areas where diverse, walkable environments are desired. Specifically, they apply as an overlay to Commercial Zoning Districts where this type of environment is desired based on planning context.

Application of the overlay shall be through the same procedures as rezoning property, but may occur in conjunction with rezoning of the base zoning districts. The Pedestrian Overlay shall be designated by a “Ped” following the base zoning district (i.e. C-1-Ped).

(3) Streetscapes and Lot Frontages.

- (a) Required Building Frontage. The primary façade shall occupy at least 75% of the required front building line along the frontage, except:

(i) Where the primary building entrance is accessed by a courtyard, plaza or similar civic open space along the streetscape, the front building line may be setback as much as 25'. At least 50% of the lot frontage along the street shall be either building façade or an alternate street wall between 2.5 and 4 feet, and matching the materials or ornamentation of the building.

(ii) On secondary or support streets that are not the primary pedestrian and retail streets for the area, the Director may approve an exception for a building façade that occupies as little as 30% of the front building line, provided it does not impair the design standards for the public streetscape and is consistent with the site design of adjacent property. The Director may require landscape elements, low ornamental walls or similar design details as alternate street walls, particularly at any corner location.

(iii) Where on-site parking is permitted to the side of the building, according to parking standards, the primary facade can occupy as little as 60% of the front building line. An alternative street wall of between 2.5' and 6' feet and matching the materials or ornamentation of the building shall be at the extension of the front building line to screen parking areas.

(iv) Buildings designed for Civic Uses may have greater setbacks provided the building façade orients to the street and any space between the building and public street is designed as Civic Open Space.

(b) Primary Entrance Feature. Any façade that faces a public street or civic open space shall contain a singlestory primary entrance feature subject to the following:

(i) The primary entrance feature shall have enhanced architectural details such as a canopy or arcade, recessions of up to 5', and decorative moldings, framing, or roof and awnings.

(ii) Primary entrance features shall occur at least every 75' along a building frontage. Where a single tenant occupies more than 75' of building frontage, the facade shall be differentiated by horizontal massing techniques specified in sub-section (f), and primary entrance features may occur every 125' along the building frontage.

(4) Lot Access and Internal Circulation.

(a) Driveways. All situations where a sidewalk or pedestrian facility intersects with an internal vehicle circulation should be treated by one of the following manners:

(i) The material, layout and grade of the pedestrian access should be continuous as it crosses the grade; or

(ii) A crosswalk differentiated from vehicle surfaces by different materials, texture or color, or a speed table. Crosswalks shall not exceed 32 feet. Where crosswalks would exceed 32 feet, curb projections shall be used to shorten pedestrian crossing distances.

(b) Internal Access Streets. Any single block, lot or development site larger than 5 acres shall provide a system of internal access streets to establish connectivity and mobility within the site and coordinate with streets and blocks adjacent to the site. Internal access streets shall:

(i) Be designed according to the public street design standards in the Subdivision Regulations, including the standards for, vehicle lanes, parking lanes, streetscape design;

(ii) Organize the site into smaller “blocks” between 1 and 4 acres for buildings, open space, and parking; and

(iii) Be treated as public streets for interpretation and application of setbacks, build to lines, curb cuts and driveway access, and building and lot frontage standards.

(c) Pedestrian Access and Circulation. All development sites shall include direct pedestrian connections and circulation routes at the same or greater frequency as is provided by streets, driveways, and internal access streets.

(i) Generally. At a minimum pedestrian access and circulation within a site shall provide dedicated pedestrian facilities directly connecting each of the following:

(1) All public entrances of all buildings;

(2) The public sidewalk on adjacent streets or internal access streets;

(3) On-site parking areas;

(4) Required open space and other site amenities; and

(5) Adjacent sites, where pedestrian access between sites via the sidewalks on streets or internal access streets is remote.

(ii) Sidewalk widths. Internal sidewalk widths shall meet the requirements in Table 316-1 of the City of Hastings municipal code.

(5) Open Space Design. Open space shall be required as provided in the Subdivision Regulations Where site development occurs without subdivision of land, and where the lot does not have access to open space required by Section 34-305, open space shall be provided on the lot subject to the following:

(a) Commercial or Mixed-use Buildings. On-site open space shall be 5% of the building footprint plus an additional 1% for each story of the building greater than 2 stories.

(b) Large Buildings. On-site open space for buildings with over 50,000 square feet footprints shall be 8% of the building footprint plus an additional 1% for each story of the building greater than 2 stories.

(c) Residential. Any residential buildings shall provide at least 200 square feet per dwelling unit, except that up to 40% of this requirement may be accommodated by outdoor decks, balconies or similar private or common open space.

(d) Design. On-site open space shall meet the Type, Design Standards and Location Criteria of the Section 34-305.

(6) Building Design. Any façade that faces a public street, Internal Access Street, or Civic Open Space shall contain the following façade design features.

(a) Façade Components. Each façade shall have components differentiated with a change in materials, projections or ornamental architecture to decrease vertical massing (base, top, and mid-section) and horizontal massing (structural bays and façade breaks) for longer building facades. Standards for decreasing vertical and horizontal massing are:

(i) Base. The base shall be directly at grade and support storefront window sills, and consist of the lower 5% to 25% of the building height, but never more than the first story.

(ii) Top. The top shall be the upper most 5% to 15% of the façade and differentiated with a continuous

horizontal architectural treatment such as a cornice line or parapet. Except that on pitched roof structures, the eave and roof structure shall be the top. Where any buildings of 4 stories or more are permitted, the upper story may be differentiated as the top.

(iii) Mid-section. The mid-section shall be all portions of the façade that are not the base or body, and may consist of primary materials, secondary materials and window openings.

(iv) Horizontal Massing. Any building with a front façade with a width greater than 150' shall have differentiated horizontal massing through any combination of the following:

(1) Differentiated structural bays every 25' to 50', demonstrated by a vertical expression line of trim or ornamental architectural elements that distinguish it from the rest of the façade;

(2) An intervening courtyard or plaza meeting the requirements of sub-section (e), resulting in no single portion of horizontal façade greater than 75'.

(b) Façade Openings. Each façade shall have openings at street level and upper levels according to the following:

(i) Between 60% and 90% of all street-level facades between 2 and 10 feet above grade shall be transparent with views to the interior of the building. No window starting at a level of greater than 3.5 feet above the street level should be included in the calculation. Where the interior operation or program of the building warrants screening from the street, a closed display window of at least 2.5 feet may be substituted along up to 50% of the linear distance of the façade.

(ii) No more than 20' of building frontage shall exist at the street level without window or door openings. On secondary or support streets that are not the primary pedestrian and retail streets of the District, the Director may approve facades with greater than 20' of building frontage without window and door openings.

(iii) Upper level openings shall occupy between 20% and 50% of the façade and consist of punched and regularly spaced openings to create a rhythm and pedestrian scale for the façade.

(iv) Corner buildings with two street frontages may designate one frontage as the primary frontage; however, at least the first 30' of secondary frontage from the corner shall meet the above minimum opening requirements.

(7) Site Screening. Any delivery and service areas, external support equipment, site utility areas, or other similar high-impact elements of site and building design shall be subject to the following:

(a) All delivery or service areas and loading docks shall be located on a discrete façade, and internal to the block wherever possible.

(b) Any rooftop equipment shall be screened from view of the adjacent public streetscape or other public or common opens spaces by a parapet on flat roofs, or located on a discrete pitch for pitched roofs.

(c) Any service areas, loading docks, service equipment, or other site utility area that is visible from adjacent property or public right-of-way shall be screened with a landscape buffer.

(d) Any service use that involves vehicle service bays on a primary or secondary façade shall be located on only secondary or support streets, shall have the service bay portion of the building set back at least 30' from the lot frontage, and shall not have service bays that occupy more than 40% of a single façade. (Ord. No. 4233-11/2009)



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Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture
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