



CITY OF WATERVLIE  
DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN



PREPARED BY:  
**WIGHTMAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.**  
ARCHITECTURE • ENGINEERING • SURVEYING



## LETTER FROM THE CITY OF WATERVLIET

We are pleased to present this Vision Plan for the future development of the Downtown of Watervliet. This plan was facilitated by Wightman & Associates as well as A5 Inc. with a great deal of input from city residents, business owners, and others who do not live in the city but have an avid interest in its development.

A series of workshops were held in an effort to engage stakeholders to move Watervliet forward from a City that has great potential to a City that has become a focal point to the regional amenities it has within its city limits. The Watervliet Downtown Development Authority engaged Wightman & Associates and A5 Inc. to kick start the process of reimagining what the future of Downtown Watervliet can be. The kick off meeting occurred on August 25, 2015 with an open discussion on what is best about Watervliet followed by what is worst about Watervliet. This led to other topics such as; what are the reasons you would give someone for starting a business in Watervliet; to which type of businesses the stakeholders thought would make the city attractive to visitors and residents.

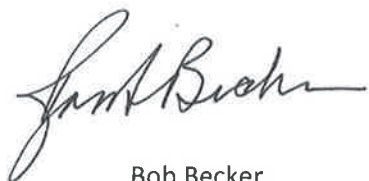
A primary goal of the DDA was to engage stakeholders and the public to identify the community's vision for the future of downtown Watervliet. The strategy used established a series of workshops that would target specific feedback to help drive the vision plan. This was supplemented by "Parking Days" on Main Street and a social media campaign with strategic news releases to keep the public informed and engaged throughout the entire process.

Through this process we developed a downtown vision statement, a core value statement, and a plan for the future of Downtown Watervliet. We identified a number of themes which lead to goals that would support those themes producing a series of statements that would equal success. Stakeholders wanted to make Downtown Watervliet a place where people wanted to live, invest, play and shop. An action plan was developed for different projects ranging from short term to long term as well as potential partnerships, grant opportunities, and a strategy for moving successful steps forward.

The DDA, Vision Plan Steering Committee, and the City of Watervliet produced this plan for Watervliet's Future Downtown. This will become a planning guide to assist city leaders, developers and citizens in the redevelopment and improvements needed for the future growth and prosperity of Watervliet.

The Downtown Vision Plan is the result of the hard work and deliberations of many concerned stakeholders and citizens who want to see Watervliet become a vibrant, reinvigorated downtown which will be the heart of the community, making Watervliet a magnet for investment and a place where residents and visitors will want to live, invest, play and shop. We move forward from here excited about the future of our great community.

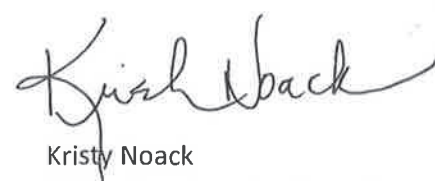
Sincerely,



Bob Becker  
Watervliet DDA Chair



Michael Uskiewicz  
Watervliet City Manager



Kristy Noack  
Vision Plan Steering Committee

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## Acknowledgments

### Vison Plan Steering Committee

Krista Kogel, Kristy Noack, K. C. McKay, Tim Freeburn, Dan Hummel, Jim Shymkus, Ken Krengel, and Tom Gear.

### Watervliet DDA

Bob Becker, Karl Bayer, Jennifer Moore, Tim Freeburn, Rochelle Ulleg, Tom Gear, Tad Parish, Krista Kogel, and David Brinker.

### City of Watervliet

Emilie Sarratore, Mayor Brinker, Dena Yow, and the great Community involvement at both Public Workshops and PARK(ing) Day.

**2015/16 Commissioners:** Duane Cobb, Deah Thornton, Rick Kinzler, Daniel Hummel, Melanie Marvin, Barbara Schofield,

**2016 City Clerk:** Tonia Betty

### Design Team

**Wightman & Associates:** Bill LaDitka, Jorden Parker, Timothy Lawrence

**a5:** John Harris, Chuck Colley, Fletcher Martin, Emerson Harris

A special thank you to the Tri-City Record for photo-documenting each Public Workshop and publishing the various stories to keep the community informed throughout this process.

# Introduction

Downtown Watervliet has great potential; a brewery anchors the north end, popular shops are the foundation to the core, and connectivity to regional travel routes flow to the south. Watervliet has high quality water, agricultural, and landscape amenities close at hand. Tourism thrives along the largest lake in Berrien County, Paw Paw Lake. While downtown Watervliet has great potential, it has yet to become the focal point of these regional amenities. This process of developing a vision plan for downtown Watervliet has culminated in the following pages to provide inspiration, direction, and strategy to implement the community's vision for the future of their city.

The Watervliet DDA engaged Wightman & Associates & a5 to kick-start the process of reimagining what the future of Downtown Watervliet can be. The DDA established a Steering Committee from members of the community, city commission, and DDA to create a vision and guide the process. In the kick-off meeting, the Steering Committee identified a series of themes that would help inform the creation of goals, guide the design, and set some boundaries for future conversation. Part of this was identifying current communities that exemplify the qualities they envisioned for Watervliet's future. Below you can find these four communities and a short description of their qualities.

## Communities We Want to be Like

**Saugatuck** embodies the feel of a quaint and pedestrian friendly downtown. Lessons learned are great streetscape, high quality shopfronts, and small, decentralized parking areas.



Saugatuck, MI

**Sawyer** is a great example of a small community that has achieved success because of a few high quality amenities. Build around your current anchors and strengthen their success.



Sawyer, MI

**Sonoma** is one of the best communities in the world due to the city's ability to translate the world class agriculture and landscape amenities into events that draw people downtown year 'round.



Sonoma, CA

**Galena** is an anomaly. With a small permanent population, the town has become a major retail and tourism hub by fostering top notch architecture and downtown environment.



Galena, IL

# PARK(ing) Day 2015

## Summary of What We Heard (The Big Ideas):

- **Outdoor Seating**  
Benches  
Cafe Style
- **Address Downtown Stores**  
Aesthetic Appeal  
Types of Business
- **Town Overall Aesthetic (Face-lift)**
- **Grocery Store**
- **Connection to fishing, canoeing, walking on the river**



# Public Engagement

A primary goal of the DDA and steering committee was to engage the public and identify the community's vision for the future of downtown Watervliet. This led to Wightman & Associates teaming with marketing and branding firm a5 to develop an outreach strategy for the public engagement process. The strategy established a series of workshops that would target specific feedback to help drive the vision plan. This was supplemented by a social media campaign and strategic news releases to keep the public informed and engaged throughout the entire process.

Workshop 1 focused on the big picture: what is great today? What is Missing Today? If the future could hold anything, what should it be? These inquiries led to the foundational themes, goals, and successes that became the touchstone for the following analysis and planning phases. see page 5.



Workshop Attendees Discussing Issues



## Issues & Opportunities Map

The issues and opportunities map is a graphic representation of positive aspects, or assets, within the community vs. areas for improvement. Also included is an opportunities aspect to this map, identifying infill, improvement, and development opportunities prioritized by the steering committee. Issues today include: lack of connectivity from downtown to Paw Paw River and Lake, missing frontages where buildings were demolished or mid-block parking lots exist, and lack of consistent architecture along Main Street. The prioritized opportunities are as follows.

**Infill Opportunity:** New zero-setback downtown building type at mid-block parking lot in front of Flaherty Park.

**Improvement Opportunity:** Fill in the "hole" and create new public/private enterprises at the crossroads of Main Street and train tracks.

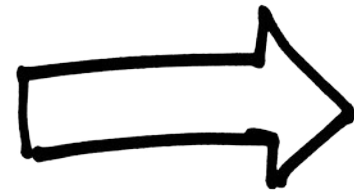
**Development Opportunity:** Attract a private developer to identify potential commercial & residential projects to extend the spirit of downtown to the south of Red Arrow Highway.

# WATERVLIED WHY

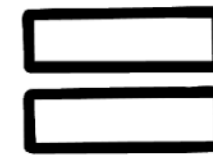
**MAKE DOWNTOWN WATERVLIED  
A DESTINATION PEOPLE LOVE.**

*A VIBRANT, REINVIGORATED DOWNTOWN WILL BE THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY MAKING WATERVLIED A MAGNET FOR INVESTMENT AND A PLACE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO WORK, LIVE, PLAY, AND SHOP.*

## THEMES



## GOALS



## SUCCESS

### Growth

Downtown Watervliet is a place to grow. Foster a "learning culture" and "outdoor movement" to connect with surrounding access to water, agriculture, and regional assets.

### Identity

Defined by its natural assets, maker's culture, and small town vibe, downtown Watervliet currently lacks a coherent built environment. Make downtown a welcoming, family-friendly environment that celebrates gateways and intensifies Watervliet's spirit.

### Amenities

Downtown Watervliet lacks "things to do" that embrace the culture and assets of the surrounding area. Connect downtown to regional trail systems and waterways, wine and beer services, restaurants, watersports, and motorsports. Find opportunities to host festivals and events that celebrate Watervliet's spirit.

### Public Spaces

Amenities need positive, human scale spaces in which to happen. Identify opportunities for public spaces such as parks, plazas, or facilities that can host or support desired amenities.

### Connections

Public spaces must be connected better as to, today, fast moving traffic creates an intimidating pedestrian experience. Add streetscape improvements and wayfinding that strategically link nearby regional trails, water assets, and basic services.

### Traffic Calming

Fast moving vehicles currently inhibit pedestrian access, limit bicycle use, and degrade window shopping. Find opportunities to slow traffic, stop people, and get them out of their cars to enjoy downtown as a premier destination.

PEOPLE

**Attract People**  
Tell the Story

*A downtown that attracts multiple generations of visitors and residents to encourage them to return again and again.*

**Establish a Culture of Learning**  
Engage All Ages

*A connected network of water resources, green infrastructure, mentors, businesses, and centers of learning.*

**Foster Cooperation**  
Build Bridges

*Involvement of City leaders and citizens throughout decision making processes and the execution of successful public/private developments.*

PLACE

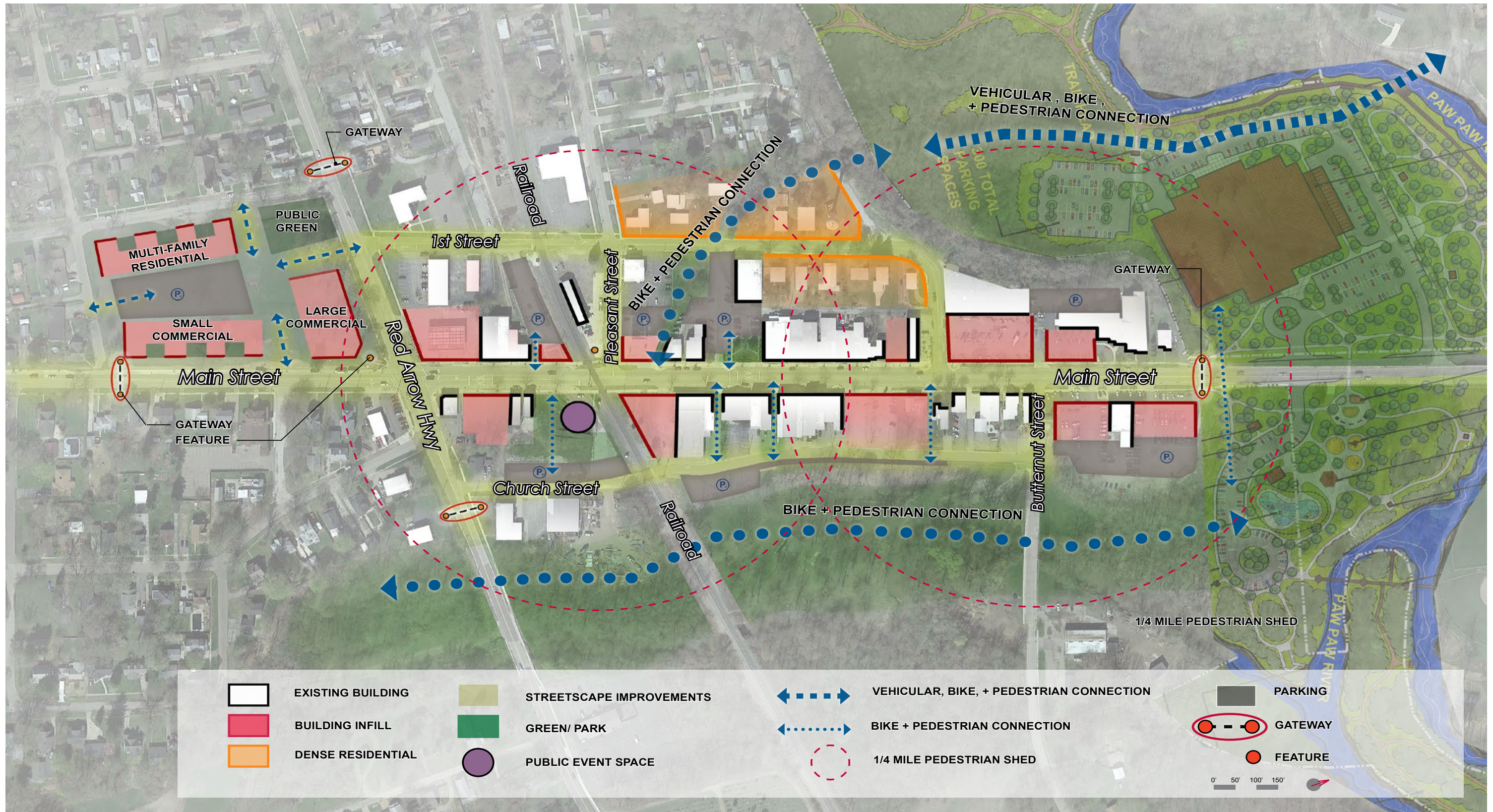
**Create an Environment for Investment**  
Invest in the Community

*The ability for investors to see potential and align new development to help meet Watervliet's overall goals.*

**Build a Vibrant, Amenity Rich Downtown**  
Create the Place

*A retail and event oriented downtown that is alive daily and year 'round as the hub of the community.*

# Downtown Growth Plan



## A Vision for the Future

With Watervliet's issues and opportunities documented, the next step was to design a growth plan identifying new frontages, connections, and prioritized design considerations from the previous public engagement events. Graphic in nature and not a literal design, the Growth Plan on the preceding page represents approximate locations for the following Improvements:

- Existing Buildings: An audit will be necessary to determine which buildings are in good shape, need maintenance/renovation, or are at the end of their life cycle and need to be replaced.
- Building Infill: These are locations where empty lots or inefficient parking lots take up valuable street frontage and should be replaced, or infilled, with buildings or elements that help create a consistent street frontage.
- Streetscape Improvements: The streets identified would benefit from additional pedestrian and bicycle accomodation. Main Street specifically needs significant improvements to both street lighting and trees along with wider sidewalks and vehicular traffic calming.
- Green/Park: With the possibility of a significant county park to the north of downtown in the future, Watervliet needs to strategize how to connect the current infrastructure with the surrounding natural amenities.
- Connections & Pedestrian Shed: 1/4 of a mile is a distance that can be assumed an individual can walk in 5 minutes. With off-street parking moved away from Main Street frontages, pedestrian connectivity will be important.
- Parking: Currently large off-street lots disrupt Main Street's building frontage with empty space. It is proposed to relocate these lots to areas along Church Street behind the Main Street buildings and connected via pedestrian "alleys."
- Gateway/Feature: Gateways will help identify arrival at the downtown district and will help tell the story of what Watervliet's spirit is. These gateways can be literal or interpretive, but the tone they set should be carried into features incorporated throughout downtown.



Pedestrian Alley Visioning Image



Downtown Gateway Visioning Image

## Suburban Retrofit



Before Image

Graphic Courtesy of "Sprawl Repair Manual"



After Image

Graphic Courtesy of "Sprawl Repair Manual"

Suburban building types exist in many downtown areas, mostly to accommodate drive-thru oriented businesses or to satisfy burdensome onsite parking ordinances. Many of these buildings are reaching the end of their life cycle as they were built in the 60's, 70's and 80's and are either ready for renovation or demolition. Healthy communities are replacing or reimagining these vehicle oriented buildings with pedestrian oriented designs, especially in historic downtown areas. This typically means incorporating zero-setback buildings with generous shopfronts, sidewalks, and seating options. Parking will be primarily on-street supplemented by smaller, off-street parking lots behind the buildings along the main street. This is not only important for pedestrians but also for the land owner and municipality as the more dense development type will yield more profits and a significantly more diverse tax base. Watervliet can utilize these concepts in several ways: reimagining vehicle oriented businesses, replacing parking lots along Main Street with building frontage, and redistributing parking along church and first street with pedestrian "alley" connectors, as seen above left.



## The Heart of Downtown Plan

One of the first images any visitor or commuter sees of downtown Watervliet is the empty intersection at Main Street and the railroad. This site is also one of the most difficult for a potential developer to create a project due to the lack of investment today. In order to spark interest and establish the City's commitment to reinvestment, a major public space is proposed to be the hub of community events, festivals, and gatherings. Depicted on the following page is a sketch rendering of what this intersection could possibly look like in the future. The Heart of Downtown is the Main and railroad intersection, so to create the spirit of the place the following is recommended:

- **Infill Buildings:** To create a homogenous frontage along Main Street, infill buildings are proposed in red to supplement the existing buildings in brown. These buildings should be zero-setback, mixed use, two-three story buildings that can accommodate outdoor dining and streetscape amenities.
- **Civic Buildings:** Recommended locations of public, or civic, buildings are in purple. These include: a pavilion that can be incorporated with a business incubator, a stage to host live music and events, and a landmark tower to draw people downtown and let them know they have arrived.
- **Event Green:** While easily able to accommodate large community events, the event green should be flexible for future use, possibly as an informal lunch location where food trucks could set-up in the back parking lot.
- **Splash Pad:** The proposed County park to the north of downtown includes a splash pad. It is recommended that the City petitions the county to alternatively provide funding for the splash pad to be located in the Heart of Downtown.
- **Streetscape Amenities:** Proposed in this plan are planters, a median where turn lanes are not necessary, public play, outdoor dining, wayfinding, and seating. Public play is anything a passerby can stop and interact with in a positive and fun way: large chess and checkers board, swings, lounge chairs, etc....





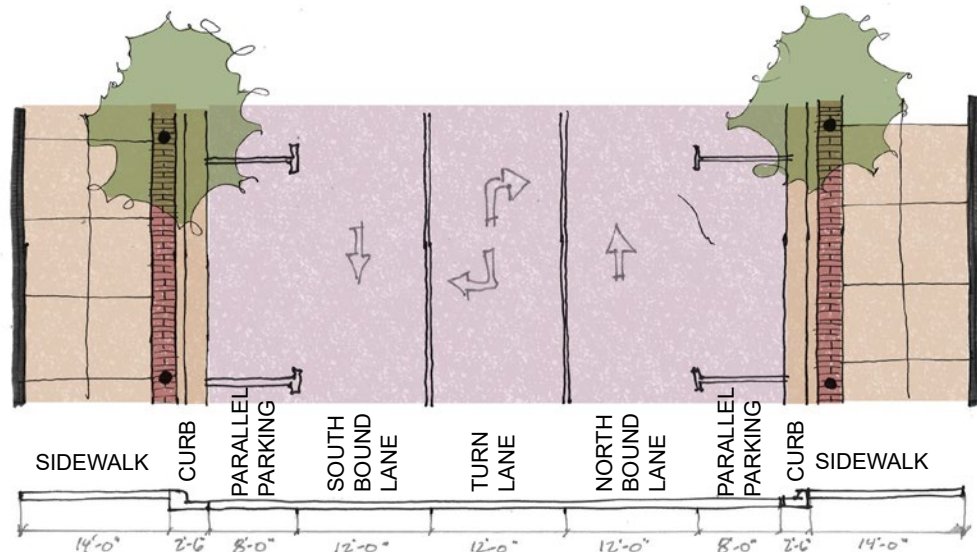
Main Street

View Looking Northeast at the Central Plaza

## Existing Streetscape (Main St./M-140)

Today, Main Street has large volumes of fast moving traffic filled with people that downtown currently has difficulty encouraging to stop and shop. With minimal sidewalk width, dilapidated lighting, and landscape that has reached its life cycle the streetscape is in need of a major facelift. The opportunity exists to eliminate the center turn lane within the downtown district and take that 12 foot dimension and add it to the sidewalks on either side of Main Street. The parallel parking on both sides of the street can be reimagined as well, a few of the possible options are depicted in the following three options. Outdoor dining, seating, and public play amenities are minimal. There have been individual efforts to add outdoor dining to establishments but is difficult due to the sidewalk width.

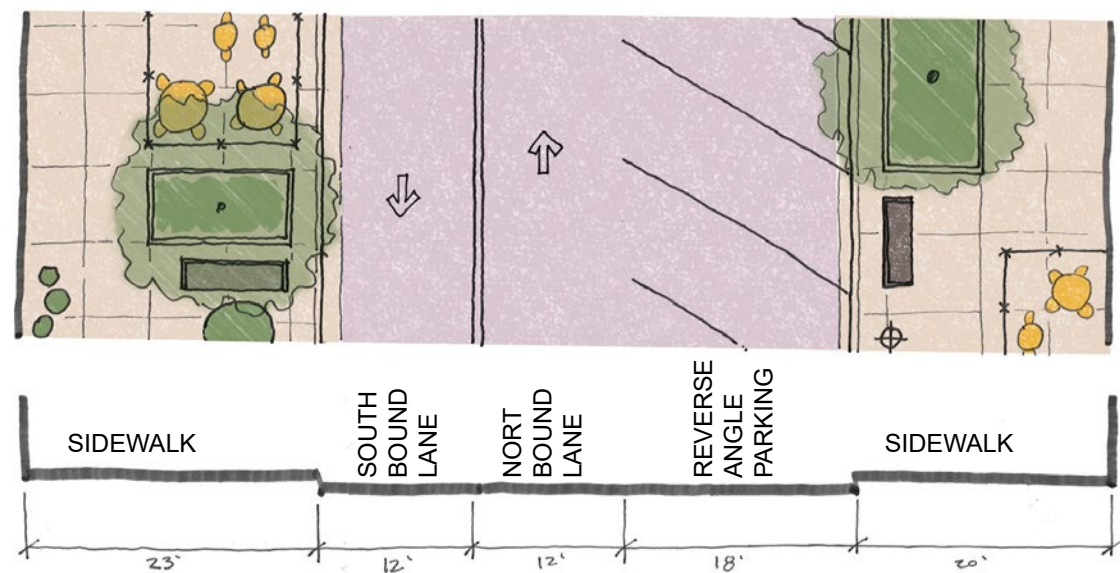
Some short-term streetscape solutions are: Replace lighting that is in disrepair. Utilize a parking space in front of a restaurant for outdoor dining by building a surface for seating and railing for traffic separation. Provide small funds for building owners or shopkeepers to repair and update shopfronts along Main Street. Provide benches or other seating along Main Street. These few solutions of many more are simple improvements that are inexpensive to fill the gap between today and when larger projects can be funded and implemented.



## Streetscape Option #1 (Main St./M1-40)

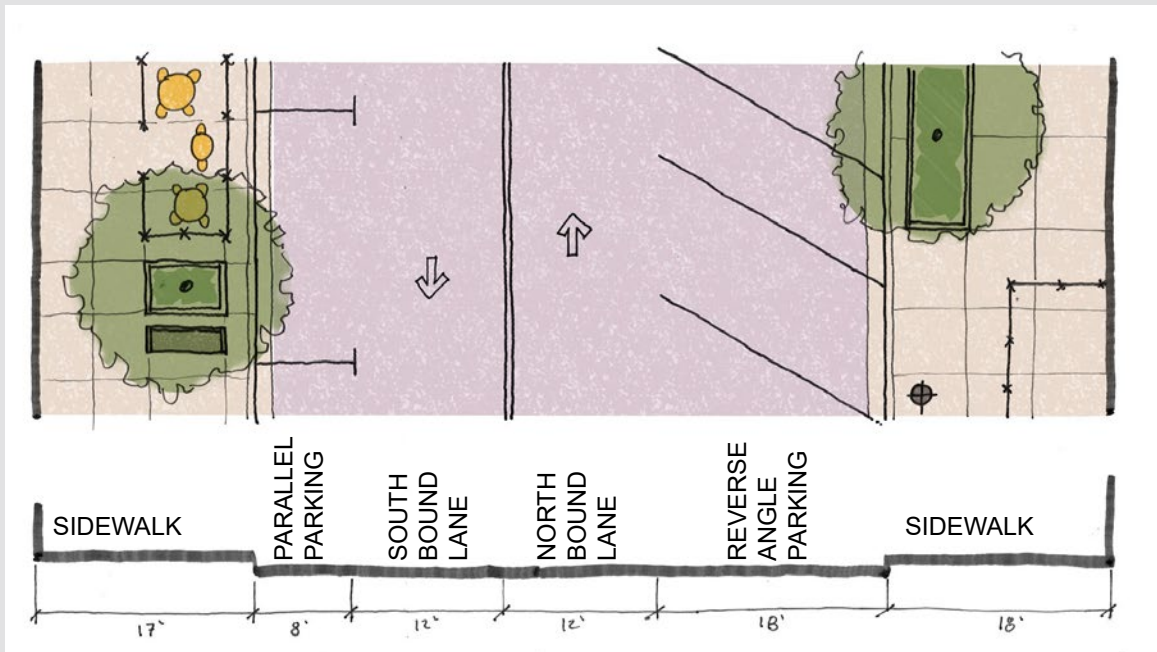
This option maximizes the sidewalk width to accommodate outdoor dining, benches, and landscape beds. To have a successful downtown commercial district pedestrians should feel comfortable and have amenities that encourage them to stop and relax or interact. Outdoor dining brings the inside outside and allows patrons and pedestrians to feel part of the various activities that are taking place along the street.

In this option, the turn lane is eliminated and two sides of parallel parking are replaced with one side of reverse angle parking, which would result in an approximate net gain/loss of zero overall on-street parking spaces. The opportunity exists to flip flop the drive lanes and reverse angle parking at a midpoint through downtown to alter the flow of traffic and slow drivers down. Today it is difficult for a pedestrian to cross Main Street due to the large block sizes and large volume of traffic; mid-block crosswalks will help ease the difficulty of crossing and also help calm traffic. This option can also be combined with one or both of the following options as necessary.



## Streetscape Option #2 (Main St./M-140)

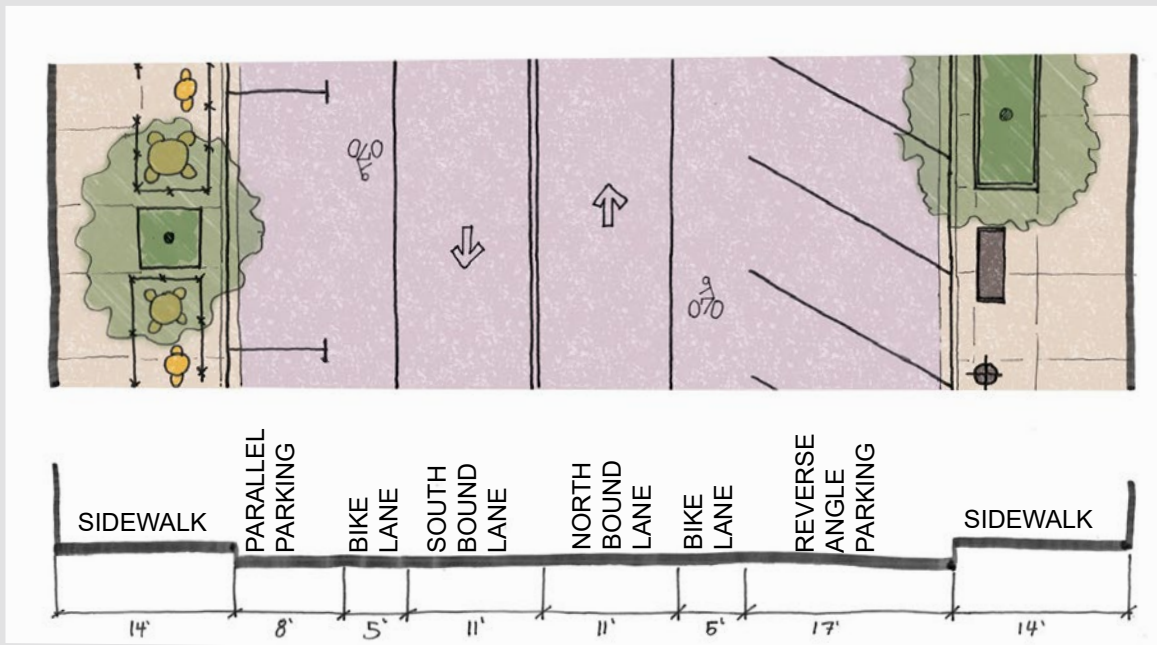
This option also eliminates the center turn lane but splits that width between increased sidewalks and maximized parking. With this minimal width increase businesses will be able to incorporate outdoor dining while still maintaining on-street parking on both sides. This would result in a net gain of on-street parking by allowing one side of more dense, reverse-angle parking. This also helps buffer pedestrians from the flow of traffic and provides vehicular access on both sides of the street.

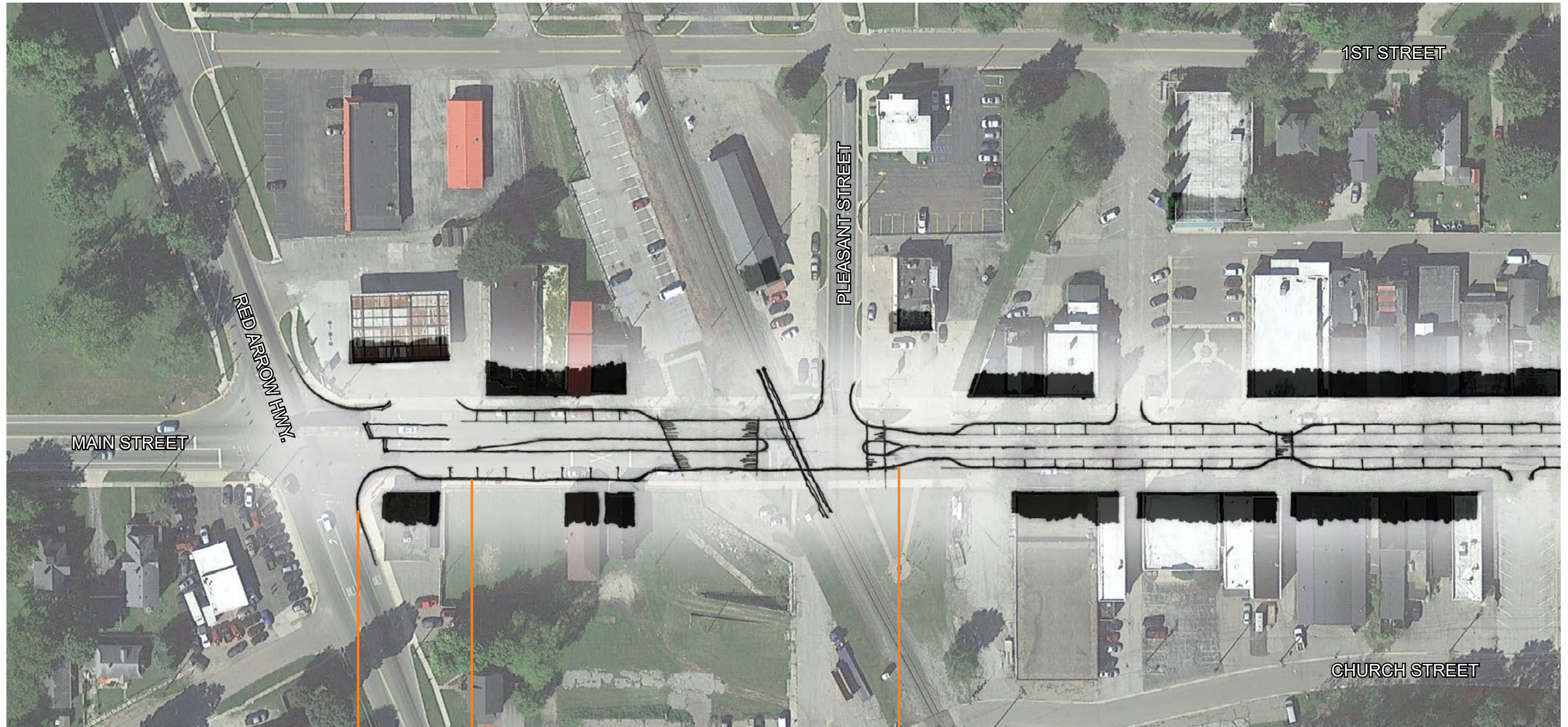


## Streetscape Option #2 with Bike Lanes (Main St./M1-40)

Both options can accommodate bike lanes along the entire length of Main Street, but it is recommended that bike lanes are only installed along the most northern portion of the streetscape enhancements. Incorporating bike lanes requires a much greater street width and this would take away from the ability to maintain positive pedestrian space along shopfronts. By looking at the following pages, the overall streetscape plan depicts the recommended location of bike lanes in relation to primary pedestrian access versus primary vehicular access.

By providing bike lanes to the north, downtown can connect the streetscape improvements to the regional Van Buren bike trail and the local bike trail around Paw Paw Lake. The Van Buren Trail connects to the Kal-Haven Trail between South Haven and Kalamazoo. In the future, this could become a closed loop that passes through Watervliet and provides a continuous bicycel route through the area. By connecting to the existing Paw Paw Lake trail Watervliet will show their commitment to providing resources and amenities that can accomodate the lake residents and tourists, encouraging them to spend time downtown.





Turn lanes and radius to remain

Reduce Speed

Eliminate turn lane, replace with curbed median and raised planters

Eliminate turn lane and add width to sidewalk by relocating curb. Parking can be a combination of parallel and/or diagonal - See options p. 10-11.



Keep turn lane and add bike lanes to each shoulder. Bike Lanes end at 1st Street where Main Street's future design speed will slow traffic and accommodate safer bicycle traffic. If bike lanes are incorporated prior to streetscape changes then bikers can alternately travel back block via 1st or Butternut Streets.

Reduce Speed

## Workshop 2

This workshop targeted community response regarding the proposed planning documents. In order to gauge what people want to see incorporated in future projects, we created a graphic preference survey that utilized various visioning images that attendees ranked 1 to 5, 5 being most desirable and 1 being least desirable. Each image is averaged among all responses and then categorized by the highest desirability.

Once the community had a chance to review the planning documents two activities were held to help establish future implementation. First, attendees were split into small groups and tasked to identify **metrics of success** for each goal, these can be seen to the upper right. Secondly, each group was asked to **write the headline** describing the future success of Watervliet, each can be found at the lower left.



Workshop Attendees Sharing Ideas

## Workshop 2: Small Group Activities

### What Does Success Look Like?

**Attract People:** Full Parking Lots, Active Farmer's Market, Higher Tax Base, 100% Occupancy Downtown, 50% Higher Sales Downtown, More Students in School, Paw Paw Lake Residents Shop Downtown, Full Parks, Activities Daily/Weekly/ Year 'Round.

**Culture of Learning:** Businesses Host Learning Classes, Business Incubator, Outdoor Lifestyle, Community College Satellite Campus, Old World Arts & Crafts Festival, Library Park as Learning Opportunity, Cooking/Brewing/Making Culture.

**Foster Cooperation:** Cooperation Between Local Governments, Student Involvement, New Jobs, Open Meetings, Citizen Involvement, Community Leadership Involvement, School & Community Pride.

**Environment for Reinvestment:** Professional Image, Responsibility for Budget, High Traffic Shops, Quality Public Space, Streetscape Improvements, Tax Incentives for New Businesses, Business Incubator, Upkeep on dilapidated Buildings.

**Create a Vibrant, Amenity Rich Downtown:** Self-Sufficient, Destination Activity, New Streetscape, Increase in Library Patrons, Good Restaurants, Vibrant Farmer's Market, Outdoor Theatre, Utilize Alleys/Greenspace.

### Write the Headline

**Coloma Proposes to Merge with Watervliet**

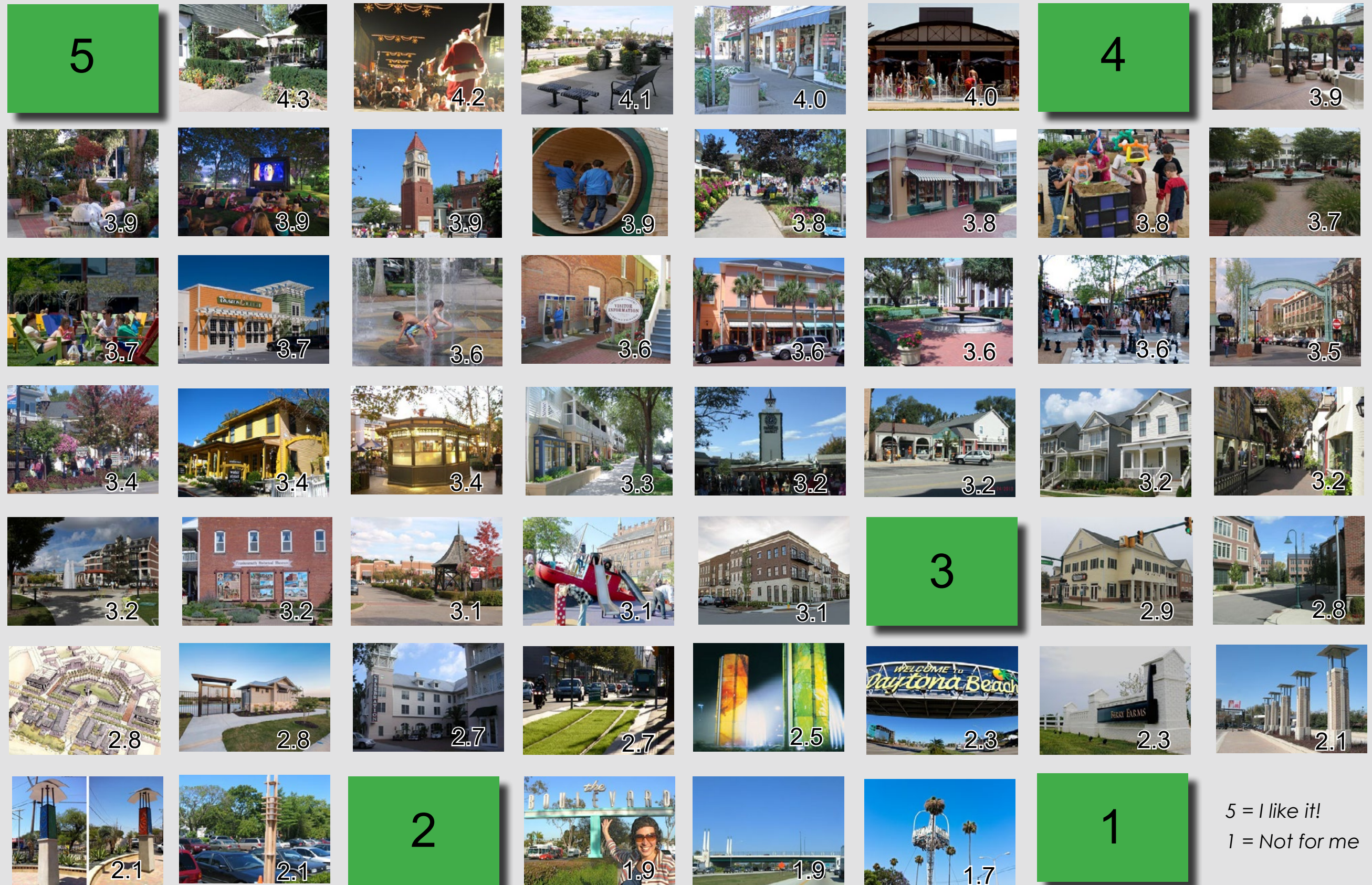
**10 Year Parks Plan Completed as County Park Hosts Opening Day**

**Watervliet Named Best Small Town in America**

**From Near Extinction to Distiction, Watervliet is a Destination**

**Watervliet: A Place to Learn, Play, & Stay in Southwest Michigan**

Graphic Preference Survey Results



## Branding

Branding is about perception. In order to grow, Watervliet needs to create an authentic brand that raises awareness of Watervliet and sets the community apart from others.

### A Brand or Story Would:

- Raise awareness of Watervliet
- Create a differentiated story that will set Watervliet apart from other communities.
- Help sell the community as a great place to live, visit, and start/grow a business.
- Create excitement and momentum.

### The Brand Consists of:

- Logo
- Tagline, or theme line
- Key messages used for verbal and written communication.
- Creative that is used consistently across digital communication (website, email, and social media) as well as marketing and sales efforts (advertising, billboards, PR, brochures, presentations, etc...)
- Elevator pitch (30 second story on "Why Watervliet?")

A great brand should be identifiable, differentiated, and consistent.

# Real WOODSTOCK

The Real Woodstock campaign is a branding and marketing effort to tell the story of Woodstock, Illinois, led by a5.



Travel Michigan and the MEDC developed the Pure Michigan national campaign to brand the state as a premier tourist destination.

# PURE MICHIGAN®



# Events

To create a great place, Watervliet needs to be active. Infrastructure can take time and a sizeable budget. Recruiting developers, designing and building new structures, and bringing in new retail takes time. Events can be developed quickly with manageable budgets and a profit motive--and can bring immediate results.

Watervliet should elevate existing events for the community, including Fourth of July, Christmas and the Homecoming Parade, while creating new events that are "ownable" and appeal to people Watervliet wants to attract to visit, start and run a business, and become a resident.

### New Events Could Include:

- A car show reimagined for the future (i.e. clean fuel)
- An antique show - indoors and out
- A craft beer festival - with soda and family activities
- A local wine festival
- A "Makers Faire" that promotes a Learning Culture

In 2016, focus on improving one existing event (i.e. Fourth of July, Homecoming parade or Christmas) to make it a **GREAT** event. Develop one **NEW** event that can bring in tourists and prospective residents. Each event should have a set of goals, be revenue neutral (or profitable), and generate measurable results, including:

- Bringing thousands to downtown to show off the possibilities.
- Generate business for existing retailers
- Create excitement about Watervliet and the future.



## Project Financing:

Grant funding is an excellent opportunity to leverage local resources and offset overall project costs. This will require a local funding strategy, possibly in the form of an economic development plan. Wightman & Associates has significant experience submitting and securing grant funding on behalf of our project partners. Listed below are some potential funding strategies.

### Grant Opportunities:

#### Recreation Related Funding:

- **MNRTF - Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund:** 15,000 - 300,000\$ available for Development projects. Required local match varies. April application deadline, grants issued Spring of following year. Grants are available for both acquisition and development projects.
- **LWCF - Land and Water Conservation Funds:** 30,000 - 100,000\$ available. 50% local match required. April application deadline, award recommendations submitted to the DNR in November.
- **MDNR - Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grant:** 30,000 - 100,000\$ available for Development projects only. 25% local match required. April application deadline, grants issued at the beginning of the year. (This type of grant is a reimbursement for project expenses.)

#### Transportation Related Funding:

- **MDOT - Michigan Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program:** 40% local match recommended, 20% required. Funds projects such as multi-use paths, streetscapes, historic preservation, and other safe alternative transportation options. Applications accepted year-round.
- **MDOT - Transportation Economic Development Fund:** 20% local match required. Funds available to state, county, and city road agencies for highway needs relating to a variety of economic development issues. Applications accepted year-round.
- **MDOT - Rural Funds:** 20% match required. Must get on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

### Loan Opportunities:

#### Infrastructure Financing:

- **USDA - United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development**
- **SRF/ DWRP/ USDA: (State Revolving Fund/ Drinking Water Revolving Fund/ United States Department of Agriculture)** Funding available for water and sewer projects. (State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water Revolving Fund, and US Department of Agriculture respectively)

### MEDC Opportunities:

#### Programs

- **Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC):** The RRC certification is a formal recognition that a community has a vision for the future and the fundamental practices in place to get there.
- **Redevelopment Ready Sites:** The RRC program works with a community to prioritize development opportunities, after which they partner with the University of Michigan to establish a "Redevelop Ready Site Study" for the specific project.
- **Public Spaces Community Places Crowdfunding Initiative:** Established to stimulate funding and activity around special places in communities throughout the state, this program engages community donation crowdfunding with the incentive of a match fund from the MEDC.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):**
  - **Downtown Infrastructure Grant:** 10% minimum match, \$750k maximum award.
  - **Downtown Facade Improvement:** Must have (2) participating properties (Population under 15,000). Minimum amount is \$30,000.
  - **Community Development - Farm to Food:** Funding for 3-4 season farmer's markets. Municipality must provide 25% of total cost, maximum award of \$750k.

# Summary of Next Steps

## First Steps:

- **Team Building (Grow Together)**

- Hire a professional
  - Include: City, DDA, DPW, Township, etc...

- **Brand/Marketing Campaign**

- Hire a professional
- Communications
  - Social media, public relations

- **Build Upon Success**

- Create ownable events (see Events, p. 17)

- **Create “Place Committee”**

- Could mean renaming a current committee
- Responsibilities to include:
  - Events
  - Management (Downtown)
  - Permits for temporary projects (ie: parking space as outdoor dining space)

- **Meet with Berrien County**

- Begin discussions about relocating proposed splash pad from county park to downtown.

## Short Term (Year 1 & 2)

### CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR REINVESTMENT

- Fill in hole at old lumber yard site. (\$200,000)
- Repair existing lighting, add poles where needed
- Pursue marketing/branding campaign
  - Signage on 94
  - Social Media
  - Water Tower
- Master Plan, Zoning, Parks & Rec, DDA Development Plan updates to accommodate vision plan.

### BUILD A VIBRANT, AMENITY-RICH DOWNTOWN

- Alley Improvement Projects
- Central Piazza Phase 1
  - Phase 1 funding applications
  - Phase 1 Design & Construction (\$800,000)
- Create temporary seating areas along Main St.
  - Comfy, landscaped
- Traffic calming (temporary)
  - Mid-block crosswalk (paint change)

### ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF LEARNING

- Upgrade one or two existing events, create one new event.
- Encourage businesses to host “learning culture” events (home brew classes, floral arrangement design)

### FOSTER COOPERATION

- Utilize ongoing professional services to maintain “best practices” for decision making and leadership engagement.

### ATTRACT PEOPLE

- Create I-94 signage
- Execute results from the brand and marketing campaign

## Mid Term (Years 2-4)

### FOSTER COOPERATION

- Bike lanes to north on M-140/Main St.

### BUILD A VIBRANT, AMENITY-RICH DOWNTOWN

- Complete Central Piazza project
  - Phase 2 funding applications
  - Phase 2 Design & Construction (\$700,000)

### CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR REINVESTMENT

- Complete Streetscape Project
  - Complete funding applications
    - Collaborate with MDOT
  - Design & Construction (\$2,000,000)

### ATTRACT PEOPLE

- Gateways at entries to Downtown Watervliet (\$200,000)
- Retail/Economic Development Plan

## Long Term (Years 5+)

### FOSTER COOPERATION/ATTRACT PEOPLE

- I-94 Bridge Identity (Watervliet Design)
  - MDOT to begin bridge replacement/remediation projects in 10+ years.

## Wightman Placemaking Lab

### Definition of Placemaking:

The focused analysis, design and management of a place which fosters human interaction and inspires memorable experiences. Spaces that elevate our interaction from static to dynamic, generate fond memories and call us to return are true Places = Comfortable Provocative Memory Places.



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