

# 2009 Downtown Kalamazoo Comprehensive Plan



*accessible*

*prosperous*

*diverse*



## The Promise of Downtown

*FINAL DRAFT APRIL 2009*

*vibrant*

*progressive*



*green*



**Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc.  
Kalamazoo, Michigan**



# Vision Statement

*The promise of downtown is to be a focal point for a distinctive sense of community, forming the foundation for educational, economic and personal success for all.*

## Executive Summary

### 1 Introduction

Downtown Kalamazoo	1-2
2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan Update	1-3
Associated Planning Efforts	1-6
2009 Downtown Comprehensive Planning Process	1-6
Public Involvement	1-7
Community Vision Results	1-8
Using the Plan	1-12

### 2 Residential

Connector Neighborhoods	2-2
New Residential Development	2-5
Senior Housing	2-7
Implementation Strategies	2-9

### 3 Retail

Downtown Retail Trends	3-3
Implementation Strategies	3-6

### 4 Students

Student Population	4-2
Enhancements	4-3
Implementation Strategies	4-5

### 5 Transportation

Street Improvements	5-3
Public Transit	5-8
Linkages and Gateways	5-9
Parking	5-11
Pedestrian Circulation	5-19
Implementation Strategies	5-25

### 6 Jobs

Employment Trends	6-3
Marketing	6-4
Implementation Strategies	6-7

### 7 Arts & Culture

Sense of Place	7-3
Creative Excellence	7-4
Implementation Strategies	7-6

### 8 Land Use & Development

Land Use Evolution	8-3
Land Use Plan	8-4
Land Use Recommendations	8-10
Streetscape	8-16
Implementation Strategies	8-19

### 9 Opportunities

Community of Excellence	9-2
Homelessness	9-2
A City for Children	9-3
Seniors in the Downtown	9-5
Commitment to Sustainability	9-6
Implementation Strategies	9-9

### 10 Transformative Projects

Transformative Projects	10-2
Implementation Strategies	10-6

### 11 Work Plan

11-2

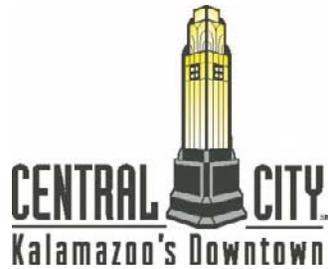
#### Appendix A

Summary of Focus Groups (Full focus group comments are available in the DKL office)

#### Appendix B

Proposed 5 Year Parking Plan – Revenue Enhancement Schedule 2010-2014

## The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo: 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan



*This plan has been made possible by the efforts of many Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated (DKI), Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Downtown Tomorrow Incorporated (DTI), Downtown Kalamazoo Association Charities (DKAC) volunteer board members; Safety, Parking, Marketing, Project Review, Capital Improvements Program, Business Recruitment & Retention (BRRC) volunteer committee members, Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated and City of Kalamazoo staff members; and hundreds of Kalamazoo citizens who participated in multiple public outreach opportunities.*

### 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

#### Project Team:

Bobby Hopewell, Mayor, City of Kalamazoo, DDA  
Robert Doud, Chair, DKI  
Jennifer Shoub, Chair, DDA  
Robert G. Miller, DKI  
Caroline Ham, Secretary, DTI  
Kenneth Miller, DTI, DDA, CIP  
Elsbeth Inglis, Chair, DKAC  
Chris Shook, Chair, DKI, Parking  
Cindy Stewart, DTI  
Anne Summerfield, Chair, BRRC  
Mary Oudsema, Chair, Safety  
John Steele, Chair, Project Review  
Tony Masco, Chair, Marketing

Frances Jewell, Parks & Recreation, City of Kalamazoo  
Bruce Merchant, Public Services, City of Kalamazoo  
Jeff Chamberlain, Community Development & Planning, City of Kalamazoo  
Jerome Kisscorni, Economic Development, City of Kalamazoo  
Keith Hernandez, Community Planning & Development, City of Kalamazoo  
Andrea Augustine, Community Planning & Development, City of Kalamazoo

#### Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. Staff:

Kenneth Nacci, President  
Steven Deisler, Vice President, Planning & Development  
Mary Staron, Finance Consultant  
Deb Houseman, Finance Director  
Vicky Kettner, Director of Community Relations  
Rob Peterson, Business Recruitment & Retention Director  
Nicole Wilson, Planning & Development Coordinator  
Sharlene Stockwell, Finance Assistant  
Jillian Green, Executive Secretary  
Stephanie Watkins, Receptionist

**The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo: 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan**

**Project Consultants:**

**TSI Consulting**

Tim Fallon, Principal

Laurie Schulte

**LSL Planning**

Val Lazdins, Principal

Sara Schillinger

Eric Frederick

**Downtown Parking Solutions**

Jon Seybold, Principal

# Executive Summary

*“The promise of downtown is to be a focal point for a distinctive sense of community, forming the foundation for educational, economic and personal success for all.”*

This vision statement, directly intended to support the “Kalamazoo Promise”, Kalamazoo’s unique free tuition program, guides us on a journey of projects, programs and policies that will define downtown Kalamazoo’s future throughout the next decade.

## Vision Elements

The project planning team, a group of twenty professionals from a diverse group of downtown stakeholders, took on the task of distilling this work into the following **Vision Elements** designed to encompass these priorities. The future of downtown Kalamazoo should be **Accessible, Prosperous, Diverse, Green, Vibrant** and **Progressive**.

- **Accessible.** Approachable, available, convenient, nearby, unrestricted.
- **Prosperous.** Financially successful, well-off.
- **Diverse.** Different, distinct, diversified, varied.
- **Green.** Environmentally responsible/conscious.
- **Vibrant.** Energetic, vigorous, exciting, lively, dynamic.

- **Progressive.** Favoring change, improvement or reform.

## Strategic Priorities

So what does that mean? What does the future of downtown Kalamazoo look like in five years? In the next ten years? Over the past twelve months, through a variety of focus groups and community forums, nearly 500 participants developed community values and guiding principles that resulted in six **Strategic Priorities: Residential, Retail, Students, Transportation, Jobs and Arts & Culture.**

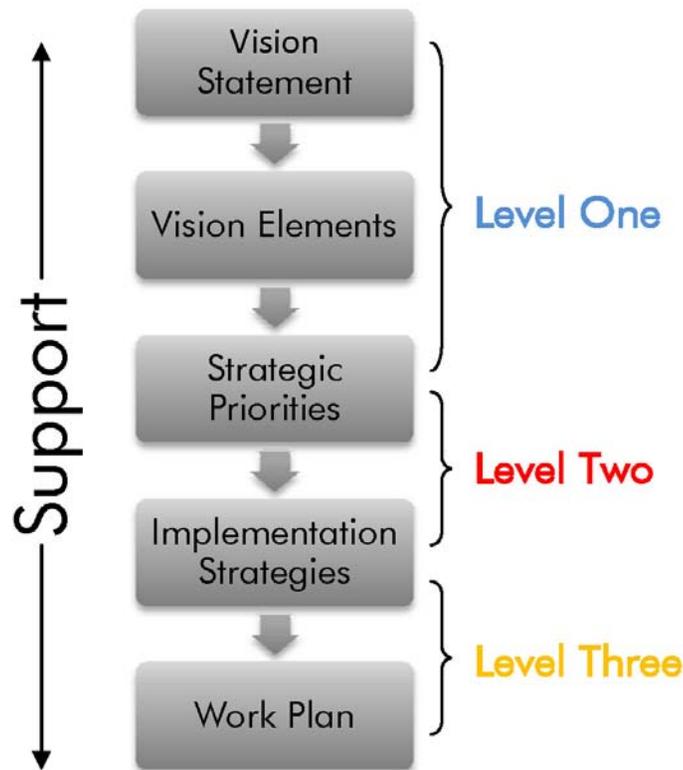
- **Residential.** Increase the number of affordable downtown residences.
- **Retail.** Continue to support and expand downtown retail opportunities.
- **Students.** Build stronger relationships with the education community, including students.
- **Transportation.** Improve traffic flow, ease of navigation and overall transportation facilities in and through the downtown.
- **Jobs.** Leverage public/private partnerships to support economic development and job creation.
- **Arts and Culture.** Continue to support arts and culture.

## Implementation Plan

So, how do we get there? We have created a **Vision Statement** that is supported by **Vision Elements** and then distilled into **Strategic Priorities**. When the three are aligned, it provides a foundation that allows us to develop specific projects and implementation strategies that support each **Vision Element**. Blend in the traditional planning **Land Use Development** component along with several **Transformative Projects**; add in non-traditional **Opportunities** such as **Homelessness, Children, Seniors** and **Sustainability** and we have the

2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan that is our recipe for the next decade.

So how do we use this plan? Well, it should be considered a “work in progress” and flexible. National, state and local trends such as the economy, demographics, technology and many unforeseen factors will affect what downtown Kalamazoo looks like ten years from now. The plan is a tool for making decisions *today* based on the community’s vision for *tomorrow*.



The Vision Alignment chart on page 1-11 aligns Strategic Priorities that best support the top three Vision Elements. For example the Strategic Priority of Retail best supports a *prosperous, vibrant* and *progressive* downtown.

In the Strategic Priority Retail chapter of this plan, a second level of detail is provided as Implementation Strategies are presented and aligned with their top three Vision Elements.

A third level of detail is presented in the final chapter by a Work Plan that identifies the Lead Agency, Support, Resources, Priority and cost for each Strategic Priority and their implementation strategies.

## The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo: 2009 Comprehensive Plan

Following are key recommendations for each strategic priority:

### Residential

- Create 500 new residential units downtown over the next 10 years that address affordability.
- Strengthen the connection between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods by improving accessibility through pedestrian friendly streetscape enhancements.
- Support development projects that create senior living/assisted care and student living opportunities.

### Retail

- Grow locally-owned retail businesses through strong recruitment and retention programs and incentives.
- Develop a retail incubator program which will assist at least 5 start-ups annually.
- Improve access to retail businesses through the conversion of one-way streets to two-way and pedestrian friendly streetscapes.

### Students

- Improve the safety and connectivity of the pedestrian walkways between WMU and K College campuses and downtown.
- Assist in the development of three new student oriented businesses.
- Implement the Student Connector Trolley.

### Transportation

- Implement the full one-way to two-way street conversion plan.
- Reconstruct the entire Michigan Ave. streetscape corridor from Lovell St. to E. Kalamazoo Ave. through traffic calming strategies, pedestrian friendly design and landscaping improvements.

- Encourage sustainable transportation initiatives including alternative modes of travel and new technologies.
- Implement the new Five-Year Parking Plan.

### Jobs

- Develop new programs that support and encourage Kalamazoo Public School Promise graduates to select the local public higher educational institutions and offer internships with downtown businesses.
- Assist in the creation of 50 new jobs annually.
- Support the development of the downtown Bio-Medical/Life Science District for expanding Southwest Michigan Innovation Center start-ups.

### Arts & Culture

- Continued support for the Arts and Cultural community and the development of new and unique programs downtown, such as "BLUE SKIES".
- Seek and encourage opportunities for more public art in green areas and pedestrian trafficked areas

### Land Use and Development

- Adopt the Comprehensive Land Use Plan as a guide for growth.
- Continue to review and revise the Downtown Design Guidelines with a focus on Form-based codes and quality urban design strategies.
- Implement strategies and projects that will create "great" streets (Michigan and Kalamazoo), parks (Urban Nature Park) and retail districts (Kalamazoo Mall and Michigan Ave.).

### Opportunities

- Support and assist Kalamazoo County with the Housing First Plan.
- Develop three new playgrounds for children and families.

## The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo: 2008 Comprehensive Plan

- Implement ten new sustainability programs for downtown businesses, property owners and residents such as recycling programs for residents, commercial and pedestrian/users.
- Identify trends and develop policies that address new demands such as growing senior population.

### Transformative Projects

- 100 Block E. Michigan Ave. Redevelopment
- Two-Way Street Conversion/Streetscape Improvements
- Event Center/In-Town Neighborhood
- Lovell St./ Rose St. Development
- Haymarket Parking Lot # 9 Redevelopment
- Kalamazoo River Redevelopment/Portage Creek Trailway
- Medical/Biomedical/Life Science/Research Village

Now what? The adopted Plan will be used as a guide, a reference check for city leadership, downtown stakeholders, and those volunteers who, everyday, make decisions on the use of financial and human resources to improve downtown Kalamazoo. It will need updating from time to time and refreshed with changing community values. Downtowns evolve. Downtown Kalamazoo has been a leader, and will continue to be. From the opening of the first pedestrian mall in 1959 to its reopening in 1998, downtown Kalamazoo remains on the leading edge of progress, continually reinventing itself through efforts such as this.

Access to key documents of “The Promise of Downtown” the 2009 Downtown Kalamazoo Comprehensive Plan, including full report, Illustrative Summary, Executive Summary can be found at [www.downtownkalamazoo.org](http://www.downtownkalamazoo.org). CD’s and jump drives are available (charges apply), as well as hard copies (charges apply). For more information, contact Steve

Deisler, VP Planning & Development, Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. 157 S. Kalamazoo Mall, Suite 175, Kalamazoo MI 49007. 269-344-0795. [sdeisler@dki.org](mailto:sdeisler@dki.org). Presentations of the plan are also available upon request.

# Introduction

## Downtown Kalamazoo

Located in the Southwest corner of Michigan, Downtown Kalamazoo is the region's central business district, home to nearly 700 businesses, organizations, institutions and service providers. Supported by a strong regional cultural center rich in arts, entertainment, and educational opportunities and an emerging residential sector, downtown Kalamazoo boasts a distinctively diverse and uniquely vibrant environment.

Its recognizable skyline, blending historical and modern architecture, portrays a community that embraces its heritage, while aggressively moving forward to retain its position as a progressive city.

Served by a transportation infrastructure that makes downtown accessible to all, it is a regional hub featuring rail and bus service, bike trails, and, of course, a well-defined street network. The proximity of well established historic neighborhoods and four institutions of higher learning invites walkability.

Downtown Kalamazoo prides itself on supporting education in the broad sense of community development and providing life-long opportunities for formal and continued personal, professional and cultural growth. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Davenport University, with over 40,000 students and 4,000 faculty and staff make Kalamazoo a major center for advanced education. Capitalizing on the many opportunities available, Kalamazoo is the beneficiary of an extraordinary gift, the *Kalamazoo Promise*. This anonymously funded endowment, in perpetuity, awards Kalamazoo Public School graduates with up to 100% tuition for continuing



*Aerial view of downtown Kalamazoo*

their post-secondary education. This rare economic development tool is one of many examples of the community's long-standing tradition of innovation for which the city is known worldwide.

Pride and leadership are common traits in this city. Many businesses, institutions and organizations in the community have received recognition for setting the highest standards of excellence and innovation for themselves within their respective fields.

Not content to rest on its well-deserved past reputation, Downtown Kalamazoo has witnessed over \$500 million dollars in private and public investments in the past 20 years. It is positioned to continue that growth and momentum due to the commitment of a dedicated and passionate community that understands, embraces and supports the importance of a healthy, economically viable downtown. Among its many accolades, the city was recognized in April 2007 by Urban Land as a *"Top Ten Turn-Around Downtown"*, Additional DKI recognitions received include:

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

- 2003 International Downtown Association Merit Award for Economic Development
- 2004 International Downtown Association Merit Award for Downtown Leadership
- 2007 International Economic Development Council Honorable Mention for the Kalamazoo Mall Ramp / Kalamazoo Commons / Rave Cinema Project.

Kalamazoo has positioned itself as a regional center in Southwest Michigan and is reaping the benefits of redeveloping its historic downtown. Through the combination of new development, historically sensitive redevelopment, and public investment, Downtown Kalamazoo today serves as a retail, employment, entertainment, civic, and residential nucleus for the surrounding region.

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan Update

In early 2008, DKI began a process to update the 1996 Downtown Plan for Kalamazoo with assistance from LSL Planning, TSI Consulting Partners, Inc., and Downtown Parking Solutions. The goal was to craft a vision that reflected community values and guiding principles, through a collaborative public process. Building on that vision, this plan seeks to preserve all that is great about downtown Kalamazoo and present implementable actions for its continued success.

The 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan continues the tradition of foresight and action established by the 1996 Downtown Plan. That plan set the overall framework to guide development and investment that makes downtown Kalamazoo attractive to residents,

businesses, consumers and visitors alike. The key recommendations in the 1996 plan included:

- **Gateways.** Creating attractive entry points into downtown.
- **Access, Traffic Patterns and Transit.** Improving mobility in and around downtown.
- **Pedestrian Environment.** Designing attractive public spaces that meet the needs of multiple users.
- **Linkages.** Encouraging greater synergy between downtown and its neighbors.
- **Land Use and Development.** Preparing a blueprint for success.
- **Attractions.** Creating appealing leisure activities for residents and visitors.
- **Residential.** Creating diverse opportunities for housing.
- **Parking.** Providing a customer-oriented, user friendly parking experience.
- **Marketing and Perception.** Spreading the good news about downtown.

The following table summarizes the many accomplishments of the 1996 Downtown Plan.

<b>1996 Downtown Plan Accomplishments</b>
<b>Gateways: Creating Attractive Entry Points into Downtown</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completed the East Gateway Streetscape Improvement / Fountain Project in 2000.</li> <li>✓ Completed the Downtown District Wayfinding System in 2000.</li> </ul>
<b>Access, Traffic Patterns and Transit: Improving Mobility In and Around Downtown</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completed several downtown Two-Way Traffic Conversion Studies between 2003 and 2006.</li> <li>✓ Converted South Burdick St. in 1999 and South Rose St. in 2005 to two-way traffic.</li> </ul>
<b>Pedestrian Environment: Designing Attractive Public Spaces that Meet the Needs of Multiple Users</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Established the Building Revitalization Program, which includes design, façade and interior rehab programs. Since its inception in 1999, these programs have awarded 70 grants and \$2 million.</li> <li>✓ Completed the North Mall Landscape Improvement Project, including the installation of public art sculptures in 2004.</li> <li>✓ Designed and constructed the Arcadia Creek Festival Place. Funded by private donations with an overall cost of \$2.7 million. 2008 programming resulted in more than 40 festivals and special events.</li> </ul>
<b>Linkages: Encourage Greater Synergy between Downtown and its Neighbors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completed the South Burdick St. improvement project in 1999.</li> <li>✓ Completed the neighborhood lighting project along Lovell, South, and Academy Streets.</li> <li>✓ The Edison Mainstreet program was facilitated along Portage Street through Downtown Tomorrow, Incorporated.</li> </ul>
<b>Land Use and Development: Preparing a Blueprint for Success</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completed a Comprehensive Downtown Market Study that helped direct business recruitment and expansion efforts related to retail, office and residential developments.</li> <li>✓ Developed the Kalamazoo Mall ordinance and overall Downtown Design Guidelines.</li> </ul>
<b>Attractions: Appealing to the Leisure Time of Residents and Visitors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Epic Center opened in 1998, as an arts and cultural facility for the community in 1998.</li> <li>✓ Over 40 new restaurants/entertainment venues have opened since 1999.</li> </ul>

<b>1996 Downtown Plan Accomplishments</b>
<b>Residential: Creating Diverse Opportunities for Housing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Supported the creation of 16 residential apartments in the Peregrine Tower.</li><li>✓ Converted many upper-levels to residential units, including The Milliner Center, Style Shop, Arcadia Condominiums, 230 N. Kalamazoo Mall, and Kalamazoo City Centre. Several newly-constructed units were developed as part of the mixed-use Kalamazoo Commons and DeVisser Place projects.</li></ul>
<b>Parking: Provide a Customer-Oriented, User-Friendly Parking Experience</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Created 250 90-minute free parking spaces available to downtown customers.</li><li>✓ Completed conditions assessment, design and repair programs for the city owned parking system.</li><li>✓ Completed and implemented a 5-Year Parking Plan.</li></ul>
<b>Marketing and Perception: Spreading the Good News about Downtown</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ On-going quarterly newsletters featuring downtown districts.</li><li>✓ Created a downtown district campaign that included radio, billboards, print media and emerging technologies.</li><li>✓ Developed image branding campaign "LOOK CLOSER."</li><li>✓ Developed student discount program.</li><li>✓ Established the DKI website, Central-City.Net, which receives significant hit rates from all over the nation.</li><li>✓ Accomplished business recruitment and expansion goals including new business marketing, recruitment and financial assistance and packaging.</li><li>✓ Created the business recruitment incentive program which awarded over 50 grants and over \$800,000 for new office and retail downtown.</li><li>✓ Provided annual reports on downtown projects and forecasted future projects via State of the Downtown presentations.</li><li>✓ Managed and executed a variety of signature events that drew hundreds of thousands in pedestrian traffic; including Expanded Art Hop, Mixer on the Mall, Do Dah Parade, Art on the Mall and the Kalamazoo Holiday Parade.</li></ul>

## Associated Planning Efforts

In addition to the 1996 Downtown Plan, a number of other studies and plans were conducted over the past several years. This plan draws upon previous data that has been collected and consolidates the diverse goals and recommendations into one cohesive document.

- Kalamazoo Riverfront Redevelopment Plan 2003
- Vision for Downtown Kalamazoo 2004
- Kalamazoo Two-Way Traffic Conversion Studies 2004-2006
- Downtown Comprehensive Retail Strategy 2004
- Convention Center Market and Feasibility Analysis 2004
- Downtown Design Guidelines 2005
- Residential Market Study 2005
- Downtown Kalamazoo Occupancy Survey 2008
- Campus Connection Study 2008

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Planning Process

Many individuals – the project team, downtown stakeholders, and the general public – actively participated in this update of the 1996 Downtown Plan. Stretching over the course of fourteen months, this effort required a significant investment of time and effort by these many contributors. The process was conducted in four phases.

**Phase I – Listening and Learning.** This first phase included a number of meetings with the project team to discuss previous planning efforts, current issues and expectations for the planning process. At this time an extensive effort to engage the public was also

conducted, which included a series of focus group meetings and interviews that are more thoroughly described in the next section. Existing information and approved plans were compiled, reviewed and analyzed to establish a foundation for development of the 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

**Phase II – Exploring and Creating.** During this second phase, ideas were developed and explored that built on previous downtown planning efforts. A vision statement, planning principles, priorities and recommendations were developed with input from the project team, staff and the public at a community forum.

**Phase III – Testing and Evaluating.** Once the vision statement, guiding principles and community values, strategic priorities and recommendations were refined, a series of review meetings were held with the project team to guide and evaluate the direction of the plan.

**Phase IV – Preparing and Completing the Plan.** Based on previous phases, a draft plan was prepared and reviewed by DKI staff, the project team and the public at a second community forum. After refinements were made, the final plan was presented at a public meeting and adopted by the DDA, DKI, DTI and City Commission in the spring of 2009.



First Community Forum

## Public Involvement

In keeping with Kalamazoo’s long-standing practice of continually reinventing itself as a leader in nationally recognized programs, products and services, the planning team set out to harness this attribute by designing a planning process, unique to Kalamazoo that fully engaged the general public as well as stakeholder groups. While the process reviewed traditional comprehensive plan components, it also included non-traditional elements such as sustainable development and centers of excellence. A discussion of the public involvement process follows. A complete summary of the results is included as Appendix A.

**State of the Downtown.** Over 250 community members attended the kick-off of the community input process which took place at the State of the Downtown Address in February 2008. Audience members participated in the input process through an electronic automatic response system that allowed instant tabulation of their opinions, beliefs, values and behaviors relative to downtown. This information revealed specific topics of

interest and a basis for conducting future focus group meetings.

**Focus Group Meetings.** Nine focus group meetings were conducted in the spring of 2008 to identify community values, guiding principles, strategic priorities and to develop a vision statement. Over 200 participants attended these sessions representing target groups which included:

- Neighborhood representatives
- Non-profit, institution and government representatives
- Property owners
- Residents
- Restaurant owners
- Retailers
- Students



*The project planning team established overall community values, strategic priorities, implementation strategies and vision elements to guide this plan*

Interviews of key downtown stakeholders were also conducted to discuss specific topics and obtain valuable insight about future downtown development opportunities.

Throughout the focus group process, community values and guiding principles were reinforced, as listed under the heading “Community Vision Results” below. Additionally, implementation strategies were developed during the focus group meetings.

**Community Forums.** Two public meetings were held to present initial plan concepts and the draft plan in a “community fair” format. Following an introductory overview of the planning process and key areas of focus, the public had an opportunity to visit information stations for more in-depth discussions about elements of the plan. Nearly 200 people (representing a broad cross-section of downtown residents, property and business owners, non-profit organizations and members of the broader community) attended the sessions, held in late summer and early fall of 2008. Specific plan components – Visioning, Land Use & Development, Retail, Transportation, Parking, and Residential – were reviewed.

## Community Vision Results

The following community values, guiding principles, strategic priorities and vision elements are the foundation of this plan.

### Community Values/Guiding Principles.

- Friendly and welcoming to all
- Known as a safe and comfortable place.

- Easily accessible to all, particularly people with special needs.
- “Green,” environmentally responsible and sustainable.
- Aesthetically pleasing and beautiful.
- Cultivating a sense of pride and ownership in the community and its heritage.

### Strategic Priorities.

- Increase the number of affordable downtown **residences**.
- Continue to support and expand downtown **retail** opportunities.
- Build stronger relationships with the education community, including **students**.
- Improve traffic flow, ease of navigation and overall **transportation** facilities in and through the downtown.
- Leverage public/private partnerships to support economic development and **job** creation.
- Continue to support **arts and culture**.

**Implementation Strategies.** Specific implementation strategies are detailed at the end of each chapter.

**Vision Elements.** Drawing from the hundreds of participants and the Project Team’s analysis of the cumulative input, the following six **vision elements** describe what is most important to the community as it works toward creating a healthy downtown and guiding the planning and implementation outcomes.

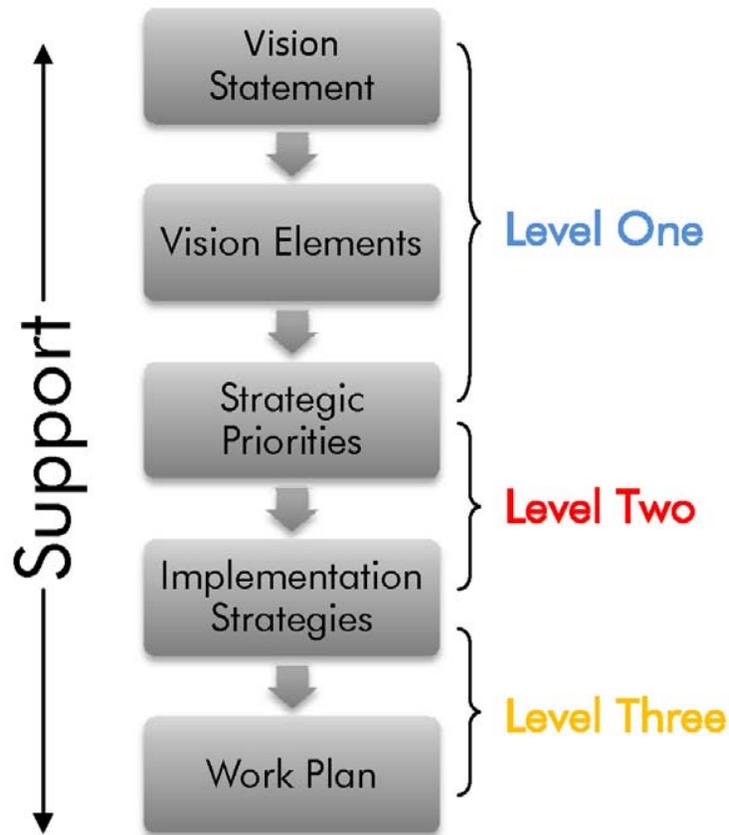
- **Accessible.** Approachable, available, convenient, nearby and unrestricted.
- **Prosperous.** Financially successful, well-off.
- **Diverse.** Different, distinct, diversified and varied.
- **Green.** Environmentally responsible/conscious.
- **Vibrant.** Energetic, vigorous, exciting, lively and dynamic.
- **Progressive.** Favoring change, improvement or reform.

From these community values, guiding principles and vision elements a vision statement was developed.

## VISION STATEMENT

*The promise of downtown is to be a focal point for a distinctive sense of community, forming the foundation for educational, economic and personal success for all.*

**Outcomes Structure.** The Planning Team developed a series of visual representations that detail three levels of planning outcomes; the Vision Alignment, Implementation Strategies and Work Plan. The chart below illustrates the outcomes structure and how they support one another.



The Vision Alignment chart on page 1-11 aligns Strategic Priorities that best support the top three Vision Elements. For example the Strategic Priority of Retail best supports a *prosperous, vibrant* and *progressive* downtown.

In the Strategic Priority Retail chapter of this plan, a second level of detail is provided as Implementation Strategies are presented and aligned with their top three Vision Elements.

A third level of detail is presented in the final chapter by a Work Plan that identifies the Lead Agency, Support, Resources, Priority and cost for each Strategic Priority and their implementation strategies.

VISION ALIGNMENT

The promise of downtown is to be a focal point for a distinctive sense of community, forming the foundation for educational, economic & personal success for all.

Vision Elements ▶	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Strategic Priorities ▼	approachable, available, convenient, nearby, unrestricted	financially successful, well-off	different, distinct, diversified, varied	environmentally responsible/conscious	energetic, vigorous, exciting, lively, dynamic	favoring change, improvement or reform
RESIDENTIAL						
RETAIL						
STUDENTS						
TRANSPORTATION						
JOBS						
ARTS & CULTURE						
LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT						
OPPORTUNITIES						

## Using the Plan

This document is not an end in itself. It contains considerable information, highlights trends, identifies strengths and deficiencies, and paints a picture of the future for downtown Kalamazoo. The plan is intended to present an ambitious vision for what can and should be. However, this is only the first critical step in realizing that vision. Now the real work begins.

**Let it be Your Guide.** There are many adages about master plans...not cast in concrete, living document, must be flexible, etc., etc. All of these are true, but should not be taken as justification for ignoring the plan. The 2009 Comprehensive Downtown Plan is, indeed, a guide for the future of downtown Kalamazoo. It not only advocates specific actions, but provides the rationale behind those actions.

**Refer to It in All Decisions.** The plan provides a framework for decisions. No doubt, opportunities will arise that may not have been envisioned at the time the plan was prepared. Those new found opportunities, nevertheless, should be evaluated in light of the plan, its vision and its principles. Decision makers should not be short-sighted and grasp at whatever may come along. Immediate results may be politically expedient in these dire economic times; but may be counter productive, if they don't support the long-term vision.

**Keep it Current.** As with any plan, this document must be routinely revisited and refreshed, as needed. It must remain relevant and provide direction. Annually, the DKI staff and board should review the plan, highlight accomplishments, reaffirm actions, and set priorities. When needed, the plan should be updated to ensure its

continued significance and usefulness as a policy guide for the future of downtown Kalamazoo.

**Enlist Support.** DKI alone cannot accomplish all that is proposed here. Kalamazoo has an amazing history of community participation and commitment. Improving and strengthening downtown offers a focus around which the entire community can rally. While DKI will lead the charge, many other public and non-profit agencies have key roles to play. In addition, the private sector – citizens, corporations, foundations, and developers – has a tremendous stake in seeing downtown succeed. Their active participation is essential.

# Residential

A strong residential base is a key component of any successful downtown. Mixing housing types and sizes, in established neighborhoods and new development, provides an array of options to satisfy the varied lifestyles that make downtown vibrant.

Many assets contribute to the desirability of downtown Kalamazoo as an attractive place to live. It is the region's principal employment center and home to major institutions, shopping, entertainment, health and personal services. Downtown Kalamazoo also offers an abundance of community facilities such as exemplary schools, parks and places of worship all within a comfortable walking distance.

Because of these benefits, an increasing number of people are calling downtown Kalamazoo home. The number of people seeking downtown residences currently exceeds the number of units available. Most of these individuals are young professionals and empty nesters. In response to this demand, the number of loft apartments and condominiums has increased.

## Connector Neighborhoods

There are five distinct urban neighborhoods surrounding downtown: Eastside, Edison, Northside, Stuart and Vine. Each exhibit a distinct identity and character. And of critical

### Downtown Residential at a Glance

- Downtown boasts 575,000 square feet of residential space, approximately 520 units, with a vacancy rate of less than 3%.
- An estimated 12,700 people live within one mile of downtown, with about 1,200 living within its central core.
- Those living in surrounding neighborhoods have an average age of 27, due in part to the large student population. Within downtown, residents tend to be young professionals or empty-nesters.
- The median owner-occupied home value within one mile is \$72,730.
- The most common type of housing, accounting for 40% of residential units in and near downtown, are single-family homes. Multiple family buildings containing 3-19 units are a close second.
- The upper floors of most downtown buildings have already been redeveloped into housing units. Future perceived demand for downtown residential will require new construction.



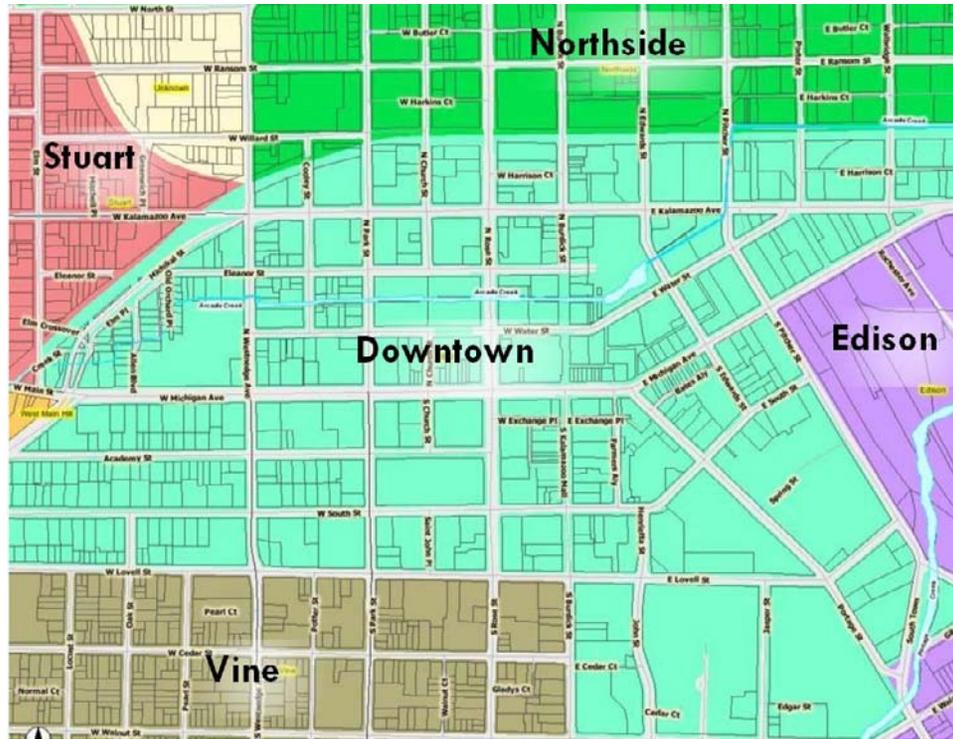
*Housing opportunities include single family homes, apartments and units in mixed use buildings*

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

importance, each is supported by an association organized to preserve the neighborhood's integrity and quality of life. When connected with pedestrian walkways, streetscape enhancements and bike paths, these neighborhoods provide housing opportunities for families and individuals wishing to take advantage of the activity, opportunity and diversity that downtown offers. In return, the downtown business community benefits from the economic impact and vibrancy those residents can create.

**Maintenance.** Neighborhoods surrounding the downtown are generally well maintained. The presence of many historic homes introduces pride and stability, contributing to the retention of the character, value and integrity of these high-quality single family areas. The City of Kalamazoo should continue the policy of maintaining these as single-family residential neighborhoods. Working with the neighborhood associations and other non-profit groups, the city can provide incentives and assistance for home improvements and maintenance. Any home renovation or expansion that alters the exterior of the structure should reflect the architecture, scale and character of existing homes along the block.

**Blight Prevention.** The City of Kalamazoo needs to continue to enforce and fine-tune ordinances that address blight to ensure



*Stuart Neighborhood historical marker*



*Single family home in Vine Neighborhood*

that a pattern of decline does not begin. Their application should be targeted where maintenance issues are evident.

**Affordability.** Compared to other Michigan downtowns, residences in downtown Kalamazoo are relatively affordable. Since government, service and blue collar workers account for a significant portion of the city's population, retaining this affordability is important to attracting new residents and more investment. The City of Kalamazoo and DKI should work with area churches and non-profit organizations to encourage and support neighborhood development corporations to provide housing to meet the needs of those that may need financial assistance.



*Continued maintenance of affordability of single family homes is essential to the preservation of neighborhood character*

#### Great Neighborhoods...

- Have distinct centers and edges.
- Are of a walkable scale.
- Balance a mix of uses and activities.
- Include interconnected streets and pathway systems.
- Have street systems that create a comfortable, safe environment.
- Include living areas and front entries as the prominent home feature.
- Use unifying elements to help identify the neighborhood.
- Embrace their historic, cultural, and civic resources.
- Have a formal organization.

**Owner Occupancy.** Due partly to a significant student population, Kalamazoo has a higher than average percentage of renters. In order to increase the number of owner occupied homes within and near the downtown, the City and DKI, in concert with other agencies and employers, should provide incentives and expand assistance programs for home buyers. For example, Bronson Hospital has offered interest free loans for employees who purchase a home within one of Kalamazoo's Community Development Block Grant neighborhoods.

**Emerging Trends.** In order to retain current residents and their families, DKI needs to respond to changing trends and demands. For example, because many communities are experiencing increasing senior populations, housing needs are changing, as is the demand for their medical care. DKI and the City should regularly review local ordinances and regulations to ensure that new trends are supported. This could include allowing accessory apartments in appropriate

locations and encouraging varied housing types such as assisted living, convalescent care or nursing homes in appropriate neighborhood settings. Likewise, as the community experiences an increase in school-age children due to the Kalamazoo Promise, DKI should encourage the development of family housing opportunities and daycare facilities.

**Student Housing.** For further discussion surrounding housing for Kalamazoo's student population, see Chapter 4 Students.

## New Residential Development

Downtown Kalamazoo currently has approximately 300,000 square feet of above-main-floor space available for residential development. There are several large downtown commercial buildings that could be redeveloped for residential or mixed-use space and a number of downtown sites and parking lots sit vacant and underutilized. These examples highlight opportunities to bring new housing to the downtown that will help support businesses and shops, and inject 24/7 energy into the downtown.

### Urban Townhomes or Row Houses.

Townhomes are known by many names: attached condominiums, brownstones and row houses. By definition, they are residential units that are attached side-by-side by vertical walls. Oftentimes, they are designed in rows of 8 to



*Tree lined residential street*



*Urban townhomes or row houses can provide a type of housing that is not commonly found in downtown Kalamazoo*

12 units per building. Townhomes offer a great housing choice for those home-owners who desire reduced maintenance responsibilities (since a homeowner's association is responsible for yard work, outside repairs and painting) than those with single family detached homes who may look forward to taking care of a yard. Because of their design (creating a continuous street wall) and relatively high residential density (20 units/acre or higher) townhomes contribute toward a compact, walkable downtown and are generally attractive to all generations that look for affordability and low maintenance responsibilities.

**Mixed-Use Buildings.** Mixed-use buildings contain a blend of residential, commercial, offices and, in some cases, parking facilities. This includes upper story residential units and retail, office or businesses on lower floors. This integration provides a customer base for businesses and improves the convenience and accessibility of goods and services for residents.

**New Development Design.** Where infill development or redevelopment is proposed, its physical character and composition needs to be in keeping with the urban context of the surrounding area. The design principles for such development are straight-forward and reflect traditional, historic development patterns. These include:

- The prominence of garage doors along public streets should be avoided by locating garages at least 10-15 feet behind a line drawn along the front façade; or locating them at the rear with alley access.
- Porches and windows should be accentuated.
- Buildings should respect the streetscape and provide a consistent urban street wall. Upper floors should



*Mixed-use buildings provide benefits for all users*

step back and recess as height increases. Windows should constitute 60%-80% of a first floor building façade, with a lesser percentage for upper floors.

- Front doors of buildings should be visible and oriented to the front sidewalk.

## Senior Housing

Providing appropriate senior housing options is increasingly important as the general population ages. Fewer financial resources are available to older residents, so they need affordable housing options that are safe, attractive and stimulating. Many seniors live in established neighborhoods, and some find their financial resources strained over time, leaving them to struggle to remain in their homes. Senior housing options should be explored together with local institutions such as Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, and local hospitals since they may be interested in encouraging or supporting housing choice for retired employees and former students. DKI should also ensure that local ordinances support retaining and developing a variety of senior housing options within the downtown.

**Independent Living.** Independent living options include units that are small in size and affordable to purchase and maintain. Rental is also an option. Often these developments offer community amenities, such as fitness centers, woodworking shops, and similar amenities which support the active lifestyle of early retirees.

In this setting, seniors can be in a mixed-use building and close to downtown shopping and services, which can be especially helpful to residents with mobility issues and those who no longer drive.



*Examples of Assisted Living Facilities in urban areas*

**Assisted Living.** Assisted living is similar to independent apartment style units, but they maintain on-site services for residents, including medical assistance, food service, housekeeping and recreation. In many ways, these developments provide a community within itself where residents are active, but prefer some assistance.

**Full-Care or Nursing Homes.** Full-care options are important in the later stages of life. Most residents needing full-time care prefer not to move far distances, as this can cause mental stress and trauma. Allowing residents to stay in downtown Kalamazoo is important when the decision is made to move to an institutional facility.

**Continuum of Care.** Many senior developments today incorporate independent, assisted and full-care options within a single development. This allows residents to stay within one building or neighborhood as their health care needs change.



Page 2-8

*Existing senior housing in downtown Kalamazoo*



*Senior housing integrated into a downtown setting*

## Implementation Strategies

*Strategic Priority: To increase housing for diverse income levels.*

A key community value and guiding principle of downtown planning is the establishment of diverse housing opportunities for all. The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo is to create a *vibrant, diverse and progressive* downtown, where people of all walks of life and economic standing have access to quality-of-life opportunities such as the rich educational environment and unique places that only downtown Kalamazoo offers.

The chart on the following page outlines residential strategies that support the three elements of the vision:

A variety of housing options across varying personal income levels **diversifies** the downtown population.

A residential population creates **vibrancy** by providing a continuous presence of people on the streets, in the stores, eating, learning and living.

A **progressive** downtown provides public resources to convert underutilized upper floor space to residential units and encourages employer based programs to assist employees in residing downtown. Downtown Kalamazoo is a leader in both of these areas and the following implementation strategies will ensure it remains so in the future.

RESIDENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
Increase the number of affordable downtown residences						
DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Partner with major employers to build incentive programs for downtown housing						
Create Live-Work Space for creative community and Event Center/ In-town Neighborhood						
Explore & emphasize the need for senior housing of all types						
Foster development of 500 housing units for people of diverse income levels over the next 10 years						
Promote a mix of rental & owner-occupied units and housing types						
Require design sensitivity to insure physical character & composition fits with surroundings						
Evaluate tax-structure for residential units (commercial v. residential, Proposal A, 2-Mil)						
Include housing within the development of the medical/bio-medical/life-science/research village (students, interns, residents, employees) and Event Center/ In-town Neighborhood						

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTOR DISTRICTS	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
University Housing for faculty & students in between campus & downtown						
Foster development of housing affordable for people of diverse income levels						
Promote owner-occupied single-family focus						
Provide incentives & assistance for home improvements, maintenance & purchase						
Maintain architectural character & residential feel						
Continue to fine-tune and enforce blight ordinances						
Continue to maintain & replace street trees						
Create & maintain connectivity to existing neighborhoods through bricks & mortar, streetscape projects						



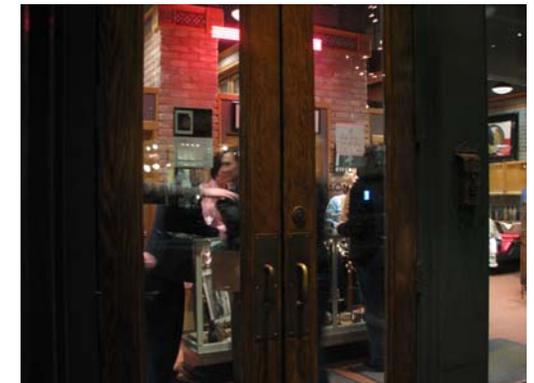
# Retail

As the popularity of suburban living increased over the past fifty years, shopping malls and strip centers supplanted downtown as the center of retail for most Americans. Only recently has there been a push toward re-establishing downtowns as competitive and desirable shopping districts and activity centers.

Compared to other Midwestern cities of this size, downtown Kalamazoo offers a stable and desirable retail environment. With affordable leasable space, convenient and accessible parking, an existing retail core, along with a healthy balance of office, entertainment, institutional and residential uses, downtown Kalamazoo is positioned to become an even more vibrant and regional shopping destination.

### Downtown Kalamazoo Retail at a Glance

- About 850,000 people visit Kalamazoo each year, spending approximately \$180 million.
- Almost half of all area residents visit downtown every week.
- 36% of those who visit downtown make the trip specifically to shop.
- 30% of surveyed residents dine downtown once a month.
- Downtown employees have a spending potential of more than \$27.5 million annually.
- Approximately 150 retailers can be found in downtown Kalamazoo.
- Downtown Kalamazoo has nearly one million square feet of retail, restaurant and entertainment space, with the economic potential for another 200,000 square feet. (*Market Insite*, 2004)
- Retail lease rates are generally \$10 to \$14 per square foot.
- Kalamazoo's Radisson Plaza Hotel and Webster's Restaurant are the only hotel/restaurant combination in Michigan to receive "four diamonds." — AAA's highest rating
- Since 2003, over 90 new retail businesses have located downtown.



The restaurants and specialty shops downtown create the kind of energy that only a vibrant city center can offer

## Downtown Retail Trends

Shopping characteristics in downtowns are different than in suburban retail centers. The mix of uses, the pedestrian orientation, accessibility and parking issues create an impression that downtowns are at a competitive disadvantage to enclosed malls. In the current economic climate, however, trends and principles that have guided retailing are becoming irrelevant and a new set of rules may greatly influence shopping habits. Some of these changes may favor downtowns over their suburban cousins, while others may at least equalize the competition.

**Economy.** Current economic times have left consumers with less money to spend. More and more Americans are spending their money on basic human needs and struggling to pay bills, which leaves less disposable income to allocate to luxuries or entertainment. Economic factors that influence shopping include:

- Fixed expenses, such as food, medical, education, childcare, energy and gas continue to increase.
- People tend to have less home equity and less disposable incomes.
- Middle class incomes have grown only modestly if at all in the last ten years.
- Unemployment has been steadily increasing, while job recovery tends to take a substantial amount of time.
- Shoppers are placing higher value on low cost goods and services.

**Trends Assessment.** DANTH, Inc., a downtown revitalization specialist firm, regularly prepares a

national downtown retail trends assessment. Completed in early 2008, the following summarizes the DANTH findings:

1. **Continued and Increased Constraints on Consumer Spending.** Incomes will continue to be modest; declining home values will continue to leave people with little equity; and costs for essentials will continue to put pressure on discretionary spending.
2. **Recovery from the Poor Job Market Will Be Slow.** For some time the nation has experienced minimal job growth and has entered a recession. Trends indicate that the job market will be slow to recover and may take about forty-six months to recover the jobs lost during this recessionary period.
3. **Boomers are at it Again.** As the boomers begin to sell their suburban homes, home prices in the 'burbs' will continue to decrease. Many downtowns seek to attract "empty nesters." However, it will be increasingly difficult for those nesters to get their money out of their homes.
4. **Value Retailers are Still Growing.** Value retailers continue to gain market share on both price and fashion/design as retailers like Target, Kohl's and, increasingly, Wal-Mart appeal to consumers with "cheap chic" products. More affluent consumers as well as budget-minded shoppers are drawn to these stores as the tightness of discretionary dollars penetrates and seeps up the income ladder.
5. **Trading Up May Be Stalling.** The "Trading Up" retail trend – running counter to value retailing – has succeeded by pinpointing consumers who are willing to spend more on certain goods that provide superior quality, performance and emotional appeal. This retail trend has supported the renaissance of many downtowns, but the factors presented above

indicate that this behavior may be significantly diminished in coming years as discretionary incomes are constrained.

**Areas for Growth.** Despite the bleak outlook on discretionary spending, the fact remains that people still need items and there will be a need for the sale of goods and services. The following areas will likely continue to fill a need.

1. **Home Goods.** Furniture and home furnishings have been hit hard, while electronics and appliances have held their ground. Demand for home goods and repair will rebound as consumers put more focus on fixing up their current homes instead of buying new ones.
2. **Medical.** As the population continues to age and live longer, the demand for pharmaceuticals, prosthetics, medical equipment and associated goods and services will continue to increase.
3. **Food Products.** Food is a basic human necessity. People are going out to eat less and eat in more. The result is the need for more food suppliers. Niche suppliers such as bakeries & meat markets, fruit & vegetable markets and both standard and gourmet grocery stores that are downtown friendly should all be available.
4. **Restaurants.** While cutbacks are being made, people are still dining out, though patrons are expecting more for what they spend. Many restaurants are responding with more modestly-priced menu options and promotions. Restaurants that offer a unique experience, like locally-owned eateries, will likely do better than others.

**Retail Friendly Atmosphere.** Though obviously affected by the economy and shifts in retailing nationally, there are steps to be taken to position downtown Kalamazoo as a retail center. In order to nurture existing retail and build additional opportunities, downtown Kalamazoo must package the unique shopping experience it offers with convenience. Convenience refers to such elements as parking, pedestrian and vehicular access, signage, consistent hours, restroom facilities and merchandise accessibility.

In addition, downtowns also have something that suburban or lifestyle centers tend to lack: a sense of place that is created by its history, complementary mixture of uses, well-designed public spaces, attractive streetscapes, and urban activity. These factors combine to provide a synergy that makes downtown an attractive place for people to visit. Businesses of all types, including retail and entertainment uses, will benefit from an increased presence of people downtown. This will naturally result from an increase in the number of downtown living units and from businesses that are open



*Downtown dining tends to offer unique experiences, and as long as affordable, should continue to be a part of successful*



2009

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

during convenient hours to provide downtown with new energy.

The prevalence of working parents, the reality of hectic schedules, and the presence of single headed households have led to an increased demand for convenience goods and services. Businesses that offer carry-out/take-out food, are open 24 hours or provide maintenance services are all expected to remain popular in the future.

**Promotion.** In order to differentiate itself from its suburban competitors, downtown retailer must distinguish itself as unique, distinctive and customer-service oriented. Successful promotions, though, must extend beyond the product/service availabilities. They must weave salient points into their message that address safety, convenience and parking – oft cited concerns for those who are unfamiliar with downtown.

**Retail Incubator.** Luring successful retailers downtown with incentives is one way to strengthen the shopping environment; but creating a supportive atmosphere in which local retailers can thrive has several added benefits. It builds wealth by keeping the profits local; positions downtown to offer shops not found elsewhere; and increases the ability for merchants to work together, since the owner is typically the operator.

DKI is working with Western Michigan University, the Small Business and Technology Development Center and other local partners to create a retail incubation program. The image is not of one building with many small retailers. Instead, the aim is to create the educational, financial and mentoring support needed to

help new retail stores become profitable, customer-centered businesses.



*Ace's Cycle, located on the Kalamazoo Mall, was the first business to receive funding through the Retail Incubation Program.*

## Implementation Strategies

*Strategic Priority: Continue to support and expand downtown retail opportunities.*

Retailing has deep roots in downtown Kalamazoo. The first pedestrian mall on the North American continent was built in downtown Kalamazoo in 1959. This community believes that retail growth is critical to creating a *prosperous, vibrant and progressive* downtown, where shoppers have an array of options and store owners have opportunities for collaboration, learning and peer support.

The following chart identifies strategies to address retail opportunities to support these vision elements.

A downtown that features a complementary mix of retail businesses is characteristic of a *prosperous* downtown and is a destination for shoppers.

A thriving retail sector enhances downtown's *vibrancy* by providing an eclectic mix of home-grown, specialty retail.

Resources designed to create new unique retail, such as an incubator program demonstrates a *progressive* approach to fostering new growth.

RETAIL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
Continue to support & expand downtown retail opportunities						
	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Promote additional on-street parking to support retail businesses						
Streetscape - create inviting pedestrian-friendly environments						
Grow specialty retail						
Establish downtown as a primary shopping destination						
Develop a retail incubator program to assist at least 5 start-ups annually						
Cluster businesses effectively						
Grow locally-owned businesses through recruitment & retention programs						
Mandate retail at ground level in retail emphasis zones						
Encourage downtown establishments to remain open for common and extended hours						
Assist in the development of three new student-oriented businesses						
Continue to support retail focused events						



# Students

Kalamazoo is rich in a tradition of education, as evidenced by the philanthropic creativity of Kalamazoo Promise, a program that provides scholarships to any Kalamazoo Public School graduate who goes on to attend one of Michigan's public colleges or universities. In addition, Kalamazoo is home to four institutions of higher learning; Kalamazoo College, one of the nation's premier liberal arts colleges; Western Michigan University, part of the state's acclaimed university system; Davenport University and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, which provides area residents opportunities for life-long learning and skill development. For a city of its size, it is unusual but beneficial, that all four schools are either located downtown or within walking or biking distance.

## Student Population

Many cities have discovered the yet untapped vitality, excitement, and economic benefit students can bring to a downtown. During a recent economic development focus group meeting in Kalamazoo, one strength was repeatedly discussed: the presence of Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, KVCC and Davenport University. Together their combined student population totals nearly 40,000, on par with major universities such as UC Berkley,

### Kalamazoo Students at a Glance

- Western Michigan University is Michigan's fourth largest higher education institution, enrolling nearly 25,000 students.
- Kalamazoo College was founded in 1833 & is among the 100 oldest institutions in the country. Kalamazoo College has roughly 1,400 students enrolled.
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) was established in 1966 by the overwhelming approval of voters in nine K-12 school districts. It is a comprehensive, public, two-year college with an estimated enrollment of 13,000 each semester (downtown enrollment).
- Davenport University is a private business college, that while not considered within walking distance of downtown, attracts students to area.



*Four institutions of higher learning are located in Kalamazoo which helps energize downtown*

University of Illinois and the University of Michigan. Together, these students are a powerful economic force. WMU alone contributes over 400 million dollars annually to the local economy.

**"I think our greatest strength is the educational community. Businesses will be attracted to come here just because there are potential employees."**

Some communities have begun to quantify the economic potential associated with students and are developing strategies to make downtowns more inviting in order to tap that market. A study by the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership found that an individual student spends, on average, \$35 a week downtown. As more and more students choose to live downtown, that figure is sure to grow. In addition to dining out, college students have discretionary income for entertainment, personal services and designer apparel.

The student focus group held as a part of this process showed results consistent with that of a study Penn State University conducted to assess student behavior. That study showed that:

- Downtown establishments that are open for late hours are rare.
- Downtown establishments do not consciously cater to a college student clientele.
- Students want to eat in places where they are also welcome to socialize in groups.
- Students favored foods that are good quality but inexpensive.
- Students prefer outdoor eateries, with patios or sidewalk tables in nice weather, and respond to the "see and be seen" ambiance.
- Venues that permit under and over-21 are desired, where drinking is not the sole activity.

- Most students desire a variety of entertainment options: live music, outdoor events, arts, comedy, and sports.
- Many students like active, lively, energetic and unique gathering places such as ESPN Zone-type virtual sports arcades or Hard Rock-type bar/restaurants.

## Enhancements

While the student market and its potential economic benefits are compelling, the true potential is unlikely to be realized without certain enhancements downtown. These will involve transportation improvements, attractive urban design and land use changes.

**Transportation.** The typical pedestrian is willing to walk fifteen minutes, or about one-quarter of a mile, to a specific destination. However, if the setting is safe, animated, and pleasing, that distance may be increased. This highlights the importance of creating a walking and biking environment that is inviting and safe. More information on important linkages between downtown and the student campuses, such as the Stadium Drive/Lovell Street area, bike connections, safety improvements and public transit are contained in Chapter 5 Transportation.

**Land Use.** To improve connectivity between the campuses and downtown, a major hole in the downtown fabric requires mending: an incompatible void exists between Stadium Drive/Lovell Street and West Michigan/West Main Streets that consists of a suburban island whose deep setbacks, expansive parking lots, and low level of activity are inconsistent with the character needed to create continuity between the campus and

downtown. Multiple retail and entertainment destinations need to be enhanced. This district is, however, poised for redevelopment and should be viewed as a potential urban neighborhood to accommodate those students who wish an alternative to suburban apartment living. This concept is consistent with the In-Town Neighborhood described in the Land Use and Development Chapter. It should support increased density and height, with buildings placed close to sidewalks, on-street parking and street trees. In addition to housing options such as townhomes, live/work units, lofts, and condos, larger-scale retail uses such as the new Frayed retail store and Dino's Café, which serve the entire downtown, should be encouraged. University or College owned housing options should also be investigated. If students choose to make the walk to downtown, having this gap filled with an exciting and vital urban neighborhood will make a better and safer experience.

## Implementation Strategies

*Strategic Priority: Build stronger relationships with the education community, including students.*

An essential community value and guiding principle of downtown planning is to build stronger relationships with the education community, including students. The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo is to create an ***accessible, diverse and vibrant*** downtown, as a continuation of life-long learning and teaching opportunities through unique educational spaces and places that only downtown Kalamazoo can provide.

The chart that follows outlines student-focused strategies that address these three vision elements:

A variety of transportation options will increase downtown's ***accessibility*** to all students.

Students from around the world bring ***diversity*** to the downtown population. The demands of this population create a ***vibrancy*** that is only present in downtown Kalamazoo.

STUDENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Stadium Drive project involvement						
University Housing for faculty & students in between Campus & Downtown						
Improve pedestrian & bike connections including safety improvements (lighting, crossings, sidewalks)						
Expand bus hours to accommodate student populations						
Implement the Student Connector Trolley						
Improvements to key streets (MichiKal, Oakland, etc)						
Market Student Discount Program via emerging technologies						
Encourage downtown businesses to remain open for student-oriented hours						
Assist in the development of three new student-oriented businesses						
Encourage establishments to offer inexpensive menu items that will appeal to students						
Encourage eateries to offer an outdoor venue						
Encourage venues that cater to both under & over 21 demographic						
Encourage a variety of entertainment options						
Encourage venues that are active, lively places						

# Transportation

Accessibility is a critical component in the success of any business district. Given its past impact on downtown, transportation, in all its forms, must be carefully considered when planning for the future to ensure that it supports the vision for downtown Kalamazoo.

The design, orientation and character of streets have had a profound impact on downtown. Much of the current street pattern stems from the 1950's Gruen Plan that envisioned creating a downtown super-block, surrounded by a one-way network of streets and a sea of parking, similar to the shopping malls of today. Luckily, that plan was not fully implemented. Still, the fallout has been a network of one-way streets that are excessively wide and carry a mix of cars and trucks at relatively high speeds through the heart of the downtown. While accessibility is an essential element of success, the current street network is over designed in relation to the volumes of traffic being carried and the context of the downtown district. The role of streets as visual elements downtown has been overlooked. Streets are, therefore, among the most important public infrastructure and place-making elements of the city because they can define how a visitor, resident, or worker perceives a neighborhood, downtown or the city as a whole. While it is important that streets foster safe travel for all modes of

### Downtown Transportation at a Glance

- Conveniently located on I-94 between Detroit and Chicago
- Served by 7 airlines through the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport, a 15-minute drive from downtown Kalamazoo
- 5 major routes carry traffic into downtown
- Train and bus service from downtown to all major Midwestern destinations and beyond
- Average Daily Traffic Counts for major streets include:  
 Michigan Ave: 15,100 - 24,800  
 Kalamazoo Ave: 14,300 - 24,800  
 Westnedge Ave: 6,400  
 Park St: 7,800



*Planning for transportation in downtown Kalamazoo needs to balance automobiles with other travel options*



and perhaps supplementary studies that are beyond the scope of this plan. Specifically, the trigger for such additional review is a recommendation that pertains to converting some one-way streets to a two-way configuration. This is not a new concept for downtown. The recommendation has been cited in previous plans, but has yet to be implemented.

**Conversion to Two Way Streets.** Kalamazoo has extensively studied transforming the existing downtown one-way street system into a two-way configuration. Previous studies have all pointed to the need to convert the flow of certain streets, which would be the best way to improve traffic circulation, accessibility, safety, and to create a more attractive downtown environment. This plan adds its voice to the chorus of previous plans and strongly endorses the timely conversion of the streets listed below to a two-way traffic pattern, as illustrated on page 5-6:

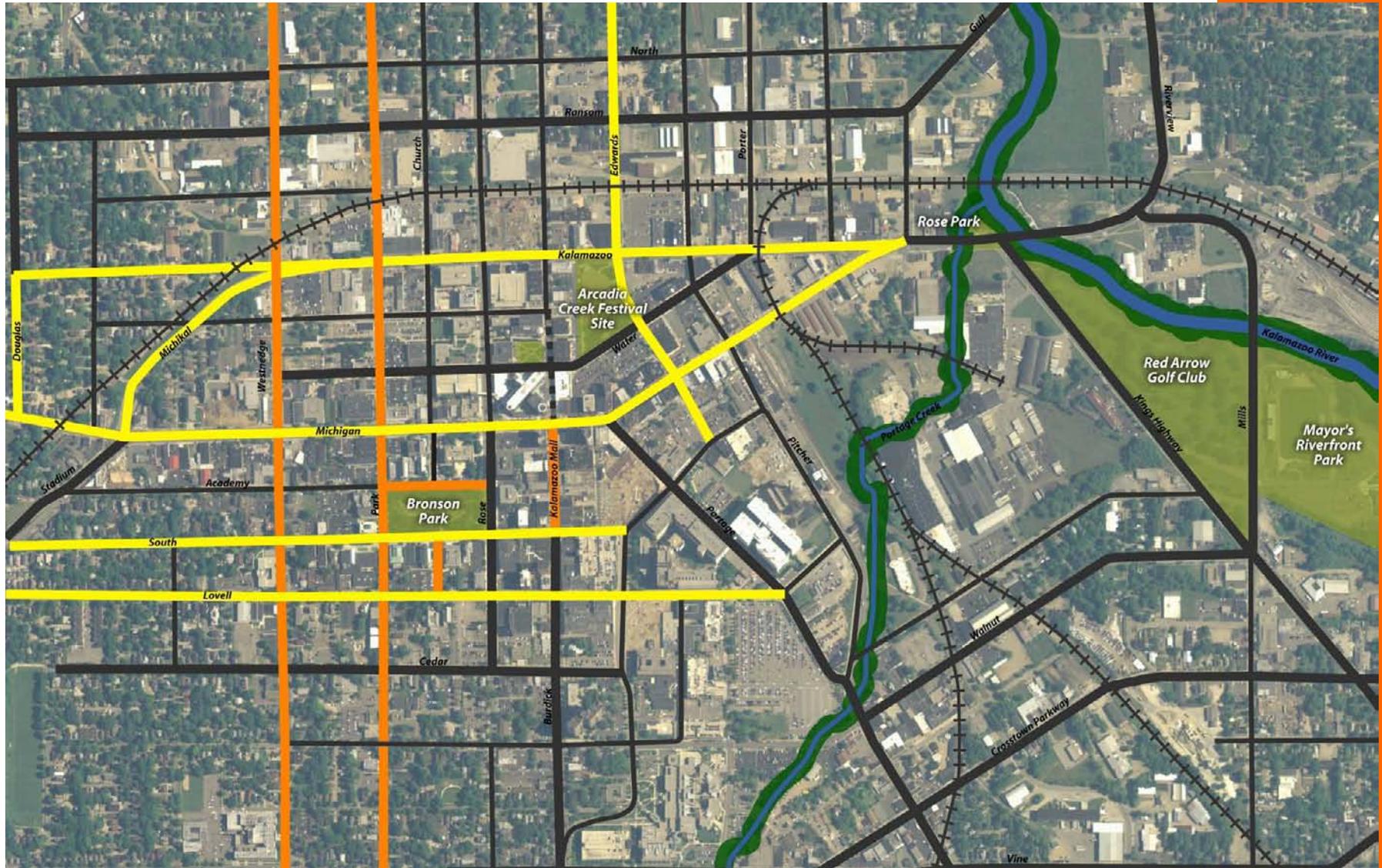
- Kalamazoo Avenue
- Michigan Avenue
- South Street
- Lovell Street
- West Main Street
- Douglas Street
- Edwards Street
- Michikal Street

As these streets fall under various jurisdictions, DKL and the City of Kalamazoo will need to initiate and facilitate a planning and design process, as follows:

1. Meet with the (KATS) and (MDOT) to review recent traffic studies and implement Context Design Solutions.
2. Refine the design of streets and intersections; accommodate bike lanes on appropriate streets and

street sections; and develop a cohesive streetscape concept that is based on sustainable and green design principles.

3. Update preliminary engineering, design and construction costs.
4. Obtain endorsement by City Commission.
5. Add project(s) to Transportation Improvement Project list.
6. Complete final engineering and urban design.
7. Bid project(s) to obtain qualified contractors.
8. Prepare public information campaign to address change and construction-related business disruption.
9. Construct improvements.



-  Converted from One-Way to Two-Way Traffic
-  One-Way Traffic
-  Two-Way Traffic



**Interchange Improvements.** Downtown Kalamazoo must deal with the negative impact of having a truck route that allows everything from semis to multi-vehicle gravel trucks rumbling through the heart of the city. This vehicle mix, the speeds and associated noise levels are not conducive to fostering the pedestrian-friendly, cohesive, urban living environment that should typify downtown. To address this significant issue, a reconfiguration of the US-131 interchange north-west of downtown would allow improved accessibility to, from and around downtown Kalamazoo. Currently, travelers heading northbound on US-131 cannot access downtown Kalamazoo via the business loop, nor can traffic leave downtown Kalamazoo via the business loop and head south on US-131. The addition of two ramps, as depicted in the illustration below, would allow travelers to make these two key traffic movements and help divert trucks away from core downtown streets.

It would further improve access to and help regenerate the major industrial areas and brownfield sites located along the northern edge of the city. These interchange modifications should be considered in conjunction with an extension of the US-131 business loop across the Kalamazoo River so trucks and industrial traffic are not forced through the downtown and the Northside neighborhood, but could use M-43, US 131, Mosel Ave, Riverview Drive and Kings Highway, avoiding the downtown core.

**On-street Parking.** Vehicle speeds and the scale of the street can be significantly reduced by introducing on-street parking, particularly along Michigan and Kalamazoo Avenues. Entering a street that has parallel



*Ramp additions to US-131 can improve access into and out of downtown*

on-street parking generally causes motorist to slow. On-street parking has the obvious added benefit of providing convenient parking for downtown shoppers and visitors, always an issue for downtown businesses. DKI and the City of Kalamazoo should seek to expand on-street parking including angled parking within the downtown, wherever possible.

**Access Management.** Access management standards can improve the movement of traffic on city streets and can further enhance public safety. When applied, access standards can help minimize congestion and accident potential, while still providing property owners with reasonable access. DKI should require new developments and existing sites to upgrade in accordance with the following access management guidelines:

- **Number of Driveways.** The number of driveways affects traffic flow, ease of driving, and accident potential. Every effort should be made to limit the

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

number of driveways and encourage access from side streets and shared driveways.

- **Driveway Spacing from Intersections.** Driveways should be spaced along major streets in a way that minimizes their impact on the efficient operation of intersections. Where possible, the distance on the same side of the street between a driveway and an intersecting street should be at least 100 feet.
- **Driveway Spacing from Other Driveways.** Along major streets, driveways should be sufficiently spaced to avoid conflicts between vehicles turning right or left from adjacent driveways. In order to prevent opposing left turn conflicts, driveways should be aligned with those across the street or offset a sufficient distance.

**Traffic Calming.** People expect low traffic speeds on neighborhood and downtown streets and alleys. Traffic calming measures cause drivers to slow-down and be more attentive. Some traffic calming measures that should be considered in certain areas of the downtown include:

- **Speed Humps and Speed Tables.** Speed humps are vertical variations in the road designed to encourage safe vehicle speeds (15 to 20 mph). They extend across the width of the pavement and range between 2 to 4 inches in height and 14 to 22 feet in length. Speed tables are similar to speed humps, but are constructed with a table or flat portion in the center, which can also provide more aesthetic benefits than humps. Downtown alleys should incorporate these design measures.
- **Street Narrowing, Slow Points or Chokers.** These features can include curb modifications, channelization and sometimes landscaping features that narrow the street to a minimum safe width. They are often installed at intersections to reduce

speed and/or redirect traffic. They provide larger areas for landscaping, enhance the area aesthetically, facilitate loading and unloading and optimize pedestrian crossing locations. The five to seven lanes along W. Michigan Ave should be modified to include these narrowing designs.

- **Medians and Boulevards.** Medians and boulevards include center islands that divide the opposing travel lanes at intersections or mid-block. They reduce vehicle speeds and enhance pedestrian safety at crossing points by creating a “refuge” area between the opposing lanes. Stadium Dr. is a prime example of where boulevards could enhance the street design.



*Traffic calming measures such as speed humps and street narrowing are effective ways to slow down traffic*

## Public Transit

Public transit offers a viable alternative to the private automobile, thereby reducing congestion and offering an affordable transportation option. Kalamazoo Metro Transit provides two types of services: Metro Transit, an accessible fixed-route service; and Care-a-Van service, both serve downtown Kalamazoo and surrounding communities. Continued efforts to improve the public transit system should be focused on the most cost-effective methods to increase ridership on the existing bus system as follows:

- Evaluate route networks, service areas, and operating hours regularly.
- Adjust operating hours to accommodate times when students are likely to visit downtown.
- Design transit stops so everyone, including those who are disabled, has safe access.
- Provide bike racks within the downtown and require them for significant new development projects and all parking structures.
- Enhance high-use stops to include bus shelters, benches, signage, route information and wider sidewalks.
- Provide new or enhanced transit facilities where new developments are proposed along existing routes.
- Investigate alternative methods, such as a trolley system that links to Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College, especially during evening hours.
- Investigate transit-oriented development around the Transportation Center to promote residential opportunities for those working in or traveling to Chicago or Detroit on a regular basis.

- Expand the current Holly Jolly Trolley program to other high traffic special events including Art Hops and Super Saturday.

*Transit could be improved through expanded service from existing bus service and the introduction of new methods such as trolley service*



## Linkages and Gateways

Downtown Kalamazoo is surrounded by 22 diverse neighborhoods and four respected institutions of higher learning. Convenient, safe and attractive linkages between these locations and downtown must be provided. DKI should work with the city, neighborhoods, university and colleges to prioritize these connections and identify appropriate improvements.

Particular attention should be focused on providing both easy access and attractive gateways into the downtown. As illustrated on the graphic at right, there are a number of key corridor linkages that need to be strengthened:

- Improve pedestrian connections, as described later in this Chapter under Pedestrian Environment.
- Develop recognizable gateways, as described on the following page.
- Employ traffic calming techniques to slow traffic and make biking and walking more inviting.



Currently there are many obstacles to linking the universities and surrounding neighborhoods to downtown

- Encourage mixed-use development within such corridors to create destinations along the way.
- Animate public spaces with a mixture of uses, quality streetscapes and appropriate lighting to make these areas safer and more inviting.
- Place buildings at defined build-to lines located adjacent to the sidewalk.
- Make intersections pedestrian friendly and easier and safer to cross.

**Gateways.** A gateway can be an entrance or a corridor leading to a particular destination. Typically, it is located where major streets or pedestrian pathways enter and exit a district. The initial visual impact of a gateway defines the overall perception about a particular area, neighborhood, or the entire community. It also announces arrival, defining the entry or limits of



A number of corridors provide key linkages to downtown that should be strengthened to improve access and be more welcoming



*Existing east gateway at Michigan and Kalamazoo*

an area. Kalamazoo has done an excellent job in redefining its eastern entrance into the downtown, but other gateways need to be enhanced to convey the desired impression.

Gateways can be very simple and consist of just trees, a plane of grass, and an existing landmark building or they can be much more “structured” and include signs, landscaping, entrance walls, sculpture or other structural elements. Potential gateway treatments include:

- Consistent Welcome to Downtown Kalamazoo signage.
- A tightly spaced grove of street trees to create a “closed-in” traffic calming atmosphere.
- Public art as a memorable community icon.
- Combination of trees, perennial and annual flowers, ground cover, shrubs and lighting.
- A boulevard to incorporate gateway elements.
- Landmarks or public art to create distinction, focal points and enhance the entry experience.

The key is to develop a design theme that repeats itself at the various gateways so those entering feel a connection regardless of how they got there. Though not every element must be used at every entry point, a selection of several correlating elements should be used to maintain consistency.

Major downtown gateways, as depicted on the Conceptual Land Use Map in Chapter 8 include:

- Kings Highway
- Portage Street
- West Michigan Avenue
- Stadium Drive
- Westnedge (from the North)
- Park (from the South)

Some of these locations lack unified, aesthetic features and do little to distinguish downtown Kalamazoo from other areas. For example, as part of the Stadium Drive reconstruction planned by MDOT, an opportunity is available to create a more prominent, greener entrance into downtown and the university district. This can be accomplished by accommodating a boulevard and supplanting the center turn lane (since the need for left turning movements on Stadium Drive between Howard and Lovell is severely limited). In addition sidewalks and bike lanes should be added. DKI should work with the City, Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University to identify priorities and to improve the appearance at and along these gateways with a consistent image to clearly identify the major entry points to downtown.

## Parking

While this plan seeks to reduce dependence on the automobile, parking has been and continues to be an important issue. Long term viability of the downtown partially depends on the availability of conveniently located parking to serve employees, customers, residents and visitors. Its availability can help ensure that customers can easily access businesses and help ease concerns for those who are not familiar with downtown.

Planning for parking in a downtown is different than for any other area. Aside from the fact that many downtown buildings predate the automobile, downtowns are intended to be compact, walkable, interactive and visually attractive. Therefore, the provision of surface lots and parking structures needs to be accomplished in a way that serves modern parking needs while protecting and furthering the overall vision for downtown. This chapter summarizes the Parking Conditions Assessment that was prepared by Downtown Parking Solutions, and can be found in Appendix B.

### Downtown Parking at a Glance

- Approximately 15,000 spaces are available in downtown
- Over 4,000 spaces are publicly owned/controlled
- 1,800 spaces are in Central City Parking structures
- 1,200 spaces are on-street and more than 1,000 are in surface lots
- More than 200 free, 90-minute on-street parking spaces are available within the core retail area
- Since 1989, DKI has managed and transformed the public parking operation into a nationally recognized, award-winning operation
- A recent survey indicates 74% of the respondents rate the parking system as excellent in terms of convenience, safety, courtesy and cleanliness



*Parking in downtown Kalamazoo is provided for in a variety of ways includes surface lots, structures and on-street*



**Supply and Demand.** For the past twenty years, DKI has strategically managed the public parking system. The goal has been to accommodate the changing, yet distinctive mix of downtown land uses, while balancing the demand for adequate parking without damaging the hallmarks of a healthy downtown. The public parking system has varied in size and makeup over these two decades and currently contains approximately 4,100 spaces, roughly 27% of all downtown parking spaces.

Downtown is divided into four parking zones, as illustrated on page 5-17 and as described in the Parking Zone Statistics table below.

Approximately 70% of parking spaces are located within the DDA district and the most frequently used spaces are located in the retail core south of Michigan Ave. The greatest availability of parking, however, is located north of Michigan Ave. With a total supply of just over 15,000 parking spaces, downtown parking can still accommodate an additional 4,500 automobiles before reaching a point where finding available parking spaces

becomes a challenge and the system becomes less efficient to operate.

This essentially means that significant new development, consistent with current land uses, can be accommodated in specific locations without generating a need for more parking.

Parking Zones 2 and 3 currently have multiple parking ramps to aid in absorbing future demand. Zone 1, however, may require replacing any parking absorbed by new development, particularly if it occurs on the former public safety station and district court site. Currently, Lot #9 is able to handle the demand of its surrounding land uses. However, if the 100 block of East Michigan Avenue were to be redeveloped, demand could far exceed the existing supply. DKI should develop a plan to utilize City of Kalamazoo contributions to reconfigure and reconstruct this lot to better address the potential increased demand in the coming years. In Zone 4, the implications for parking required by new development need to be analyzed on a case by case basis.

Parking Zone Statistics							
	Total Spaces	Handicap Spaces	Reserved Spaces	Occupied Spaces	Occupancy Rate	Available Spaces	Availability Rate
Zone 1	1,953	63	224	932	48%	1,021	52%
Zone 2	4,598	72	218	2,740	60%	1,858	40%
Zone 3	4,408	120	229	2,532	57%	1,876	43%
Zone 4	4,085	118	250	2,318	57%	1,767	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,044</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>8,522</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>6,522</b>	<b>43%</b>

Note: Occupancy rates below have been inflated 10% for seasonal fluctuation



**Maintenance.** In 2006, Walker Parking Consultants reported \$1.8 million is required over the next ten years for the downtown parking system to perform structural repairs. The City of Kalamazoo is contributing \$265,000 annually to address these needs.

**Security and Safety.** The perception that parking structures are not safe is always a concern. However, according to 2007 statistics, only a small percentage of the crimes in the City of Kalamazoo occurred in the downtown. Of those, an even, smaller portion occurred in the parking system. In fact, operator-reported incidents have declined by more than 50% during the last three years.

This decline may be attributable to initiatives undertaken by DKI's Safety Committee to make aesthetic and



*Lighting and surveillance technology can add to the perception of safety in parking structures*

lighting improvements, along with the use of technology and an increased police presence. Further enhancements could involve expanding digital surveillance technology, improving lighting, monitoring vagrancy levels, reviewing traffic signage and structural conditions, promoting vigilance and installing service call stations at strategic downtown locations.

**Technology and Automation.** Recent public survey results indicate that 80% of the respondents who use an attended parking facility prefer to interact with an attendant rather than automated technology. This would suggest a need to educate the public about the benefits of technology and to market its use by continuing a slow progression toward automation.

Following the 2005 installation of the pay-in-lane auto-



*The use of automated technology reduces staffing costs associated with the parking system*

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

cashier at the Kalamazoo Mall ramp, some exit lanes in the Epic Center ramp should now be automated. Not only would this be another step toward automation, it would also reduce payroll expenses to more acceptable levels. In order to maintain an efficient and user-friendly system, the future use of similar pay-in-lane technology should be considered for automation at ramps and lots, such as Arcadia Ramp #4 and Edwards St. Lot # 1. Validations should be universal whenever possible. Multi-space and wireless communication technology should also be explored for on-street parking spaces. If installed, this technology could significantly increase on-street revenue, efficiency, customer convenience, and information access. Office systems and software should be upgraded to accommodate newer technologies and Windows operating systems and software.

**Parking Enforcement and Compliance.** Kalamazoo has striven to reduce the parking system's fiscal dependence on aggressive enforcement without sacrificing on-street parking compliance. Enforcement levels have decreased from an average of 11,000 tickets issued per month in 1989 to approximately 2,500 tickets per month,



*Parking enforcement helps to ensure that short term parking is used appropriately*

according to 2008 operational activity reports. Approximately 88% of parked vehicles are in compliance with meter and time zone regulations.

**Cost of Parking.** In the late 1980's, the parking system was caught between increasing operational and maintenance costs and political pressures to maintain a low rate structure. Saddled with large debt, Kalamazoo was subsidizing the system at an annual rate of approximately \$100,000. Since that time Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc. has been committed to improving the fiscal strength of the parking system.

With a goal of investing in the parking system to make it marketable and capable of supporting future downtown development, Tax Increment Financial (TIF) dollars were used to restore the two oldest downtown garages and expand another by approximately 300 spaces. This began the system's journey toward financial solvency, but it wasn't until 2002 that the system finished the year with a positive balance.

In 2004, Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc. made the strategic decision to trim TIF assistance to the parking system and reduced its annual contribution by approximately \$150,000 so that money could be diverted to other downtown improvements. With this decision, a five year parking plan was adopted.

**Rates.** Since 2005 parking fees have increased at a rate less than inflation. Parking in downtown Kalamazoo is still inexpensive. Hourly transient and monthly parking rates are lower than the average for comparable Michigan Cities, as illustrated in the Parking Rate Survey table below. Based on current conditions, some rate adjustments should be considered as discussed below.

2008 Parking Rate Survey				
City	Transient (Hourly)	Transient (24 Hour)	Monthly General	Meters Hourly
Ann Arbor	\$0.80	n/a	\$125.00	\$1.00
Battle Creek	\$0.75	\$4.00	\$32.50	n/a
Grand Rapids	\$2.00	\$8.75	\$130.00	\$1.50
Kalamazoo	\$1.15	\$9.20	\$74.00	\$1.25
Lansing	\$2.00	\$8.25	\$107.00	\$1.00
Average	\$1.34	\$7.55	\$93.70	\$1.19

**Five-Year Parking Plan.** In consideration of past progress, current conditions, public input and in support of future development, the strategies that follow should be considered in the next five year plan, beginning in 2010.

**Rate Adjustments.** Future rate adjustments to monthly, transient, meters, fines and assessments should be considered when appropriate. Also, the current TIF reduction strategy should be revisited and the question of the financial objective should be defined. A Five Year Parking Plan Revenue Enhancement Schedule is included as part of Appendix B and is summarized as follows:

- Modify the incremental rate structure at attended facilities from hourly increments to thirty minute increments with an initial first hour rate and a reduction in the All Day rate:

\$1.25      1st Hour  
 \$0.75      per 30 minutes thereafter  
 \$8.75      All Day

Based on a recent analysis, this modification should:

- Increase transient revenue in the respective area by more than 3.5%.
- Generate 20% more transient revenue than the

traditional 3.5%.

- Reduce the argument of being overcharged for "over parking" the hourly increment by several minutes.
- Reduce the all-day rate, thus increasing use of parking ramps for storage parking rather than on streets and surface lots.
- Decrease the cost of parking for over thirty percent (30%) of the current transient parkers.

If desired, the all-day could remain at the 2009 rate of \$9.25. If accepted, the revenue increase would be greater by approximately \$2,000 annually. However, only 21% will experience a rate reduction.

- Adjust the evening and weekend maximum rate at attended facilities from \$2.00 to \$3.00.
- Increase all monthly rates by 5% over 2009 rates (to achieve a net 3% increase).
- Adjust the short term on-street meter rate from \$1.25 per hour to \$1.50 per hour.
- Adjust the 10 hour meter rate from \$1.75 to \$2.00.
- Adjust the part-time worker rate from \$1.75 to \$2.00.
- Adjust the short term rate of unattended lots to \$1.00 per hour.
- Expand the Event Rate of \$5.00 at the Water St. parking lot # 9 to all evening festivals. This would begin in 2009.
- Adjust the reserved meter bag rental rates for public sector from \$3.00/day to \$4.00/day and private sector from \$6.00/day to \$8.00/day.
- Begin an annual fine adjustment schedule.

**Reduce Cashier Hours.** Revenue collected between 8 am and 10 am was compared to wages and related expenses. The comparison indicates that expenses

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

exceed revenue by approximately \$900 per month. Until revenue exceeds expenses, cashier hours at the ramps between 8 am and 10 am, weekdays, should be suspended.

**Expand and Modify Meter Areas.** The Comfort Inn and other business activity on West Michigan Ave. and Academy St. warrants expanding meters along Academy St. west of Westnedge Ave. Based on local Central City Parking review, approximately 40 meters may be added. Recommendations in the 2002 Comprehensive On-Street Meter Analysis and the 2005 Five Year Plan should also be reviewed and any incomplete changes should be addressed.

**Expand Time Zone Enforcement to Start Earlier and End Later.** Vehicle activity and employee behavior with “jockeying” cars suggests that some part-time workers may be continuing to abuse the 90-minute time zones. Therefore, time zone enforcement should begin earlier



*Multi-space meters reduce the amount of meters needed on the street, thereby opening up space for street trees and other desirable street furniture*

in the day at 6 am and extend until 6 pm. Enforcement should also include Saturdays from 8 am to 5pm. All changes must follow the current city ordinance.

**Expand the Use of Multi-Space Technology.** Use of a multi-space parking meter has been tested successfully on Rose St. and is being considered north of Bronson Park along Academy and Church St. replacing single space meters with 6 multi-space units.

**“Going Green” – Promoting Alternative Transportation.** With increasing fuel prices saddled upon a challenged economy, downtown leaders face the critical need to reevaluate their transportation management strategies. This need is being magnified by the widening attention directed toward the environment and the impact of future development.

Across the country, cities are promoting alternative transportation such as light rail and other forms of mass transit. Communities are also encouraging non-motorized transportation such as bicycling and walking. In recent years, downtowns have experienced increased residential development which has created its own set of



*Bike rental kiosks and charging stations for electric vehicles are becoming more and more popular as a way to make parking areas more sustainable*



unique challenges. In the next five year plan, the parking system should consider:

- **Incentives for Car Pooling.** In 2000, 83.8% of people drove alone to work in a car. Because of increasing fuel costs, economic struggles and environmental awareness, carpooling is likely to become more popular. Downtown Kalamazoo can support roughly 50 carpooling spaces.
- **Bike Sharing Program.** Many communities across the country are introducing bike sharing programs, commonly known as “Yellow Bike Programs.” Bikes that are donated are prepared and painted, usually a bright color such as yellow, and strategically placed throughout the downtown. Anyone using a yellow bike may borrow it and simply return it to a designated return site. Some communities are introducing Bike Rental Hubs where bikes may be checked out, similar to checking out a library book. Due to the downtown’s proximity to nearby college campuses, this program may be very popular. Possible hubs could be at the Water St. Lot # 9 or in the former Secretary of State space next to Central City Parking’s office on Rose St. where the facility may easily be managed and attended by Central City Parking.
- **Premium Parking for Hybrid/Electric Vehicles.** Across the country cities are also beginning to recognize the need to accommodate and reward those who drive hybrid and electric vehicles. A number of cities currently issue free parking permits to owners of hybrid, alternative fuel and fuel efficient vehicles. Public parking facilities have also started to offer charging stations to accommodate electric vehicles. Kalamazoo should explore the possibility of introducing a limited supply of charging spaces in parking ramps. A survey of

downtown residents and employers should be performed to better predict demand.

**Provide Payment Options.** Along with improving technology, the industry is experiencing an increase in credit and debit card use. A recent survey indicated that over 50% of parkers prefer to pay with a credit and/or debit card. Credit card readers should be installed at each ramp and promotional signs posted at facility entrances.

**Other Recommendations.** In addition to the recommendations previously listed, the following items should be implemented to help enhance the parking system and ensure its long term success.

- Continue capital maintenance program.
- Install call for service kiosks. These should be installed at strategic locations and monitored 24/7.
- Continue lighting improvements.
- Explore expansion of surveillance technology.



*Electronic digital message signs that interface with the parking facility count systems and informational kiosks help promote and educate the public about downtown parking*

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

- Revisit good-standing policy and habitual violator ordinance.
- Expand the way-finding sign system to incorporate digital message signs that inform patrons of parking availability.
- Improve signage in facilities. The informational signs in the Kalamazoo Mall Ramp should be replicated for the Epic and Arcadia Ramps.
- Explore infomercial use of telephone system.
- Address negative customer perception through education.
- Reinforce the customer service training program and formalize its process to ensure its success.
- Institute a bike-to-work program.
- Evaluate and increase the amount of handicap parking.

## Pedestrian Circulation

Successful downtowns have streets, sidewalks and public spaces that are geared toward creating quality environments for the pedestrian. These settings create memorable places – places where people want to linger, shop, recreate, and see other people enjoying themselves. A more walkable downtown Kalamazoo will make an imprint on people and provide significant health benefits for its residents, contributing toward a more sustainable community.

A traditional, pedestrian-friendly downtown is largely defined by the public realm created by well conceived buildings that line its sidewalks,

2009

### Pedestrian Environment at a Glance

- Sidewalks exist on every street in downtown Kalamazoo.
- The Kalamazoo Mall, the nation's first pedestrian shopping mall, opened in 1959 in the heart of downtown.
- Reliance on the automobile and the number of wide streets with high traffic volumes creates barriers to a pedestrian friendly environment.



*The pedestrian environment in downtown Kalamazoo in 1960 and 2008*



parcs, and public spaces. Downtown Kalamazoo has a variety of buildings and well defined spaces that contribute to a positive pedestrian environment. Some features, however, detract from that experience. Open surface parking lots, frequently spaced driveways, buildings with long stretches of blank walls, wide streets that conspire to inhibit pedestrian movement. Providing a safe and comfortable interface between vehicles and the pedestrian is critical to maintaining a high level of comfort for the workers, residents, shoppers, and visitors within the downtown.

Downtown Kalamazoo needs an integrated pedestrian circulation system to link with surrounding neighborhoods, schools, parks, the riverfront and public gathering places.

An extensive system of sidewalks is in place throughout downtown and can serve as the basis for expanding the connectivity to key features. Natural corridors such as the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway and the proposed Portage Creek Trailway are logical links in a regional pathway system with the downtown as its hub.

While sidewalks and pathways are essential to accommodating pedestrian activity, these facilities must be well maintained, continuous and free of obstacles.



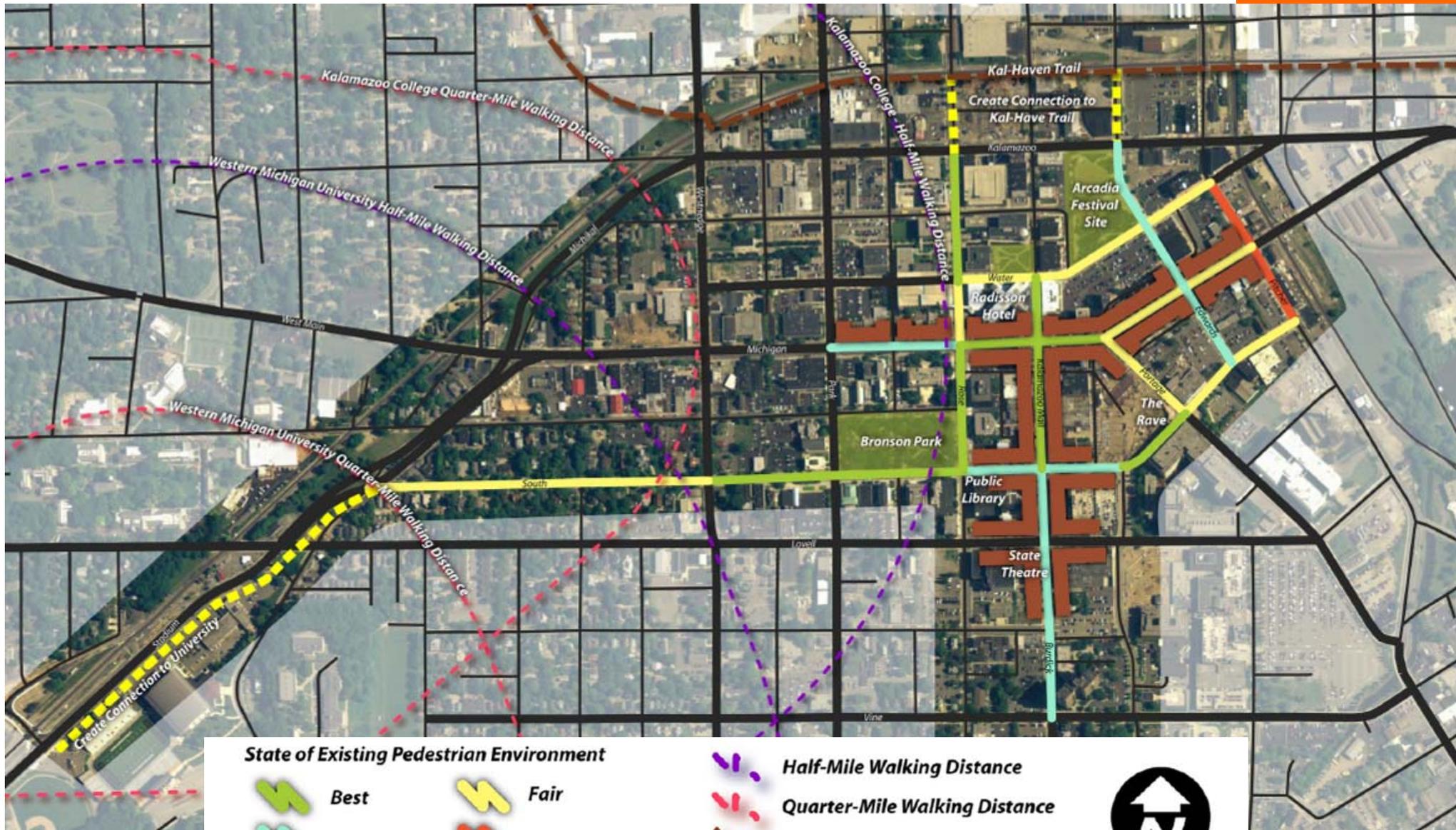
Existing barriers to a comprehensive and safe pedestrian system

In 2008, a Western Michigan University Urban Planning class undertook a study of downtown Kalamazoo to assess the quality of the pedestrian environment that links WMU, Kalamazoo College and downtown. The study considered a number of factors including sidewalk width, pedestrian amenities, speed limits on surrounding streets, number of traffic lanes, distance between the sidewalk and traffic, and many others. Each block was given a rating of best, good, fair or poor, as illustrated in the graphic and table on the following pages.

### Green Streets

As described in the 2004 Vision Plan, downtown Kalamazoo's key corridors should be developed as green streets. Green streets are urban parkways with wider sidewalks and landscape zones on either side. They constrain vehicular speeds with narrow travel lanes, bike lanes, on-street parking and articulated pedestrian street crossings.





**State of Existing Pedestrian Environment**

-  Best
-  Good
-  Fair
-  Poor
-  Primary Retail Core

-  Half-Mile Walking Distance
-  Quarter-Mile Walking Distance
-  Kal-Haven Trail
-  Key Pedestrian Connection



Pedestrian Conditions and Recommendations									
Priority Pedestrian Corridors	Existing Pedestrian Conditions	Recommendations							
		1. Access Management	2. Pedestrian Amenities	3. Pedestrian Connectivity	4. Traffic Calming	5. Green Buffering	6. Sidewalk Separation	7. Bike Lanes	8. Sidewalk Width
Pitcher: Water to South	Poor	X		X		X	X		X
Rose: Water to Michigan	Fair	X	X	X		X		X	
Portage: Michigan to South	Fair		X	X	X		X		
South: Portage to Pitcher	Fair	X	X	X	X			X	
Michigan: Edwards to Pitcher	Fair	X	X	X	X				
South: Oakland to Westnedge	Fair	X	X	X	X			X	X
Water: Rose to Pitcher	Fair	X	X		X				X
South: Rose to John	Good		X	X	X	X		X	
Michigan: Park to Rose	Good		X		X				
Edwards: Water to South	Good	X	X	X				X	X
Edwards: Kalamazoo to Water	Good	X		X			X	X	
Burdick: South to Vine	Good			X	X	X			
Rose: Michigan to South	Best				X			X	
Michigan: Rose to Edwards	Best			X	X	X			
Rose: Kalamazoo to Water	Best			X	X		X	X	
South: Westnedge to Park	Best			X				X	

<p><b>1. Access Management.</b> See Street Improvements section in this chapter.</p> <p><b>2. Pedestrian Amenities.</b> Develop a comprehensive kit-of-parts for streetscapes so that there is continuity in design, materials and quality. Having an agreed upon palette of materials, fixtures, and tree types is the first step in clearly defining and implementing a sustainable maintenance program.</p> <p><b>3. Pedestrian Connectivity.</b> Identify and prepare design concepts and improvement plans for key pedestrian connectors to downtown, neighborhoods, the universities and nearby destinations.</p> <p><b>4. Traffic Calming.</b> See Street Improvements section in this chapter.</p>	<p><b>5. Green Buffering.</b> Develop and implement a comprehensive and prioritized program to add trees to all downtown streets.</p> <p><b>6. Sidewalk Separation.</b> Identify specific parkway dimensions based on a street classification system for the area located between the sidewalk and curb where street trees are planted.</p> <p><b>7. Bike Lanes.</b> Evaluate downtown streets based on character, functional classification, traffic volumes and surrounding land uses and identify those corridors that should accommodate bike lanes.</p> <p><b>8. Sidewalk Width.</b> Based on a street classification system, identify appropriate sidewalk widths to accommodate multiple users and increase safety.</p>
--	--

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

DKI should identify, prioritize and augment the downtown paths, sidewalks and trails to create a true network that is interconnected, safe, accessible and attractive to pedestrians. The recommendations that follow identify improvements for non-motorized access within and to downtown.

**Accessibility.** Disabled residents rely on public transit as their primary means of travel and non-motorized systems to access transit. When considering improvements, the following should be considered:

- Install pedestrian signals that produce an audible cue to indicate signal changes at critical intersections.
- Maintain a consistent intersection design, so disabled users can easily anticipate where a bench, pedestrian crossing button or shelter is located.
- Install textured materials or tactile strips, such as brick or polymer, at crosswalks to indicate where the walk ends and where motorized travel lanes begin.

**Coordination and Connectivity.** High-quality non-motorized systems are continuous and provide access to various destinations. Breaks in the sidewalk system can impede use by those in wheelchairs. To maintain proper accessibility and preserve the quality pedestrian environment, the sidewalk system needs to be interconnected and well maintained. The City of Kalamazoo and Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc. should consider the following enhancements:

- The design of sidewalks should follow their function and volume of use. Routes along major streets that connect with destinations such as parks and schools may require wider pedestrian paths.

- DKI should continue to work with the City of Kalamazoo and surrounding communities to fully integrate a regional non-motorized path system.
- Pedestrian and bike connections to WMU and Kalamazoo College should be enhanced to encourage students to come downtown.
- A pedestrian and bike connection should be established along the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway to the Kal-Haven Trail through downtown.

**Convenience.** While people will walk farther distances for exercise or recreation, the average pedestrian will not walk more than 15 minutes or a quarter mile to reach their destination. Therefore, convenient pedestrian routes must be provided to encourage walking as an alternative to driving. This includes pedestrian crosswalks at intersections and continuity and directness of the route. An inconvenient network can encourage street crossings in an unsafe or illegal manner.

The City and DKI should ensure that continuous sidewalks are provided that offer numerous, safe crossing where increased pedestrian activity is desired. In all cases, complete streets should provide safe, convenient and pleasant options for pedestrians and bicyclists rather than making the automobile the priority.

**On-Street Bike Lanes vs. Separated Paths.** The design of sidewalks and pathways can discourage use by bicyclists. Bicycles using sidewalks or shared pathways often encounter slow pedestrians, multiple driveways and intersection signals that interrupt their flow. All of these factors can slow travel speed and discourage bicycle use. On-street bike lanes allow bikers to travel at higher speeds. Bikers using designated on-street lanes share the road with motorists and are more visible to them. The City of Kalamazoo should consider

adding bike lanes along routes commonly used by bicyclists. Dedicated bike lanes require some public education during the initial stages of use, but can provide desirable travel alternatives in the long-term.

**Safe Routes to School.** Particular attention to safety is needed near schools, where children walking to school are likely to be unattended by an adult. MDOT manages a program called Safe Routes to School that is designed to encourage walking or biking to school by providing a safer environment for children. This initiative offers State of Michigan funds for physical improvements and programs aimed at increasing students' use of the non-motorized system as a means to and from school. While the program requires each school to prepare an action plan in order to qualify for funding, DKI can assist in coordination and engineering assistance for near downtown schools wishing to participate.



*On-street bike lanes offer bicyclists a dedicated space without interference from vehicles or pedestrians*



*The Safe Routes to Schools program is a resource that could be used to improve connections to schools*

## Implementation Strategies

*Strategic Priority: Improve traffic flow, ease of navigation and transportation facilities in and through the downtown.*

A key community value and guiding principle of downtown planning is to improve traffic flow, ease of navigation and transportation facilities in and through the downtown. The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo is to create an ***accessible, prosperous and green*** downtown, where the existing transportation system adapts to accommodate all modes of travel in order to provide safe, convenient and navigable linkages.

The chart on the following pages outlines transportation strategies that support these three vision elements.

Easily traveled streets with two way linkages and provisions for non-motorized traffic characterize an ***accessible*** transportation system.

A safe, convenient and efficient transportation system is essential to downtown's ***prosperity*** by supporting the business and residential communities through connections to customers, clients and visitors.

A ***green*** transportation system provides support for all modes of travel and promotes the use of sustainable technologies.

TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
VEHICULAR	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Stadium Drive project involvement						
Address all methods of transportation, including non-vehicular						
One-Way to Two-Way Street conversion						
Improve bike connections (bike sharing / storage)						
Improve public transportation						
Re-configure US-131 business route ramps						
Prioritize & strengthen linkages into downtown						
Employ traffic-calming techniques to slow traffic						
Require access management (limiting number of driveways, etc)						
Regularly evaluate bus routes, service areas, & hours						
Identify locations & maintenance options for enhanced bus stops						
Institute Bike-to-Work Program						
Reconstruct the Michigan Ave. streetscape from Lovell St. to E. Kalamazoo Ave.						
Encourage sustainable transportation initiatives including alternative modes of travel & new technologies						
PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Implement green streets program						
Improve safety, accessibility & connectivity of pedestrian walkways						
Improve safety by applying consistent design to crosswalks						

2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
PARKING	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Implement 5-Year Parking Plan (2010-2014)						
Improve bike connections (bike sharing / storage)						
Smart car / fuel efficient vehicle parking						
Continue lighting improvements						
Explore expansion of surveillance technology						
Provide additional on-street parking						
Lot #9 Re-configuration						
Continue efforts to provide affordable, convenient parking						



# Jobs

With the presence of multiple educational, cultural, governmental and health care institutions, Kalamazoo has maintained its economic strength as a major employment and activity center, despite today's glum fiscal outlook. The diversity of the city's economy has helped mitigate volatile economic swings.

In part to fortify Kalamazoo's economic standing, a group of anonymous local philanthropists have made an enormous commitment to the community to fund higher education. The Kalamazoo Promise provides scholarships to Kalamazoo Public Schools grads that pursue continued education at one of Michigan's public colleges or universities. Early indicators credit The Kalamazoo Promise with a rise in housing prices within the school district, increased interest from developers, growth in enrollment in Kalamazoo Public Schools and an increase in graduates that go on to attend college. This program gives Kalamazoo an enviable advantage over other communities by not only promoting an educated population to fill area employment needs, but also stimulating reinvestment in the core city.

By working with existing institutions and building upon their many strengths, Kalamazoo can continue to attract and retain high-quality workers and employers.

### Downtown Employment at a Glance

- Nearly 13,000 people work in downtown Kalamazoo.
- Michigan's unemployment rate in September 2008 was 8.3%, which is higher than the nation's average of 6.0%.
- The Kalamazoo metropolitan area has a slightly lower unemployment rate of 7.2%.
- The largest downtown employers include Bronson Healthcare Group, Kalamazoo Gazette, Pfizer, the City of Kalamazoo & the Radisson Plaza Hotel.
- In 2000, Kalamazoo residents commuted an average of 17.4 minutes to work, indicating employment out of the City.



*Today's economy makes it challenging to find employment opportunities; however, with the proper planning and marketing, Downtown Kalamazoo can continue to serve as a regional employment generator*

## Employment Trends

**Employment Characteristics.** There are two important factors to consider when evaluating Kalamazoo’s employment characteristics. First, it is important to understand the predominant types of industries available in the area. Second, the skill and specialties of area residents must be considered.

Education, health and social services, along with

Industry of Jobs Held by Kalamazoo Residents		
Industry	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo County
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting, & Mining	0.7%	1.1%
Construction	4.1%	5.6%
Manufacturing	15.6%	20.4%
Wholesale Trade	2.3%	3.1%
Retail Trade	11.9%	11.7%
Transportation & Warehousing, & Utilities	2.8%	3.2%
Information	2.3%	2.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, & Rental & Leasing	5.6%	5.8%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, & Waste Management Services	7.4%	7.0%
Educational, Health & Social Services	27.8%	24.1%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services	13.0%	8.7%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	4.6%	4.7%
Public Administration	2.0%	2.6%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau

manufacturing, have historically been the predominant employers in both the City and County. While the City of Kalamazoo has a higher share of arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services jobs than the County, that is expected since downtown serves as a regional hub for arts and culture. In general, service jobs account for over 50% of City residents and nearly 50% of County residents. This typifies a more than twenty year nationwide trend as the United States economy has evolved from a manufacturing to a service-oriented economy.

The occupational breakdown for the City and County provides insight into the available skills, expertise and training of area residents. This information can be useful in preparing economic development strategies that draw upon the talents of the current workforce. The highest-ranking job categories for Kalamazoo are managerial, professional, sales and office. This reaffirms the area’s high proportion of residents with advanced education and suggests a pool of skilled professional workers.

Occupation of Kalamazoo Residents		
Occupation	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo County
Management, Professional, & Related Occupations	32.2%	34.7%
Service Occupations	20.9%	15.5%
Sales & Office Occupations	25.4%	26.0%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry Occupations	0.8%	0.7%
Construction, Extraction, & Maintenance Occupations	5.9%	7.7%
Production, Transportation, & Material Moving Occupations	14.7%	15.4%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau

Fastest Growing Occupations through 2014 in the Kalamazoo/St. Joseph Region	
Occupations	% Job Growth
Network Systems/Data Comm Analysts	44.0%
Home Health Aides	33.4%
Network/Computer Systems Administrators	30.8%
Medical Assistants	24.2%
Social/Human Service Assistants	22.7%
Pharmacy Technicians	21.5%
Personal/Home Care Aides	21.0%
Directors, Religious Activities & Education	20.9%
Special Ed Teachers, Pre/Kinder/Elem School	20.6%
Community/Social Service Specialists	19.7%
Dental Hygienists	19.7%
Combined Food Prep/Serv, incl. Fast Food	19.7%
Dental Assistants	19.2%
Business Teachers, Postsecondary	18.9%
Art/Drama/Music Teachers, Postsecondary	18.4%
Computer Systems Analysts	18.3%
Registered Nurses	18.3%
English Language/Lit Teachers, Postsecondary	18.2%
Fitness Trainers, Aerobics Instructors	18.1%
Education Teachers, Postsecondary	17.8%
Counter/Rental Clerks	17.8%
Physical Therapists	17.4%
Industrial Engineers	17.1%
Preschool Teachers, excl. Special Education	17.0%
Employment/Recruit/Placement Specialists	16.6%
Source: Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth	

**Employment Trends.** The relationship of educational attainment to the availability of employment opportunities is becoming more and more important. Fortunately, with the Kalamazoo Promise and the presence of multiple institutions of higher learning, Kalamazoo is well positioned to take advantage of this relationship.

With labor intensive manufacturing in crisis, Kalamazoo must capitalize on its strengths as a center of educational excellence, a reservoir of highly-skilled professionals and a historic center of innovation if it is to compete in this transitioning economy. A listing of the fastest growing occupations in the region is shown in the table to the right. Computer and health occupations rank among the fastest growing industries. In that light, downtown Kalamazoo must become “the place to be,” creating the right physical and social environment to attract visitors, residents, skilled workers and entrepreneurs.

## Marketing

Every city seeks to promote its strengths, address its weaknesses, and provide a strong economic base so that its residents can prosper and services can be made available. Downtown Kalamazoo recognizes the importance of accommodating growth and creating additional tax-base, while preserving the significant features that make downtown a special place.

The continued diversification and growth of the local economy and tax base are essential for downtown Kalamazoo to remain vital. Tax base provides the economic resources for the delivery of necessary public services. An expanding tax base must come largely from the commercial and industrial sectors which create job

opportunities for residents and stimulates added growth.

The highly competitive environment of economic development necessitates a strong, proactive campaign to market the community and its assets, extolling the virtues of the Kalamazoo, its downtown, its educational opportunities, and its many other strengths. Such efforts should not be targeted solely to prospective newcomers, but to current residents and employers.

**Development Trends.** Downtown Kalamazoo is well positioned to take advantage of high technology, medical, Bio-medical, research & development, light manufacturing, commercial and residential redevelopment opportunities in the coming years. The area's proximity to I-94, US-131, passenger and freight rail, its existing industrial base, educational and research facilities, highly-educated workforce, available infrastructure and residential & cultural amenities are attractive draws for development. To foster growth, as well as to retain existing businesses, the following factors are important:

- Maintain and continually improve upon safe and efficient travel alternatives to ease transportation movement on business routes and major streets.
- Provide flexible site development regulations and expedite plan review processes to encourage desired development.
- Employ financial assistance tools to leverage local funding resources.
- Investigate and create additional financial assistance incentives.
- Continue to market the benefits of downtown Kalamazoo as a convenient, affordable, and desirable place to live and establish business and

commerce.

**Business Recruitment.** In an effort to grow downtown, DKI has created a new Business Recruitment and Retention Director position. The person is responsible for working with real estate brokers, developers and downtown property owners, augmenting their marketing efforts to identify and educate new prospects and businesses about downtown Kalamazoo.

Avenues for promoting downtown include outreach to trade organizations, visibility at relevant conferences and cooperation with state and regional recruitment efforts. Other efforts can include promotion via the new [downtownkalamazo.org](http://downtownkalamazo.org) website, direct marketing, and advertising via mail and regional publications. The message is that downtown Kalamazoo is an "opportunity in waiting" for entrepreneurs. The recruitment plan focuses on area assets, including:

- Continued regional growth
- High quality of life due to the local arts & culture offerings and nearby amenities such as the Air Zoo, Gilmore Car Museum, golf courses, Arcadia Creek Festival Place and the lakeshore
- Low cost of living
- The Kalamazoo Promise
- Proximity to Chicago and Detroit
- Convenient global travel and shipment options via highway, rail or air
  
- City's desire for enhancement through quality planning and design
- Availability of infrastructure
- Commitment to sustainability

**Retail Incubator.** Luring successful retailers downtown with incentives is one way to improve the options for shopping, but creating new retail, using local talent has many benefits: building wealth by retaining the profits locally; allowing downtown to offer shops not found elsewhere; and increasing the ability for merchants to work together, since the owner is typically the operator. DKI is working with Western Michigan University, the Small Business and Technology Development Center and other local partners to create a retail incubation program. The image is not of one building with many small shops. Instead, the aim is to create the educational, financial and mentoring support needed to help new retail stores become profitable, customer-centered businesses.

**Business Retention.** One of the qualities that gives downtown its own flavor is the collection of locally-owned businesses. These businesses, many of which have been at their current location for generations, offer an experience to the consumer that is one-of-a-kind. As downtown continues to grow and develop, there may come a time when national chains take notice and change their suburban model. Whether or not that happens, it is important to advocate for and support local merchants that make downtown a unique and valuable destination.

The Business Recruitment and Retention Director is specifically responsible for conducting regular discussions and retention visits with existing businesses to determine their needs and desires. Maintaining relations in that fashion will help ensure their needs can be met and, consequently, they are better able to survive in a changing market place. The key to this strategy is creating a mechanism to respond to the issues and

needs identified during these activities.

Another piece of the retention strategy is promotion of local enterprises, whether through the internet, regional advertising or via a Buy Local campaign. It is important that members of DKI staff work together with the Downtown Retailers Association to make sure the broader community is aware of the shopping and entertainment options available downtown, and that downtown remain a fun, safe and convenient place to visit.

Developing day-time programs for employees also supports recruitment and retention, and could include lunch and learn programs, brown bag lunches, businesses that support the day worker like tanning salons, physical fitness centers, etc.

**Public Relations.** An effective public relations campaign can enhance awareness about downtown and help increase the effectiveness of any direct marketing solicitations. Recommended activities include submitting articles, news stories and press releases to appropriate organizational trade journals, and the local and regional press. DKI should continue to work with and enhance relationships with economic development and business organizations such as Southwest Michigan First, Chamber of Commerce, the Convention & Visitors Bureau and the City of Kalamazoo's Office of Economic Development.

**Direct Marketing.** Direct marketing selects each industry sector individually and targets strategic messages. A professional direct mail company can provide lists by North American Industry Classification System code, applying additional qualifiers by ZIP codes, size of business, number of employees, gross sales, etc.

Regional and local real estate organizations are also qualified lead generators for recruiting business as these groups share a proprietary interest in marketing property.

**Cooperative Partnerships.** Cooperative partnership arrangements and strategic alliances provide opportunities for reaching a greater number of customers by sharing client lists as well as expenses. While each partner may have different functions, their customer profiles, location and ultimate goals are shared, therefore, benefiting from cooperation. These ventures can be informal and simply negotiated or they can be highly developed strategic arrangements with detailed plans.

Downtown employers should be well informed about downtown issues to attract and retain jobs. DKI should play a significant role in providing continuous, consistent information about development projects, general downtown improvements, safety, and life-style/quality-of-life programs/projects/amenities that help to position downtown as the preferred place of employment.

## Implementation Strategies

***Strategic Priority:***

***Leverage public/private partnerships to support economic development and job creation.***

The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo is to create a ***prosperous, diverse and vibrant*** downtown environment by encouraging job creation.

The chart that follows outlines job-focused strategies that support these three vision elements:

Job retention and growth is essential to continued ***prosperity*** downtown.

The creating of new employment programs will add ***diversity*** to the downtown workforce.

The creation of a variety of jobs, from internships to full-time employment, increases the ***vibrancy*** of downtown.



*Promotion of downtown Kalamazoo can be achieved through national and regional publications*

JOB IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Housing for downtown employees						
BRRRC Recruitment strategies – Retail Incubator Program						
Promote job creation in Redevelopment Districts						
Support others' recruitment, retention and expansion efforts						
Leverage new downtown state legislative incentives						
Encourage Kalamazoo Promise graduates to select local higher education institutions						
Facilitate internship opportunities with downtown businesses						
Support the development of the downtown Bio-Medical/Life Science District for expanding Southwest Michigan Innovation Center start-ups						
Educate downtown employees on downtown opportunities						
High Technology Job creation						

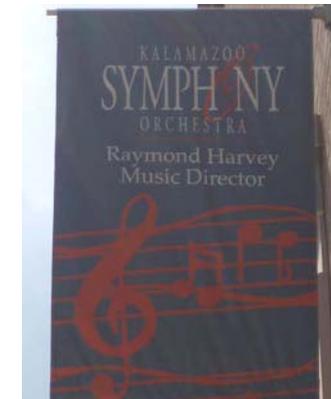
# Arts & Culture

Downtown Kalamazoo offers a wealth of art and cultural opportunities that are usually associated with much larger metropolitan areas. Numerous performing arts attractions, galleries, and museums provide almost limitless opportunities for residents and visitors alike to enjoy the arts. Additional venues and programs affiliated with the many educational institutions in downtown Kalamazoo create an extraordinary synergy.

The presence of such diverse art and cultural resources is in large part a reason for Kalamazoo's attractive qualities. Residents have come to enjoy performances, games and an award-winning library. The quiet beauty of historic structures, well-designed open spaces and peaceful parks all contribute to make downtown Kalamazoo a great place.

### Downtown Arts & Culture at a Glance

- The Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra is the state's third largest orchestra
- 5 live-stage theatres draw more than 150,000 people downtown each year
- The Arcadia Creek Festival Place hosted over 35 events in 2008, drawing over 150,000 with such acts as *Survivor*, *Gin Blossoms*, *The Buckingham*s and the *Verve Pipe*
- The Epic Center, a performing arts collaborative center, houses over a dozen independent dance and theater companies
- Art Hop, features local artists at downtown sites, sometimes as many 50 locations in one evening
- Downtown is home to 9 small galleries
- Kalamazoo hosts a major International Keyboard Festival every other year
- The \$20 million Kalamazoo Valley Museum attracts visitors from throughout the Midwest
- The Kalamazoo Public Library was named National Library of the Year in 2002 and serves more than 120,000 people annually
- Semi-professional baseball, soccer, hockey and football teams are all based out of Kalamazoo



Access to the arts is easy with a number of venues found in downtown Kalamazoo

2009

## Sense of Place

Mention downtown Kalamazoo and people tend to think of a three-block area known as the Kalamazoo Mall. It is because of this area and Kalamazoo's distinction as the first city in the country to develop a pedestrian mall, that Kalamazoo was known for decades as "The Mall City." It's a name that doesn't begin to describe all that downtown has to offer. While the mall has created a prominent identity for downtown, there are actually six unique and exciting districts within downtown, each of which creates a distinct sense of place.

**Arcadia.** A vital gateway to the Northside neighborhoods, Arcadia is home to the Park Trades Center, Kalamazoo Valley Museum, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, and the Arcadia Creek Festival Place.

**Bronson Park.** Kalamazoo's civic center, this area encompasses the municipal offices, churches, the county courthouse, public library, and civic theatre.

**Kalamazoo Mall.** Often thought of as the heart of downtown, this unique district features many local businesses and unique retailers.

**South Town.** One of the most interesting mixes of neighborhoods, people, businesses and gathering places in Kalamazoo and once the City's most populated neighborhood, South Town maintains its roots as a working-class neighborhood.

**Haymarket.** Once the site of the City's first hotel and hay auction, this area now boasts some of downtown's most popular restaurants and nightlife.

**East End.** An area that once supported railroad business has been transformed into a popular district for night life, offices and antique shops.

Each of these districts offers a distinct mix of arts & entertainment, dining & nightlife, residential neighborhoods, and retail & business services. Together, they form the superstructure of a sustainable and attractive downtown.



*Kalamazoo Mall, one of six downtown Kalamazoo districts, helps define Kalamazoo's sense of place*

## Creative Excellence

An enviable combination of arts & entertainment offerings, institutions of higher learning, cultural attractions, and community pride make downtown Kalamazoo a cauldron of creative energy.

**Educational Opportunities.** Home to four educational institutions, Kalamazoo offers a wide spectrum of higher education options, usually found in much larger cities. Their presence promotes a philosophy of life-long learning and encourages creative exploration. Kalamazoo College offers programs in fine arts, Western Michigan University provides degrees in dance, music and theater. Not to be outdone, Kalamazoo Valley Community College is not only a stepping stone to more advanced studies, but provides technical career choices for those seeking a future in the trades, electronics, technology and medicine. Together, these institutions help breathe life into the Kalamazoo Promise and give college-bound students multiple local choices for education and training.

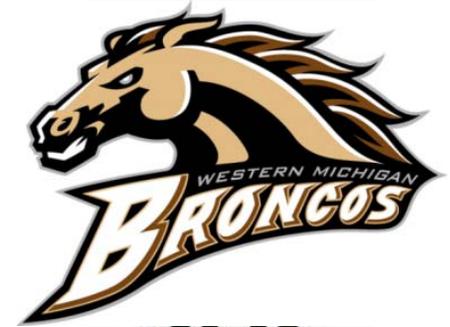
**Performing Arts.** Live theater, dance, music concerts and more are offered in downtown Kalamazoo. The Epic Center, home to the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo, serves as a focal point for the entire arts community and

houses two modern performance spaces, and offices for 11 cultural organizations. The State Theater, a historic fixture in downtown has hosted opera, dramas, big bands, ballet, dance reviews, and stage shows since 1927.

**Cultural Venues.** In addition to performing arts, Kalamazoo is home to many other visual and living art venues. Rounding out the many galleries downtown, the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts has been a visual arts center showcasing exhibitions, lectures, special events and an extensive permanent collection since 1924. The Kalamazoo Public Library, named Library of the Year in 2002, is another



Downtown Kalamazoo is home to a number of world class arts & cultural venues



*Kalamazoo is home to four institutions of higher learning which help identify the city as a center for excellence*

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

downtown anchor and a point of pride, serving the community with five branch locations.

**Creative Industry.** Festivals and special events create vibrancy in the downtown and are great opportunities to celebrate the diversity and cultural richness that helps define downtown Kalamazoo.

**Festivals and Special Events.** Downtown should be a gathering place. Each year, the equivalents of massive block parties are held almost weekly through the summer and fall, drawing tens of thousands of people. Each event provides a unique opportunity to highlight local, regional and in some cases, national talent, foster social interaction and celebrate the uniqueness of the community.

Several venues throughout downtown provide space for these special events. The Arcadia Creek Festival Place hosts the Greek, Island, Blues, Black Arts, Rib and Irish Festivals in addition to the Taste of Kalamazoo. Most of the events featured at the Arcadia Creek Festival Place are fundraising mechanisms for non-profit organizations. Many events are charity based and raise both money and awareness for their respective causes, including the March for Babies, Race for the Cure and Making Strides against Breast Cancer. Downtown Kalamazoo Association Charities is the entity responsible for programming the Arcadia Creek Festival Place, as well as providing quality programming for youth and families throughout the downtown.

**Public Art.** Public art helps define downtown's identity and highlights the unique character of specific areas. Kalamazoo should continue to develop and support public art to help create interest and add excitement to

downtown public spaces. An example of public art is the wheel of history on the North Kalamazoo Mall.

**Promoting Creativity.** The Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo serves to strengthen and promote the arts community. Through grant writing and program promotion, the council helps organize the artistic community. Downtown Kalamazoo can continue to position itself as attractive destination for artistic ventures by providing adequate and affordable space for art studios, live/work opportunities and additional venues for artistic expression and the creative class.



*Public art takes many shapes and forms in downtown*

## Implementation Strategies

### *Strategic Priority: To support Arts and Culture*

A key community value and guiding principle of downtown planning is to ensure that the currently strong Arts and Culture scene continues to drive the heart and soul of downtown. The Promise of downtown Kalamazoo is to create a ***diverse, vibrant and progressive*** downtown, where people of all ages, walks of life and economic standing have opportunities to challenge and enhance their thinking and understanding of the community and the world around them.

The chart on page 7-7 outlines arts and culture strategies that support these three vision elements:

A variety of cultural activities ***diversifies*** downtown's entertainment and educational experience.

Arts and Culture programs and activities add ***vibrancy*** to downtown by providing fun and welcoming activities, programs and spaces.

Institutions such as the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, the Epic Center and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum create a ***progressive*** downtown environment.

ARTS & CULTURE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Continue to support Arts & Culture & the development of new & unique programs downtown, such as "BLUE SKIES"						
Create Live-Work Space for creative community						
Seek & encourage opportunities for more public art in green areas & pedestrian trafficked areas						
Develop Daytime Programming						
Recruit new Festivals (Special Events)						
Foster partnerships with Arts Organizations						
Develop a community culture and standards of creative excellence						
Create a Four season programming plan						
Implement Placemaking strategies that serve to enhance the community's sense of place						



# Land Use & Development

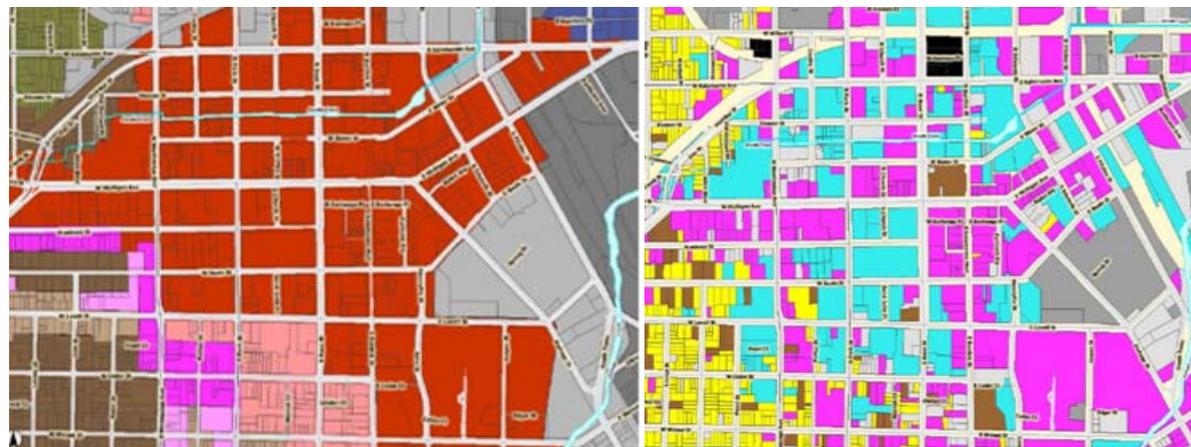
As it should be, the pattern of development downtown is an eclectic mix of interrelated and mutually supportive uses unlike anything typically found in outlying areas of the city. An assortment of shops and restaurants line busy streets, taking advantage of the high visibility and easy customer access. Offices are stacked in taller structures dotting the area. Parks and cultural amenities add to the vibrant livability of the district. Urban residents live above the shops or in nearby neighborhoods within a pleasant walk or easy bike ride to work, shop, or relax.

While Kalamazoo's downtown is relatively small in scale, its employers, workers, visitors, and residents interact to create the vital synergy that distinguishes downtown from the suburban malls. Daytime bustles with traffic and commerce. In the evening and weekends, eateries and entertainment offerings capture the magic energy that makes city life exciting.

This variety and diversity provides a great beginning, but must be continued and expanded. While specific development projects will be dictated largely by market factors, Kalamazoo needs to ensure that an appropriate mix of downtown land use is not only allowed, but encouraged.

**Land Use at a Glance**

- Recommendations for a medical, bio-medical, life-science research village would play on the strengths of Kalamazoo's medical legacy
- Retail focus will add to the downtown's vibrancy
- Improving sustainability will be a crucial strategy
- Streetscape and public space improvements seek to enhance downtown's character



The map on the left illustrates current zoning while the map on the right depicts actual downtown land uses.

**Zoning**

<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Commercial, Central Business
<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	Commercial, Community
<span style="color: purple;">■</span>	Commercial, Local Neighborhood
<span style="color: pink;">■</span>	Commercial, Office
<span style="color: brown;">■</span>	Residential, Multi-Dwelling
<span style="color: grey;">■</span>	Manufacturing

**Existing Land Use**

<span style="color: magenta;">■</span>	Commercial
<span style="color: cyan;">■</span>	Public/Institutional
<span style="color: darkbrown;">■</span>	Multiple Family or Rental
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span>	Single Family
<span style="color: grey;">■</span>	Industrial

## Land Use Evolution

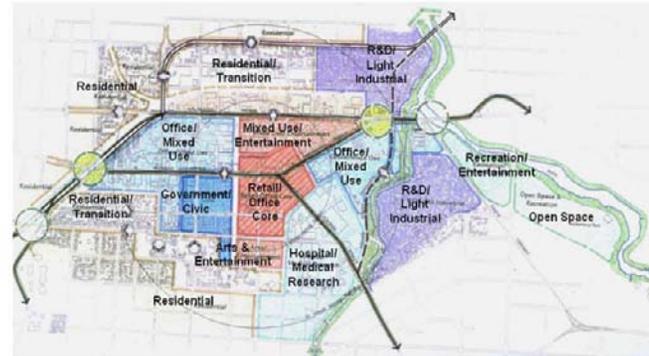
Downtown's physical layout has evolved over the years, influenced by a need for expansion, recommendations of multiple planning studies, new opportunities for development, availability of funding and political desires. Yet, the downtown remains relatively compact and cohesive.

The **1996 Downtown Plan** supported a strengthened retail core, arts and entertainment districts, and mixed-use and residential infill. At the same time, it recommended maintaining downtown as a center for commercial, research, and light industrial activities.

The **2004 Vision Plan** took the previous land use plan and identified specific locations for infill development and key cultural facilities including a multi-plex cinema, an arena, a convention center and a performing arts center. While that plan was flexible in nature, it promoted a strong urban form with a network of streets and blocks that integrated uses, created opportunities for new downtown neighborhoods, reinforced existing neighborhoods, and created prominent entertainment destinations.

While the future land use plan presented in this document may support these past planning efforts, it also adds a number of opportunities and recognizes certain limitations that may influence the next round of proposed change. It is important to consider a number of factors when charting a new direction for the downtown such as:

- Consistency with existing land use patterns and zoning.
- Incompatible land use relationships.



*Previous land use planning efforts are used as a base for this plan update*

- The aesthetic qualities that contribute to the character and quality of life.
- District boundaries such as DDA, TIF and exempt parking
- Availability of infrastructure.
- Preservation and appreciation of natural features.
- Market conditions.
- The overall vision of the plan.

## Land Use Plan

The land use plan helps translate the vision for downtown Kalamazoo into specific recommendations. This plan not only offers direction on the types of uses that are appropriate and envisioned for downtown but also addresses the use of existing buildings and identifies where in-fill and redevelopment are appropriate.

**1. Downtown Connector Neighborhood.** These neighborhoods, located just on the fringe of downtown, consist primarily of mature single family detached homes which provide an opportunity to create a desirable, stable, and affordable residential base within walking distance of downtown Kalamazoo. The integrity and appeal of these neighborhoods needs to be preserved and even strengthened in some instances. Related maintenance and incentive programs to accomplish that are further discussed in Chapter 3 Residential Neighborhoods.

To complement these neighborhoods and provide needed goods and services to local residents, small-scale office and retail uses are encouraged, such as pharmacies, dry cleaners, and neighborhood-serving convenience stores. Their design and architectural form must, however, respect the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood.

**2. Event Center District/In-Town Neighborhood.** This area affords different options for future development. Its attributes are relatively large parcels of land, good access and available infrastructure. Consequently, it has been identified as a location for a multi-functional sports and entertainment facility or Event Center and In-Town mixed-use neighborhood. Such uses must be integrated, not only in terms of its physical form, but also by its function into the downtown. It must not be

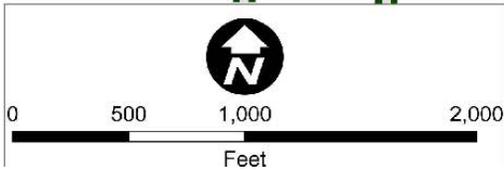
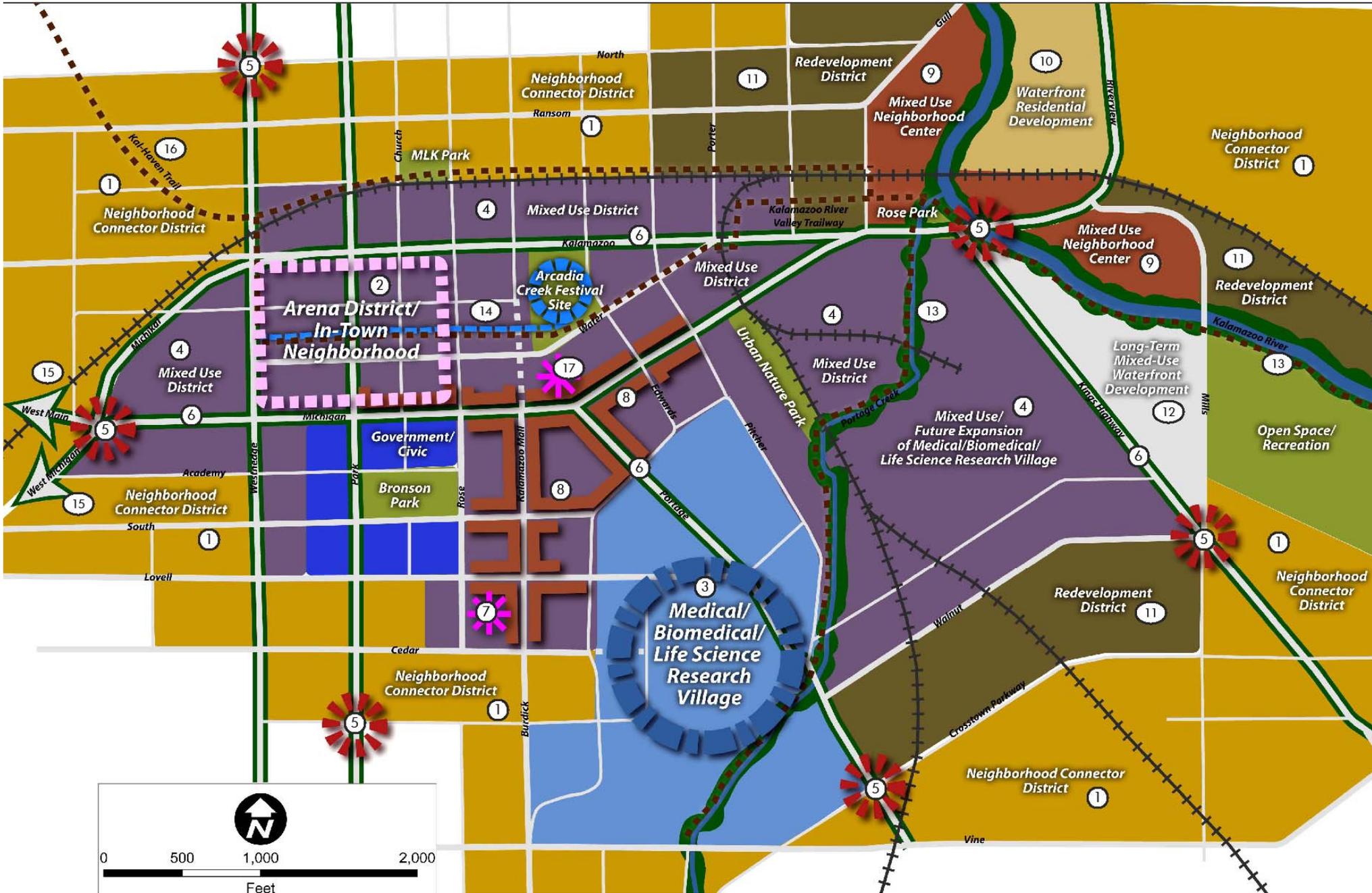
an isolated island of activity. Rather, it must be integrated with surrounding development to create a true sense of neighborhood.

This event center facility has the potential to be shared with Kalamazoo's institutions of higher learning and serve multiple audiences including the local community and surrounding neighborhoods.

While it would be a regional draw, the event center should also be a venue for local youth activities and sporting events, smaller community focused gatherings and events that are clearly "Kalamazoo" in nature, especially when larger gatherings are not planned. As a result of an event center development, spin-off and associated uses such as restaurants and shops should locate in close proximity.



*Potential arena district concept*



If an event center is not found to be viable, an expanded in-town neighborhood, including a mix of residential and supporting retail uses, is a viable option. Quality architecture and materials should be stressed. And increased density and height would be appropriate, with buildings close to sidewalks and providing on-street parking and street trees. Townhomes, live/work units, lofts, and condos mixed with small-scale retail to serve the entire downtown should be encouraged.

**3. Medical/Biomedical/Life Science Research Village.**

The area currently anchored by Bronson Hospital is envisioned as an expanded medical, biomedical, and life sciences research village encompassing multiple healthcare, education, and research/development related uses. Housing, shopping, and recreation opportunities should be added to this mix to create a “village” environment in town.

Land uses should include medical offices, research and development, expanded hospital facilities and services, medical education, and supporting land uses. These include personal service, commercial and retail, restaurants, senior housing, and affordable mixed housing options. Housing partnerships, especially with



*The expansion of Bronson Hospital will act as a catalyst for the development of a Medical Village*



*A Form-Based Code should be used to implement the urban form of the in-town neighborhood*



*Mixed-use buildings allow a variety of compatible uses that contribute to a pedestrian friendly environment*

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, Bronson Hospital and other downtown employers and institutions, should be explored. The key will be to reflect a unified theme that appropriately transitions the scale of development from larger hospital, research/development, and administration buildings to finer grained residential neighborhoods and smaller scale commercial areas.

This medical village should be developed as a cohesive campus-like setting with complementary design features, unified architectural character, and interconnected public open spaces and walkways, especially along the Portage Creek corridor. The nearby Portage Street and Crosstown Parkway corridors should be viewed as two key gateways, not only to the medical village, but to downtown, as well. As such, they should provide linkages to and from the medical village and be developed as the front doors to this new district with enhanced streetscapes, natural and sustainable landscapes, and safe walking and biking trails.

**4. Mixed-Use.** Mixed-use areas accommodate a variety of compatible residential and business activities



2009

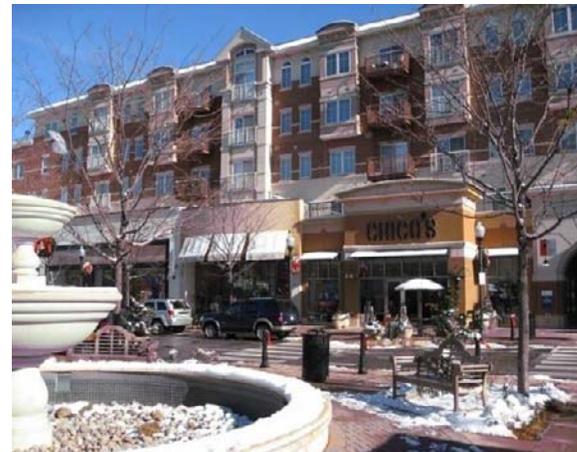
*A mixture of urban business, entertainment, residential uses make up the Mixed-Use Neighborhood along the Kalamazoo River*



*Retail uses are focused and concentrated to create a vital downtown shopping district*

in support of a pedestrian-oriented downtown. The pattern of development in this area should still be urban in form, with inter-connected streets resulting in a unified grid. The goal would be to have integrated mixed-use buildings with a strong orientation to the street, incorporating non-residential uses on the first floor and residential and office use on the upper levels.

To preserve the architectural integrity of downtown, the reuse and redevelopment of existing structures should



Page 8-7

be encouraged whenever possible. Mixed-use areas should also be comprehensively developed to allow for shared vehicular access, parking, and pedestrian amenities.

**5. Gateways.** Opportunities to enhance gateway corridors with streetscape improvements and landscape design features are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 Transportation.

**6. Streetscape Improvements.** The streetscape includes streets, sidewalks, and street furniture, such as signs, paving materials, benches, light fixtures, and trash receptacles. Specific recommendations for streetscape improvements are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 Transportation.

**7. Performing Arts Center.** Built in 1927, the State Theatre is one of Southwest Michigan's most popular live music venues. The desire to have downtown Kalamazoo as an attractive destination for arts and entertainment strongly suggests that the theater's restoration should be a high priority. Its expansion and

*Investing in the State Theatre would help solidify downtown as a key destination for live arts and*



modernization will help attract people to the downtown year round.

**8. Downtown Retail Core.** In an effort to concentrate commercial uses and create the critical mass necessary for successful shopping environments, retail activities should be required on the first-floor of buildings in the downtown core along Michigan Ave., the Kalamazoo Mall, Burdick St., South St., Lovell St. and Portage St. These areas are defined on the Conceptual Land Use Plan. Focusing retail in these locations will help create the needed interaction between uses and result in a vital and exciting retail atmosphere. These areas should also have high quality, safe, and well-maintained pedestrian environments that allow a customer easy access to multiple stores.

**9. Mixed-Use Neighborhood Center.** The creation of a lively urban business, entertainment, and residential district is the goal for this area. It once harbored many of the city's founding industries and should again build upon this heritage and retain existing buildings whenever possible. The intent is to encourage small start-up businesses, new homes, and upper story residential loft and office uses that embrace the waterfront in the same pioneering spirit.

New construction should frame the pattern of grid streets, promote pedestrian traffic and connect to the Kalamazoo River. Auto dominated uses such as drive-throughs and gas stations should be phased out over time and any development should be consistent with the Kalamazoo Riverfront Redevelopment Plan.

**10. Waterfront Residential.** The vision for this area is to create a new neighborhood supported by a variety of housing types in a riverfront setting. An integral part of this neighborhood is a public path and open space system located along the Kalamazoo River that connects to downtown. Any development should be consistent

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

with the City of Kalamazoo's Riverfront Redevelopment Plan.

**11. Redevelopment District.** Intended to accommodate light industrial, office, and flex-R&D uses in and near the heart of downtown, this district should build upon the manufacturing and entrepreneurial heritage of the city and provide needed jobs for its residents. A goal of this Plan is to provide, within this district, downtown jobs by accommodating incubator space for smaller businesses and start-ups.

**12. Long-Term Mixed Use Waterfront Development.** In the near term, this area should continue as the Red Arrow Golf Course and operate until such time that viable redevelopment opportunities present themselves. A longer term view should, however, explore future redevelopment that looks at any combination of office, commercial, residential, lodging and restaurant uses; all with an orientation and public access to the Kalamazoo River.

**13. Portage Creek River Corridor.** An important and underused amenity in the downtown, the Portage Creek corridor should be enhanced. This can be accomplished by improving its connection to the Kalamazoo Valley River Trailway system, undertaking a comprehensive stream restoration effort that focuses on reestablishing the native landscape, rebuilding eroded banks, and providing a stream walk that is enhanced by pedestrian amenities. This pedestrian connection should be established between Kalamazoo River and the Medical/Biomedical/Life Science Research Village area, thereby creating a vital link to the river.

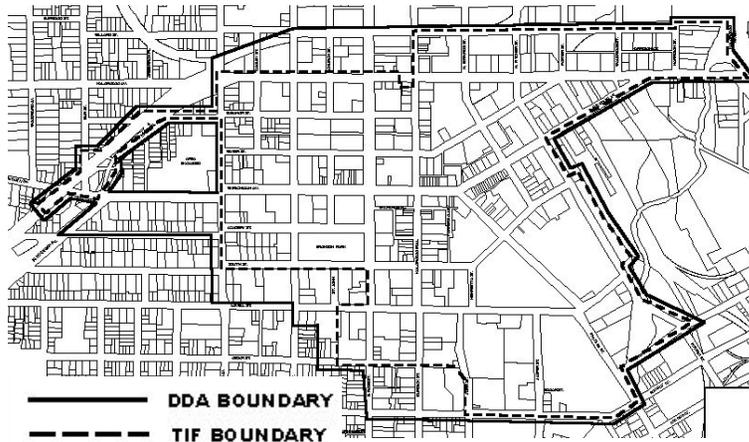
**14. Arcadia Creek Corridor.** The Arcadia Creek Corridor serves as a vital pedestrian walkway connecting the Kal Haven Trailway to the core of

downtown and Arcadia Creek Festival Place. As future development takes place the pathway should be maintained and expanded to other downtown streetscape enhancement projects. DKI should promote new retail, residential and office development along the corridor.

## Land Use Recommendations

**Downtown District Boundary Review.** It is clear that downtown Kalamazoo, its surrounding neighborhoods, and the rest of the city are intertwined and decisions made regarding one inevitably impacts the others. This is obvious with respect to pedestrian and vehicular access, land use relationships, and gateways. Therefore, the existing boundaries for the downtown should be re-evaluated and refined to facilitate consistent planning and the application of regulatory and financial tools essential to the successful implementation of this plan. In particular, the current Tax Increment Finance (TIF) and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) boundaries should be reconciled to maximize the assistance that can be provided to property owners.

**Public Spaces.** All successful downtowns have memorable spaces for public gatherings, special events, and recreation. They are the glue that helps bind a downtown together. They can also be part of a



*Existing DDA & TIF Boundaries*



*Downtown public spaces must be exciting, accessible, and amenity-rich*

convenient, safe, and attractive route that helps connect business and retail areas, parking facilities, and adjoining neighborhoods with downtown.

Public spaces, in the form of parks and plazas, provide the special places for residents and shoppers to gather and relax. They also provide visual relief to the urban environment, contributing to the variety and identity of the downtown. Downtown Kalamazoo offers some of these elements; however, access to open space, particularly along the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek, should be improved. DKI should also implement the following strategies to develop public spaces throughout the downtown that offer comfortable places for visitors to gather and circulate:

- Protect and enhance the relationship of civic uses to adjacent public spaces such as city hall, the library, and Bronson Park.
- Take advantage of smaller areas and incorporate opportunities for public alleys and pocket parks with landscaping and seating for public access.

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

- Orient buildings toward the street so entrances are complementary and open to the public.
- Require active uses at street level for all downtown buildings.
- Discourage the development of additional at-grade surface parking lots in the downtown.
- Improve downtown pedestrian access with through-block and through-building pedestrian connectors.
- Concentrate uses that generate pedestrian traffic and focus attention on providing well-designed walking environments.

**Public Space Analysis.** Great public spaces are great for reasons that are often difficult to define. However, there are a set of widely accepted criteria for examining public spaces that offer some guidance, as follows:

- located centrally within their community
- enclosed on all sides
- surrounded by active edge uses
- flexible in function
- safe, by eliminating hiding places
- filled high-quality, low-maintenance materials

In similar fashion, there are guiding concepts for the public right-of-way along streets. In this instance, the criteria are based on safety, continuity, adjacent environment, user appeal, amenities and maintenance, and convenience. The public right-of-way along streets should:

- be safe, through the separation of bikes and pedestrians from vehicles
- be continuous, with minimal interruptions
- be surrounded by variety and interest in its adjacent environment
- provide user appeal for pedestrians and bikers

- have high-quality amenities and maintenance
- be convenient, through transit integration

Retail corridors are evaluated in terms of their mix, presentation, pedestrian environment and crossings, parking and auto access. An inviting retail corridor must:

- be configured with the right retail
- be attractive in terms of presentation
- be surrounded by a comfortable, high quality pedestrian environment
- provide safe and special pedestrian crossings
- provide shopper-friendly parking
- be conveniently accessed by automobiles

Based upon a methodology developed by Crandall Arambula PC, DKI staff performed a public space analysis, the results of which are contained in the following pages. This analysis suggests there is considerable opportunity for improvement to truly achieve the desired “opportunities” downtown.

## Great Streets Analysis

Great Streets Analysis								
Street	Evaluation Criteria						Composite Score	Evaluation
	Safety	Continuity	Adjacent Environment	User Appeal	Amenities & Maintenance	Transit Integration		
	Separation of Bikes / Pedestrians from Autos	Minimal Interruptions	Variety & Interest	For Bikes & Pedestrians	High Quality	Convenient		
Michigan Ave.	1	1	3	2	1	1	1.50	FAIR
Kalamazoo Ave.	1	1	2	1	1	2	1.33	POOR
Portage St.	1	2	2	2	2	2	1.83	FAIR
Rose St.	2	2	2	2	2	3	2.17	FAIR
Water St.	1	1	2	1	1	1	1.17	POOR
South St.	1	1	2	2	2	2	1.67	FAIR
Lovell St.	1	1	2	2	2	2	1.67	FAIR
Pitcher St.	1	1	1	2	1	3	1.5	POOR
Edwards St.	2	1	2	2	2	2	1.83	FAIR
Westnedge Ave.	1	1	1	1	1	2	1.17	POOR
Church St.	1	1	2	2	1	2	1.5	FAIR
Cedar St.	1	1	1	2	1	2	1.33	POOR
Walnut St.	1	1	2	2	1	2	1.5	FAIR
John St.	2	2	2	2	3	2	2.17	FAIR

## Great Retail Analysis

Great Retail Analysis								
Street	Evaluation Criteria						Composite Score	Evaluation
	Configuration	Attractive	Pedestrian Environment	Pedestrian Crossings	Parking	Auto Access		
	The Right Retail	Presentation	Comfortable, High Quality	Safe & Special	Shopper Friendly	Convenient		
S. Kalamazoo Mall/Burdick	2	3	2	3	3	3	2.67	GOOD
N. Kalamazoo Mall/Burdick	2	3	2	1	3	2	2.17	FAIR
E. Michigan Ave.	3	2	2	2	3	2	2.17	FAIR
W. Michigan Ave.	1	2	1	1	2	2	1.5	POOR
Kalamazoo Ave.	1	2	1	1	1	2	1.33	POOR
W. Lovell St.	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	FAIR
South St.	2	2	2	3	3	2	2.33	FAIR
Rose St.	1	3	3	3	3	3	2.67	GOOD
Portage St.	2	2	2	2	3	3	2.33	FAIR
Farmers Alley	2	2	1	2	2	2	1.83	FAIR

# Public Space Analysis

Great Public Space Analysis								
Space	Evaluation Criteria						Composite Score	Evaluation
	Location	Enclosure	Edge Uses	Function	Safety	Material		
	Central	All Sides	Active	Flexible	No Hiding Places	High Quality / Low Maintenance		
Arcadia Creek Festival Place	2	3	2	3	1	3	2.33	FAIR
Farmer's Alley Pocket Park	3	2	3	2	2	2	2.33	FAIR
Bronson Park	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	GOOD
Martin Luther King Jr. Park	1	1	1	2	1	2	1.33	POOR
Kalamazoo Mall	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	GOOD
Downtown Trailway	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	FAIR
West End Linear Park	2	2	1	2	2	2	1.83	FAIR
Urban Nature Park	2	2	2	2	2	3	2.16	FAIR
Rose Park	1	2	2	2	1	3	1.83	FAIR

**Historic Preservation.** Historic, architectural, and cultural resources flourish throughout the downtown. DKI, over the past ten years, has provided grants to building owners to rehabilitate the facades of their buildings. In 2005, DKI received an award for its efforts in this regard from the Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Commission. These efforts must continue. The style, materials, and character of the city's historic treasures must be respected. Both redevelopment and new development projects should be designed in ways that are complementary with existing building forms and materials. Retention of older structures, especially those of historical and/or architectural prominence, should be protected.

**Corner Locations.** Within a downtown, highly visible corner locations or sites at the terminus of a busy street should not be wasted on mediocrity. These locations should be carefully planned and thoughtfully designed. They deserve special buildings or architectural treatments that create a memorable landmark. Buildings in such locations should be designed to be very distinct and prominent downtown architectural icons. Shapes and views formed by the angles of downtown streets provide remarkable opportunities to create dramatic site-lines and interest in the downtown. Special consideration for architecture and site elements should, therefore, reflect the importance of any building or site with such a location.

**Transitions.** One of the many benefits associated with downtown Kalamazoo is its rich history. While this contribution has resulted in many landmark buildings, it has also created land use arrangements that may not fit the current vision. Traditional development patterns

such as shallow commercial lots, rear-loaded service areas, and parking lots that back up to residential areas and older buildings have resulted in conflicting land uses. The elimination of these conflicts should occur over time, however it may not be possible everywhere. In those instances, site and building redevelopment should be accomplished so as to minimize impacts on neighboring uses, as much as possible.



*Appropriate transitions between land uses helps keep downtown desirable for all users*

**Redevelopment Strategy.** Many older buildings do not conform to current zoning and building codes. Because of the complex nature of redevelopment DKI should consider flexibility in site and building design, as well as streamlined policies, ordinances and review procedures. The following strategies are recommended as a way to encourage downtown redevelopment:

- **Regulatory Flexibility.** Many of downtown’s buildings were built with integrity and quality, and can be restored, renovated and redeveloped into viable uses. To maintain the historic fabric of downtown, the city needs to provide regulatory flexibility to accommodate existing conditions. Established setbacks, location of parking, driveways, window and door placement, and structural building design often dictate how a site or building can be redeveloped. Ordinances need to respect these conditions and focus on improving the elements that can be changed, like landscaping, exterior building materials, signage and buffering.

In addition, zoning regulations should be examined to ensure they will not only permit, but promote, the flexibility and creativity that successful downtown development demands. Mixed uses, residential development, increased densities, modified loading provisions, incentives and bonuses should be an integral part of the zoning provisions for the downtown area to facilitate and entice development. Review and approval procedures should also be evaluated to minimize complicated and conflicting reviews.

- **Form-Based Codes.** Many of the recommendations in this plan could be implemented through the development of a form-based zoning district that enhances the current downtown design guidelines. Unlike conventional zoning that focuses on separating land uses, form-based regulations focus on building form as it relates to the streetscape and adjacent uses. A mix of land uses is permitted based on the context of the building form. Compatibility of uses is achieved through design and orientation, instead of strict land use separation. Form-based regulations rely on design

concepts and patterns intended to create more livable environments and spaces; as envisioned for downtown Kalamazoo.

## Streetscape

The following features and planning principles contribute to the design of streetscapes. Each of these should be implemented to make downtown pedestrians feel as safe and comfortable as possible and to enhance the overall appearance of the downtown streets.



*Pavement markings and curb extensions are two methods to increase pedestrian safety at street crossings*

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

**Streetscape Master Plan.** A Downtown Streetscape Master Plan, based on the Western Michigan University study discussed earlier, should be prepared. The plan should classify streets by function and character, identify an overall design approach by street classification, and prioritize improvements.

**Building Relationships to Pedestrians.** Buildings should be designed to relate to pedestrian scale since pedestrians respond differently to varying building frontages and heights. The most attractive and comfortable building frontages are those storefronts that have large display windows. Therefore, buildings must have ample windows that orient to the public sidewalk, provide interest, and, from a security standpoint, make interior spaces visible to a passer-by. Building entrances should also be clearly visible and accentuated by canopies or awnings and orient to the street. Blank walls along the sidewalk should be

avoided.

As building heights increase near the core of downtown, building design should be considerate and respond to the pedestrian environment. Once buildings reach a certain height, in the range of 6-8 stories, the façade should step back. This articulation is called the “recess line” and acts to define a consistent building height along the public realm that is at an appropriate dimension. Beyond that point, building height can increase with a lesser impact on scale and other environmental factors such as an adequate supply of light to the ground.

**Street Crossings.** The design of crosswalks is critical to ensure proper safety for pedestrians and vehicles, especially as they may intersect at mid-block locations. Safety hazards exist whenever pedestrians or bicyclists intersect with individual driveways, or where they meet



*Examples of pedestrian-friendly streetscape*

at an intersection. Crosswalk improvements in the downtown should include the following:

- Use pavement markings to clearly indicate where pedestrian activity will occur; vehicles must not be allowed to block these areas.
- Maintain clear vision zones at intersections to increase visibility.
- Provide adequate lighting at intersections so pedestrians are safe at all hours.
- Include overhead flashers to indicate non-signalized crossing points. Mid-block crossings can be further enhanced by using pavement markings or texture and signage at the motorists' eye level.
- Consider restricting right turns on red at high volume intersections, as most motorists fail to consider the pedestrian when turning.
- Include medians in the design of intersections, especially where a high volume of pedestrian activity is expected. Medians provide safer crosswalk options and refuges for pedestrians.
- Decrease street width at crossing points by installing sidewalk flares and curb extensions, medians or raised islands to create a safe haven for pedestrians and bikers.

**Street Trees.** Street trees currently contribute to the allure of downtown streets. However, over time many of these trees will need to be replaced as they are damaged, suffer from disease, or will die. Not only can street trees and landscaping provide a sense of comfort for pedestrians, research suggests that street trees improve safety

by increasing driver awareness and perception. Therefore, street trees in the downtown should be planted as follows:

- Planted in a continuous manner to establish a pedestrian scale and define the street corridor.
- Spaced consistently.
- Varieties of trees should: vary from street to street, be hardy to the climate, have minimal leaf litter, be free of thorns, berries or seeds, and reach a mature size of 30-50 foot height and 15-30 foot spread.
- Located to avoid obscuring traffic sight lines, architectural features, signage, or posing other safety issues.
- Placed along the curb in continuous trench planters where possible instead of in tree grates.



*Streetscape is made up of a variety of components including pavements, trees, lights, seating, furniture etc*

**Street Lights.** Kalamazoo currently has high quality, traditional ornamental lighting in the core of the downtown. This lighting style can be implemented in other appropriate downtown locations and in surrounding neighborhoods. Using a consistent style of lighting can be a unifying feature that reinforces linkages by leading pedestrians to other areas of the city.

**Street Furniture.** Downtown street furniture should include benches, waste receptacles, bike racks, ground and hanging pots, and moveable tables and chairs. Quality and style should be consistent with the architecture of downtown Kalamazoo, yet flexible enough to blend with the architectural diversity of downtown buildings.

**Outdoor Seating, Pocket Parks and Plazas.** Outdoor pedestrian areas and public spaces should be encouraged throughout downtown with visible links to destination uses and neighborhoods. Public facilities, such as drinking fountains, restrooms, telephones and outdoor music and/or speaker systems should also be considered.

**Fences and Walls.** Fences and walls should be used to screen service areas and surface parking lots. Materials should be appropriate to the adjacent buildings and their quality should reflect durable materials, such as stone, masonry and iron sufficiently detailed and enhanced with landscaping.

## Implementation Strategies

*Land Use & Development Strategic Priorities:* Safety, ambiance/beauty, pedestrian environment and downtown facilities.

Several community values and guiding principles have been incorporated into the Land Use & Development implementation strategies. As identified in the following chart, each of these components supports different vision elements.

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
LAND USE	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Emphasize consistency with existing land use patterns & zoning						
Reduce incompatible land uses						
Increase availability of infrastructure						
Re-evaluate existing DDA boundaries						
Redevelopment regulatory flexibility						
Evaluate a form-based zoning district based on the downtown design guidelines						
Continue administrative review of plans if they meet all standards of review						
Design buildings that relate to pedestrian scale						
Adopt the Comprehensive Land Use Plan as a guide for growth						

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
<b>SAFETY: Improve the reality &amp; perception of safety in the downtown</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<b>PROSPEROUS</b>	<b>DIVERSE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VIBRANT</b>	<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>
Narrow street crossings using bump-outs & curb extensions						
Maintain clear vision zones at intersections						
Include medians on streets						
Maintain Community Policing presence						

<b>AMBIANCE / BEAUTY: Continue to improve the ambiance &amp; beauty of the downtown</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<b>PROSPEROUS</b>	<b>DIVERSE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VIBRANT</b>	<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>
Implement Placemaking strategies						
Address the aesthetics of walkable areas						
Ensure maintenance & repairs are timely & consistent						
Develop in a way that is compatible with traditional building forms & materials						
Emphasize preservation & appreciation of natural features						
Create consistent gateways at key entrances to the downtown						
Prepare a Downtown Streetscape Master Plan						
Create special treatments for mid-block crossings						
Develop a consistent design theme to indicate arrival into downtown						
Implement Full-Time Festival Place Attendant / Operations Person						

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Identify, prioritize, & augment the network of paths, sidewalks, & trails						
Continue installation of audible pedestrian signals						
Require the use of tactile paving at intersections & sidewalk edges						
Integrate a regional path system						
Enhance connections to WMU & K College						
Enhance connection to the Kal-Haven Trail						
Add bike lanes to downtown streets						
Add street trees & furniture						
Create a pedestrian friendly environment						

DOWNTOWN FACILITIES	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Public restrooms / Information Kiosk						
Dog Park						
Facilities to support walking/biking trails						
Teen/youth-oriented venues/activities						
Make the arena decision as part of the planning process						
Evaluate & Improve public spaces						
Improve access to open space						
Enhance downtown as a special place for families & children						

# Opportunities

## Community of Excellence

Kalamazoo is justly proud of its history of innovation for which it has received international acclaim. Known widely for being the first community in the country to incorporate an outdoor pedestrian mall in its central business district (1959), downtown Kalamazoo has also been the home to many well-known businesses that include:

- Checker Cab
- Gibson Guitar
- Kalamazoo Corsets
- Shakespeare Rod and Reels

Downtown Kalamazoo is a center of excellence, wholly due to the many businesses and organizations that have set and achieved the highest standards in their industry. Some of these entities and their accomplishments include:

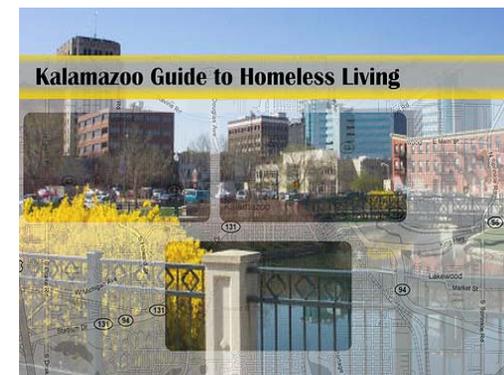
- Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo;
- Bronson Hospital; Malcolm Baldrige Award Winner 2006; Top 100 Places for Working Mothers
- City of Kalamazoo; National Family Friendly Award, 2005
- Gazelle Sports; Michigan Retailers Association Retailer of the Year, 2006 & 2007
- Kalamazoo Community Foundation;
- Kalamazoo Public Library; Library of the Year, 2002
- Radisson Plaza Hotel
- Tower Pinkster Titus

## Homelessness

Despite its well deserved reputation for excellence, its many accomplishments, and its abundance of exceptional qualities, Kalamazoo, like any city its size, is not immune to social ills such as homelessness. It is unfortunate that such a problem exists at all and may worsen as a consequence of the deteriorating economy. Though much of the homeless population is concentrated in and around downtown, near the social service agencies, this is a community-wide burden, requiring a community-wide solution.

Kalamazoo has focused attention on homelessness through efforts that provide a variety of support and housing options. Among those involved have been Ministry with Community, the Rickman House, the Catholic Dioceses of Kalamazoo, the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission Church, and Housing Resources Incorporated of Kalamazoo, to name a few. Efforts to address homelessness include subsidized or low cost residential units, ranging from emergency shelters to longer-term housing options.

A paradigm shift must take place from well-intentioned social service treatment based solutions to a Housing



*Minimizing homelessness must be addressed by the overall Kalamazoo community*

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

First model that favors moving chronically homeless persons from the streets to housing, and providing comprehensive services to deal with the issues that contribute to their plight. Key steps include:

- Support the City of Kalamazoo's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.
- Develop supportive housing - reconfigure shelters to move people beyond homelessness more quickly; use shelters as temporary housing.
- End street homelessness through targeted outreach and housing placement.
- Integrate the formerly homeless into mixed-income housing - adopting creative housing initiatives that focus on an individual approach to combat chronic homelessness.
- Provide quality housing management.
- Use resources to get the public, elected officials and other government decision makers to help homeless people in a positive way.
- Identify solutions to prevent and end homelessness rather than contain it.
- Find a financial solution to mitigate the homeless problem.

Ultimately, if homelessness is to be addressed, broader issues that cause individuals and families to become homeless - mental illness, low-paying jobs, a lack of affordable housing, unemployment, addiction – must be dealt with.

## A City for Children

Even among the most desirable and exciting downtowns, those that have successfully attracted the "Creative Class", a basic element of future success has been

neglected – the next generation of city dweller, children. Europe has been at the forefront studying and addressing the desirability of urban environments for children. Demographic changes in Europe, as the population ages and fertility rates decline, constitute an



*Areas for formal and informal play should be developed throughout the downtown to make it an inviting atmosphere for children*

enormous challenge for the long-term viability of their cities. These same demographic shifts apply to this country as well.

By developing more child and youth-friendly environments, cities can create frameworks in which – as a final outcome – family life is facilitated and encouraged. In applying this concept to the downtown Kalamazoo community, new activities or events should be implemented to target a variety of age groups. Activities should be chosen and run by youth to incorporate a service-learning program. Play equipment should be added to the downtown to encourage creativity and education through play.

For children, young persons and families to enjoy living in our cities, an international effort has been established through the United Nations – the Cities for Children – which promotes the following:

- Each child should be educated and their talents supported, providing them fair chances in the future.
- Families with children should have access to affordable housing and public space to play.
- Health education, healthy eating and medical services for parents and children should be implemented at the highest possible level.
- The compatibility between family and profession, children and career, is to be improved for parents by adapting working conditions and by providing high-quality affordable child care according to the needs of families.
- A new contract among generations should instill interaction between old and young with structured networks of mutual assistance and aid in available for support.

- Participation of children and young persons in decision-making processes and public life should be encouraged. In this context, youth initiatives should be supported and the activities of youth organizations should be promoted.
- Children’s safety in traffic and protection against crime should be assured.

These tasks are admirable and ambitious. Some may require a broader commitment by the community and longer term solutions, while others are realistically achievable in the shorter term. The participation of college students in helping to define the future of downtown Kalamazoo has been a step in the right direction. However more effort is needed.

Specifically, downtown Kalamazoo should become more generation-friendly. Because children are the future, it is imperative that children, young people, and families be attracted to the downtown by creating physical environments that are attractive, safe and desirable. The proximity of downtown to nearby residential neighborhoods should be exploited as a home for young families; recreational opportunities for children in downtown and in near-downtown neighborhoods should be expanded by providing playgrounds that are exciting, safe and appropriately scaled; and downtown events should not only focus on adults, but the young as well. Finally, the network of streets within and leading into the downtown must be transformed so they become bridges rather than barriers.

Edmonton Alberta Canada is a leader in programming and marketing their downtown to children and families. Unique events and programs have brought diverse groups together to experience downtown. Perceptions



have improved to the point where families are making downtown a destination and their home.

## Seniors in the Downtown

With 78.2 million baby boomers poised to retire, the market for retirement homes in the coming years will be at an all time high. More and more retirees are looking to settle downtown, taking advantage of a mix of amenities, accessibility, value, and sense of community. A report from the National Association of Home Builders says that over half of all Baby Boomers between the ages of 45 and 65 expect to purchase retirement property within the next five years where they can enjoy an active social lifestyle. According to the Urban Land Institute and American Demographics, a growing number of retirees are heading downtown after years of raising families in small towns or suburbs. Downtown living offers them benefits that are rare in any other setting; easy access to performing arts, restaurants, museums, medical care, educational opportunities, and the energy and excitement of a city. All of these are found in downtown Kalamazoo. A more detailed discussion of senior housing is found in Chapter 3 Residential. Other senior housing trends include:

**University Retirement.** For seniors who enjoy life long education, universities are developing retirement communities. These programs initially started as a way to keep alumni involved, but they're appealing to a broader group. Cornell, Duke, University of Michigan, Penn State, and Stanford all have such initiatives. With the number of local universities and colleges available, this concept should be explored for downtown Kalamazoo.

**NORC Living.** Seniors can be an independent and very self-reliant lot. Sometimes so many seniors live in a building or neighborhood that it becomes a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community or "NORC". Instead of forcing seniors out, government agencies target services to these areas. As an example, residents in a Boston neighborhood have formed a senior services co-op. Those over 50 can pay and get help with household services, wellness and assisted living services, transportation and enjoy events together.

**Retiring with the Kids.** For a growing number of seniors, moving in with their children may be the only financially viable option. Some may dread this choice while others may find it to be a desirable alternative. A 2007 USA Today/ABC News Poll found that 8% of Baby Boomers say a parent lives with them and another 8% say their parents live with another relative. For the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown multi-generational housing may be a way for a parent to



*Many seniors are drawn to downtown areas as they provide a number of goods, services and entertainment within a close proximity*

remain in the city while providing affordable housing options for the next generation.

Ultimately, if downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods are to be viable housing options for seniors, closer attention will need to be paid to the kinds of goods and services they demand. Therefore, Kalamazoo must continually evaluate its retail, service, and overall business mix downtown. The senior demographic demands things like grocery stores, health care facilities, and pharmacies that are easily accessible. Additionally, the types of housing seniors prefer will vary as their lifestyles change and mobility declines. Consequently, a mix of downtown housing options will offer flexibility to aging retirees. Kalamazoo should evaluate opportunities for this emerging group of downtown dwellers and match services, promote business opportunities and growth relative to the needs of this new downtown niche market.

## Commitment to Sustainability

Sustainability is a concept that is long overdue and one that favors core cities. The City of Kalamazoo is committed to improving sustainability, which was identified as one of the key planning strategies for the downtown. Several factors are behind this including: escalating energy costs which have created immediate demand for alternative energy; local government has embraced sustainability as concerns about global warming proliferate; and more and more downtown stakeholders and tenants are demanding sustainable buildings and environments.

In 2007, the City of Kalamazoo joined other communities and signed the U.S. Mayors Climate

Protection Agreement to show support for international efforts to reduce energy consumption, improve air quality and generally combat the effects of global warming. The agreement was initiated as a result of the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement adopted by 141 participating countries in February of 2005. By signing the agreement, Kalamazoo has agreed to implement best management practices and policies to improve the global environment.

Kalamazoo should focus on the following interrelated topics to address greening and environmental sustainability in the downtown:

- **Greening New and Existing Buildings.** A prominent and recurring theme throughout the planning process, the incorporation of sustainable design and “green” building practices, should be promoted in the downtown. Standards for sustainable design to:
  - Reduce the energy required for lighting, heating and cooling of structures.
  - Reduce the energy required for transportation.
  - Reduce on-site water usage.
  - Reduce the off-site runoff of stormwater.
  - Encourage design that promotes walking and biking.
  - Protect existing trees and vegetation.
  - Promote higher density infill development where the infrastructure capacity exists

Sustainability, simply put, is the capacity to maintain a certain process or state indefinitely

The United States Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) provides benchmarks for the

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings and site design. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing five key areas of human and environmental health:

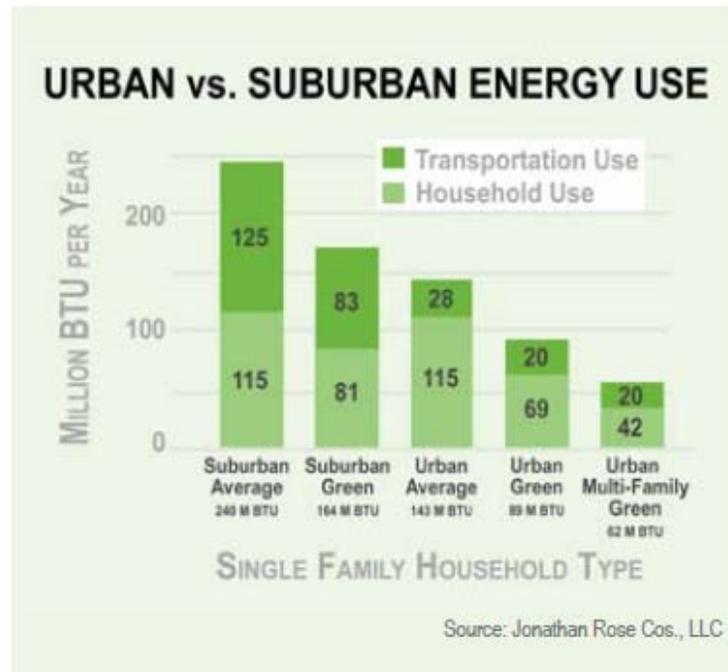
- sustainable site development,
- water savings,
- energy efficiency,
- materials selection and
- indoor environmental quality.

Renovated and infill development projects can be LEED-certified based on qualifying guidelines. It has been shown that LEED-certified buildings have lower operating costs, promote healthier neighborhoods and conserve energy and natural resources that lead to development that is sustainable over the long term.

The use of LEED-designed buildings should be encouraged in downtown Kalamazoo and incentives, such as density or height bonuses, could be granted in exchange for buildings that become LEED certified. To achieve the maximum benefits of environmental sustainability, the following should be considered for downtown:

- The use of LEED certification programs, including those for new construction, existing buildings (operations and maintenance), commercial interiors, core and shell, schools, retail, healthcare, homes and neighborhoods.
- Placing, orienting and configuring buildings on a site to minimize energy use by means of day light, solar heating, natural ventilation, green roofs, and shading from vegetation or other buildings.

- Using pervious pavers in surface parking lots along with appropriate sustainable design concepts that reflect urban development patterns like rain gardens for open spaces and landscaped areas to improve the quality and reduce the amount of storm water runoff.
- Implementing a streetscape enhancement program with a focus on use of shade trees and native vegetation.
- Working with downtown residents and business owners to implement “green” operating practices such as installing compact fluorescent light bulbs and/or lights with motion sensors, developing restrooms with low flow fixtures, promoting recycling,



*Living in a downtown environment in and of itself is more sustainable than living in suburban areas*

- and adjusting thermostats to reduce usage, etc.
- Promoting the use of Energy Star.
- **Educating Tenants on Green Best Practices**
  - The City and DKI should become models by using eco-friendly materials, turning off computers when unused and employing sustainable construction practices and materials.
  - Facilitating training and providing technical assistance for improving energy efficiency and transforming current practices.
  - Reducing employees' energy consumption for work trips.
- **Enhancing Land Use and Transportation Options**
  - Completing the conversion to a two-way configuration for key downtown streets and redesigning them with a focus on greening the downtown.
  - Promoting the development of higher density mixed use development in the downtown.
  - Providing safe, efficient and well designed transportation options for downtown visitors, residents and workers.
- Encouraging smart parking technology on the curb and off-street to help reduce automobile carbon contributions and facilitate market-rate metered parking and real-time parking availability information, both of which have proven their value to other U.S. cities.
- Promoting public transit and supporting bicycle parking, striping downtown streets for bike lanes and promoting bike sharing as a good transportation choice for travel.
- **Improving Public Spaces**
  - Assessing downtown streetscapes and employing methods to increase the number of trees in the downtown and enhancing their rate of survival.
  - Providing energy efficient bulbs for downtown streetlights and traffic signals.
  - Seeking new, environmentally friendly uses for public spaces such as vendors and farm markets selling food that is locally produced.



*A variety of techniques can be used to make development more sustainable or eligible for LEED accreditations including green roofs and bioswales*

## Implementation Strategies

**Strategic Priority:** *To develop opportunities to address key issues facing downtown including seniors, sustainability, children and homelessness.*

An essential community value and guiding principle of the downtown plan is to build strong partnerships and new programs to address critical downtown topics. The Promise of Downtown Kalamazoo is to create an **accessible, diverse and progressive** downtown that works with the entire Kalamazoo community to solve large scale challenges which extend beyond the core downtown.

The chart that follows outlines community-focused strategies that address these three vision elements.

A variety of programs must be developed to improve **accessibility** to all.

Opportunities to reduce homelessness, improve housing for seniors, promote sustainability and provide options for children add **diversity** to the downtown community.

By addressing emerging social and physical trends, downtown is positioned to continue its legacy of **progressive** thinking.

OPPORTUNITIES IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
HOMELESSNESS	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Support and participate in the broader partnership to address homelessness						
Support the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness						
Support "Housing First" strategies						
SENIOR OPPORTUNITIES	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Promote a variety of housing options						
Identify trends & develop policies to address senior needs						

OPPORTUNITIES IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
SUSTAINABILITY	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Promote non-motorized transportation (walking / biking)						
Reduce water use & stormwater runoff						
Protect existing trees & vegetation						
Promote higher density infill development						
Promote LEED principles						
Implement ten new sustainability programs for downtown businesses, property owners						
Support community sustainability initiatives						
Research a "Zipcar" program and their applicability to a downtown setting						
CITY FOR CHILDREN	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Implement Placemaking strategies that serve to enhance the community's sense of place						
Develop three new playgrounds for children and families						

# Transformative Projects

## Transformative Projects

The 2009 Downtown Kalamazoo Comprehensive Plan identifies seven key development projects, either proposed or in the planning stages, which would change the downtown landscape and stimulate future growth for years to come. These are projects that will touch every facet of the downtown experience and impact the entire community. Significant community capital and coordinated partnerships will be required to make them reality. Implementation could take anywhere from 2 to 10 years.

Downtown Kalamazoo Inc., Downtown Tomorrow, Inc., the Downtown Development Authority, the City of Kalamazoo and all its partners have a history of thinking big, committing to action and accomplishing monumental goals. The projects below promise great change and opportunity for jobs, entertainment, education, health and enhancement of our sense of place.

**100 Block E. Michigan Ave. Redevelopment.** Focusing its energies on downtown since 1987, Downtown Tomorrow Inc. acquired the four historic structures on E. Michigan Ave. in 2000. It was DTI's mission to find a master developer with a vision and commitment to launch a high quality mixed use project on this prime retail/entertainment corner. After a series of failed plans and strategies between 2001 and 2006 stalled any progress, a developer has stepped forward to take up the challenge to renovate the buildings and make the vision reality.

The project economics are huge and beyond the capacity of any single entity. The developer, DTI and

several local and state agencies are collaborating to formulate a strategy that maximizes the property's potential for commercial and residential use. This project has the potential to improve and expand retail linkages between the Kalamazoo Mall East and West Michigan Ave.

**Two-Way Street Conversion/Streetscape Improvements.** Kalamazoo's historic "Main Street," Michigan Ave., is in dire need of re-establishing itself as the transportation corridor and gathering place it was 50 years ago. The corridor must once again become a safe vehicular, pedestrian friendly connector to and through downtown.

Conversion of one-way traffic to two-way and the redesign of the pedestrian streetscape must be at the forefront of this improvement plan. Furthermore, it must include the entire corridor, from W. Lovell St. to E. Kalamazoo Ave.

Though preliminary plans have been drawn, this is an enormous undertaking that will take several years to implement. The project will no doubt require phasing and a bold step to commit the energy and dollars needed to make it happen.

**Event Center / In-House Neighborhood.** There are over nine acres of land situated along the Arcadia Creek West End district that have been targeted for redevelopment since the late 1980's. The 1989 Arcadia Creek Redevelopment Plan had envisioned the introduction of townhomes and retail shops along the creek banks. A grand vision evolved in 2000 when DTI and Western Michigan University partnered to assemble the four blocks for a mixed use project that would incorporate a WMU entity.

## 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan

A 2004 Vision Plan indicated this was a viable site for a new arena complex. Recent studies suggest that in order to be fully feasible, it must incorporate other uses such as retail, entertainment, housing and offices. Planning and evaluation of the Arena (now referred to as the Event Center) concept continues. Timing is critical and a strong community partnership will need to be organized to create this major development forward. If the pieces, players and commitments from the community cannot be solidified, alternative plans need to be ready.

One concept for this site is a variation of the original Arcadia Plan – a residential project. The “In-Town Neighborhood” development calls for mixed uses connecting the core downtown with the Stuart and Northside neighborhoods and WMU/Kalamazoo College. The project would contain mid-rise residential and commercial buildings integrating with the Arcadia Creek Linear Park, pedestrian pathways and live-work opportunities.

**Lovell / Rose Development.** The former Public Safety building site is located on the southwest fringe of downtown adjacent to the Vine Neighborhood. This two acre parcel currently functions as a surface parking lot for downtown employees. Owned by the city of Kalamazoo, the site is surrounded predominately by office uses on the north, east and west sides. Multiple family housing lies to the south. The property allows for a unique mixed use project that should transition from the urban office/retail uses to the residences in the neighborhood connector district. New housing has been the key requirement for any development scenario proposed for the site as long as its design and scale fit with the context of the adjacent buildings. This block is

considered a prime redevelopment site downtown, ready to move. Both the City and DKI are actively seeking local and regional investors with multiple-use redevelopment experience.

**Haymarket Parking Lot #9 Redevelopment.** Maximizing the use of land downtown is paramount as we undertake the implementation of the 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan. A significant amount of land downtown is vacant or covered by parking lots. Redeveloping these underutilized properties for private housing, mixed use or parking ramps has to be one of the key objectives to increasing tax base. The Haymarket Parking Lot #9 located at E. Water St. and Edwards St. is Central City Parking’s most productive parking facility from a demand standpoint. It also offers excellent growth potential due to its central location and proximity to other recent redevelopment projects since 2000.

Redevelopment of the 2 acre parking lot for mixed use housing, retail and offices has been proposed in the past. A critical element of any plan for the site will be the incorporation of a multi-story parking ramp within the development. DKI and the city must continue to work on a strategy in partnership with a developer that supports future parking and shares the vision for this property.

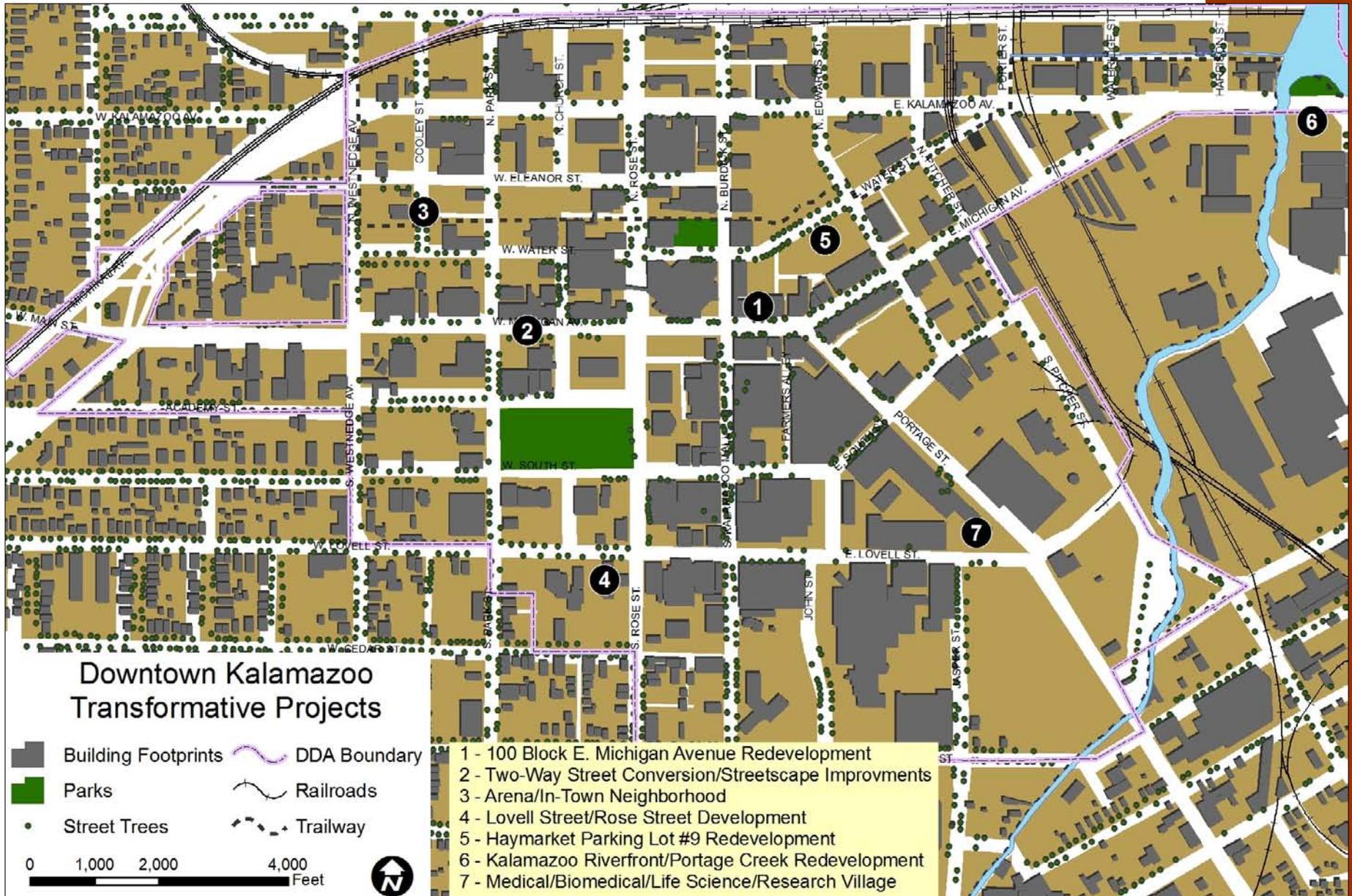
**Kalamazoo River / Portage Creek Greenways.** Connecting downtown to the waterways where Kalamazoo first began has been a vision of planners, citizens and historians since the riverfront was abandoned in the 1950’s. Great cities have embraced their waterfronts, using them as prominent natural features, economic development tools and recreational

greenways. Entrepreneurs are creating housing, art facilities and new locally-owned businesses as development inches toward the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek. These pioneers have recognized the potential of the water, landscapes and unique historical structures.

Redevelopment incentives must continue to be offered in these areas along the east end of downtown. The City and DKI can foster further development with the planning strategies and financing programs available in the downtown and other Brownfield areas.

The City's Riverfront Redevelopment Plan is in place. Future development opportunities are unlimited along the river.

**Medical/Biomedical/Life Science/Research Village.** The Kalamazoo region has become a leader in biomedical/life science and medical development. Investments by Bronson Hospital, Pfizer and MPI over the past few years, along with future commitments will offer long term benefit to downtown. Facility expansion and job creation announced recently makes this area a new center for growth. This development will require new housing and support services to attract top professionals to work in these science-related businesses. The concept of creating a "village" atmosphere could draw the desired young professionals seeking an urban lifestyle. Establishing state of the art research labs for the graduation of biomedical start-ups from the Southwest Michigan Innovation Center would be a goal of the village plan.



## Implementation Strategies

Several community values and guiding principles have been incorporated into the Transformative Projects implementation strategies. As identified in the following

chart, each of these projects supports different vision elements.

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
<b>100 BLOCK E. MICHIGAN AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<b>PROSPEROUS</b>	<b>DIVERSE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VIBRANT</b>	<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>
Renovation of Existing Buildings (multi-use)						
Demolition/ Development of a Multi-Use Signature Building						
<b>TWO-WAY STREET CONVERSION/ STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<b>PROSPEROUS</b>	<b>DIVERSE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VIBRANT</b>	<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>
Conversion & Streetscape Improvements of Lovell / South, Michigan / Kalamazoo, Edwards, MichiKal, Douglas, West Main.						
<b>EVENT CENTER/IN-TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<b>PROSPEROUS</b>	<b>DIVERSE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VIBRANT</b>	<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>
Multi-function sports/entertainment facility						
Potential to share with institutions of higher learning						
Encourage spin-off & associated uses nearby						
Alternate plan (in-town neighborhood)						

SPECIAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
<b>LOVELL / ROSE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<b>PROSPEROUS</b>	<b>DIVERSE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VIBRANT</b>	<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>
Mixed-Use Development (including residential)						
<b>HAYMARKET PARKING LOT #9 REDEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<b>PROSPEROUS</b>	<b>DIVERSE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VIBRANT</b>	<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>
Reconstruct / Reconfigure Existing Parking Lot						
Long Term: Mixed Use Development with Parking Structure						
<b>KALAMAZOO RIVER / PORTAGE CREEK GREENWAY</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<b>PROSPEROUS</b>	<b>DIVERSE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VIBRANT</b>	<b>PROGRESSIVE</b>
Development should be consistent with the City of Kalamazoo Riverfront Redevelopment Plan						
Encourage residential development along Kalamazoo River						
Open space connection to downtown & riverfront						
Enhance retail along Riverview Dr.						
Maintain Red Arrow Golf Course for the time being						

SPECIAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
MEDICAL/BIOMEDICAL/LIFE SCIENCE/RESEARCH VILLAGE	ACCESSIBLE	PROSPEROUS	DIVERSE	GREEN	VIBRANT	PROGRESSIVE
Expand medical offices						
Hospital supporting services & retail						
Medical school campus						
Include residential component						
Interconnected open space, especially along Portage Creek Corridor						
Portage Street should be utilized as a gateway to downtown & hospital/medical						
Demolition/Signature Development of vacant parking lot						

# Work Plan

## Work Plan

Planning is not an end in itself. The true measure of a plan's value is the extent to which it is carried out. Putting the plan into action involves orchestrating multiple activities among a variety of groups to assure consistency with the vision. The actions listed in the tables on the following pages will help guide Kalamazoo with implementation of this Plan.

For ease of use, the action items are organized by topic. Although successful implementation will involve effort from the entire community, the second and third columns identify the key groups responsible for each action item. The remaining columns identify helpful resources, priority for DKI and estimated costs.

All of these projects stem from extensive public input. Keeping that in mind, some initial 2009 projects have been identified. Further evaluation and prioritization of work plan elements will take place prior to finalizing this plan.

RESIDENTIAL WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL</b>				
Partner with major employers to build incentive programs for downtown housing	DKI, DDA, CAC	City, Bronson, HRI	CDBG, HOME,KNHS, NMTC, LISC, BRP	
Create Live-Work Space for creative community	DKI	Arts Council, City, WMU	MEDC, MSHDA, KCF, ISGF	
Explore & emphasize the need for senior housing of all types	K C H C S, Area Services on Aging	Bronson, Borgess, Senior Services	MSHDA	
Foster development of 500 housing units for people of diverse income levels over the next 10 years	DKI	City, Private Developers	MSDHA	
Organizational structure to support the development of housing for diverse income levels	DKI	City, HRI	CDBG, HOME,KNHS, NMTC, LISC, BRP	
Develop incentives to build diverse income housing	DKI, City	HRI, KNHS, LISC	LISC, BRP, KNHS	
Promote a mix of rental & owner-occupied units and housing types	DKI	City, HRI, KNHS, LISC	DKI	
Require design sensitivity to insure physical character & composition fits with surroundings	DKI	City	DDRC	
Evaluate tax-structure for residential units (commercial v. residential, Proposal A, 2-Mil)	DKI, CAC	City, State Legislators		
Include housing within the development of the medical/bio-medical/life-science/research village (students, interns, residents, employees)	DKI	Bronson, MPI, Pfizer, City, WMU, Private Sector	Federal, State, Local	

\* See page 11-22 for descriptions of acronyms.

RESIDENTIAL WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTOR DISTRICTS</b>				
University Housing for faculty & students in between Campus & Downtown (Holland Model)	DKI, WMU, City	Private Sector	CDBG, HOME, KNHS, NMTC, LISC, BRP, Private Sector	
Promote owner-occupied single-family focus	City	DKI, Neighborhood Associations, HDC	CDBG, LISC, Private Sector, KNHS, Habitat	
Provide incentives & assistance for home improvements, maintenance & purchase	City	DKI, Neighborhood Associations, HDC	CDBG, LISC, Private Sector, KNHS, Habitat	
Maintain architectural character & residential design by adopting infill/redevelopment regulations	City, HDC	Neighborhood Associations	DDRC	
Continue to fine-tune & enforce blight ordinances	City	Neighborhood Associations		
Continue to maintain and replace street trees	City			
Create & maintain connectivity to existing neighborhoods through bricks & mortar, streetscape projects	City, DDA	Neighborhood Associations, CIP	MDOT, City, DDA-CIP	2009

RETAIL WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
Promote additional on-street parking to support retail businesses	Parking Committee	City	DDA	
Streetscape - create inviting pedestrian-friendly environments	DDA	City	DDA, City, Private Sector	
Grow specialty retail	BRRC	DRA	BRRC, Private Sector, City	
Establish downtown as a primary shopping destination	BRRC, Marketing Committee	DRA	BRRC, Marketing Committee, Private Sector, City	
Develop a retail incubator program to assist at least 5 start-ups annually	DDA	BRRC, City, SBTDC, KVCC, WMU, DRA, Downtown Merchants	TIF, Private	2009
Grow locally-owned businesses through recruitment & retention programs	BRRC	Marketing Committee, City, DRA	BRRIP, Marketing Committee, City	
Create retail emphasis zones	DKI	Private Sector, DRA		
Continue to support retail focused events	Marketing Committee / Special Events Committee	DKI, DRA	Marketing Committee	

STUDENT WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
Stadium Drive Project Involvement	MDOT	City, DKI, WMU, KVCC, K-College, Neighborhood Association, KATS	MDOT, City	2011
University Housing between Campus & Downtown	DKI, WMU, City	Private Sector	CDBG, HOME, KNHS, NMTC, LISC, BRP, Private Sector	
Improve pedestrian & bike connections including safety improvements (lighting, crossings, sidewalks)	City	City, DKI, WMU, KVCC, K-College, Neighborhood Association, DRC, Safety Committee, KDPS, KRVT	MDOT, City, WMU, K-College, Federal	
Expand bus hours to accommodate student populations	Kalamazoo Metro Transit	DKI, WMU, KVCC, K-College	Federal, State, Local	
Implement the Student Connector Trolley	DKI	Metro Transit, WMU, KVCC, K-College	Federal, State, Local	2009
Improvements to key streets (MichiKal, Oakland, etc)	City	DKI	Federal, State, Local	
Market Student Discount Program via emerging technologies	Marketing Committee	Retailers	Marketing Committee	
Encourage Downtown establishments to remain open later and on weekends.	Marketing Committee	BRRC		
Assist in the development of three new student oriented businesses	BRRC	Private Sector, WMU, KVCC, K-College	BRRC, Private Sector, City	
Encourage establishments to offer inexpensive menu items that will appeal to students	BRRC	Private Sector		
Encourage eateries to offer an outdoor venue	BRRC	Private Sector, DDRC, Marketing, DKRA		
Encourage venues that cater to both under & over 21 demographic	BRRC	Private Sector		
Encourage a variety of entertainment options	BRRC	Private Sector		
Recruit venues that are active, lively places	BRRC	Private Sector		

TRANSPORTATION WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>VEHICULAR</b>				
Stadium Drive Project Involvement	MDOT	City, DKI, WMU, KVCC, K-College, Neighborhood Association, KATS	MDOT, City	2011
Address all methods of transportation, including non-vehicular	DDA, City	MDOT, KRVT, KATS	Federal, State, City, DDA	
Conversion & streetscape improvements of Lovell / South, Michigan / Kalamazoo, Edwards, MichiKal, Douglas, West Main	City, DKI, MDOT	DDA, KATS, Private Businesses and Property owners	Federal, State, Local, TIF, Private, Foundations	Beginning 2009
Improve bike connections (bike sharing / storage)	DDA	CIP	TIF, Parking	2009
Coordinate locations and timeframes to improve loading zone use for downtown businesses	DKI	City		
Improve public transportation	City - Metro	DKI	Federal, State, City, TIF	
Re-configure US-131 business route ramps	MDOT	DKI, City, KATS	Federal, State, Local	
Prioritize & strengthen linkages into downtown	DDA, City	MDOT, KATS, KRVT	City, TIF, Federal, MDOT	
Employ traffic-calming techniques to slow traffic	DDA, City	MDOT	MDOT, City, TIF	
Require access management (limiting number of driveways, etc)	City	DDA	City	
Regularly evaluate bus routes, service areas, & hours	City - Metro	DDA	City	
Identify locations & maintenance options for enhanced bus stops	City - Metro	DDA	City, TIF	
Institute Bike-to-Work Program	DKI, DKAC	Marketing Committee, KRVT, City	City, TIF, State	
Reconstruct the Michigan Ave. streetscape from Lovell St. to E. Kalamazoo Ave.	DDA	MDOT, City, KATS	Federal, State, Local	
Encourage sustainable transportation initiatives including alternative modes of travel & new technologies	City	DDA, MDOT	Federal, State, City, TIF	

TRANSPORTATION WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION</b>				
Implement green streets program	DDA	City, MDOT	Federal, State, City, TIF	
Improve safety, accessibility & connectivity of pedestrian walkways	DDA	City	Federal, State, City, TIF	
Improve safety by applying consistent design to crosswalks	City	DDA, DDRC		

TRANSPORTATION WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>PARKING</b>				
Implement 5-Year Parking Plan (2010-2014)	DKI, DDA	Parking Committee, City	TIF, City	
Improve bike connections (bike sharing / storage)	DDA	Parking Committee, City, KRVT	Federal, State, City, TIF	
Smart car / fuel efficient vehicle parking	Parking Committee	Parking System, TIF, City	Federal, State, City, TIF, Parking	
Continue lighting improvements	Parking Committee	Parking System, TIF, City	Federal, State, City, TIF, Parking	
Explore expansion of surveillance technology	Parking Committee	Parking System, TIF, Safety Committee, City	Federal, State, City, TIF, Parking	
Provide additional on-street parking including angled parking	Parking Committee	Parking System, TIF, City	Federal, State, City, TIF, Parking	
Lot #9 Re-configuration	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	City, CIP, Parking	2009
Continue efforts to provide affordable, convenient parking	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	City, CIP, Parking	
Epic Center Ramp Improvements	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	City, CIP, Parking	
Implement Auto-Cashiers in surface lots	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Explore wireless communicators	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Increase rate structure	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Extend 90 Minute Time Zone Enforcement (weekdays & Sat)	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Extend Meters on Academy to Oakland / Michigan / Stadium	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Reduce cashier hours at attended ramps	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Offer car pool premium parking & / or discounts	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	

TRANSPORTATION WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>PARKING</b>				
Promote credit / debit card use	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Explore additional multi-space technology	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Increase public awareness of downtown parking options/availability	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Revisit good standing policy & habitual violator ordinance	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Expand way-finding system within ramps / lots	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Explore infomercial use of telephone system	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, City	CIP, Parking	
Develop public perception improvement campaign	Parking Committee	Parking Committee, Marketing Committee	CIP, Parking	
Reinforce customer service training	Parking Committee	Parking Committee	CIP, Parking	

JOBS WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
Housing for downtown employees	DKI	City, Private Developers	Federal, State, Local	
BRRRC Recruitment strategies – Retail Incubator Program	BRRRC	Private, City	TIF, City	
Promote job creation in Redevelopment Districts	City	DKI, Neighborhood Associations	City, State, Federal	
Support others' recruitment efforts	DKI	City, County, SW Michigan First		
Assist in the creation of 50 new jobs annually	DKI	BRRRC, City	TIF, City, State, Federal	
Site Selector Marketing	BRRRC	City, SW Michigan First		
New Downtown State Legislative Incentives	BRRRC	City, MEDC, SW Michigan First	Local, State, Federal	
Develop programs to support Kalamazoo Promise graduates to select the local public higher educational institutions & offer internships with downtown businesses	DKI	Kalamazoo Promise, KPS, Private Sector	TIF, City, Kalamazoo Promise, KPS	
Support the development of the downtown Bio-Medical/Life Science District for expanding Southwest Michigan Innovation Center start-ups	DKI	Bronson, MPI, Pfizer, SW Michigan First, City	Bronson, MPI, Pfizer, SW Michigan First, City, TIF, MEDC	
High Technology Job creation	DKI	BRRRC, City, SW Michigan First, MEDC	TIF, City, SW Michigan First, MEDC	
Develop Live/Work projects to draw jobs and residents downtown	DKI	DTI, BRRRC, Arts Council, City, Private Sector	TIF, EDC, Private Sector	

ARTS & CULTURE WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
Continue to support Arts & Culture & the development of new & unique programs downtown, such as "BLUE SKIES"	DKAC		DKAC	2009
Live / Work Space for artists	DKI	DTI, BRRC, Arts Council, City, Private Sector	TIF, EDC, Private Sector	
Seek & encourage opportunities for more public art in green areas & pedestrian traffic areas	DDA	CIP, City	TIF, ISGF, KCF	
Workforce Programming	DKAC		DKAC	2009
Festivals (Special Events)	DKAC	CIP, Marketing Committee	DKAC, TIF, Foundations	
Partnerships w Arts Organizations	DKAC	Arts Council	Foundations	
Marketing "Creative Excellence"	Marketing Committee	Arts Council, Chamber	TIF	
Elevate Image of Creativity	Marketing Committee	Arts Council, ISGF, KCF	TIF, ISGF, KCF	
Develop a community culture and standards of creative excellence				
Four Season programming plan	DDA	ISGF, City	TIF, ISGF, KCF, City	2009
Public Art	DDA	Arts Council, DKAC, ISGF, Marketing Committee, KIA, WMU, K-College Art Departments	TIF, Foundations, Private Donations	
Creative Spaces	DKAC	DDA CIP, ISGF, Private Sector	TIF, Foundations, Private Donations	
Implement Placemaking strategies that serve to enhance the community's sense of place				

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>LAND USE</b>				
Emphasize consistency with existing land use patterns & zoning	DDA	City, DDRC		
Reduced incompatible land use relationships	DDA	City, DDRC		
Availability of infrastructure	DDA	City, MDOT, State		
Re-evaluate existing DDA boundaries	DDA	City		
Provide regulatory flexibility	DDA	City, DDRC		
Evaluate a form-based zoning district based on the downtown design guidelines	DDA	City, DDRC		
Continue administrative review of plans if they meet all standards of review	DDA/City	DDRC		
Design buildings that relate to pedestrian scale	DDA	City, DDRC		
Adopt the Comprehensive Land Use Plan as a guide for growth	DDA	City, DDRC		
<b>SAFETY: Improve the reality &amp; perception of safety in the downtown</b>				
Narrow street crossings using bump-outs & curb extensions	DDA	City	TIF, City	
Maintain clear vision zones at intersections	DDA	City	City	
Include medians on streets	DDA	City	TIF, City	
Community Policing Officer	DKI	KDPS, Safety Committee	KDPS, TIF	2009

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>AMBIANCE / BEAUTY: Continue to improve the ambiance &amp; beauty of the downtown</b>				
Develop more green spaces – Support the Urban Nature Park	DDA	CIP, ISGF, DDRC, City, Kalamazoo Nature Center	TIF, City, ISGF	
Address the aesthetics of walkable areas	DDA	CIP, ISGF, DDRC, City, KRVT, DRC	TIF, City, ISGF	
Ensure maintenance & repairs are timely & consistent	DDA	City, CIP	TIF, City	
Develop in a way that is compatible with traditional building forms & materials	DDA	CIP, DDRC, City		
Emphasize preservation & appreciation of natural features	DDA	CIP, DDRC, City		
Create consistent gateways at key entrances to the downtown	DDA	CIP, City, MDOT	TIF, City	
Develop a downtown wide planting plan	DKAC	CIP	TIF, ISGF Grants	2009
Prepare a Downtown Streetscape Master Plan	DDA	CIP, City, MDOT, ISGF, DDRC	TIF, City, MDOT, Foundations	2009
Coordinate with two-way traffic conversion plan	DDA	CIP, City, MDOT, ISGF, DDRC	TIF, City, MDOT, Foundations	2009
Create special treatments for mid-block crossings	DDA	CIP, City, MDOT, ISGF, DDRC	TIF, City, MDOT, Foundations	
Develop a consistent design theme to indicate arrival into downtown	DDA	CIP, City, MDOT, ISGF, DDRC	TIF, City, MDOT, Foundations	
Maintenance	DDA/City	CIP, CCP	TIF, Parking Committee, City	
Develop a cohesive holiday décor program	DKAC	CIP, City	TIF, Grants, City	2009
Implement Full-Time Festival Place Attendant	DKI	Lead	(D's) TIF	2009

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT</b>				
Conversion & Streetscape Improvements of Lovell / South, Michigan / Kalamazoo, Edwards, MichiKal, Douglas, West Main	City, DKI, MDOT	DDA, KATS, Private Businesses and Property owners	Federal, State, Local, TIF, Private, Foundations	Beginning 2009
Identify, prioritize, & augment the network of paths, sidewalks, & trails	DDA	City, MDOT, DRC, KRVT	TIF, City, MDOT	
Continue installation of audible pedestrian signals	City	CIP	City	
Require the use of tactile paving at intersections & sidewalk edges	City	CIP, DDRC	City, TIF	
Integrate a regional path system	City	DDA, KRVT	City, TIF	
Enhance connections to WMU & K College	DDA	City, MDOT, WMU, K-College, KVRT	City, TIF, WMU, K-College	
Enhance connection to the Kal-Haven Trail	DDA	City, MDOT, WMU, K-College, KVRT	City, TIF, WMU, K-College	
Add bike lanes to downtown streets	City	DDA, KRVT	City, TIF	
Add street trees, & furniture	DDA	CIP, City, DDRC	City, TIF	
Add bike lanes to downtown streets	City	DDA, KRVT	City, TIF	
Use fences, & walls to provide screening	DDA	CIP, City, DDRC	City, TIF	
Enhance the streetscape of major downtown corridors	DDA/City	MDOT, DDRC	TIF, City, MDOT	
Create a pedestrian friendly environment	DDA	CIP, City, DDRC, KRVT	City, TIF	

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>DOWNTOWN FACILITIES</b>				
Public restrooms / Information Kiosk	DDA	CIP, Safety, Parking	TIF, Private	2009
Dog Park	DDA	CIP, CAC	TIF	2009
Trails for walking/biking trails	DDA	City, KRVY	TIF, City	
Teen/youth-oriented venues/activities	DDA	DKAC, Marketing, City, Businesses	TIF	
Make the arena decision as part of the planning process	DTI	DDA, City, County, Chamber	Local, State Federal, Private Sector	
Evaluate & Improve public spaces	DDA	CIP, Safety, Parking, City, DDRC	TIF, Private, Foundations	
Improve access to open space	DDA	CIP, Safety, Parking, City, DDRC	TIF, Private, Foundations	
Create a special place for families & children	DKI	DKAC, Marketing, CIP,	TIF	

OPPORTUNITIES WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>HOMELESSNESS</b>				
Pursue a broader partnership to address homelessness	DKI	City, County, Gospel Mission, Ministry with Community, County Mental Health, ROI		
Support & assist the Housing First Plan	DKI	City, County, Gospel Mission, Ministry with Community, County Mental Health, ROI		
Endorse the County's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness	DKI	City, County, Gospel Mission, Ministry with Community, County Mental Health, ROI		
<b>SENIOR OPPORTUNITIES</b>				
Implement a variety of Senior Housing	DKI, DDA, DTI	City, LISC, Private Sector		
Identify trends & develop policies to address senior needs	DKI	City, LISC, Private Sector		
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>				
Promote non-motorized transportation (walking / biking)	DKI	CIP, City, MDOT, KRVT	TIF, City, MDOT	
Reduce water use & stormwater runoff	City	DDA, Downtown Property owners		
Protect existing trees & vegetation	DDA	City, DDRC	TIF, City, State	
Promote higher density infill development	DDA	DDRC, City, Private Developers		
Promote LEED	DKI	CIP, City, Private Developers, W. Michigan Chapter of ABC		
Implement ten new sustainability programs for downtown businesses, property owners	DKI/DDA	City, State, Federal	TIF, City, State, Federal	
Implement Downtown Building Weatherization Program	DDA	City, State	TIF, City, State, LISC	
Support City of Kalamazoo Sustainability Initiatives	City	DKI/DDA	City, TIF	
Research a "Zipcar" program and their applicability to a downtown setting				

OPPORTUNITIES WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>CITY FOR CHILDREN</b>				
Public Spaces				
Develop three new playgrounds for children and families	DKAC	CIP	TIF, Grants	2009
Develop additional programming to target children and youth	DKAC		Grant	2009
Implement Placemaking strategies that serve to enhance the community's sense of place				

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>100 BLOCK E. MICHIGAN AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT</b>				
Renovation of Existing Buildings (multi-use)	DTI	KCF, City, LISC, County, Historic Preservation Commission	TIF, City, County, Developer, NMTC, State Historic Tax Credits	2009
Demolition/ Development of a Multi-Use Signature Building	DTI	KCF, Private Developer	TIF, City	2009
<b>TWO-WAY STREET CONVERSION/ STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS</b>				
Conversion & Streetscape Improvements of Lovell / South, Michigan / Kalamazoo, Edwards, MichiKal, Douglas, West Main	City, DKI, MDOT	DDA, KATS, Private Businesses and Property owners	Federal, State, Local, TIF, Private, Foundations	Beginning 2009
<b>ARENA/IN-TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD</b>				
Multi-function sports/entertainment facility	Private Sector Task Force	DTI, WMU, City, County, State, Private Business, CIP, DDRC	Federal, State, Local, TIF, Private, Foundations	2009
Potential to share with institutions of higher learning	Private Sector Task Force	DTI, WMU, City, County, State, Private Business, CIP, DDRC	Federal, State, Local, TIF, Private, Foundations	2009
Encourage spin-off & associated uses nearby	Private Sector Task Force	DTI, WMU, City, County, State, Private Business, CIP, DDRC	Federal, State, Local, TIF, Private, Foundations	2009
Define alternative (in-town neighborhood) -Mixed single- & multiple-family residential with supporting retail - Increased density as well as architecture & building placement create urban - Student-oriented shopping & larger scale commercial buildings	DTI/WMU	DTI, WMU, City, County, State, Private Business, CIP, DDRC	Federal, State, Local, TIF, Private, Foundations	2009

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>LOVELL / ROSE DEVELOPMENT</b>				
Define Mixed-use Redevelopment Project Criteria	City/BRA	DDA		2009
Identify Developer	City/BRA	DDA		2009
Implement Mixed-Use Development (including residential)	City/BRA	DDA	EDC, BRA, TIF	2010
<b>HAYMARKET PARKING LOT #9 REDEVELOPMENT</b>				
Reconstruct / Reconfigure Existing Parking Lot	Parking Committee	City, DDRC, area businesses and property owners, Walker Parking	City CIP	2009/2010
Long Term: Mixed Use Development incorporating a Parking Structure	Parking Committee	City, DDA, DDRC, Private Developer	TIF, City, State	2014
<b>KALAMAZOO RIVER / PORTAGE CREEK GREENWAYS</b>				
Support for the City's existing riverfront plan	City	DDA		
Encourage residential development (including senior housing) along Kalamazoo River	City	DDA		
Open space connection to downtown & riverfront	DDA	City, KRVT, Nature Center		
Development should be consistent with the City of Kalamazoo Riverfront Redevelopment Plan	City	EDC, BRA, DDA, Parks & Rec Department	EDC, BRA, State Federal	
Retail along Riverview	City		EDC, BRA, State Federal	
Maintain Red Arrow Golf Course for the time being	City	EDC, BRA, DDA, Parks & Rec Department	EDC, BRA, State Federal	
Long Range Redevelopment Plan for Red Arrow should include mixed-uses	City	EDC, BRA, DDA, Parks & Rec Department	EDC, BRA, State Federal	

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS WORK PLAN				
Action	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Resources	Priority
<b>MEDICAL/BIOMEDICAL/LIFE SCIENCE/RESEARCH VILLAGE</b>				
Medical offices/research labs	DKI	Bronson Hospital, MPI, Pfizer, SW Michigan First	MPI, Bronson, Pfizer, TIF, EDC, MEDC	
Hospital supporting services & retail	DKI	Bronson Hospital	Bronson, TIF, EDC	
Senior housing	DKI	DDA, City, Bronson, LISC, KNHS	LISC, KNHS, City, TIF	
Medical/Research school campus	DKI	DDA, City, Bronson, WMU, MPI, Pfizer, SW Michigan First		
Residential	DKI	Bronson, MPI, Pfizer, Private Developer, LISC		
Interconnected open space, especially along Portage Creek Corridor	City	DDA, KRVT, Nature Center, Bronson, MPI, Pfizer, Arcus Foundation, State, Railroad		
Portage Street should be utilized as a gateway to downtown & hospital/medical village	DTI	City, DDA, DKI, Edison Neighborhood, Bronson, MPI, Pfizer		
Demolition/Signature Development on MPI Parking Lot	MPI	DKI, DDA, City, Bronson, Pfizer,		

## ACRONYM REFERENCE GUIDE

BRA – Brownfield Redevelopment Authority  
BRRIP – Business Recruitment and Retention Incentive Program  
CCP – Central City Parking  
CDBG – Community Development Building Grant  
CIP – Capital Improvement Project (Committee of DKI)  
DDA – Downtown Development Authority  
DDRC – Downtown Design Review Committee  
DKAC – Downtown Kalamazoo Association Charities  
DKI – Downtown Kalamazoo Inc.  
DKRA – Downtown Kalamazoo Restaurant Association  
DTI – Downtown Tomorrow, Inc.  
EDC – Economic Development Corporation  
HRI – Housing Resource Incorporated  
ISGF – Irving S. Gilmore Foundation  
K- College – Kalamazoo College  
KATS – Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study  
KCF – Kalamazoo Community Foundation  
KDPS – Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety  
KNHS – Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services  
KRVT – Kalamazoo River Valley Trail  
KVCC – Kalamazoo Valley Community College  
LISC – Local Initiative Support Corporation  
MDOT – Michigan Department of Transportation  
MEDC – Michigan Economic Development Corporation  
MPI – MPI Research, Inc.  
MSHDA – Michigan State Housing Authority  
NMTC – New Market Tax Credit  
ROI – Residential Opportunities, Inc.  
TIF – Tax Increment Finance  
WMU – Western Michigan University