



WADSWORTH VISIONING

DOWNTOWN PLAN

PLAN CREATED FOR THE CITY OF WADSWORTH BY OHM ADVISORS

PLAN ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL VIA ORDINANCE NO. 16-165
ON FEBRUARY 7, 2017



CONTENTS

01 | INTRODUCTION

- Project Overview
- Plan Elements
- How to Use the Plan
- Planning Process

02 | CONTEXT

- Existing Conditions
- Market Trends
- Best Practices

03 | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Participants
- Schedule
- Meeting Activities + Results
- Community Survey

04 | RECOMMENDATIONS

- Overview
- Plan Pillars
- Objectives + Strategies

05 | CATALYST PROJECTS

- Overview
- Design Concepts

06 | IMPLEMENTATION

- Funding Resources
- Implementation Matrix

07 | APPENDIX

- Community Survey
- Survey Summary Report
- Public Commentary Report
- 2016 Community Reinvestment Area
- Glossary of Terms



01

INTRODUCTION

01.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

01.2 PLAN ELEMENTS

01.3 HOW TO USE THE PLAN

01.4 PLANNING PROCESS



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THANKS FOR THE
MEMORIES
MR. HADGIS!

LICENSE W/RELAND

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2015, the City of Wadsworth initiated a process to create a Downtown Plan. The project evaluated the wants and needs of current and future residents in the downtown area, identified target development areas that are currently vacant or underutilized, and developed a vision and strategy for these areas that will respond to opportunities in the regional marketplace. Additionally, the Plan is intended to guide the City in the development of public projects that will enhance the pedestrian realm and promote future growth.

PLAN GOALS + OBJECTIVES

This project will help achieve a number of community goals and objectives such as:

- Establish a refined vision for Downtown
- Identify the opportunity for new catalyst projects that will generate new City revenue while enhancing the character and brand of the community
- Support future development through creative redevelopment strategies and incentives.
- Create a plan that has broad public and private sector support.
- Support future funding initiatives (e.g. state and federal grant programs)

1.2 PLAN ELEMENTS

Many elements come together within the Plan to create a holistic and informed blueprint for future growth

and development. These elements were established from quantitative and qualitative analyses alongside public input and include the following:

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Area conditions considered included current land use, demographics, parking demands, and other area specific investigations. With an understanding of the existing conditions, the planning team and the Wadsworth Task Force could make more informed decisions and goals for the Downtown area.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the planning process, the planning team facilitated discussions amongst community members to delineate the common direction and goals for the Downtown. Community issues and opportunities made apparent during discussions were used to formulate both public and private projects, addressing and capitalizing on under-served and growth opportunity areas.

PUBLIC PROJECTS

The Plan outlines several key public projects that were identified throughout the planning process with public, Task Force, and stakeholder input. These projects are intended to enhance the public realm, while boosting the economic competitiveness of the Downtown.

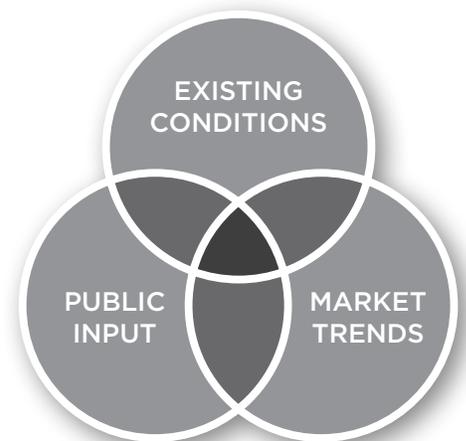
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The Plan includes a series of development concepts for key focus areas that illustrate the development potential of that area. They are derived from market research and public expertise and thus are both intuitively and technically

informed. These suggested concepts are only examples and outline how future development and redevelopment may occur in Downtown.

PLAN PILLARS, OBJECTIVES, + STRATEGIES

After analyzing all of the foundational elements of the Plan, eight Pillars were deduced to guide the implementation of the vision for Downtown Wadsworth. Each Pillar has Objectives associated with it which are long term goals for the community. Each Objective will be achieved through several Strategies as detailed in the Plan. Strategies are actionable steps to be taken one at a time for incremental implementation. These Pillars, Objectives, and Strategies are described in more detail in Chapter 04: Plan Pillars.



The Plan is centered on the fusion of three elements: existing conditions, public input, and market trends.

1.3 HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Plan is intended to be used on a daily basis as decisions are made concerning new development, redevelopment, capital improvements, economic incentives, and other matters involving Downtown.

The Plan is intended to serve as a guide to help the City, development community, and local residents plan for the redevelopment of Downtown. It is intended to be flexible and fluid, and should be updated and amended as appropriate. As projects, policies, and programs develop over time they may not look exactly like the images in this document, but they should address the intent of the Plan. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should align with the Plan.

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMS AND BUDGETS

Individual City departments and administrators should be cognizant of the contents of the Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. Objectives in this Plan should be prioritized when reviewing Downtown budgets to maximize the implementation of goals voiced by the public and included in this Plan. The matrix in Chapter 06: Implementation is meant to aide in the tracking of projects with the City's budget and timeline.

DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning and conditional use permits, should be a central means of implementing the Plan. Decisions by elected and appointed officials should

reference relevant Plan Objectives and Strategies. City plans and codes should also reflect and support the vision and recommendations in the Plan.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS + THE GENERAL FUND

The City's plan for Capital Improvements and use of the General Fund should be prepared consistent with the Downtown Plan's policies and infrastructure recommendations. New improvements that are relevant to recipients of the General Fund (ie: Parks, Building and Planning, Engineering, etc.) as well as other tax funds such as Street Improvements should be capitalized to implement the recommendations of this Downtown Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Economic development incentives should be reviewed periodically to ensure consistency with the Plan and current legislation. New state ordinances may develop that change the economic landscape for funding projects in Ohio, such as House Bill 233 Downtown Redevelopment Districts, outlined by Figure 4.1 in Chapter 04: Recommendations. This Plan should be leveraged to apply for funding which requires a set of guidelines or area plan, such as the Downtown Revitalization District.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

Property owners and developers should consider the goals and strategies of the Plan in their land planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the Plan as a guide in their development deliberations such

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

GUIDE...

...the community in evaluating proposed public, private, or joint projects

INFORM...

...current and prospective property owners as well as developers on desirable growth patterns

MEASURE...

...progress and effectiveness of projects in Downtown Wadsworth to ensure they strengthen the community as a whole

as zoning matters and infrastructure requests. This Plan should be used as a tool by the City to clearly communicate to property owners and developers the overall vision for growth in Downtown Wadsworth.

INTRODUCTION

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

The Downtown Plan process spanned approximately six months and included both technical research and public involvement, resulting in an intuitive, informed, and proactive document.

By employing an innovative planning process, Wadsworth sought to develop a truly implementable plan that would fully integrate land use, transportation, parks and open spaces, and other public amenities in the Downtown.

The planning process was developed at the beginning of the project. This process helped guide project activities, many of which were carried out concurrently in order to maintain the overall project schedule. The following is a brief summary of each step in the planning process.

PROJECT LAUNCH

During this initial step in the planning process, the scope of services was defined for the planning team, consisting of contracted planning consultants and key members of City staff. Members of the Task Force were identified and invited to participate during the project launch, their roles will be outlined in Chapter 03: Public Engagement.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Throughout the Winter of 2015 and 2016, the planning team collected and analyzed data about all aspects of the City and the Downtown. This information provided an understanding of the current conditions in the Wadsworth area and informed the recommendations found in the Plan. Existing Conditions were reported to the Task Force for general feedback and verification and are included in Chapter 02: Context.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Concurrently with the existing conditions assessment, public input was sought using a combination of Task Force meetings, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, a community-wide survey, and online engagement to gain insight into the concerns and needs of Wadsworth residents. Results from these various interactions informed the recommendation in the Plan and are included in Chapter 03: Public Engagement.

IDENTIFY PLAN PILLARS AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching Pillars and Objectives for the Plan were formulated with the Task Force, based on the public input received early in the process. These Plan elements communicate the goals the City hopes to accomplish through the creation and implementation of the Plan.



DEVELOP CATALYST PROJECTS

This step in the planning process involved developing recommendations for public and private improvements in the Downtown. Catalyst Projects were identified as both area-wide programs and amenities and targeted development in specific focus areas. Examples of Catalyst Projects include upgrades to the transportation network, added gateways, expansion of the pedestrian and bicycle network, park and public space enhancements, expanded housing options, and community image and brand. These projects are described in further detail in Chapter 05: Catalyst Projects.

DRAFT PLAN REVIEW AND FEEDBACK

This step followed an iterative process allowing the Task Force and the general public an opportunity to review and provide feedback on a draft version of the Plan. This is a key step in ensuring

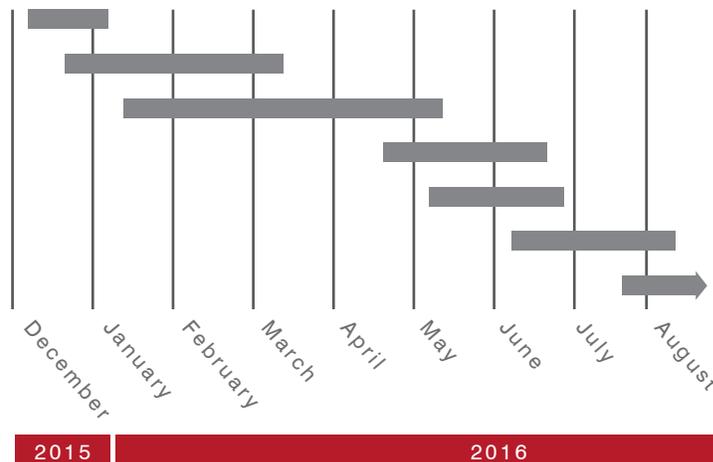
the Plan is supported by the public and that its recommendations are successfully implemented in the future. The public and Task Force were also asked to prioritize Objectives found in Chapter 04: Recommendations.

FINAL PLAN AND ADOPTION

Once the Plan components were completed, compilation of the Downtown Plan document began. The final Plan is a concise, coherent, and easily comprehended document. It is meant to be read and used by any Wadsworth community member and its straightforward design should aid in the swift implementation of its recommendations.

As a final step in the Downtown planning process the Plan should be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. This document is an area plan for Downtown Wadsworth and should act as a supplement to the City's Comprehensive Plan moving forward.

- Project Launch**
- Existing Conditions Analysis**
- Community Engagement**
- Identify Plan Pillars and Objectives**
- Develop Catalyst Projects**
- Draft Plan Review and Feedback**
- Final Plan and Adoption**



The planning process followed seven different stages culminating in the final Plan in August of 2016.



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02

CONTEXT

02.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

02.2 MARKET TRENDS

02.3 BEST PRACTICES



CONTEXT

2.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Downtown study area is defined by the main intersection of Main Street, High Street, Broad Street, and College Street, and its surrounding area. Comprising an area of 0.27 square miles, the area has a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

ZONING

The zoning map to the right depicts the six different classifications present within the Downtown study area. It is pertinent to note that Wadsworth has in place a Central Business Development (CBD) District, a zoning classification which allows for a higher intensity of land use and higher residential density than other surrounding zones. Specifically, the CBD District calls for buildings to be located flush to the sidewalk with visually compatible facades and first floor spaces reserved for retail or public services. This zoning classification has aided in solidifying the character of Downtown Wadsworth and will continue to function as the City makes improvements and acts on recommendations within this Plan.

TAX EXEMPT LAND USE

While the Downtown has a good amount of commercial and office uses present, a large proportion of land in the Downtown core is dedicated to land uses that are tax exempt. These exempt uses include government-owned land, such as City Hall, the Library, the Post Office, and public parking lots; parcels owned by various religious institutions; and the Central Intermediate School. While many of these exempt land uses provide invaluable services to the greater Wadsworth community, their presence in the Downtown can sometimes

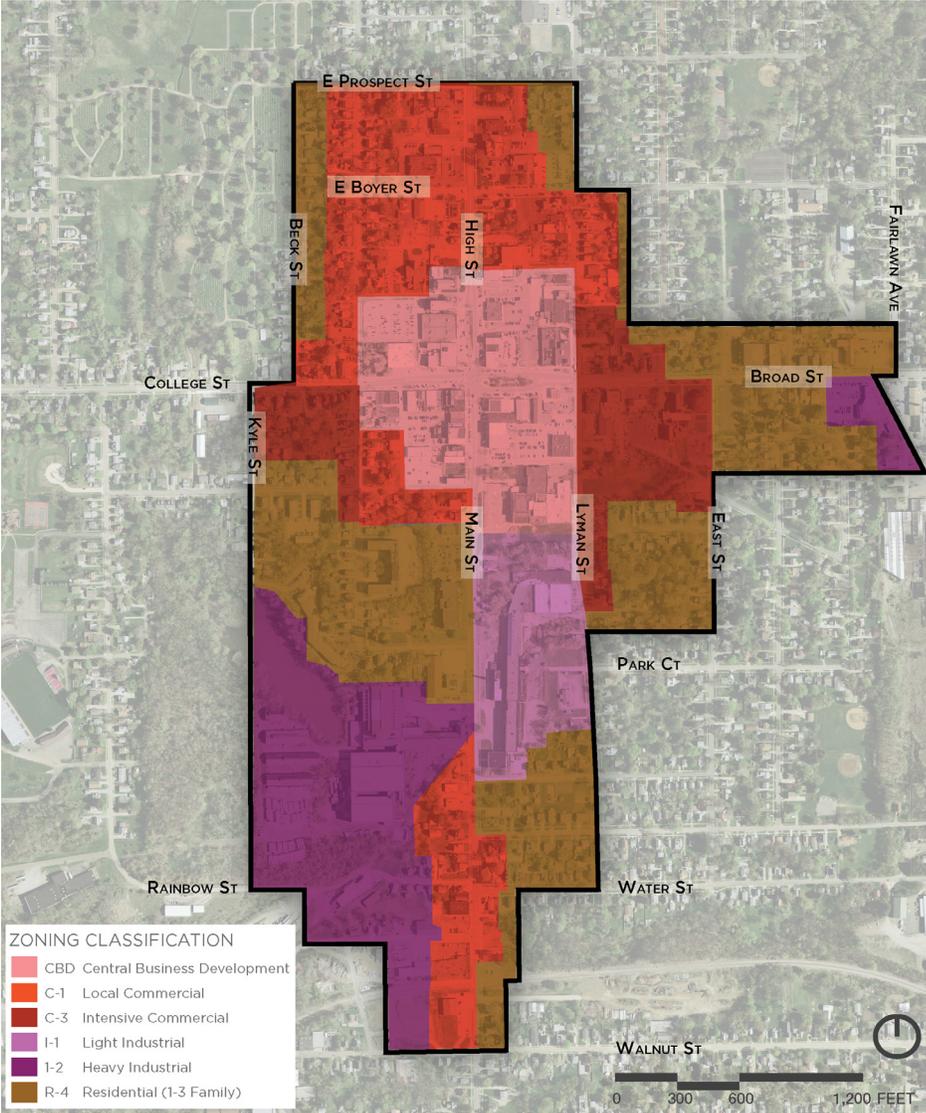


Figure 2.1 - Downtown Wadsworth Zoning Map

be detrimental to creating a strong commercial core. This is largely due to the vast parking lots many of these uses require but which are used a limited amount of time. For instance, a church parking lot may be full on Sunday, but near empty the remainder of the week. Similarly, City services generally close at 5pm, just as restaurants are opening for dinner. This natural ebb and flow of parking lends itself well to shared parking

agreements, which allow nearby businesses to utilize excess parking at regulated times. Though not currently present in Downtown Wadsworth, such an agreement could be instated swiftly with immediate results.

In addition to the underutilized parking associated with these uses, exempt properties are by nature exempt from paying property tax,

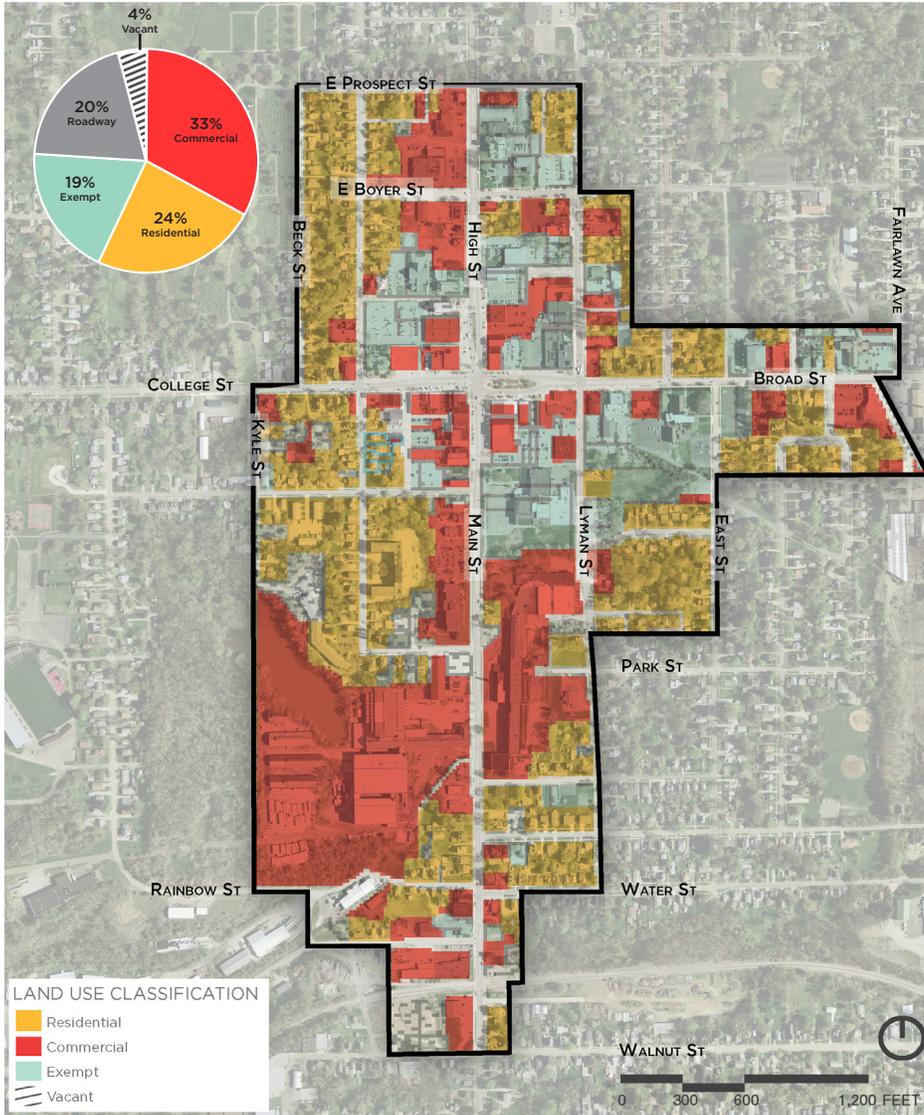


Figure 2.2 - Downtown Wadsworth General Land Use Map

them in the regular and robust number of visitors they can attract to an area. For instance, the post-service crowds from a nearby church can stimulate local businesses, City employees can easily transition to local dining patrons, and so on. Wadsworth should capitalize on the existing exempt uses within Downtown and limit any further loss of commercial space moving forward.

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA

The Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program aims to stimulate new development in Wadsworth. This economic development tool provides property tax exemptions for property owners making significant improvements or constructing new buildings in the designated area. This temporary and targeted use of tax exemption to incentivize reinvestment can act as a catalyst to the surrounding properties. The current CRA map is located in the Appendix of this Plan; up-to-date Tax Exemption Guidelines can be found on the City of Wadsworth’s website.

New legislation may provide additional resources for Downtown Wadsworth and facilitate the implementation of Objectives found in this Plan. The Downtown Revitalization District is a new economic development tool recently instated to the Ohio Revised Code by House Bill 233. This district-based financing shares some similarities with the Community Reinvestment Area and should be evaluated for its applicability to Downtown Wadsworth. This Downtown Plan should be utilized in the application of such funding when an area plan is required. Further information on the Downtown Revitalization District is located in Figure 4.1: Funding Resource within the Recommendations chapter of this Plan.

which can lead to a shortage of capital improvement funds for the area. Such funds may be used for initiatives that encourage more visitors to the Downtown stores and restaurants, such as programming and streetscape improvements. With a smaller percentage of tax-generating real estate in Downtown, these initiatives will take longer to come to fruition. In many cities, the Central Business Development

District generates the highest revenue per acre to the tax base due to its density and high assessed value. The presence of exempt property within the Downtown core, as opposed to locating in external residential areas, limits the amount of revenue Downtown Wadsworth can generate.

It is important to note that tax exempt land uses also bring positive qualities with

CONTEXT

LAND USE

As shown in Figure 2.3 to the right, Downtown Wadsworth has a healthy mix of various land uses. At present, there is not a significant amount of vacant land within the study area; however, some parcels have been identified through the planning process as being underutilized. Several of these areas have been strategically reimagined for future redevelopment as outlined in Chapter 05: Catalyst Projects.

POPULATION

With 1,174 residents, the Downtown study area represents 5.4% of the City's total population. Downtown Wadsworth has not seen the same population growth from 2000 to 2010 as did the City (17.0%) and Medina County (14.1%), having instead a net loss of 0.3%. In an area of only 0.27 square miles, a decline in population of less than 1% could be attributed to a very small amount of turnover and is considered stagnant.

As the core of the community, the downtown area would ideally be leading the City in population growth, attracting not only new residents but new businesses, employees, and visitors. Several strategies are outlined in this Plan to stimulate such growth moving forward.

Median household income for the population living Downtown (\$35,500) is also significantly lower than the City (\$58,000). This disparity of income could be attributed to the lack of diverse and quality housing options in the Downtown.

HOUSING

There are currently 593 housing units located within the Downtown study area; however, many of those are vacant. With a 17.2% vacancy rate, Downtown has more than twice the number of vacant

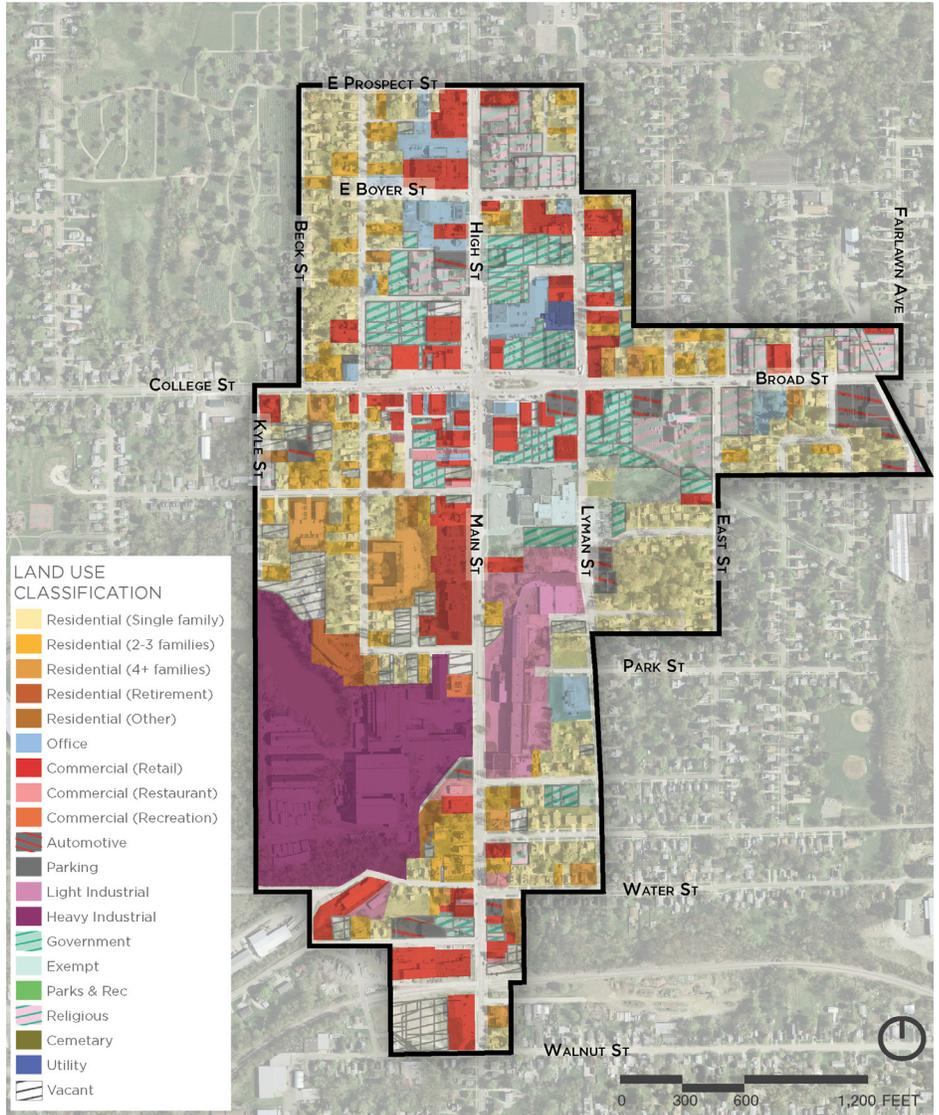


Figure 2.3 - Downtown Wadsworth Land Use Map

properties as the City (7.6%) and three times that of the County (5.8%).

Over half of Downtown Wadsworth's available housing is renter-occupied at 51.2%, compared to the City which is 27.6% renter-occupied. While it is common for downtowns to have a higher percentage of renter-occupied housing than suburban and rural areas, a renter-dominated housing market generally

requires more attention from City staff to ensure landlords and property managers are adequately maintaining and updating their properties.

When combined, the high vacancy rate and ratio of renter-occupied housing in Downtown indicate a gap between the available housing and the wants and needs of area residents. Section 2.2 Market Trends will look at current trends

in the housing market as well as the populations looking to live downtown.

2.2 MARKET TRENDS

The insight in this section is based on national and regional trends in development and demographics. On a general scale, these trends represent the wants and needs of current Wadsworth residents; but also, these trends refer to the future population of new residents that Wadsworth should aim to attract.

MILLENNIALS + BOOMERS

Millennials, born 1980-1999, and Baby Boomers, born 1945-1964, make up the largest share of the nation's population at 53%. As a result, the trends for each of these generation groups have a large impact on the development and housing markets. Baby Boomers value housing that is close to entertainment, retail, and medical services while Millennials look for locations that are diverse and offer plentiful entertainment and employment opportunities. Both generations tend to prefer housing that is lower maintenance and will sacrifice large living spaces for better access to amenities.

In short, Millennials and Boomers are looking to relocate to more walkable communities. Generally, this entails the ability to walk to basic grocery and pharmacy needs, various restaurants and entertainment, ample jobs, and recreation opportunities. Walkable neighborhoods are not only popular, but also stable. During the recent national recession, homes in walkable communities resisted the damaging effects of the housing market collapse and largely retained their property values. With the percentage of

Baby Boomers and Millennials growing on a national scale, it is imperative to plan for them at the community scale.

PLACE FIRST

Current national trends indicate a swing in how individuals choose where to live. A growing number of Millennials choose where they want to live first and then resolve the logistics of finding employment and housing in their desired location. Millennials seek destinations that offer a superior quality of life and ample amenities. This quality of life, or satisfaction with one's health, community, employment, environment, and more, can be met for Millennials in the urban setting of Downtown. They have a preference for in-town areas that feature diversity and walkability in close proximity to jobs and entertainment. This is drastically different than past generations of people who first sought jobs and then moved to the location of their job.

The result of this change is more competition for jobs and housing in popular urban areas that offer the desired amenities. A subsequent decrease in the desire to live in outlying suburbs, small towns, and rural areas follows as these locations lack the sought-after amenities and have less abundant opportunities for employment.

BUYING VS. RENTING

While owning a home may be desired by some, current trends indicate that many individuals are more inclined to rent instead. Buying can offer a greater return on investment over time, but carries a significant amount of financial risk as well as maintenance over time. Renting often does not carry the financial risk or maintenance of owning property. Longevity is also an important factor in determining whether to buy or

rent. While owning typically involves a long-term commitment from the buyer, renting can offer short or long term living solutions and allows tenants the flexibility to move when desired or needed.

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

As household population and structure evolve over time, subsequent changes in housing needs become apparent. The average family size in the United States in 2010 was 2.39 individuals per household. This number has steadily decreased from 3.33 in 1960 due to the Baby Boomer population living longer and Millennials having smaller families than past generations. Many Baby Boomers no longer have dependents living with them and many Millennials are delaying marriage and have not yet established families. This decrease in family size subsequently decreases the desire for large single-family homes, prevalent in suburbs where an abundance of land is available. There is a need now for a variety of housing sizes and types to accommodate the new trends in household structure. Downtowns provide ideal locations to achieve the necessary amount of this nontraditional housing stock.

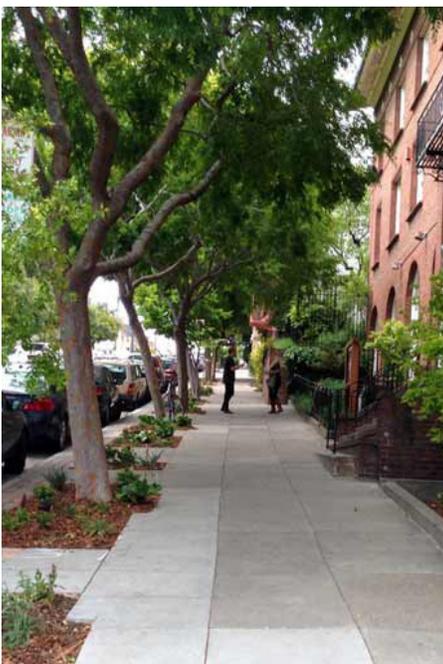
HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE

Healthy and sustainable initiatives can enhance the overall quality of life in a community, attract talented individuals, and encourage high-quality development. Investments in park space, trails, and other community amenities promote a healthy lifestyle for residents and draw regional visitors. Downtown can increase its sustainability by incorporating these green initiatives as well as supporting the long term financial health of its businesses and increasing residential density. Compact, walkable environments like Downtown Wadsworth have the greatest potential for sustainability.

WALKABILITY + CONNECTIVITY

An emphasis on a complete transportation system allows people to easily travel by foot, bicycle, transit, or car. Factors that influence walkability include pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, cross walks, wayfinding, and signage. Bicycle connectivity is influenced by bike lanes, on-street sharrows, multi-use paths, and bicycle storage facilities. Public transit allows individuals to connect to both local and regional destinations. Communities that are easily navigated on foot are desired as more Millennials want to live in close proximity to employment and entertainment options and the ease and convenience of walkable and well-connected communities is preferred.

The Downtown provides an excellent opportunity for an increase in nonmotorized transportation. Not only does the dense urban framework promote walkability, but also offers an ideal location for a trailhead on the regional bike trail system.



2.3 BEST PRACTICES

STREETSCAPE DESIGN

The success of a downtown core depends on the vibrancy of its streets. Streets that are safe and pleasant for pedestrians will make Downtown Wadsworth a more attractive place to live, work, and visit. Even residents who drive to Downtown Wadsworth still walk from their car to local shops and businesses. Streets that encourage patrons to linger and enjoy themselves are important to the success of Downtown Wadsworth.

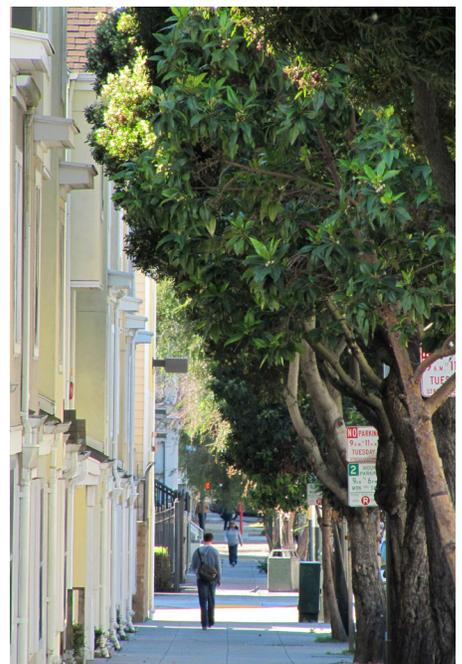
Streetscape design and improvements can be achieved through a range of strategies. A prevalence of street trees in urban environments is important as they provide shade and a buffer between pedestrians and automobile traffic. Some communities in recent years have resisted the addition of trees to their downtowns due to the cost and time involved in



their maintenance and the ever-present possibility of disease and storm damage. However, there are few other additions a City can make to its urban environment that equal the positive effects of trees, be they increased walkability, stormwater mitigation, improved street character, or reduced flooding events.

The wider sidewalks proposed in many streetscape designs inherently lead to narrower traffic lanes. This is a popular trend among cities as narrower travel lanes reduce traffic speeds, increasing the safety for all road users. Other physical improvements, such as sidewalk bump-outs that reduce the distance pedestrians have to cross the street, or raised crosswalks that make pedestrians more visible to vehicles, can make a downtown's streets safer, and thus, more attractive to pedestrians.

Finally, streetscape design that incorporates green infrastructure can help advance a downtown's environmental strategies. In addition to being visually appealing, green



infrastructure, such as rain gardens or bioswales, can redirect stormwater away from Wadsworth’s sewer system and reduce the strain on existing infrastructure. Investing in Wadsworth’s streetscape designs can have a myriad of positive effects on the Downtown.

ALLEYWAYS

Often viewed as an afterthought to the urban core, alleyways should be considered an important asset in improving the quantity and quality of public space in Downtown Wadsworth. Much more than access ways for trash collection, alleyways make important physical connections in downtowns, connecting parking lots to businesses, and thereby increasing pedestrian access. Currently, one alleyway in Downtown Wadsworth has seen improvements in lighting and surfacing, and several other alleys have been identified in this Plan for added amenities. Improving the pedestrian experience within the existing alleyway network is important

for improving the overall experience for those who visit Downtown.

Alleyway aesthetics can be improved through the use of planters and benches, allowing residents and shoppers a change of pace from the busier main streets. Restaurants can utilize alleys to offer a quieter place to eat and visit. Finally, alleys can be activated with programming, including movie screenings or spaces to display public art. Alleys are an important existing asset to Downtown Wadsworth, and should be leveraged to help raise the overall quality of life.

PUBLIC ART

Improving the bones of Downtown’s infrastructure, whether the street grid or alleyways, is important to creating a safe and pleasant experience Downtown. Incorporating public art throughout Downtown is a strong and popular strategy to strengthen the interactive and engaging qualities of Downtown.

Public art can provide a method to

showcase local artistic talent while strengthening community ties. Local residents can get together to paint a mural on the side of a blank building or the ground of an alley, activating an otherwise empty space. Sculptors can help design benches, planters, and bike racks. Public art, and local artists, can play an active role in creating and reinforcing the identity of Downtown.

PUBLIC FUNDING

Successful streetscape design recognizes that a balance between all modes of transportation, pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles, is crucial for Downtown’s economic success and strengthened quality of life. Also important is the balanced use of tax payer dollars and public funding to successfully implement these initiatives. Public funding can come from state or federal programs and should be heavily leveraged with grants and matching funds to ensure the City’s capital improvement budget is used to its full potential.





03

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

03.1 PARTICIPANTS

03.2 SCHEDULE

03.3 MEETING ACTIVITIES + RESULTS

03.4 COMMUNITY SURVEY



PILLAR 3 EFFICIENT AND CONNECTED MOBILITY

Please discuss your top 3 priorities for the Downtown Plan
at the meeting and use all the options in the Downtown Plan, but we want to know
what you think we should do to best be supported by the community. If you have a suggestion
to make, describe it clearly and the results you'd like to see.

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OPTION 2
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OPTION 3
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OPTION 13
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OPTION 14
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OPTION 15
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OPTION 16
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OPTION 17
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PILLAR 2 A DIVERSE CHARACTER & FORM

Please discuss your top 3 priorities for the Downtown Plan
at the meeting and use all the options in the Downtown Plan, but we want to know
what you think we should do to best be supported by the community. If you have a suggestion
to make, describe it clearly and the results you'd like to see.

OPTION 1
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AS

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

At the heart of the planning process are the ideas and aspirations of the public. An extensive public engagement effort was conducted by the City and planning team to solicit ideas and develop the vision for future growth in Downtown Wadsworth. These ideas, values, and aspirations provided the foundation from which the Plan Pillars, Objectives, and Strategies were formed.

Through this outreach campaign, roughly 1400 community members contributed their thoughts for the future of Wadsworth. In addition, individual meetings with the Task Force, Stakeholders, Downtown Wadsworth, City Staff, and local business owners each provided the planning team unique perspectives on the Downtown as the Plan evolved.

TASK FORCE

Comprised of 13 community members, the Task Force met regularly throughout the planning process over a span of eight months. The role of the Task Force was to guide the development of the final Plan by providing firsthand insight on the community, testing public engagement activities, and vetting development concepts presented by the planning team. Additionally, the Task Force members were asked to act as stewards of the Plan, passing along information and encouraging friends, family, and neighbors to attend public meetings and participate in the planning process.

STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to the 13 Task Force members, the planning team met in small groups with seven other community stakeholders. These smaller, interview-style meetings were designed to provoke

in-depth perspectives about Downtown Wadsworth. Stakeholders were community members nominated by the Task Force and were a varied group of Wadsworth residents and business people.

THE PUBLIC

Wadsworth residents were encouraged to participate on multiple occasions throughout the planning process. Two public meetings were held over the span of the project where attendees were encouraged to share valuable insight into Downtown Wadsworth through

various activities. In February of 2016, a community survey was launched and sent out with the City of Wadsworth's water utility bills to all residents. Activities from the public meetings and the community survey are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of this Plan.

Finally, a dynamic project website was developed and updated throughout the planning process to encourage public participation. The website hosted the community survey as well as all activities from both public meetings for those community members unable to attend in person.

CITY STAFF

As facilitators of this Plan, the City of Wadsworth had several staff members with integral roles in the planning process. Staff from the Building and Planning Department, Economic Development Department, the Mayor, and members of Planning Commission all participated in the formation of the Plan. This staff participation is important to ensure the final Plan aligns with the City's initiatives and is implemented at the terminus of the project.

1396 TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

TASK FORCE	13
STAKEHOLDERS	7
PUBLIC MEETING #1	35
ONLINE SURVEY	524
MAILED SURVEY	795
PUBLIC MEETING #2	22

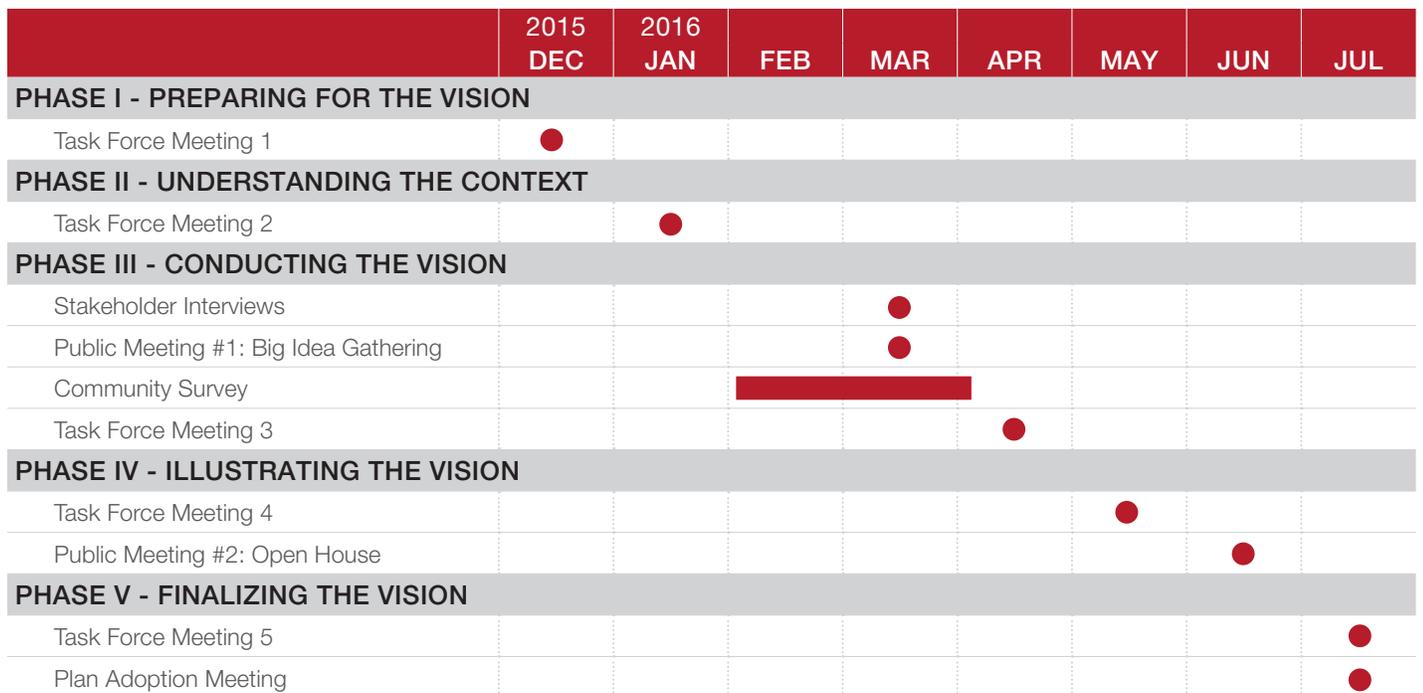
PLANNING COMMISSION

At the conclusion of the planning process, the final Plan will be presented to the Planning Commission for review. Tasked with the regular review of various planning applications, including future development proposals for Downtown, it is imperative that the members of the Planning Commission understand the vision of this Plan and are willing and able to use it as a tool for evaluating future projects.

3.2 SCHEDULE

As outlined in section 1.3 Planning Process, the project was structured around five phases: Preparing for the Vision, Understanding the Context, Conducting the Vision, Illustrating the Vision, and Finalizing the Vision. For each of these phases, members of the Wadsworth community were asked to provide insight and feedback for the Plan.

The project schedule below illustrates when each meeting was held during the eight month process. Meetings are represented with a circular symbol and the survey is represented with a bar symbol, as responses were collected over a six week period of time.



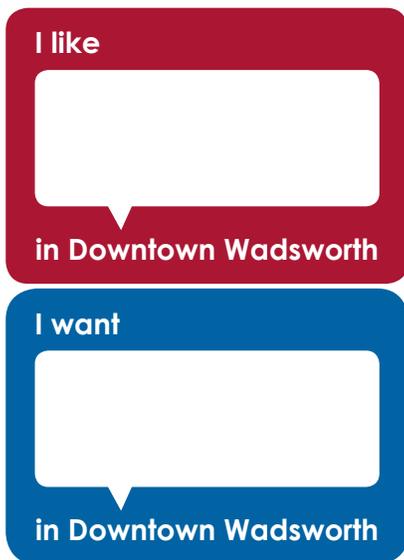
3.3 MEETING ACTIVITIES + RESULTS

Each of the two public meetings, the Big Idea Gathering and the Open House, had a set of activities to engage attendees and gather vital feedback for the Plan. These activities and their results are described below.

CONVERSATION CARDS

At the Big Idea Gathering, the public was introduced to the planning and visioning process for the Downtown Plan. In order to facilitate conversation amongst meeting attendees, everyone was asked to answer the following prompts:

Responses were then collected on one board for all to see and discuss.



On evaluating the responses to these prompts, certain themes emerged. The most commonly referenced strength of Downtown Wadsworth was its historic charm and hometown feel. This was

followed by the support for community events, the mix of businesses, and the amenities found in the Downtown. When asked to identify what they wanted in the future for Downtown, residents showed great support for additional restaurant and retail users in the area. This was followed by a new public green space, multifamily housing options, and additional events in the Downtown. This public input was heavily considered when developing new programs to preserve and enhance the existing character of Downtown, and when designing potential sites for redevelopment.

ISSUES + OPPORTUNITIES

The second activity at the Big Idea Gathering was to brainstorm current Issues facing Downtown Wadsworth and Opportunities that should be capitalized on in the future. Common themes from the list of Issues gathered included the current lack of gathering space in the Downtown core, the need to attract new and varied businesses, and the desire for new and existing businesses to extend their hours into the evenings. The range of suggested Opportunities offered by the residents of Wadsworth speak to its varied strengths and possibilities moving forward. Several people cited the community pride seen in residents, City staff, and Downtown business owners as a prime opportunity for future growth.

INITIATIVE RANKING

Following a short presentation outlining the planning process and national trends in downtown development, attendees at the Big Idea Gathering were asked to vote for their top three choices for new initiatives in the Downtown. Meeting attendees identified ‘Diversified retail and restaurant options,’ ‘A central gathering place,’ and ‘Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity’ as their top three

initiatives. Results from this activity were used to formulate questions that were more tailored to Wadsworth for the community survey, outlined in section 3.4 Community Survey.

CATALYST PROJECTS: INVESTMENT EXERCISE

After refining the vision for Downtown Wadsworth through the community survey and planning process, an Open House was held to share the draft Plan to the public. After a short presentation reviewing the planning process and outlining how the Plan had evolved from the first Public Meeting, the attendees were asked to take part in a few activities.

The Investment Exercise asked the public to consider eight Catalyst Projects that had been identified as priorities through the planning process. Each person was then given \$1 Million in \$100,000 increments to invest in the Catalyst Projects as if he or she were Mayor of Wadsworth for the day. Participants were encouraged to distribute their funds over several projects or invest it all in one place, whichever fit their needs the best. Results from this activity are shown opposite in Figure 3.1: Catalyst Project Investment Exercise. Several of the images depicting the Catalyst Projects are a part of the new vision for Downtown Wadsworth as identified in this Plan. Full scale views of this vision with explanations and examples of the various features can be found in Chapter 05: Catalyst Projects.



**ROAD ALIGNMENT
+ GREEN SPACE**
\$5 M



**ALLEY
IMPROVEMENTS**
\$2.3 M



BIKE TRAIL
\$3.8 M



**TRAIL HEAD +
POCKET PARK**
\$1.5 M



**STREETSCAPE
IMPROVEMENTS**
\$3.6 M



**GATEWAY +
WAYFINDING**
\$1.4 M



**PLAZA / PARKING
AREA**
\$2.8 M



**PARKING
REALIGNMENT**
\$1.4 M

FIGURE 3.1: CATALYST PROJECT INVESTMENT EXERCISE

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES + STRATEGIES: PRIORITIZATION

In order to create an implementable Plan, Objectives were formulated with Strategies suggesting how to accomplish each. In total, there were 14 Objectives and 51 Strategies presented to the public at the Open House. Each participant was asked to identify his or her top 5 priority Objectives, along with their corresponding Strategies. As a result of this prioritization activity, the top 5 Objectives are as follows:



GENERAL COMMENTS

At each of the two public meetings, participants were encouraged to share any outstanding comments with the planning team through discussion, comment cards, and diagramming on maps of the Downtown. Oftentimes these unsolicited comments were very insightful to the wants and needs of Wadsworth residents and gave more depth to the feedback gathered through the facilitated activities.

	RANK	ID	OBJECTIVE	VOTES
PRIORITY OBJECTIVES	1	Objective 1.1	Grow more retail options	22
	2	Objective 5.1	Create new public spaces for gathering	22
	3	Objective 6.1	Use economic development tools to promote revitalization	18
	4	Objective 4.1	Define and promote the downtown brand	17
	5	Objective 5.2	Add additional community events	17

In addition to the prioritization of the Plan's Objectives and Strategies, the public was also encouraged to write any suggestions for new Objectives or Strategies. This ensured that any member of the public unable to participate previously in the planning process, still had a chance to voice ideas for new initiatives or programs. The planning team and City staff evaluated all comments and incorporated them appropriately.



3.4 COMMUNITY SURVEY

Included in Wadsworth’s February utility bill, residents had the opportunity to complete an 18 question survey regarding their views of Wadsworth and the Downtown. A total of 795 residents completed and returned these paper surveys. Additionally, community members had the option to complete the same survey online at the project’s website, 524 surveys were completed using this method. The responses gathered from this incredible turn out have been analyzed and compared with existing conditions data to shape the key findings and pillars of this plan.

During the analysis of survey responses, questions were also cross-tabulated by the respondents’ ages. This allowed for further insight into the community’s views of Downtown Wadsworth and what the City may need to focus on to attract and retain various generations of residents. For instance, 88% of 18 to 24 year olds would consider living in the Downtown area, compared to 44% of 45 to 54 year olds, as shown in the Figure 3.3 chart to the right.

The survey provided invaluable feedback into the direction Wadsworth residents would like to see the Downtown move and how the area is being utilized currently. The results of the survey in its entirety are included in the Appendix of this Plan. All in all, the Wadsworth community has shown great support for the Downtown through the positive survey responses and the sheer amount of participation throughout this planning process.

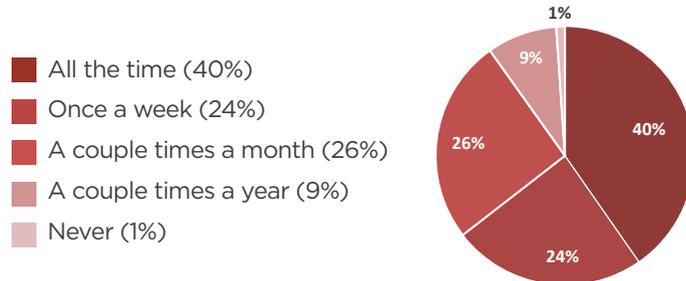


Figure 3.2: Survey Question 1: How frequently do you visit Downtown Wadsworth?

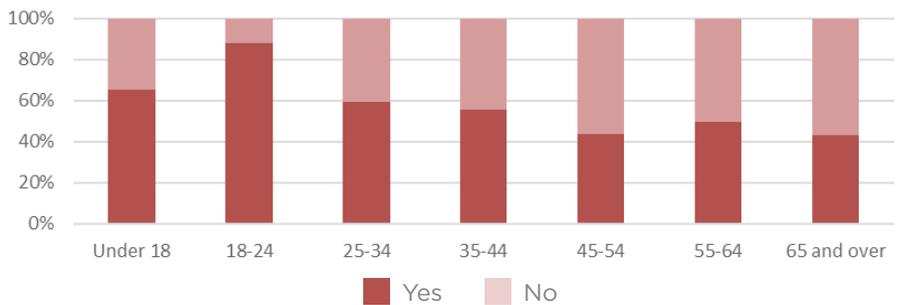


Figure 3.3: Survey Question 5: If your preferred choice of housing were available, would you consider living in Downtown or within a 5-10 minute walk of the square? (delineated by age cohort)

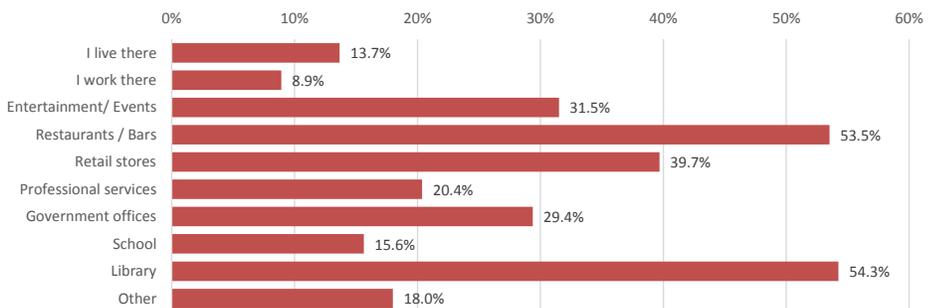


Figure 3.4: Survey Question 2: What would you say are the primary reasons you visit Downtown?



04

RECOMMENDATIONS

04.1 OVERVIEW

04.2 PLAN PILLARS

04.3 OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES



RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter is the crux of the Plan and includes the plan pillars, objectives, strategies, and additional recommendations. The eight plan pillars serve as the foundation for the Downtown Plan. They are derived from the existing conditions analysis and community feedback gathered throughout the planning process. The plan pillars express overarching goals that are valued and desired by the community.

In essence, the plan pillars represent the community's intentions to drive progress in Wadsworth. The pillars are presented here with brief descriptions of each. The following section presents the individual objectives and strategies that fall within each pillar and activate the Plan toward implementation. Finally, recommendations are scattered throughout the chapter to further illustrate the intent of the Plan.

4.2 PLAN PILLARS

PILLAR 1: A QUALITY COMMERCIAL BASE

The heart of Downtown is often characterized by its commercial offerings, namely its retail and restaurant options. As a major economic driver for the City, it is important that Downtown Wadsworth attract quality commercial uses which in turn draw residents and visitors to the area. At the same time, it is imperative that existing businesses are supported by programs and policies to retain the existing character of Downtown Wadsworth. Together, old and new businesses can expand the commercial area, promote independent business, and increase the authentic downtown experience.

1

A QUALITY COMMERCIAL BASE

2

A DEFINED CHARACTER AND FORM

3

EFFICIENT AND CONNECTED MOBILITY

4

A DEFINED IMAGE AND BRAND

5

EXPANDED SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

6

A DIVERSE AND GROWING ECONOMY

7

A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES

8

SMALL AND FUN

PILLAR 2: A DEFINED CHARACTER AND FORM

The quintessential image of a downtown is a dense urban environment with large shop windows and busy sidewalks. In truth, many successful downtowns share these characteristics and more. To encourage density, an engaging walkable environment must be fostered in Downtown Wadsworth. Building on existing character, this environment may be attained through initiatives such as the adoption and enforcement of design standards, added landscaping, or the creation of a facade improvement program. The goal of these initiatives is to promote quality architecture and features that preserve Wadsworth's historical roots and increase its modern appeal.

PILLAR 3: EFFICIENT AND CONNECTED MOBILITY

A downtown that is difficult to get to is a downtown that struggles to survive. Luckily for Wadsworth, the Downtown is easily accessible from I-76 and is provided multiple gateways through which to promote its image. After arriving in Downtown, it is imperative that residents and visitors are able to easily navigate to their destinations, whether they are traveling by foot, bike, or vehicle. To capitalize on existing infrastructure, mobility improvements might include the addition of wayfinding and directional signage, sidewalk improvements such as lighting and landscaping, and bicycle access to the regional trail system.

PILLAR 4: A DEFINED IMAGE AND BRAND

To promote itself within the region and state, Wadsworth must foster a brand for itself. For instance, when nonresidents think of Wadsworth, what image comes to mind? The answer to that question

is within the control of the City of Wadsworth, downtown businesses, and residents. First, the community must come to a consensus on its values and vision, which become the brand, then that brand must be incorporated into the physical realm and promoted extensively in the region and beyond.

PILLAR 5: EXPANDED SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Early on in the planning process, the sense of community in Wadsworth was touted as a top reason for good quality of life in the city. The Downtown plays a key role in building that community by providing a centralized location to meet friends and family as well as an impressive setting to host community events. In addition to increasing the frequency and promotion of Wadsworth's community offerings, other initiatives for this pillar may include an increase in arts and cultural events and the development of a central gathering place, such as a plaza or park.

PILLAR 6: A DIVERSE AND GROWING ECONOMY

Increasing the economic success and viability of Downtown Wadsworth may include initiatives and programs that aid in financing development, property maintenance, and access to city services; there are several financing mechanisms available to municipalities. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) promotes new development by allowing municipalities to borrow against the increased value of a property. The Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) provides tax exemptions for property owners investing in the revitalization or construction of buildings within the predetermined area. Special Improvement Districts (SIDs) are specified areas where all property owners

pay a fee to be part of this public-private partnership which offers access to services and representation for community issues and initiatives. Finally, the Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD) focuses on historic preservation and promotes new investment and business Downtown.

PILLAR 7: A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES

The easiest way to increase daily visits to the downtown core is to increase the number of people that live there. Expanding the residential offerings in Downtown Wadsworth to include options that appeal to young professionals, retirees, and Downtown employees is crucial to enlivening the street at all hours of the day. "Retail follows rooftops" is a popular phrase in downtown planning, and successful downtowns take this to heart. Mixed use multifamily development and the revitalization of lofts above existing downtown commercial buildings can achieve the necessary residential density that convinces new businesses to open in Downtown.

PILLAR 8: SMALL AND FUN

The eighth and final pillar has been crafted to ignite change in the near future. Many cities have been utilizing incremental strategies such as tactical urbanism, temporary parks, and pop-up businesses to reinvigorate their downtowns. These small-scale initiatives have community-focused goals with short-term commitments and realistic expectations. Oftentimes these initiatives are championed and carried out entirely by community members, with or without government funding. The separation of these projects from the bureaucracy that can often consume and delay civic projects lends itself well to the low-risk and locally planned recommendations outlined in this pillar.

4.3 OBJECTIVES + STRATEGIES

This section introduces the objectives and strategies, or action plan, for each of the eight pillars. For details regarding responsible parties and expected timelines for each strategy, please refer to Chapter 06: Implementation.

PILLAR 1: A QUALITY COMMERCIAL BASE

Objective 1.1: Grow more retail options

- Strategy 1.1.1 - Create an inventory of Downtown properties, including property owners, specs, and pictures, to present to future investors.
- Strategy 1.1.2 - Work with existing and future property owners to attract tenants that support Downtown living (i.e. hardware store, grocery, etc.).
- Strategy 1.1.3 - Attract additional restaurants to locate near existing and planned public spaces by leveraging outdoor dining features.
- Strategy 1.1.4 - Work with merchants to establish special dates and/or days to extend business hours (i.e. holiday season, nights, and weekends).
- Strategy 1.1.5 - Create a unique and authentic Downtown experience through coordinated events and programs (e.g. First Friday, Taste of Wadsworth, etc.).

LIVABLE RETAIL

Many downtowns hang their hat on the unique and boutique aspects of their retail offerings. While this is an excellent way to build identity and attract visitors, residents can at times find something lacking. To increase residents Downtown, Wadsworth should strive to attract livable, everyday uses such as a grocery store, coffee shop, and hardware store.



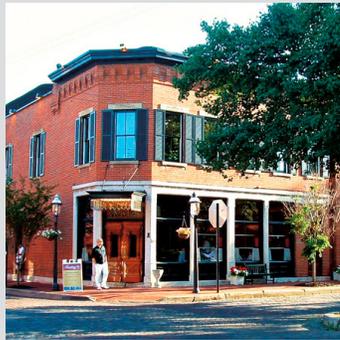
PILLAR 2: A DEFINED CHARACTER AND FORM

Objective 2.1: Enhance existing codes and guidelines

- Strategy 2.1.1 - Create design guidelines that work to maintain the form and architecture of a traditional downtown; guidelines should be flexible as well as easy to understand, implement, and enforce.
- Strategy 2.1.2 - Create an overlay district for Downtown that will work to simplify the land use and site development framework, and unify the Downtown.
- Strategy 2.1.3 - Utilize the design guidelines and overlay to guide future development, enhancing the district while allowing a variety of uses.

Objective 2.2: Improve existing building form / facades

- Strategy 2.2.1 - Create a facade improvement program to guide and support individual building enhancements for structures both old and new.
- Strategy 2.2.2 - Utilize the facade improvement program to preserve and complement the character of historically significant buildings.
- Strategy 2.2.3 - Create programs/events that encourage merchants/owners to create seasonal improvements to storefronts and window displays.



FACADE IMPROVEMENT

Preserving or rehabilitating storefronts may include painting, colorful awnings, the addition of cornices and decorative molding, lighting, and flower boxes or planters. Any effort to revitalize historic buildings in the downtown core is encouraged to draw new visitors and increase walkability for the area, which in turn can stimulate the local economy.

PILLAR 3: EFFICIENT AND CONNECTED MOBILITY

Objective 3.1: Improve traffic flow

- Strategy 3.1.1 - Conduct a signal timing study to evaluate the quality of traffic flow balanced with pedestrian safety.
- Strategy 3.1.2 - Evaluate the potential to adjust the alignment of Broad Street at the main Downtown intersection, removing the median and aligning the travel lanes with those on College Street.

Objective 3.2: Improve pedestrian safety

- Strategy 3.2.1 - Implement traffic calming features into the Downtown street and streetscape (i.e. bump outs, landscaping, road diets, bike lanes, etc.).
- Strategy 3.2.2 - Create a campaign to raise public awareness of pedestrians in Downtown (eg. the Knight Foundation's Pedestrians First! program).
- Strategy 3.2.3 - Widen sidewalks in strategic areas to improve walkability and include urban design features (i.e. outdoor dining, benches, landscaping planters, etc.). **CATALYST PROJECT**
- Strategy 3.2.4 - Increase visibility of crosswalks (i.e. larger/higher signage, pavement treatments, lighting, signage, etc.).
- Strategy 3.2.5 - Create new non-motorized transportation connections to and in the Downtown (e.g. regional trail connections). **CATALYST PROJECT**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective 3.3: Expand parking options

- Strategy 3.3.1 - Convert head-in parking to parallel on main Downtown streets, adding to the pedestrian realm and reducing traffic conflicts.
- Strategy 3.3.2 - Improve / increase wayfinding signage for public parking lots.
- Strategy 3.3.3 - Improve the layout and connectivity of public and private parking areas with the goal of increasing parking options and improving vehicular and pedestrian connectivity (i.e. rear facade improvements, patios, landscaping, etc.). **CATALYST PROJECT**
- Strategy 3.3.4 - Enhance pedestrian connections to parking lots (i.e. alley revitalization / conversion, lighting, lot clean-up, etc.). **CATALYST PROJECT**
- Strategy 3.3.5 - Expand on-street parking to adjacent neighborhood streets.

Objective 3.4: Promote non-motorized transportation options

- Strategy 3.4.1 - Create new non-motorized transportation connections into and around the Downtown (e.g. regional trail connections). **CATALYST PROJECT**
- Strategy 3.4.2 - Create a welcome area, such as a trail head or pocket park, for bicyclists entering Downtown Wadsworth complete with bike amenities, shade trees, and street furniture. **CATALYST PROJECT**

CONNECTIVITY

Pedestrian connections in the Downtown are crucial to the success of local businesses. Even those that arrive Downtown in a vehicle complete the last leg of their trip on foot. Addressing the sidewalks, alleyways, and signage that link parking lots to Downtown businesses will improve the pedestrian experience and increase walkability overall.



PILLAR 4: A DEFINED IMAGE AND BRAND

Objective 4.1: Define and promote the Downtown brand

- Strategy 4.1.1 - Create an image and brand strategy to define the brand and brand messaging Downtown Wadsworth.
- Strategy 4.1.2 - Communicate the brand through local and regional media outlets (i.e. social media, regional magazines, etc.).
- Strategy 4.1.3 - Engage the younger demographic in activities that iconicize Wadsworth to instill nostalgia and encourage lifelong residence.
- Strategy 4.1.4 - Utilize Wadsworth TV and radio to spread the word.



REGIONAL RECOGNITION

Creating a brand for Downtown Wadsworth will increase community pride and recognition within the region. Downtown branding can come in many forms such as gateways, benches, public art, and signage. With the community involved in the design process, creating an identity for the Downtown would promote Wadsworth as a destination.

Objective 4.2: Brand the public realm

- Strategy 4.2.1 – Create a Downtown signage package that applies a unique and recognizable look to public signs and amenities in the district (i.e. street signs, storefronts, etc.)
- Strategy 4.2.2 - Enhance the gateways and wayfinding signage in Downtown to communicate the brand and improve the resident and visitor experience.

CATALYST PROJECT

PILLAR 5: EXPANDED SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Objective 5.1: Create new public spaces for gathering

- Strategy 5.1.1 - Create a signature public space in the Downtown core.
CATALYST PROJECT
- Strategy 5.1.2 - Update the streetscape to improve the pedestrian experience and increase commercial opportunity with outdoor dining areas in the Downtown. **CATALYST PROJECT**



PUBLIC SPACE

Downtown parks and public space are more than just greenery within the urban core, they provide places to congregate, plan events, and make memories. Creating a place for people to stay and relax extends their visit Downtown. Trees, flowers, and shrubbery soften the urban landscape and encourage people to linger, enjoying local businesses and neighbors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective 5.2: Add additional community events

- Strategy 5.2.1 - Create an event(s) focused on young professionals.
- Strategy 5.2.2 - Expand and enhance the summer concert series.
- Strategy 5.2.3 - Add new events focused on arts and culture.
- Strategy 5.2.4 - Create an arts space to promote local art within the community and Downtown (i.e. rental of Strand Theater).
- Strategy 5.2.5 - Collaborate with local churches to create and host events in the Downtown.
- Strategy 5.2.6 - Utilize tactical urbanism strategies to engage the public, program the central gathering space, and activate the downtown.

PILLAR 6: A DIVERSE AND GROWING ECONOMY

Objective 6.1: Use economic development tools to promote revitalization

- Strategy 6.1.1 - Examine the opportunity to create a Tax Increment Financing district or a Downtown Redevelopment District (see Figure 4.1) in the Downtown to help fund future capital improvements.
- Strategy 6.1.2 - Utilize the local CRA and Enterprise Zone, or other district financing such as the Downtown Redevelopment District, as a tool to guide future investment in the downtown.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Progress in the development world does not exclusively mean bulldozing the old and constructing the new. Adaptive reuse allows older buildings with historical significance and architecture to be restored and outfitted for a new tenant. Buildings in Downtown Wadsworth with such potential include the Central Intermediate School and the Post Office.



- Strategy 6.1.3 - Create a Special Improvement District (SID) in the Downtown to coordinate efforts amongst property owners and building tenants in the Downtown and provide representation for the community.
- Strategy 6.1.4 - Appoint a Downtown liaison or committee to work with City officials, representing the interests of the SID and the downtown business community.
- Strategy 6.1.5 - Work with Main Street Wadsworth to bolster the effectiveness of its initiatives and those of the SID.

FIGURE 4.1: FUNDING RESOURCE

HB233: THE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Passed in the Spring of 2016, House Bill 233 of the Ohio Revised Code aims to rehabilitate historic buildings, promote economic development, and advance innovation through the establishment of Downtown Redevelopment Districts (DRDs). Building off the success of the Historic Preservation Tax Credit program of 2007, the DRD will continue to revitalize Ohio's downtowns. All Downtown Redevelopment Districts must be established by a city ordinance and are limited to areas of ten acres or less which contain a historic preservation project.

The program is structured similar to that of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District which generates funds for infrastructure improvements through tax abatements. TIF properties are assessed by their future, appreciated value and a portion of the determined property tax is reallocated to a separate fund. Such is the financing structure for Downtown Redevelopment Districts, with 70% of the appreciated tax value put aside for improvements within the district. However, Downtown Redevelopment Districts have a broader range of abilities to use these funds than do TIF districts. DRD funds can be utilized for loans and grants to owners of historic and

non-historic properties, contributions to special improvement districts, public infrastructure improvements, revolving loans to businesses within the district, debt service on construction loans and programming within the district.

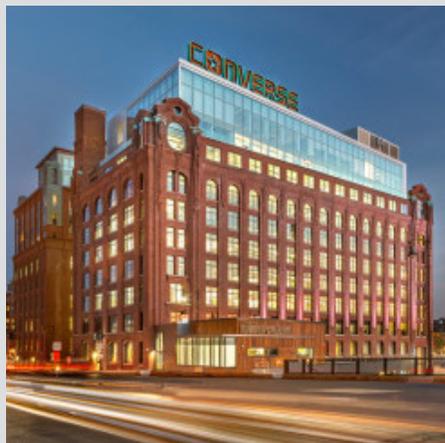
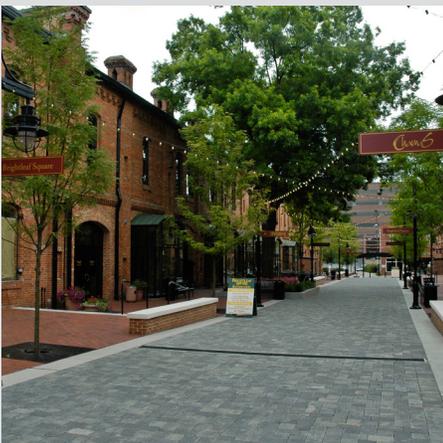
The two main goals of HB233 are to encourage and support public-private redevelopment in Ohio's downtowns and to reverse the "brain-drain" phenomenon in the state. The DRD aims to attract and retain young professionals in Ohio by enticing them to invest personally and professionally in downtowns. By creating an environment for young people to live, work, and play, DRDs can stimulate physical revitalization of an area as well the economy.

Part of the strategy for attracting young professionals to Ohio's downtowns is attracting technology-based businesses, which led to an additional provision in HB233 for the establishment of Innovation Districts. The only stipulation of an Innovation District is it must occur within an established Downtown Redevelopment District. Tech companies that locate within these districts are provided ultrafast broadband connection via OARnet to facilitate IT research and

development. This is the first instance that OARnet, or Ohio Academic Resources Network, will be available for private use. Currently the broadband network is limited to use by Ohio's education, healthcare, public broadcasting, and government communities.

The inclusion of Innovation Districts to the DRD ordinance is meant to attract cutting edge businesses and talented workers through the business incubators and accelerators to which the broadband will be offered. Incubators and accelerators provide guidance and mentorship to new businesses to prepare the companies for growth. Incubators concentrate on the operational side of a business, providing office space, skills training, access to financing, and professional networks through the startup phase of a business. Accelerators work with businesses that have progressed out of the startup phase and are in need of guidance for long-term strategic planning.

The holistic approach to downtown revitalization afforded by HB233 is innovative and intuitive for the real growth of the economy and character of Ohio's many historic downtowns.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective 6.2: Promote the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized areas in the Downtown

- Strategy 6.2.1 - Guide and promote the redevelopment of the southwest corner of Broad Street and Lyman Street (Focus Area A, Figure 5.2).
- Strategy 6.2.2 - Work with the post office to promote the redevelopment / revitalization of its site on the southeast corner of Broad Street and Lyman Street (Focus Area B, Figure 5.2).
- Strategy 6.2.3 - Plan for the future adaptive reuse of the Central Intermediate School site (Focus Area C, Figure 5.2).
- Strategy 6.2.4 - Promote strategic infill of vacant lots on Main Street between Mills Street and College Street. (Focus Area D, Figure 5.2).
- Strategy 6.2.5 - Promote the redevelopment of underdeveloped residential properties between Mills Street and College Street west of Main Street (Focus Area E, Figure 5.2).
- Strategy 6.2.6 - Promote the redevelopment of parcels along Main Street between Boyer Street and Prospect Street (Focus Area F, Figure 5.2).

PILLAR 7: A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES

Objective 7.1: Promote mixed use and infill medium density housing in the downtown

- Strategy 7.1.1 - Promote loft living Downtown by ensuring codes and standards allow and encourage residences over retail uses.
- Strategy 7.1.2 - Acquire funding through state and federal programs to construct or revitalize Downtown residential units (See Figure 4.1).
- Strategy 7.1.3 - Work with the local Community Improvement Corporation or Land Bank to identify and acquire property to guide and promote residential development in the Downtown.
- Strategy 7.1.4 - Identify grants for the remediation of sites that may need 'cleaned' and/or for brownfield sites.
- Strategy 7.1.5 - Update existing codes and standards to allow for new mixed use and medium density residential development in the Downtown.

RETAIL FOLLOWS ROOFTOPS

Studies have shown that a critical mass of residents is necessary to ensure successful retail in downtowns. To reach that vital level of residents, Downtown Wadsworth will need to diversify its housing options. Multifamily residential comes in many shapes and sizes and finding a style that fits the Downtown character and attracts young professionals is a key initiative.



Objective 7.2: Preserve and protect the existing historical housing stock

- Strategy 7.2.1 – Create a downtown housing improvement program to guide and support the maintenance of housing in existing historic areas (e.g. see Medina and Lakewood as models).

PILLAR 8: SMALL AND FUN

Objective 8.1: Employ tactical urbanism techniques to incrementally improve the liveliness of Downtown

- Strategy 8.1.1 - Utilize public art to enliven the streets, walls, and sidewalks of Downtown (See Figure 4.2).
- Strategy 8.1.2 - Capitalize on necessary amenities to add character to Downtown (See Figure 4.2).
- Strategy 8.1.3 - Facilitate activities in Downtown that attract new visitors and keep residents engaged year-round (See Figure 4.2).



TACTICAL URBANISM

This Plan is meant to be used by residents of Wadsworth from all backgrounds and interests- not just City officials and business owners. Tactical Urbanism enables residents to enact change in their community at various scales and can take the form of installations, events, and more. These initiatives are a great way to involve the community's youth as well.

Objective 8.2: Increase the web presence of Downtown businesses and events

- Strategy 8.2.1: Update the Main Street Wadsworth organization website regularly to highlight news, businesses, and events in Downtown.
- Strategy 8.2.2: Develop and maintain a multifaceted web presence for Main Street Wadsworth through social media sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).
- Strategy 8.2.3: Develop a strategy to strengthen the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of Main Street Wadsworth's website and social media presence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FIGURE 4.2: ARTS, AMENITIES, + ACTIVITIES TACTICAL URBANISM IDEAS FOR THE DOWNTOWN

Be surprised by the unexpected! Promoting fun and novel experiences within Wadsworth can serve to create a unique identity for the community, while serving the purpose of improving the overall aesthetic and character of the Downtown. When people visit a city, it's the surprises that remain memorable: the building mural in the alley, the uniquely painted statues placed in public spaces, the impromptu concert in the park. It is the small details that show a community cares for a place, and the place in turn represents the community.

The ideas and initiatives outlined below have been gathered from community stakeholders and best practices in planning, but are not an exhaustive list of the many various ways the community can stimulate new interest and excitement in Downtown.

ARTS

Arts initiatives have been used successfully in a number of downtown districts, and become a signature, characteristic element for the community.

Grizzly Bears - Wadsworth High School, home of the Grizzlies. Engage the creative community by asking artists to paint one of a series of fiberglass grizzly bear statues, which are then placed throughout the Downtown. Utilize the existing artist community, but also consider using Wadsworth High School students for designing and painting the statues.

Utility Box Art - Transform the mundane into the interesting. Utility boxes can be "dressed up" with decorative screens, landscaping, or painted murals or graphics to change a necessity into an amenity. Work with the corresponding utility to get permission, and allow artists to make them something unique to Wadsworth.

Murals - Allow the creativity of Wadsworth to show. Building facades, especially those in alleyways and abutting parking lots, can be considered a canvas for painted murals. For a rotating show, temporary murals are also an option. Using vinyl replicas of artwork which are adhered to building surfaces, Downtown could showcase numerous artists and roll out a new show every year, turning an installation into an event as well.

AMENITIES

Use the functional elements needed in a city to make a larger impact. Transform everyday amenities into interesting pieces that add to the overall appeal of Downtown.

Seating - Sit somewhere original. Incorporate a variety of seating throughout the Downtown. Creative seating options can become a novelty in Downtown Wadsworth, with highly visible options becoming landmarks along the street.

Bike Racks - Park somewhere creative. Why settle for a simple bike rack, when you can use it to express something original? Leverage Wadsworth's history of the Blue Tip Match Company to create a bike rack composed of giant match sticks.





ACTIVITIES

Physical structures and amenities don't have to be the only attraction in a Downtown. Emphasize experiences that continue to draw visitors and engage residents.

Urban Games - Unexpected fun in an unexpected place. Help people get active and have fun in Downtown Wadsworth by offering multiple opportunities to take part in spontaneous games. Checkers, chess, hop-scotch, and dominoes are all examples of sidewalk games that could be created with very little money and effort. For an even bigger twist on the fun, create life-sized board games in public spaces.

Downtown Scavenger Hunt - Inspire visitors to experience the City. Scavenger hunts can be an effective way to engage people with their surroundings. Themed objects (cast animals, matches, grizzly bears, etc.) can be placed around Downtown, where visitors can have the opportunity to search them out and find them all. Maps and/or clues can be given out by local businesses, generating more foot traffic and an opportunity to further engage with the community.



Community Gardens - Growing community involvement. Neighborhood gardens can be an excellent way to build community and address underutilized land all at once. Existing organizations, such as gardening clubs or community groups, should be used to help plan and maintain the gardens. Land may be granted by the City or a willing landowner for use as a community garden.

Loaner Bikes - Have a bike, leave a bike; need a bike, take a bike. Solicit community donations of old bicycles to incorporate into an informal bike share program. Any bikes donated can be painted a specific color and left at predetermined bike stations for use. Non-corporate models of bike share such as this operate completely on the honor system with little to no overhead costs.



Urban Yoga - A community that stretches together, stays together. Many communities have had success organizing free yoga sessions that take place in urban parks- or sometimes on the street! Prioritizing fitness and community over vehicles is a great message to send to residents and visitors of Wadsworth.

Movie Screen - Picnic meets drive-in movie theater. With a focus on family-friendly programming and set in a public space, movies can bring people into Downtown to enjoy the City throughout the evening. Participants can bring chairs and blankets, and watch movies projected on building facades or temporary screens.



05

CATALYST PROJECTS

05.1 OVERVIEW

05.2 DOWNTOWN PARK & PLAZA

05.3 ALLEY CONVERSIONS

05.4 STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

05.5 FOCUS AREAS



CATALYST PROJECTS

5.1 OVERVIEW

Catalyst Projects are priority initiatives that enhance the physical character of Downtown in ways that aim to generate further interest and development. Their importance lies in the transformative affect these changes could bring to each focus area, as well as adjacent properties and the Downtown as a whole. The projects in this chapter are meant to interest developers, inspire business owners, and instill community pride in residents.

PUBLIC - PRIVATE PROJECTS

The Catalyst Projects fall into two categories, those that the public sector will champion and those that the private sector will carry out. That said, each of the projects illustrated in this chapter will require cooperation from multiple parties as well as community support. Wherever possible, responsibility for the completion of these projects should be shared by the public and private sectors.

PUBLIC PROJECTS

Public projects are designed to be carried out by staff members of the City of Wadsworth or a local constituent such as a Community Improvement Program (CIP), Main Street Wadsworth, etc. Many of these projects qualify for federal or state funding and may be included in routine street maintenance projects. Figure 5.1 illustrates the proposed catalyst projects for the public sector; subsequent pages include more details and example images.

PRIVATE PROJECTS

Private Projects have been identified as focus areas. These projects are more suited for private developers to fulfill the vision portrayed in this chapter. While a private developer would be responsible for designing the building

and determining the building tenants, the suggested future uses included herein are recommendations that address the wants and needs of current Wadsworth residents as well as the gaps in the market as identified through this planning process.



Figure 5.1 - Catalyst Projects for public improvements

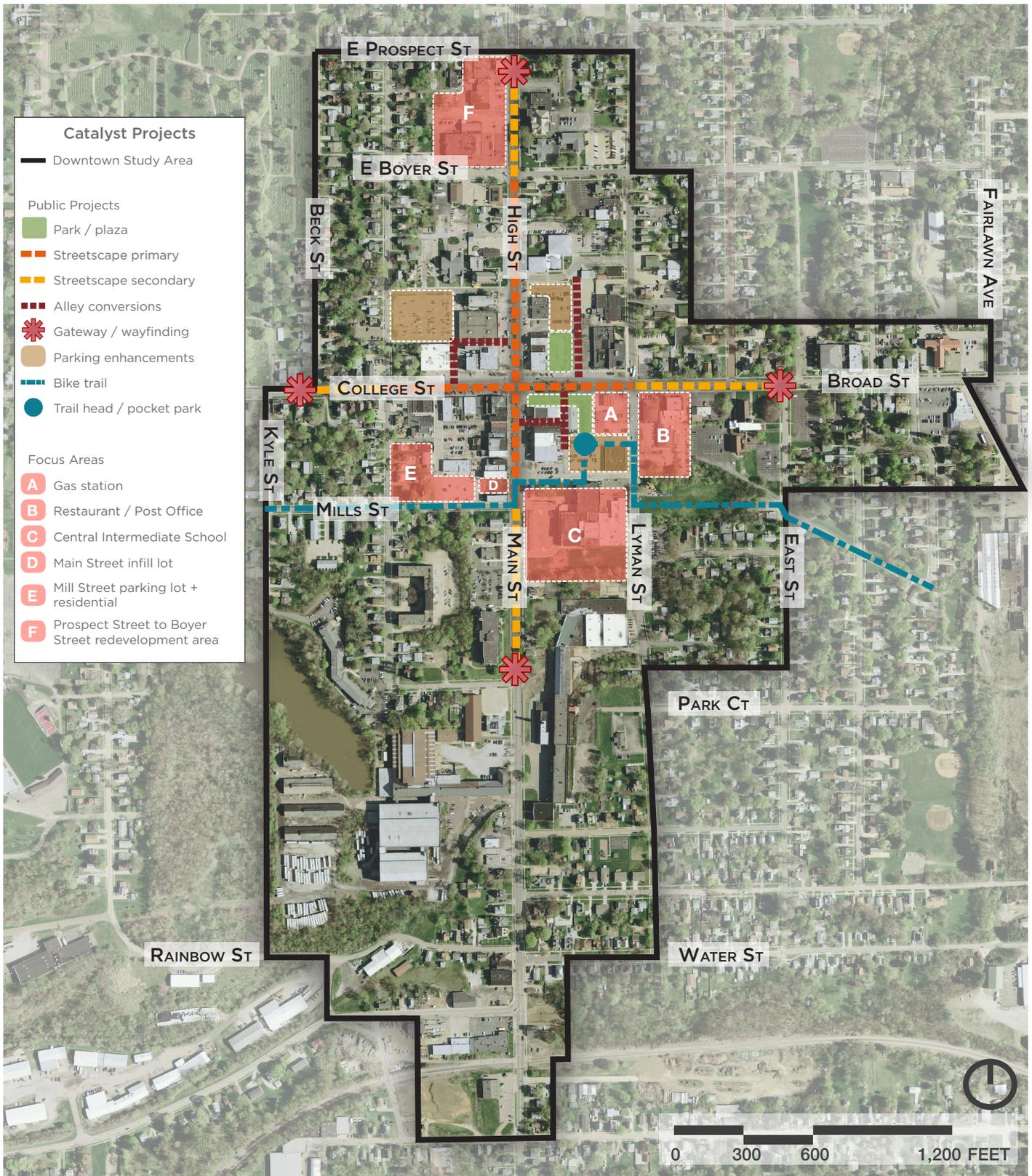


Figure 5.2 - Downtown Wadsworth Public Projects and Focus Areas

5.2 DOWNTOWN PARK & PLAZA:

The lack of a park in the Downtown core was a sentiment repeated by the public throughout the planning process. The following pages show several conceptual designs that could be integrated into the existing framework of Downtown and provide ample space for public gathering while retaining current parking availability. Features such as the gazebo and fountain, along with added green space, are shown in three potential configurations.

The final result of a Downtown park design could be any one of the three concepts shown here, or an alternative not represented in this plan. The design that ultimately gets constructed will depend on any number of factors, the availability of land and funding chief among them. These illustrations depict only a handful of options available to Wadsworth and are meant to inspire interest and discussion.

CONCEPT I

FEATURES:

A Plaza with outdoor dining

Acres: 0.4 ac.
 Parcels: 5
 Owners: 4
 Estimated Cost: \$550-850K
 2016 dollars

B Improved streetscape; gazebo & median remain

Blocks: 1
 Estimated Cost: \$500K-750K
 2016 dollars
 (as illustrated in Figure 5.9)



Figure 5.3 - Concept I: Proposed Downtown plaza & streetscape.

DESCRIPTION:

Area A of Concept I depicts improvements to an existing parking lot between the Wadsworth Public Library and businesses along High Street, with access from Broad Street and adjacent parking lots. Improvements include resurfacing the gravel lot and adding brick pavers for character and stormwater mitigation,

plus added trees and an outdoor dining area for the building's tenants. The parking area is designed to be cordoned off for farmer's markets and other events using removable bollards at the entrance from Broad Street.

Area B of Concept I shows the gazebo, fountain, flagpole, and traffic median retained, with improvements made to the streetscape only.

CONCEPT II

FEATURES:

A Plaza with outdoor dining

Acres: 0.4 ac.
 Parcels: 5
 Owners: 4
 Estimated Cost: \$550-850K
 2016 dollars

B Road realigned, new park, & gazebo moved to corner

Acres: 1.25 ac.
 Estimated Cost: \$850K-1M
 2016 dollars

DESCRIPTION:

Area A remains the same as depicted in Figure 5.3 of Concept I with an existing parking lot redesigned to allow for outdoor dining and festivals.

Area B of Concept II depicts the realignment of Broad Street to College Street and removal of the center median. The gained right-of-way is converted to a community park, with the gazebo and fountain relocated from their current location in the roadway median. Realignment of the roadway improves traffic flow and increases walkability by shortening the distance pedestrians must travel when crossing the street.

The gazebo is shown in a highly visible and prominent position at the corner of Downtown and acts as a gateway to the new park. Locating the park adjacent to existing buildings provides more opportunities for outdoor dining and ease of pedestrian access from nearby parking via the redesigned alleyways (Figure 5.8). The new location of the gazebo allows residents and visitors to congregate in greater numbers to watch performances, gather for festivals, or just relax in a quieter, safer park.

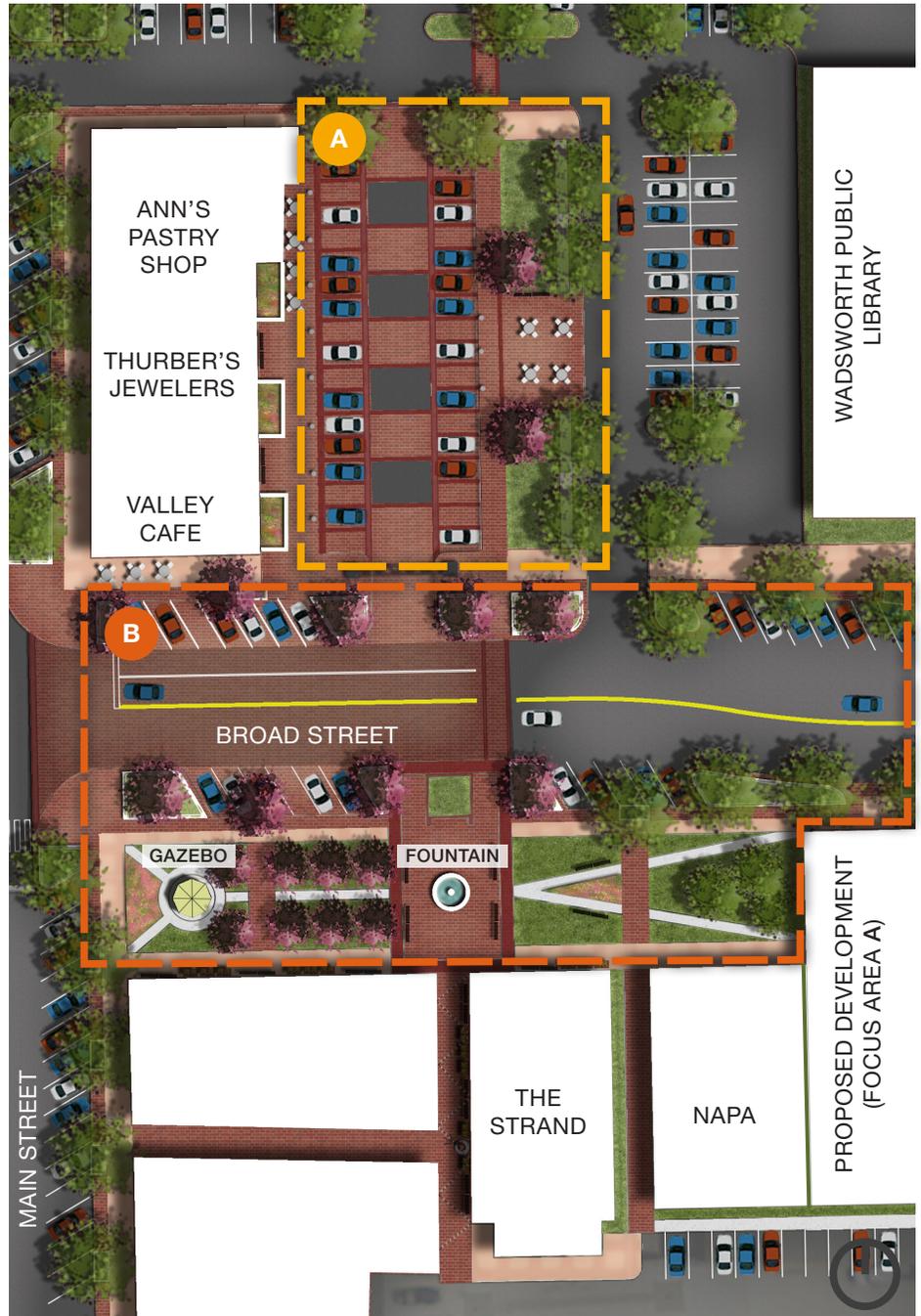
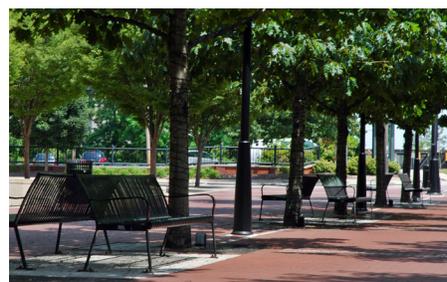


Figure 5.4 - Concept II: Proposed Downtown park and plaza.



5.2 DOWNTOWN PARK & PLAZA: CONCEPT III

FEATURES:

A Plaza with outdoor dining

Acres: 0.4 ac.
Parcels: 5
Owners: 4
Estimated Cost: \$550-850K
2016 dollars

B Realigned park & gazebo

Acres: 1.5 ac.
Parcels: 2
Owners: 2
Estimated Cost: \$900K-1.1M
2016 dollars

DESCRIPTION:

Area A remains the same as depicted in Figure 5.3 of Concept I with an existing parking lot redesigned to allow for outdoor dining and festivals.

Area B depicts the realignment of Broad Street to College Street across the main intersection of Downtown and the removal of the roadway median, as shown in Figure 5.4 of Concept II. The gained right-of-way is converted to a community park, with the gazebo and fountain relocated from their current location in the median. Realignment of the roadway

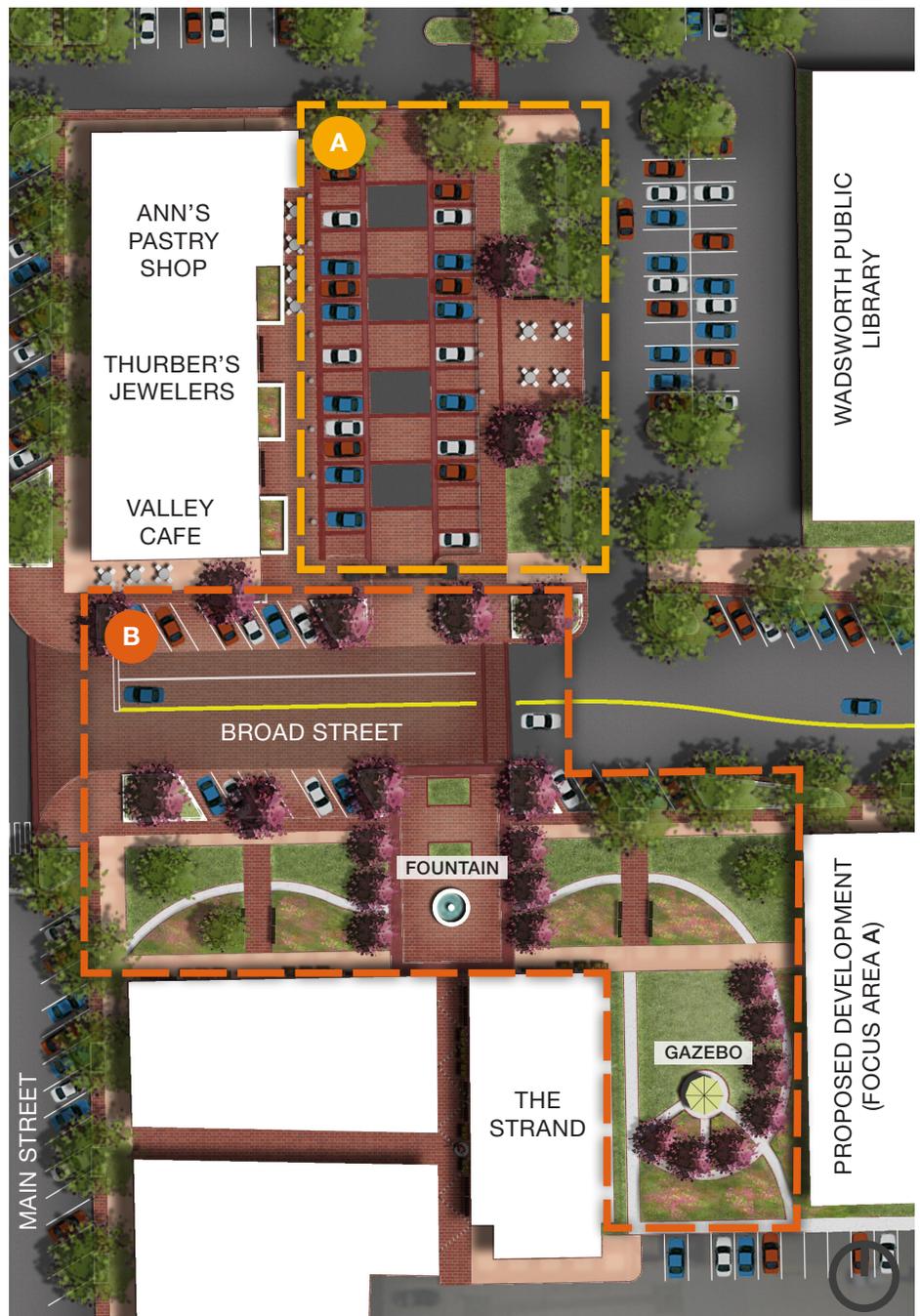


Figure 5.5 - Concept III: Proposed Downtown park and plaza.





Figure 5.6 - View of the proposed park on Broad Street in front of the restored Strand Theatre.

improves traffic flow and increases walkability by shortening the distance pedestrians must travel when crossing the street.

The linear park along Broad Street provides added amenity space for trees, benches, and potential outdoor dining for existing buildings. The park also connects to the converted alleyway, described in detail on the following page, which provides access to nearby parking.

The pocket park located between the Strand Theatre and the proposed new development of Focus Area A doubles as a new home for Wadsworth’s gazebo and as a trailhead for the recommended regional bikeway connection to Downtown (Figure 5.2). This proposed location of the gazebo allows residents and visitors to congregate in greater numbers to watch performances, stage parades, or host events and festivals.



Figure 5.7 - View of the proposed park from the corner of Broad Street and Main Street, looking southeast.

5.3 ALLEY CONVERSIONS

FEATURES:

- Brick pavers
- Planters
- Lights

Estimated cost: \$50-100K
2016 dollars, per alley

DESCRIPTION:

Improvements to the alleyways have been suggested for several locations in Downtown Wadsworth, as indicated in Figure 5.2. These alley conversions include replacing asphalt with brick pavers as well as adding planters and lighting. These additions convert a vehicle access route into a pedestrian walkway that connects existing parking lots to Downtown shops and businesses as well as the newly proposed Downtown park. Features such as fountains or sculptural art may also be added to the alley as focal points.

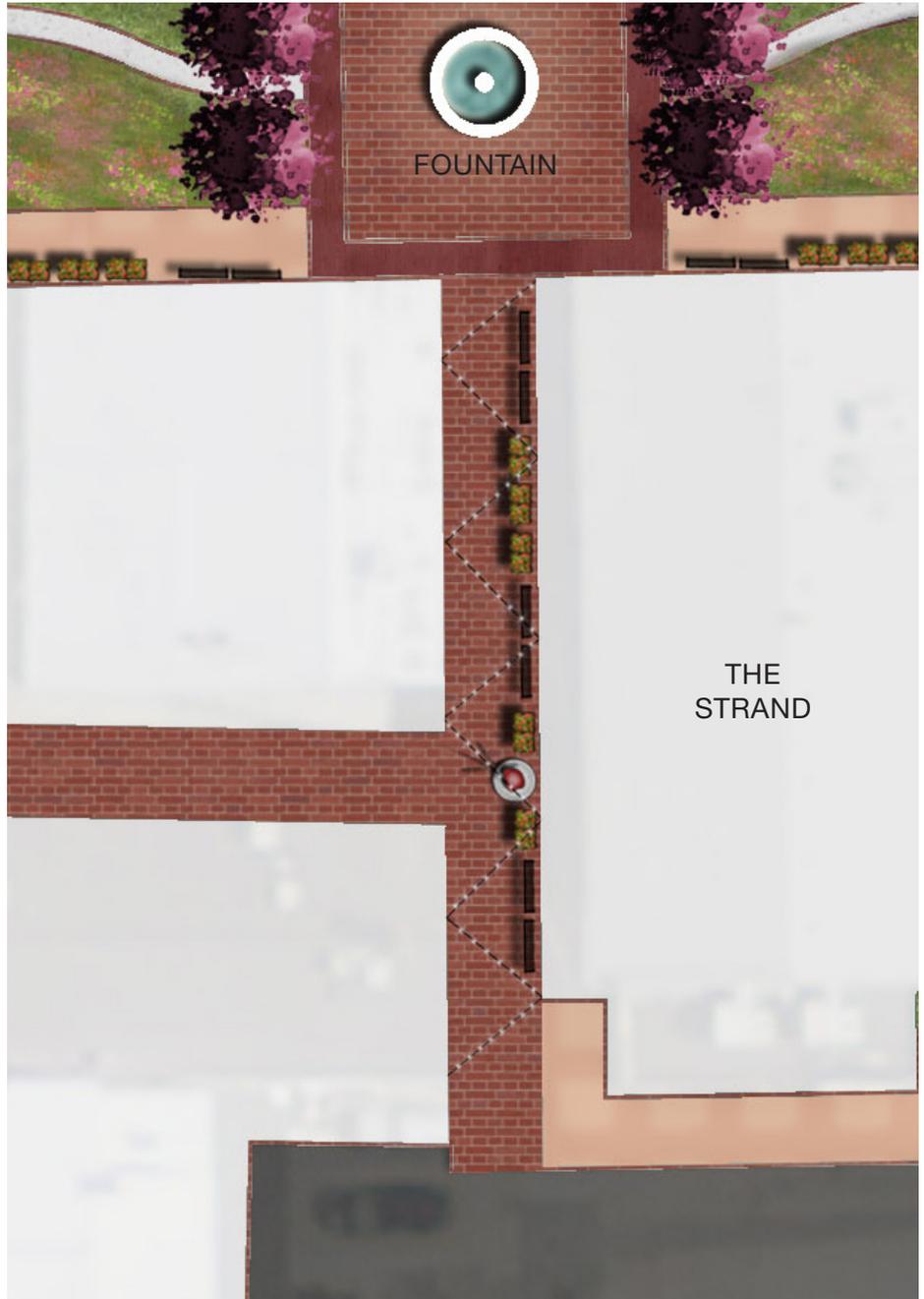


Figure 5.8 - View of proposed Downtown alley conversion.



5.4 STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

FEATURES:

- Brick pavers
- Bioswale landscaping
- Planters
- Lights
- Street trees

Estimated cost: 500K-750K
*2016 dollars, per block,
 both sides of the street*

DESCRIPTION:

Streetscape improvements have been recommended along the primary streets of Downtown. These improvements include enhancing the existing sidewalks with brick pavers, landscaping, lighting, and street trees. Landscaping beds have been depicted as bioswales to provide an option for stormwater mitigation in the Downtown. Benches are encouraged at frequent intervals along the street. Additionally, it is recommended that sidewalk “bump-outs” be added at crosswalks to narrow the distance of roadway pedestrians must cross and provide heightened visibility to motorists.

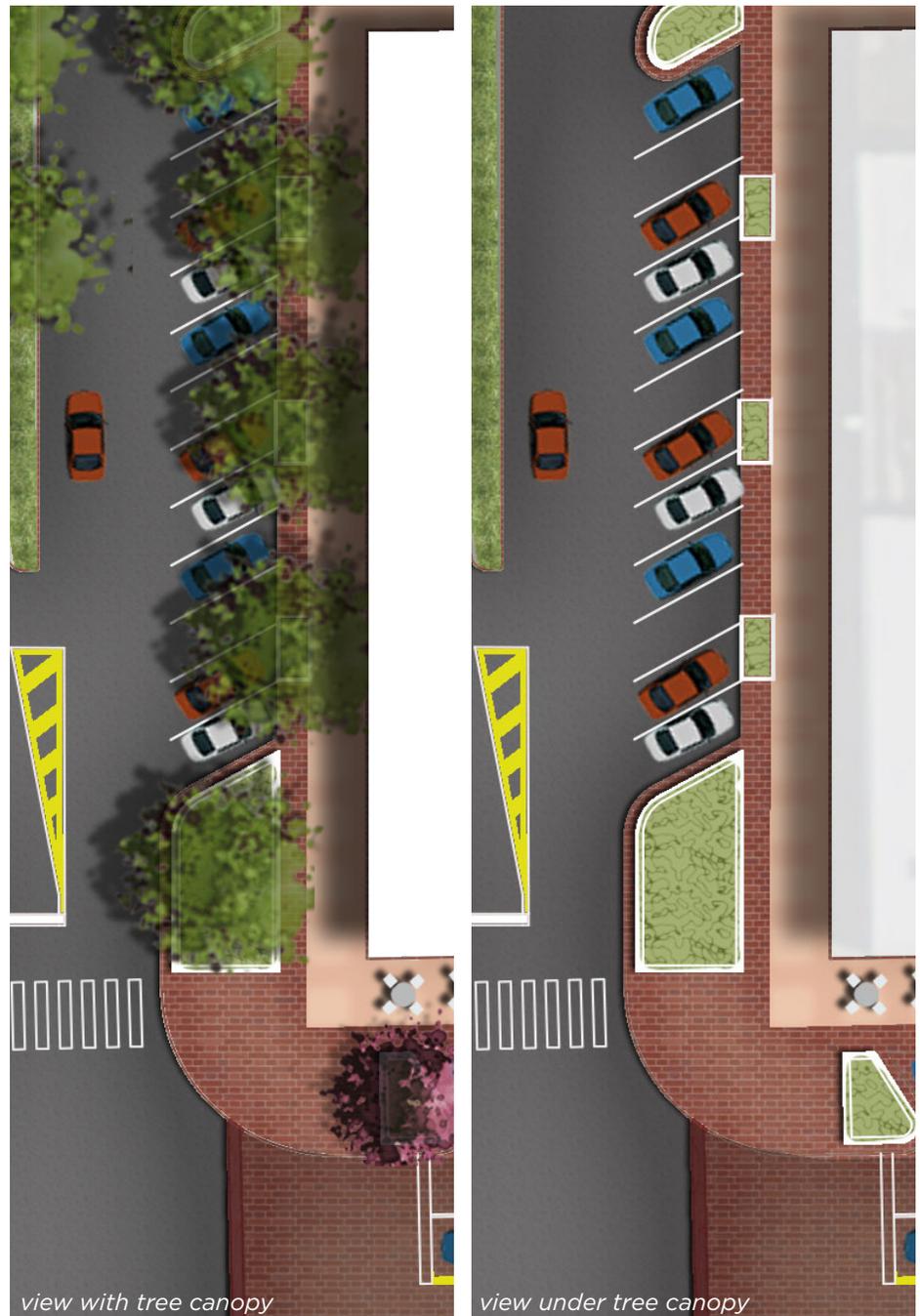


Figure 5.9 - View of proposed Downtown streetscape.



5.5 FOCUS AREAS

The Focus Areas, as outlined in Figure 5.8 to the right, are collections of parcels identified during the planning process as prime locations for new development in Downtown Wadsworth. The following pages include the relevant site data for each Focus Area, including the number of parcels and land owners, total acreage, current land uses, and suggested redevelopment options. Also included in the layouts are images depicting the desired character and density of the potential new developments as suggested in the Plan.

These Focus Area descriptions act as a starting point for the development of a Downtown “look-book” of development opportunities as recommended in Strategy 1.1.1 of the Implementation Matrix. The completion of such an invaluable piece of marketing for Downtown Wadsworth would bridge any gap between the City and private developers, lowering the barrier to entry for the Wadsworth development market.

While the exact layout and architectural styling of any new development would be determined by the developer in partnership with the City and its design guidelines, the images shown here provide a sense of size and land use to the residents and stakeholders of Wadsworth. Many of the suggested future uses of these Focus Areas include mixed use development, incorporating commercial and residential into economically viable, versatile sites.

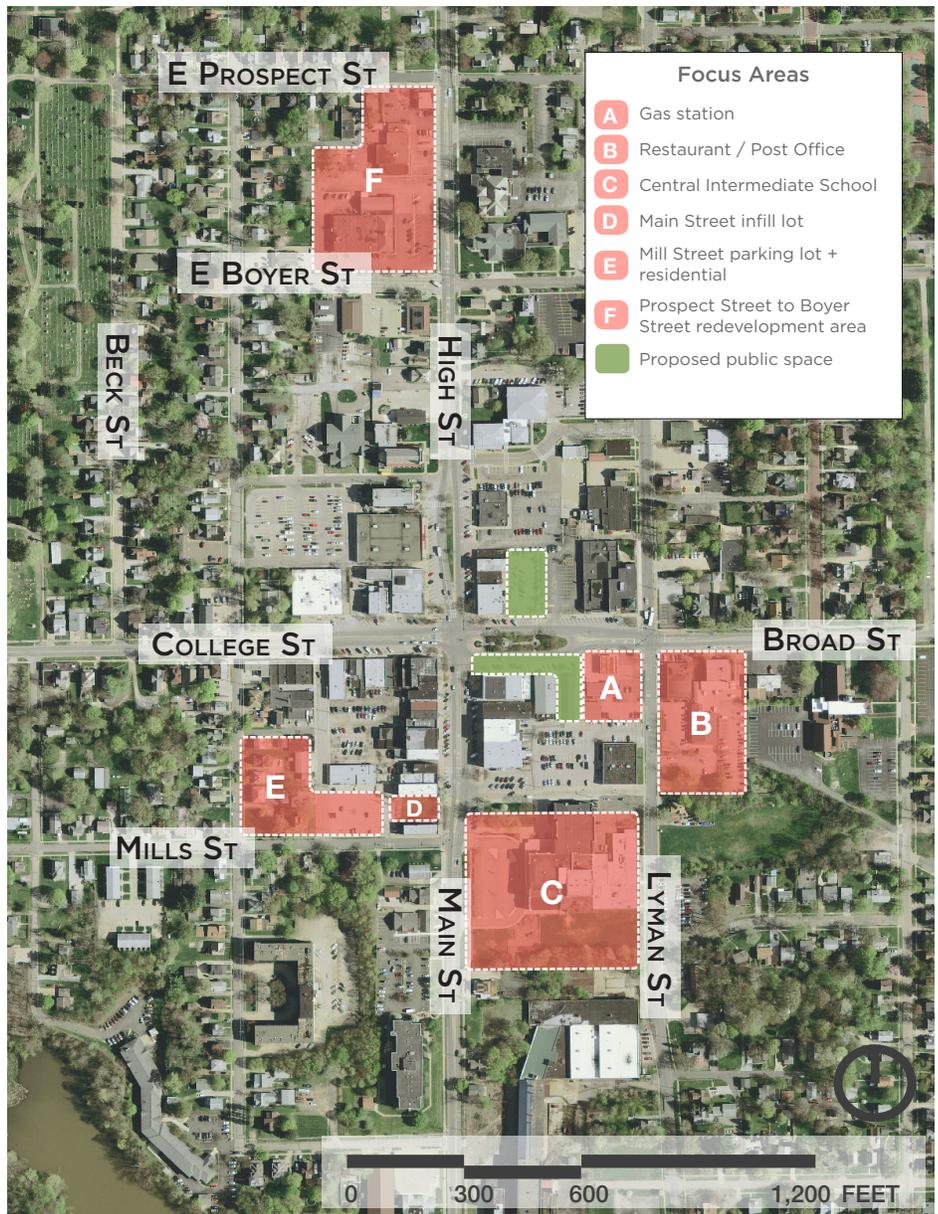


Figure 5.10 - Downtown Wadsworth Focus Areas

When taken as a whole, these recommendations achieve the vital mix of residential, retail, and public space needed for a healthy, thriving downtown.

There is great potential in the core of Downtown Wadsworth, and this

Plan is meant to act as a catalyst to successfully seizing that potential. In the following section, Chapter 06: Implementation, funding sources to aid in development opportunities are outlined and stakeholders are identified to act as champions of the individual strategies of this Plan.

FOCUS AREA A

Located at the southwest corner of Broad Street and Lyman Street; refer to Figure 5.10 for an overall map of the Focus Areas.

SITE DATA

- Acres: 0.4 ac.
- Parcels: 2
- Owners: 1
- Current Use: Gas station
- Future Use: Mixed-use signature building with pocket park



FOCUS AREA B

Located at the southeast corner of Broad Street and Lyman Street; refer to Figure 5.10 for an overall map of the Focus Areas.

SITE DATA

- Acres: 2.1 ac.
- Parcels: 11
- Owners: 3
- Current Use: Restaurant & U.S. Post Office
- Future Use: Retail/restaurant (1-2 story); lofts over retail



CATALYST PROJECTS

FOCUS AREA C

Located between Main Street and Lyman Street, south of Wright Street; refer to Figure 5.10 for an overall map of the Focus Areas.

SITE DATA

Acres: 4.5 ac.
Parcels: 13
Owners: 2

Current Use: Wadsworth Central Intermediate School

Future Use: Retail/restaurant (1-2 story); townhomes or medium density residential



FOCUS AREA D

Located on the west side of Main Street; refer to Figure 5.10 for an overall map of the Focus Areas.

SITE DATA

Acres: 0.2 ac.
Parcels: 2
Owners: 1

Current Use: Vacant infill lot at 154 Main St

Future Use: Two-story retail/restaurant infill structure to complement existing building character; public plaza space



FOCUS AREA E

Located north of Mills Street to the west of Main Street; refer to Figure 5.10 for an overall map of the Focus Areas.

SITE DATA

- Acres: 1.5 ac.
- Parcels: 18
- Owners: 8
- Current Use: Residential & parking
- Future Use: Townhomes; medium density residential



FOCUS AREA F

Located on the west side of High Street, between Prospect Street and Boyer street; refer to Figure 5.10 for an overall map of the Focus Areas.

SITE DATA

- Acres: 3.1 ac.
- Parcels: 18
- Owners: 5
- Current Use: Grocery store, bank, & small commercial uses
- Future Use: Townhomes; medium density residential





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06

IMPLEMENTATION

06.1 PRIMARY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

06.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 PRIMARY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The funding sources and incentives outlined here assume that Wadsworth would prefer to utilize as many tools as possible while preserving property tax revenue and generating new sources of income tax. The following is a set of primary federal and state funding programs that could be utilized by the City of Wadsworth and local organizations, but does not represent an exhaustive list. Those looking to enact any of the following are encouraged to review current standards and rulings to ensure viability of such funding.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development tool utilized by local governments to fund public infrastructure improvements and, occasionally, residential rehabilitation. TIFs utilize future property tax revenue within a defined district based on an increase in assessed property values. This increase in value is determined on a parcel by parcel basis and generated by new development. The increased property tax revenues from new development are then used to fund public infrastructure construction within the defined district boundary, such as enhanced transit amenities, streetscape improvements, or increased public safety services. A TIF district is created with

the understanding that private development can be leveraged to fund improvements that benefit the general public. State law determines the process in which a TIF district is established and the criteria required for the enacted legislation.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS

The State and Federal Historic Tax Credits Program provide a tax credit in order to encourage the private rehabilitation and redevelopment of historic buildings. The program is administered by the National Park Service and Internal Revenue Service along with State-specific Historic Offices. Eligible buildings must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as a local landmark, or contributing to a National Register Historic District, National Park Service Certified Historic District or Certified Local Government historic district. Eligible property owners interested in redeveloping a building in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interiors are eligible for tax credits in the amount of up to 45% of the qualified rehabilitation cost of the project.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a federal grant program administered through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides resources

to manage various community development needs. The objective of the program is to support economic improvements, services geared towards the most vulnerable populations of a community, and adequate housing.

For eligibility, a project must aim to benefit low and moderate-income persons, eradicate or prevent blight, or address community development needs that pose an urgent threat to the community's welfare. The Ohio Development Services Agency administers CDBG funding programs within the State of Ohio. Only non-entitlement communities are eligible to receive funding. Funding programs include; Neighborhood Revitalization, Downtown Revitalization and Critical Infrastructure. Applications for the program are accepted and awarded on an annual basis to State and local jurisdictions.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

A Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) is a nonprofit organization created to support and improve the industrial, economic, commercial, and civic development of the area. The creation of the program and its established powers was enacted by Ohio State Legislature with the purpose of supporting economic development activities. Loosely related to a land bank, a CIC may acquire properties, amass several parcels, and sell or gift land to private developers or nonprofit organizations. The

FIGURE 6.1: PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public private partnerships are increasingly being used as a creative method to leverage public sector stability and funding to help realize private sector developments that in theory will grow the tax base enough to make the project beneficial to all entities involved. These partnerships typically come in to existence

when a project is identified that the private sector alone is not willing or able to complete, but that the local government decides is catalytic in terms of its economic impact. The public sector and private sector establish their particular roles in the project in a manner that allows for the project to realize the maximum

benefit of each. This can take shape in the form of the public sector financing the cost of infrastructure improvements, signing a long-term tenant lease, or developing creative methods to mitigate the private investor's risk. The private investor typically manages the construction and leasing of the project.

corporation is recognized by the State and may be designated by a county, township, or municipality, or a combination thereof.

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Downtown Redevelopment Districts are similar to TIF districts, but provide considerably more flexibility. A DRD is implemented to capture the increase in property taxes within a district, up to 70%, and apply those funds back to the district in which they were derived. The district boundary cannot exceed 10 acres, but multiple contiguous boundaries are permissible. The district must include a property that is eligible to receive Historic Tax Credits.

The major benefit of this financing mechanism is the flexibility of use for the funds. DRD funds may be used for public infrastructure improvements, loans to small businesses, debt service on construction loans, district programming, and loans or grants to district property owners. A portion of the funds can be used as contributions to downtown

revitalization organizations as well. Funds can be used as they are captured or borrowed against projected revenues to finance major improvements. A DRD is established via city ordinance, which includes a description of the boundary, economic development plan, and length in years the financing will be in place.

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A Special Improvement District (SID) is a division of land wherein property owners pay an additional assessment directed towards economic and community development improvements. All derived funds must be applied to enhancements located only in the defined district and can be used for community development and service needs, such as sanitation, snow removal, and ongoing beautification. It can also be used for marketing and economic development purposes. SID funds can be used in tandem with other property tax benefits to enhance the range of benefits for the district. Property owners typically pass along the additional assessment to tenants.

For establishment, owners of at least 60 percent of the front footage (excluding church or government property) or owners of at least 75 percent of the land area within the proposed SID petition the appropriate legislative authority. A board of directors is formed comprising of the appointed legislative authority and property owners and direct the use of the funds.

NEW COMMUNITY AUTHORITIES

A New Community Authority (NCA), also known as a Community Development Authority, is a powerful tool for financing infrastructure improvements and encouraging new economic development activity. With the ability to sell bonds and collect revenues through a community development charge, an NCA is an independent public entity that can support public purposes such as: community facilities and public buildings, recreational programming, health and sanitation services, streets, sewers, schools, utilities and other infrastructure improvements.

6.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

PILLAR 1: A QUALITY COMMERCIAL BASE

OBJECTIVE 1.1* Grow more retail options	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
Strategy 1.1.1 <i>Create an inventory of Downtown properties, including property owners, specs, and pictures, to present to future investors.</i>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth
Strategy 1.1.2 <i>Work with existing and future property owners to attract tenants that support Downtown living (i.e. hardware store, grocery, etc.).</i>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Chamber of Commerce
Strategy 1.1.3 <i>Attract additional restaurants to locate near existing and planned public spaces by leveraging outdoor dining features.</i>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Chamber of Commerce
Strategy 1.1.4 <i>Work with merchants to establish special dates and/or days to extend business hours (i.e. holiday season, nights, and weekends).</i>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Main Street Wadsworth • City of Wadsworth • Local business owners
Strategy 1.1.5 <i>Create a unique and authentic Downtown experience through coordinated events and programs (e.g. First Friday, Taste of Wadsworth, etc.).</i>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth • Local business owners

* Indicates the Objective was ranked by the community as a priority for implementation

PILLAR 2: A DEFINED CHARACTER AND FORM

OBJECTIVE 2.1 Enhance existing codes and guidelines

<p>Strategy 2.1.1 <i>Create design guidelines that work to maintain the form and architecture of a traditional downtown; guidelines should be flexible as well as easy to understand, implement, and enforce.</i></p>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 2.1.2 <i>Create an overlay district for Downtown that will work to simplify the land use and site development framework, and unify the Downtown.</i></p>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 2.1.3 <i>Utilize the design guidelines and overlay to guide future development, enhancing the district while allowing a variety of uses.</i></p>	ONGOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth

OBJECTIVE 2.2 Improve existing building form / facades

<p>Strategy 2.2.1 <i>Create a facade improvement program to guide and support individual building enhancements for structures both old and new.</i></p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 2.2.2 <i>Utilize the facade improvement program to preserve and complement the character of historically significant buildings.</i></p>	ONGOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local property owners • Local business owners
<p>Strategy 2.2.3 <i>Create programs/events that encourage merchants/owners to create seasonal improvements to storefronts and window displays.</i></p>	ONGOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth • Local business owners

PILLAR 3: EFFICIENT AND CONNECTED MOBILITY

OBJECTIVE 3.1 Improve traffic flow

Strategy 3.1.1
Conduct a signal timing study to evaluate the quality of traffic flow balanced with pedestrian safety.

MID TERM

- City of Wadsworth

Strategy 3.1.2
Evaluate the potential to adjust the alignment of Broad Street at the main Downtown intersection, removing the median and aligning the travel lanes with those on College Street.

MID TERM

- City of Wadsworth

OBJECTIVE 3.2 Improve pedestrian safety

Strategy 3.2.1
Implement traffic calming features into the Downtown street and streetscape (i.e. bump outs, landscaping, road diets, bike lanes, etc.).

MID TERM

- City of Wadsworth

Strategy 3.2.2
Create a campaign to raise public awareness of pedestrians in Downtown (eg. the Knight Foundation’s Pedestrians First! program).

SHORT TERM

- Wadsworth Public Schools
- Main Street Wadsworth

Strategy 3.2.3
Widen sidewalks in strategic areas to improve walkability and include urban design features (i.e. outdoor dining, benches, landscaping planters, etc.). **CATALYST PROJECT**

LONG TERM

- City of Wadsworth

Strategy 3.2.4
Increase visibility of crosswalks (i.e. larger/higher signage, pavement treatments, signage etc.)

SHORT TERM

- City of Wadsworth

Strategy 3.2.5
Create new non-motorized transportation connections to and in the Downtown (e.g. regional trail connections).

MID TERM

- City of Wadsworth
- Medina County Park District
- Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)

OBJECTIVE 3.3
Expand parking options

<p>Strategy 3.3.1 Convert head-in parking to parallel on main streets (loss of parking adds to pedestrian realm and reduces traffic conflicts).</p>	LONG TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 3.3.2 Improve signage for public parking lots.</p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 3.3.3 Improve the layout and connectivity of public and private parking areas with the goal of increasing parking options and improving vehicular and pedestrian connectivity (e.g. rear facade, patios, landscaping, etc.). CATALYST PROJECT</p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 3.3.4 Enhance pedestrian connections to parking lots (e.g. alley revitalization, lot clean-up). CATALYST PROJECT</p>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Boy Scouts • Garden clubs • Local business owners
<p>Strategy 3.3.5 Expand on-street parking to adjacent neighborhood streets.</p>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth

OBJECTIVE 3.4
Promote non-motorized transportation options

<p>Strategy 3.4.1 Create new non-motorized transportation connections into and around the Downtown (e.g. regional trail connections). CATALYST PROJECT</p>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Medina County Park District • Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)
<p>Strategy 3.4.2 Create a welcome area, such as a trail head or pocket park, for bicyclists entering Downtown Wadsworth with bike amenities, shade trees and street furniture. CATALYST PROJECT</p>	LONG TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Medina County Park District

PILLAR 4: A DEFINED IMAGE AND BRAND

OBJECTIVE 4.1*

Define and promote the Downtown brand

<p>Strategy 4.1.1 <i>Create an image and brand strategy to define the brand and brand messaging for Downtown.</i></p>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Wadsworth Public Schools • Chamber of Commerce
<p>Strategy 4.1.2 <i>Communicate the brand through local and regional media outlets (e.g. social media, regional magazines, etc.).</i></p>	ONGOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Wadsworth Public Schools • Chamber of Commerce
<p>Strategy 4.1.3 <i>Create image and brand elements and communication strategies to engage the younger demographic (catch them before they leave!).</i></p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Wadsworth Public Schools • Chamber of Commerce
<p>Strategy 4.1.4 <i>Utilize Wadsworth TV and radio to spread the word.</i></p>	ONGOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Wadsworth Public Schools • Chamber of Commerce

OBJECTIVE 4.2

Brand the public realm

<p>Strategy 4.2.1 <i>Create a Downtown signage package that creates a unique look to public and private signs in the district (e.g. street signs, storefronts, etc.).</i></p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 4.2.2 <i>Enhance the gateways and wayfinding signage in the Downtown to communicate the brand and improve the resident and visitor experience.</i> CATALYST PROJECT</p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth

* Indicates the Objective was ranked by the community as a priority for implementation

PILLAR 5: EXPANDED SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE 5.1* Create new public spaces for gathering

<p>Strategy 5.2.1 <i>Create a signature public space in the Downtown core.</i></p> <p>CATALYST PROJECT</p>	<p>LONG TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
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<p>Strategy 5.2.2 <i>Update the streetscape to improve the pedestrian experience and increase commercial opportunity with outdoor dining areas in the Downtown.</i></p> <p>CATALYST PROJECT</p>	<p>LONG TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
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OBJECTIVE 5.2* Add additional community events

<p>Strategy 5.1.1 <i>Create an event(s) focused on young professionals.</i></p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth • Chamber of Commerce • Medina County Career Center
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<p>Strategy 5.1.2 <i>Expand and enhance summer concert series.</i></p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth • City of Wadsworth
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<p>Strategy 5.1.3 <i>Add new events focused on arts and culture.</i></p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth • City of Wadsworth
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<p>Strategy 5.1.4 <i>Create a local arts space to promote local art within the community and Downtown (e.g. rental of Strand Theater).</i></p>	<p>MID TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth • Chamber of Commerce
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<p>Strategy 5.1.5 <i>Collaborate with local churches to create and host events in the Downtown.</i></p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth • Area churches
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<p>Strategy 5.1.6 <i>Utilize tactical urbanism strategies to engage the public, program the central gathering space, and activate the Downtown.</i></p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth
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* Indicates the Objective was ranked by the community as a priority for implementation

PILLAR 6: A DIVERSE AND GROWING ECONOMY

OBJECTIVE 6.1*

Use economic development tools to promote revitalization

<p>Strategy 6.1.1 <i>Examine the opportunity to create a Tax Increment Financing district or a Downtown Redevelopment District (see Figure 4.1) in the Downtown to help fund future capital improvements.</i></p>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 6.1.2 <i>Utilize the local CRA and Enterprise Zone, or other district financing such as the Downtown Redevelopment District, as a tool to guide future investment in the Downtown.</i></p>	SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 6.1.3 <i>Create a Special Improvement District (SID) in the Downtown to coordinate efforts amongst property owners and building tenants in the Downtown and provide representation for the community.</i></p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Chamber of Commerce
<p>Strategy 6.1.4 <i>Appoint a Downtown liaison to work with City officials, representing the interests of the SID and the downtown business community.</i></p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Chamber of Commerce
<p>Strategy 6.1.5 <i>Work with Main Street Wadsworth to bolster the effectiveness of its initiatives and those of the SID.</i></p>	MID TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Chamber of Commerce

* Indicates the Objective was ranked by the community as a priority for implementation

OBJECTIVE 6.2

Promote the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized areas

<p>Strategy 6.2.1 <i>Guide and promote the redevelopment of the southwest corner of Broad Street and Lyman Street (Focus Area A, Figure 5.2).</i></p>	<p>LONG TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 6.2.2 <i>Work with the post office to promote the redevelopment / revitalization of its site on the southeast corner of Broad Street and Lyman Street (Focus Area B, Figure 5.2).</i></p>	<p>LONG TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 6.2.3 <i>Plan for the future adaptive reuse of the Central Intermediate School site (Focus Area C, Figure 5.2).</i></p>	<p>LONG TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Wadsworth Public Schools
<p>Strategy 6.2.4 <i>Promote strategic infill of vacant lots on Main Street between Mills Street and College Street. (Focus Area D, Figure 5.2).</i></p>	<p>MID TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Chamber of Commerce
<p>Strategy 6.2.5 <i>Promote the redevelopment of underdeveloped residential properties between Mills Street and College Street west of Main Street (Focus Area E, Figure 5.2).</i></p>	<p>LONG TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
<p>Strategy 6.2.6 <i>Promote the redevelopment of parcels along Main Street between Boyer Street and Prospect Street (Focus Area F, Figure 5.2).</i></p>	<p>LONG TERM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth

PILLAR 7: A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES

OBJECTIVE 7.1

Promote mixed use and infill medium density housing in the Downtown

Strategy 7.1.1

Promote loft living Downtown by ensuring codes and standards allow and encourage residences over retail uses.

SHORT TERM

- City of Wadsworth

Strategy 7.1.2

Acquire funding through state and federal programs to construct or revitalize Downtown residential units.

MID TERM

- City of Wadsworth
- Private developers

Strategy 7.1.3

Work with the local Community Improvement Corporation or Land Bank to identify and acquire property to guide and promote residential development in the Downtown.

LONG TERM

- City of Wadsworth

Strategy 7.1.4

Identify grants for the remediation of sites that may need 'cleaned' and/or for brownfield sites.

LONG TERM

- City of Wadsworth

Strategy 7.1.5

Update existing codes and standards to allow for new mixed-use and medium density residential development in the Downtown.

MID TERM

- City of Wadsworth

OBJECTIVE 7.2

Preserve and protect the existing historical housing stock

Strategy 7.2.1

Create a Downtown housing improvement program to guide and support the maintenance of housing in existing historic areas (see Medina and Lakewood as models).

LONG TERM

- City of Wadsworth
- Main Street Wadsworth

PILLAR 8: SMALL AND FUN

OBJECTIVE 8.1

Employ tactical urbanism techniques to incrementally improve the liveliness of Downtown

Strategy 8.1.1

Utilize public art to enliven the streets, walls, and sidewalks of Downtown (See Figure 4.2).

SHORT TERM

- Wadsworth Public Schools (art program)
- Local artists
- University Circle

Strategy 8.1.2

Capitalize on necessary amenities to add character to Downtown (See Figure 4.2).

SHORT TERM

- City of Wadsworth
- Main Street Wadsworth

Strategy 8.1.3

Facilitate activities in Downtown that attract new visitors and keep residents engaged year-round (See Figure 4.2).

SHORT TERM

- Main Street Wadsworth
- Wadsworth YMCA
- Local dance organizations
- Wadsworth Footlighters

OBJECTIVE 8.2

Increase the web presence of Downtown businesses and events

Strategy 8.2.1

Update the Main Street Wadsworth organization website regularly to highlight news, businesses, and events in Downtown.

ONGOING

- Main Street Wadsworth

Strategy 8.2.2

Develop and maintain a multifaceted web presence for Main Street Wadsworth through social media sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).

ONGOING

- Main Street Wadsworth

Strategy 8.2.3

Develop a strategy to strengthen the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of Main Street Wadsworth's website and social media presence.

MID TERM

- Main Street Wadsworth

OBJECTIVE PRIORITIZATION

A compilation handout of the top 15 Objectives as prioritized by both the Task Force and general public through the planning process.

PILLAR	ID #	OBJECTIVE	TASK FORCE	PUBLIC MEETING	TOTAL VOTES
1	1.1	Grow more retail options	6	16	22
5	5.1	Create new public spaces for gathering	6	16	22
6	6.1	Use economic development tools to promote revitalization	9	9	18
4	4.1	Define and promote the Downtown brand	4	13	17
5	5.2	Add additional community events	3	14	17
6	6.2	Promote the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized areas	3	13	16
2	2.2	Improve existing building form / facades	3	12	15
7	7.1	Promote mixed use and infill medium density housing in the Downtown	4	8	12
4	4.2	Brand the public realm	3	6	9
3	3.3	Expand parking options	2	6	8
2	2.1	Enhance existing codes and guidelines	1	6	7
3	3.4	Promote non-motorized transportation options	2	5	7
3	3.2	Improve pedestrian safety	2	4	6
3	3.1	Improve traffic flow	0	4	4
7	7.2	Preserve and protect the existing historical housing stock	0	3	3

TOP 10 STRATEGIES

A curated list of the 10 Strategies to be completed first, identified based on ease of implementation and size of impact on the community. Successful implementation of these Strategies would domino into further success.

RANK	ID #	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
1	8.1.1	Utilize public art to enliven the streets, walls, and sidewalks of Downtown (See Figure 4.2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wadsworth Public Schools (art program) • Local artists • University Circle
2	8.1.2	Capitalize on necessary amenities to add character to Downtown (See Figure 4.2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth
3	8.1.3	Facilitate activities in Downtown that attract new visitors and keep residents engaged year-round (See Figure 4.2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth • Wadsworth YMCA • Local dance organizations • Wadsworth Footlighters
4	8.2.1	Update the Main Street Wadsworth organization website regularly to highlight news, businesses, and events in Downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Wadsworth
5	6.1.1	Examine the opportunity to create a Tax Increment Financing district or a Downtown Redevelopment District (see Figure 4.1) in the Downtown to help fund future capital improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth
6	1.1.1	Create an inventory of Downtown properties, including property owners, specs, and pictures, to present to future investors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth
7	1.1.4	Work with merchants to establish special dates and/or days to extend business hours (i.e. holiday season, nights, and weekends).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Main Street Wadsworth • City of Wadsworth
8	3.3.4	Enhance pedestrian connections to parking lots (e.g. alley revitalization, lot clean-up).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Boy Scouts • Garden clubs • Local business owners
9	4.1.1	Create an image and brand strategy to define the brand and brand messaging for Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth • Wadsworth Public Schools
10	2.1.1	Create design guidelines that work to maintain the form and architecture of a traditional downtown; guidelines should be flexible as well as easy to understand, implement, and enforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wadsworth • Main Street Wadsworth

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