

Edwards,Michelle

From: Todd Nation <booknation@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2020 11:37 AM
To: Auler,Amy; Boland,Tammy; Loudermilk,Cheryl; Elliott,Earl; DeBaun,Curtis; Garrison,Neil; Crossen,Martha; Azar, George
Cc: Edwards,Michelle
Subject: *Ext!* HyettPalma Downtown Action Agenda
Attachments: DowntownActionAgenda.pdf; ATT00001.htm

****External Email - Think Before You Click****

- Helpdesk

Hi Fellow City Council Members,

I've been contacted by some of you, requesting more info about the Downtown Action Agenda. Attached, you will find the core of the document.

I know your time is valuable. Pages 18 through 27 contain the info that I'd like you to consider. Reading through those pages (and the rest of the doc, if you have time), you will see that we have made a lot of progress downtown since 2002..

When I reached out to Mayor Bennett and Steve Witt yesterday, our mayor was quick to point out that the city has undertaken a more recent study than HyettPalma — Storrow and Kinsella's Downtown Vision Plan. Data was gathered for that plan late in 2008, and the plan itself was issued in March of 2009. I apologize for unintentionally omitting reference to that document — instead of writing that HyettPalma was “the last time” we held a focused conversation on the future of downtown, I should have written that it was “the first time”. If you want to see the Storrow Kinsella document, please ask.

Part of the follow-through on HyettPalma's 2002 Downtown Action Agenda involved updating our city code to create the C8 and C9 zoning districts downtown, along with some basic rules guiding new development within those districts. All of that was embodied in Special Ordinance 17, 2002, which was filed in May of that year. To me, the steps taken by the City Council to update City Code to implement HyettPalma's plan set it apart from the 2009 Storrow Kinsella report. In any case, it's probably time to undertake a new, focused study of downtown.

I welcome your questions and comments.

See you soon,

Todd
mobile 812-870-4986

- **Downtown Improvements**

Residents and business owners were asked to rate a list of possible Downtown improvements as being "very important," "somewhat important," or "not important" at this time.

Eight improvements were rated "very important" by a majority of residents and five received this rating from a majority of business owners. Four improvements were rated "very important" by a majority of both residents and business owners. These were:

- Increase the variety of retail goods (85% residents, 67% business owners);
- Recruit additional retail businesses (83% residents, 78% business owners);
- Improve the availability of parking (66% residents, 66% business owners); and
- Improve the convenience of parking (65% residents, 67% business owners).

The four improvements rated "very important" by a majority of residents, but not business owners, were:

- Increase the variety of restaurants (64% residents, 43% business owners);
- Improve the quality of retail goods (59% residents, 36% business owners);
- Keep businesses open longer on Saturdays (56% residents, 29% business owners); and



- Keep business open later in the evening (55% residents, 37% business owners).

And, finally, the one improvement rated "very important" by a majority of business owners – but not residents – was:

- Physically improve Downtown's buildings (45% residents, 68% business owners).

■ **Downtown Terre Haute Tomorrow**

A series of discussions, focus groups, and meetings were held to define the community's preferred vision of Downtown Terre Haute – as it would ideally exist in the year 2007. Those participating in the sessions said that, by the year 2007, Downtown Terre Haute would have a strong sense of community identity and a sense of individuality that are unique to Terre Haute. Downtown would be the heart of Terre Haute and it would be "a little bit funky" with arts, entertainment, cafes, unique restaurants, "a distinctive presence of public art," specialty shops selling unique items, and places to "meet and gather and hang out."

Downtown's older buildings would be restored. Upper stories would be converted to housing of all types. These would act as a base of support for businesses and people would be enticed to "return to your college community" or "come to a college community" and live Downtown. And, the Terre Haute House would be restored, saved, and opened.

Downtown would be clean, well-maintained, and made aesthetically pleasing with greenery, pedestrian-scale decorative street lights, empty lots that are landscaped and made more attractive, and "no trash." Downtown would be filled with specialty businesses that sell unique items. Stores and merchandise in Downtown would be of the kind "you'd never find at a mall." Downtown stores would have hours that are not "just Monday to Friday, 9 to 5."

By 2007, Downtown would have more on-street parking, fewer surface parking lots, and "no additional surface lots on Wabash." As Downtown patronage grows, consideration would be given to constructing additional garages in the future.

Ideally, Downtown Terre Haute would be enhanced to contain the following mix of uses:

- Specialty retail;
- Apartments, lofts, and condos;
- Restaurants;
- Entertainment;
- Arts and culture;
- Convenience retail;
- Professional offices;
- Government offices;
- Financial institutions and
- Lodging.

By the year 2007, the enhancement effort would have resulted in creating the following image for Downtown.

***The hub of Terre Haute
that is beautiful and energetic,
interesting and fun,
and that offers lots of reasons to go Downtown***

***A distinct and unique Downtown
that has a thriving art community,
a flourishing nightlife, and
something for all ages.***

***A safe and social Downtown
where you can walk the sidewalks
and always find friendly faces.***



***A culturally rich Downtown
with a proud heritage,
where historic buildings have been preserved and
local history has been woven into Downtown's fabric.***

***A Midwest arts destination
that is a gateway to arts in Indiana
and the real Crossroads of America.***

***The heart of an academic community
with a social environment
that is welcoming to families and multiple generations
and that makes you say,
"Wow, it's terrific to be from Terre Haute!"***

■ **Downtown Market Analysis**

Downtown Terre Haute has the potential to serve a dynamic and expanding marketplace.

• ***Downtown Retail Market Opportunities***

Taking steps to further enhance Downtown Terre Haute, and barring a significant decline in the national or regional retail economy, it is conservatively anticipated that Downtown may have the potential to support the development of between approximately 20,000 and 33,000 net square feet of additional retail space by the year 2007 – which could include expansions or sales increases by existing Downtown Terre Haute retail businesses and/or the construction of some limited amount of new retail space.

• ***Downtown Office Market Opportunities***

It is estimated that approximately 30,000 to 45,000 square feet of additional office space could potentially be supported in Downtown Terre Haute between now and the year 2007. This represents an increase in demand based on both the expected continued enhancement of the area and an anticipated small increase in area households during the same time period.

• ***Downtown Housing Market Opportunities***

Every effort should be made, consistent with the implementation of the overall Downtown enhancement program, to introduce more quality, market-rate housing:

- In loft apartments located in the upper floors of appropriate existing buildings throughout Downtown – particularly in the historic core of Downtown;
- In townhouse- and garden-style infill units located at the edges of Downtown – on appropriate redevelopment sites; and
- When market strength is deemed appropriate, as infill projects on Downtown surface level parking lots – with the maximum number of parking spaces retained on site.

In addition, every effort should be made to protect and enhance existing housing units located adjacent and in proximity to Downtown – particularly the extremely valuable historic homes located due south of Downtown's Poplar Street boundary in the Farrington's Grove Historic District.

■ ***Recommended Strategies***

The *Terre Haute Downtown Action Agenda 2002* contains two sets of Recommended Strategies:

- A ***Development Framework*** which should be used to direct and manage Downtown's future character; and
- A ***Course of Action*** which should be implemented – by both the private and public sectors – to create the best possible future for Downtown Terre Haute.

Both are summarized below.

- 18 • Terre Haute
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Development Framework

The following *Development Framework* should be used to ensure Downtown's future as an economically vibrant commercial area with great appeal to local residents, area-wide residents, and discerning tourists.

Defined Edges

Downtown is fortunate to have well-defined edges along all of its boundaries, as described below.

- ***North***

Immediately to the north of Downtown is Indiana State University, with a myriad of attractions and facilities – and with a built-in customer base from which Downtown can draw.

- ***South***

To the south of Downtown lies the Farrington's Grove Historic District.

- ***West***

At the western edge of Downtown lies the Wabash River, Fairbanks Park, and the City/County government center.

- ***East***

Downtown's eastern edge is bounded by the railroad tracks and associated industry.

Linkages

It is very important to establish and reinforce a stronger link between ISU and Downtown. This can be accomplished at the three primary locations discussed below.

First, given its existing historic buildings, 6th Street is the natural location for creating a stronger pedestrian link between ISU and Wabash. Second, 7th Street should be made to serve as a stronger campus/Downtown connector with the development of the Downtown Arts Corridor. Third, as is being discussed locally,

the anticipated new Cherry Street parking garage should be designed to include ribbon retail on the first floor. This will be especially important on the 7th Street side of the structure.

Trails

As is currently understood, a new Riverfront Trail and Cherry Street Trail are being planned. This effort should be continued and supported to create trails that link Downtown, ISU, and the Wabash River.

Districts

Downtown should be enhanced to create and reinforce the following two districts.

The districts are shown on the map presented on the next page of this document. A description of the districts follows.

- **Arts Corridor District**

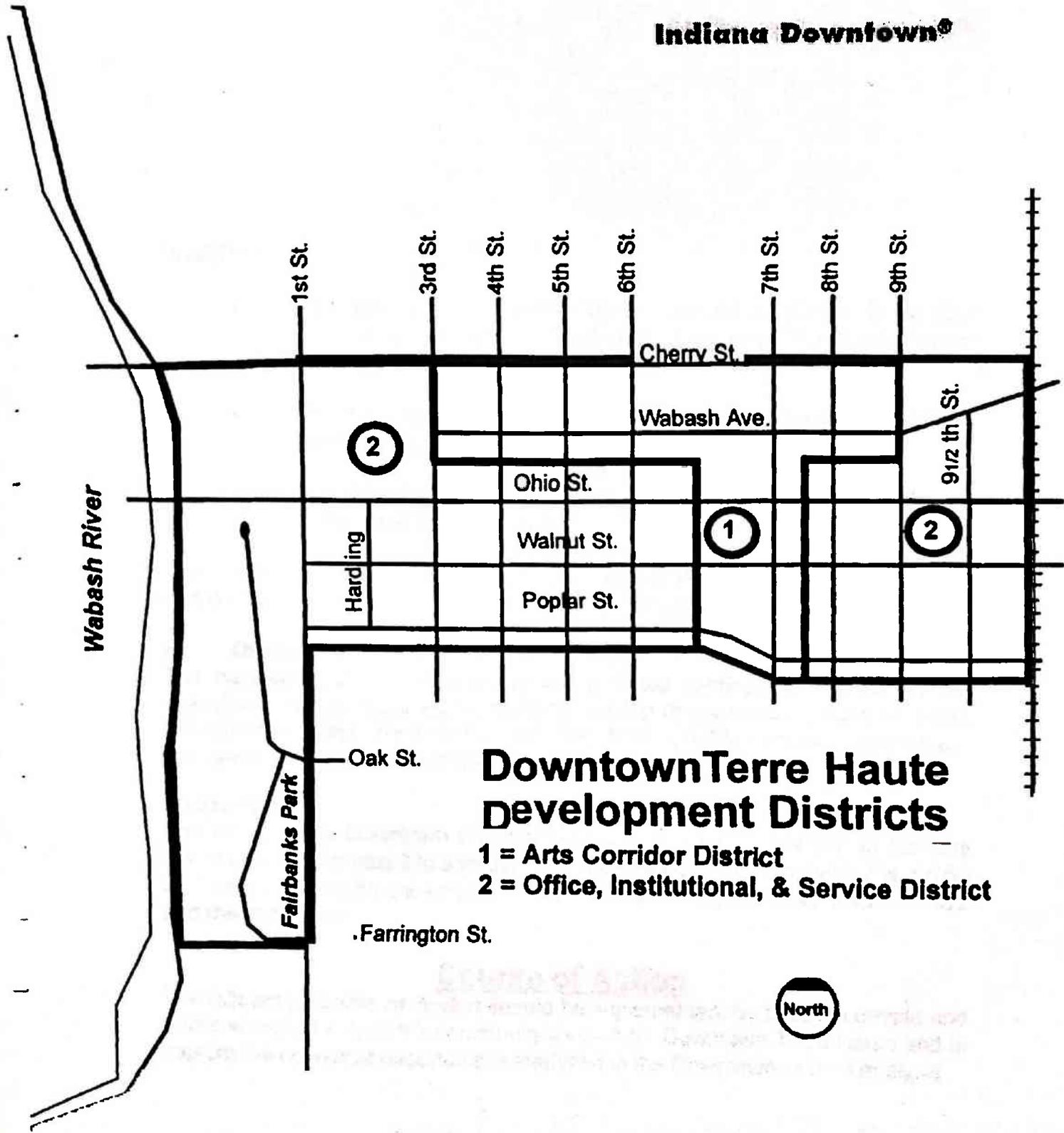
Existing plans should continue and every effort should be made to develop a Downtown Arts Corridor. This is a great concept which will bring tremendous benefits to Downtown Terre Haute. In addition to planned development and linkage along 7th Street, the Wabash Avenue Spine should be linked to the corridor.

A concerted effort should be made to cluster specialty retail, food, art, and entertainment in the first floors of building space on Wabash Avenue from 4th Street to 9th Street, and on 7th Street from Poplar Street to Cherry Street in the Downtown project area, with housing and offices located on the upper floors. Lodging would also be appropriate in this district.

It is extremely important that every effort be made in the Arts Corridor District to:

- Save and reuse historic buildings;
- Stress pedestrian-orientation; and
- Enhance beautification to create a unique ambience.





Downtown Terre Haute development Districts

- 1 = Arts Corridor District
- 2 = Office, Institutional, & Service District



In addition:

- Only zero lot line infill development should be allowed in the Arts Corridor District, with no streetfront building setback and no off-street parking developed at streetfront;
- The development of any additional surface parking lots on Wabash Avenue should not be allowed; and
- The design of infill structures that are compatible with existing historic buildings should be required.

The overall enhancement goal in the Arts Corridor District should be to create a viable critical mass of Downtown destinations and street animation.

• ***Office, Institutional, & Service District***

The balance of Downtown's project area should continue to include offices, institutions, service businesses, housing, lodging (if market conditions support), convenience retail, restaurants and fast food establishments, government, recreation (park), and limited light industry.

Focus Area

The focus of the Downtown enhancement effort should be placed on the Arts Corridor District for next 3 to 5 years. This is essential in order to make this district the best it can possibly be – so that Downtown can attract spenders both from ISU and the trade area.

Course of Action

The following ***Course of Action*** should be implemented, by both the private and public sectors, to attain the community's vision for Downtown Terre Haute and to capture the economic opportunities identified in the Downtown market analysis.



Real Estate Development & Improvement

Every effort should be made to foster and maintain the highest quality real estate development possible throughout Downtown Terre Haute.

Terre Haute House

The Terre Haute House is a highly important structure located in the heart of Downtown's Arts Corridor District. Every effort should be made to bring the building back to a productive use as a lodging facility, as is presently planned.

Existing Buildings

The City of Terre Haute currently has a facade grant program in place. Use of the grant program should be concentrated on Wabash Avenue in the Arts Corridor District in order to realize the greatest level of physical improvements in the shortest time possible.

To ensure that the grants are used for improvements that best enhance Downtown, the following tools should be created.

- Design guidelines should be written -- by a qualified architectural historian or preservation architect -- in order to provide advice to owners regarding the "do's and don't's" of improving facades in Downtown.
- Design assistance -- provided by a qualified preservation architect or architectural historian -- should be offered to owners who are serious about improving their facades in accordance with the design guidelines.

In addition, receipt of facade grants should be tied to use of the design guidelines.

Housing

Currently, the City has a forgivable loan program in place to encourage upper story housing in Downtown. This program should also be continued to stimulate the maximum number of housing units in Downtown. In addition:

- 23 • Terre Haute
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- The program should be used to strive for the highest quality housing development in Downtown; and
- The City and those involved in the Downtown enhancement effort should work with ISU to attract faculty and students to Downtown as residents.

Infill

The appearance, setback, and materials used in infill construction should be addressed in the design guidelines mentioned above.

Design Review

It is suggested that the City institute a design review process that pertains to facade renovation and infill construction. The purpose of the design review would be to protect Downtown's historic character, pedestrian-orientation, property values, and economic viability.

Traffic, Parking & Transportation

Traffic, parking, and transportation are ancillary issues that are important to Downtown's economic well-being. Therefore, these issues should be addressed as part of Downtown's overall enhancement, as recommended below.

Traffic

A goal of the Downtown enhancement effort should be to make Downtown's traffic flow as efficient as possible while, at the same time, making Downtown as pedestrian-friendly as possible.

- ***One-Way Streets***

The City should consider retaining a traffic engineer to assess Downtown's entire traffic flow system. The goal of this assessment should be to return as many of Downtown's one-way streets as possible to two-way traffic.



- **3rd Street**

The retained traffic engineer should also be directed to examine ways to enhance the feeling and reality of pedestrian-safety in crossing 3rd Street -- without the construction of elevated or sub-surface walkways.

- **Traffic Light Timing**

The timing of both City and INDOT systems should be coordinated -- with the goal of enhancing both traffic flow and pedestrian comfort in Downtown.

- **Street Signs**

The entire Downtown area should be examined to ensure that all streets are marked with street name signs -- and that those signs are of a font large enough for motorists to read clearly.

- **Wayfinding System**

Working in association with ISU, the City should design and install a wayfinding system to lead motorists to Downtown Terre Haute and to other significant destinations in and near Downtown and on the ISU campus.

Parking

Parking availability and convenience are major concerns to both trade area residents and Downtown business owners. This concern should be addressed in the following manner.

- **Existing Parking Garage**

The maximum number of first floor spaces in the existing parking garage should be designated for use by Downtown customers.

- **Cherry Street Garage**

Construction of the new Cherry Street garage is a very important project that should be moved forward and implemented ASAP.



- ***On-Street Parking Spaces***

In the Arts Corridor District, the maximum number of on-street parking spaces should be reserved for Downtown customers. The following actions should be taken to further refine parking enforcement in Downtown.

- The City should consider enforcing two-hour time limits by using hand-held computers, rather than by chalking tires.
- The City should re-evaluate the current fine structure by considering an escalating fine system, whereby each violation would impose upon the parker a higher fine than the last.
- As part of the enforcement system, the City should include provisions for a "grace ticket." This would mean that the first ticket an individual receives in a month, for example – for over-parking in Downtown – would be forgiven by the City.

- ***Parking Study***

In September 2000, the *Downtown Parking Study* was completed by American Consulting, Inc. The recommendations contained in that document should be fully implemented – especially those regarding angled parking and removal of yellow curbs in Downtown.

- ***"Reserved for" Parking Signs***

Several Downtown businesses have placed signs at curb lines that read "Reserved for customers of (business name)." These signs are very detrimental to Downtown since they convey the message that "Downtown is not open to all." Therefore, the City should remove the signs, and prohibit their return.

- ***Future Parking Supply***

In the future – after the Cherry Street garage has been opened and its usership has been established, and after the parking recommendations referred to above have been fully implemented – parking demand in Downtown should be quantified by a professional parking analyst. If a parking shortage is documented at that time, then



consideration should be given to constructing a parking garage, with first floor retail space, rather than by creating additional surface lots in the heart of Downtown.

Transportation

The following actions should be taken to address transportation in Downtown.

- ***Trolley***

Consideration should be given to seeking additional sponsors so that the trolley can be operated free to the public on more days.

- ***Students***

The City is working with ISU to allow students free bus ridership. Such an initiative has proven to be quite successful in Lafayette, Indiana, and should be implemented in Terre Haute as quickly as possible.

Business Retention

The following actions should be taken to assist Downtown's current businesses in becoming as profitable as possible.

- ***Small Business Development Center***

A Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is in operation at ISU. The SBDC's services should be fully marketed to Downtown business owners and prospects.

- ***Targeted One-On-Ones***

In addition to and in cooperation with the work of the SBDC, the Downtown director -- discussed later -- should conduct targeted one-on-one consultations with Downtown business and property owners.

- ***Business Hours***

As uses in the Arts Corridor District intensify -- with more entertainment venues and more food establishments -- and as this district broadens its appeal to students, business owners in the area should shift to later hours.



- **Business Windows**

Every first floor business owner in the Arts Corridor District should look at their storefront with a critical eye to determine:

- How to introduce additional lighting to their windows; and
- How to create more eye-catching window displays.

- **Public Safety**

The Police Department should be supported and encouraged in their efforts to maintain a safe environment throughout Downtown Terre Haute.

- **Riverfront Development Project Areas**

The City should consider designating Downtown as a riverfront development project area. As the legislation is understood, this will allow Downtown's existing restaurants to obtain two- or -three-way permits to sell alcoholic beverages, thereby expanding their potential appeal, and it will allow Downtown to attract additional restaurateurs.

Business Recruitment

Downtown has a number of first floor vacancies. In addition, the community wishes to see a larger number of retail, food, and art-related businesses open in Downtown. This should be accomplished using the recommendations below.

- **Top List**

While all uses identified in the **Development Framework** of this **Action Agenda** are appropriate for Downtown Terre Haute, those businesses which should initially be sought for Downtown include:

- Restaurants of all types, particularly those which offer evening entertainment;
- Casual apparel, for men, women and children, and accessories;
- Art galleries;
- Antiques;

28 |

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- Small variety store; and
- Convenience uses for students and residents, such as video store, shoe repair shop, health food store, etc.

- **Incentives**

All incentives offered through the Downtown enhancement program should be offered to all appropriate new business prospects desiring to locate in Downtown Terre Haute. In addition, if feasible, a fund of unrestricted money should be established – such as initially in the range \$15,000 to \$20,000 – which can be used to design incentives unique to the needs of key tenants on the “top list” sought for Downtown Terre Haute.

- **Clustering**

Consistent with recommendations of the *Development Framework*, specialty retail businesses and food establishments – which are now dispersed throughout most portions of Downtown Terre Haute – should be clustered on Wabash Avenue and within the Arts Corridor District.

- **Process**

The Downtown director should be responsible for the recruitment of businesses to Downtown Terre Haute. A concerted effort should be made by staff to work with property owners to fill vacant Downtown space with appropriate businesses when vacancies occur.

Beautification

The following improvements should be made to Downtown's public spaces in order to “create an overall affect of beauty” – as was stated locally.

- **Streetscape Improvement Project**

The City has obtained grants to implement a Downtown streetscape improvement project. This project should be moved forward ASAP. And, the streetscape improvements should be designed by a professional landscape architect having experience in urban, historic Downtowns.

The streetscape improvements should include:

- Landscaping with color;
- Benches;
- Trash receptacles;
- Seasonal, creative banners that do not include advertising; and
- "Historic," pedestrian-scale street lights.

• **Maintenance**

It is suggested that:

- The City consider retaining one or two full-time employees who are specifically dedicated to Downtown maintenance;
- These employees be given uniforms that are recognizable and that look official – including caps, t-shirts in warm weather, and jackets in the winter; and
- The Downtown maintenance crew should be highly visible at all times.

• **Focal Points**

The landscape architect retained to design streetscape improvements should also examine small open spaces located in the Arts Corridor to identify where and how to create focal points by:

- Adding greenery;
- Introducing quality public art;
- Recreating Downtown's streetwall that has been lost to setback buildings; and
- Thereby creating small focal points in Downtown's Arts Corridor District.

• **Public Art**

Currently, a number of community members are involved in "The Public Art Project" – a very exciting effort to bring public art to the community. It is very important that The Public Art Project include placing public art in Downtown's Arts Corridor District. And, it is essential that:

- Public art placed in Downtown must be of significance -- both in terms of quality and artist name recognition; and
- Public art placed in Downtown should build on the community's rich local history and on bringing water features to Downtown.

Marketing

A variety of festivals and events are held in Downtown – by a variety of groups and organizations. In addition, the City has recently received a grant to produce a brochure and Web site for Downtown's budding Arts Corridor. The following recommendations are intended to augment these efforts.

•| **Markets**

Through the marketing campaign, Downtown should be marketed to the following consumers:

- | Downtown residents and workers;
- | Those related to ISU -- students and their families, faculty, administration, visitors, etc.;
- | Art patrons;
- | Downtown library users, who number approximately 1,500 to 2,000 per day;
- Residents of Terre Haute;



- Residents of neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown;
 - Trade area residents; and
 - Travelers – particularly cultural and heritage tourists.
- **Image**
All efforts to market Downtown should create and reinforce its image of being a historic, pedestrian-oriented arts district.
 - **ISU Involvement**
Those spearheading the Downtown enhancement effort should work with ISU faculty to craft a “Downtown story” that will be used to create and reinforce Downtown’s image.
 - **Image Development**
Once the “Downtown story” has been crafted, an all-out effort should be launched to get positive press about Downtown placed with the media.
 - **Arts Corridor Brochure and Web Site**
The Arts Corridor brochure should include a high quality insert that lists all businesses and attractions located in the Arts Corridor District.
 - **Events**
A variety of special events are now held in Downtown Terre Haute. The Crossroads Artsfest and the Downtown Holiday Fest should be viewed and sponsored as two of Downtown’s annual, signature special events.

In addition, consideration should be given to holding a “First Night” celebration in Downtown each New Year’s Eve.

- ***Festival Park***

Currently, several special events and festivals are held in Fairbanks Park. This is appropriate and understandable. However, events that are to become signature Downtown events should be held on Wabash Avenue in the Arts Corridor District.

- ***Visitor Information Center***

The Chamber of Commerce office should serve as a visitor information center in Downtown.

- ***Joint Ads***

The UEA organized Downtown joint ads, for the first time, during the 2001 holiday season. These ads were run on five consecutive Fridays. This is an excellent initiative which should be viewed as a good start. The next step should be to:

- Expand the joint ad campaign to a year-round effort;
- Run the ads in the ISU newspaper (The Indiana Statesman), as well as in the Tribune Star; and
- Work with the newspapers to arrange a favorable rate for businesses participating in the ad campaign.

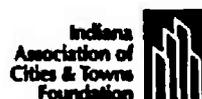
- ***Downtown Partnership***

Currently, the City of Terre Haute is very committed to Downtown's enhancement. In addition, there are several other entities that are, or have been, directly involved and very instrumental in furthering Downtown's enhancement. These are primarily:

- Downtown Terre Haute, Inc.;
- The Urban Enterprise Association; and
- The Downtown Coalition -- a coalition of the City, ISU, and business leaders formed primarily to champion the Center City project.

33

- Terre Haute
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At this point, to most successfully implement the *Terre Haute Downtown Action Agenda*, that effort must be spearheaded by an entity that:

- Is a partnership of the private and public sectors;
- Has strong and long lasting leadership;
- Has a full-time, experienced staff director; and
- That is committed to actively, aggressively, and persistently implementing the *Terre Haute Downtown Action Agenda*, on a long-term basis.

The options at hand are for an existing organization to fill this role or to form a new organization to do so. Ideally, if possible, the former option would be selected. In that case, the most logical and appropriate organization to serve as the Downtown partnership would be Downtown Terre Haute, Inc. It is understood that Downtown Terre Haute, Inc., has experienced leadership fluctuations and challenges over the years – and that it is not a well-capitalized entity at this time. However, it is the only local organization whose mission is solely Downtown's comprehensive enhancement. (The UEA project area is larger than Downtown and the Downtown Coalition has convened to tackle specific issues.)

If it were agreed that Downtown Terre Haute, Inc., is to serve as the Downtown partnership, several additions would need to be made to that group's Board of Directors. The additions would be:

- The Mayor of Terre Haute;
- A Terre Haute City Councilmember, selected by Council; and
- The President of ISU, or the President's designee

34 • Terre Haute
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It will be imperative that Downtown Terre Haute, Inc., have a full-time, professional director who has experience and a proven track record in Downtown economic enhancement. To retain such a professional, it is suggested that a national search be conducted.

The UEA should continue to be involved in Downtown's enhancement and work closely with Downtown Terre Haute, Inc. And, the Downtown Coalition should continue to champion the implementation of high-profile initiatives recommended in the *Downtown Terre Haute Action Agenda 2002*.

