Louisville

Louisville Downtown Development Plan

City of Louisville · Downtown Development Corporation · Louisville Central Area, Inc.

September 2002

To the Friends and Supporters of Downtown Louisville | JUNE 1, 2003

This is a tremendously exciting time for our entire community. We have come together to create a new city government—Louisville Metro—that unites all of us, center city to suburb.

It's also a tremendously exciting time for downtown Louisville – the heart of our new city. To be a truly great community, we must have a downtown that delights, inspires, entertains, educates, provides an array of services and bustles with energy ... from its richly varied workforce to its growing number of residents.

Louisville's downtown should be our city's most unique and stimulating environment — a place that epitomizes our city's energy and pulse.

To achieve this, we need a strong vision that serves as the blueprint for our downtown. Fortunately, the Louisville Downtown Development Plan provides this vision. It represents three years of hard work by more than 600 of our citizens, thanks to strong financial support from the City of Louisville, the J. Graham Brown Foundation, the Gheens Foundation and the W.L. Lyons Foundation. These partners in downtown deserve our sincere appreciation, as does the Policy Committee chaired by former Mayor David Armstrong and Kelly Downard, former chairman of the Downtown Development Corporation. We applaud all of the people who have helped craft this vision for downtown.

Our downtown has seen incredible momentum build – with close to $1 billion in investment over the past 10 years. New downtown projects now under way total more than $330 million. An additional $490 million in downtown development is in various stages of project design. Each new project becomes another building block for creating the vibrant downtown envisioned by this Plan and by our community's leaders.

Why is a strong, vibrant, creative downtown so important? To compete in the 21st century, our community must be a stimulating and creative place to live and work — economically stimulating, socially stimulating, and intellectually stimulating. People with vision, with creativity, with ideas, can often live wherever they choose. Entrepreneurs should want to live here because of the business opportunities. Educators should want to live here because exciting things are happening in our schools, our colleges and our universities. Artists should want to live here because of our rich, creative environment. People from other cultures should want to come here because this is a place of opportunity. Downtown Louisville sets the tone in these areas for our entire city.

As our vision for downtown moves forward, there is a great deal more to be done. More support from the public sector, more investment from the private sector, more innovative public/private partnerships can take us where we want to go. We are fortunate that the Downtown Development Corporation, a model of public/private partnership innovation, is the steward for implementation of the Plan.

The guiding principles highlighted in these pages propose very high standards for our downtown. The most creative and talented thinkers in the country were engaged in this effort. These urban designers, planners, housing and transportation experts, economists, and graphic designers worked in concert with those who are involved in downtown planning and development on a daily basis.

Our community has enthusiastically endorsed the vision of downtown detailed in the Louisville Downtown Development Plan. Together we will work in the months to come toward bringing that vision to life.

Jerry E. Abramson
Mayor
City of Louisville

Louisville Downtown Development Plan

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Policy Committee Co-Chairs

David Armstrong, Mayor, City of Louisville
Kelly Downard, Chairman, Downtown Development Corporation

Project Management

Barry Alberts, Executive Director, Downtown Development Corporation
Patti Clare, Assistant Director, Louisville Development Authority
David Peterson, President, Louisville Central Area

Plan Team

Lead Consultants

Urban Design Associates
Chan Krieger Associates

Supporting Consultants

Economic Research Associates
Zimmerman/Volk Associates
E & Y Kenneth Leventhal Real Estate
EDAW
Selbert Perkins Design
University of Kentucky School of Architecture/Joint Urban Design Studio
QK4 Associates (formerly Presnell Associates)
American Engineering

Principal Writer

Barry Alberts

Contributing Writers

Patti Clare
Charles Cash
Charles Raith

Editor

Michael Gritton

Graphic Design

Priscilla Daffin

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Preface

There are a number of reasons why we have embarked on a new Downtown Development Plan. First, the original Plan is now ten years old, and in the intervening decade we have firmly embraced its guiding principles: a focus on the pedestrian; a sense of distinct districts with their own character rather than a homogenous whole; a return to the River; a more compact core. Second, we have, for the most part, carried out the specific recommendations of the Plan: we have expanded the Convention Center, redeveloped the waterfront into an asset for the entire community, developed the West Main Street Cultural District, and focused our attention on the Downtown Medical Center as an economic driver. Third, having strengthened the base of our downtown, we can now tackle the more difficult issues of retailing and housing — and in fact we have already begun to do so with great enthusiasm and initial success — through the Downtown Housing Initiative, Fourth Street Live!, and the Fourth Street Entertainment District.

These are all good reasons, but the most compelling reason to develop a new blueprint for the future of downtown is a simple one: the marketplace has changed—for the better—and we must be sure that we are poised to capitalize on these positive changes. There are now as many—if not more—opportunities to capitalize on than liabilities to overcome. Downtowns everywhere are being thought of in positive, rather than negative, terms. We need to move into the future seeking out the emergent opportunities resulting from this shift in perception, rather than trying to hang on to old images of downtown. These old images may be romantic, but are no longer operative in the dynamics of urban life that exist today and will grow stronger tomorrow. We should borrow a management concept espoused by Peter Drucker, the management guru, who said *"Results are obtained by exploiting opportunities, not merely by solving problems."*

What exactly does this mean for our downtown and our new merged community? It means creating a vision of the future, not steeped in a return to the past, but one that capitalizes on current trends that provide new growth opportunities downtown. It is rather amazing, when you stop and think, the changing attitudes toward urban life and downtowns since we began to develop the Downtown Plan ten years ago. Just a decade ago, much effort and discussion was still focused on what were considered to be the traditional functions of downtown: major department stores, high-end apparel retailing, fine dining, most if not all white collar jobs, etc. Most of the analysis dealt with ways to reduce or overcome the obstacles that people believed prevented a return to a prior vision of downtown – traffic, crime, lack of parking, and to be frank, people different than themselves.

This way of thinking was a continuation of a trend that began in most cities, including Louisville, in the 1950s. The rapid movement towards suburbanization scared most city leaders and planners, and all too often the instinctive response was to eliminate the differences of downtown and try to replicate the suburbs. How many cities developed pedestrian malls, built enclosed shopping centers, created covered skyways, and leveled historic buildings for surface parking – all in the name of trying to replicate this new suburban model? We all know, unfortunately, the result of most of these efforts.

By replicating the suburban model, we drained the uniqueness and character out of downtown, and all we did was to provide—even if successful—a similar experience. Why would anyone go out of their way to come downtown if it was just the same as something that they already had closer and more convenient to where they were?

Obviously hindsight is 20/20 as these efforts were well intentioned at the time, but this is just not smart business. What would you think in your own business if your company team was asked to develop a business plan for the new century, and their recommendation was to recreate how business was conducted in the 1950s. They'd be out the door faster than they came in. Yet just this type of thinking dominated downtown planning for a long, long time. Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has recently written, *"it would be a mistake to judge today's downtowns against what they used to be instead of what they might become."*

What, then, has changed, and changed so dramatically? If you stay abreast of popular culture today, you will have by now noticed that by far the major change is the public's attitude toward cities and downtowns. Whereas ten years ago, the general attitude was still fairly negative, it has now become highly positive, at least in certain important demographic circles. Downtowns are now seen as possessing certain unique and positive attributes that outweigh their drawbacks. Pick up recent copies of *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, and even *The Wall Street Journal*, and you will see story after story about people who are seeking a more interesting and exciting experience, who are rediscovering the assets of downtowns and inner city neighborhoods.

Who exactly are these people? Depending upon the age breakdown of these publications' readers, they're called yuppies or empty nesters or dinks (i.e. dual income no kids), but whatever name they're given, they share certain characteristics that exist in all cities, large or small. Basically, they are people who are just a little bit bored. Some grew up in the suburbs, hung out in the mall, and now yearn for a more authentic experience – a real sense of place. Others are those who got a great deal of satisfaction

living or working in the suburbs at one point in their lives but now want a lifestyle change. Many have come to realize that diversity and difference and uniqueness are indeed important to the richness of their lives and the lives of their children. More and more people seem to be coming to this conclusion. And finally, there are others, particularly young professionals on the cutting edge of education and technology—the so-called Generation X—who want a more stimulating and creative environment in which to live, work, and play. For all of these reasons, and for all these people, the image of downtown is becoming much more positive.

Preface

There are a variety of ways that cities have begun to reinforce the marketability of downtowns for those seeking this type of experience, and we have already taken some firms steps in the right direction here in Louisville. Certainly the historic preservation movement has played a large part, not by trying to recreate the past but rather by using the incredible richness of these areas as places where new creative ideas and uses can flourish. The West Main Street Cultural Arts District is certainly one of the leading examples of this, and people are flocking to this area.

Perhaps one word best expresses all this: experience. More and more people want to experience something that is authentic, that is exciting, that is culturally distinctive, and most of all creative. The cities that will thrive during the next decade will be those that are seen as "creative cities," where new ideas and new products and new cultural and social interaction will be nurtured and encouraged. These cities' downtowns will be the hub of their creativity. Here we face our current challenge: How does a city like Louisville seize this experiential opportunity and provide an authentic, exciting, and creative environment downtown? Just as we've seen the folly of recreating the suburbs through the downtown pedestrian mall disasters, we have also seen what has happened when cities take what they believe are exciting projects in other cities and try to plop them down in their own towns, often with no particular context or relevance to the community.

Experts tell us that cultural tourism is the biggest growth sector in leisure travel right now, and that people crave authentic experiences based upon the particular culture and history of each city. This is true not just for tourism, but for where people want to work, shop, recreate, and even where they may want to live. This again does not mean replicating one's history, but rather using it in meaningful ways in the modern marketplace. This speaks to the heart of the changing face of downtown, and the emerging trends and markets were studied very carefully throughout the downtown planning process. Downtown is, as one expert has said, "*no longer a place for the laboring masses in the workaday world, but rather a place to promenade and seek a style of living. It is changing from a place where things are made to a place where things are seen, purchased, and experienced.*" The incredibly successful downtowns in the past decade have been able to see these trends and take appropriate actions to cultivate them and stoke the fires. In some cases, the public sector has taken the lead; in other instances it has happened more haphazardly.

Usually it is a combination of urban entrepreneurs and enlightened public officials who seek out new ways to take buildings and districts that were once considered liabilities and turn them into thriving, dynamic community assets.

Understanding the particular niche of downtowns is essential. Downtown Louisville must be thought of in relation to its "customers;" its users as consumers of popular culture and seekers of intellectual stimulation and a creative, energizing experience. Our goal must be to make downtown a more interesting and attractive place to live, work, and play. This is as important an economic development strategy as low interest loans and tax abatements. The recent analysis of the opportunities for the new merged City of Louisville and Jefferson County by the Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy highlights this downtown amenity package as a major element of its suggested strategy for attracting and retaining a talented workforce:

"Research by Carnegie Mellon University economic development expert Richard Florida, for example, indicates that knowledge workers gravitate toward center-city districts that blend living seamlessly with work; that are diverse, inclusive and sociable; and that facilitate outdoor recreation in close proximity to "hip" meeting places, small-scale amenities like coffee shops and gyms, and entertainment. And other work has shown the importance of top-quality shopping, entertainment, restaurants, parks, and cultural institutions."

Our efforts downtown need to be focused on ways to create the type of environment that people really do want to be part of – to be where the action is. Downtown Louisville has certainly been moving in the right direction recently. The Convention Center expansion, the development of Louisville Slugger Field, the Hillerich and Bradsby facility, and the proposed Muhammad Ali Center (what is more authentic to Louisville than the Louisville Slugger and Muhammad Ali – in addition to the Kentucky Derby Museum!). Combined with the current focus on repositioning the Galleria from a 70s retail project to a new urban entertainment destination, new downtown housing, and the interest in the emerging Entertainment District, we see Downtown Louisville in prime position to take advantage of the markets it can serve well. It is just emerging, but initial indications suggest it is even more robust than initially believed. With bold initiatives and partnerships between the public sector and our business and civic leadership, the demand for such a downtown will be overwhelming.

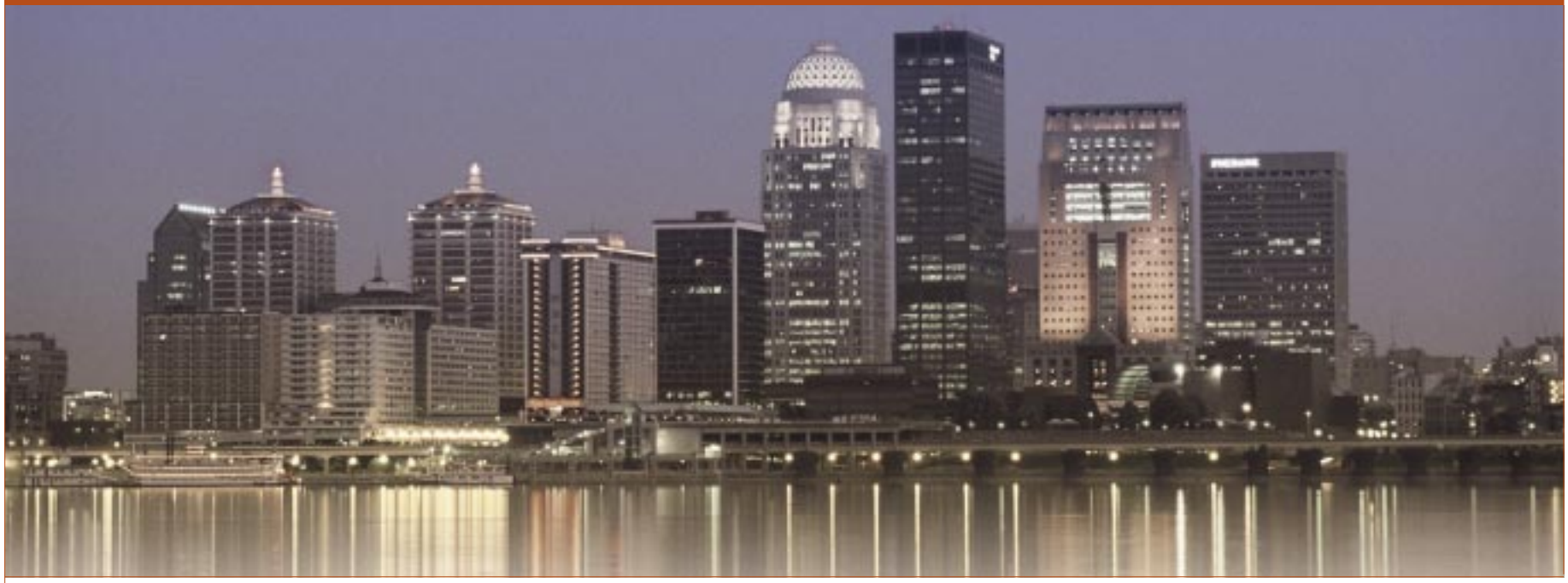
In order to create the overall environment that is most desirable, we need to continue to think about downtown in the same way we think about any desirable neighborhood, regardless of where it is.

We need parks and open spaces, places to relax in, places to be inspired in, places to stimulate one's mind, and most of all places to live. We are making great strides here as well and have real assets in this regard. The new Waterfront Park, the inspirational programs of the Cathedral Heritage Foundation, the RiverWalk, the Kentucky Center for the Arts, Actors Theatre, etc. all provide tangible assets that can be found in no other neighborhood in this community. More attention to the quality and character of our public spaces provides not only amenities of real value, but instills a sense of pride for all who work or live downtown as well.

In a sense we are returning to downtown's traditional roles: as marketplace, as a place of ideas and culture and spectacle, as the intellectual and creative center of society. Lewis Mumford once said, *"The city is a symbol of art and order. Downtown is the place where everyone can meet and interact… more than anyplace else, downtown gives a community its collective identity and thus its pride. It is the keystone that keeps other pieces of the city in place. It is the heart and soul of the metropolis."*

We should demand no less of downtown Louisville.

Introduction



At the dawn of a new century, downtown Louisville finds itself poised at the brink of an exciting new era. Many improvements have been made in the past decade, leading to a more positive attitude about downtown among both local citizens and visitors from around the country. Many other initiatives, now in development, combine to create a real opportunity for downtown Louisville to become the kind of dynamic, vibrant downtown not seen in two generations.

Many of the changes in the past decade have consciously focused on creating new uses and markets for downtown. These efforts have tried to capitalize on downtown's unique character, as well as its physical and intellectual infrastructure. They are not intended to mimic suburban efforts, but rather to create a unique market niche for downtown efforts that builds on its competitive advantages.

These efforts have made a noticeable difference—not just in improving downtown, but in changing people's perceptions of what the downtown can become. Most significantly, discussions regarding the future of downtown are now pervaded by impatience, rather than indifference. The questions are now about when things will happen, rather than whether they should—or will—occur.

A twenty-four hour downtown—providing a stimulating environment in which to live, work, play, and learn—is now within our grasp. However, this vision for downtown faces significant challenges and obstacles in coming to fruition.

Most importantly, the role of Downtown Louisville as the focal point of the metropolitan area, as the epitome of the emerging "creative city," and the one place that celebrates the diversity and uniqueness of the entire community, must be reinforced. There must be total commitment to the benefits that a strong and vibrant downtown can and should play as the center of the economic and cultural life of the entire metropolitan region. The impending merger of the City and the County holds great promise in this regard, yet it is critical that the significance of downtown in a unified community not be lost or subjugated to other organizational and developmental issues.

Local leaders also will have to continue to take important critical steps to sustain and foster downtown's renaissance. The public sector's role as a stimulus and catalyst for private development has worked extremely well, and similar strategic investments must continue. Significant additional improvements and investments, both public and private, will be necessary. Mid-course adjustments to strategy will have to be made as events like the current economic slowdown create unforeseen impacts in certain market segments important to the overall downtown economy, such as technology businesses. The impact of September 11, 2001, still yet to be fully understood especially in the hospitality industry, one of downtown Louisville's economic engines, will also have to be more fully assessed.

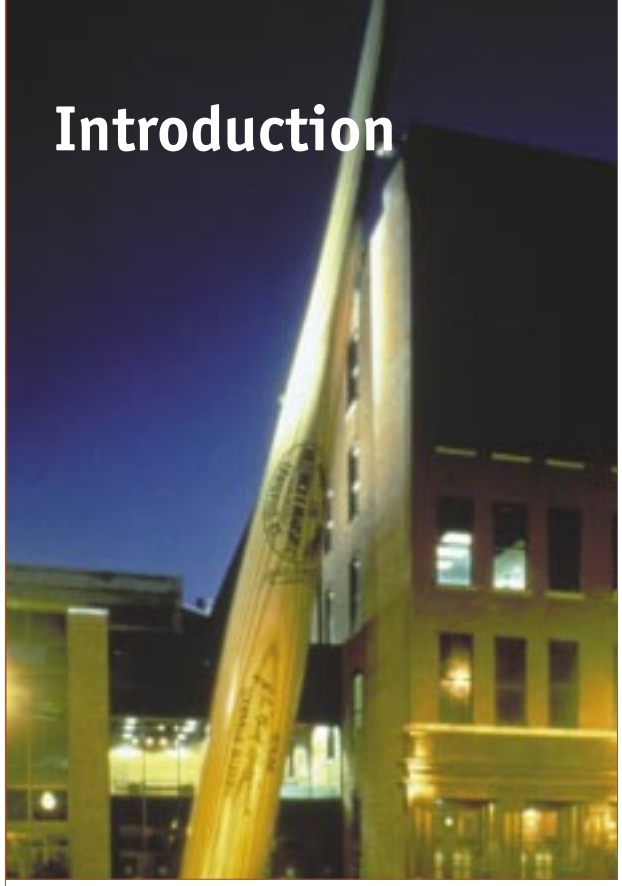
Yet it must be realized that the future economic health of downtown Louisville, and its ability to serve as the focal point of the region, is a long-term issue, one that should – and must – withstand any and all sporadic and intermittent economic "bumps." Achieving this vision will require the community to take a number of interrelated and complementary actions that, over time, will build the critical mass of activity and investment that will make it a reality. The community began that process with the Downtown Development Plan of 1990, and the burgeoning potential of downtown that we see today is due, in large part, to that effort and the many good works that have followed its recommendations.

The Louisville Downtown Development Plan of 1990

In 1990, the community completed an 18-month process to develop its first Downtown Development Plan since the mid-1960s. Prior to the completion of this Plan, the downtown was characterized by a series of initiatives, private developments, and public/private partnerships that were neither integrated with each other nor consistent with a general blueprint for the downtown. Often times these actions were proposed with great fanfare, yet the results did not live up to their promise.

In 1990, the downtown community came together to determine what kind of downtown "vision" was important to it, and how to move forward on this vision in a coordinated manner. The results of this process were quite significant. The community rejected a future tied solely to the traditional model of downtown, with its emphasis on 9-5 commuting office workers, governmental functions, and general merchandise retailing. While Plan participants understood that these would remain important elements of a strong downtown, by 1990 they had come to know, as had many of their counterparts in cities around the country, that these elements alone would not create the kind of placed they envisioned.

Introduction



Instead, 1990 Plan participants had begun to realize that the strength of Louisville's downtown was its unique environment—one that fostered an aura of stimulation, intellectual curiosity and diversity while providing residents the ability to interact with each other on a personal scale. Past efforts that minimized these unique characteristics of downtown in an attempt to duplicate some of the successful elements of the suburbs had proved futile.

The 1990 Plan placed a great deal of emphasis on reinforcing downtown as the heart and core of the region by taking advantage of the many things that made it unique. Much of this Plan concentrated on the future development of a "blue-green" downtown—one that focused on reconnecting the city to the waterfront (blue), and enhancing the quality of our public spaces—streets, parks, plazas (green). While accommodation of the automobile was important in a downtown still heavily accessed via the car, it was strongly agreed that such accommodation must not reduce the quality of the downtown environment and that "streets for people" should become a guiding principle of the implementation of the Plan.

The 1990 Plan recommended that a number of focus areas be made high priorities: the Waterfront, West Main Street, the Convention Center/Galleria, the Medical Center, Founders Square, and Fourth Street. Significant progress has been made in these areas during the last decade. At the same time, the 1990 Plan was less focused on individual development recommendations than the adoption of a set of principles that all development proposals and initiatives—both public and private—would be measured against. The main sponsoring entities—the City of Louisville, Louisville Central Area, and the Downtown Development Corporation—all agreed that they would adopt the principles of the Plan and keep them as active guides to their efforts during the upcoming decade.

This agreement has worked remarkably well over the past decade. Many of the key recommendations and principles of the Plan have been put into effect. The new Waterfront Park, the West Main Street Cultural Arts District, the expansion of the Convention Center, the Louisville Slugger Museum, Louisville Slugger Field, the "humanizing" of Founders Square, and the new public plaza adjacent to the Aegon Tower all reflect and respond to the direction of the Downtown Development Plan. The urban design guidelines put into effect have stimulated a quality of urban design that is now a standard of excellence for the community. A number of other goals have taken longer to coalesce. A strong and focused downtown retail sector remains elusive. A downtown housing resurgence was slow in coming, although it is now flourishing. Many of these challenges were anticipated by the 1990 Plan, since retail and residential are often the final elements in a downtown revitalization effort to take hold. The focus of the 1990 Plan was the improvement of many of the basic conditions in the overall downtown infrastructure, in order to build a much stronger base upon which certain elements, such as retail and housing, could ultimately succeed.

Past Decade

The 1990 Downtown Development Plan represented the first comprehensive analysis of downtown Louisville in a quarter of a century. Because of its extensive analysis completed as part of that effort, the current planning process did not need to repeat the exhaustive data reporting. Instead the current effort focused on the changes that have occurred in the past decade, due in part to the actions taken to implement the 1990 Plan and in part because of market conditions and trends, both local and national.

Plan Implementation

Among the most significant recommendations of the Plan that have been implemented are the first phase of the Waterfront Park, the Main Street Cultural Arts District, and the expansion of the Commonwealth Convention Center. These improvements have not only significantly changed the landscape and the built environment in a large swath of downtown, but they also have signaled the rebirth of parts of downtown as havens for pedestrian activity and a greater appreciation of the unique environments that downtown Louisville can offer.

The Waterfront Park has dramatically reclaimed the river's edge in downtown and returned it to the public. The area was characterized by the barrier of the highway and a mix of anachronistic heavy industrial uses bearing little or no connection to the river. Through a public/private partnership and aggressive action by the public sector, the transformation of this area has been stunning, resulting in a major new public park at the river's edge, complemented by Louisville Slugger Field on the site of a former scrap yard, the Extreme Park, and an emerging mixed-use neighborhood at its edges.

A creatively designed series of public improvements to West Main Street has resulted in a Cultural Arts District of great vitality, creating a stimulating environment for business and cultural institutions. The public investment in the streetscape has served as a catalyst for $100 million in private and non-profit development, including the Hillerich and Bradsby/Louisville Slugger Museum, new restaurants and outdoor cafes, an influx of galleries and design-oriented businesses, and most recently the Glassworks Lofts. Additional investment in the West Main Street Cultural District can be seen almost daily, and the level of pedestrian activity has increased dramatically.

Expansion of the Commonwealth Convention Center, now the Kentucky International Convention Center (KICC), was a major recommendation of the 1990 Plan. The expansion was sought to increase the competitiveness of downtown Louisville in attracting convention visitors. The KICC opened its completed expanded facilities in 2000. It now can offer 200,000 square feet of flexible exhibit space, including 145,000 square feet of contiguous, column-free space, 50 meeting rooms, and a 30,000 square-foot ballroom.

Since the expansion of the KICC, there has been a 68 percent increase in event activity level and a 33percent increase in attendance, even without the addition of a new convention center hotel. Plans for such a hotel are currently in development.

Past Decade

The quality of the design of the West Main Street Cultural Arts District, and the public's enthusiastic response, has been complemented by the implementation of a number of the other urban recommendations of the 1990 Plan, making downtown more active and vibrant, more pedestrian-friendly, and more attractive for private investment. The Design Development Review Overlay District (DDRO), the development review overlay that covers much of downtown, has in its ten years of existence bolstered the overall quality of new construction and major renovations. The DDRO includes a set of design guidelines that strengthen the pedestrian environment and the urban design fabric of the city. Improvements to downtown's pedestrian and open space network also have been made. Redesign of the Belvedere and Riverfront Plaza, Fort Nelson Park, and Founders Square have turned forbidding places into inviting and comforting downtown gathering places.

Immediately after its recommendation in the Plan, the Louisville Downtown Management District was established, and it has been assisting in the safety, cleanliness, and promotion of downtown during much of the past decade.

Other major improvements during the past decade have included a cohesive plan for the Louisville Medical Center as a major economic driver of the region, and its integration into the downtown environment; the development of the Aegon Tower and public plaza along Fourth Street. Additional downtown parking facilities have been built, Fourth Street has been reopened to vehicular traffic, and Second Street has been widened and made two-way.

Investment and Market Trends

In the last ten years, downtown has benefited from more than $930 million in physical investment. Of this total, more than one-third of the investment in downtown came from the public sector. Key public sector investments have spurred private development efforts throughout the 1990s.

While the early 1990s saw a retrenchment in the robustness of the national economy and job growth, followed by an economic growth spurt in certain sectors, downtown Louisville continued its historical trend of modest but steady economic growth. The medical sector outperformed others during this period.

While downtown's traditional growth sector—the office market—accounted for 39 percent of the total investment during the last ten years, there was a concentrated growth in the medical sector. The medical center benefited from more than $237 million in investment over the 1990s; 25 percent of the downtown total. Importantly, this trend is continuing, with 45% of the $251 million in investment that is currently under construction occurring in the Medical Center.

The growth in the Medical Center is reflected in downtown employment as well. Employment in downtown has remained fairly stable, and after a decrease in the early 1990s, has grown by nearly 10 percent since 1994. The Medical Center experienced the largest concentrated employment growth in downtown, accounting for approximately 28 percent of downtown's employment growth from 1994 to 2000. In addition, the University of Louisville greatly expanded its presence in downtown by locating two new research facilities in the heart of the Medical Center.

Like many central business districts, downtown Louisville has seen increasing competition throughout the decade in new Class A office space built in suburban locations, primarily office parks. While the CBD continues to hold a slight majority in such space, it now represents only 52% of the inventory, and suburban space continues to be built, even as vacancy rates rise. This trend remains one that must be monitored, and the CBD has begun to focus on certain segments of the office market that find downtown locations more attractive and stimulating, such as technology firms, information and telecommunications firms, medical and research, and design-oriented firms. The traditional large downtown office users, such as major law practices, financial and accounting firms, utilities, and communications firms, remain overwhelmingly within the central business district. It is important that they remain and expand downtown.

Results

The cumulative result of the activity of the past decade has been overwhelmingly positive, and there is a great momentum to downtown's continued and increasing health. People are returning to downtown once again. Whether sitting in a café on the widened sidewalk of West Main Street, biking along the RiverWalk, splashing in the fountain at Waterfront Park, attending a convention, or taking in a game at Slugger Field, the increase in activity and vitality on the streets of downtown—compared to a decade ago—is striking. Much of this is the result of a series of well-planned catalytic public investments and a concurrent increase in confidence shown by the private sector.

Development Activity

- Office
- Medical
- Hospitality (Hotel, Retail, Cultural)
- Residential
- Open Space/Infrastructure
- Educational/Religious
- Other

Development Activity

Projects Underway
- Public
- Private

Projects Announced
- Public
- Private

Historical Development

1990 – 1994
- Public
- Private

1995 – 1999
- Public
- Private

2000 – 2002
- Public
- Private

Study Process

The 1990 Plan's success in guiding downtown development efforts fostered a decade of progress and advancement in Louisville's downtown. As much of this success became apparent toward the end of the decade, local leaders began to realize the need to update and expand the earlier plan to take advantage of the new opportunities being created by downtown's many successes.

With this realization, efforts to undertake a new Downtown Development Plan were born in late 1999. The same troika of sponsoring entities of the 1990 Plan—the City of Louisville, the Downtown Development Corporation and Louisville Central Area—came together again to lead this effort, with the following as its mission:

> **"To develop an updated blueprint for the continued growth of downtown Louisville as it moves into the twenty-first century, to create the type of unique downtown environment that can take advantage of markets that now exist, and to use the new Plan as a guide for its activities during the upcoming decade."**

The same entities that provided the financial underwriting for the 1990 Plan generously provided support again: The J. Graham Brown Foundation, the Gheens Foundation, and the City of Louisville. In addition, the W.L. Lyons Brown Foundation provided support for the new planning effort.

The 2002 Plan effort began with the development of a public process to review the principles and goals of the 1990 Plan and to seek out the community's current wishes, desires, and vision for the downtown area. A vast number of meetings with downtown stakeholders, district groups, and neighborhood associations were held to seek out this input, as well as a number of forums and design-oriented conferences (called "charrettes") that were conducted in partnership and with the active participation of the public.

As part of this community input process, participants were first asked to comment on the elements of downtown that they perceive to be its main strengths, and also its major weaknesses. In addition, they also were asked to describe the major challenges and opportunities facing downtown over the next decade.

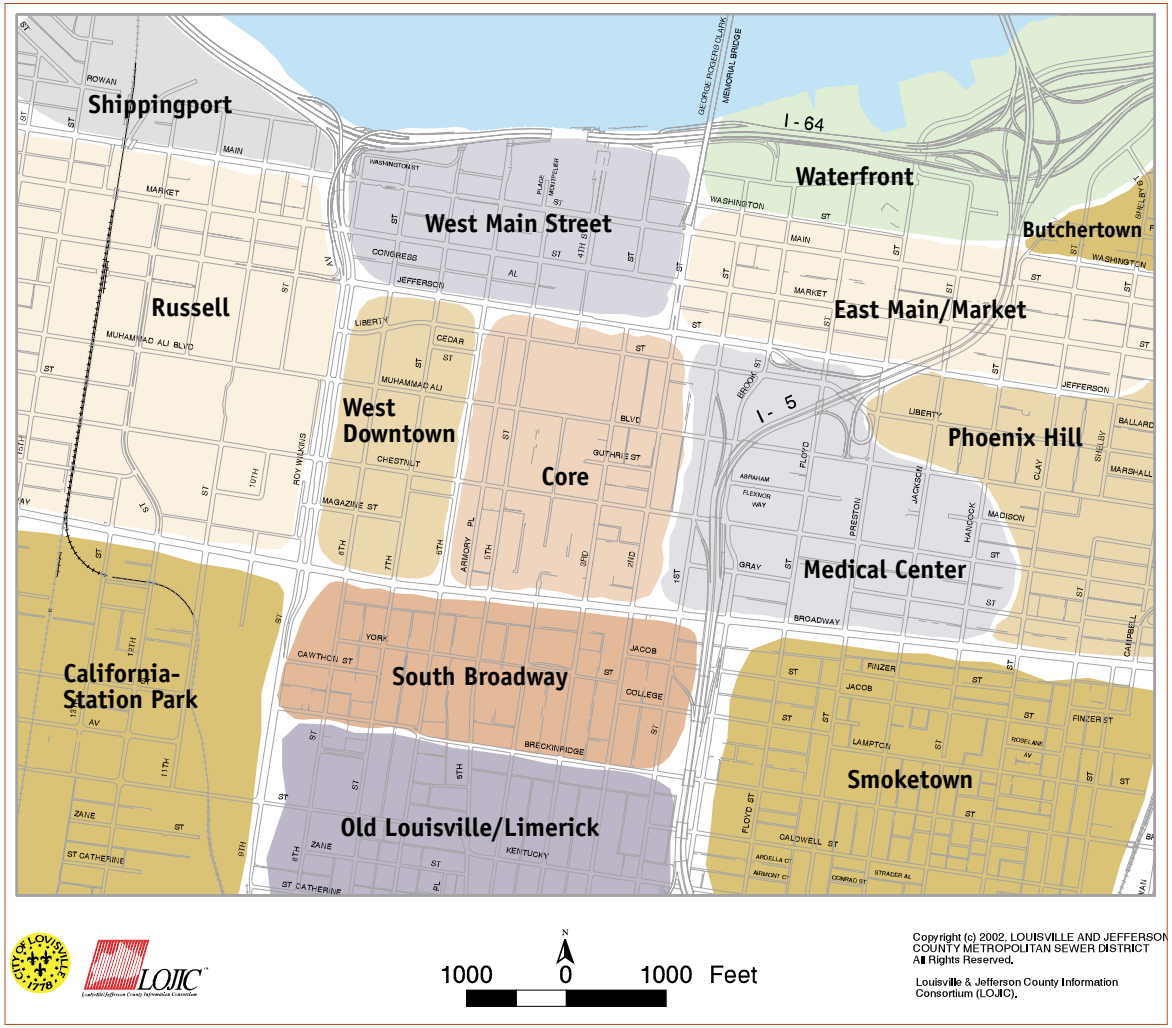
The results of this self-assessment were then analyzed and aggregated by the Plan Team that was assembled to assist the three sponsoring entities in the development of the Plan. The Plan Team consisted of some of the leading urban visionaries and practitioners in the country, each with a specific area of expertise and all having a vast array of experience and understanding of the market forces at work in similar-sized downtown areas and the tools being used to accommodate these forces (members of the plan team are listed in the Appendix). A series of market studies and analyses were then commissioned to provide an objective view of the strengths and weaknesses of the downtown market relating to office space, retail space, residential demand, and hospitality.

At the same time that this information was being accumulated, the Plan Team was also developing a database of historical and current information about the physical characteristics of downtown—its functions, trends and resources. This information became the baseline "snapshot" of downtown Louisville that would be used as a foundation for the overlay of new information, suggestions, recommendations, and directions as the planning work moved forward.

For the purposes of this assessment, the Plan Team divided downtown into a number of sub-areas, or districts. These followed, for the most part, those districts that were devised during the 1990 Plan. The district approach was followed here, as it was in 1990, because these districts share similar characteristics, uses, and/or demographics. Each possesses unique assets that can be built upon, and each district also has the potential to strengthen and complement other sub-areas of the downtown, rather than competing with them.

Downtown was divided into the following districts for planning purposes:

- **Waterfront**
- **East Main/Market**
- **West Main Street**
- **Convention Center/ Galleria Core**
- **West Downtown**
- **Shippingport**
- **Medical Center**
- **SoBro (south of Broadway)**
- **Russell**
- **Clarksdale/Butchertown/ Phoenix Hill**
- **Smoketown**



Information-gathering sessions were held with stakeholders from each of these areas during the spring of 2000. The input from these sessions was combined with the baseline information to create a set of initial "observations" about both downtown and these individual areas. The "observations" were then used as a basis for the initial full-scale public design workshop. Three sub-areas facing particular challenges and at different stages of planning spawned detailed "mini-planning" efforts—Clarksdale, SoBro, and the Medical Center area.

The Plan Team came together with community stakeholders and other interested citizens for a three-day design charrette at the Kentucky International Convention Center in August 2000. Initial planning and design concepts began to take shape for the first time during these sessions, which were open to the public. All potential stakeholders were invited to either attend the group sessions or to stop by and discuss their particular views and issues separately with Plan Team members.

At the conclusion of this process, the Plan Team "reported out" to the participants and the Mayor shared the initial suggestions and conclusions, followed by a broader dissemination of these initial results. The Team then continued to analyze and refine these suggestions as to their practicality, market viability, economic impact, and implementation potential, while at the same time receiving additional input and feedback from the community. Opportunities for "pilot" projects to test these suggestions and initiatives also were pursued.

The Plan Team then returned and conducted a second three-day public design and planning charrette in November 2000, using the results of the initial effort as the workshop's starting point. This work was augmented by significant new information and market analysis that was gathered after the earlier workshop. The same public input process and participatory design atmosphere was utilized, and the response from the community was very positive.

By the end of the three-day conference, participants and planners had developed the major elements of this updated Downtown Development Plan. These preliminary recommendations were then detailed further and refined, and specific implementation actions were formulated. The final Plan elements were then reviewed with the project team and with individual and group stakeholders during the winter and spring of 2001 and presented as a final set of Plan recommendations during the summer of 2001. These elements are described in greater detail in the pages that follow.

Guiding Principles

One of the strengths of the 1990 Plan was the development of a guiding set of basic principles, and the adherence to these principles throughout the implementation of the Plan. This provided downtown Louisville with a context for its investments, a continuity of improvements, and a consistency in its efforts toward a common vision. Ultimately, a critical mass is achieved. The current Downtown Development Plan begins with a consensus on its own set of basic guiding principles that will serve the same function in the upcoming decade and beyond.

The Louisville Downtown Development Plan is governed by nine overriding principles. These principles will guide the review of all proposed actions in downtown—be they public, private, non-profit, quasi-public, or a public/private partnership—to ensure that all future activity support and contribute to the vitality of downtown. For those considering investment in downtown, these principles also provide a clear vision of the future of downtown Louisville. Those proposed development actions and investments that embrace these principles are most likely to be enthusiastically supported and encouraged.

Principle #1

Continue to reinforce Downtown as the unique cultural, business, entertainment, retail, and civic center of the region

>Objectives

- Attract public uses that serve the region
- Support expansion of entertainment and restaurant facilities
- Attract both traditional and e-commerce businesses
- Improve access and parking systems
- Expand the "sense of place" of downtown by integrating areas east of I-65
- Build on the Medical Center and other institutions as important economic engines

For many years, downtown areas in mid-sized cities like Louisville tried to compete with the suburbs by mimicking development patterns that were having great success in more suburban areas. However, cities have learned through hard experience that pedestrian malls, enclosed shopping centers and other suburban features simply haven't worked well in America's cities. Downtown's greatest strength, in Louisville as well as around the country, is its unique environment—one that brings together elements of commerce, entertainment, and diversity that simply cannot be matched in the suburbs. This uniqueness is downtown's greatest strength, and the community should do all it can to maximize this asset.

Principle #2

Create a 24-hour Downtown with a focus on residential development, integrated with a mix of commercial, civic, cultural, and entertainment attractions

>Objectives

Promote residential development of all types including mixed-income and mixed-use structures

Provide pedestrian-scale neighborhood environments in downtown Louisville

Reinforce neighborhoods immediately adjacent to downtown and provide attractive linkages between those neighborhoods and downtown

The time when downtowns functioned primarily for the purpose of 9-5 business activity has long since passed. The most vibrant downtowns today are those with a strong residential base and a mix of commercial activities, recreational opportunities and learning centers. The single most often heard comment from citizens during the Plan process was the need—and the demand—for a stronger downtown residential base. While most expressed a desire for a mix of housing units and prices, participants frequently acknowledged the important need for more market rate units in downtown. This segment of the market should be encouraged strongly.

Principle #3

Transform Downtown from a "collection of destinations" into one unique "Destination"

>Objectives

Create a consistent theme and image that conveys a sense of the excitement and activity downtown

Focus efforts on attracting many diverse attractions, rather than a limited number of large ones

Improve transit connections between the various districts and destinations of downtown

Identify key pedestrian connections and create continuous pedestrian-friendly environments

Coordinate parking, pedestrian, and transit systems to encourage centralized parking that can accommodate multiple downtown destinations ("park once")

Thousands of area residents come downtown on any given day. They come for a variety of reasons —to work, shop, see a performance, visit Waterfront Park, conduct business at the government center, etc. Often these visits are single-purpose trips focused exclusively on the one thing that draws those visitors downtown. For the downtown to reach its full potential, downtown itself must become the destination, providing a variety of options to anyone who visits. While this is not a current strength of our downtown, momentum in this direction is growing, especially given the number of exciting initiatives currently in development in downtown.

Principle #4

Create active, vibrant, safe and livable public spaces supported by the design of buildings, streets, and open spaces

>Objectives

Build street facades with ground floor street-oriented uses and with maximum transparency

Refine the downtown district development code to reflect objectives of the Plan

Upgrade the streetscapes in downtown districts to reflect the character of that particular district

Our public spaces define our downtown. While there are many fine individual buildings in downtown, it is the environment around them that creates a true sense of place. West Main Street is not defined by any one building. The street's character is created by combination of the inviting streetscape, the continuity of the street wall, and the landscaping, as well as the fact that all of the buildings are built to the building line.

For future developments to contribute to the success of downtown, they will have to be designed with these elements in mind. In particular, they must pay special attention to the public design elements of landscaping, streetscape amenities, inviting storefronts, sun and wind considerations, and others that affect the experience of a visitor at the street level (i.e. the pedestrian level). All of these elements affect the public environment, and each can be designed in a way that reinforces what makes each street or district in downtown special.

Guiding Principles

Principle #5
Create an interconnected network of streets, transit, and public open spaces

>Objectives

Optimize the design and flow of downtown streets for pedestrians and other street level activity; return to two-way streets where appropriate

Redesign existing public parks and plazas and create new open spaces with a mix of pedestrian-oriented amenities and activities

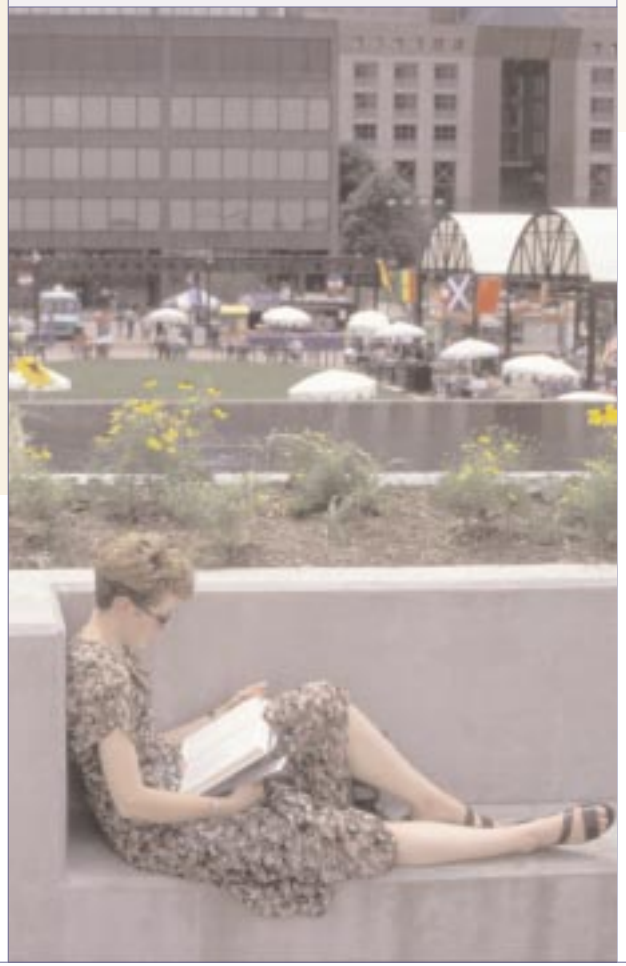
Provide for proper management and maintenance of public spaces

Integrate the proposed light rail line appropriately into urban streetscapes

Use signage and lighting to connect districts

Link parking facilities in a coordinated system connected by transit and pedestrian ways

One of the strengths of downtown is the fact that a person can easily get around much of it on foot. Part of downtown's unique appeal derives from the chance that it provides people to meet and interact in the public square. Unfortunately, there are still too many areas of downtown where this experience is not possible. Great strides have been made in recent years to improve the design of our public spaces and streets, and this focus on excellence in the urban design of our downtown must continue in all future efforts, both public and private.



Principle #6
Enhance Downtown's attractiveness as a place for investment

>Objectives

Recognize the Plan's role in helping to identify strategic investments and providing a guide to potential investors

Identify strategic sites and best practices for development

Connect priority strategic investments to incentives and other development enhancements

The continued growth of the downtown area depends in large part on a continued infusion of investment and capital into the area, both by the public sector and the private sector. The adoption of both a unified vision of downtown and a strategy for realizing this vision will provide an important stimulus for these investments. Those investments that are deemed to have the most significant benefits should be accelerated, either by the public sector or by actions to encourage the private sector to make it a high priority. The Downtown Housing Initiative is an excellent example of such a strategy.

Principle #7
Build on existing strengths with new initiatives and development

>Objectives

Identify future development opportunities for mixed use development within or adjacent to existing strong areas; build from the strongest edge

Identify existing and potential anchors for development plans

Coordinate and integrate new development to increase and/or attain critical mass

Identify attractions and other development opportunities that are "uniquely Louisville"

A sound strategy is to build upon one's strengths. Downtown Louisville has a number of assets, both in terms of physical areas (e.g. West Main St; the Waterfront) and strong economic engines (e.g. Medical Center; convention business). It is also home to a number of institutions that are unique to Louisville (e.g. Slugger Museum), with others soon to open (e.g. the Muhammad Ali Center). Improvement strategies should build upon these "anchors" and move from them outward to those areas that are currently not as strong.

Principle #8
Integrate Downtown seamlessly with its adjacent neighborhoods, the City, and the region

>Objectives

Transform barrier-like edges of downtown into welcoming front doors at key locations

Create mixed-use development along perceived edges such as Broadway, Ninth, Preston, Hancock

Transform streets at key points along the edges into pedestrian-friendly attractive boulevards

Improve physical conditions at downtown expressway access routes and ramp intersections

Create/improve downtown gateways

Connect downtown with the heritage and attractions in surrounding neighborhoods

Use signage to celebrate downtown as the center of the region

Physically, downtown Louisville has not been a particularly welcoming place to its adjacent neighbors. Its "unofficial" boundaries are marked by streets that create physical and psychological barriers between nearby residents and downtown. Nevertheless, Plan participants expressed universal support for initiating efforts to reduce or eliminate these artificial barriers, and "expand" downtown to include and embrace its immediate environs. Better pedestrian connections, a renewed, mixed-income Clarksdale, and better connections to SoBro have all been affirmed as high priorities for this Plan.

Principle #9
Forge Public/Private Partnerships to coordinate high priority initiatives and oversee Plan implementation

>Objectives

Coordinate public and private investment for maximum impact

Identify cooperative land owners/developers and develop key pilot initiatives

Develop short term and long term strategies for public and private participation

The key to success for any planning effort is the seriousness with which decision-makers follow its recommendations, and the implementation strategy that is developed. The success of the 1990 Louisville Downtown Development Plan was made possible by the rigor with which both the public and private sectors adhered to its vision, and the enthusiasm with which both sectors proactively advocated for its implementation. Public and private sector representatives worked hard to make the Plan's vision a reality by developing and funding specific programs and initiatives to implement its key recommendations. The current effort will require the same level of commitment to ensure its success.

Urban Form

Downtown Louisville is relatively unusual compared to similar-sized cities in that it covers a large geographic area and contains relatively large blocks. While there are a large number of people within the central business district on a daily basis, these characteristics make it more difficult to attain a critical mass of activities in many parts of the downtown area, particularly as the continuity of structures along each street has been eroded over time. A view of the 1906 "figure/ground" diagram illustrates the continuity of development (black indicates the existence of a building) during that period of time and how strong each block and street was. Continuous and orderly blocks of residential use blending seamlessly with the commercial areas characterized downtown Louisville. The commercial district is centered along Main and Market Streets (east/west) and Fourth Street (north/south). The resulting urban form is T-shaped.

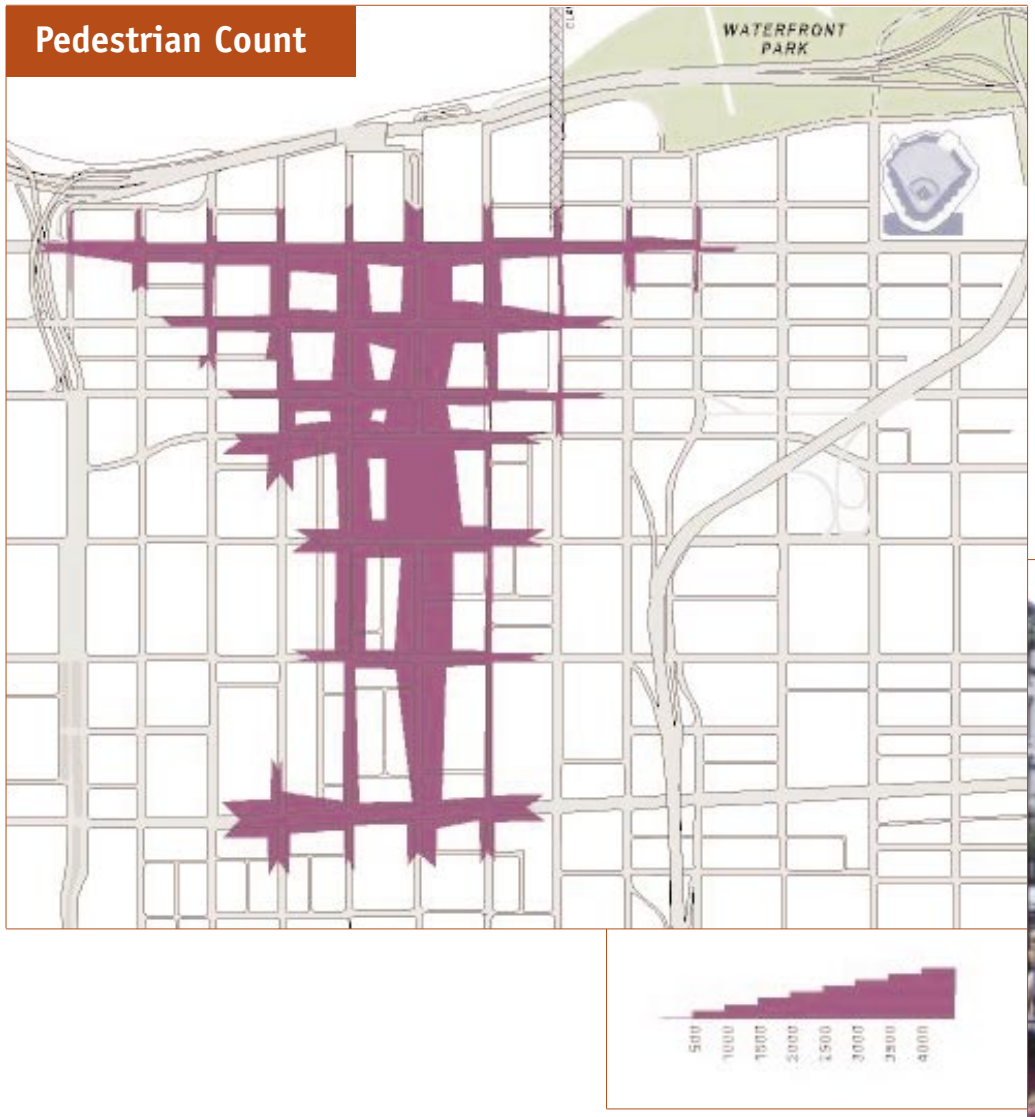
Contrast this with a similar figure/ground pattern in the year 2000. It is clear that the earlier strength of the T-shaped axis of Main/Market and Fourth Street has remained to a great extent, but the continuity on adjacent streets and downtown districts has suffered. The continuous fabric has been replaced with large structures in a less organized pattern, with many vacancies acting as "missing teeth." These areas often are characterized by surface parking lots, buildings with inactive storefronts, and upper story vacancies. I-65 and Roy Wilkins Boulevard serve as barriers that isolate downtown from surrounding neighborhoods. These areas and characteristics were cited most often (see next Section) by stakeholders as posing particular challenges for downtown's future.

1906 figure/ground

2000 figure/ground

Urban Form

Pedestrian Count



Interestingly, the most successful new downtown development has occurred along the historic T-formation. Initiatives that were cited by stakeholders as being most promising, and holding the most future opportunities, tended to be those along the T: West Main Street, the Waterfront Park, the Galleria redevelopment, the Convention Center, etc. The highest pedestrian activity continues as well to be concentrated along this central T-shaped core. The opportunity, therefore, exists to continue to strengthen the core while at the same time provide more vibrancy and vitality to surrounding areas so that activity in the core can complement and enhance these areas, and vice versa. The introduction of housing in these areas (actually its re-introduction, as seen in the 1906 figure/ground) is an excellent way to do so.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Perceptions)

This 2002 Plan development began with an initial public input process during the spring of 2000, designed to elicit feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders about their perceptions of downtown's current strengths and weaknesses, and potential opportunities. Although the responses differed somewhat depending upon the demographics of the group and its particular geographic focus, there were a large number of common responses. These are listed below:

Downtown's Strengths

- Access to River
- Waterfront Park
- West Main Street Cultural Arts District
- Ease of Access
- Concentration of Performing Arts Facilities (KCA, Actors Theatre, etc.)
- Historic Resources
- Safety
- Slugger Museum
- Louisville Slugger Field
- Humana Building
- Galleria (potential of)
- Active government center
- Unique downtown character
- Diversity of people in downtown
- Medical Center as economic engine
- Walkable downtown
- Cathedral and churches
- Convention Centre
- Library
- Grand historic hotels
- Crescent Center
- Sense of momentum building in downtown

Downtown's Weaknesses

- Too spread out
- Many vacant storefronts and underutilized Class B-space buildings
- No strong night life
- Not enough housing
- Traffic moves too fast
- One-way streets
- Too many "missing teeth" (vacant lots)
- Surface parking breaks up urban character
- Too much land devoted to surface parking
- Too many barriers (e.g. highways; Broadway/Ninth Street)
- Perception of safety problems
- Lack of general entertainment
- Lack of diverse restaurants
- Not exciting for younger people
- Areas with poor lighting
- Lack of activity south of Muhammad Ali Blvd.
- Poor pedestrian linkages between Medical Center and downtown
- Concentrations of public housing
- Spaghetti Junction congestion
- Streets not pedestrian friendly
- Galleria (current)
- Closing of Fourth Street
- Multiplicity of property owners/difficult land assembly
- Lack of basketball arena
- Haymarket – too far from core of downtown
- I-64 blocks river/no views from downtown streets
- Public spaces poorly maintained
- Lack of neighborhood services
- Lack of critical mass of density

Opportunities

- New interest in downtown housing
- Proposed Muhammad Ali Center
- Class B office-space ideal for high tech companies and/or residential
- Plans for repositioned Galleria
- Redevelopment of Clarksdale
- Spaghetti Junction redesign
- Enhancement of Medical Center/eMain connection
- SoBro (south of Broadway area) redevelopment/connection with downtown
- Extension of Waterfront Park and river access: east and west
- Shippingport redevelopment/connection to West Main District
- New entertainment venues
- New Haymarket
- Re-open Fourth Street
- East Main development
- U of L Research Buildings; spin-offs

Public Opinion Survey

In addition to the information received by those participating in the planning effort, additional information regarding public attitudes toward downtown was gathered through a public opinion survey sponsored by the Louisville Downtown Management District in October 2000. A telephone survey of 350 area residents 18 years of age or older living within selected Jefferson County zip codes was conducted. In addition, employees who work in downtown Louisville completed a self-administered paper survey.

The following is a summary of findings as reported in ***A survey Regarding Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Downtown Louisville: A Summary Report; October, 2000 prepared by Horizon Research International for the Louisville Downtown Management District.***

Workers and residents alike identified a "change" in their perceptions of Downtown Louisville. Although many respondents reported their overall impression of downtown had not changed compared to three years earlier, those who did identify a change suggested it was clearly "for the better" and see downtown as becoming a place "on the move."

Respondents noticed the growth in entertainment and attraction alternatives downtown, and recent developments along the Ohio River – specifically Waterfront Park and Louisville Slugger Field.

In addition to lingering concerns about traffic, parking, and to a much lesser extent crime, Downtown Louisville was not viewed by respondents as either a sophisticated or exciting place, or generally as a place to shop or live.

If some of these concerns about Downtown Louisville can be addressed, the survey results indicate great potential to attract more people to downtown.

Area residents generally viewed downtown as a good place to come for a community celebration or special occasion, and as a place with lots of activities and varied, if limited, entertainment opportunities.

They expressed a clear desire for more entertainment options and other activities to help "pull" them downtown.

Most survey respondents also expressed the belief that Downtown Louisville's success is important to the success of Louisville itself. This suggests that while these area residents may or may not currently have particularly positive impressions of downtown, they realize its importance as a community resource and as a place to live, work and play.

The majority of respondents supported the attraction of high-tech firms downtown and an expansion of Waterfront Park in particular.

Most respondents also supported broader transportation alternatives for downtown (light rail and trolley), although there was far less support for these ideas from among those respondents living farthest from downtown.

Similarly, most downtown workers and residents strongly supported the planned improvements to the Galleria, while other area residents were also supportive of these changes, but to a lesser degree.

This interest in more attractions and entertainment options downtown was reinforced in a telephone survey of residents throughout Jefferson County conducted on behalf of the Downtown Development Corporation in September 2001. At least two-thirds of all respondents in that survey expressed support for three current initiatives: the expansion of Waterfront Park, the proposed Muhammad Ali Center, and the repositioning of the Galleria into an urban/entertainment center.

Residential

To create a vibrant, 24-hour downtown, people of all incomes need to be living within and adjacent to downtown. In city after city that has blossomed recently, the ability to develop and lease/sell a significant number of housing units has been a critical, if not the critical, factor. In areas with few market rate units, new market rate housing is a key. In areas where dense concentrations of low income and public housing prevail, the de-concentration of these pockets of poverty is crucial. A series of mixed-income neighborhoods and sub-areas across downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods is necessary in order to build a vibrant downtown.

Participants in the downtown planning process were nearly unanimous in their support for creating more housing options downtown. A consensus emerged that this is the single most important step Louisville could take to create a truly dynamic downtown. At the outset of the planning process, many believed there was a significant latent demand for new market rate housing downtown, and that if new housing units were provided, the response would be strong. However, those most responsible for the creation of new housing, particularly developers and bankers, were uncertain as to this demand and therefore hesitant to "test the market." As a result, the Plan Team commissioned a pro-active assessment of the market by the nationally recognized firm of Zimmerman Volk Associates (ZVA) to determine the breadth and depth of the downtown housing market.

The results of ZVA's market study confirmed the existence of a strong demand for mixed-income housing in downtown; in fact, the results were more robust than anticipated. The study found demand strongest among young professionals and "empty nesters" (middle-aged adults looking for different housing options once their children are grown). It also found a strong demand from Medical Center and high-tech employees.

The ZVA projected the following market demand:

- **2,000 additional market-rate housing units downtown**
- **500 units of new housing in the first year**
- **350 units annually thereafter**

The ZVA report recommended a mix of rental and ownership units for downtown, with an initial emphasis on rental units. It also recommended a diversity of housing styles, from traditional apartments to loft apartments and townhouses, both new construction and adaptive use projects.

Given this demonstrated market for downtown housing, Plan participants were enthusiastic in supporting the creation of additional housing options in downtown, with a priority on market-rate units that can meet the demand outlined in the ZVA study. The existence and immediate success of the Downtown Housing Fund in stimulating the development of new downtown housing, and the positive response by the public, has already validated the market analysis and provided a great deal of momentum for downtown living.

While encouraging these initiatives throughout downtown, a particular focus on those areas where a residential base is already established is suggested, in order to build on existing strengths. The following areas are suggested for such emphasis:

(see page 26)

Infill Housing - Ninth/Market Street

> THE DOWNTOWN HOUSING FUND

More and more cities around the country have come to understand that the single most important factor in creating a vibrant, 24-hour downtown is to increase the number of people of all incomes living downtown. While this understanding also has been becoming more widespread in Louisville, the fact remained that Louisville had not seen any major new market-rate housing developments since 1985 when the 209-unit Crescent Centre development was built. Mayor Armstrong and the Downtown Development Corporation realized the urgency of taking a bold step to stimulate the downtown housing market and overcome some of the barriers to the production of downtown housing units.

Louisville's leaders faced three distinct problems in trying to reinvigorate the market for downtown housing in Louisville. First, many proposals could not muster the capital to begin construction or renovation because local lenders were hesitant to back these types of deals. Secondly, lenders based their hesitancy in part on the lack of "comps," or other comparable deals by which to evaluate new proposals. Thirdly, this hesitancy was only compounded when lenders faced the possibility of taking the risk of financing one of these projects alone.

The Downtown Housing Fund was conceived to address these obstacles to the downtown housing market. The Downtown Housing Fund is a simple, yet creative, public/private partnership focused on the creation of market-rate housing in downtown Louisville, combining the strengths of the City with those of the private sector through the help of the Downtown Development Corporation (DDC), a private non-profit development corporation. The Mayor designated $2.36 million in City funds for downtown housing and then through the DDC, raised an additional $2.7 million in private funds—from local banks and corporations—to match the City's contribution, for a total of $5.06 million. The Fund was recently recapitalized with an additional $2.4 million in public and private funds. The DDC, with the City of Louisville, established program guidelines, created a limited liability corporation to hold and lend funds, and a loan committee to administer the project.

The Downtown Housing Fund was created to deal with each of the obstacles to downtown housing problems. First, it provides badly needed capital for developers to complete the funding of their projects. Secondly, it creates "comps" for local lenders — successful projects by which to measure other housing proposals. Thirdly, it allows many local lenders to stick a toe in the water of lending to these projects — and to share in their success — rather than requiring one lender to take all the risk.

Importantly, the Fund also has solved a fourth, larger problem. The exodus of people from Louisville's core to its suburbs had been going on for so long that lenders had assumed a weak market for downtown housing. Within two years of its creation, the Downtown Housing Fund has funded projects that have changed that mindset. These projects have demonstrated convincingly that there is a strong demand for market-rate housing in downtown—something that seemed inconceivable only a few years ago.

To date, four projects have received financing approval. They represent a nearly fifteen percent increase in market-rate housing units in downtown. The projects range in size from 3 units to 128 units, and include historic renovation and new construction.

Two of the projects have now been completed and the market response has been overwhelming. The two others now in construction have experienced extremely strong tenant interest and pre-leasing. The "buzz" regarding living in downtown Louisville is high, and there are other residential projects, both new construction and rehab, in development.

Perhaps the most important impact of this initiative has been its impact in changing attitudes locally about downtown living. Prior to the establishment of the Downtown Housing Fund, few developers were interested in taking the risk of putting together downtown residential projects; few if any local financial institutions were interested in considering downtown residential projects; few realtors would steer people to downtown housing; and those potential downtown residents had few living environment options. In the course of a two-year period, all of these conditions have changed, and downtown living is now a viable option for developers, bankers, and residents.

West Main Street/Glassworks District
The West Main Street area provides a particularly attractive location for residential development. Its unique character as a downtown historic district focused on the Cultural Arts has a strong appeal to those who seek out interesting urban living environments. The success of the first phase of the Glassworks development at 8th and Market Streets has helped to validate the strength of this potential market, and additional phases now under development are expected to experience a similarly strong market demand.

A continued expansion of this Glassworks District to the area immediately west of Ninth Street offers the potential for a critical mass of new housing units, given the building stock and other uses in this area. The buildings west of Ninth Street are easily adaptable for loft housing units, and these units are more abundant as one moves west. This district offers particular promise for young professionals in the creative arts, as well as the potential for artists' live/work spaces.

This expansion will be helped by transforming Ninth Street into more of an urban boulevard, with residential units on either side of the redesigned street. Publicly owned sites on the east side of Ninth Street between Main and Broadway should be considered for in fill residential development, providing a street-oriented residential face to the new Boulevard.

EXISTING BUILDING
PROPOSED NEW BUILDING

THE GLASSWORKS DISTRICT
A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN DOWNTOWN LOUISVILLE

Redesigned Ninth Street Boulevard

GLASSWORKS

The Glassworks Lofts is a unique mix of artist's spaces, visitor attractions, professional offices, and market rate loft apartments in the heart of downtown Louisville. The first two floors contain the Glassworks, a mix of uses devoted to the creation of high-end glass art. This space contains fully working hot and cold glass studios that are open to the public, as well as glass galleries, a retail space, function rooms and a café. These floors also serve as the headquarters of a major architectural glass art firm. The second through fifth levels house the headquarters for a major architectural and engineering firm. The upper three floors, providing unencumbered views of the city in all directions, contain 44 loft units in a variety of configurations and sizes.

The Glassworks Lofts is housed in the former Snead Manufacturing Building, a large, eight-story building at 8th and Market Streets that had the distinction of being the first concrete structure built in the Commonwealth of Kentucky when completed in 1910. By 1990, the property had, unfortunately, fallen into disrepair and was mostly vacant.

Fortunately, through the vision of its new developers and the creation of the Downtown Housing Fund, the Snead Building has now been redeveloped into a dynamic, creative mixed-use project that epitomizes the excitement and vitality of downtown living.

The public has responded enthusiastically to this visionary redevelopment project. The residential units were leased well before the anticipated absorption period and at rental rates higher than anticipated, and there is currently a waiting list for new units. The Glassworks galleries have welcomed thousands of visitors, tours, and tourists, and provide a festive starting point for the Gallery Hop the first Friday of each month—when the downtown trolley provides free transportation among and between the 15 downtown art galleries.

For those who were uncertain as to what exactly an "urban-style" mixed-use project would look like in Louisville, the Glassworks Lofts now provides a living, breathing example. The response has been so strong that plans are moving forward for additional elements of the Glassworks District. A second phase with 17 condominium units is under construction and nearly sold out; a third phase with an additional 100 residential units is about to be financed, and a retail city market/farmer's market will be operational shortly, as well as the Glassworks café.

Residential

East Main/Market Street District
The area around East Main and Market Streets already provides a significant number of downtown's residential units, including Billy Goat Strut and the Clarksdale development. Additional housing units in this area would be desirable to a number of potential downtown resident types. These include: 1) eMain young professionals; 2) Medical Center employees, doctors, researchers, etc; 3) urban dwellers seeking the diversity of the mixed-income vibrant neighborhoods of Butchertown and Phoenix Hill.

Butchertown and Phoenix Hill already provide downtown "jewels" of strong, diverse neighborhoods. Downtown housing that begins in the heart of downtown and moves east along Main, Market and Jefferson Streets should blend seamlessly into these existing neighborhoods, and will also serve to reinforce the continued health and vibrancy of these neighborhoods.

Waterfront Park
The reclamation of the downtown waterfront for the benefit of the public has once again reminded the community of the significance of the Ohio River, and strengthened the community's resolve to keep the water's edge open and accessible to the public. The Master Plan for the waterfront calls for this wonderful public asset to expand and become a draw for the development of a new residential neighborhood abutting its public spaces.

The first such development, Waterfront Park Place, is now under development and provides a much-needed residential component directly adjacent to the southern edge of the Great Lawn. This residential character should be continued through the development of the parcel of land directly to its east between Floyd and Preston Streets.

Other opportunities for new residential units either directly adjacent to the Park, or nearby in adaptively reused buildings along East Main and Market, should be strongly encouraged. Residential development adjacent to the east edge of the Park—at the Louisville Municipal Boat Harbor and Thruston Park—should also be encouraged, as long as public access to the River and Beargrass Creek is assured.

Future development that can provide dramatic river views and/or river access nearby should be encouraged as well, particularly on parcels that are in public ownership. For example, the land adjacent to the proposed West Waterfront Park may provide an ideal location for such future development.

Founders Square
The area immediately surrounding Founders Square at Fifth Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard is a strong location for additional market rate housing. The existence of Kentucky Towers provides an existing residential redevelopment opportunity and the area's proximity to the Cathedral, the Galleria, and downtown services makes it attractive as a residential area. The physical character of this part of downtown also lends itself to a higher density housing typology.

The development of two major surface parking lots immediately south of Founders Square presents immediate opportunities for the consideration of additional housing in this area. The redesign of Founders Square can serve as a focal point of such a residential neighborhood. The current analysis of reuse options for The Gardens or for new construction on the site will have a major impact on this possibility, and its reuse should consider its ability to encourage adjacent residential development.

Broadway Area Housing
Perhaps the densest current area of downtown housing is found in the blocks just north and south of Broadway between First and Fourth Streets. The Crescent Centre apartments and townhouses provide a significant number of units north of Broadway, and buildings like the Weisinger Gaulbert, the Worthington, and Hampton House do the same between Broadway and York. Additional residential development in this area should focus on the following priorities:

The renovation of the older, residential buildings along Broadway;

The adaptive use of buildings into housing;

More mixed-use developments, such as the innovative St. Francis High School/233 West Broadway development; and

New, infill residential buildings on appropriate sites, such as the southwest corners of Fourth and Broadway and Third and Broadway to fill in the "missing teeth" in this urban neighborhood.

Additional residential development in this area also will make a connection to similar mixed-use residential development in SoBro due south, and Smoketown/Shelby Park southeast of this area, further reducing the barrier of Broadway between downtown and its adjacent neighbors to the south.

Infill Housing - Fourth/Broadway

> 233 WEST BROADWAY/ST. FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL

233 West Broadway is a wonderful, historic downtown property, initially constructed to serve as Louisville's YMCA in 1913. Over the years, it has had a distinguished history of community service, and for the past 25 years it has been occupied by St. Francis High School, an innovative downtown center of learning and academic excellence. In 1999, St. Francis purchased the building in anticipation of a much needed expansion and renovation of its academic facilities. During its facilities assessment, the school realized that the seven-story, former dormitory portion of the structure would not meet its various needs. It then teamed with a developer to determine the best way to provide both the necessary school facilities and an appropriate adaptive reuse of this exceptional building.

At the same time, the Downtown Housing Fund had just been established, and a market study was developed that indicated both the market and the demand for downtown living. This combination of factors resulted in one of the most unique downtown mixed-use projects imaginable. 233 West Broadway a partnership between AU Associates and St. Francis High School, combines a master plan for the downtown school campus with a new center for downtown urban living. The historic YMCA property will be renovated and used for the high school as well as for 58 apartment units and 18,000 square feet of commercial/retail space on the first and second floors. The existing building will be complemented by a new, contemporary facility that will house the school's arts and athletic programs. Between these two structures, the "Transforum" will connect Second and Third Streets with an exterior space filled with pedestrian activity, informal sports areas, landscaping and parking facilities. Acting as a catalyst for a major downtown revitalization project at the south end of the central business district, the school's master plan will reinvigorate Broadway as a gateway to downtown Louisville by creating residences, cultural amenities, and an animated public space.

The uniqueness of this project is further seen in the mix of units and its funding sources. Of its 58 upscale studio, one-bedroom, and two bedroom apartments, 10 will be reserved by the Housing Authority of Louisville for its tenants. The innovative funding mix includes the use of historic tax credit equity from National City of Kentucky's Community Development Corporation, a secondary financing loan from the Downtown Housing Fund, investment by the Housing Authority of Louisville, and CDBG funds.

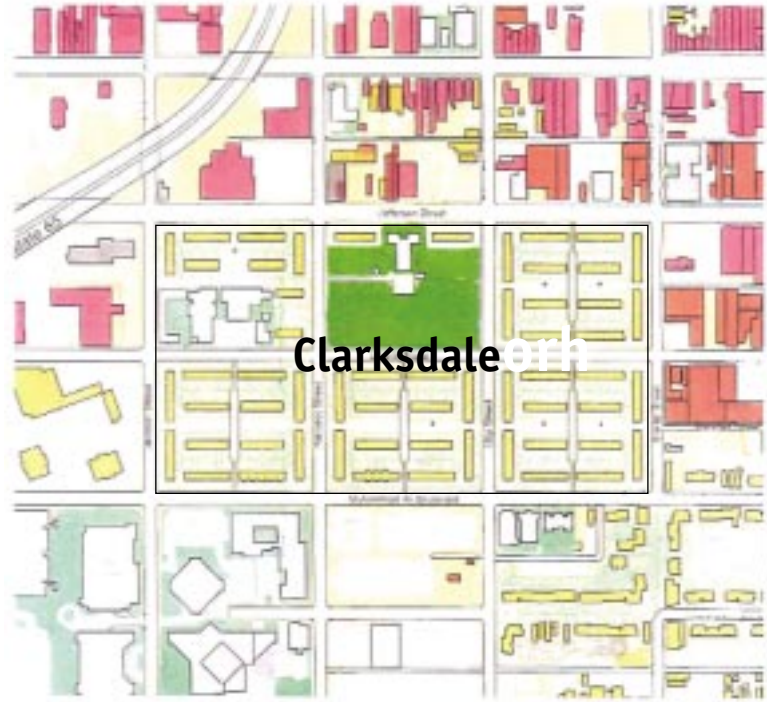
The elements of the project perfectly blend together many key ingredients of a strong and vibrant downtown: a mix of uses – including first floor retail; the successful and dignified rehabilitation of a historic yet still useful property; a true mix of income groups seamlessly residing together; new market-rate downtown units in a sophisticated, cosmopolitan setting; and the retention and expansion of a strong academic institution with students who can use the entire downtown as part of their learning environment.

Clarksdale Mixed Income Neighborhood

The Clarksdale public housing complex, constructed more than 60 years ago, represents both a challenge and an opportunity for current residents as well as for the downtown Louisville area. The “barracks”-style housing created at Clarksdale and other public housing sites around the country has finally been recognized as an outdated and often times dehumanizing way to provide adequate shelter. National and local trends indicate that much more dignified and appropriate ways to provide public housing opportunities can be found. As the extremely successful approach at Park DuValle has demonstrated, the most important principle in providing better public housing opportunities is an integrated approach that creates a truly mixed-income neighborhood, with a density and style of housing consistent with the context of the surrounding neighborhood.

The Clarksdale complex and the surrounding environs present a strong opportunity for its redevelopment into a vibrant mixed-income neighborhood. Clarksdale’s advantageous location so near to the downtown core makes it a potentially desirable location for residents with a range of incomes. The proximity to employment opportunities that are emerging in the eastern portion of downtown, including the Medical Center and eMain, adds another element to the desirability of this area. In addition, its residents have strongly expressed their desire for this kind of mixed-income community through their involvement in the planning process.

The Clarksdale redevelopment analysis is wider than merely the 29 acres of land upon which Clarksdale currently sits. There are additional parcels of property in the immediate vicinity that are being studied for new housing potential. There are additional housing opprtunities in other areas of downtown, particularly south and east in



Current Site Plan:
Existing Conditions of Clarksdale Site and Immediate Area

- Residentail
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Vacant Buildings
- Industrial

Smoketown and Shelby Park, which may be developed for a wider range of incomes that would assist in the stabilization of these neighborhoods as well. Thus the redevelopment of Clarksdale would not only provide an improved living situation for its current residents, it also would serve as a catalyst to the revitalization of the neighborhoods immediately east and south of downtown, further reducing the barriers that separate these neighborhoods from downtown.

The HOPE VI proposal that was developed as an outgrowth of the initial Clarksdale redevelopment concept in the Downtown Plan process embodies these characteristics and objectives, and should be enthusiastically supported for funding. As part of the Downtown plan, a residential market analysis of the Clarksdale and east downtown areas was conducted, and the results indicated a strong local housing market that cuts across a wide range of income levels. Building upon this analysis and extensive discussions with both current Clarksdale residents and residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, the Clarksdale HOPE VI Master Plan calls for the redevelopment of the Clarksdale site as a mixed-income development that will serve as the focal point for a number of coordinated developments within a one-mile radius of the site. Market studies have demonstrated a demand for 2,025 units in the East Louisville area. The Master Plan encompasses the development of 1,819 units: 728 public housing units, 448 tax credit units, 412 market units, and 231 homeowner units.

Current Site Plan: Area-Wide Initiatives

1. Clarksdale
2. Off-Site Development
3. Collaborations

Three types of development activity are contained in the plan's coordinated, phased program:

On-Site Development – A mix of public housing, tax credit and market-rate rental housing. A variety of units are provided in eight different building types ranging from single-family homes to townhouses and garden apartments to mixed-use buildings with apartments above retail space.

Off-Site Development – Within a one-mile radius, properties will be acquired and developed to include multi-family buildings, new apartments and townhouses, and single-family houses (both rental and homeownership). The off-site developments identified in the Plan have been carefully selected and designed to support ongoing revitalization efforts in each of the communities and will be coordinated with implementation of other planning efforts active in east Louisville.

Existing Site Plan: Before Aerial Perspective

Collaborations – Combined efforts among a number of development groups engaged in the adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods will provide mixed-income units in a variety of building types including loft apartments, new townhouses and apartment buildings, and new and renovated single-family homes. These collaborative efforts will be focused in Butchertown, Phoenix Hill, East Main and Market Streets, the Medical Center, Smoketown and Shelby Park.

This redevelopment plan offers the chance to create in the Clarksdale area those physical features that support the development of strong and nurturing neighborhoods. Currently many of these conditions do not exist. The Clarksdale Master Plan calls for rebuilding the site as a series of traditional Louisville residential blocks, seamlessly integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods. At the same time, the concept is designed to provide a focal point for a number of restoration and new construction efforts to repair, revitalize and restore the fabric of its surrounding neighborhoods.

Conceptual Site Plan: After Aerial Perspective

Clarksdale Mixed Income Neighborhood

A coordinated system of streetscape improvements will link the on-site development to off-site development including the new Waterfront Park and the Extreme Sports Park, as well as cultural, educational, and employment opportunities. A series of new traditional neighborhood streets will replace the central inner courts, creating quiet environments for family living. The major east/west streets, which carry heavy volumes of downtown traffic, will be lined with apartments designed to resemble the large houses and apartments that front on Louisville's best boulevards.

The less heavily traveled north/south streets will have a series of small-scale neighborhood parks enclosed by townhouses and small apartments. These parks will create attractive new addresses within the Clarksdale site and in the surrounding neighborhoods, providing recreational opportunities and child play facilities within walking distance of every home.

The architectural character of this development will be coordinated to support the concept of rebuilding traditional downtown Louisville neighborhoods. The design of on-site housing includes three architectural styles, all found within the immediate area. The development will include a wide range of unit types, responding to market demands for everything from single-family houses to attached units to apartments, lofts and assisted living facilities.

Conceptual Site Plan: New Residentail Street Elevation

Conceptual Site Plan: North/South Street Elevation

Conceptual Site Plan: East/West Street Elevation

Existing Site Plan: Clay Street Today.

Conceptual Site Plan: Clay Street Tomorrow

The market study indicates that a fully mixed-income neighborhood is achievable, and a major goal of the redevelopment of Clarksdale is the integration of public housing units with the various market rate and affordable housing units in a seamless, invisible manner. The creation of a new mixed-income neighborhood will be the tangible and visible result of this redevelopment program. At the same time, however, it is critical that the current Clarksdale residents have an adequate range of choices as to their housing types and locations. While some will wish to remain in the same location, other options in the neighborhood, in the downtown area, or in other HAL units must be provided to ensure that no one is left without choice. Initial analyses and surveys of Clarksdale residents suggest that providing them with this range of housing options will help ensure the redevelopment plan's success.

In addition to the revitalization of the Clarksdale neighborhood as a result of the on-site development, the additional off-site new housing units to be developed will serve as a stabilizing element to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The development plan uses Hancock Street as its major "spine" connecting Clarksdale/ Phoenix Hill with Smoketown and Shelby Park. A series of coordinate developments that include new single-family homes, townhouses, small apartment houses—in the same mixed-income ratio—will provide additional housing opportunities in these neighborhoods that share the same proximity to downtown. Initial efforts will focus in areas with existing concentrations of City-owned, vacant land. These properties, combined with selective acquisition of private property, create sufficient critical mass for marketable developments.

Hancock Street

Existing Site Plan: Marshall Court Today

Conceptual Site Plan: Marshall Court Tomorrow

Office

The downtown Louisville office market historically has remained relatively steady, with continued modest increases in occupied space—and an occasional period of no growth—as opposed to the "boom and bust" cycles found in many other cities. Speculative Class A buildings are not a common occurrence, and as new Class A space does come on the market, the surplus of Class B and Class C space generally increases.

At the same time, suburban office space continued to be built at a far greater pace than downtown space. While downtown still retains a slight majority of the region's Class A space, this percentage continues to erode. However, new trends in the office market bode well for downtowns, and downtown Louisville is no exception. While it is critical for downtown Louisville to retain (and expand) its traditional Class A office users, companies involved in the wide spectrum of what is commonly called technology business often indicate a preference for downtowns and the type of downtown districts that tend to have a considerable amount of vacant and underutilized Class B and Class C space. In addition, as more people choose to live downtown, their interest in downtown as a workplace increases immeasurably.

Given these trends, the nationally recognized firm Economics Research Associates (ERA) was engaged to undertake an assessment of the office market in downtown Louisville. ERA's assignment was comprised of two main components: to determine the market potential for downtown office development and, to investigate the potential role of technology-related businesses in downtown over the plan period. The following represents the main findings of ERA's analysis.

Current Downtown Office Market

The downtown Louisville office market is performing reasonably well, with overall vacancy rates down approximately 14 percent and an average annual absorption (the net additional occupied space) of 284,000 square feet during the five year period from 1995 – 2000. The downtown office market has filled over 1 million additional square feet of space during this period.

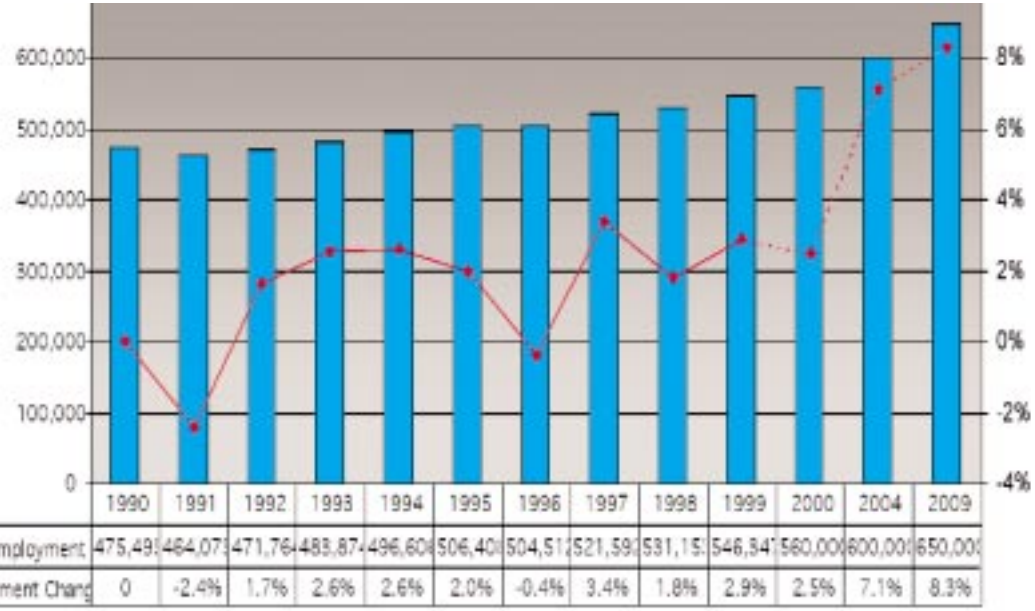
There is currently 3.5 million square feet of Class A space and 5.6 million square feet of Class B and C space. Within Class B there is approximately 3.3 million square feet of historic preservation space.

Renovation activity has outpaced construction activity in the CBD since 1980 and there has been no new Class A space in the last five years. However, a new 90,000 square foot Class A office building at 614 West Main Street has recently been completed.

Class A vacancy rates are currently close to a stabilized vacancy rate for this market at 5.6 percent. Class B and C vacancy rates have been improving, but remain high at around 20 percent.

There is a current oversupply of Class B and C space of 560,000 square feet, but this large number may be slightly misleading because approximately 350,000 square feet of this space is in single ownership and is not actively marketed.

Chart 1. Employment and Employment Change, Louisville MSA 1990-2009



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2004	2009
Total Employment	475,49	464,07	471,76	483,87	496,60	506,40	504,51	521,59	531,15	546,34	560,00	600,00	650,00
Employment Chang	0	-2.4%	1.7%	2.6%	2.6%	2.0%	-0.4%	3.4%	1.8%	2.9%	2.5%	7.1%	8.3%

Source: US Department of Commerce; Economics Research Associates

The Louisville central business district (CBD) has been losing ground to the suburbs in terms of its share of total inventory, declining from 62 percent in 1993 to 56 percent in 1999. The CBD's share of occupied space also has declined, from 60 percent in 1994 to 55 percent in 1999. (Recent estimates put the downtown share at 52 percent in 2002)

Louisville Metropolitan Area Office Demand

Demand for office floor space is driven by net employment growth. Chart 1 presents employment trends and ERA projections for the Louisville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) between 1990 and 1999. The chart reveals that employment has increased from approximately 475,500 in 1990 to 550,000 in 1999. ERA projects this employment growth to continue during the next five years to total approximately 600,000 by the year 2004.

Louisville CBD Share of the Greater Louisville Office Market

Charts 2 and 3 present current and historical data on the market share of downtown Louisville of total office floor space in the greater Louisville area. Chart 2 presents the results of the analysis by total office inventory whereas Chart 3 presents the results by occupied office floor space.

Office Space Inventory by Class

Chart 4 provides a breakdown of the CBD leasable office space inventory for Class A and B/C space during the past 10 years. The chart shows that the quantity and mix of office space has changed over time.

The Courier-Journal

Busines

www.courier-journal.com

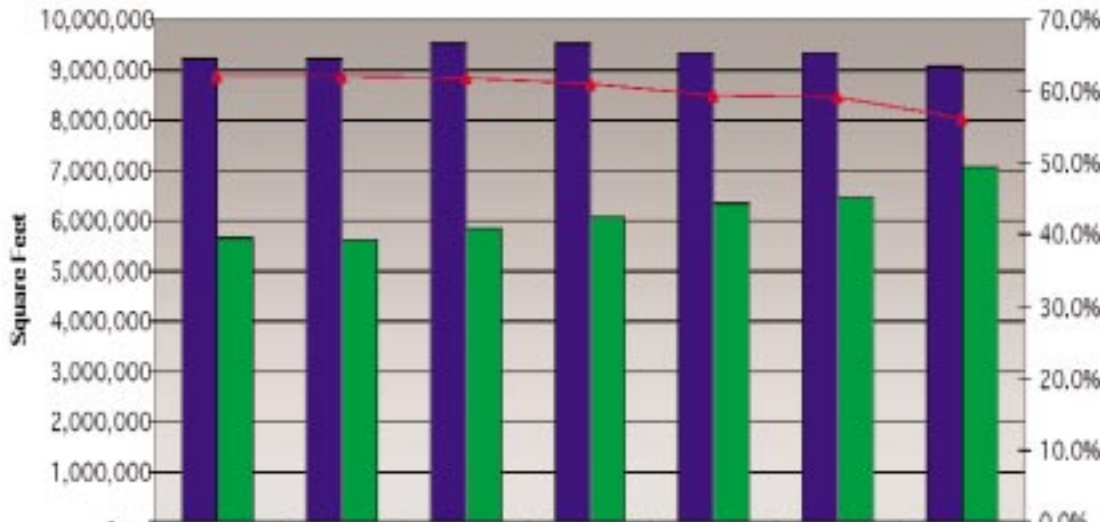
Suburbs may soon surpass downtown in office space

New sites mostly outside city core

The total inventory of downtown office space reached a high of more than 9.5 million square feet in 1996, but since then has steadily declined to approximately 9.1 million square feet in 1999 as a result of reductions in both the Class A and Class B/C categories. Class A space constituted just 51 percent of the space in 1991 but now comprises 63 percent.

Office

Chart 2. CBD Market Share of Total Office Floor Space, 1993-1999



	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
CBD	9,245,443	9,245,443	9,522,799	9,523,339	9,348,218	9,330,288	9,083,555
Suburbs	5,637,993	5,630,739	5,833,384	6,067,623	6,349,750	6,452,861	7,071,055
CBD Share	62.1%	62.1%	62.0%	61.1%	59.6%	59.1%	56.2%

Source: Commercial Kentucky; Economics Research Associates.

Estimated Need for New Office Development in Downtown Louisville

ERA's analysis revealed that there is currently a strong Class A office market and a much weaker market for Class B and C space in the Louisville CBD. Newly constructed office development in downtown for the foreseeable future will be driven by demand for Class A space. This assertion is supported by trends in the mix of floor space and the over-supply of Class B/C space.

ERA's analysis indicated that there is a demand for some new Class A office space in downtown Louisville. However, the employment analysis suggests that growth in downtown employment will generate demand for 600,000 square feet of office space over the 10-year period to 2009.

Based on the mix of existing occupied downtown office floor space and trends in usage, ERA predicts that this will be comprised of demand for approximately 280,000 square feet of Class A space and 320,000 square feet of Class B and C space.

Therefore, over the next 10 years, there will be a demand for perhaps one or two medium sized new Class A office developments in downtown Louisville. There will not be significant demand for newly constructed Class B space during this period given the substantial existing over-supply in this market.

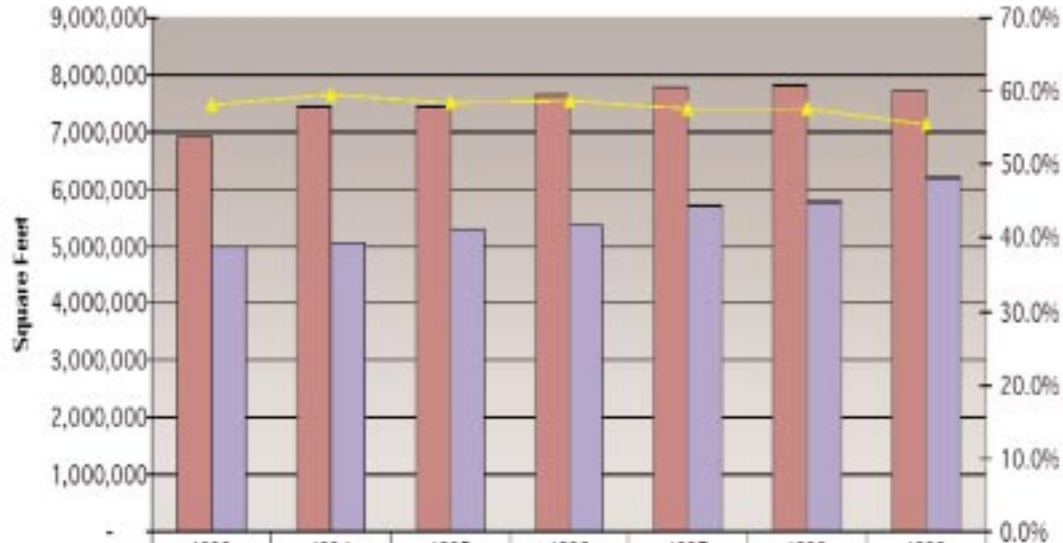
The Potential Role of Downtown in Supporting High Technology Employers

ERA's analysis of the Louisville region's technology-related economy revealed strong growth during recent years. Although growth in this sector has retrenched nationally in the period since this analysis was completed, and is currently still mired in this cycle adjustment, it is nevertheless likely that this sector will continue to grow, albeit at a rate more in line with the growth of other sectors in the Louisville market. The significance of this sector is in its compatibility with downtown as a location. Although downtown is currently capturing 9 percent of the regional high-tech market and nearly 20 percent of the telecommunications-dependent market, the analysis of the high-speed telecommunications infrastructure and industry-supported initiatives such as eMain suggest that there is significant competitive advantages for downtown over the suburbs in these sectors.

Substantial technology-related development also is currently taking place in relation to the Medical Center's Health Sciences Research Park and incubator and expansion of University research facilities, with substantial additional development planned. Case studies demonstrate the success of technology-related downtown economic development in other large cities given the right conditions, which usually include a strong University and/or medical center presence, and illustrate the potential for Louisville.

In addition, downtown Louisville technology-related businesses have access to the requisite public provider advanced telecommunications infrastructure for them to be competitive within the various industry sectors. The telecommunication and other

Chart 3. CBD Market Share of Occupied Office Floor Space, 1993-1999



	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
CBD	6,937,991	7,440,852	7,458,236	7,637,274	7,793,278	7,812,466	7,722,869
Suburbs	4,994,411	5,070,270	5,289,097	5,381,984	5,703,957	5,766,354	6,211,000
CBD Share	58.1%	59.5%	58.5%	58.7%	57.7%	57.5%	55.4%

Source: Louisville Central Area, Inc.; Commercial Kentucky; Economics Research Associates

technology resources of the University represent value-added facilities that if properly utilized can provide downtown with a competitive advantage both regionally and nationally. The potential for developing such business-university partnerships must be fully explored.

These findings suggest that downtown is well placed to capitalize on regional technology-related growth, including medical-related technology associated with the LMCDC research park. Technology-related economic development can play a significant role in downtown during the next decade.

Estimation of Technology Sector Growth Potential and Office Space Needs

Although the technology sector of the local economy is still in its infancy, its growth in the pre-2000 slowdown bodes well for a continuation of steady growth in the long run. ERA's analysis of this market found the following:

> 28 industry sectors were identified that can be classified as either technology-based or telecommunications-dependent.
>
> There are currently approximately 7,600 technology and telecommunications-dependent companies employing over 125,400 in the Louisville region and another 67,000 technology and telecommunications-dependent companies employing 1.2 million in nearby regions (like Indianapolis and Nashville).
>
> Between 1994 and 1999 the number of technology-based establishments grew by 320 firms—an 85 percent increase compared to 31 percent for the economy as a whole.
>
> Technology-based employment grew by 3,200 or 28 percent compared to 23 percent for the economy as a whole.

The number of telecommunications-dependent establishments grew by 2,500, or 59 percent, between 1994 and 1999, and employment by 32,900 or 48 percent.

ERA's analysis of downtown's potential as a technology center revealed that it is well placed to capitalize on regional technology sector growth. It believes that Louisville is positioned to see growth in this sector over the next decade of anywhere from 750,000 to 1,000,000 square feet of floor space. Given the fact that current Class B and Class C space could accommodate much of this demand, 300,000 square feet of additional office space is estimated to be needed, comprised of approximately 140,000 square feet of Class A space and 160,000 square feet of Class B and C Space.

Office

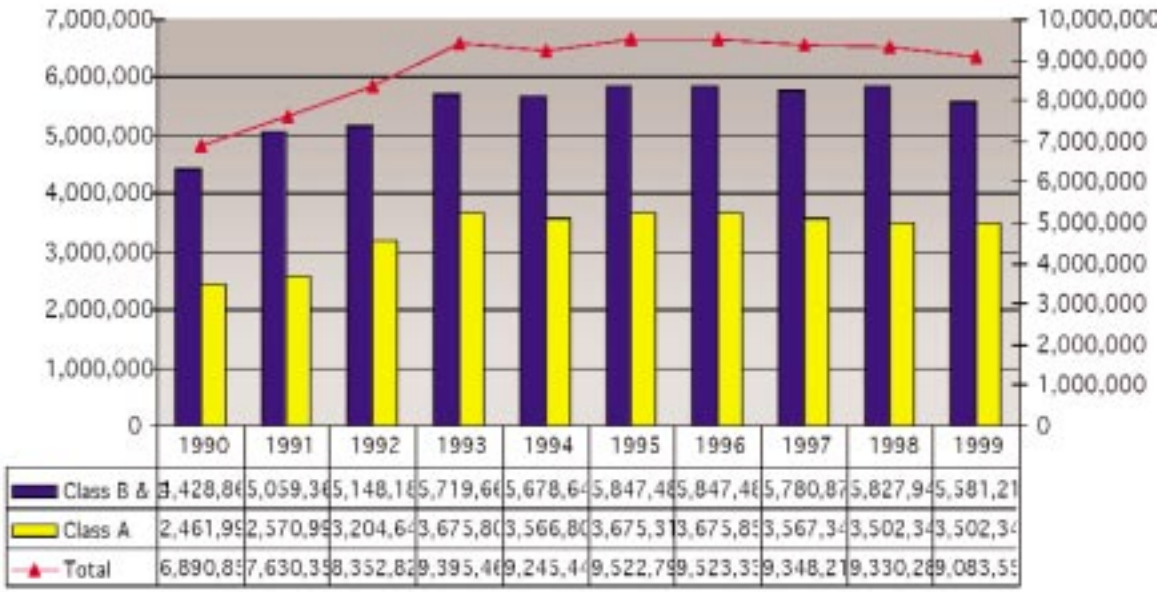
These office space needs of technology businesses can be met through three primary sources:

> A shift in the tenant mix in existing office buildings, with growth in technology-related business space and a corresponding decline in traditional tenant occupied space.
>
> Newly constructed space.
>
> The existing 560,000 square feet of vacant Class B and C space over and above that equivalent to a 10 percent stabilized vacancy.

The latter represents a major downtown resource, but approximately 65 percent of this space is in single ownership and is not at present actively marketed. Furthermore, much of this space will require renovation and modernization prior to occupation by technology-related businesses. Tax and other financial incentives, for both landlords and tenants, may be required to stimulate this sector of the downtown office market.

Additionally, although a detailed spatial analysis of vacant space downtown was not conducted, it is clear that this space is widely distributed throughout the study area. Such a widespread distribution reflects that of existing downtown high technology businesses. It is therefore recommended that existing space throughout downtown be marketed for these new users, while at the same time marketing the attractiveness of certain downtown districts such as eMain and the Medical Center as specifically tailored to technology and biomedical companies.

Chart 4. Louisville CBD Office Space Inventory by Space 1990-1999



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Class B &	4,428,86	5,059,36	5,148,18	5,719,66	5,678,64	5,847,48	5,847,48	5,780,87	5,827,94	5,581,21
Class A	2,461,99	2,570,99	3,204,64	3,675,80	3,566,80	3,675,31	3,675,85	3,567,34	3,502,34	3,502,34
Total	6,890,85	7,630,35	8,352,82	9,395,46	9,245,44	9,522,79	9,523,33	9,348,21	9,330,28	9,083,55

Source: Louisville Central Area, Inc.; Commercial Kentucky; Economics Research Associates

> 614 WEST MAIN STREET

Main Street historically was the epicenter of Louisville trade and commerce. Throughout the years, hundreds of businesses have thrived here, shoulder to shoulder, sparking the engine of growth in our community. Merchants constructed buildings to meet the demands of their flourishing companies along this bustling street, and in the process created some of the finest examples of cast-iron architecture in America such as the Carter Dry Goods Building and the Hart Block.

Louisville is fortunate that much of this architectural heritage remains intact. Today, the West Main Street Historic District contains a nationally recognized collection of cast-iron architecture, and the innovative Cultural Arts District program has sparked a revitalization of West Main Street that not only celebrates this rich architectural fabric, but has resulted in the area once again becoming a hub for many of the city's most creative and interesting business and cultural activities.

Much of West Main Street's strength lies in the continuity of its building wall, the absence of surface parking lots and curb cuts, and the variety of its architectural styles. Remarkably, only one "missing tooth" existed in the district, a small lot in the 600 Block. Fortunately, the streetwall has now been completed, with a new infill building that is modern in design yet consistent with the overall character of the District.

The 614 West Main Street Building, a Fenley property, continues the street's tradition of craftsmanship, enterprise, and unique atmosphere. Located where the grand Louisville Hotel once stood, 614 West Main Street's design pays tribute to the past, but with an eye toward the future. Its open floor plan of 83,420 square feet allows a multi-tenant occupancy within its 6-story volume. Its high-ceilinged first floor opens through large storefront windows either to West Main Street or an adjoining private, landscaped courtyard. The glass, brick and limestone façade has a strong cornice line at the fifth story, aligning with the neighboring structures, and the sixth story is set back to form a rooftop observation deck.

The anchor tenant of this new structure will be the offices of Greater Louisville Inc., the Metro Chamber of Commerce. A restaurant, which will use the courtyard for outdoor dining, and other retail users will occupy the ground floor space. With the opening of 614 West Main Street in the summer of 2002, the dynamic revitalization of West Main Street continues, as this historically and architecturally rich District fills in its last gap.

eMain USA

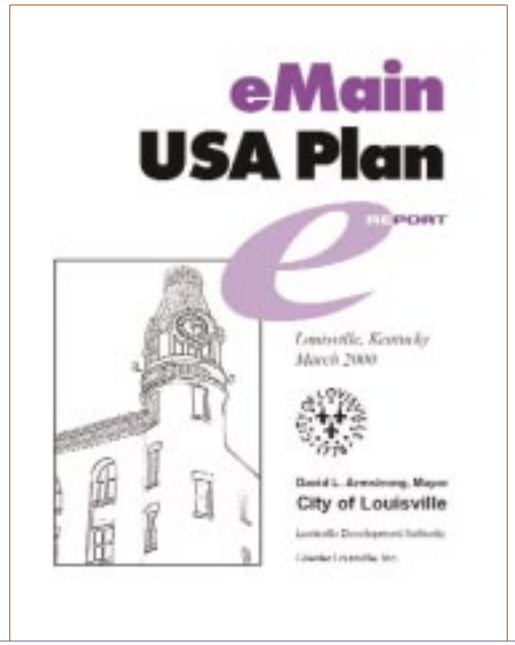
The analysis of the office market clearly indicates that downtown Louisville – similar to other cities – can become a strong magnet for what are generally considered to be high technology, telecommunications, and related businesses with a high percentage of technologically skilled employees. As indicated, there is significant current underutilized space throughout downtown that would be attractive to these types of firms. However, the East Main Street area exhibits a number of characteristics that make it especially attractive as a high technology nexus.

One of the area's primary assets is its proximity to the River. Louisville's Main Street has a rich history of river commerce. But until the last quarter of the twentieth century, 95 percent of the river's edge was blocked by industrial uses and eroded by interstate highway construction. The major community initiative of reclaiming its riverfront during the past decade has reopened the waterfront to the public with spectacular results. A nearly solid industrial presence along the waterfront was completely converted to public access at the river's edge through projects like the new Waterfront Park, the RiverWalk, and a redesigned Riverfront Plaza/ Belvedere with a new Wharf Connector. The new Louisville Slugger Field now anchors the eastern end of Main Street within downtown, adjacent to a burgeoning district of nightclubs, restaurants, and galleries, as well as workplace developments like the Humana Waterside Building and the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church USA.

During the same period of time, the creation of the West Main Street Cultural Arts District, a recommendation of the 1990 Louisville Downtown Development Plan, resulted in significant private investment to rehabilitate historic buildings and create a heritage tourism destination for residents and visitors alike.

Given these improvements to the waterfront and West Main Street, the special character of East Main Street began to attract attention, especially with the opening of Slugger Field at the eastern end of the corridor, the new interest in downtown housing, and the expanding Medical Center district just to the south.

The eMain initiative was intended to create a strategy that could best take advantage of the character of the street, the rapidly improving environment surrounding East Main Street, and the particular locational desires of high technology firms. East Main Street, or "eMain," provides a concentration of older, attractive buildings that could be reused in open configurations often required by such companies, proximity to the new waterfront with both passive and active recreational opportunities, the ability to live near one's workplace, and a concentration of similar types of companies that often provides a heightened intellectual stimulation and creativity. In addition, the new Extreme Park presents a unique activity area adjacent to eMain that would appeal to many of these employees. In short, the area is ripe for a focus of technology-related entities as well as others who would find it stimulating to work and live in such an environment.

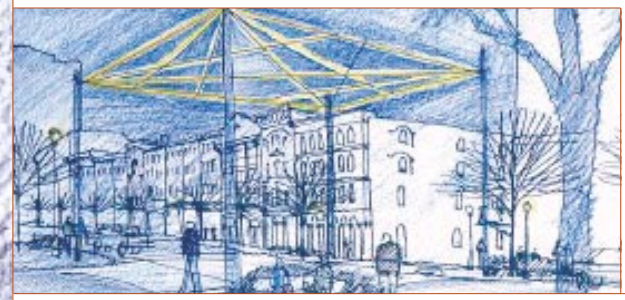


In February 2000, spurred by the widespread interest generated by the proposed renovation of the Clocktower Building for the initial eMain project, a design charrette was convened to give form to a vision for "eMain USA." The resulting conceptual master plan for East Main and Market Streets envisions an entirely new mixed-use urban business neighborhood for e-businesses (exclusively web-based businesses), e-commerce (divisions and joint ventures), e-services (ISP's, web design, and technology firms), and—most of all—people, offering a dynamic urban atmosphere and an innovative place for new economy pioneers.

The charrette examined the redevelopment potential of key buildings and created a focused urban design plan for the eMain USA district. This plan includes the following recommendations:

New Development Potential

Establish a consistent commercial presence along the street edge with new infill construction, providing active storefront uses along the sidewalk with a mix of residential, office, or live/work units above. Building heights should remain consistent with historic structures in the area and protect vistas and views to the river from downtown.



Parking

Limit parking to block centers, not visible from either Main or Market Streets, with primary vehicular access through alleys. Encourage structured parking and incorporate efficient surface parking on existing lots.

Land Use

eBusinesses

Focus high tech uses in the western portion of the eMain district, with the Clocktower Building as the centerpiece of new construction and rehabilitation around the intersection of Brook and Main Streets. Provide flexible office space

for e-business entrepreneurs in the key business markets: startup and incubator, growing, and maturing businesses.

Residential Uses

Provide a concentration of diverse housing options in the form of live/work studios on upper floors of all redevelopment proposals as well as loft apartments and condominium developments beginning in the vicinity of the Brinly-Hardy properties on Preston and Main Streets in the eastern portion of the eMain USA district.

Entertainment and other uses

Promote the location of eating and drinking establishments in conjunction with Louisville Slugger Field and the Extreme Park and encourage the concentration of entertainment and retail uses in the vicinity of Preston and Main Streets and portions of Market Street, which is already a popular location for entertainment and unique retail uses.

Zoning

Zoning should be sensitive to the diversity of uses that will be permitted in the district, encouraging retail and entertainment uses on the first floor while allowing office and residential uses on the upper floors in conformity with existing design guidelines. Manufacturing and heavy industrial uses are not consistent with the goals of the eMain district.

Historic Preservation

Preserve the potential of historic properties by guiding infill development to enhance the character of the entire district and providing incentives to rehabilitate buildings on the National Register or structures that are eligible for National Register nomination.

Streetscape Improvements, Transportation, and Linkages

Create a sense of place unique to the eMain district using sidewalks, street trees, lighting, open spaces, street furniture, and other pedestrian and transit amenities. Link and extend the pedestrian-oriented character of West Main Street, shortening the psychological distance separating East and West Main Streets. Strengthen multi-modal linkages to the Waterfront, Medical Center, the Downtown core, and adjoining neighborhoods.

... offering a dynamic urban atmosphere and an innovative place for new economy pioneers.

The goal for eMain is to become the premier district for businesses and knowledge workers who want to thrive in the virtual marketplace. The initial "anchor" of this exciting combination of creativity and entrepreneurial spirit is the renovation and reuse of The Clock Tower Building at 123 East Main Street.

The Clock Tower Building, featuring 130,000 square feet of space retrofitted for use in the new economy, will be home to an innovative combination of knowledge-based businesses, educational opportunities and support services. Its renovation at the heart of eMain is being completed through an impressive partnership between local and state government, businesses and local educational institutions. The Clock Tower Building, the oldest portion of which dates to the late 1800s, served for decades as warehouses of the now-defunct Belknap Inc. hardware business. Now owned by Humana, the building runs the length of the block along Brook from Washington to Main and is widely known for its large clock that overlooks the northeast corner of Brook and Main. The City loaned Humana $5.2 million at two percent annual interest for ten years to complete the renovation. The money included $2.5 million from a State pool of money provided to the City that was set aside for technology development statewide. The space will be leased specifically to e-businesses and for educational efforts supporting e-commerce.

To support the e-businesses housed above, the building will host a number of services including "The Community @eMain," an educational and training partnership; The Enterprise Corporation, a division of Greater Louisville Inc. that specializes in developing the region's fast-growth entrepreneurial sector; and the Bellarmine University Center for eWorld Education.

The City of Louisville, the Jefferson County Schools, Kentucky Community and Technical College Systems and the University of Louisville have partnered together to sponsor technology training and support programs through The Community @ eMain initiative. The primary focus of the center will be to train students in the most up-to-date technologies as a way to keep talented young people in the community.

It also will be a place where adults and businesses may turn for state-of-the-art technology education. The Community @ eMain will pair students, as well as professionals, with companies that offer technology internships and full-time work placement. Beginning in the fall of 2002, the Community will begin serving up an adult education program to 200 students in the county school system. Eventually the Community will establish cooperative programs with employers, such as the Louisville Medical Center and the burgeoning technology businesses in the eMain district.

With the renovation of The Clock Tower Building, eMain is moving from a grand vision to a real, pulsating presence in downtown Louisville.

The Community @eMain

Retail

Retail activities that are most appropriate for a downtown area, and most supportive of the type of vibrant downtowns that are sought, have changed considerably. No longer is downtown primarily a market for apparel goods, large department stores, and other types of general merchandising. These are now more commonly found in suburban locations, and this type of shopping tends to be done in the evenings and weekends.

Given the new dynamics of downtown, with more of an emphasis on entertainment-oriented retailing, neighborhood service retailing to accommodate the existing and anticipated increase in residential development within and adjacent should downtown. The interest in specialty retailing that can only be found in unique locations also suggests, a revised mix of retail activities that reflect these trends.

Retail Market

As part of this planning effort, the Plan Team first commissioned a market assessment of downtown Louisville's retail market. The report, prepared by Economic Research Associates (ERA), examined the potential market demand for retail space in downtown Louisville and reached the following key findings:

Key Findings

Louisville currently has about 700,000 square feet of existing space generally classified as "retail" in downtown Louisville.

Approximately 340,000 square feet of this retail space is scattered at street level, the prime location for retail space. However, much of the street level retail space is either vacant (estimated at about 20 percent of the total) or under-performing.

Given the activity level of downtown Louisville and its demographics, approximately 528,000 to 762,000 square feet of appropriately located retail space can be supported in downtown.

Given these findings, it is apparent that downtown Louisville does not need a large amount of additional retail square footage. It does indicate, however, that a good deal of the existing retail space needs to be improved and/or provide a tenant mix that is more conducive to today's market. First floor, transparent retail space is essential, improved visibility by both those on foot and those in vehicles is important, and location within an area of similar and complementary uses can provide the critical mass that successful retailing requires.

Specific recommendations regarding the retail space are grouped into four distinct sub-areas of downtown:

Galleria/ Fourth Street

The configuration and tenant mix of the Galleria has long been at odds with newer concepts of

> 4TH STREET LIVE!

Louisville's Galleria opened in 1982 at a time when many cities were converting downtown streets into pedestrian malls and enclosed shopping centers. It quickly lost its initial glamour and became seen as an impediment to traffic along once-vibrant Fourth Street. By the early 1990s, the Galleria was no longer able to draw destination retailers, a major department store left, and the Galleria struggled to find its retail niche. By 1999, the owners of the complex were seeking to sell the center and the City was eager to find an appropriate developer to rethink and reposition the Galleria, changing it from an outdated, enclosed downtown mall that blocks Fourth Street, to an exciting urban entertainment complex more in tune with the new downtown demographics. The idea was to capitalize on the resurgence of downtowns across America as a gathering place, and provide a truly unique entertainment and niche retailing experience.

The Baltimore-based Cordish Company, a national developer with a proven track record in creating successful entertainment complexes in major urban areas, was chosen to make the vision a reality. Renaming the complex 4th Street Live!, the Cordish Company plans to invest $70 million in renovating the center, changing its focus, and opening it up to the fabric of downtown. The new redeveloped project, increased to 350,000 square feet, will reinforce Fourth Street and will serve as the anchor for revitalization of an emerging entertainment district to the south of the project. During the day, 4th Street Live! will provide an engaging lunch and shopping environment, while at night the complex will feature a unique blend of national and local dining and entertainment establishments.

In planning the project, the Cordish Company draws from a record of success in other urban centers, such as those in Baltimore, Houston, and Charleston.

Baltimore's Power Plant, a historic power plant that was transformed from an eyesore to a symbol of urban revitalization, combines a Barnes and Noble Booksellers, Hard Rock Café, ESPN Zone, Gold's Gym, and office space. Nearby, the Power Plant Live offers live music, the Improv (comedy club), McFadden's Irish Pub and other eateries.

Construction is scheduled to begin in fall 2002, with completion in the fall of 2003.

The plans also create exciting new opportunities for development in the Fourth Street area south of 4th Street Live!. The City envisions the creation of an entertainment district along the 500 and 600 blocks of Fourth Street. This will, in turn, create new opportunities for developers who wish to build or renovate additional housing near what is sure to become a hub for downtown Louisville's nightlife.

downtown retailing that take advantage of the unique downtown atmosphere, the retail desires of those most likely to frequent it, and the urban-entertainment orientation of many successful downtown retail centers. Enclosed downtown shopping centers with a traditional mix of retail goods and services are being repositioned all across the country to present a fresher type of retail experience, with the emphasis on experience. Entertainment-oriented projects also tend to expand the trade area of a retail district, drawing customers from greater distances than typical shopping districts. Such a repositioning of the Galleria will assist in creating a more active downtown, especially during the evening hours, and also draw residents from the region into the City on a more regular basis.

Fortunately for downtown Louisville, such a repositioning has already been proposed by the Cordish Company, one of the nation's leading developers of urban entertainment retailing. The proposed Fourth Street Live! development will transform the Louisville Galleria into a thriving downtown retail experience. It will be able to take advantage of the assets of the Galleria (central CBD location, impressive glass covering, ability to close the

street at certain times of the week, excellent transit accessibility), and at the same time remove some of its deficiencies (enclosed space, no through traffic, poor tenant mix.) The mix of entertainment, food and drink, and specialty retailing provides the critical mass that is necessary for success. A focus on well-known national retailers within these categories not currently in the Louisville area will capture a latent market, and also will provide the stability to encourage more local and regional entrepreneurs to consider locations in the adjoining Fourth Street.

Entertainment District.

With Fourth Street Live! providing a major retail anchor, it is recommended that the 500 and 600 blocks of Fourth Street be positioned as downtown's Entertainment District. A diverse mix of restaurants and clubs should be encouraged along the Fourth Street corridor in order to better serve the hotels and theaters located at both ends of the street. Entertainment uses (such as bars and nightclubs) will extend the operating hours of the corridor – encouraging nighttime activity.

It will be important to balance any retail development occurring at the Galleria with retail development along Fourth Street and Main Street. Given the rather limited market support in the Louisville region (the Louisville region with just under one million residents is much smaller than, for example, Indianapolis with 1.5 million residents and Charlotte with 1.35 million), it will be important to monitor the amount of space set aside for retail.

The merchandise mix along Fourth Street should include unique specialty retail shops that will complement the mix of national retailers expected at Fourth Street Live!

500 Block: Existing

500 Block: Proposed

> ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

For earlier generations of Louisvillians, the phrase "Fourth and Broadway" conjured up a special feeling. Many referred to it as "the Magic Corner," and pictures of the area from those earlier days show a vibrant area of downtown that drew residents from across the region to enjoy the best of the downtown experience: shopping, entertainment and fellowship.

Fourth Street and the Magic Corner have lost much of their magic in the decades since the 1960s. Revitalization projects along the 500 and 600 blocks of Fourthh Street have not spurred area revitalization; while the Seelbach and the Brown Hotels provide strong anchors, projects in between exist in isolation. In hopes of restoring the sparkle, a year ago Mayor Armstrong formed the Entertainment District Task Force to recommend how best to revitalize areas of Fourth Street in a way that would reinforce the burgeoning success of a new urban/entertainment oriented Galleria. 4th Street Live!, as the Galleria will be renamed, will receive more than $70 million in investments from the Cordish Company over the next two years. Plans include re-opening Fourth Street to traffic, bringing in new restaurants and entertainment venues, and creating an entertainment destination like no other in this region.

While redeveloping the Galleria is a critical piece in restoring magic to Fourth Street, that vision will not be fully realized unless Fourth Street from the Galleria to Broadway is revitalized. With this goal in mind and following the task force's recommendations, the City of Louisville has designated $500,000 to spur development along two critical blocks – the 500 and 600 Blocks of Fourth Street. The strategy is to use the "anchor" of many of Fourth Street Live!'s national entertainment tenants to spur the location of more local and regional entertainment venues to these blocks of Fourth Street.

With the goal of creating a safe and exciting environment, City funds will be used to bolster the infrastructure of the area, such as enhanced lighting, landscaping and public art. Lighting and signage in the area will add an innovative flair to the district, signaling a sense of excitement and playfulness.

The new entertainment venues and businesses will join a number of established businesses on Fourth Street — from The Palace Theater and the Public Radio Partnership, to the recently opened Cunningham's and Luigi's restaurants. The Fourth Street Entertainment District will knit together existing and new businesses into an exciting Louisville destination. When locally owned businesses join national franchises, Fourth Street again will become an exciting and dynamic "point of destination" for residents and visitors alike.

Retail

East and West Main/Market Streets

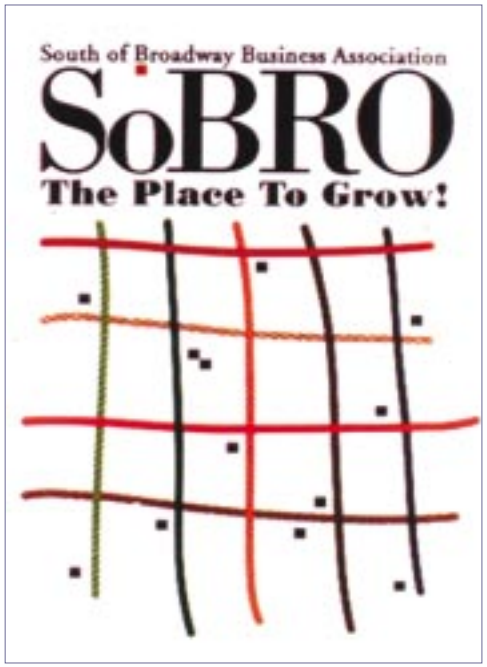
The spurt in development activity within the West Main Street Cultural Arts District, and the activity recently emerging along East Main and Market Streets, is encouraging. Given the emerging retail strength of these areas, additional restaurants and specialty retail tenants should be targeted, including galleries and arts/design-related tenants. This will likely imply more regional and localized retailers, with an emphasis on creating a critical mass of galleries and restaurants in the area. Professional office space should be encouraged to locate above the street level so as to create a continuum of retail activity along the street.

The City should promote the uniqueness (and artistic appeal) of the corridor with specialty bookstores, map suppliers, artists' supplies, and gift merchants. An effort also should be made to recruit successful local retailers. Although the movie theater industry is currently in a state of flux, an art house or independent theater could be considered for this area.

Some neighborhood services to accommodate the increasing number of downtown residents, particularly a small, urban-style market, also is necessary, and will likely seek locations as the number of residents in the area continues to increase.

South of Broadway (SoBro)

The south of Broadway area (dubbed "SoBro") is a logical site for community-oriented retail, given the proximity of the public library and multi-family housing. Because Broadway often acts as a barrier between the neighborhood and the downtown core, more service-oriented retail (e.g. dry cleaners, hair salons, markets) also will stand a good chance of success, providing immediate benefits to the surrounding residential base. Mixed-use development with ground floor commercial uses and residential units above should also be strongly encouraged in this area.



East Downtown, Including the Medical Center

Retail on the east side of downtown should include goods and services targeted at hospital employees and visitors as well as the local neighborhood. Food service, dry cleaners, and drug stores/pharmacies are the most obvious targets.

> EAST MARKET STREET

One part of downtown experiencing a burgeoning revitalization is the East Market Street area. This area, just east of the downtown core but adjacent to the Waterfront, Main Street, the Medical Center, and Clarksdale, is transforming itself from an area characterized by a concentration of social service providers and vacant buildings into, as a recent Courier Journal article stated, "an eclectic mix of contemporary art galleries, antique shops and restaurants with sidewalk seating." Especially interesting is its recent focus on international dining options and the successful integration of restaurants and art galleries into a true cosmopolitan feel.

The best news is that most of this has occurred naturally, through the initiative, investment, and sweat equity of many of the property owners and local entrepreneurs. The public sector's strategic investment in the Waterfront Park, Louisville Slugger Field, and the Extreme Park has helped solidify this private investment and has greatly expanded the market by bringing lots of new people to the area. The Downtown Housing Fund also has assisted the conversion of the Hancock Street Firehouse into new residential units and a first floor art gallery. But the flourishing of East Market Street is a perfect example of the mass impact that can be made by just a few people who really believe in downtown, in the uniqueness of this type of urban atmosphere as a stimulus for creative work, and who are willing to make an investment to prove the point. The confluence of these individuals with a public sector ready to encourage and support such efforts, and make strategic investments of its own, has transformed this area in a relatively short period of time.

There are still issues that remain, including the need to carefully accommodate those important social service providers that remain in the area, but the enthusiasm of all ready to work together on a successful resolution is refreshing. Clearly, the East Market transformation will be further enhanced once the Clarksdale redevelopment occurs, as a new mixed-income development that will blend in to the existing neighborhood fabric will provide a 24-hour market demand. Conversely, the cosmopolitan environment of East Market Street provides a unique amenity for potential new residents of the adjacent neighborhood, as well as those working and living along Main Street and near the Medical Center.

Hats off to those who had the courage and foresight to invest in East Market Street and help make it perhaps downtown's most diverse and culturally interesting place to be!

Public Realm

Overview

The "public realm" of a city is the environment that its streets, open spaces, parks and plazas create for visitors, employees and residents. The public realm in any vibrant downtown engages people and encourages human interaction. It makes one want to sit outside at a café and watch what's going on rather than stay inside. Its streets celebrate the uniqueness of downtown and add to its creativity.

In downtown Louisville, some parts of the public realm currently provide exactly this kind of welcoming environment. The West Main Street area and Waterfront Park exemplify two areas where the public realm is successful in engaging visitors, residents and employees in an attractive and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. This is no accident. Active and intensive efforts to create this kind of environment in these areas have been in place for a number of years.

In other areas of downtown, however, where less attention has been paid to the design of the public realm, or past efforts have not been as successful, the physical environment remains far less welcoming. The challenge of infusing different parts of downtown with their own unique identity and sense of place remains a significant hurdle in many parts of town.

On the other hand, downtown Louisville has great potential to create welcoming public spaces in virtually every corner of downtown. Many areas of downtown retain a fine stock of buildings, as well as unique characteristics that contribute to the identity of the area. In addition, burgeoning new areas of focus, such as eMain, the Galleria/Entertainment District, and the Medical Center can be reinforced and encouraged to continue to add to their vibrancy with a well-planned set of public improvements and supportive policies.

The creation of an inviting public realm does not depend solely upon an upgraded streetscape program, although that is certainly one necessary element for success, particularly in those places where the quality of the public right-of-way does not match that of the private. The creation of a sense of place involves a complex set of interrelationships among a variety of factors. These include:

- the location and programming of public parks and plazas;
- the storefront retail environment;
- the speed, direction and flow of traffic;
- the design of private buildings;
- landscaping features;
- the existence of "missing teeth" at the building line;
- the location and design of parking and mass transit facilities; and
- the lighting and cleanliness of the area.

While this list may seem dauntingly long, a well-designed development effort focused on the public realm can in fact anticipate and manage the coordination of many of these elements at one time — providing significant benefits to the public.

First and foremost among these elements, a downtown cannot be vibrant and alive unless its streets are vibrant and alive. The development of highly unique, attractive, and vibrant downtown streets should be a major priority of downtown Louisville. The celebration of West Main Street through a detailed and well thought-out streetscape program is a perfect example of the benefits of making improved streetscapes such a priority.

Secondly, each downtown district should have a special, unique streetscape and public amenity program tailored to the characteristics of that particular district. To create a true sense of place, the public environment must establish and reinforce the sense of uniqueness of that district, highlighting its individual character while at the same time providing the necessary public amenities.

Some downtown districts—like West Main Street - have already succeeded in creating this unique sense of place. Others like eMain USA are in the

early planning phases of this effort. A "Place-Making" program by the Downtown Development Corporation has begun for Fourth Street, focusing on ways to create a unique environment in the City's new Entertainment District that build on the area's proximity to water as Fourth Street moves towards the River. This Place-Making program also should be utilized to create unique environments for the Medical Center, SoBro, the Civic/Government complex, and Shippingport.

East Waterfront Park

Louisville's reclamation of the waterfront has helped to reconnect the public to the Ohio River after many years of waterfront usage that was openly hostile to pedestrians. A generation ago, a drive along the River would show most of the property being used for a variety of heavy industries. Today, green spaces, play areas, a new baseball stadium, and new residential development, are all contributing to the community's return to the River. The most dramatic effort has been the 55-acre first phase of the Waterfront Park. Since its opening, over one million people have used its facilities, and it has been instrumental in helping change the image of downtown and the community.

Work has now begun on Phase II of the Waterfront Park, a $40 million investment that will extend the Park eastward for another 30 acres up to Towhead Island and Beargrass Creek. Elements in this phase will include an additional, larger children's play area; a water play area; a café; an amphitheater; docks for pleasure boaters; a school and community rowing center; additional picnic and lawn areas; and the reuse of the Big Four Bridge as a pedestrian connection to southern Indiana.

> WATERFRONT PARK Phase II

When the first phase of Waterfront Park was officially dedicated on July 4, 1999, more than 80,000 people jammed the Great Lawn and Festival Plaza for a day full of games, music, food and fun. The Park played host to folks of all ages, from every part of the community, state, and region.

Big as it was, this milestone celebrating the first 55 acres of the planned 90-acre park was just a fraction of the successful story of Waterfront Park. A full schedule of events has kept the Park bustling since its opening: Derby festival events, Thunder over Louisville, Rockin' at Riverpointes concerts, numerous walkathons, picnics, visits by the Mississippi Queen and Delta Queen, school field trips, sailing regattas, and more.

Add to all that the daily park users – kids in the Children's Play Area, joggers in Linear Park, people just sitting on the Overlook watching the River, kids (and adults!) frolicking in the fountain – and you get a true picture of how the community has embraced this place as the ultimate neighborhood park and community-wide gathering place.

Waterfront Park Phase II will continue to build on the success of the first phase, adding 34 acres of Linear Park to Phase I. Construction has already begun. The construction area covers all areas from the eastern end of the park to just west of the Big Four Bridge, and includes the most active areas of Phase II, including the new Children's Play Area, which will be significantly larger than the playground in the first phase of the park; a fun area for water play; a plaza for an informal café; an amphitheater; docks for pleasure boaters; an area for a school and community rowing center; and additional picnic and lawn areas, tree groves, and walking paths. The contract for the "finishing work" on IIA, which includes all landscaping, park furnishings, playground surfacing and equipment, docks, paving and concrete work—basically everything you will see when the park is finished—has been awarded, and Phase IIA is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2003.

The centerpiece of the second phase, the Big Four Bridge as a walkway across the river, will be included in Phase IIB, and also includes a continuation of the tree groves, meadows, picnic areas and walking paths of Linear Park. Work on IIB, which will start immediately after IIA is finished, will take approximately 18 months to complete.

The extension of the Waterfront Park to Beargrass Creek also will provide opportunities for downtown residents and visitors to access new recreational boating facilities on Beargrass Creek, as well as making additional waterfront residential development possible.

The public's embrace of Waterfront Park provides a major impetus for the development of a mixed-use community surrounding the Park. While flood plain issues and a desire not to draw existing commercial tenants away from the downtown commercial core are constraints to certain types of development, the success of Waterfront Park provides a strong impetus for the development of additional downtown residential units near and adjacent to the waterfront. Waterfront Park Place is the initial effort in this regard, and the adjacent parcel to its east should be prioritized for additional housing. Adaptive use of existing buildings in the Main and Market Street corridors also should be targeted for residential development.

West Waterfront Park

At the same time as Waterfront Park was being developed, public access to the waterfront to the west of downtown was again re-established through the development of the RiverWalk. This pedestrian and bicycle pathway stretching from the downtown Wharf all the way west to Chickasaw Park has provided recreational opportunities to a great many people. Just as important, it has provided an opportunity for many people to experience the beauty of western Louisville for the first time. The RiverWalk is well utilized, and its success has spawned efforts to provide a similar river path stretching from the Waterfront Park east to the county line.

Proposed West Waterfront Park

While the Riverwalk has been a great success, it is still difficult for pedestrians to get to it in many parts of downtown. Its primary advantage—a location directly along the River bank—is also its primary challenge, due to the lack of public areas between the River's edge and downtown, as well as the lack of pleasant pedestrian connections to the River west of the Waterfront Park. While major public improvements have been made to the Belvedere/Riverfront Plaza, and West Main Street, the ability to move from these areas to the RiverWalk and/or the waterfront in the heart of downtown is a difficult and often an unpleasant experience. The same can be said for access to the RiverWalk from many parts of west Louisville. A number of opportunities to enhance the connections to the waterfront from Third to Fifteenth Streets, and to improve access to the RiverWalk, are possible. Foremost among these is the creation of a new West Waterfront Park, which would occupy the northern-most edge of Shippingport, on the former site of the container storage area currently not accessible to the public. This 10-acre park would provide recreational opportunities—both active and passive—for those in the western portion of downtown and the residents of West Louisville, and provide a pleasant, welcoming access to the Riverwalk.

River Road Redesign/Connection to West Main Street

The north side of River Road provides the current connection to the RiverWalk, to the downtown wharf area, and ultimately to the new West Waterfront Park for the vast majority of those in downtown. However, regardless of the significant public and private investment occurring along these areas and in the area south of River Road and Main Street, River Road acts as a severe impediment to those wishing to access the River.

As Louisville provides a pedestrian-friendly environment along the River, along West Main Street, on the Belvedere and in the new development on the former Kingfish site, it is incongruous that River Road, the major entrance into these areas, remains a cold, hostile, and uninviting environment. The existence of the expressway overhead should not be used as an easy excuse for such an environment. Although it is a condition that must be dealt with, it is merely one obstacle that must be—and can be—minimized in any good urban design program.

River Road today

Many cities have established strong, pleasant, and welcoming pedestrian environments in similar areas. The current obstacles are many: 1) the high speeds of automobiles—higher than necessary; 2) the extreme width of the vehicular right-of-way—wider than necessary; 3) the lack of any traffic control—rendering pedestrian crossing dangerous; 4) the impediments imposed by the jersey barriers—blocking access to the RiverWalk; 5) the poor pedestrian environment along Sixth and Seventh Streets—potentially major access points to the River; and 6) the lack of any color or liveliness that announces the attractions and activity just one block south. These are all issues that the community can address, not just to make the River Road environment less hostile, but to create a proud new gateway into downtown, as well as the new West Waterfront Park.

There are a number of ways that significant improvements can be made, and all should be addressed immediately in a new Western Waterfront Improvement Program design. Elements of this design plan should include the following:

- The design of the West Waterfront Park.
- The redesign of River Road to provide access to the West Waterfront Park and ultimately to connect to Northwestern Parkway. The redesign should include elements that slow traffic speeds, provide signalization at Sixth and Seventh Streets, introduce strong graphic and lighting elements, and eliminate the Jersey Barriers along the Riverwalk.
- The redesign of Sixth and Seventh Streets to provide a strong pedestrian connection to—and across—River Road.
- The creation of new development parcels between Washington Street and River Road, with priority given to residential development on these new parcels.
- Improved access to the West Waterfront Park and RiverWalk via the Shippingport area.

Ali Center Plaza

The recently unveiled plans for the redevelopment of the former Kingfish site between Sixth and Seventh Streets, and Washington Street and River Road as the new Muhammad Ali Center Plaza, will provide a wonderful addition to the downtown open space system by extending public access to the last remaining riverfront parcel in downtown Louisville. The current plan will create a truly vibrant public plaza that extends the pedestrian environment of West Main Street and connects it to the Riverfront Plaza/Belvedere and the RiverWalk.

With the opening of the Muhammad Ali Center in 2004, the plaza will come alive with more than 400,000 visitors, children, and educators annually, and the activities of the Center will spill out into this public space.

Public Realm

Ali Center Plaza Site Plan

The plaza also will be connected to Main Street via the historic Main Street properties, whose renovation and redevelopment will include a grand atrium entrance to the Plaza. Finally, the integrated site plan includes a development parcel for a future activity generator on the western portion of the site. This as-yet-unspecified development is appropriate for a mixed-use design incorporating residential, commercial, and/or hotel, and should incorporate a public use at its ground floor level. The development of this parcel in such a complementary manner will provide additional activity for the public plaza, and further enhance the vitality and vibrancy of this new jewel in downtown Louisville's public space network.

Place-Making Initiative

The efforts to highlight the unique character of certain of the distinct districts downtown, such as West Main Street and the Waterfront area, have been met with great enthusiasm by the public, and equally strong interest by those considering private investment in these areas. These areas now celebrate their uniqueness and special flavor in their own right, while at the same time complementing one another as distinct parts of the overall downtown. These efforts have inspired stakeholders in other parts of downtown to focus on their own character and special characteristics, with a clear focus on creating a true "sense of place."Out of this background, the Downtown Development Corporation has suggested an overall approach to this effort through its Downtown Place-Making Initiative. This initiative is a call to action to begin a design (and ultimately an implementation) program that, over time, will develop a special character and identity for each of the downtown districts. It is recommended that one urban design element in each of these districts be added each year, preferably through a cooperative partnership of the public and private sectors. Over time, these elements will come together, as they have already for the West Main Street area, to create a distinct sense of place in districts throughout downtown.

These "place-making plans" will incorporate the following elements:

- Upgrade existing public parks/plazas to transform them into more user-friendly environments.
- Focus on special streetscape (e.g. West Main)
- Public art/amenities
- Improved public landscaping/trees
- Special district lighting/identity items
- Limited number of small new open spaces (near residential)
- More active/commercial use in public parks and plazas
- Improved management options

Guthrie Green

Efforts already have begun in some downtown districts. The eMain corridor has produced a series of urban design and streetscape amenities that will reflect the technology basis of this district. A streetscape plan for Fourth Street south of the Galleria is being developed that will highlight the entertainment-related activities anticipated as part of the Entertainment District. The Medical Center is developing a streetscape improvement program as well as an integrated signage program. Other efforts need to be initiated, particularly Fourth Street north of the Galleria, SoBro, the Civic/Governmental Area, and the Educational Campus area.

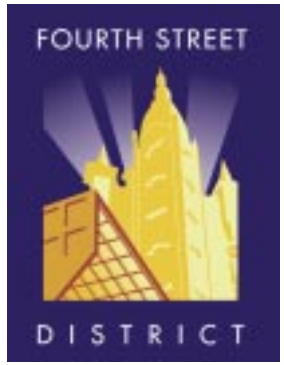
Ninth Street Boulevard Redesign

Ninth Street/Roy Wilkins Boulevard is a major boulevard that currently acts as a severe barrier between the Central Business District and West Louisville. With the anticipated construction and completion of the Ninth Street extension, this barrier will only become more rigid. While the current right-of-way is quite wide and was originally intended to serve as a green "boulevard" in its grandest sense, it unfortunately does not serve this purpose. However, the width of the right-of-way and the green space does provide the opportunity for its transformation.

A redesign of the roadway can produce a center section that serves through-traffic, and frontage roads on the east and west sides (e.g. Southern Parkway) that can act as a wonderful residentially-oriented local street. This redesign, combined with a good deal of underutilized property on parcels that abut the right-of-way both on its east and west edges, provides an opportunity to create another positive residential boulevard address in the downtown area.

Current Ninth Street Boulevard

Redesigned Ninth Street Boulevard



Downtown Gateways

The downtown area has some fairly straightforward and well-understood "entrances," yet most of these do not provide any visual or aesthetic representation that one is entering a particularly significant and important "place" in the community. Gateways at the major entrances of downtown should be developed that celebrate the area and provide identification to the major thematic design elements of that part of downtown.

Improved Wayfinding/District Image

Downtown Louisville is composed of a number of sub-districts with their own unique identity and character. Some of these have been very well developed and also have included a nomenclature of design elements: signage, streetscape, design standards, etc. These include Theater Square, the Waterfront, West Main Street, and to some extent the Medical Center. However, many other areas of downtown are not well defined, and there is no coordinated signage and wayfinding system to help people locate destinations and move from one district to another. Such a coordinated system can become a major element in defining various districts of the downtown, reinforcing their unique character, and assisting both motorists and pedestrians in navigating through the downtown in a pleasant and easy way.

As a corollary effort to the Downtown Plan, a unified signage and wayfinding system for downtown and Old Louisville has been developed. The system provides for an overall logo and design vocabulary for downtown, but also provides for similar identity elements for the major sub-districts of downtown. These identifiers not only provide improved directional information for both those in vehicles and pedestrians, but they also become major elements of an improved public environment that add color, liveliness, lighting and a degree of celebration to the public realm.

The combination of improved information for those downtown, a reinforcement of the special character of our downtown districts, and a heightened level of liveliness makes the downtown wayfinding system one of the most useful and cost-effective implementation measures to move the downtown vision forward.

Public Realm

Walnut Street Corridor

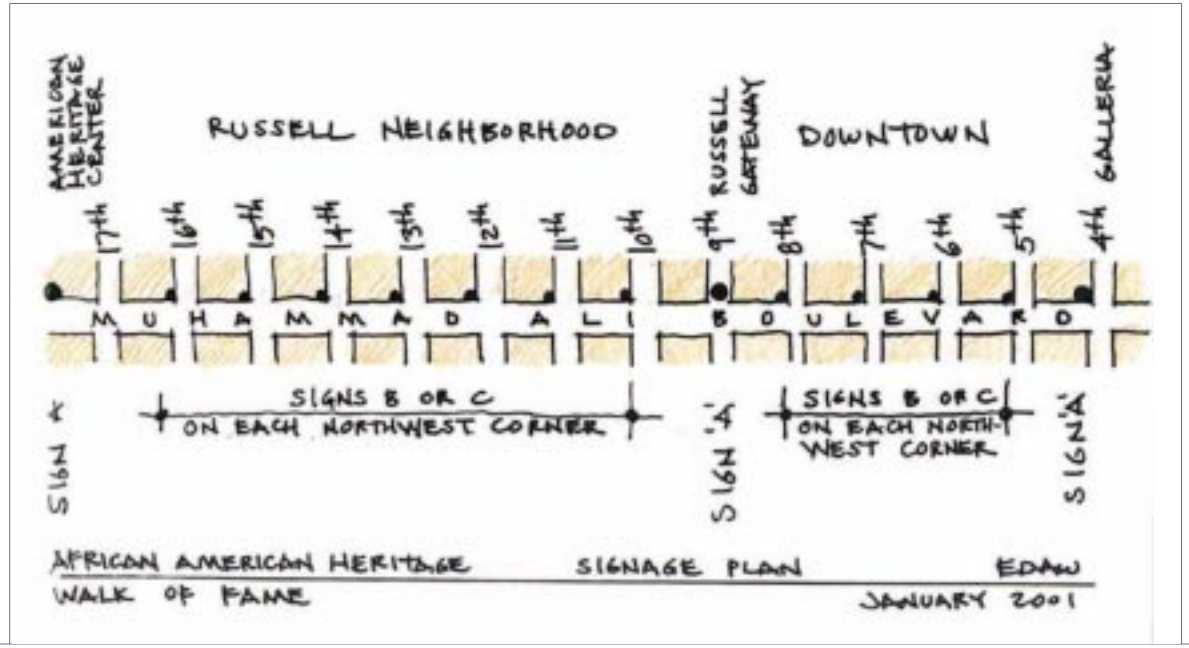
For many years, the old Walnut Street area from Fifth to Tenth Streets served as the major African-American district in downtown Louisville, and the street was alive with restaurants, shops, and clubs that gave this area a distinct character and flavor. People still remember the sights, sounds, and smells, and the distinctive design elements that characterized this district.

While these establishments unfortunately no longer exist in this area, their memory resonates with many African Americans. A new commercial hub is growing in the west end at Muhammad Ali Boulevard (old Walnut Street) and 18th Street, culminating with the construction of the African American Heritage Center.

Muhammad Ali Boulevard from Fifth to 18th Street can become a vital link between this new hub and downtown, and can serve as a physical and psychological link as well, if designed to highlight this connection. Streetscape improvements, public art, heritage/educational markers, and other design elements should be incorporated into the street to celebrate this vibrant history and announce the current connections.

Detriments to the Public Realm

Both the City of Louisville and the private sector have made significant commitments to the enhancement of the public realm in the most recent decade, and the consensus reached on many of the recommendations contained in this Plan shows an equally strong commitment for this to continue. However, in spite of this public policy, other actions often occur which are detrimental to these efforts and result in a diminution of the overall impact of the program. Often these can be prevented through regulatory and enforcement measures.



Too often, however, these first floor spaces are leased for office-uses, or closed from public view by dark glass or other non-transparent building materials. Particularly in a soft retail market, these spaces are converted to uses that are better provided on upper floors. Once lost, however, these ground floor spaces are rarely returned to their proper use. The new Development Code should provide regulatory standards for the percentage of ground floor space devoted to retail-type uses and the use of transparent glass as a building material, particularly along those streets with the strongest current or future retail potential.

A second major detriment to the public realm is the incursion of surface parking lots along streets that break the continuity of building line. The result is the "missing tooth" effect, where the energy of the street is sapped due to the deadliness of the surface lots. While downtown parking is important, it is nonetheless critical that these existing lots be heavily screened from view, and that additional surface lots are not permitted along those downtown streets where such missing teeth would be highly detrimental.

One of the most interesting ways to add to the vitality and creativity of downtown is the encouragement of public art. Even more important, the incorporation of art by enhancing common elements in the downtown streetscape provides an additional degree of interest and hopefully brings the smile that often occurs when one encounters a nice surprise. A strong public art program in downtown also indicates that this is a community that cares enough to pay attention to detail, and at the same time celebrates the creative spirit.

Public art elements have become more of an integral element of many spaces in the downtown area. Two recent efforts illustrate both the surprise and whimsy that buoys the spirit, and also illustrates an excellent example of incorporating art into otherwise mundane infrastructure.

THE FINNS

In the past year, a collection of large, colorful bird sculptures—the signature pieces of local artist Marvin Finn—have been on display in downtown Louisville, initially in the green space at Fourth and Jefferson and more recently along West Main Street. With their bold colors, brilliant designs, and large sizes, this display of folk art can't help but be noticed, and the anomaly of such pieces in the downtown area further enhances one's curiosity.

None of the Finn-inspired animals are painted with the colors one would typically find on the creatures in real life. For instance, the children's fish are more likely to be bright blue and hot pink with yellow polka dots than simply green with scales.

"His work is so magical, mystical and whimsical. Their eyes light up when they see it," said an elementary school teacher who brought her class downtown to see the Finns—and then had them design their own. This display provides exactly what public art should do: it stirs imagination, it creates an unexpected whimsical moment, it creates discussion and debate among strangers who wouldn't otherwise engage each other, and it encourages personal creativity, especially among the young. Hats off to the Finns!

BIKE RACKS

A bike rack is just a piece of metal where you lock your bike and hopefully find it when you get back, right? Wrong, if you are talking about the four new bike racks recently installed in downtown Louisville. The Louisville Downtown Management District commissioned four local artists to create one-of-a-kind bike rack sculptures to be placed in the public right-of-way in various locations in downtown Louisville. In addition to serving as functioning bike racks, they provide original art for the enjoyment of the general public. When no bike is attached, it is difficult to realize that these are bike racks. In fact, even with a bike attached is still appears to be a piece of sculpture that one has surreptitiously commandeered as a bike rack. The four local artists - Craig Kaviar, Bates Fisher-Webster, Raymond Graf, and Bryan K. Holden, should be commended for their interesting designs and their creative talents, as should the LDMD for its innovative idea. Here again, having a bike rack stir discussion, debate, and hopefully creative thinking is a great example of doing little things that make downtown special.

And doesn't it seem as if there are more and more bicycles showing up at these racks?

Circulation

Downtown Circulation

Overview

The ability to easily access downtown Louisville and to circulate and navigate within the downtown area is a critical component to its long-term health. The myriad of improvements recommended in this Plan will fail to achieve the goals of a vibrant, economically healthy downtown unless its circulation system is operating in an efficient manner. This circulation system must operate effectively for vehicular movement, pedestrian movement, and transit movement, if our downtown will be a place to live, work, play, and learn.

The street and circulation network must therefore serve a multitude of functions. While it must move vehicles and pedestrians in and around the downtown, its streets and boulevards also serve as the front door for its retail business establishments, and a strong retail sector is an important component of downtown. In addition, the downtown streets provide the "address" for those people living downtown, and there must be value in this address in order for people to be willing to invest in downtown housing.

While all of these objectives are equally important, for many years one has been prioritized much more significantly, in some instances at the expense of the others. Like many downtowns during the second half of the 20th century, many regarding downtown Louisville were often made to facilitate and optimize the ability of vehicles to easily get into and out of downtown during the morning and evening peak periods of commuter traffic. Key decisions regarding the direction of streets, speed of traffic, availability of on-street parking, and locations of parking garages often dictated how downtown Louisville looked, how it operated, and eventually, what character it came to have.

While these decisions generally had positive impacts on commuter traffic during peak hours, they also had negative impacts on the life of the street and the ability to sustain and encourage other valuable assets of a thriving downtown: street-level retailing, residential neighborhoods, pedestrian-friendliness and safety, and ease of navigation for those unfamiliar with the downtown street system. During the last decade, many cities have revisited their downtown circulation system in order to provide a better balance in the accommodation of the commuter, the visitor, the pedestrian, and the downtown resident. The most valuable asset of downtown is its street; it is literally the lifeline of downtown, and it should be designed in such a manner as to encourage and accommodate street life.

Towards this end, the current street pattern in downtown has been analyzed, and a number of improvements to the current system are suggested for either implementation or further detailed analysis. These can be grouped into three major areas: 1) improving access into the downtown area; 2) improving the navigability of downtown Louisville; 3) improving the downtown street environment, particularly for retailing and pedestrians.

Parallel I-65 Bridge

For many years, a great debate has raged in this community regarding the need and location for a new bridge crossing the Ohio River. The existing bridges—the I-65 Kennedy Bridge, the Second Street (aka George Rogers Clark) Bridge, and the Sherman Minton Bridge are currently either exceeding design capacity or will soon do so, according to recent analyses conducted as part of the Ohio River

Bridges Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In addition, the safety and congestion problems experienced at the Kennedy Interchange (Spaghetti Junction) are due in large part to the inadequate ramps that access the Kennedy Bridge and the difficult weaving movements necessary to access these ramps. Each year that passes with ever worsening traffic congestion on these bridges and in Spaghetti Junction reduces the attractiveness of downtown and those areas within the Watterson Expressway as places of economic growth and investment.

Fortunately, the recommendations that arose from the Ohio River Major Investment Strategy and are now being finalized in the EIS have produced a viable plan for a new bridge parallel to I-65 (Option C-1) that will operate in concert with the recent I-65 improvements north of the River and the reconstruction plan for Spaghetti Junction. There appears to be consensus that this new bridge is necessary and that its implementation should move forward immediately.

Redesign of Kennedy Interchange/Spaghetti Junction

The Kennedy Interchange in downtown Louisville (intersection of I-64/I-71/I-65), also known as Spaghetti Junction, is the region's most important transportation facility in terms of traffic carried and access to points both within and outside of the metropolitan region. Its congestion has increased dramatically in recent years, and it is predicted to worsen considerably in the future unless a major redesign and reconstruction of the interchange is undertaken. The potential construction of a parallel I-65 bridge downtown and an upriver bridge will not reduce the congestion of Spaghetti Junction unless the redesign of the interchange itself is undertaken.

Fortunately, there now exists a feasible, manageable plan to solve this decades old problem, one that – if implemented with a high priority placed on neighborhood concerns and sound urban design principles – could also result in significant ancillary benefits. The proposed new parallel 1-65 Ohio River Bridge and new Kennedy Interchange to be constructed just south of its present location, as detailed in the Ohio River Crossings Environmental Impact Statement, will provide significant relief from existing and projected traffic congestion levels over the next 20 years. It will significantly improve access into and out of downtown, as well as other locations adjacent to downtown and within the Watterson Expressway. The reduction of this traffic congestion, which is the regional transportation network's most serious problem, will eliminate perhaps the most serious inhibitor of downtown's future economic health.

Currently, plans for such a redesign are in process, and the preliminary design presents some significant opportunities for downtown Louisville in addition to the traffic flow improvements in the highways themselves. A redesign of Spaghetti Junction can improve the accessibility into and out of downtown, and can alleviate much of the hostile, dangerous and confusing street pattern under the current elevated interchange. Perhaps most significant, a redesign of Spaghetti Junction will open up a significant amount of new land directly adjacent to downtown, an opportunity that literally comes along once in a lifetime.

Although the ultimate redesign and reconstruction of Spaghetti Junction is a number of years away under the best of circumstances, it is incumbent to make sure that adequate planning and advance actions are taken in order not to lose the opportunity when it ultimately arises.

The reconstruction plan for the Kennedy Interchange would place it immediately due south of its current location. This strategy has numerous advantages: 1) it offers a construction management system that enables the existing Interchange to continue to operate while the new system is being constructed; 2) it uses land that currently has environmental problems and some uses that are incompatible with a thriving downtown; 3) it offers the potential to provide additional, more pedestrian-friendly connections from downtown and Butchertown to the River, thereby extending the downtown grid under and through the Interchange; and 4) it provides the opportunity to reclaim some 30 acres of prime land immediately adjacent to downtown – in effect creating a new in-town neighborhood.

The importance of moving this project forward immediately cannot be too heavily stressed. A project of this magnitude will, under the best of circumstances, take the good part of a decade to complete. Coping with existing and worsening traffic in the Interchange during this time will be difficult; coping with it any longer will be unacceptable, and will present a major risk to the continued economic health of downtown. Second, while this bridge/Kennedy Interchange reconstruction will unfortunately result in some necessary relocations of

LOUISVILLE - SOUTHERN INDIANA OHIO RIVER BRIDGES PROJECT

Figure 2.2-5
KENNEDY INTERCHANGE

Table 2.2-3
KENNEDY INTERCHANGE AREA WEEKDAY OPERATIONS

Measure		1999	2025 No-Action
Average Peak-Hour Speed:	A.M. Peak Hour	37 mph	17 mph
	P.M. Peak Hour	43 mph	16 mph
Total Vehicle Hours of Delay:	A.M. Peak Hour	361	1,581
	P.M. Peak Hour	252	1,841
Throughput as Percent of Demand[1] :	A.M. Peak Hour	100%	84%
	P.M. Peak Hour	100%	91%

[1] Throughput is the amount of traffic passing through a roadway system. If throughput is less than 100 percent of demand, traffic backups and diversions result. The lower the throughput as a percent of demand, the worse the congestion and diversion.

Proposed new Spaghetti Junction Redesign

businesses, the total of such relocations is very small compared to the magnitude of the project. A delay in its implementation will result in this number increasing and costing more. In addition, the uncertainty facing these businesses would be detrimental to their business, and this uncertainty must not be allowed to occur. Finally, the opportunity to develop plans for this new "in-town" neighborhood must be optimized and designed in such a manner that any alterations in the Interchange to better accommodate future uses at the reclaimed property can be incorporated. Discussions with State and Federal highway officials have indicated a willingness and desire to incorporate these future plans into the design work.

Redesign of Brook/Jefferson Street Interchange

A major impediment to the integration of the eMain/Waterfront district and the Louisville Medical Center is the intrusion of the I-65 Brook/Jefferson Streets off-ramp. The current location of this exit ramp orients traffic in a westbound or northbound direction, making access to the Medical Center difficult. Additionally, the current location of the I-65 ramp is very land intensive and occurs in a location after the bridge crossing and a major curve, which increases the potential for dangerous weaving and merging movements. Essentially two full blocks of the downtown core remain of marginal use as a result. It is strongly recommended that this ramp be reconfigured and relocated slightly southbound, in the block bounded by Brook Street on the west, Liberty Street on the north, Floyd Street and I-65 on the east, and Muhammad Ali Boulevard on the south. Under this alternative, a new slip ramp would be constructed that would run parallel to the existing I-65 right-of-way and drop down to grade level as it passes east of the current Doctor's Office Building, then provide northbound access at the intersection of Muhammad Ali and Brook Street, and southbound access at First Street and Brook (when Brook becomes two-way).

Brook/Jefferson Street Ramp

This would greatly improve the clarity of access to the Medical Center. Furthermore, relocation of this ramp a block further south than its present location removes it from the bend in I-65, increasing visibility, providing longer merge and weave segments, and improving overall safety and efficiency of the ramp. Relocation of this ramp would also free up an additional two blocks for new development such as the expansion of the Bio-Medical Park. These two additional development blocks would also provide a much-needed connection between the Medical Center district and the burgeoning eMain and Waterfront Districts to its north.

In addition, the redesign of this ramp system can be done in conjunction with the planning for the light rail system as it travels from the downtown core to Floyd Street and south towards the airport. The proposed redesign could accommodate a modal transfer station at this important downtown juncture. Such an option should be immediately considered as the detailed light rail analyses continue.

Circulation

I-65 South Improvements

The new parallel I-65 Ohio River Bridge and the improvements to the Jefferson/Brook St. ramp will combine to significantly improve the access into and out of downtown Louisville. However, the configuration of both the northbound and southbound on and off ramps, south of downtown all the way to the Watterson Expressway are for the most part outdated and inadequate given today's traffic and speeds. While some of these, such as the northbound Broadway, Brook Street, and Muhammad Ali Boulevard ramps provide direct access to downtown, the others provide important access and connections between Old Louisville, the University of Louisville, downtown, and its surrounding neighborhoods. The inefficiency and confusion that the current system engenders presents a serious problem for these areas, and warrants changes.

An interchange improvement plan was developed recently as part of the South Central Louisville initiative, and it is strongly recommended that these improvements begin to be implemented through inclusion on the State's Six-year Road Plan.

Re-instituting a Two—Way Street System

As part of this planning process, the current street pattern in downtown has been analyzed, particularly regarding the predominant one-way directional system generally in place. This directional system, the average vehicular speeds, and the availability of on-street parking were analyzed in relation to the health of the street's retailing, its pedestrian usage, and the ability to navigate within the downtown area in a vehicle. As a result of this analysis, it became clear that the current one-way street system is not effectively enhancing these downtown goals, and that a re-institution of a two-way street system is warranted on certain streets. In these streets and others not so designated, appropriate improvements to the street right-of-way are suggested with the goal of encouraging additional pedestrian use and resultant retail activities.

CORSIM Traffic Analysis

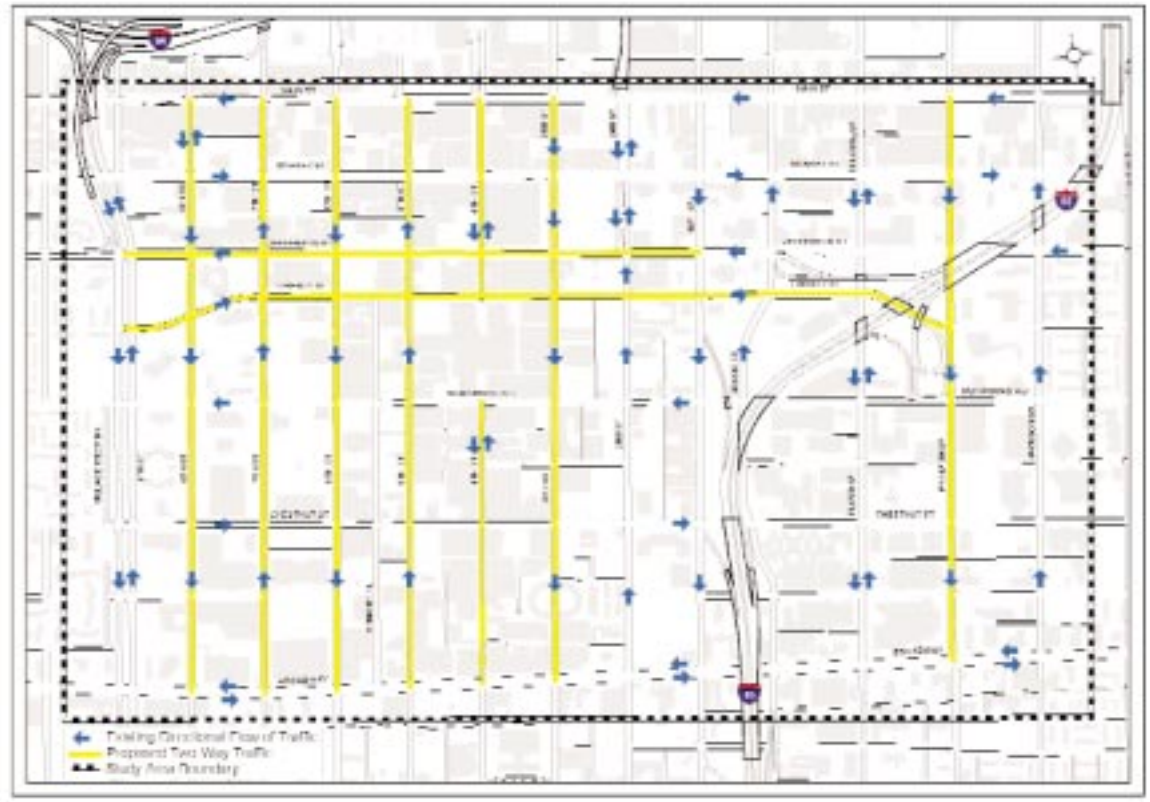
The benefits of such operational changes are clear. Retailers express a strong preference for two-directional traffic in front of their establishments, with documentation available on the sales growth when such changes are implemented. For pedestrians, the slower speeds that result, the increase in safety in crossing fewer lanes of traffic moving in the same direction at higher speeds, and the more "pedestrian-friendly" environments that result are all significant benefits. For the intermittent or casual visitor to downtown, the one-way street grid often presents a confusing circulation pattern and a frustration at the inability to find a specific location and/or be taken blocks out of one's way in trying to return to a destination or find off-street parking.

The major objections to two-way traffic often come from daily commuters, who understand intuitively that the current one-way system is prioritized for their peak hour commuting, and that a change to two-way operation will likely mean a somewhat reduced convenience. However, this is offset by the fact that daily commuters quickly find the most optimal route to and from their place of employment, and will quickly accommodate themselves to such changes. In addition, traffic engineers often are reluctant to implement such changes due to the fact that the signal synchronization system in place downtown assumes a certain flow and speed of vehicles that can be used to maximize the timing of signal sequences. Nonetheless, traffic engineers are beginning to understand the operational disadvantages associated with one-way streets, in that such a system forces drivers to follow out-of-direction routes to their destinations, causing an increase in the number of turning movements required and the vehicle-miles of travel. Given the current avail-

ability of computer technology, issues of signal synchronization can be dealt with so that signal progression can be maintained on two-way streets to favor the peak direction movement during the morning and afternoon peak periods with minimal effect on vehicular delay or the capacity of the network.

Essentially, the "philosophy" of returning to two-way streets where appropriate is based on the fact that the operation of the street should be maximized for its use throughout the day, rather than for a relatively short period of time each morning and afternoon. A street flowing very quickly during AM and PM rush hours often means a dead street the remainder of the day.

Nevertheless, the change from one-way to two-way operations of certain downtown streets will have some impact on the overall efficiency of the entire downtown traffic network. Those streets whose physical characteristics suggest a change to two-way operation have been be modeled under a new configuration to determine such an impact, using the CORSIM model. Impacts to the system were found to be minor, most of which could be accommodated via the introduction of left turn lanes at certain intersections and/or some intersection reconfiguration. The capacity of the downtown street network is sufficient to accommodate these directional changes. The majority of the proposed new two-way streets are the north-south streets in the central business district. Second Street through Eighth Streets would be converted to two-way traffic. East of Second Street, Preston Street would be



converted to two-way traffic, with Floyd already flowing in two directions. Brook and First Streets would remain one way due to the location of the I-65 ramps. Due to the fact that the traffic signalization system in downtown is timed for east-west progression, the signal timings would not need to be changed in most instances.

In the east-west direction, Jefferson Street and Liberty Street are proposed for two-way traffic. Jefferson Street would become two-way from First Street to Ninth Street, Liberty Street would become two-way from Preston Street to Ninth Street. The I-65 exit ramps at Jefferson and Brook Streets restrict continuing the two-way section of Jefferson Street east of First Street. Traffic signals on Jefferson and Liberty Streets would be retimed to permit synchronized flow. A reconstruction of the Liberty and Jefferson intersections with Ninth Street would be required.

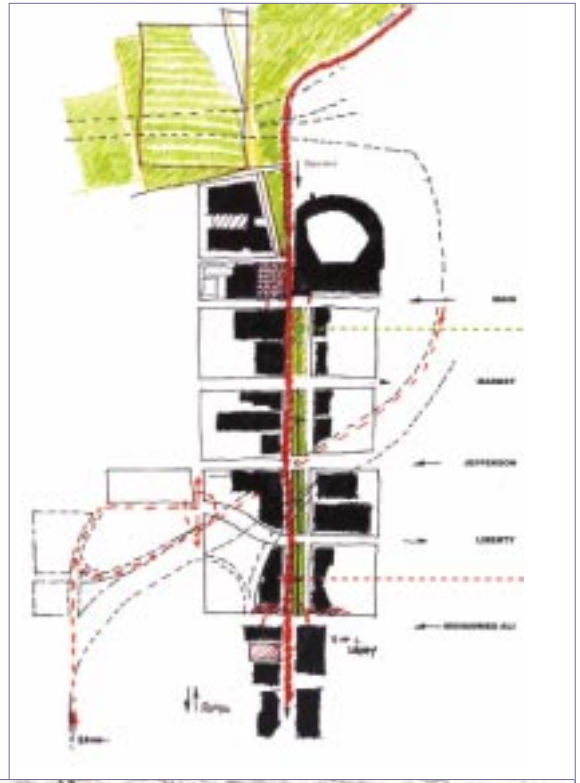
In summation, it is recommended that a phased implementation program be developed for the reinstitution of two-way traffic flow on the following downtown streets:

- Jefferson Street
- Liberty Street
- Preston Street
- Second Street
- Third Street
- Fifth Street
- Sixth Street
- Seventh Street
- Eighth Street

Circulation

Preston Street Widening/Floyd Street Improvements

Preston and Floyd Streets are the major north/south arterials through the Medical Center, and as such should be highlighted as major streets. Currently, however, they have not been infused with a special character that suggests this role, and they function and feel no different than any other street in the area. With the potential light rail line utilizing these streets, certain changes in the street will be required. Rather than wait for the light rail line to be developed, it is appropriate for these streets to be significantly improved and highlighted as the major streets of the Medical Center, for both motorists and pedestrians. Such a transformation can be undertaken immediately, with advance planning that will accommodate the operation of a light rail line in the future. Given the recent changes in River Road as part of the construction of Waterfront Park, Preston Street has now become a major entrance into downtown from the east.



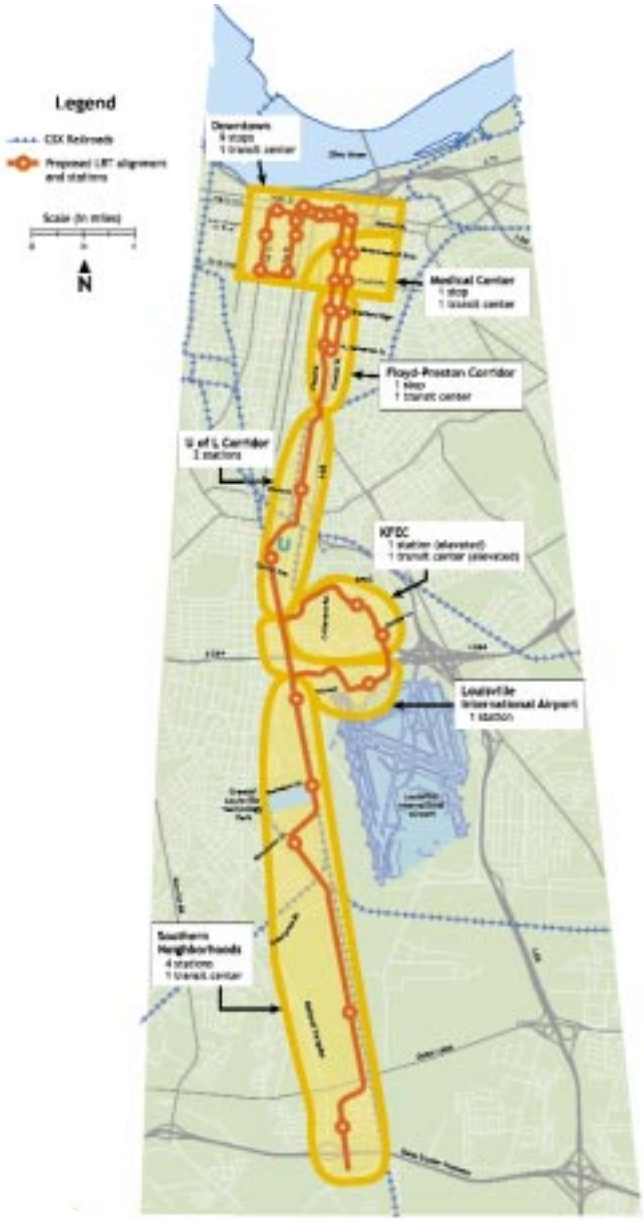
As River Road flows into Preston Street at the Park, Preston Street becomes a gateway past Louisville Slugger Field, eMain, the bio-medical area, and the Louisville Medical Center. A major redesign and upgrade of Preston Street can therefore serve a number of objectives:

- Maximize the impact of Waterfront Park by bringing it into downtown
- Connect the Waterfront with the Medical Center
- Provide a grand boulevard approach to the Medical Center
- Accommodate a future LRT line
- Encourage pedestrian-friendly street usage along its length

Improved Downtown Transit

Plans for a light rail line connecting downtown to points south are currently in development. Such a transit system would be a major asset for the future health of downtown Louisville. It would have a myriad of benefits for downtown, including enhancing the number of transit trips into downtown and reducing vehicular travel.

Such a system would also provide greater accessibility between downtown and activity generators to the south (e.g. U of L, Fairgrounds, Churchill Downs, Spalding University), provide better transit options within downtown, connect people to employment areas and high activity zones, and increase the desirability of residential living in and near downtown.



The light rail line is an important element for the future increased transit accessibility of downtown. The ability of the light rail line to connect downtown with the activity generators to its south will enhance downtown as a destination for those attending events and activities south of downtown. The downtown component of the system also will serve as a nexus for the expansions of the light rail system to its east, west and north. Certain downtown streets that provide an efficient connection to the system as it leaves and enters downtown should be designed in such a manner as to accommodate the light rail line at the same time it is accommodating vehicular traffic, pedestrian movement, and street-level retail.

The characteristics of a downtown circulation system, however, are quite different in character, in headways, and in station locations, and therefore the light rail line should not be seen as providing an optimal downtown circulation system. Its main function is moving significant numbers of transit riders into and out of downtown. A downtown alignment is proposed that would accomplish the following:

- provide light rail access to major downtown activity generators
- provide optimal travel time
- minimize intrusion into streets that would have difficulty accommodating the impacts of the light rail system
- tie directly to an improved downtown circulation system

Circulation

The need for an easily accessible, flexible, convenient and reliable downtown transit circulation system is evident. Currently, the trolleys fill some of this need, but a full system is not in place. A light-rail system, as stated above, cannot meet these needs. Therefore, in addition to the light rail line, it is suggested that an enhanced downtown streetcar route be developed to serve activity generators within the downtown core, and provide an easy connection to the light rail stations. This line, which can be a rubber-wheeled vehicle or a track-based system, should be developed in such a manner as to function as a complement to the light rail line. It can provide a greater number of downtown stops, faster headways, and closer access to major activity generators downtown. It can also minimize impact on traffic, parking and pedestrian amenities. It should be seen as an integral element of the mass transit system for the downtown area, and not severable from the light rail line.

Parking

Adequate and convenient parking is always a primary element of the health of any downtown, and downtown Louisville is no exception. Louisville has been blessed with an abundance of low cost and convenient parking, and while the demand is catching up to this supply, a very large amount of land in our downtown is still devoted to parking. While such a supply can be a boon to commuters, it nevertheless has a negative impact on the activity level of downtown's streets and neighborhoods.

As existing parking continues to get tighter, it will be important that future parking facilities be developed in a manner that respects and is consistent with the overall principles and goals of downtown Louisville.

PARC

PARKING AUTHORITY OF RIVER CITY

Secondly, the availability of on-street parking is now generally understood to be an extremely positive element of downtown's health. This is not only due to the help it provides to discretionary shoppers and visitors and the resultant impact on retailers and service providers, but it also serves as a positive buffer between fast moving traffic and pedestrian activity on the street. It has also been shown to have a positive influence on pedestrian safety. Consequently, more emphasis should be placed on the provision of on-street parking in the downtown area.

Fifth Street Garage

In order to maximize the amount of parking downtown while at the same time minimizing the negative impacts of parking facilities on the downtown streetscape, the following improvements to the parking system are recommended:

- Encourage parking as part of mixed-use developments, rather than as stand alone
- Discourage surface parking lots in high priority development locations
- Encourage air rights potential atop parking facilities
- Mandate first floor retail uses in parking facilities
- Suggest strategic locations for future parking
- Review on-street parking availability; reduce 3-hour on-street bans during peak hours (reduce to 2-hours)
- Identify and market fringe parking locations

First and Main Garage

Activity Generators

The strength and uniqueness of a downtown area is derived from the mix and intensity of activity that occurs there, and the external, positive interactions that result. In a thriving downtown, the benefits from these interactions can be economic, intellectual, or social. Ideally, all of downtown's activities should combine to make downtown a stimulating, exciting, and vibrant place to be, and provide an experience that can be found nowhere else in the community.

Downtown Louisville currently contains a large number of such activity generators. Waterfront Park, the Kentucky Center for the Arts, Actors Theatre, the Palace, Louisville Slugger Field, the Louisville Slugger Museum—to name just a few—provide a solid base of activity. However, an analysis of downtown's strengths and weaknesses conducted by ERA reveals that Louisville's attractions often do not maximize their potential external benefits, nor has downtown Louisville yet reached a critical mass of activity that can keep visitors occupied (and spending their money) for long periods of time.

For example, the ERA study found that the Louisville area receives international acclaim for its performing arts, sporting events, festivals, and associated attractions, a significant portion of which occur in the downtown core. By most internal audience measures as well, Louisville has been successful with its downtown attractions, from the Louisville Slugger Museum and the Louisville Science Center to the numerous performing arts organizations at the Kentucky Center for the Arts and Actors Theatre. Attendance for the Louisville Bats' first two seasons at Louisville Slugger Field has been extremely strong as well.

For the most part, however, these downtown attractions are highly localized. Too few visitors or residents visit more than one of these attractions at a time —which would turn a "visit downtown" into a "downtown experience." Thus, the economic benefits to the immediate downtown area that would be expected to accrue from these activities have not been as great as expected. However, with the development of Louisville Slugger Field, the new Muhammad Ali Center, Fourth Street Live!, and a renewed interest in downtown, opportunities now exist to tie together the leading themes and types of Louisville attractions to create a downtown "destination" that welcomes both Louisville residents and visitors.

For future Louisville attractions planning, it is important to understand that little economic impact occurs directly on-site at a museum, theater, or sports facility. The measurable economic and social effects are in the surrounding uses. Our cultural institutions unquestionably add to Louisville's quality of life. But their economic and social impact can be greatly improved through the creation of a unique sense of place in their immediate vicinity that offers a visitor a range of options for dining, shopping and entertainment. This sense of place can be enhanced through the creation of unique, mixed-use housing options in their vicinity, as well.

There are a number of different types of activity generators that need to be enhanced in order for downtown Louisville to attain a critical mass of activity and vitality. These include additional visitor attractions, an expanded higher education presence, a downtown sports facility, and improved recreational opportunities. To succeed, Louisville will also have to create strategies for specific areas of the downtown that will maximize the impact of their unique attractions.

"For many years I have dreamed of creating a place to share, teach, and inspire people to be their best and to pursue their dreams." – Muhammad Ali

"The Muhammad Ali Center will become one of America's most exciting places to visit. It will explore not only Ali's life and what makes him such an enduring hero, the Center will touch its visitors' lives and inspire them to emulate his discipline, perseverance, and willingness to stand up for one's beliefs." –Fath Ruffins, Smithsonian Institution

Louisville is indeed fortunate that Muhammad Ali - one of the most recognized and most admired individuals on the face of this earth - is a native son, and should take pride in the fact that many of the personal values and his sense of character which have earned him this admiration were initially developed right here in his home town. Louisville is equally fortunate in that Lonnie and Muhammad Ali have decided that the lessons that people can take from his life, and the inspiration that it provides to so many - regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or physical ability – should continue in perpetuity in Louisville, Kentucky, through the development of the **Muhammad Ali Center**, opening in 2004.

The Muhammad Ali Center will be headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, in a $40 million, 93,000 square foot building that itself with be a symbol of the dreams and aspirations of Muhammad Ali and each of the approximately 400,000 annual visitors who will attend. However, the reach of the Center will be worldwide, as Muhammad Ali's universal appeal will attract a worldwide audience through Internet-based programming, participation in national and international events, and school based multi-media curricula. The Center's mission will reach millions of people throughout the nation and the world through innovative and dynamic outreach programs and interactive educational programming.

Given the Center's mission as both a visitor attraction with broad-based appeal and an education center that will work with and train children, educators and organizations from across the world, the Center will be a bustling and enervating building that will become a hub of activity. Its impact on the city will be enormous, both in terms of bringing people downtown—especially people who are not from Louisville—and in terms of the recognition that Louisville will garner as a center for the advocacy of peace, tolerance, conflict resolution, and most important, inspiration.

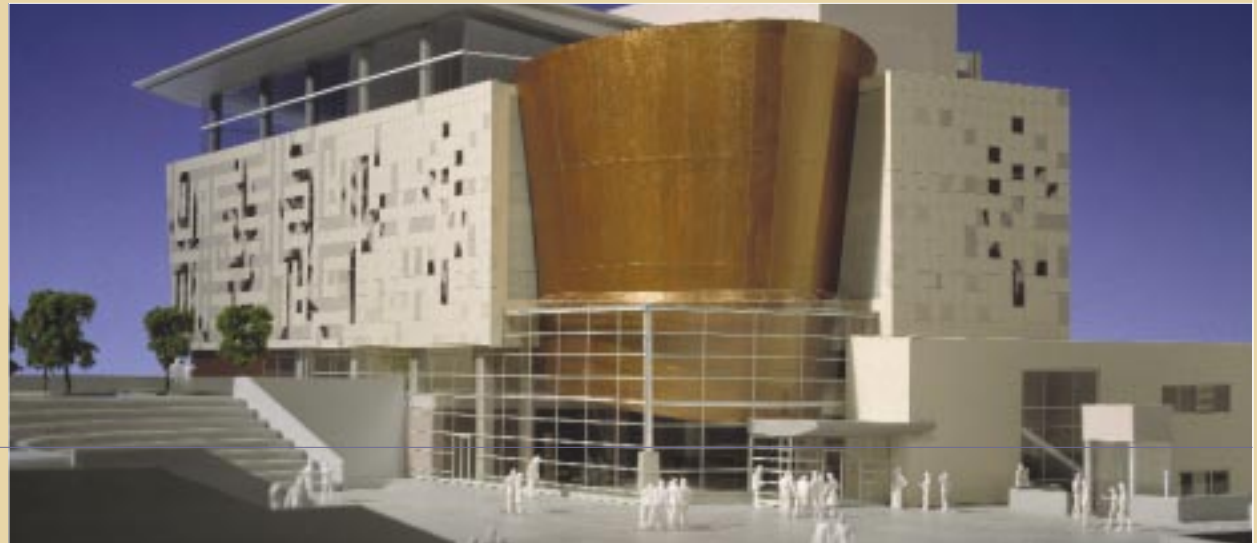
The location of the Muhammad Ali Center on the west side of Sixth Street—the former Kingfish site—is an excellent one. The visibility of the Center from the highways and bridges; the proximity to the Convention Center and the downtown hotels; and synergy with other visitor attractions such as the KCA, the Slugger Museum, the Science Center, Actors Theatre, Waterfront Park, all combine to optimize its success and its ability to enhance downtown and the Cultural District.

The development of the Muhammad Ali Center on this site—as impressive and as vibrant as it will be—provides another significant benefit: the ability to serve as an anchor for a dynamic new urban "place" in the downtown. It provides an opportunity to increase the potential of this property from one that acts merely as a good "site" for a building, to one that creates a new "public place" in the downtown; one that would be unlike any other in the community.

The plan extends the urbanity of downtown, and Main Street, out to the Kingfish site through the Main Street properties, by providing a truly public pedestrian environment to the site, up to the River, and across to the Belvedere/Riverfront Plaza connecting to the waterfront.

It accomplishes this by creating a pedestrian focal point —an urban plaza—in the middle of the Kingfish site, on axis from both Main Street and the Riverfront Plaza/ Belvedere. This plaza serves as the central hub of the mixed-use development, with the Muhammad Ali Center as one activity zone on the east and a commercial tower, with a public base, providing activity to the west. An upper level promenade provides additional public space overlooking both the plaza and the River.

This combination of an intensively visited public attraction, a major residential or office tower, a very urban public plaza, and a river promenade, all open to the public and connected to Main Street via the rehabilitation and stabilization of its historic properties and facades, provides a unique opportunity to create a new and very special kind of urban environment.



Activity Generators

Additional Visitor Attractions Needed

Cultural Attractions

One of the strongest economic engines and activity generators in downtown Louisville is its convention and visitor sector. The excellent convention facilities at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center and now at the Kentucky International Convention Center, combined with the community's national reputation for hospitality and value, provide Louisville with a strong convention and visitor base. The expansion of the Convention Center, the Louisville Slugger Museum, Louisville Slugger Field, and additional attractions coming on line in the near future, such as the Muhammad Ali Center and the Frazier Historical Arms Museum, will further enhance the "package" of attractions that downtown Louisville can offer, particularly those that are "uniquely Louisville."

The future appears bright in this area. However, a serious problem that currently inhibits the growth of tourism and convention business is the shortage of high quality hotel rooms within walking distance of the Convention Center and other visitor attractions. The need for a convention-quality flagship hotel of approximately 600 rooms is critical, as is the need to upgrade existing major hotel facilities such as the Galt House. At the current time, plans are in the works to initiate both of these. They should be afforded the highest priority.

Tourism is an area that can also bring positive economic impacts and a stronger activity level downtown. While there are a number of fine downtown visitor attractions, in order to compete for leisure tourism, particularly those that include at least one night stay in the city, additional visitor attractions are warranted. A critical mass must be available, preferably within walking distance of each other. The Muhammad Ali Center will be a major asset in this regard, because it will be strategically located on Main Street and its programming will bring in many people from outside the region to visit its galleries and participate in its educational programs and seminars. Other smaller, boutique attractions that capitalize on unique aspects of Louisville (e.g. the Frazier Arms Museum; Bourbon Museum) will support this strategy as well. While Churchill Downs/ Derby Museum and the J.B. Speed Art Museum are not downtown, they nevertheless should have a presence downtown, either via a branch, special exhibitions, etc. These are unique Louisville institutions and their presence in the heart of Louisville's cultural district would provide

benefits to both institutions, as well as enhancing the uniqueness of the area to visitors.

Another major downtown attraction that would enhance this area is some form of public market, which often includes both fresh produce and eating establishments. The current Haymarket location is not optimal, given its distance from the mass of downtown employees and visitors. Exploration should be given to the development of a new haymarket-type facility in the heart of downtown, initially as a temporary installation within an area of restaurants, that can be expanded into a permanent facility offering fresh produce and baked goods, and on-site eating establishments.

> FRAZIER HISTORICAL ARMS MUSEUM

Construction activities have recently begun in the West Main Street Cultural Arts District on the new Frazier Historical Arms Museum, a $20 million project that will be the latest addition along what is becoming Louisville's "Museum Row," near the sites of the Louisville Slugger Museum, the Louisville Science Center and the future site of the Muhammad Ali Center. The 100,000 square foot Museum will house the collection of antique guns and rifles assembled by Owsley Brown Frazier, retired vice chairman of Brown-Forman Corp., and will acclaim the artistry, craftsmanship, and technological innovation of weapons and their makers, by creating a dynamic context within which to understand and appreciate the ways in which fine arms have celebrated American culture throughout its history.

For history buffs, weapons enthusiasts, or those interested in the design and artistry of fine objects, the Owsley Brown Frazier Historical Arms Museum will offer exciting and interesting features, including

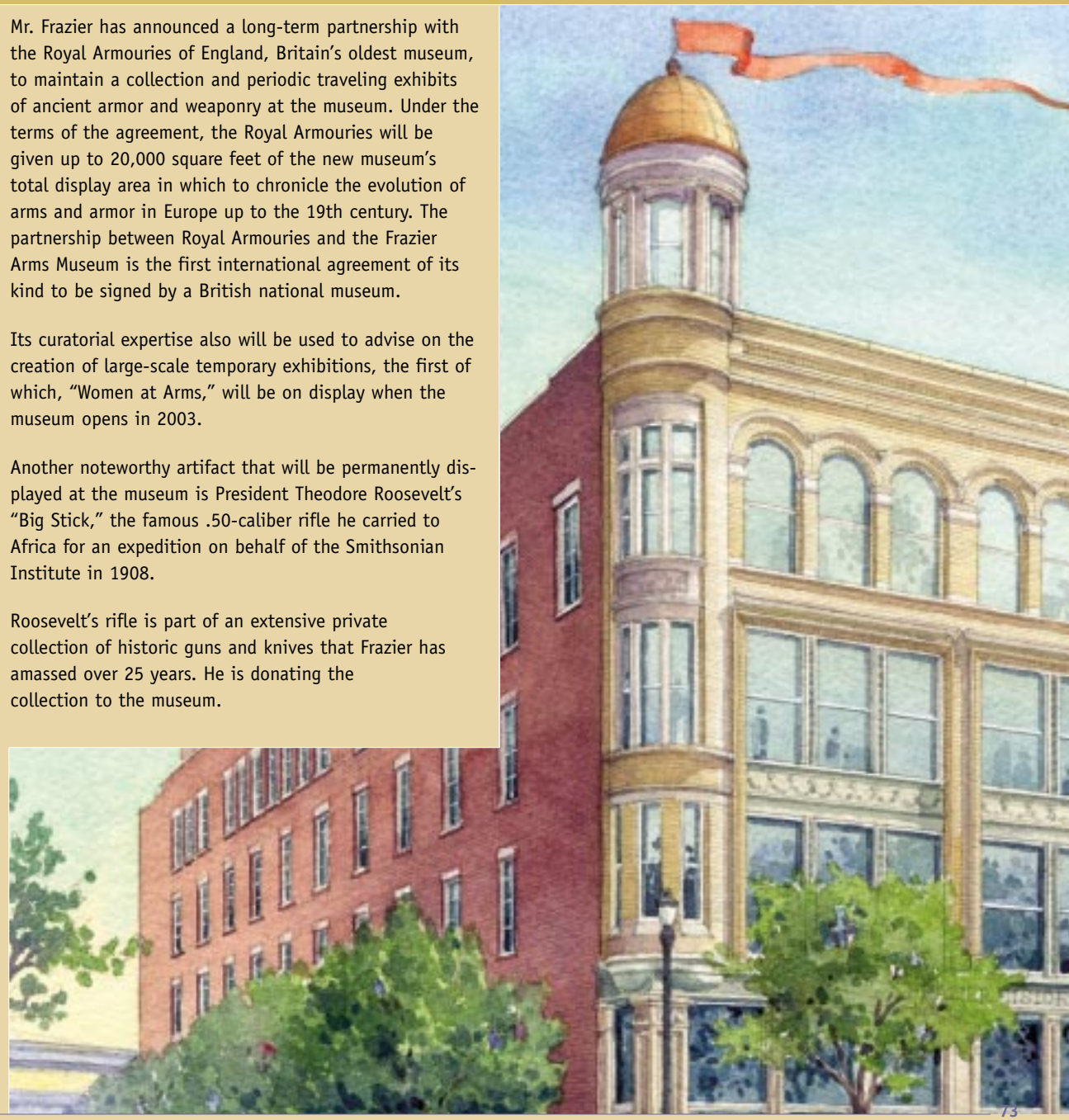
- Finest examples of the engraver's art
- One-of-a-kind and previously unexhibited weapons
- Arms that have made history
- Weapons owned by some of our nation's most outstanding leaders
- Re-enactments and live performances
- Lectures by noted historians, experts and collectors
- State-of-the-art exhibitions and interactive technology in a world-class facility
- Replicas and unique offerings in the Gift Shop

Mr. Frazier has announced a long-term partnership with the Royal Armouries of England, Britain's oldest museum, to maintain a collection and periodic traveling exhibits of ancient armor and weaponry at the museum. Under the terms of the agreement, the Royal Armouries will be given up to 20,000 square feet of the new museum's total display area in which to chronicle the evolution of arms and armor in Europe up to the 19th century. The partnership between Royal Armouries and the Frazier Arms Museum is the first international agreement of its kind to be signed by a British national museum.

Its curatorial expertise also will be used to advise on the creation of large-scale temporary exhibitions, the first of which, "Women at Arms," will be on display when the museum opens in 2003.

Another noteworthy artifact that will be permanently displayed at the museum is President Theodore Roosevelt's "Big Stick," the famous .50-caliber rifle he carried to Africa for an expedition on behalf of the Smithsonian Institute in 1908.

Roosevelt's rifle is part of an extensive private collection of historic guns and knives that Frazier has amassed over 25 years. He is donating the collection to the museum.



Activity Generators

Attraction Strategies

Because the economic impact of attractions and retail locations are inextricably linked, the retail and attractions strategies move forward together.

Three distinct districts that should be targeted for attractions strategies are the Fourth Street Corridor, West Main Street, and East Main/Market Street.

Fourth Street Corridor

The Fourth Street corridor represents a clear opportunity for expanding on one of the downtown area's great strengths: performing arts and entertainment venues. Theater Square and the nearby Fourth Street hotels already provide a point of reference for downtown visitors. In this vein, the Fourth Street area should expand and enhance its role as a downtown entertainment district. Uses such as nightclubs, entertainment venues, studios, and entertainment-oriented retailing, as well as food and drink, should be prioritized and supported. The presence of the urban-entertainment oriented Galleria and the Convention Center at the northern end of the District, and Theater Square, the Palace and the Brown Theatre on the southern end, along with the major downtown hotels, provide strong existing anchors.

West Main Street

The West Main Street section of downtown is primed for the development of a pedestrian museum corridor that is populated by interpretive centers to draw regular visitation and provide locales for celebration of Louisville's culture. Most visitors and Louisville residents already see the Louisville Slugger Museum and the Louisville Science Center as two of the strongest draws to the entire downtown area. The Kentucky Center for the Arts and Actors Theatre command visitation from both inside and outside Louisville and are in need of surrounding public facility development to keep regional visitors in the downtown area before and after performances. The new Muhammad Ali Center project will begin to bridge this gap and provide visual continuity for the visitor.

New museum development, with a particular emphasis on lifelong learning and product histories, should be encouraged along the West Main Street corridor and cross streets. Suggestions that merit further study include a Louisville history museum, a culture center, an art museum annex, and a full-time artisan and crafts interpretive center.

East Main/Market Street

The success of Louisville Slugger Field and the Waterfront Park have spurred a resurgence of interest in the East Main Street area, and have succeeded in bringing this area back as an integral part of downtown. The focus of commercial development in the eMain district will further enhance interest in this area, especially from young workers and residents who desire a hipper, edgier urban environment. The development of the Extreme Park, connecting to expanded waterfront access, provides recreational and leisure opportunities and reinforces this atmosphere.

The area already has a number of locally oriented galleries, trendy restaurants, drinking and club-like venues, and a residential base. An even greater concentration of such establishments should be encouraged. Rather than seeking out large, destination-type venues, which to some extent would compete with the burgeoning West Main and Fourth Street districts, East Main/Market should continue to build on its existing edgier character and thus have the entire street serve as such a "destination."

Opportunities for additional food and drinking establishments exist in the western end of the Louisville Slugger Field concourse and its outfield restaurant pad, and there are numerous storefront spaces available along East Main and East Market Streets.

Expanded Higher Education Presence

One of the key elements of most thriving downtowns is a major presence of institutions of higher education, as the combination of students and the types of services and retailing that serve them add to the vitality and life of the city on a 24-hour basis. While downtown Louisville has some anchors in this respect (U of L Medical School, Jefferson Community and Technical Colleges), as well as a number of primary and secondary schools, Louisville's higher education entities can make a much greater impact in downtown than they do currently.

The recent announcement of the location of a technology branch of Bellarmine University in eMain and the location of two U of L research buildings in the Medical Center are excellent additions to the core of downtown. The presence of Spalding University and the main U of L campus just to the south of the CBD hold great, as yet untapped, potential. Both are physically close to downtown, but their interaction with downtown has never been strong.

The recent creation of the joint U of L/UK Urban Design Studio at Third St./Muhammad Ali Blvd. represents another positive step in establishing a significant University presence in the core of downtown.

A major component of downtown during the next ten years should be an increase in higher education activities that occur in the downtown area. The eMain initiative provides a great opportunity for an expanded presence by Bellarmine and participation by the area's other universities, as well as the public school system. Additional development that complements and supports academic programs - such as resident housing and student retail/services - should be strongly considered. Opportunities for public/private partnerships with these academic institutions, perhaps in a combined university initiative, should also be actively explored.
In addition, the ability to provide continuing professional education within the downtown area, particularly in technology-related fields, provides both

a built-in clientele for these Universities and another off-hours activity generator. These options are currently limited in the downtown.

Specific initiatives that should be explored further include the following:

- New technology public high school, in combination with the university(s)
- Expanded U of L medical school presence, including housing
- Expanded Bellarmine e-Main center potential
- JCC/Louisville Tech corridor
- New U of L research/academic enterprise
- Downtown student housing
- Downtown sports facilities

Activity Generators

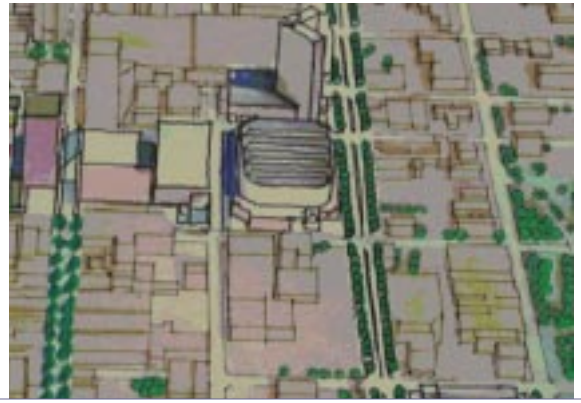
Sports Facilities

Sports facilities in a downtown area are often effective activity generators and can play a role in stimulating and supporting retail, restaurant and urban entertainment venues. The recent opening of Louisville Slugger Field is an excellent example of an appropriate sports facility that is playing a role in the revitalization of the East Main Street area.

However, careful planning must be undertaken to ensure the sports facility will serve these important purposes because otherwise, they can actually detract from a downtown's renaissance. Many communities learned this lesson the hard way in the past two decades. They built sports facilities far from their downtowns in an attempt to maximize transportation access and take advantage of acres of surface parking. Through experience, they have come to understand the folly of such public investments, as the evidence is strong that such development decisions not only further sap the vitality of their downtowns, but also fail to capture any significant external economic benefit from these nightly high concentrations of visitors. Many of these communities are now, in some cases within 10-20 years of such an investment, constructing new sports facilities within the hearts of their downtowns—emphasizing the importance of planning well to capture the full potential benefits of such an investment.

Sports facilities are major public investments and need to be carefully located, sized, and tenanted in order to maximize their potential and not fall victim to false economies or vastly exaggerated economic benefits. Those instances where there is a likely major tenant, one that has established a consistent base of fans, are those most likely to succeed.

In downtown Louisville, a new basketball arena would be an asset to downtown, at an appropriate time, if it was to be centrally located. It should be sited proximate to a district currently or projected to support a variety of eating and entertainment establishments, and also in an area that can take advantage of a current supply of off-street parking that is underutilized in the evenings and on weekends. The prime location for such a facility in downtown Louisville – as well as the entire community – is the block due east of the Galleria bordered by Liberty, Second, Muhammad Ali, and Third Street. Given the redevelopment of the Galleria, the location of a new Convention Hotel and the Kentucky International Convention Center due north, and the proposed



Fourth Street Entertainment District to the south, the development of a basketball arena in this location would optimize the external benefits of its financing, and provide the strongest base of complementary retail and entertainment facilities, and a concentration of people and activity. The ability to use the facility at certain times in conjunction with events and conventions at the KICC would also be a significant benefit to the community. Such a facility could also serve as a venue for professional hockey.
Last year's efforts to lure an NBA team to Louisville illustrated the complexity – and controversial nature - of such an initiative. While there was much debate over the merits and impact of this proposal, most of the community nevertheless did believe that a sports arena would be beneficial to the downtown. The tenanting and timing of such a facility, however, is critical.

It is important to point out that a city the size of Louisville should only move forward on these facilities if and when a current sports team is willing and able to become a prime tenant — and make a long-term commitment to Louisville. For a basketball arena, it would be appropriate to develop a new venue downtown to accommodate the University of Louisville, to be available when Freedom Hall can no longer serve as a first class facility for the University basketball program without major improvements.

It is critical that the recent demonstrated support for a facility downtown – at the right time and cost – be maintained and that the City, the University, and the business community begin plans to develop an acceptable construction and financing plan for a downtown facility on the proposed site.

Downtown Recreational Facilities

Given the new interest in downtown living among young professionals and "empty nesters," and the strong growth in technology-related business activities downtown, it is not surprising that the availability of recreational activities can play a major role in attracting these residents and workers to downtown. Similarly, students and visitors are also more likely to be attracted to downtown if it offers a full range of recreational activities.

For these reasons, the creation of more recreational activities in downtown – both passive and active recreation - is both warranted and desirable. Waterfront Park stands as the shining example of how this kind of public investment can transform parts of downtown into thriving, diverse attractions.

The new Extreme Park provides another example of a highly unique active recreational opportunity that is drawing visitors to Louisville from across the region.

A host of additional recreational opportunities should be pursued with equal vigor:

- Expanding and upgrading the RiverWalk;
- Providing a pedestrian, jogging, and bikeway connection to Beargrass Creek, as well as additional boating opportunities there;
- Creating a more pleasant, pedestrian-friendly connection from the existing waterfront west along River Road to a new West Waterfront Park and beyond to Shippingport and the RiverWalk;
- Completing the new West Waterfront Park; and
- Improving connections to the waterfront through the old Kingfish site (the new site of the Muhammad Ali Center) and via Sixth and Seventh Streets, and redesigning River Road to connect the emerging West Main/Market Street Glassworks residential district (and the planned housing opportunities in the Shippingport area west of Ninth Street) to the Ohio River;
- New pleasure boating opportunities in and between downtown and Beargrass Creek;
- Increased emphasis on making downtown streets more bicycle-friendly and providing improved bike paths between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

The potential to incorporate more active recreational facilities in Waterfront Park, both the future eastern phases and the proposed West Waterfront Park, should also be prioritized, especially as the desire for downtown living continues to grow.

Hotel and Hospitality

The hospitality industry is one of the most significant economic engines of downtown Louisville, as well as for Jefferson County as a whole. In the recent Tourism 21 study conducted on behalf of the Louisville and Jefferson County Visitors and Convention Commission, it was estimated that tourism and convention business brought over $1.1 billion in expenditures into the County, nearly 27 percent of all such expenditures in the state. Not only is this total number large, but the per capita expenditure is also extremely high.

Much of the strength of Louisville's convention and visitor business is a result of the community's national reputation for hospitality and friendliness, its ability to efficiently host and manage large events, its cost advantage, and the quality of its convention facilities. Over 300 conventions are held annually, with more than 900,000 delegates whose spending totals some $230 million.

Until recently, the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, located adjacent to the airport, hosted the majority of these events, due to its impressive size and management capacity, combined with an outdated and inferior sized downtown facility, the Commonwealth Convention Center. However, with the renovation and expansion of this facility recently completed, the renamed Kentucky International Convention Center is drawing new events to downtown, and competing with newly built or renovated convention facilities in other cities within our region. This expansion and renovation is a critical element of the ability of downtown to continue to attract large number of visitors.

While the expansion of the Kentucky International Convention Center has been important, it has not yet optimized its occupancy or potential.
The doubling in size of its exhibit halls and meeting spaces, the addition of a 30,000 square foot ballroom, and the upgrade of the ambiance and quality of its space enables the facility to compete with most other such facilities in the region. However, the availability of high quality, convention grade hotel rooms within its immediate proximity has not increased proportionally, thereby compromising Louisville's ability to effectively market the facility. The need for a significant supply of convention quality hotel rooms – via new construction and renovation of existing rooms – within walking distance of the KICC, is critical if the hospitality market is to continue to play a significant role in the economic strength of downtown Louisville.

The market analysis conducted as part of this planning effort, including a review of the findings of Tourism 21, yielded the following recommendations:

- A new, convention headquarters hotel should be developed in immediate proximity of the KICC. The hotel should contain a minimum of 600 high quality hotel rooms, as well as associated meeting facilities. The public sector should assist in the development of such a hotel.
- The Galt House hotel complex should be renovated and upgraded in quality.

- The market feasibility of a small all-suites hotel and/or a European-style hotel should be analyzed. The inclusion of these types of hotels provides an alternative type of lodging for visitors. However, this additional component to our downtown hotel supply is less important than the need to provide the increased convention quality hotel rooms as recommended above.

In addition to the increase in convention quality hotel rooms, the hospitality industry will benefit greatly from an increased number of attractions and amenities in the downtown area (see Attractions section). Among those elements recommended by Tourism 21 are the following:

- Renovation and repositioning of the Louisville Galleria
- Fourth Street Entertainment District Improved access between the downtown core and the waterfront
- Development of the Muhammad Ali Center
- Five-Year marketing plan for downtown
- Regular schedule of waterfront events
- Public sector financial support for downtown development initiatives

> CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS HOTEL

As early as 1990, city leaders recognized that there was a pressing need for an upscale convention center headquarters hotel. The expanded Kentucky International Convention Center was a crucial part of the visitor attractions picture, but only part. Report after report reaffirmed the need for an upscale, large hotel attached to the Convention Center, the latest pointing out that during the past three years alone, more than $50 million in convention business has been lost to Louisville, solely due to the absence of an upscale headquarters hotel.

In January 2001, the City issued a Request for Proposals for a convention center hotel developer. Kentucky Convention Hotel Partners, LLC (made up of REI Investments, White Lodging Group, and local investors) was chosen as developer for the project, with Marriott as the hotel flag. The Louisville Board of Aldermen authorized the Development Agreement and directed the Louisville Development Authority to begin acquiring property for the hotel project in the block bounded by Second Street, Third Street, Jefferson Street and Liberty Street.

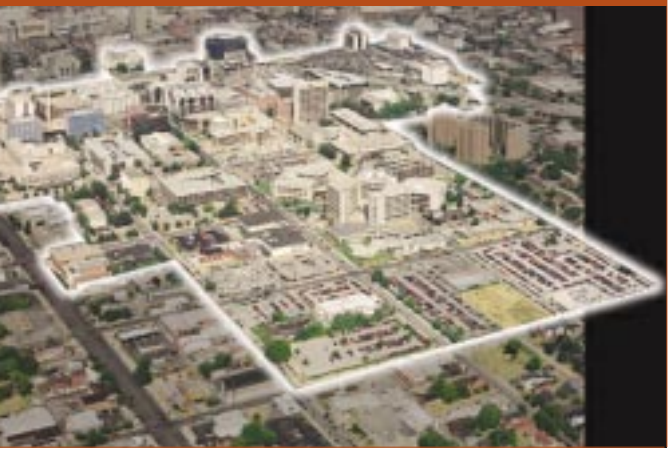
The partners will spend $92 million to construct a first-class Marriott hotel, complete with a fine dining facility, casual sports restaurant and bar, a pool and exercise facility. The hotel will have 20 suites, 600 spacious rooms, 30,000 square feet of meeting space, and internal parking for nearly 300 vehicles. Plans are to open the hotel in Fall 2004.

The new downtown Marriott will be financed through debt and equity contributions from the developers, and a City incentive payment. The City's debt service will be repaid from receipts of a special State authorized Tax Increment Financing District. As part of the Development Agreement, the City will participate in the profits from the hotel project. The City will issue bonds to fund the cost of its $27 million incentive payment to the developer, the cost of acquisition, demolition and remediation of the property, the construction of 200 additional parking spaces, and the construction of the pedways to both the convention center and adjacent parking.

The new convention headquarters hotel will give the city the edge it needs in vying for convention business. Once the financing is in place and a date is set for completion, the Greater Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau, along with Marriott International, can begin to solicit the professional, corporate and high-tech conventions. With tourism the third largest industry in the state, the new project allows Louisville and Kentucky to maximize this growth industry, with tremendous spin-off benefits to downtown's retail and entertainment markets.

Over 300 conventions are held annually, with more than 900,000 delegates whose spending totals some $230 million.

Medical Center



The Downtown Louisville Medical Center is one of the primary economic engines of downtown Louisville, as well as the economy of the entire metropolitan area. It is estimated that over 11 percent of the metropolitan area employment is contained within health-related enterprises, with over 72,000 such jobs. The downtown Medical Center, clustered east of I-65 as it passes through downtown, contains the largest concentration of health care providers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Its member institutions are building a reputation for leading edge medical research and breakthrough medical treatments, and have recently developed nationally recognized medical breakthroughs in areas such as hand and heart transplants. In addition to being a regional center for medical care, the Louisville Medical Center is increasing its focus on medical research and commercial medical enterprises, and is developing a biomedical research park to house small-to-medium sized health related businesses.

Louisville Medical Center

At the heart of the Louisville Medical Center is the Medical School of the University of Louisville and its two new research facilities, along with seven acute care hospitals: Frazier Rehabilitation Center. Jewish Hospital, Norton Hospital, Kosair Children's Hospital, Norton Medical Pavilion, University Hospital, and the Rudd Heart and Lung Center. One out of every three jobs located within downtown Louisville is affiliated with the Louisville Medical Center.

As a major activity and economic generator of downtown Louisville, the Medical Center should be considered as an integral component of the economic health and well being of downtown, and connections to and from the Medical Center to and from other parts of downtown should be seamless and inviting. However, until recently this was not the case. Primarily due to the barrier created by I-65, the Medical Center was often disconnected physically and psychologically from its downtown neighbors. In addition, the numerous entities actively involved in health care and health-related businesses in the area made for somewhat fractionalized decision-making, particularly related to physical improvements, facility design and location, and marketing of the area. Although often considered constrained in terms of physical size, the current Medical Center spans an area comparable in size to the Longwood Medical Center in Boston and the Johns Hopkins University Medical Center in Baltimore.

These obstacles have significantly changed during the past few years, due to a number of circumstances. The 1990 Downtown Development Plan was the first effort to include the Medical Center in its planning area, and began to suggest ways to reduce the I-65 barrier both physically and psychologically. More important was the creation in 1997 of the Louisville Medical Center Development Corporation (LMCDC), a non-profit organization. The LMCDC was jointly created by its member institutions – The University of Louisville, Jewish Hospital HealthCare Services, Norton Healthcare – and the City of Louisville to help the community capitalize on the economic development potential that exists throughout the Louisville Medical Center. The existence of the LMCDC encourages the development of a unified image of the Medical Center, as well as planning and development issues that benefit the area as a whole and better integrate it with the rest of downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. The final element has been management of the University Hospital by a joint entity of Jewish Hospital and Norton Healthcare, further encouraging cooperation and joint efforts on the part of the individual medical center institutions.

All of these positive developments have created an atmosphere that supports and encourages more aggressive physical and strategic planning to maximize the benefits of this strong cluster of health-related economic activities. This improved atmosphere and organization has already resulted in major benefits. Among these are the following:

- The development of the **Donald G. and Delia B. Baxter Biomedical Research Buildings**, two new University of Louisville research facilities with a total of more than 245,000 square feet, both located in the heart of the Louisville Medical Center.
- The Louisville Medical Center bio-park, a multi-building initiative designed to encourage spin-off medical-related entrepreneurship and to capture these enterprises within the general area of the downtown Medical Center. The results to date have been impressive: **MedCenter One**, a 90,000 square-foot multi-tenant adaptive reuse project providing space for life science companies, completed in the spring of 2000; **MedCenter Two**, the site of MedVenture Technology Corporation's 90,000 square-foot headquarters, which also will include 20,000 square feet of office and wet labs for emerging life science companies; and **MedCenter Three**, an incubator facility to support the growth of young life science companies, currently under construction (completion Fall, 2002).

BAXTER BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH FACILITY - PHASE II
THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

All of these initiatives are important elements of the emergence of the Louisville Medical Center as not just the pre-eminent location for primary, secondary and tertiary medical care in this part of the country, but also as a major bio-medical center for both research and entrepreneurial activities. The LMCDC, its member institutions, and the City of Louisville should be commended for their efforts and successes in this regard.

The physical internal integration of the Medical Center's "urban campus" and its external connections to the rest of downtown have not as yet matched its intellectual and entrepreneurial growth. Problems still remain regarding access into and out of the Medical Center, the establishment of a central corridor within the Medical Center, and a "campus green" that can serve as a pedestrian link

Preston Street Boulevard

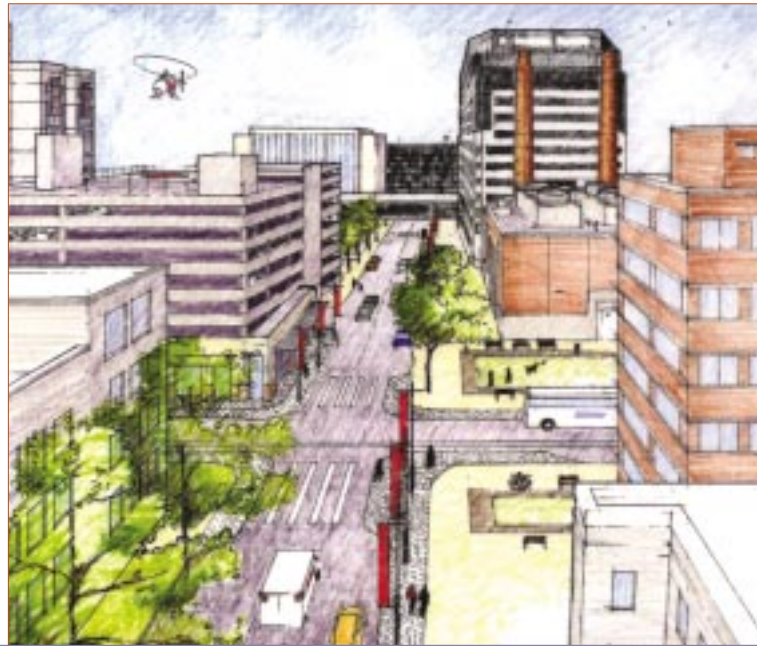
among the institutions and the University's facilities. The result is that the physical identity of the Medical Center is still not unified, and orientation within it remains somewhat confusing. However, a number of initiatives are suggested that deal with each of these obstacles, and together they can make substantial improvement to the overall image and ultimate vitality of the Medical Center.

External Access – The Medical Center's primary means of access are I-64 and I-65. Each of these Interstates provides excellent access to downtown, but once there, they each provide a circuitous and often confusing route to the Medical Center campus. The major current problem is the Jefferson Street exit ramp from I-65 southbound (see page 63). The current location of the exit ramp orients traffic in a westbound direction, towards the core of downtown, making access to the Medical Center difficult. Additionally, the I-65 ramp design is very land intensive and placed in a location after the bridge crossing and a major curve, which provides a fairly hazardous configuration. A redesign and relocation of this ramp one block further south from its present location removes it from the bend in I-65, increases visibility, and improves safety. It also would provide much needed clarity of access to the Medical Center.

In addition, the redesign and relocation of this ramp would open up additional land for development, including an additional two blocks that are consumed by the current ramp. Since the new design would utilize some existing land owned by the Medical Center institutions, the new development land could be considered as a trade and thus used for additional medical related purposes. This also would provide the benefit of more easily connecting the Medical Center with Market and Main Streets, including a direct connection to the Med Center incubator currently under construction.

A second improvement to the access into the Medical Center is the proposed new **Preston Street Boulevard**. With the truncation of River Road at Preston Street as a result of the creation of the Waterfront Park, Preston Street now has the opportunity to be designed as a new front entrance to downtown Louisville. With a widening of its current right of way and a well-landscaped design, this new connection can serve as a grand boulevard tying together the Waterfront, Louisville Slugger Field, the bio-medical center complex, and the Medical Center itself. Combined with the proposed light rail corridor, which travels the length of Preston Street in downtown from Smoketown to Main Street, a new Preston Street could become the major access point into and through the Medical Center, something that currently does not exist.

Internal Access – Internally the Medical Center is comprised of a large number of institutions on a variety of streets that currently fail to project a unified identity. The streets provide access for drop-offs and parking locations but do not provide a strong sense of place. The lack of one primary internal access street adds to this lack of identity. Given its east-west configuration and the location of a number of its major institutions along its length, it is suggested that **Abraham Flexner Way** be redesigned to serve as such an integrated, major internal street. A series of streetscape improvements with a common theme, combined with improved landscaping and drop-off configurations at the



Abraham Flexner Way

Medical Center Campus Green

institutions that front on the street, would do much to lessen the confusion and disjointed nature of the street, while at the same time providing a unifying sense of place to the entire Medical Center district. A second major improvement to the physical character of the Medical Center is the establishment of a **Campus Lawn** that would provide a dramatically improved pedestrian environment from Muhammad Ali Boulevard to Chestnut Street. Such a green space would take better advantage of some residual land that now exists in and around the University facilities and could be converted, with dramatic results, into a lawn that would unify and celebrate the University Medical School. The size of the proposed lawn would rival that of the famed lawn at the University of Virginia. Other elements of this improvement include plazas at key intersections and a new pedestrian walk connection from Jewish Hospital to U of L outpatient care, via the improved Flexner Way and the campus lawn. This is a fine opportunity to create a special, central green space within the Medical Center, something that is currently lacking, through the better use and design of existing public property.

An additional unifying element of the Medical Center is the development of unified signage and graphics and a common identification element. Progress is being made in these areas, with the establishment of a new logo for the Louisville Medical Center Development Corporation and the initiation of a new unified signage program. Such a signage program, if kept updated and designed in a manner complementary to the overall downtown signage program, would significantly reinforce the concept of a unified district and improve the ability to circulate and navigate through the area for both drivers and pedestrians.

Bio-Medical Park – The burgeoning development of the Louisville Medical Center is a significant step in the optimization of its potential, both as a regional economic engine and as an activity generator for downtown. The ability to capture entrepreneurial spin-offs from medical research conducted within the district, combined with the lure of new business activities that are helped by a location close to these medical and educational facilities, will provide significant benefits to the downtown environment. These entrepreneurial enterprises not only provide highly-paid employment opportunities, they also strengthen the market for residential and retail activities, and add to the potential of a 24-hour downtown.

The initial efforts in this regard have resulted in MedCenter One, MedCenter Two, and the MedCenter Three facilities now built on the northern, southern and eastern edges of the current Medical Center, taking advantage of real estate opportunities that were available. The LMCDC jumped on the opportunities available in order to get the effort off the ground and to illustrate the potential of these bio-medical related activities. As these initial facilities lease up, and planning moves forward on additional stages of the bio-park, the advantages of clustering activities where possible and realistic should again be high priorities. With the construction of the MedCenter Three at Brook and Jefferson about to be completed, the concentration of future phases in the Preston/Floyd corridor north of I-65 and south of Main Street would reinforce the bio-park identity and also provide an appropriate connection between the Medical Center district and the East Main District. This area could become a true mixed-use area anchored by medical-related employment activities, market-rate housing (with the Medical Center providing much of the demand) and more neighborhood-oriented retail uses. Researchers and those involved in these types of bio-med businesses often thrive in such a mixed-use, intellectually creative environment. The land available due to the relocation of the Brook and Jefferson Street I-65 ramp would be an excellent area to focus upon, particularly if privately held land in the area remains difficult to acquire due to unrealistic economic expectations.

In addition, the area just east of the current Medical Center, in the Clarksdale area, could provide additional opportunities for adjacent medical-related

uses as part of the Clarksdale redevelopment program. Innovative use of the westernmost Housing Authority property by the Medical Center, in exchange for some property currently owned by U of L on Hancock Street (which is more appropriate for new residential development) would give the Medical Center two contiguous areas for bio-park expansion. Development of each of these as part of a mixed-use development would not only increase the vitality of East downtown, but also would help reduce the current boundaries of the Medical Center while providing expansion space (for non-hospital uses) in a manner that would positively enhance the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Medical Center institutions have, through the Clarksdale planning process, indicated their interest in developing workforce training and job development opportunities with current and future residents of Clarksdale and the surrounding neighborhoods. Their commitment to such a cooperative, neighborhood-based program should be applauded. Combined with the potential for joint development opportunities in the redevelopment plan, the Louisville Medical Center has the potential to serve as a national model for a positive partnership between Medical Center areas and surrounding neighborhoods. Models of such cooperation are few and far between; the opportunity in Louisville is real and should be acted upon immediately.

> LOUISVILLE MEDICAL CENTER RESEARCH AND BUSINESS PARK

One of the most potent tools in Louisville's strategy to promote technology commercialization of university-based research is the LMC Research and Business Park, now under development. The Park also will be a key element in creating a competitive environment in Louisville for attracting life sciences companies. Creation of such facilities is especially important to life sciences companies, due to their interest in "clustering" near to each other and near to academic research environments, where they have access not only to the talents of top scientists but also to a workforce that ranges from laboratory technicians to post-doctoral fellows.

The Park is an initiative of the Louisville Medical Center Development Corporation, which acts as primary developer and manager of the park and its principle facilities. The initial feasibility study found that establishment of such a park would be feasible at the LMC, based on conservative market assumptions. The feasibility study recommended that the Research Park be "anchored" by a Life Sciences Incubator – a facility with programs to assist young and start-up companies through their early phases of development. The importance of this facility was strongly underscored, in part because young companies in the life sciences fields require specialized equipment that is prohibitively expensive at that stage of their development, and because commercial laboratory space is for all practical intents is non-existent for lease in Louisville.

LMCDC's board of directors assumed responsibility for creation of the Research and Business Park, based on the City's feasibility study. The Research and Business Park concept has been adapted by LMCDC to address the realities of the downtown real estate environment surrounding the Louisville Medical Center, and to seize opportunities that have presented themselves for bringing real estate "product" on line to meet a growing demand for a "medical address." The concept of the Park now extends to all sides of the campus, creating a mix of real estate that is beginning to attract life science and health care companies to locate adjacent to the LMCDC. These include:

MEDCENTER ONE

Purchased by the City of Louisville and leased to LMCDC, the 87,000 sq. ft. complex of three buildings has been renovated by a private developer to create multi-tenant office space. Departments from the University of Louisville Health Sciences Center and University of Louisville Hospital have master-leased space to make this project financially feasible. Already, two Health Informatics companies have been attracted from other states and have leased space in the building; two more private companies are in negotiation for the remaining space. The building currently is 97 percent leased.

MEDCENTER TWO

A private medical device R & D company, MedVenture Technologies, has purchased an approximately 90,000 sq. ft. facility east of the LMC campus with financial assistance from LMCDC. In return for LMCDC's financial assistance, LMCDC is being allowed to occupy some 23,000 sq. ft. of space in order to launch its incubator program on an interim basis. LMCDC will develop small offices and laboratory space for sublease to incubator tenants. Six companies are actively negotiating with LMCDC to obtain space in the facility by the end of 2001. If these tenants are successfully recruited, the space will be fully occupied.

MEDCENTER THREE

LMCDC received an appropriation from the 2001 Kentucky General Assembly of $5 million in order to acquire a site north of the LMC campus (Brook and Jefferson Streets) on which to develop a permanent home for the Life Sciences Incubator. The State later matched this grant with $5 million in additional funds through the Kentucky Innovation Act — these funds going both to LMCDC and the University of Louisville. The KIA funding has permitted the Incubator facility to be expanded to 50,000 sq. ft., so that it can house both LMCDC's incubator program ("MetaCyte Business Labs"), and the University of Louisville's "iTRC", Information Technology Resource Center, an incubator program operated by the College of Business and Public Administration. The synergy between MetaCyte and the iTRC will create a state-of-the-art incubator capacity that responds to the growing convergence between life science and information technologies, attracting companies who may use the expertise of both incubator programs. The facility is located within a block of the City's "eMain" district, further enhancing its appeal to young companies seeking proximity to resources that can make their start-up period successful.

MedCenter Two

MedCenter Three

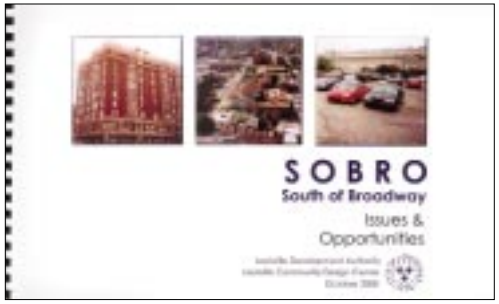
South of Broadway

Strategically located between downtown and the Old Louisville and Limerick neighborhoods, SoBro has been called the "missing link" because of its fragmented development pattern and large amount of underused land. Because of its location, SoBro has the potential to help create a continuous attractive urban environment from the Ohio River south to the University of Louisville.

SoBro has evolved dramatically over the last century. Before 1900, it more closely resembled the Old Louisville neighborhood's mixture of large Victorian-style houses, grand churches, and a variety of commercial enterprises. Since the early 1900s, the continuous development pattern of houses and institutional buildings that left few gaps in the urban fabric has changed extensively. Today's buildings possess much larger footprints than their predecessors, and significant gaps in the urban landscape have become commonplace to accommodate surface parking.

The SoBro area was the subject of several interrelated planning efforts that occurred between September 2000 and April 2001, including the following:

The **Downtown Plan** charrette, held in October 2000, focused on a number of strategic development sites in SoBro that could induce further private investment, with a primary goal of rebuilding the grand Broadway "boulevard" with monumental buildings lining the street along the northern boundary of SoBro.



The **SoBro Vision Forum** involved two community planning sessions that included a "Collective Vision Survey" and focus group discussions. The results of the survey indicated a consistent preference for a moderate density, mixed-use neighborhood that built on existing strengths like the Public Library on York Street, Spalding University, and the remaining magnificent buildings along Broadway from Third to Fourth Streets. Weaknesses included the vast amount of surface parking lots and the presence of I-65, which acts as both a perceived and real barrier between SoBro and neighborhoods to the east.

The amended **Old Louisville/Limerick Neighborhood Plan**, adopted in September 2001, recognized the importance of SoBro for its location and expressed the long-range goal of having a continuous "intact" mixed-use neighborhood with a diverse population of students, seniors, and young urban dwellers. The Plan envisions a neighborhood made up of moderate-density housing with associated retail and commercial businesses in an urban environment that links Downtown to Old Louisville and Limerick.

The results of this work and its integration into the Downtown Plan process has reinforced the consensus that SoBro can become a strong, lively urban neighborhood through the strategic implementation of a set of targeted public and private projects and development guidelines. Foremost is the need to reestablish the urban fabric by recreating the streetwall (i.e. having buildings come out to the property line, rather than being set back behind parking), retaining historically significant structures, and implementing strategies to mitigate adverse incursions of the automobile. Specific recommendations include the following:

- Site design standards should require buildings to be built close to the public right-of-way, with housing units separated from the sidewalk by a level change or shallow landscaped setback and retail uses built up to the right-of-way.

- Parking in this urban area should be located at the rear of properties and accessed from the alley with street frontage reserved for buildings.

- Moderate-density uses and building designs that are compatible with the urban environment should be encouraged through a specific set of urban design guidelines to be developed based on the "Collective Vision" for the area.

- Spalding University should be encouraged to further reinforce its0 presence in SoBro through implementation of a campus master plan that consolidates the core campus through design guidelines that will create a unique identity, an internal pedestrian spine, and relocate parking to the perimeter of the campus (preferably located in parking structures).

SoBro is the type of urban environment that can complement Downtown as a place to live, work, play, and learn by creating diverse housing opportunities. It can provide a transition from the high density of downtown to the traditional neighborhood pattern of Old Louisville. Infill development can be of moderate to medium density with an emphasis on housing/mixed-use structures and parking subordinated to the rear of the lots to establish a cohesive urban character throughout SoBro. Strategies to accomplish this include:

- Target strategic sites for redevelopment with moderate-density housing and compatible retail, commercial, and office uses.

  City-owned parcels could be put on the fast track for new housing or mixed-use development.

  Existing parks and open spaces could be reconfigured to encourage new housing development while enhancing the character, active use, and safety of the open spaces.

Ben Washer Park

  Vacant and underused parcels on Second Street and elsewhere could be made ready for redevelopment.

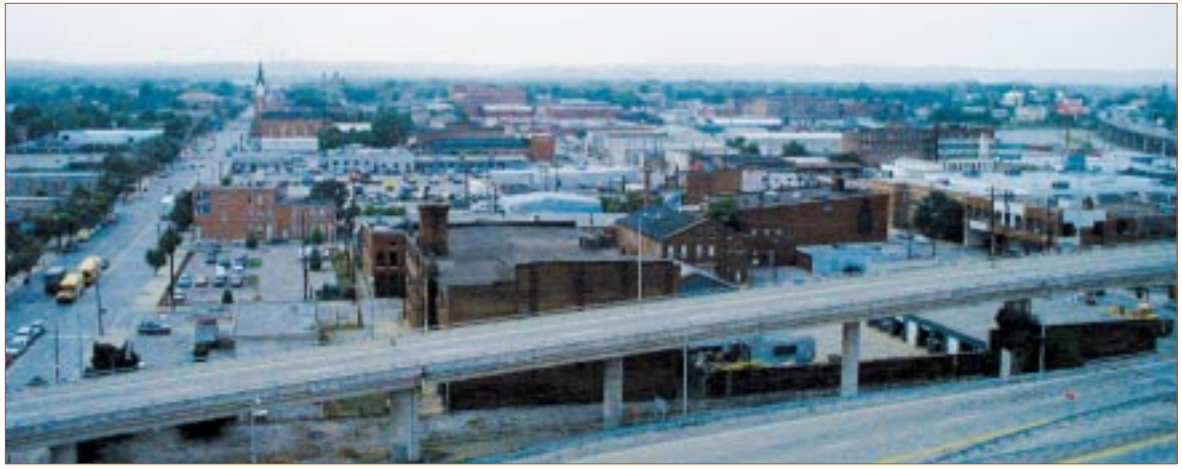
  Surface parking lots that consume vast amounts of land, creating urban dead spaces and disrupting the urban environment (especially at the northern boundary of SoBro along Broadway), could be opened up to redevelopment if those lots were replaced by garages in other locations.

- Promote transit-oriented developments in the vicinity of the proposed light rail stops for high density, mixed-use development.

- Create a pedestrian-friendly streetscape with associated mixed-use buildings along Breckinridge Street between the SoBro core (Spalding area) and the proposed light rail stops at Floyd and Preston Streets.

Infill Housing-Library Square

West Main/Market Streets Shippingport Area



Traditionally, Ninth Street and Roy Wilkins Boulevard have been considered to be the western "boundary" of downtown. The existence of the I-64 Interchange at Ninth Street, the width and through traffic characteristics of Roy Wilkins Boulevard, and the heavy concentration of public housing on the west side of the street all contributed to this perception. When combined, these factors serve to make Ninth Street as much a barrier as a boundary to the westward expansion of "downtown."

The result has been quite unfortunate, particularly since the area just west of Ninth Street has a rich history. This area provides a strong architectural trove of reusable buildings and often striking waterfront views. More importantly, the proper redevelopment of the area offers the hope that it can help encourage an improved atmosphere of social interaction among the various income and racial segments that live and work on each side of the street. When development along the western edge of downtown was rather modest, there appeared to be little incentive to focus on such a reconnection. However, given the current pattern of downtown and riverfront development, the time is ripe to initiate actions that will better connect downtown to the area west of Ninth Street.

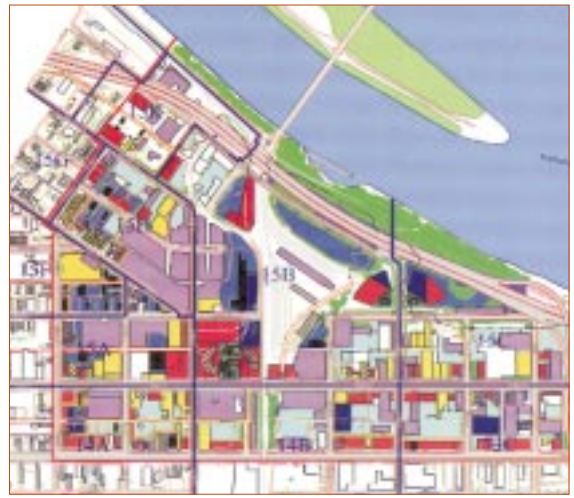
The Glassworks Lofts development at Ninth and Market Streets has stimulated both the residential market in this part of downtown as well as the market for arts-related spaces: galleries, studios, and live/work spaces. The physical attributes of many of the buildings in the area just west of Ninth Street are exceptionally well suited for both residential and arts-related spaces. Combined with the fact that many of these buildings are currently underutilized, the expansion of the "Glassworks District" across Ninth Street should be made a high priority, including the development of public policies and incentives that encourage such appropriate re-use of current properties.

A major impetus for this extension of the Glassworks District across Ninth Street will be the redesign of Roy Wilkins Boulevard and the infill residential development proposed along the Boulevard between Main Street and Broadway. The redesign of Roy Wilkins to provide a central section for through traffic and frontage roads with a more residential character, along with more residential development fronting on the street, will help transform this street from a negative traffic barrier to a positive "address." With such activity on both sides of the street, the street then becomes a way to connect both sides, rather than a way to divide it.
In addition, the development of a West Waterfront Park, initially connected to River Road and

eventually to Northwestern Parkway, will act as further encouragement to a more intensive redevelopment of the West Main and Market Street area, and particularly the area known as Shippingport. This area, roughly defined as the north side of West Market Street to the Ohio River and the west side of Ninth Street to the east side of 17th Street, comprises approximately 225 buildings covering 100 acres. The area is a heterogeneous mix of uses and properties, with an overwhelming potential for redevelopment. However, it is currently isolated from the rest of downtown, suffers from limited traffic flow, and is constrained by infrastructure and utility issues (including the flood wall). While it has a strong and architecturally distinguished building stock, many of these structures have fallen into disrepair and are generally underutilized and/or used primarily for warehousing purposes. While close to the River and downtown, it nevertheless suffers from a lack of visual appeal or consistent identity.

However, in the past few years, its potential has become more recognized by both city officials and the property and business owners within the area. Efforts have begun to redevelop and revitalize the area into *" a contemporary, multifunctional part of the inner city, with respect to the existing business profile, historic and architectural heritage, and the development needs of the immediate area and the city as a whole."* A series of improvements to the area were developed in the mid-nineties, primarily focused on improving the transportation access to the area and improving the environment for existing uses. At that time, it was agreed that certain existing conditions needed to be removed. Among these were warehousing as the only use of a building; the elimination of open storage unless properly screened from the public; vacant buildings and lots; unscreened parking and loading areas; unlit areas and unidentified businesses; and exposed utility lines.

Since that time, the marketability of the area as a mixed-use neighborhood, including a strong residential component, has improved significantly. In addition to the surge in residential demand in west downtown and the West Waterfront Park, the elimination of the container storage facility at the northern edge of Shippingport has provided an opportunity for improved access to the River, the Portland Canal, and the RiverWalk. This removes the major obstacle to the development of a true waterfront neighborhood and opens up the potential for a mix of uses unlikely to have been considered previously. The architectural quality and the mass of the warehouse-like structures in this area provides an opportunity for mixed-use development of first floor retail and upper story residential and commercial uses that cannot be found in any other part of downtown. Residential districts with a strong mixed-use and arts component in other cities are often found in areas with similar characteristics. These characteristics at Shippingport, combined with the proximity to the River and the West Main Street Cultural District, provide a combination of



assets that make the Shippingport area highly desirable to a number of different urban-oriented markets. It is believed that such a mixed-use environment, with a combination of interesting and arts-related first floor uses, a wide variety of commercial enterprises, and loft-style apartments and live/work spaces, would be especially marketable to young urban professionals.

In order for this opportunity to be realized, both the public and private sectors must be willing to undertake certain actions that will stimulate this potential. The public sector must be willing to commit to necessary streetscape and infrastructure improvements, and make the West Waterfront Park a reality. In return, existing property owners must commit to the necessary flexibility required to allow these buildings to be adaptively reused and more appropriately tenanted under reasonable terms. With these conditions in place, the area has almost unlimited potential as a major mixed-use extension of the downtown area.

Neighborhood Connections

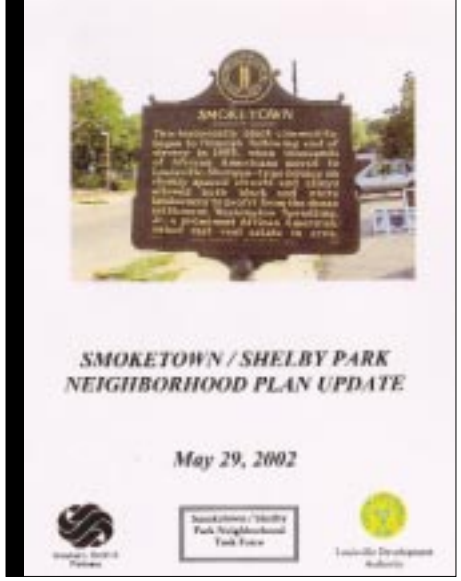
The continued economic, social, and physical strength of the central business district is a critical issue for the overall health and vitality of the entire metropolitan region. Similarly, the central business district has a symbiotic relationship with the inner city neighborhoods adjacent to it. As these neighborhoods grow stronger, they provide additional markets for downtown businesses. As the downtown revitalization continues, the number of new businesses and jobs created as a result increase the vitality of downtown's surrounding neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, the traditional boundaries of downtown have all too often been seen as barriers, both physical and psychological, that tended to separate downtown from its neighbors, rather than connecting the two. Downtown cannot reach its full potential until it successfully breaks down the barriers between the central business district and its surrounding neighborhoods.

Downtown Louisville is flanked on three sides by strong neighborhoods that present significant opportunities for redevelopment and connection to downtown, but also face equally significant challenges. In the past, while downtown has been considered the center of the community and the heart of the region, its connections to these immediately adjacent neighborhoods have not always been seen as a high priority. Most of the previous downtown planning failed to look outside the traditional boundaries of Hancock to Ninth Streets and York Street to the Ohio River. This changed to some degree in the 1990 Plan, but the current effort is the first to undertake a coordinated assessment of the areas beyond this perimeter, including East Downtown, the area south of Broadway (SoBro) and the nearest sections of West Louisville. Rather than impose a new planning effort over existing ones, this Plan instead integrated a number of other significant, planning efforts that was already in process into this final product.

In East Downtown, the Smoketown-Shelby Park Neighborhood Plan has recently been completed and adopted. The Clarksdale Hope VI Plan (see Page 31) bridged from Shelby Park to Waterfront Park, linking Phoenix Hill to Butchertown. Butchertown has undergone a neighborhood strategy process in recent years and is now pursuing a local Landmarks District designation. South of Broadway, the SoBro area (see page 86), has been the focus of a number of planning efforts incorporated as part of the Old Louisville and Limerick Neighborhood Plan, recently adopted. West Louisville has been working on the implementation of the Russell Urban Renewal Area, which has recently witnessed some significant planning efforts. Other neighborhood or special district plans have been created in recent years for sections of Portland and the Shippingport area, immediately west of Ninth Street.

Each of these areas has the potential to form a stronger connection with downtown. Previous disinvestment and suburban-minded development efforts have harmed these potential connections, in some cases making downtown the proverbial "hole in the doughnut." Cut off from the close-in neighborhoods, downtown suffers from a lack of connectivity to its most logical allies. By taking a coordinated look at its environs, this Downtown Plan recognizes the synergy between downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods, and suggests additional ways to further catalyze and stimulate such synergy. Some of this work has already been described. Highlights of other individual area planning efforts follow, but for more detail, the individual Plans should be referred to in their complete, adopted form.



East Louisville

Smoketown – Shelby Park Neighborhood Plan

The Smoketown/Shelby Park Neighborhood Plan process formally began in 1993. Several initiatives were undertaken as part of a broad-based effort to identify opportunities and implement plans for improved socio-economic conditions in the area.

In 1995 the Smoketown and Shelby Park Neighborhood Partnership Development Strategy was drafted to establish clear goals and implementation strategies. A companion document, the Smoketown/Shelby Park Design Guidelines and Prototypes, also was developed to help ensure architectural compatibility of new development within the area. A Neighborhood Plan Task Force set in motion the process for development of land use and public improvement recommendations as an addendum to the 1995 Development Strategy. The combined documents make up the Smoketown/Shelby Park Neighborhood Plan and are intended to further the ongoing efforts to protect and preserve the historic neighborhood character of Smoketown and Shelby Park, as well as to stimulate and support redevelopment in the area.

Recommendations:

- Use the Conceptual Master Plan as a guide for redevelopment and capital improvements.
- Allow commercial "nodes" to spur economic redevelopment and link surrounding neighborhoods.
- Use the area-wide rezoning process to realign existing zoning to reflect current development patterns and to eliminate future uses that have a negative impact on residential areas.
- Identify specific parcels to be considered for rezoning. These rezonings would attempt to accomplish the goals and recommendations of the plan by making existing zoning more consistent with existing land uses, allowing infill development that is consistent with surrounding land uses, and keeping high density residential and commercial or industrial sites separate from single-family residential areas.
- Work with Public Works, LDA and the Smoketown/Shelby Park Coalition to convert some one-way streets to two-way to slow traffic and to create a neighborhood feel—including sidewalks, enhanced landscape treatment, a unified system of signage, and streetscape elements such as pedestrian lighting and public seating. Use the Downtown Plan and the Old Louisville/Limerick Neighborhood Plan as guidelines for which streets to change.
- Support the light rail line and station in the neighborhood to allow greater access to mass transit and to promote neighborhood reinvestment and redevelopment.
- Work with TARC to consider better alignment of TARC routes through the area closer to the center of the residential core.
- Building on the *1995 Design Guidelines and Prototypes*, create design guidelines that, at a minimum, address: building pattern (setback, massing, height, scale); architectural character (style, materials, window/doorway location); parking (on and off-street guidelines); signage; and landscape/buffering.
- Establish separate design guidelines for each general use area. Modifications and/or exceptions for each set of design guidelines also would be needed within designated "transition" areas to help create a seamless progression from one general use area to the next.
- Update the portion of the Development Strategy dealing with the Housing Strategy to bring the goals of that document in line with the goals and objectives of the neighborhood. The Housing Strategy should set forth specific implementation measures to target new housing and open space development in keeping with the Conceptual Land Use Plan and the goals and strategies.
- Update the 1995 "Development Strategy" that would target new development in keeping with the Conceptual Land Use Plan and the goals and strategies of the Neighborhood Plan.

Neighborhood Connections

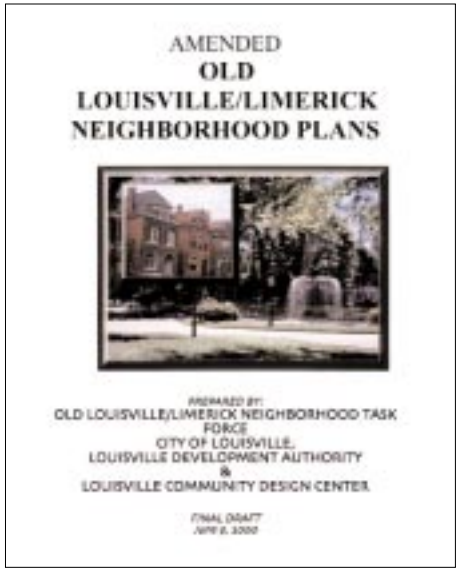
Old Louisville –
Limerick Neighborhood Plan Update

Old Louisville and Limerick together constitute a rich and outstanding architectural legacy of the great cultural and economic prosperity enjoyed by the City of Louisville after the Civil War. Unfortunately, they also provide textbook examples of the ways that architectural legacy has been eroded by encroachments and incompatible uses throughout the twentieth century.

The Old Louisville/Limerick Neighborhood Task Force was established to study current development patterns, land use, and zoning regulations, and make recommendations that update the Old Louisville Neighborhood Plan and the Limerick Action Plan adopted in 1982. The Task Force, acknowledging the fundamental soundness of Old Louisville's original urban design, seeks to establish the original land use of parcels from existing patterns and historical evidence and to use that information to guide future land uses in the neighborhood.

Recommendations:

- Reclaim the residential character more typical of the neighborhood as originally built by creating appropriate tools for development review.
- Adopt incentives for carriage house rehabilitation or construction, re-creating the alley "walls" once typical in Old Louisville and Limerick.
- Preserve private open space (rear yards) as part of the overall pattern of historic neighborhood character by implementing site design standards for alley-side surface parking.
- Continue existing institutional uses without expansion, emphasizing the appropriate adaptive uses of such structures within the context of possible broader impacts, especially parking requirements and perceived blighting influences.
- Create a pedestrian-oriented, compact, neighborhood shopping district at Fourth and Oak.
- Permit high-density, mixed-use development within the Neighborhood Transition Center as a progression between the Neighborhood Center and the adjacent Neighborhood General.
- Encourage "live work" residences within the neighborhood transition.


AMENDED
OLD
LOUISVILLE/LIMERICK
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

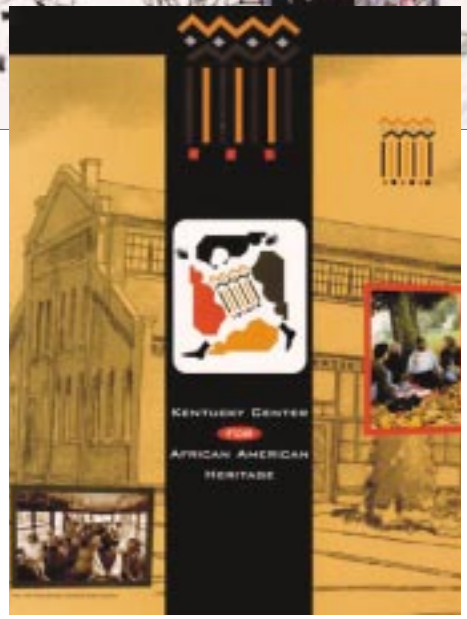
PREPARED BY:
OLD LOUISVILLE/LIMERICK NEIGHBORHOOD TASK FORCE
CITY OF LOUISVILLE,
LOUISVILLE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
&
LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER

FINAL DRAFT
APRIL 8, 2000

- Develop a detailed master plan for the area South of Broadway (Sobro), using the framework established in the Task Force recommendations, to lay the foundation for the redevelopment of Sobro as a cohesive mixed-use urban district tying Old Louisville and Limerick together with Downtown.
- Initiate a neighborhood traffic study to improve circulation, mitigate adverse impacts on residents' parking, improve heritage tourism access, and foster the growth of the neighborhood commercial center.
- Seek priority study for the neighborhood's public open spaces in the Metro Parks Department's master plan update.

West Louisville
Russell
Cedar Street

The Russell neighborhood contains the Russell Urban Renewal Area, enacted nearly ten years ago. The City administration sought to create several strategic initiatives to enhance development opportunities and bring a new planning paradigm to the area. Building on the successes of the Park DuValle neighborhood revitalization, a plan was devised to create a new subdivision along Cedar Street between 18th and 20th Streets. Part of the U.S. Conference of Mayors "Million Homes Initiative," this plan is a nationwide effort with the Homebuilder's Association to create one million homes in urban neighborhoods over the next ten years. Louisville was chosen as a demonstration city



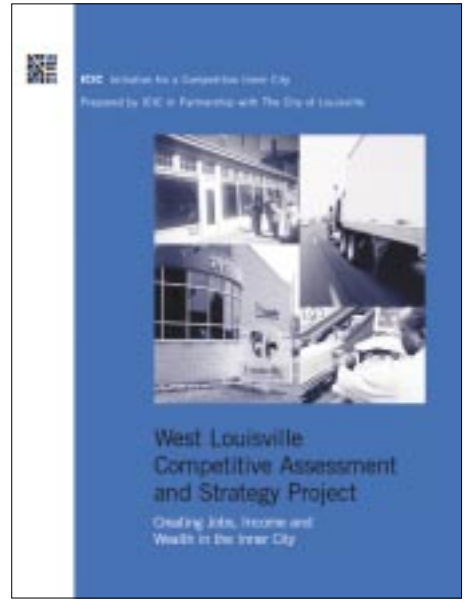
and will invest over $1 million to create a new tree-lined boulevard leading to Pioneer Cemetery, the largest green space within the historic Russell neighborhood. This new residential boulevard frontage will configure 60 or more new lots for homes with a real estate value of $3.2 million. The boulevard also forms one edge of a potential Russell "town center," anchored by the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage.

Kentucky Center for African American Heritage
Located in the historic Trolley Barn Complex in the Russell District, the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage is a cultural and educational facility that will speak with the unique voice of the African American peoples of Greater Louisville. The Center's presence in West Louisville will present a dramatic architectural and communications showcase that will serve as a source of pride for citizens of the city, county, state, and region. This $16 million project also will form part of the critical mass to support the 'town center' concept growing around the historic commercial node at 18th Street 0and Muhammad Ali Boulevard.

West End

Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) – West Louisville Competitive Assessment and Strategy Report
The West Louisville Assessment and Strategy Project is a bold effort to tackle one of the region's most pressing challenges—improving the standard of living and access to economic opportunity for those living in Louisville's West End. By investing in and implementing the wide range of market-based opportunities identified in the West Louisville Assessment and Strategy Project, this initiative will accomplish the following:

- Increase the competitiveness of West Louisville as a business location;
- Stimulate growth of West Louisville companies;
- Increase jobs, income, and wealth opportunities for West Louisville residents; and
- Add to the growth and vitality of the regional economy.



Downtown Management

In addition to the other efforts to strengthen downtown as the core of the metropolitan region, the day-to-day management of downtown Louisville is a critical element in ensuring that the area is well-maintained, safe, and welcoming for its "customers." Unlike suburban shopping centers and office parks, a downtown does not have a central owner or property management entity that has direct responsibility for all aspects of the activity occurring within it. Downtowns are a mix of private and public activities; however, the management of this variety of activities must be well coordinated and undertaken in a pro-active manner if the downtown is to remain competitive.

In Louisville, the overall provision and coordination of these management responsibilities are primarily the responsibility of the City of Louisville, through a variety of City departments, and the Louisville Downtown Management District. The City is responsible for the provision of the basic services that are required (e.g. public safety, street maintenance, trash removal, public space maintenance, parking, etc.) while the Management District provides an enhanced degree of service in a number of these areas.

Similar districts (often called Business Improvement Districts) have been enacted in many cities across the country in the recent decade. These are designated zones within which services are delivered above and beyond the level currently provided by local government or voluntary efforts. The services are designed to enhance the physical environment of the downtown, including improvements for better security, maintenance, cleanliness, and marketing. This concept has become an essential tool for the economic development of downtown areas.

Funding to support such services is provided through a special assessment levied against property owners. Non-benefiting properties, those which are exempt from property taxes and assessments, may contract with Management Districts for the delivery of specific services or programs. Operations of a Management District are carried out through a non-profit corporation, whose board acts on behalf of all property owners and other participating groups.

The Louisville Downtown Management District (LDMD) was established in 1991. The original district was comprised of 42 blocks in the core of downtown. In 1999, the District was expanded to include an additional 19 blocks, bringing its total area to 61 blocks in the center of the 104-block central business district.

The Louisville Downtown Management District focuses its activities on cleanliness, safety, and marketing and promotion:

Clean Team: The LDMD employs a Clean Team and two special crews in the provision of supplemental cleaning services within the District. The Clean Team provides supplemental services for cleaning sidewalks and alleys within the District. Sidewalks are cleaned at least once a day and alleys are cleaned at least once a week; problem alleys are cleaned more frequently. The Clean Team consists of eleven team members and a working supervisor, the 4,000-pound "Clean-a-saurus" (a sidewalk vacuum cleaner disguised as a friendly dinosaur), a Green Machine that scrubs and disinfects sidewalks, and two Tennant vacuum machines.

Safety Team: The LDMD employs a Safety Team designed to provide a highly-visible safety presence, serve as a public information resource, and act as a communications conduit for safety information. Although downtown Louisville has a very strong safety record, perceptions about safety issues still linger, and it is important that a safety presence be visible. Safety presence means being watchful for, and reporting, potentially unsafe situations, as well as actual emergencies.

The Safety Team consists of 12 downtown "ambassadors" and a supervisor, and the Team provides a safe downtown environment in the broadest sense of the meaning of safety. The Team reports suspicious activity, assists with traffic accidents and helps individuals. Team members also report smoke or noxious odors from buildings, patrol specific downtown locations where people generally feel unsafe and disperse panhandlers.

The Pedal Patrol was added to the Safety Team in 1997. This three-person patrol uses bicycles to cover longer stretches of the District more frequently than the team members who remain on foot.

Marketing and Promotion: The LDMD provides a variety of marketing and promotional activities, all designed to highlight the attractions, amenities, retail and commercial opportunities, and special activities of the downtown area. Among its efforts to do so are the artist-created bike racks, Friday Nite Fax, Pedestrian Signage program, Image Campaign, and downtown Street Stuff—a program providing downtown entertainment during weekday lunch times.

The activities of the Louisville Downtown Management District are an essential element of a strong and vibrant downtown. An entity that has its primary focus on the day-to-day operations of the downtown area is critical to ensure that the assets and the uniqueness of the downtown area are being optimized, and not devalued due to operational problems or, more importantly, neglect and oversight. The LDMD has become a valuable and integral element of the continued positive growth of downtown Louisville.

Pedestrian Information Kiosk

In many cities, the initial areas of focus of these management districts and/or business districts have grown as the entity builds its expertise and its experience in its areas of operation. The LDMD should consider expanding its operations as well, particularly in the areas of open space management (see page 96) and marketing. However, in order to so do, it will need to review and adjust its assessment rate on a more frequent basis than it has done in its initial decade of operation. Any strong business, particularly one that is closely evaluated by its level of customer service, needs to be able to keep up with the cost of doing business as well as its customer requests for additional service. Although no one looks forward to higher costs or increases in their assessments, the need to do so when service levels and/or increased responsibilities demand is appropriate.

The existence and the successful operations of the LDMD must not, however, reduce the priority that the City of Louisville places on the level and quality of its services within the downtown area. It must be reiterated that the Management District's mission is to provide supplemental services that enhance those provided by the public sector. In fact, the authorizing legislation of the District sets the level of service provision by the City that shall be maintained. To date, the City has continued to abide by this commitment.

While there is no current evidence that this commitment will be reduced, it is nevertheless a fact that service levels and deployment schedules of many public service entities will be re-evaluated as a result of the pending merger of the City and County. The importance of downtown as the "front door" of this new merged community cannot be overstated, particularly as new economic opportunities emerge. A downtown that does not project an image of cleanliness, friendliness and safety indicates a community with problems, one that is to be avoided. The continued high regard that the public sector has for these operational issues downtown is an important element of its overall economic development objectives, and must be maintained.

Belvedere/Riverfront Plaza

Public Space Management

One area where a re-assessment of current downtown management practices is warranted is the maintenance of its public open spaces. Downtown Louisville is blessed with a significant number of appropriately sized and well-located public parks and plazas. Combined with an expanding number of streets with a unique pedestrian environment, our downtown public space system can be second to none.

However, these public spaces lose much of their value if they are not adequately maintained. The Louisville Downtown Management District, in conjunction with the City, does a strong job in dealing with the cleanliness of our downtown streets. The maintenance of the downtown open spaces, on the other hand, is more varied. Some spaces are excellently maintained, while others suffer from neglect and less-regularly scheduled maintenance activities.

The uneven quality of the maintenance of these spaces is a function in part of their various management responsibilities. Many downtown spaces are maintained solely by the public sector (e.g. Founders Square, Fort Nelson Park, Belvedere/ Riverfront Plaza). Others are owned by the public but controlled privately (e.g. Jefferson Square, Aegon Plaza). Others are privately owned and maintained (e.g. National City Plaza). Still others are owned publicly and maintained publicly through the use of designated funds (e.g. Waterfront Park). While circumstances may dictate different approaches for different areas, it is apparent that the level of maintenance varies. In addition, each improvement to the public realm requires a higher level of maintenance commitment, both in terms of funding and manpower. Finally, increased usage of the space, a major goal, results in more maintenance needs, particularly if food or other desirable amenities are part of the program.

In recent years, many cities have responded to this issue by the increased use of shared maintenance responsibilities involving both the public and private sectors. Pedestrian-friendly improvements, the redesign of formerly hostile public spaces and the provision of much-needed new public spaces are welcomed enthusiastically by the businesses, employees and residents who are nearby on a regular basis. These become, if successful, strong places of social interaction, passive recreation, and people-watching. As a result, in many instances, one of these stakeholders assumes the maintenance responsibilities (as in Jefferson Square and Aegon Plaza). Other times, a group of adjacent property owners will join together to ensure that the park or plaza is well maintained on a daily basis. These groups, often designated as “the Friends of ….,” have a real stake in seeing that the space continues to function as planned. In some cases, the downtown management district serves this role.

In Louisville, this model should be assessed for its relevancy for downtown’s current and proposed public spaces. Founders Square would be an appropriate pilot project.

National City Plaza

Theater Square

Regulatory Environment

One of the key ingredients in the implementation of a new vision for downtown is the ability of the local regulatory environment to play a supportive role rather than serving as an obstacle. Downtown development is by its very nature complex and complicated. In addition, downtown projects often do not fit into "neat little boxes," they often are mixed-use, deal with the rehabilitation of older and historic buildings into modern new uses, have difficult access issues, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

While these conditions are very often the reasons that they become interesting and exciting projects once they are completed, they nevertheless can present regulatory and construction headaches that may jeopardize their initiation. It is critical that the regulations in effect are flexible enough to allow these projects to move forward, and that the regulatory process is aimed at expediting those development projects that are supportive and complementary to the vision of the overall plan for downtown.

The regulatory environment in Louisville is generally supportive to downtown development, and there are a number of institutions and programs designed to encourage and facilitate the continued revitalization of downtown. The current zoning regulations are generally flexible, the City development staff is highly competent and responsive, there are a number of programs in place that incentivize downtown development (e.g. Downtown Housing Fund), market information is plentiful and up to date, and there is an excellent GIS system that is very useful in the identification of utility and infrastructure needs. It is clear that the redevelopment of downtown is strongly encouraged.

At the same time, however, there are a number of deficiencies in the system that directly impact the recommendations of the Plan presented herein. In addition, there are certain elements of the vision for downtown that can be, and should be, accelerated and stimulated through more pro-active actions taken by the public sector. Both of these are highlighted below:

Residential Conversion

There are many existing buildings downtown and in the surrounding neighborhoods that are excellent candidates for conversion to new residential units, due to the physical characteristics of the structure, its location, and its current use (primarily vacant or under-utilized). However, current building and zoning codes often do not explicitly deal with such conversions, with most regulations designed primarily for new construction or rehabilitation in primarily residential neighborhoods. Issues of access and egress, upper story fenestration, parking, etc. often present obstacles even when all agree that the conversion is appropriate. A review of current and proposed zoning code and building code requirements as to their impact on residential conversion should be undertaken immediately.

Signage

One of the trickiest issues to deal with downtown is the issue of signage. Signage regulations have been primarily designed to protect the public interest from garish, oversized, and illuminated signs that often have negative impacts on adjacent neighbors. The one instance where the opposite is the case is in entertainment districts, where the energy created by a variety of signs and design elements often becomes one of its greatest assets. When there are few adjacent neighborhood issues involved, the public often is quite supportive of this type of "entertainment-oriented" signage.

Louisville has not yet come to grips with this issue and provided a resolution in its sign code that recognizes the unique aspects of downtown signage while at the same time respecting the need for a different type of approach in residential neighborhoods. There are additional signage issues downtown related to signs in the historic district, pedestrian-oriented signage, and generic urban design elements such as banners, graphics, and other streetscape elements.

Ground Floor Retail

The success of many great downtown streets has much to do with its continuity; continuity of buildings along a common building line, continuity of a common streetscape vocabulary, and continuity of retail uses on the first floors of buildings. This continuity increases the retail interest in a street or district, provides a heightened degree of liveliness,

color, movement, and energy, and provides the necessary synergy among retailers that ultimately results in greater sales and interest from additional retailers. There is perhaps nothing as “deadening” to a downtown street as a row of building storefronts that have been converted to office use, where the storefront has literally turned its back to the street.

This is often positioned as a “chicken and egg” situation. A building owner will state that he or she would love to have retail uses at the lower level, but the market is not there or the rents are lower than other uses. At the same time, often there is a sense that first floor retail will return to a street once the demand is shown. However, there are very few instances of a ground floor use returning to retail once it has been captured for non-retail uses. Furthermore, as more retail uses are converted, the marketability of that street for retailing is reduced as well.

In the downtown Louisville market, it would be inappropriate to require total first floor retailing along every downtown street; the retail market is not that large. However, in the districts most conducive for retail use, it is important that regulations are put in place to require most or all of the best ground floor space to be required for retail use. This is certainly the case along Fourth Street, East and West Main and Market Streets, Third and Fifth Streets, and Jefferson and Liberty Streets, and Muhammad Ali Boulevards. In other districts, a gradual system could be instituted where an appropriate percentage of ground floor space could be required.

Even in those streets and districts where ground floor retailing is not mandated, there nevertheless should be a requirement that transparent glass be used at the first floor level. Black or darkened glass, or the replacement of storefront glass with non-transparent materials, presents a hostile environment, reduces the liveliness of the street, and presents a fortress-like environment that reinforces perceptions of safety issues. These are inappropriate uses of the street level in downtown Louisville.

Surface Parking Lots

There is nothing more disruptive to the kind of vibrant downtown envisioned in this Plan as a street or district with many surface parking lots. These gaps in the street wall become gaps in the vitality of downtown itself, and their street frontage becomes something to pass by quickly or avoid altogether. Those surface lots that provide income for their owners on a temporary basis until they are developed serve a purpose, and are only of minor disruption if their temporary nature is clear. However, there are many more instances where the permanent operation of these lots for surface parking

provides a steady stream of income and actually acts as a deterrent for more intensive development. The taxation and valuation methodology in use on these properties do not encourage their conversion to active development sites.

It is therefore recommended that new permanent surface parking lots be prohibited, and that the landscaping requirement for existing surface parking lots be upgraded, and more importantly, rigorously enforced. The disruption of the surface parking lot to the vitality of the downtown street can often be ameliorated to a great extent by appropriate interior landscaping, by a strong landscaped area and/or a decorative low wall along the property line, and the creative use of interesting urban design elements. The City should undertake an inspection program of all downtown surface parking lots as to their compliance with existing landscaping requirements, and offer all those who fail to comply a landscaping plan that they can implement, or modify, in a specified period of time, prior to enforcement proceedings. This will result in a number of improved surface lots and an indication of the intent of the community to enforce these, and hopefully improve, regulations.

Louisville Downtown Development Plan Executive Summary

City of Louisville • Downtown Development Corporation • Louisville Central Area, Inc. | September 2002

Executive Summary

Guiding Principles

- Downtown is the unique center of the region
- Create a 24-hour downtown with a mix of residential, commercial, civic, and cultural activities
- Downtown should be transformed from a collection of destinations to one unique "destination"
- Create active, vibrant, livable public spaces supported by the design of buildings, streets, and open spaces
- Enhance downtown's attractiveness as a place for investment
- Integrate downtown seamlessly with its adjacent neighborhoods, the city, and the region
- Build on existing strengths with new initiatives and development
- Create an interconnected network of streets, transit and public open spaces
- Forge public/private partnerships to coordinate high priority initiatives and oversee Plan implementation

Strategic Initiatives

- Additional Downtown Housing
- Celebrate the Public Realm
- Streets for People
- Urban-Oriented Retailing
- Targeted Office Market Strategy
- Enhanced Medical Center Engine
- Expanded Higher Education Presence
- Enhanced Downtown Activity Generators
- Improved Neighborhood Connections
- Complementary Regulatory Environment

Additional Downtown Housing

- 2,000 unit demand
  - 500 first year, 350 annually
- Strong market: young professionals, empty nesters, medical center
- Mix of rental/sale units; early focus on rental
- Mix of styles:
  - lofts
  - townhouses
  - flats
  - low to mid-rise (e.g. Waterfront Park Place)

Housing Focus Areas

East Main/Market
West Main/Market
Clarksdale
Broadway/SoBro
Fifth-Sixth/Muhammad Ali Blvd.
Waterfront Park

Clarksdale

- Redesign as mixed-income neighborhood
- Integrate into adjacent neighborhood
- Add additional in-fill housing on proximate parcels
- Connect to redevelopment/housing opportunities in Smoketown
- Reintroduce city street character
- Insure adequate housing options for all current residents

Celebrate the Public Realm

- Create sense of place
- Encourage activity on the street (not just parks, but streets, sidewalks, plazas)
- Make each district special
- Better connections between districts

Place-Making Initiative

- Upgrade existing public parks/plazas and streets into more pedestrian-friendly environments
- Focus on district-character streetscape
- Public art and amenities
- Improved landscaping/trees
- Special district lighting
- New wayfinding/signage system
- Encourage commercial activity in parks and plazas
- Public/private open space management

Waterfront Park Phase II

New West Riverfront Park

- Redesign of River Road into lower-speed, pedestrian-friendly local street
- Improved Sixth/Seventh/Eighth Streets from Main to River
- Connect to new West Riverfront Park at current container terminal
- Upgraded RiverWalk
- Improved west end connections to Waterfront
- Encourage new residential uses nearby

Old Walnut Street Corridor

- Create new streetscape vocabulary along Muhammad Ali between Fifth and 18th Streets
- Highlight its history as the old Walnut Street corridor
- Connect downtown to African American Heritage Center
- Serve as visitor attraction gateway to 18th Street commercial district

Streets for People

- Should optimize 24-hour usage and be appropriately scaled
- Should be attractive and inviting rather than obstacles
- Provide greater ease of movement and flexibility
- Improve retailing presence
- Encourage street activity and residential development
- Reduce confusion and circuitous travel to destinations and attractions

Traffic Circulation

- Reintroduce two-way street system downtown where feasible and appropriate
  - North/South
    - Brook, Preston, Second – Eighth Streets
  - East/West
    - Jefferson and Liberty Streets
- Fully re-open Fourth Street
- Accommodate future LRT route
- Analyze adjacent neighborhood streets to become more residential in character

Ohio River Bridge/Spaghetti Junction

- New Parallel I-65 bridge
- Spaghetti Junction redesign high priority
  - Guarantee future accessibility to downtown
  - Opportunity for improved access to waterfront, particularly Butchertown
  - New town/in-town potential

Redesigned Streets

River Road (Third – Ninth)
Ninth Street
Preston Street
Floyd Street
Hancock Street

Ninth Street Boulevard

- Redesign as a true boulevard
  - Central through-traffic section; east and west residential frontage roads
  - Develop infill housing on appropriate parcels on both east and west sides of the street

Preston Street Boulevard

- Transform Preston Street into major entrance into the City
  - Maximize the impact of Waterfront Park by bringing it into downtown
  - Connect the waterfront with the Medical Center
  - Provide grand boulevard for the Medical Center
  - Accommodate future LRT route
  - Encourage pedestrian-friendly street usage

Hancock Street Transit

- Encourage greater use of transit for commuter and intra-downtown trips
- LRT line to support downtown redevelopment
  - Light rail route to connect between downtown and points south
  - Connect to improved downtown circulator system
  - Integrate into downtown urban design standards

Parking

- Encourage parking as part of mixed-use buildings, rather than stand-alone development
- Suggest strategic locations for mid-block future facilities
- Encourage air rights development
- First floor retail use for ease of access
- Discourage additional surface lots

Urban-Oriented Retailing

- Capitalize on uniqueness of downtown with retail strategy
- Stop trying to replicate suburban retail experiences
- Focus on first floor retailing
- Galleria should remain major anchor with an Urban Entertainment focus
- Different retail components for different districts
- Neighborhood retail focus in more residentially oriented districts

Retail Focus Areas

- Galleria/Fourth Street
  - Fourth Street Live!
  - 500/600 Block Entertainment District
  - Reopen Fourth Street to traffic
- East/West Main Street Districts
  - Specialty retailing
  - "Edgier" entertainment/food/drink
  - Arts cinema
  - Small market/grocery
- Medical Center/East Downtown
  - Neighborhood Services
  - Food services
  - Convenience/food market
- South of Broadway
  - Neighborhood services
  - Food services
  - Improved grocery/market
- 500 Block of Fourth Street

Targeted Office Market Strategy

- One or two new Class A office buildings in next decade. Have adequate (not excessive) blocks of space available
- Major focus on technology users to occupy existing Class B and C space; good local market forecast
- Support and encourage eMain; Medical Center Bio-Park; additional University activities
- Market competitive advantages of downtown for technology companies
- eMain and Medical Center continuum

Enhanced Medical Center Engine

- Accelerate Bio-Park development; incorporate mix of uses
- Create new pedestrian "spine" along Abraham Flexner Way
- Preston Street as major entry boulevard
- Central U of L campus focal point
- Training program for adjacent neighborhood residents
- Redesign of I-65 Interchange

Expanded Higher Education Presence

- JCC/Louisville Tech corridor
- Expand Bellarmine presence in eMain
- Expand U of L presence; medical school and other departments
- Downtown student housing; begin with nursing students
- Explore Metro College presence
- Explore new technology high school

Enhanced Downtown Activity Generators

- 24-hour activity downtown; not 9-5
- Mix of residents, workers, metro residents, students, tourists
- Maximize Louisville's hospitality and convention business
- Downtown as cultural center of region
- Downtown as recreation center

Visitor Attractions

- New Convention Center hotel to optimize KICC expansion
- Muhammad Ali Center
- Cathedral of the Assumption
- Explore Speed Museum/Derby Museum branch
- New smaller, boutique museums
  e.g. Frazier Firearms Museum
- New Public Market
- Partnership with nearby attractions
  - Louisville Stoneware
  - Portland Museum
  - Falls of the Ohio

Downtown Sports Arena

- Excellent activity generator, if properly sited and tenanted
- Should be located adjacent to critical mass of eating/drinking/retail
- When new/upgraded facility is necessary, should be downtown to maximize benefits
- Type of tenant (i.e. professional, minor league, collegiate) less important than full schedule commitment
- Urban design issues critical to success/impact

Additional Recreational Activity

- Extreme Sports Park
- Improved/upgraded RiverWalk
- Downtown walking/jogging trails
- Downtown historic walks
- Bicycle-friendly streets
- Bike path connections between downtown and neighborhoods
- Connections to Beargrass Creek (bicycle and pedestrian)
- Boating opportunities at Waterfront Park

Improved Neighborhood Connections

- Better integration of downtown with adjacent neighborhoods
  - De-densification of adjacent pockets of poverty; replace with mixed-income neighborhoods
  - Return to neighborhood streets
  - "De-edge" Broadway/Ninth Street/Second Street/I-65
  - Improved pedestrian connections
  - Innovative uses/design treatments at highway underpasses

Neighborhood Connections

- Broadway/SoBro
  - Redesign to encourage pedestrian/vehicular movement across Broadway
  - Use of Library area as downtown/Sobro connector
- Shippingport Area Improvements
  - River Road/West Waterfront Park improvements
  - Mix of uses
  - Streetscape improvement
- Ninth Street Boulevard
  - De-emphasize west side barrier
  - Use housing as connection
- Hancock Street Boulevard
  - Connection from Shelby Park north to Waterfront Park
- Butchertown
  - Better connections to waterfront
  - Improve connection to Witherspoon/Clay Streets
- Preston Street Redesign
  - Connect Smoketown/Medical Center/Waterfront
  - LRT route accommodation
- Phoenix Hill
  - Connect to East Main/Market residential area
  - Improve Jefferson Street
  - Redesign Clarksdale—integrated into neighborhood

Complementary Regulatory Environment

- Zoning code revisions to encourage residential use and conversion
- Sign code revisions to encourage entertainment and pedestrian scale signage
- First floor retail use only (in designated streets and districts)
- Surface parking landscaping enforcement

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