



Strategic Vision for Luverne, Minnesota

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The Community's Process

Luverne has already begun investing in their vision for their future. Turn-out and participation at meetings, interviews, and open houses has been extremely positive.

Over 100 people showed up for the first community meeting to share their reflections on Luverne's strengths, issues it's facing, and opportunities for positive change. Community members worked on a variety of exercises to develop a vision for their community.

Many business leaders, city staff, and other residents participated in private interviews to discuss specific issues and opportunities.

Finally, many community members participated in a three-day long charette featuring several task force meetings and city tours. The charette culminated in an open house at the historic Palace Theater, with an enthusiastic audience getting a first taste of the ideas presented in this report.

This public process has already begun to generate momentum for positive change. Several projects have garnered enthusiastic interest and support. Community leaders have expressed interest in beginning a process of implementation for a wide variety of projects.

This document is intended to summarize Luverne's vision, objectives, initiatives, and paths to implementation. It is intended to be a living document since change is inevitable as new opportunities and challenges arise. However, it is important to have a core understanding of the community's shared vision for its future in order that energy and resources can be directed in the most effective way possible.



The Vision

A vision statement frames the community's values for itself. It provides a check for all activities by providing a way to judge if an action enhances its self-proclaimed goals. Does this activity make Luverne more like what it wants to be or not? The vision statement below was developed from feedback given at the first community meeting.

Luverne is...
...family-friendly.
...enterprising.
...authentic.
...educated.
...outdoorsy.
...creative.



The Objectives

In order to fulfill its vision, Luverne needs to set goals. These objectives will help the community be more like its vision statement. All initiatives should support one or more of the objectives.

Luverne will...

...improve aesthetics

in order to appear more family-friendly, authentic, outdoorsy, and creative.

...create vitality

in order to capitalize on being family-friendly, enterprising, educated, outdoorsy, and creative.

...strengthen processes

in order to encourage enterprise, authenticity, and education.

...enhance marketing

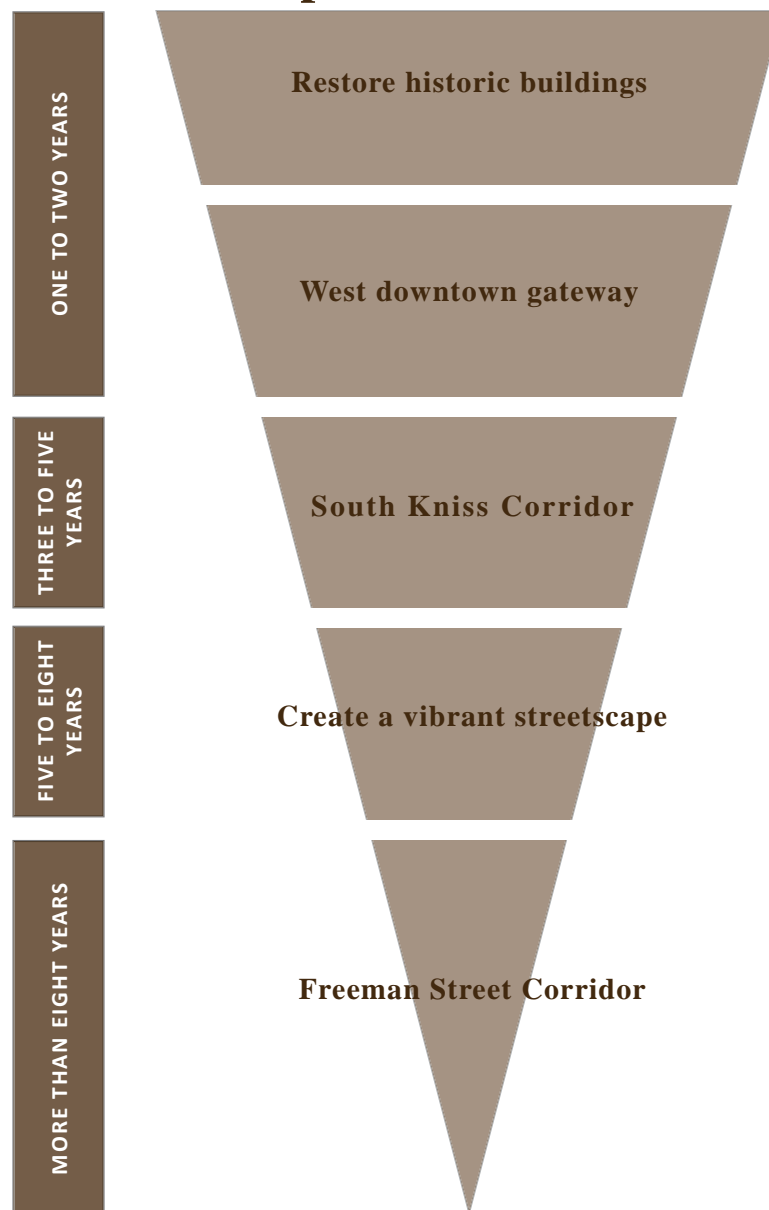
in order to tell others that Luverne is family-friendly, enterprising, authentic, educated, outdoorsy, and creative.

...increase business cohesiveness

in order to support an enterprising and educated business climate.



Path to Objective:
Improve aesthetics



Objective achieved:
Improve aesthetics



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

**Restore historic
buildings**



Initiative: Restore historic buildings

Incremental restoration of buildings deemed to contribute to the sense of downtown's historic integrity, and the upgrade of other buildings that are not historic to create a more consistently appealing aesthetic for downtown



Relation to commercial area revitalization

While the character of downtown Luverne is derived from the totality of the experience, having its historic buildings remain attractive and vital is a key element of the downtown aesthetic. In fact, it's those few buildings that stand out as gems that often lend a sense of history to a downtown, and those exist in Luverne. While efforts have been directed to several worthy buildings, including the Palace Theater, [hotel, law office], several others appear to be great candidates for restoration because much of their original character and detail still exists.

Targeting restoration efforts most often relies on a combination of education, building potential, and incentives. First, owners—and the community in general—should be made aware of the potential of worthy buildings and the care that must be exercised in their restoration to maintain their integrity. This can be orchestrated through community meetings and more targeted meetings with select building owners, and might

be facilitated by a historic preservation specialist or an architect with historic preservation experience.

The potential of a building must also be considered. While a goal might be restoration of every building in downtown, sometimes it's just not feasible. With time and lack of care, buildings lose their capacity for feasible restoration, and while some enthusiasts will dedicate themselves to saving architecturally worthy buildings, they are the rare case. In considering a building's potential, it's important to assess the building as a whole, and then determine a reasonable course of action.

It might be important to frame a path that leads toward restoration without achieving it in a single project. Many building owners have limited resources to apply to a wholesale restoration, but are willing to make limited improvements. Working with these owners might result in positive incremental changes that, with time, may result in a more complete restoration. In this case, education is important, as is the potential

Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

Restore historic buildings



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

Restore historic buildings

need to offer professional guidance about proper steps that move toward restoration in logical and permanent increments.

Sometimes the best path toward building improvements relies on a partnership between an owner and a city. In this case, a city might incent an owner to make improvements that align with a community's vision—in Luverne's case, a historic downtown. Owners might receive support in the form of technical guidance and financial assistance in return for agreeing to follow "rules" that are consistent with good historic preservation practices.

If Luverne had access to a source of funds for façade improvements in historic buildings, strategies for directing those funds to worthy properties might be considered:

- Target specific buildings that would serve as the best examples for the program and its potential for shaping the aesthetics of downtown;
- Solicit owners of worthy buildings and work with

those willing to participate in the program; or

- Target a zone with a number of worthy buildings, even if the zone includes some buildings that are not the best examples of historic architecture.

In the process of addressing historic buildings, it's important to remember that downtown Luverne also has a number of buildings that are not historic, or that do not have significant character. For these buildings, similar approaches might be pursued, where changes to the façade occur in logical and well-considered increments. As these buildings contribute to the character and aesthetics of downtown, they should be given equal weight when considering improvements. To do otherwise might diminish well performed improvements on a nearby building with worthy and historic character.

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

The community considers restoration of historic buildings to be a high priority. Failing to deal with these buildings not only results in a lack of alignment with the community's vision, it could result in the loss of historic fabric—buildings will disappear from the landscape of downtown.

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives

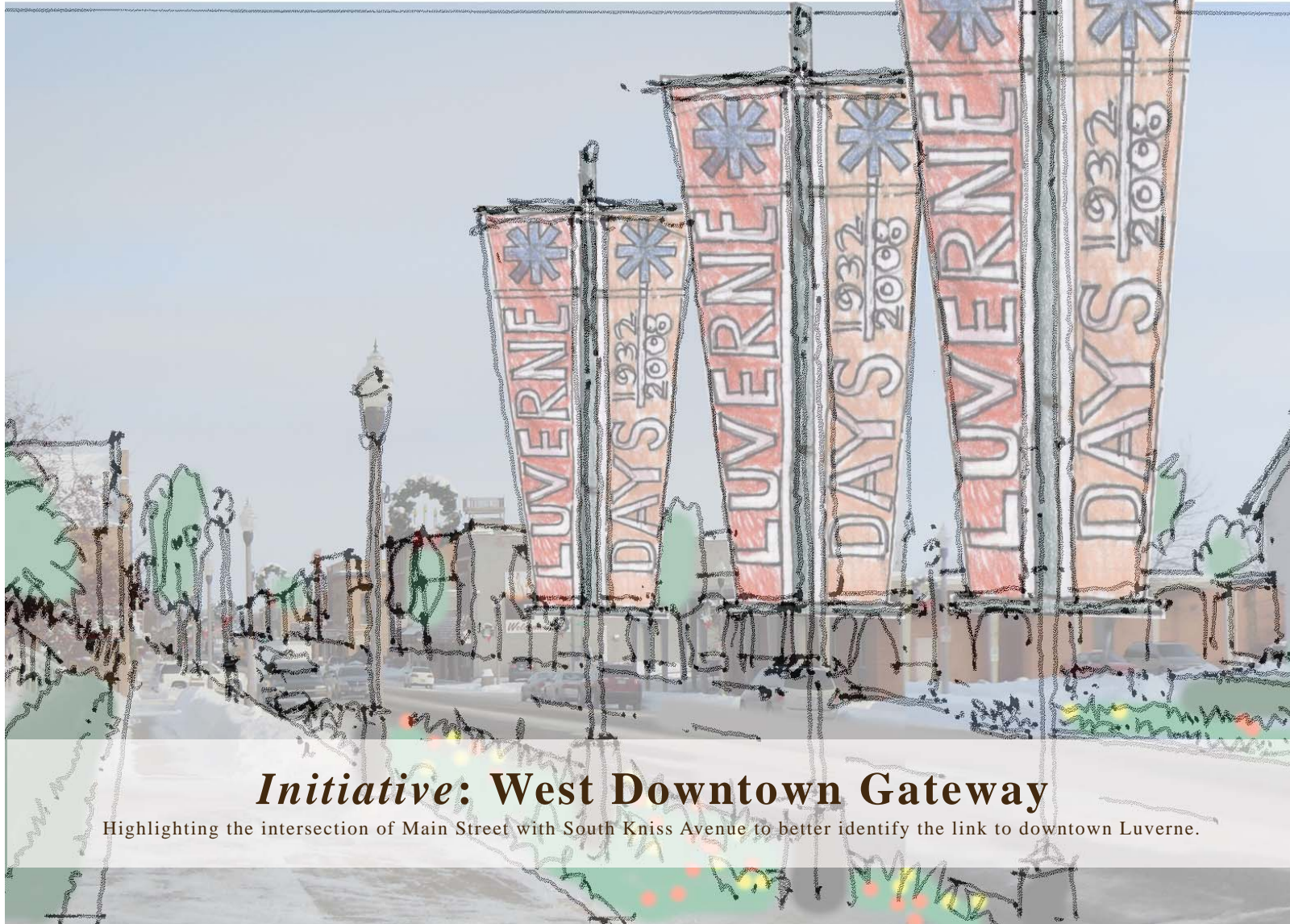


Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

**West Downtown
Gateway**



Initiative: West Downtown Gateway

Highlighting the intersection of Main Street with South Kniss Avenue to better identify the link to downtown Luverne.



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

West Downtown Gateway

Relation to commercial area revitalization

People traveling Kniss Avenue arrive upon its intersection with Main Street without any clear indication that this is the link to the downtown commercial area. While the traffic signals offer a suggestion, the character of the surrounding environment give contrary cues, with residential properties separating the downtown area from the intersection.

Extending the character of the downtown streetscape and expanding upon the “prairie” garden that exists at the southeast quadrant of the intersection is a key to highlighting the link. The connection might be enhanced by narrowing Main Street in the areas fronted by residential properties, and using the reclaimed spaced to create a more expansive prairie garden in the boulevard at each side of Main Street. Streetlights can be extended through this area, and more expressive signage in the form of banners might be considered.

While the improvements may appear outwardly simple, issues related to drainage along the street, sight lines, lost parking, and maintenance of improvements might be key concerns to be resolved. Still, these issues are not insurmountable, and can be reasonably addressed as changes are explored.

Lead entity The City of Luverne must be the lead entity in developing directions for changes in the roadway, and must coordinate changes, if permitted, with the Rock County Highway Department (Main Street is CSAH 4)

Supporting entities

Downtown business and property owners must be active in supporting this initiative, as they stand to benefit from increased visibility and activity from the improvements. Their efforts might be orchestrated by the Chamber of Commerce.

Community priority

This initiative, if approval is gained from the county, could be implemented by the city prior to related improvements along Kniss Avenue.

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives

This initiative should be coordinated with enhancements to the South Kniss corridor in order to establish consistency in the experience visitor and customers have as they move through Luverne and enter downtown from the west.



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

South Kniss Corridor



Initiative: South Kniss Corridor

Visual quality enhancements to the highway corridor, potentially coupled with roadway improvements, that result in a character more consistent with a boulevard than a highway.



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

South Kniss Corridor

Relation to commercial area revitalization

The South Kniss corridor is the primary entry to Luverne, suggesting to visitors and residents alike the kind of community they might find in Luverne. Today, the corridor is a mix of uses that convey mixed messages—some activities suggest vitality and a character that is in keeping with the vision the community has for its commercial areas, while others fail to reach that vision for reasons of age, aesthetics, or level of activity.

Improvements can be accommodated in the public realm of the South Kniss corridor so that its visual character is more consistent and aligned with xxxxxxxx

While aesthetics alone will not change the overall character of the corridor, it may encourage an evolution in the private realm. Existing property and business owners, as well as prospective new property and business owners may see the investment in the public realm as a commitment on the part of the community that would spur their interest.

The methods of procuring these changes are important. If the cost of the improvements is assessed, some businesses may not be capable of bearing the additional cost. Considering a benefit test, it would seem that a local share of the cost of improvements might be borne by both property owners and the community, particularly as property owners values are improved to the degree the corridor's aesthetics attracts additional customers, and the community's interests are served by bringing the aesthetics of the corridor into closer alignment with the vision for the commercial areas.

Enhancements that might become central to this initiative include updated street lighting, sidewalks along the roadway, street trees, and signage. These

improvements should be explored through a design process directed specifically to this corridor, with input from the community, property and business owners along the corridor, and any entities having jurisdiction over the corridor.

As aesthetic improvements are considered for the public realm along South Kniss, the ways in which sites can be enhanced might also be considered. Creating simple standards for development would encourage a more consistent and coordinated commercial district, one with a stronger identity and one where customers are better able to recognize patterns that would encourage their patronage. Standards might address building placement, access, parking patterns, pedestrian accessibility, signage, lighting, and landscaping. Standards should not attempt to create uniformity; this is a corridor composed of dozens of individual parcels, so patterns that allow expression of sites and buildings—within a more holistic context—would be useful. To encourage adherence to new standards, the city might organize a program that offers education and incentives, and works with property and business owners to help them bring forward improvements that align with the goals for the corridor.



Changes might also be considered for the roadway. The four lane configuration with multiple accesses between intersections is a pattern that often results in crashes—particularly rear end crashes. Kniss is under the jurisdiction of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, which would be the lead entity for changes to the roadway. MnDOT may also be capable for assisting in the development of directions relating to non-roadway improvements, and would be interested in creating strategies that better manage access to sites from the road. As MnDOT programs improvements to its facilities, coordinating with their process is critical. In this case, MnDOT should be viewed as a partner in the effort to evolve the character of the South Kniss corridor.

Lead entity

While MnDOT will be the lead entity for improvements to the roadway, the department must also agree to improvements that will occur within the right-of-way. The City of Luverne must be the lead local agency representing the community's interests.

Supporting entities

The City of Luverne will have to organize local interests to effect positive change for the corridor. Groups such as the Chamber of Commerce might play an important role in helping the city align property and business owners behind this effort, and in helping property and business owners understand the implications of potential changes along the corridor.

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

The improvements related to visual quality for the corridor include street lights, sidewalks or trails, landscaping, and signage. Those improvements,

including fees for design, engineering, and administration, as well as a contingency based on the current status of the initiative would cost \$xxxxxxxxx in 2011 dollars. Costs of maintenance have not been calculated, but should be considered as improvements are planned.

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Enhancements to visual quality and potential changes to the roadway require design and engineering studies. One of the key aspects of the visual quality process will be to develop a range of possible directions for consideration by the community and business and property owners. Organizing a process that brings various interests together to explore possibilities is a key first step.

Related initiatives

As enhancements to the South Kniss corridor are considered, coordination with other initiatives might be advantageous. In particular, the West Downtown Gateway initiative might present particular benefits for an alignment of the design process and implementation efforts.



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

South Kniss Corridor



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

Create a vibrant
streetscape



Relation to commercial area revitalization

While the core infrastructure supporting downtown businesses are buildings, the streetscape of downtown provides a way of conveying a consistent aesthetic that binds the downtown area as a district. The basic elements of the streetscape are often thought to be streetlights, street trees, and sidewalk paving, other features include other plantings, benches and trash receptacles, kiosks (small structures supporting informational signage), street signs, and even the way building façades interface with the street.

The patterns of downtown and the community suggest an environment strongly oriented to pedestrian movement. Streetscape enhancements, in this case, might eventually extend beyond Main Street to encourage foot traffic from nearby neighborhoods. But the key features of the downtown streetscape focus on the pedestrian realm enhancements, organized along simple aesthetics that allow key buildings and features to stand out, and that reflect the straightforward nature of the Luverne community.

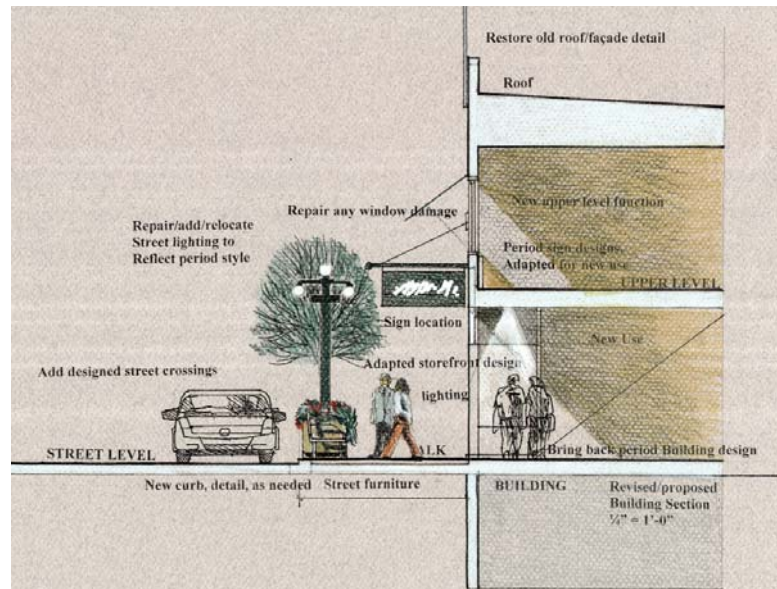
While downtown has streetlights that reflect historic character and provide sufficient illumination, the pedestrian realm is relatively devoid of other enhancements. Street trees might be considered as a possible improvement, as they can very directly create an aesthetic and economic advantage (studies have demonstrated that people are willing to buy more and pay more for goods in an environment with trees). While street trees cannot be placed everywhere, well-placed trees can be located to avoid conflicts with historic buildings and storefront signage.

While many communities view streetscape improvements to include sidewalk pavements, the most important feature of a sidewalk is its serviceability for pedestrian movement—that is, it should be smooth and walkable surface, without variation, and consistent

from block to block. Any variation in color, texture, or pattern should be reserved for areas where a real highlight is needed.

Other improvements should be directed toward building consistency in downtown's public realm. A bench and trash receptacle style should be chosen for downtown, and then consistently implemented. Planters, if used, should be of one style (although varying sizes would be acceptable), and should be consistently planted and tended throughout downtown. These elements offer a consistent aesthetic, but one that is subordinate to the buildings of downtown.

Streetscape improvements are not the key cost related to public realm aesthetics. Over the long term, maintaining those improvements and keeping the downtown area well-kept will be costs that could easily surpass the costs of the original improvements. As streetscape improvements are considered, the community must address the potential costs of maintenance, and if those costs cannot be accommodated, the time for streetscape improvements might best be delayed.



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

Create a vibrant streetscape



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

Create a vibrant streetscape

Lead entity

Planning improvements in the public realm typically falls to the city, but in the case of Main Street, any improvements will need to be coordinated with Rock County, the jurisdiction with authority over Main Street.

Supporting entities

Improvements to downtown's streetscape benefit the entire community, as downtown in many ways might be considered a focal point for the community. However, these improvements also benefit downtown property owners, so their direct involvement in the project will be critical.

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

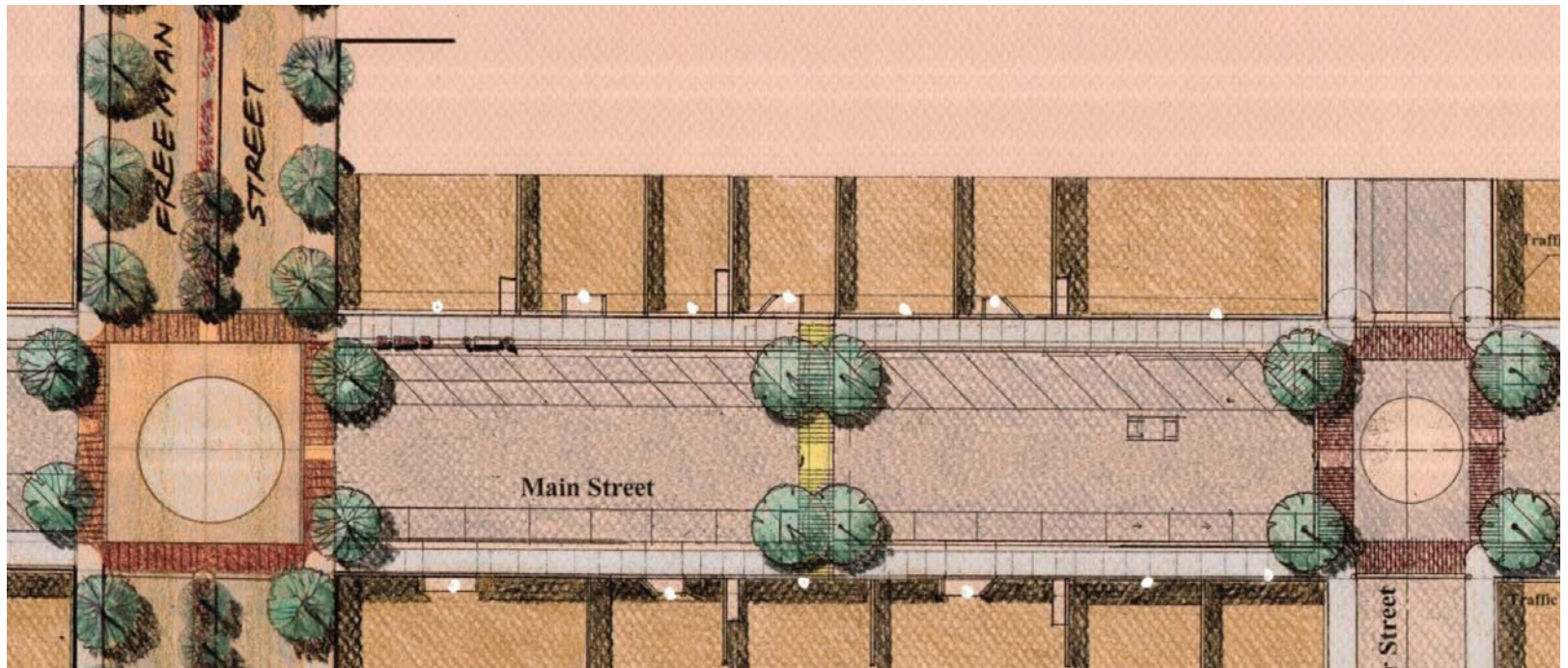
Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Streetscape improvements should be pursued using a design process that explores options that can be considered by downtown stakeholders. Important aspects of the planning process include estimating the costs of initial and on-going improvements, and defining a method of funding the original improvements and the required maintenance.

As there is no single solution, the process of exploring should consider a series of options, looking at a range of costs, various improvements, and even staging of improvements.

Related initiatives

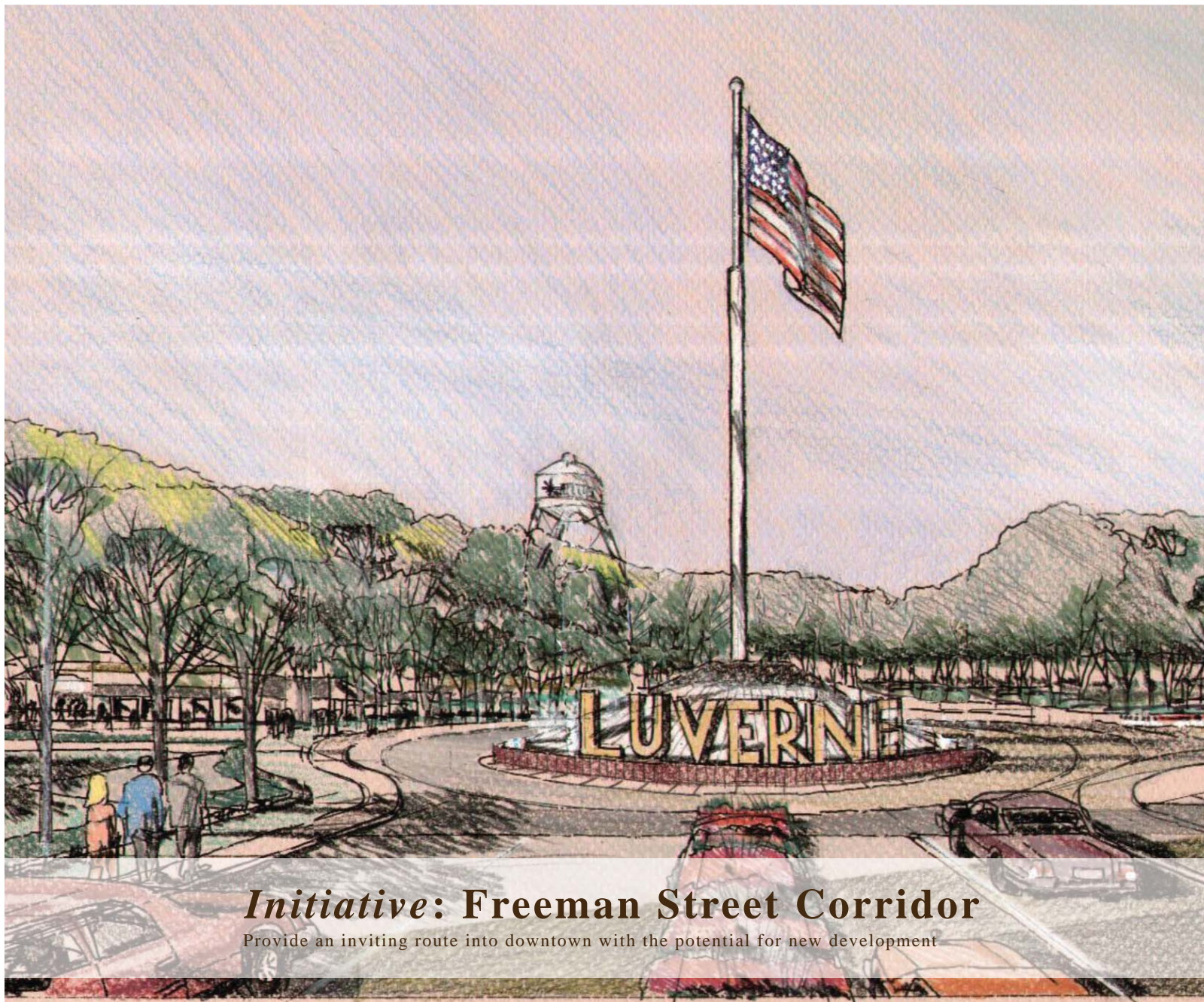


Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

**Freeman Street
Corridor**



Objective:

Improve aesthetics

Initiative:

**Freeman Street
Corridor**

Relation to commercial area revitalization

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

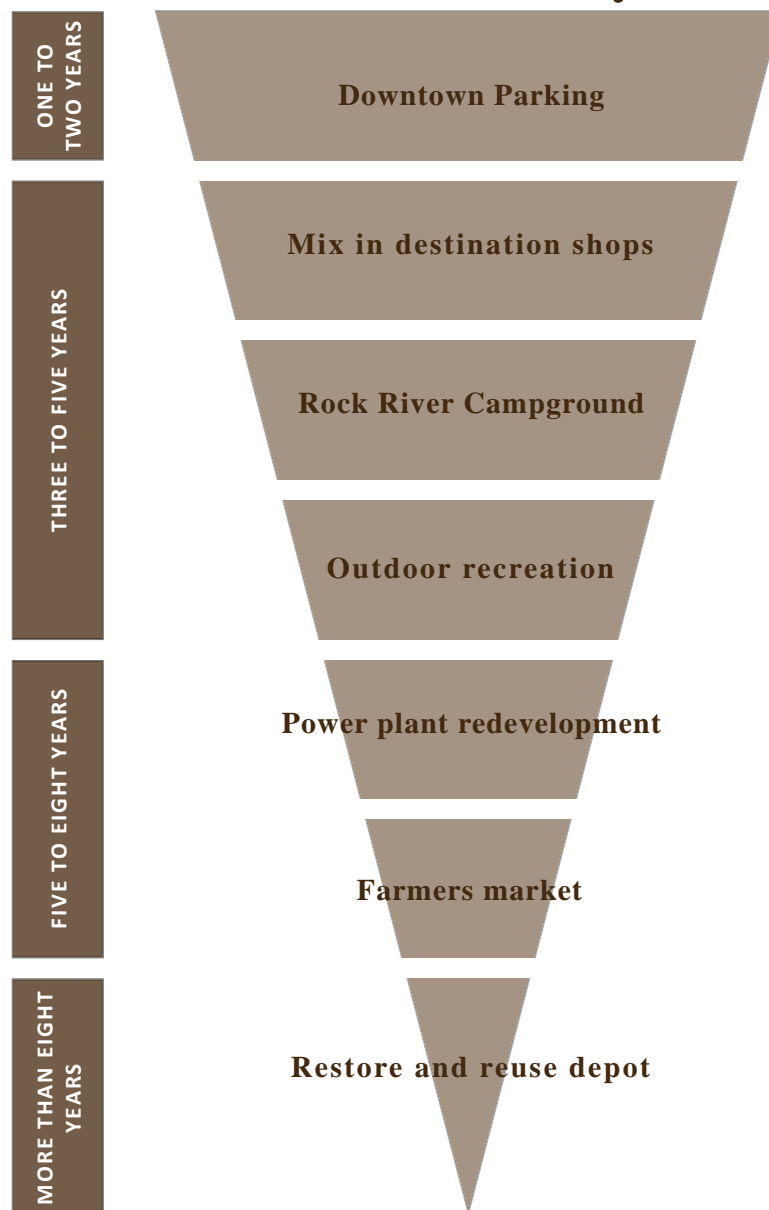
Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives



Path to Objective:
Increase vitality



Objective achieved:
Increase vitality

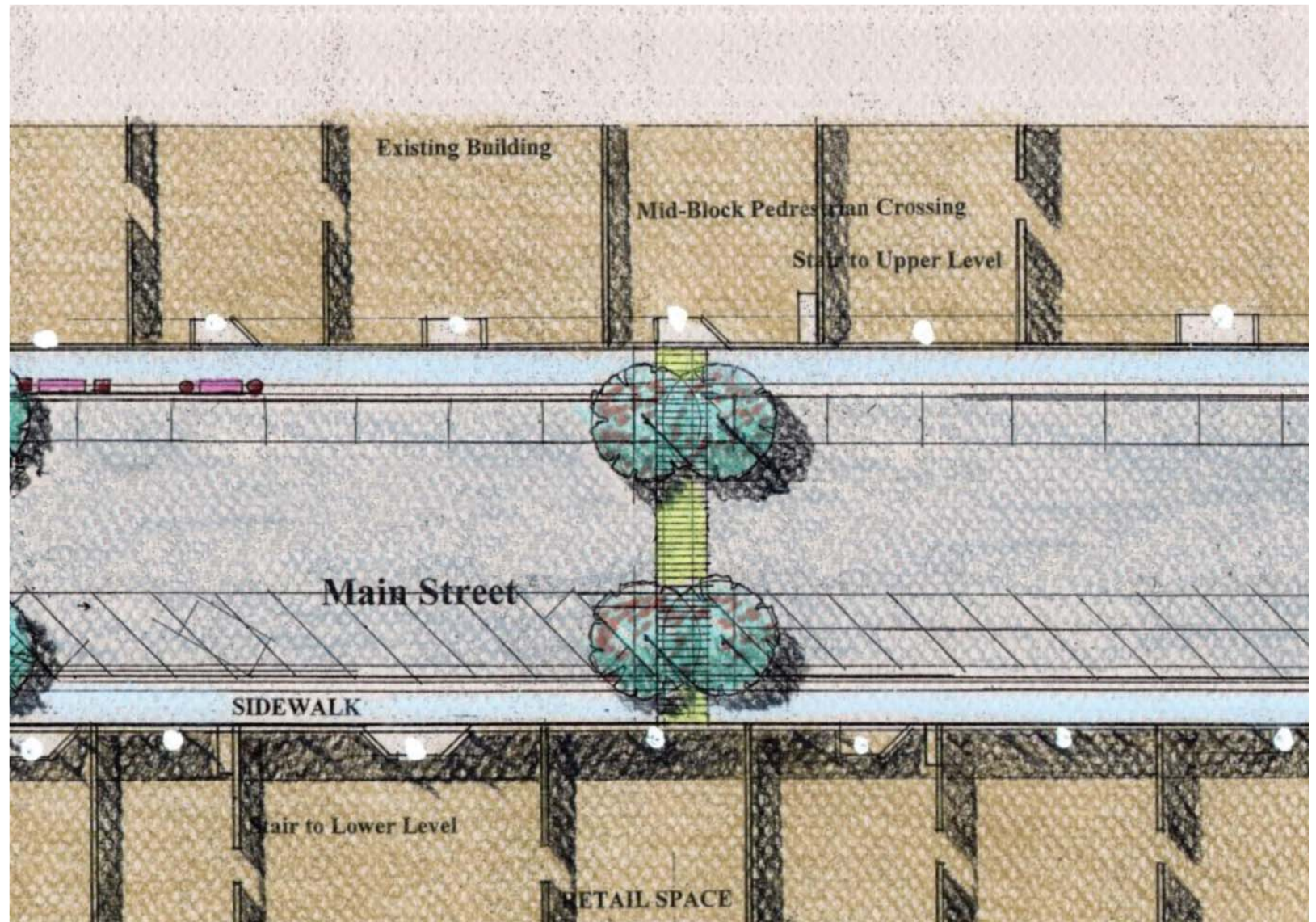


Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Downtown Parking



Initiative: Downtown Parking

Anticipating revitalization of the downtown commercial district by organizing increased parking opportunities



Relation to commercial area revitalization

Even today, with downtown seeing less economic activity than may be desired by the Luverne community and downtown stakeholders, parking in downtown can be at times limited. While largely a perceptual problem, customers who cannot find a parking space often seek other, more convenient, alternatives. Given the proximity of other shopping venues, providing parking in downtown that better accommodates customers is a key issue in the revitalization process.

The parking spaces most sought after by customers are those located nearest their destination. In a vital downtown, however, customers might have several destinations, and walking between destinations is a real possibility. Parking on the street is clearly the best solution. Several possibilities might be explored to increase the supply of parking in downtown.

Main Street parking is the best place for parking that serves customers and downtown businesses. Additional parking spaces could be created by changing the configuration of parking, but the county has indicated that diagonal parking would not provide needed clearance for movement of traffic. In addition, Main Street cannot be extended to create more length that would accommodate additional parallel parking. As a result, no encroachment in the parallel parking zone should be pursued, and managing those spaces that exist becomes paramount.

Streets crossing Main Street are locally controlled and offer more flexibility to accommodate parking configurations other than parallel parking. Diagonal parking, or a combination of diagonal parking and parallel parking might be considered, and would result in an increase in parking spaces of about 30 percent (in the case of the combination configuration)—a substantial increase in parking supply resulting from restriping of an existing pavement.

The National Main Street Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation advocates reserving Main Street parking spaces to support downtown businesses. The Main Street Program often relates examples of the loss of potential income from parking spaces occupied by building or store owners or their employees. The losses can be substantial. Encouraging owners and employees to utilize more remote parking is a key step.

Downtown Luverne, unlike many downtowns, does not have a significant number of remote parking spaces. Where other communities traded buildings for parking areas, this is not the case in downtown Luverne. Still where those kinds of parking opportunities exist for the public, they should be identified, and then an inviting route created to link the parking area to Main Street.

Most important for the vitality of downtown, parking should remain free. Consumers have many choices, including many that offer more convenient or free parking.

Lead entity

Investigating potential for reconfiguring parking along downtown streets is the responsibility of the City of Luverne.



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Downtown Parking



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Downtown Parking

Supporting entities

The exploration could be initiated by another group charged with the investigation and making recommendations. The Chamber of Commerce or a subcommittee of the chamber might assume this task on behalf of the city, with technical support from city staff.

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Costs of restriping streets to provide additional parking spaces achieved by reconfiguring are relatively limited, perhaps \$xxxx per block. These costs are ongoing, and if methods of increasing parking can be achieved without striping, long term costs can be reduced.

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

The potential for increasing parking along downtown streets through a reconfiguration is relatively simple. Reconfigurations that include diagonal parking would

not likely be successful on streets with speed limits greater than 30 miles per hour. Downtown streets must maintain paths for through traffic, and while the standards might be reduced in some cases, the standard lane width will likely be established at 12 feet. Parallel parking will require a width of 8 feet. For streets with traffic counts less than 3,000 vehicles per day, diagonal parking at a 45 to 60 degree angle will require a length of 22 to 28 feet (including a clear zone behind the parking space). The total width of the street (curb face to curb face) must be 54 to 60 feet. The overhang at the front of the parking space might also be investigated to ensure there are no obstructions and the space dedicated to pedestrian movement is not compromised. Where these widths exist, the potential for a reconfiguration might be explored. Where these widths do not exist, it might be possible to consider reductions in lane width to accommodate the reconfiguration. In any case, space to accommodate parking should be achieved by a reduction in sidewalk width.

Related initiatives

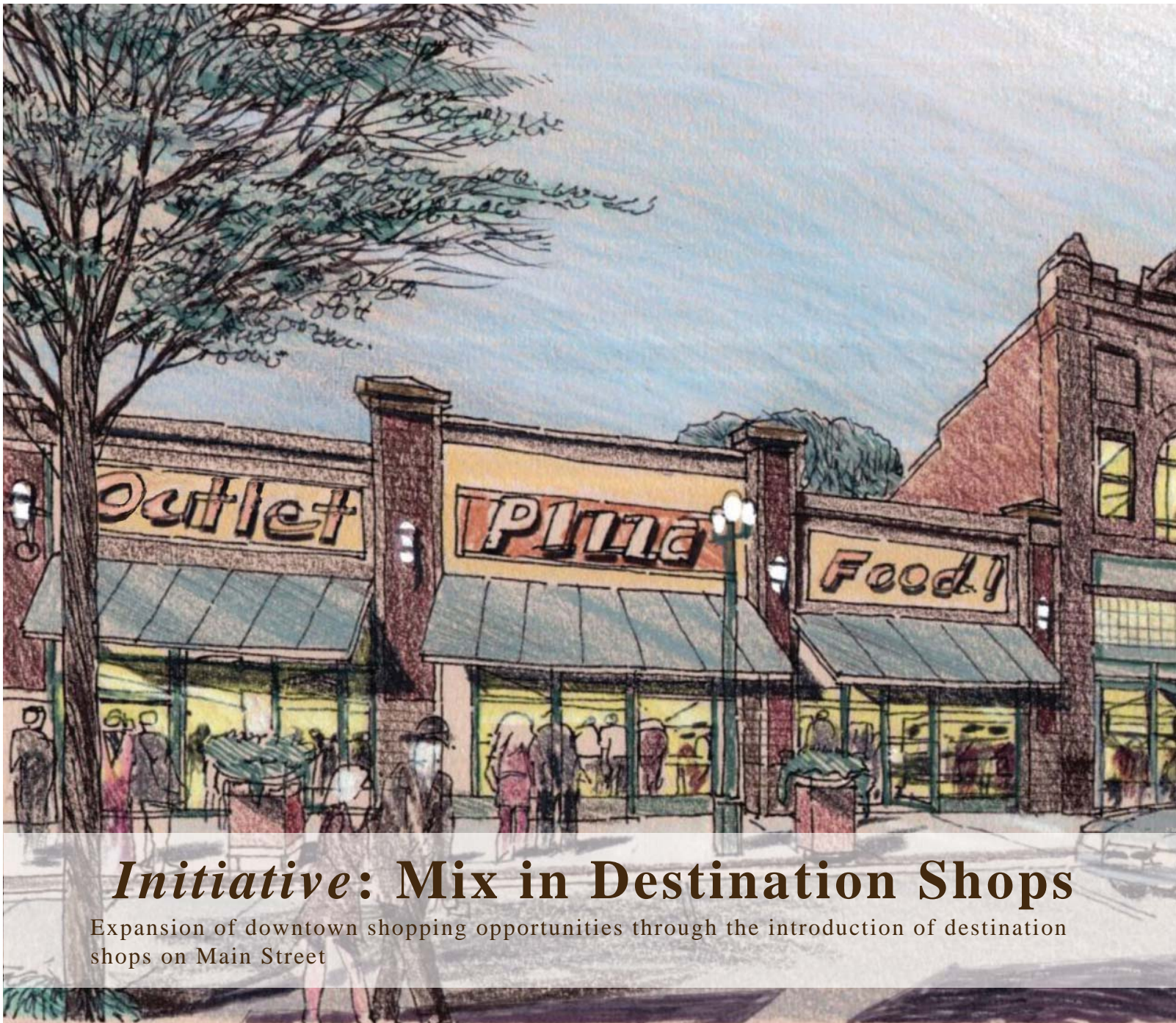


Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

**Mix in Destination
Shops**



Initiative: Mix in Destination Shops

Expansion of downtown shopping opportunities through the introduction of destination shops on Main Street



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Mix in Destination Shops

Relation to commercial area revitalization

Much attention can be directed to opportunities for shopping that exist across the state line in Sioux Falls, where the population can support a far broader mix of retail than can be found in Luverne. Still, as the Luverne community considers how it can compete, they recognize that not everything they desire can be found in Sioux Falls, and that there are some items they need or desire that can be found—or might only be found—in Luverne. From this, Luverne citizens have been framing an idea that draws from patterns of outlet retail shops, where a number of destination shops are aggregated to provide a shopping experience that relies on the delivery of factory-made goods directly to the consumer. In Luverne, the translation of the outlet mall might use downtown as the physical environment, and it might more directly use local specialty retail outlets—offering a destination due to aggregation of these stores. National credit and regional retailers might also be enticed to be a part of this mix, although the likelihood is far greater that local businesses will be attracted to Luverne.

The key is the physical environment offered by downtown Luverne. With a stock of attractive buildings, convenient parking, and a larger trade area that extends to Sioux Falls, retailers might see real opportunities in a Luverne location. Customers may also see value in coming to Luverne, where a focus on convenience is replaced by a focus on experience.

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

The Luverne community views this effort as one of its higher priorities, as it has the potential for changing the kinds of activity seen in downtown today. However, it is a longer term effort, and one that will likely

be quite incremental—with only a few stores being added annually being a mark of reasonable success.

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

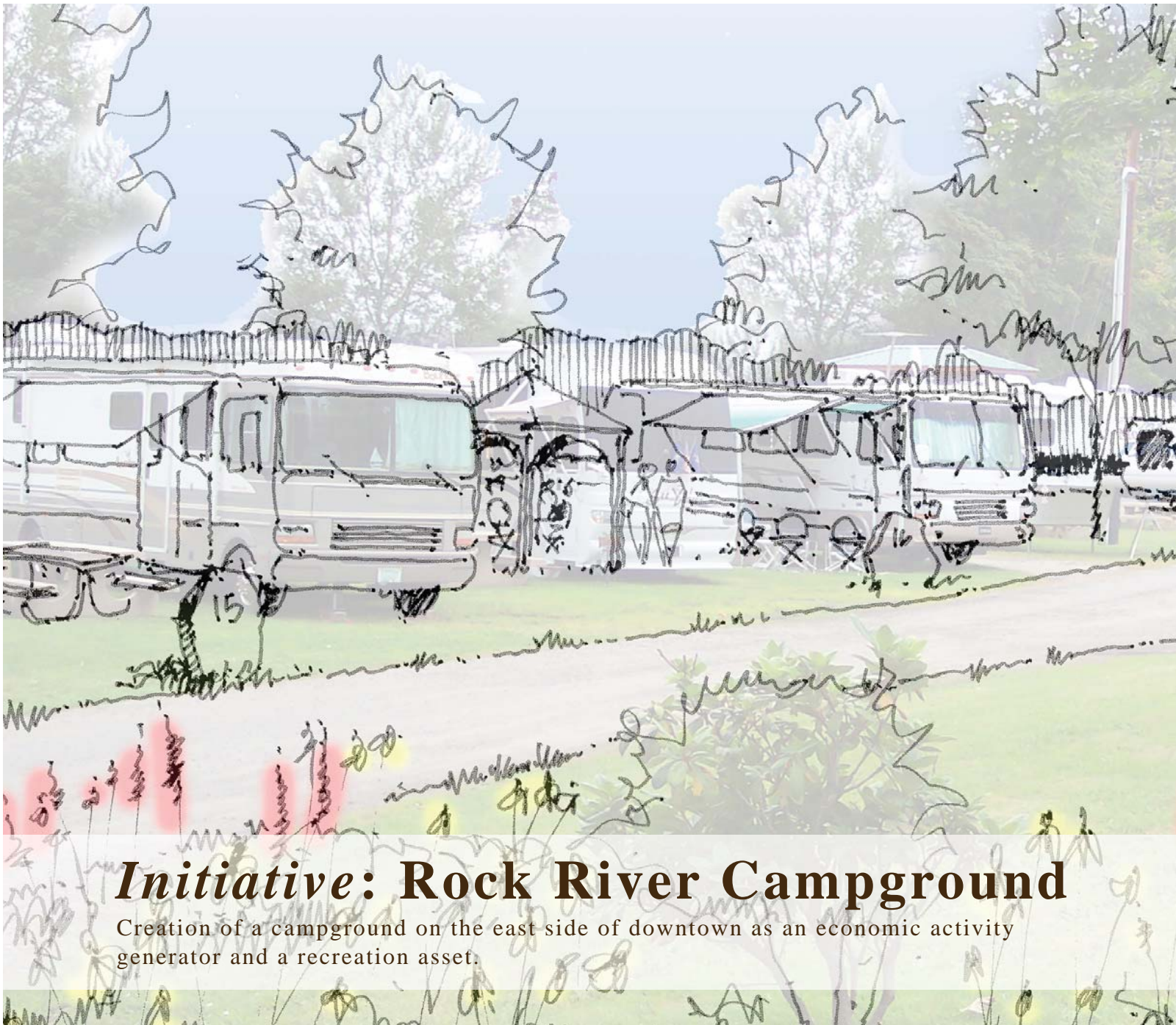
Key steps prior to implementation

Retailers will need to be induced to come to Luverne; they will not likely just show up looking for space to rent. Having a recruitment package assembled is a key first step—a tool that demonstrates the vision for downtown (and the community in general), the actions the community is taking to move toward that vision, the fit of a recruit in downtown, and the assistance that might be offered to encourage a recruit to decide to locate here.

Related initiatives

Restoration of downtown buildings (facades and building infrastructure), downtown parking, and vibrant streetscapes are important related initiatives—and these all relate to downtown. The other important initiative is the improvement of South Kniss, so that the experience of a potential retailer or consumer is not lost when they first enter Luverne.





Initiative: Rock River Campground

Creation of a campground on the east side of downtown as an economic activity generator and a recreation asset.

Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

**Rock River
Campground**



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Rock River Campground

Relation to commercial area revitalization

Southwest Minnesota and Luverne, in particular, benefit from Blue Mounds State Park as a tourism destination and local recreation asset. While the park provides camping, not all tourists desire the state park camping experience. Providing options nearer to downtown Luverne while offering unique landscape and recreation amenities could attract campers to the region and to Luverne. The City of Luverne maintains a large park along the Rock River on the east side of downtown; several nearby or adjoining parcels may accommodate a small campground for recreational vehicles.

Communities throughout Minnesota have created campgrounds as a part of their municipal park infrastructure, and benefit from the camping fees they generate while local businesses benefit from an additional customer base. By locating a campground near downtown, these opportunities are enhanced.

It will be important to develop a campground that meets the expectations of that portion of the tourism market seeking municipal camping opportunities. A feasibility study will reveal the kinds of facilities desired by campers, the optimal site and location, and a size that offers an appropriate return on the investment required to create the campground.

Several sites are possible locations for the Rock River campground initiative. Unless a clear and reasonable site can be identified without speculation, a feasibility study may be required before acquisition.

Other communities, such as Grand Marais and Wabasha, have municipal campgrounds with similar goals as the Rock River campground. As the Luverne community contemplates development of its own campground, research might include contacts with those communities.

Lead entity

city, private party as developer??? City develop facility and a private party as vendor/operator

Supporting entities

city

Community priority

Timing/sequence

This initiative is not necessarily tied to other initiatives considered as a part of the strategic planning effort; initiation and implementation could occur independent of other efforts.

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

While the campground might seem to offer a boost to the local economy, the ability to reasonably operate the campground in a way that satisfies the initial capital outlay can be best framed by a feasibility study. This is the necessary first step, followed by a investigation of possible sites.

Related initiatives

The Rock River campground initiative, while articulated as a benefit to downtown, can reasonably stand on its own as an initiative.



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Outdoor Recreation



Initiative: Outdoor Recreation

Create a canoe and kayak route starting at the Luverne City Park



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Outdoor Recreation

Relation to commercial area revitalization

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives

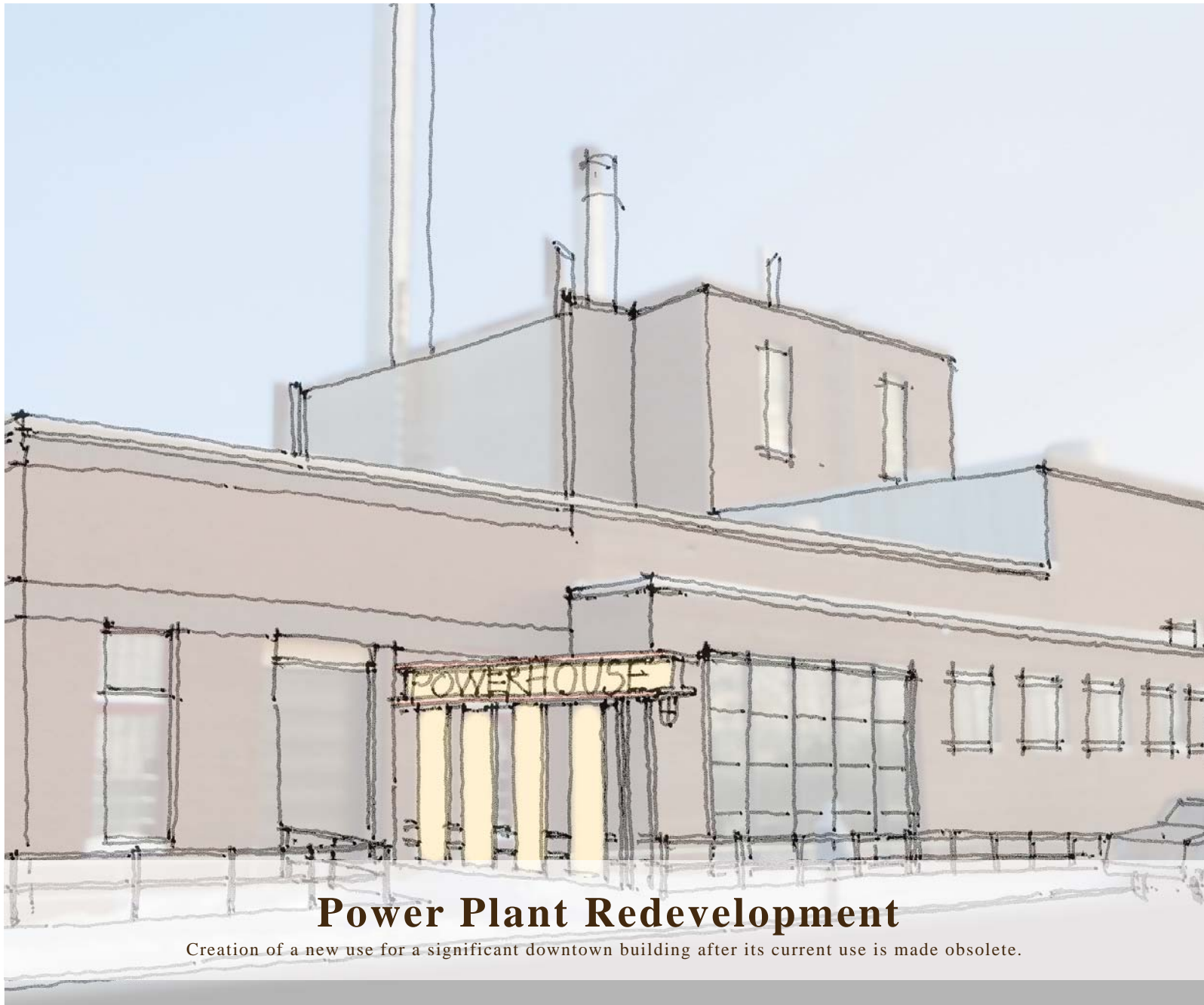


Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

**Power Plant
Redevelopment**



Power Plant Redevelopment

Creation of a new use for a significant downtown building after its current use is made obsolete.



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

**Power Plant
Redevelopment**

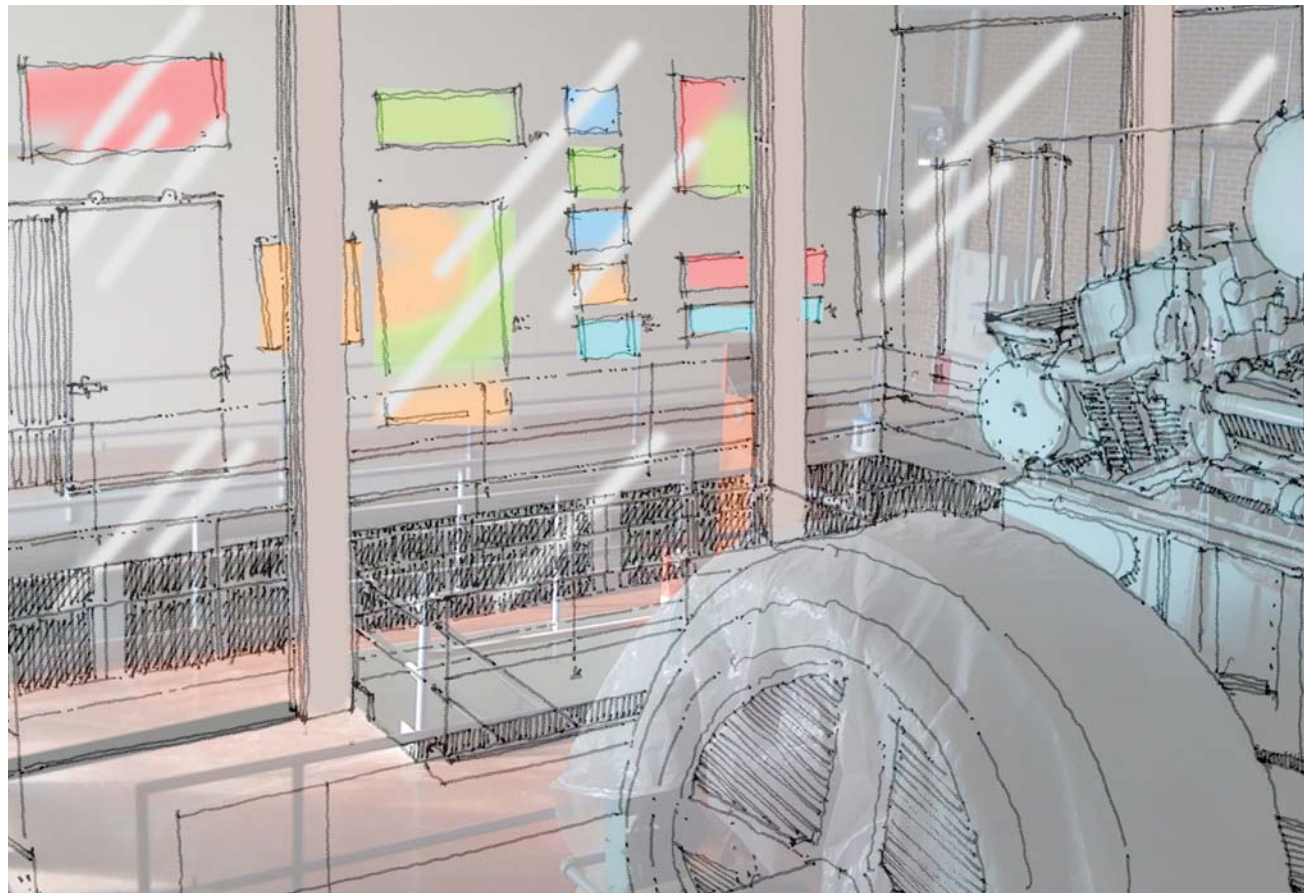
Relation to commercial area revitalization

The east end of downtown and the community in general is anchored by the municipal power plant, a building of significant size that provides occasional supplemental electrical power to the community. With several years, the facility may become functionally obsolete as repairs or upgrades to the power generation equipment will become too costly to economically perform. In fact, the current power generation equipment occupies only a portion of the current building, with other areas being used for storage and occasional training by the Luverne Fire Department.

The Power Plant was constructed in such a way that its demolition would be cost prohibitive. Re-use, however, might take advantage of its unique size and mass, its architectural character, and even the power generation equipment to create an attraction that could not be replicated in any other local building. In this case, part of the attraction is the power generation equipment, which might be sealed from public access but remain visible to

visitors. In fact, the costs of removal and disposal of that equipment might be as much or more than keeping it as a part of the experience of the new use.

Considering the building and its location, it seems the use of the Power Plant should include a public venue, perhaps for the arts. In this case, a gallery might be accessible off Main Street, and might include studio and classroom space on the lower level, which is visible through an opening in the main floor. Another portion of the building might be re-used as a private development; discussions with the community suggested a brew pub or similar activity that uses the



building's character as a part of its attraction. Power House Arts and the Power House Brew Pub might, in early concepts, occupy only a portion of the building. The tower element and the control room might also be reused in ways that support life for the building after its current use is rendered obsolete, and in ways that lend energy to the building and downtown.

Lead entity The City of Luverne owns the building and operates the municipal electrical utility that uses portions of the building. The city is the logical lead entity, but a joint re-use entity might be organized to spread the effort across a variety of entities that share an interest in the building's future.

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

The building is not obsolete, and the power generation equipment is still being used. Planning for the future of the building is a current need, however, as the equipment's remaining life is, as reported during this study, limited.

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

A key first step is a re-use study. This effort would involve an analysis of the existing building to assess its structural condition and any limiting environmental issues. It would necessarily require mapping of the building to determine an accurate layout, which would aid in determining the suitability of various spaces for activities. The re-use study would also frame potential costs of preparing the building for new uses, and might consider the ultimate costs of creating new uses within the building. It would also lay out a sequence of actions required to apply the

re-use strategy described in the overall plan.

Related initiatives

The re-use of the power plant, and related planning for its re-use, can occur without interaction with other initiatives. However, the potential of this building sitting without a use might be considered; without an active use, buildings tend to deteriorate quickly and its future re-use would likely be compromised.



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

**Power Plant
Redevelopment**



Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Farmer's Market



Relation to commercial area revitalization

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

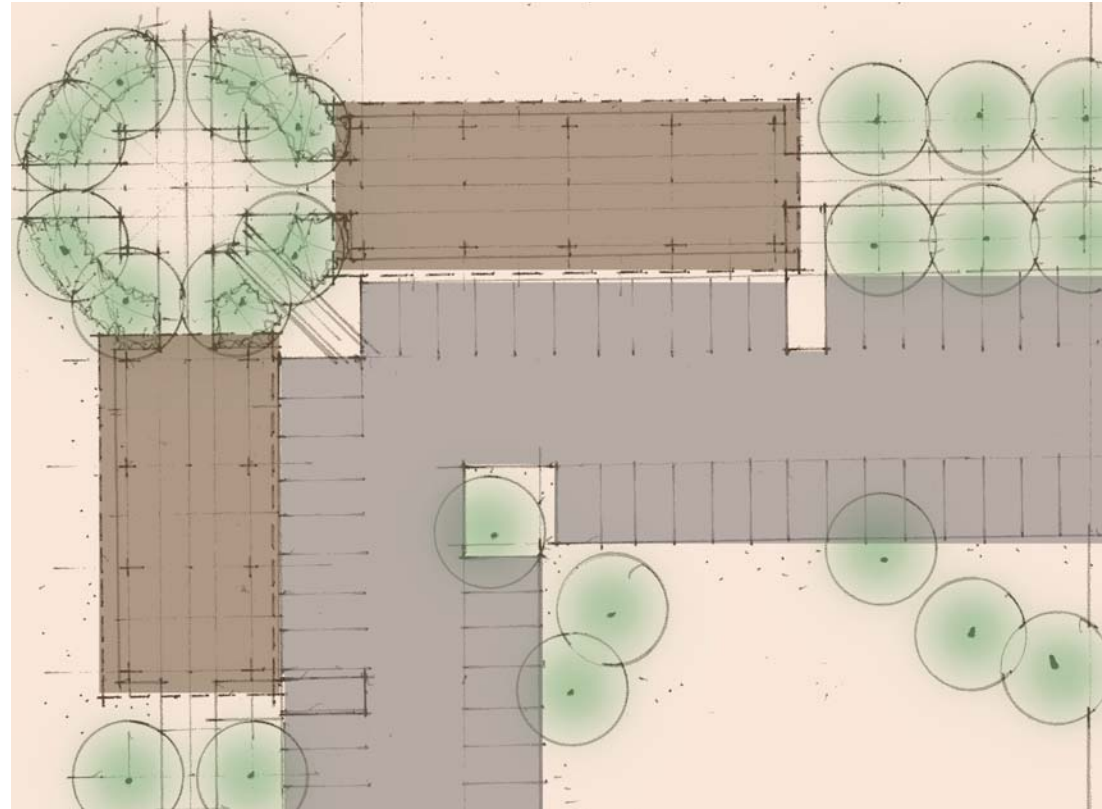
Related initiatives

Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

Farmer's Market

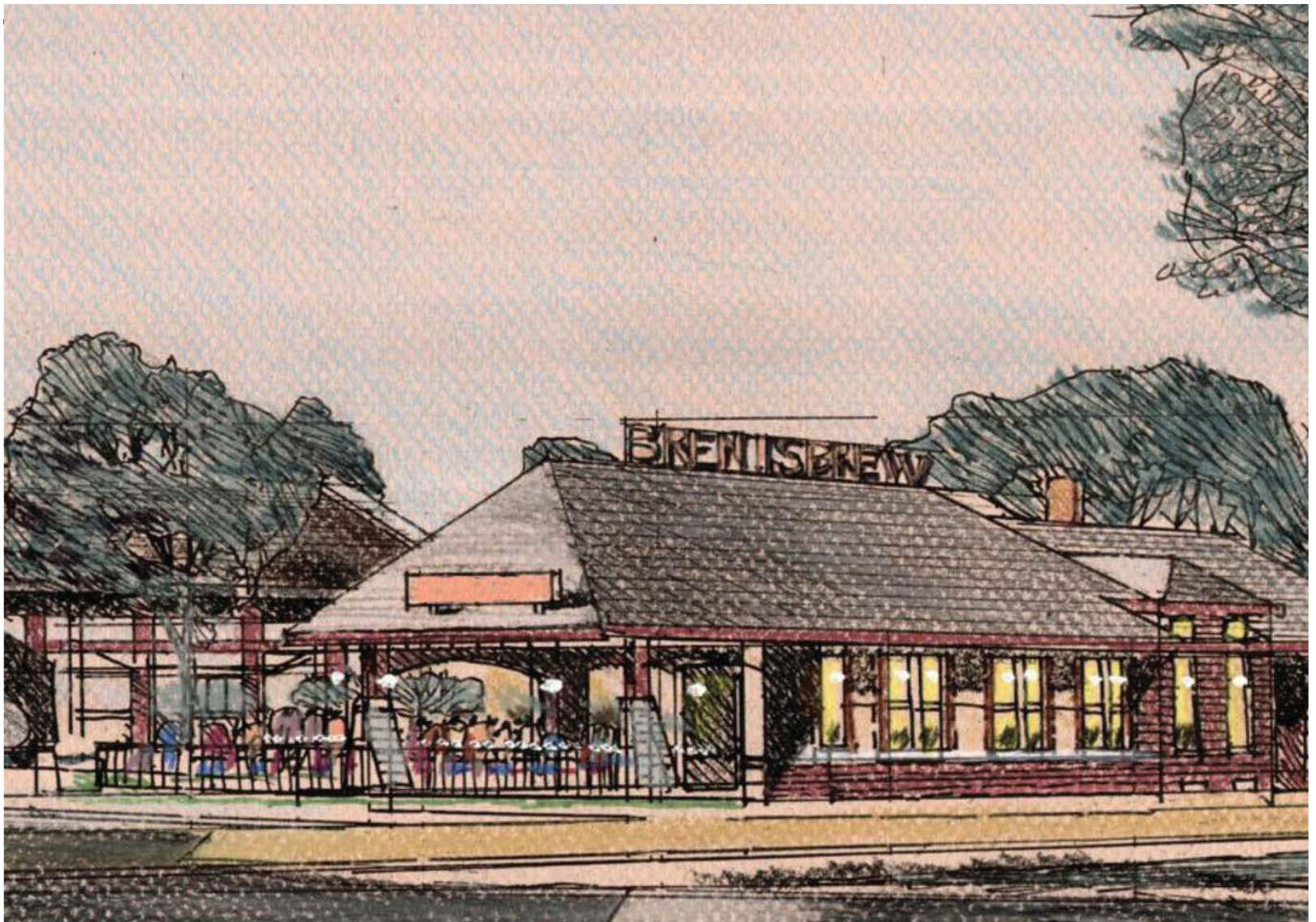


Objective:

Increase vitality

Initiative:

**Restore and Reuse
Depot**



Initiative: Restore and Reuse Depot

Enliven this historic structure with a use that invites activity and investment to the building and areas surrounding it.



Relation to commercial area revitalization

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives

Objective:

Increase vitality

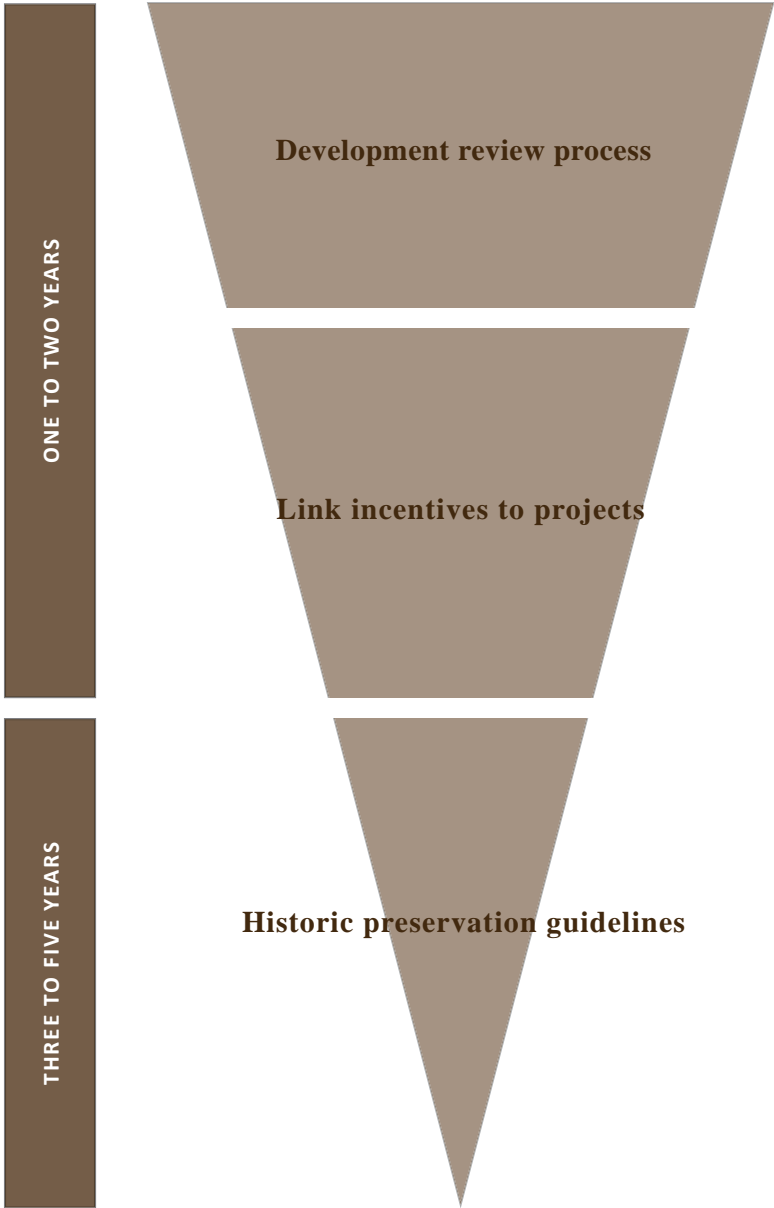
Initiative:

**Restore and Reuse
Depot**



Objective:
Strengthen processes

Path to Objective:
Strengthen processes



Objective achieved:
Strengthen processes



Objective:

Strengthen processes

Initiative:

**Development Review
Process**



Initiative: Development Review Process

Balancing perspectives on the process of evaluating development proposals in commercial areas to ensure community goals are recognized and to foster a more cooperative spirit in the development process.



Objective:

Strengthen processes

Initiative:

Development Review Process

Relation to commercial area revitalization

The process of evaluating proposals for development in Luverne's commercial areas does not have to pit one entity against another. Perspectives in the community on the development review process vary: some believe the process protects the community's broader interests, while others think the process is unnecessarily burdensome for those willing to invest in the community. Ultimately, both perspectives are correct.

This initiative encourages a dialog between developers (which includes any entity proposing a change to a site or building in Luverne's commercial areas) and the city, with the discussion directed to the process and goals of the city in their review, and the ability of developers of a wide range of scales to respond. The dialog should not be viewed as an opportunity to complain, but rather a facilitated discussion that results in better understanding of the development review process, coupled with the need of many development applicants to have greater flexibility in the ways in which their projects are evaluated and eventually implemented.

A likely result of this effort is the implementation of education sessions oriented to assisting developers in understanding the variety of ways in which they can incrementally improve their buildings. As the city participates in this effort, it will be important to understand the incremental nature of many projects, and the ways in which the review process needs to both accommodate incremental changes while managing incremental steps in order to achieve the greater goals of the finished project.

The result of this initiative might be documented in a way that diagrams an optimal development review process, and that allows the city to adjust policies and ordinances in ways that are more conducive to a de-

velopment review process that encourages investment in the community's commercial areas at a variety of scales.

Lead entity

While the city is the lead agency for review of development proposals, the dialog described by this initiative might be best orchestrated by a third party, such as the Chamber of Commerce.

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

This initiative is not interdependent with other initiatives, except that it should occur prior to any concerted effort at downtown building or storefront improvements.

Potential costs

The cost of this initiative are limited and are focused on mailings, arrangements of meetings spaces, and, possibly, fees related to a facilitated discussion.

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives



Objective:

Strengthen processes

Initiative:

**Link Incentives to
Projects**



Initiative: Link Incentives to Projects

Establishment of funding to aid in efforts to develop improvements or enhancements to buildings or sites that align with the community's vision for its commercial areas



<i>Objective:</i>	
Strengthen processes	Relation to commercial area revitalization
<i>Initiative:</i>	Lead entity
Link Incentives to Projects	Supporting entities
	Community priority
	Timing/sequence
	Potential costs
	Potential funding sources
	Key steps prior to implementation
	Related initiatives



Objective:

Strengthen processes

Initiative:

**Historic Preservation
Guidelines**



Initiative: Historic Preservation Guidelines

Development of guidelines to direct improvements to downtown buildings and intended to lend a consistent level of investment even if improvements are implemented incrementally.



Objective:

Strengthen processes

Initiative:

Historic Preservation Guidelines

Relation to commercial area revitalization

For building owners interested in improving buildings in downtown, no consistent guidance is available. While some owners may choose to pursue improvements that align with their buildings architectural character, others may choose directions that malign intrinsic character. What's more, the improvements made by one building owner, if not pursued with some level of integrity, may denigrate the worthy efforts of another building owner. Design guidance that results in consistency in building improvements will yield a more holistic character for downtown, and in the case of downtown Luverne, a character more in line with its small town and historic patterns.

Improvements need not be directed to absolute historic restoration. For many building owners, that level of investment may not be possible. But guidelines can offer even owners with limited investment capacity the ability to make incremental improvements that may someday lead to more significant improvements, all in keeping with a building's character.

Understanding the directions of guidelines cannot be assumed. As guidelines are formulated and approved, an effort should be directed to educating building owners about the ways in which their buildings could be enhanced, and the ways in which unified enhancements can be a benefit for all of downtown. Supporting the desire for guiding enhancements to downtown buildings might be a program of incentives, organized by the city for the benefit of building owners—which may better secure adherence with the goals of a unified design direction for downtown buildings.

As improvement to downtown facades are considered, the ability to operate a building efficiently and in ways that support contemporary downtown activities should also be considered. Facades alone will not create a vital downtown, and preservation of the

stock of worthy buildings in downtown is an equally important goal. To satisfy that goal, improvements in building facades might be paired with improvements to building envelopes and infrastructure.

incentives

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

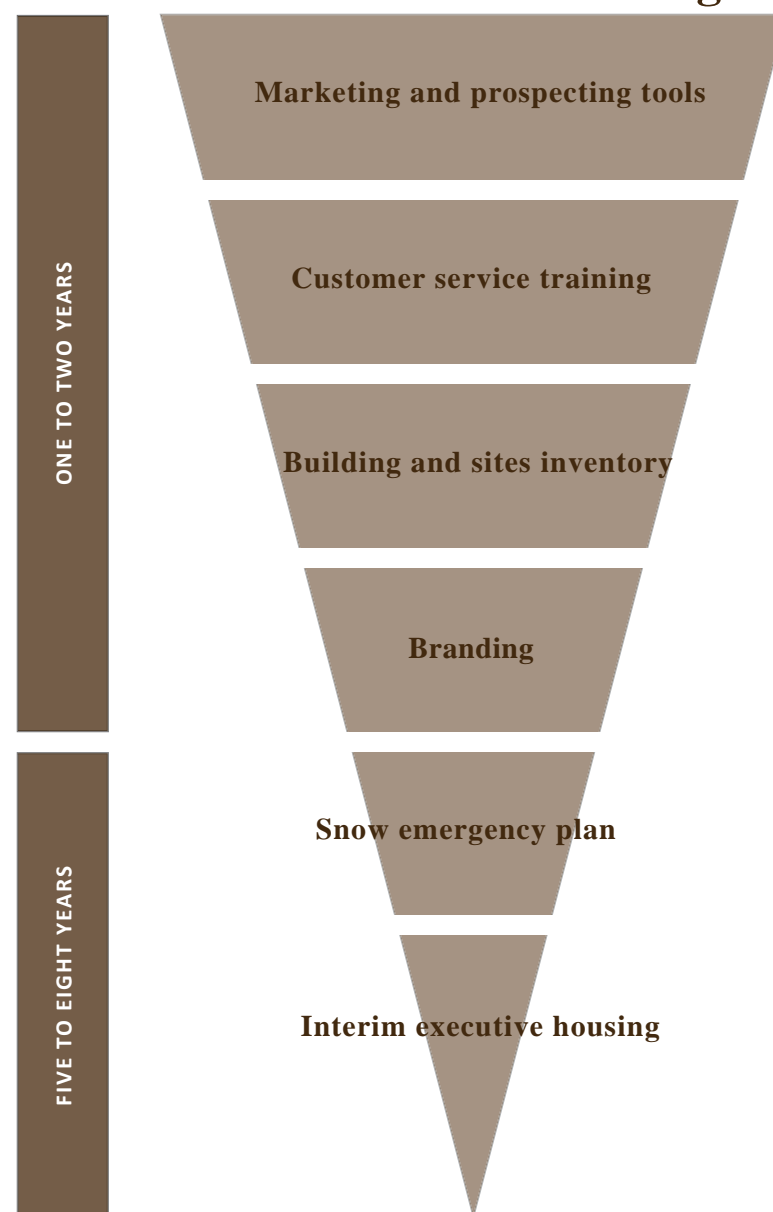
Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives





**Objective achieved:
Enhance marketing**



Objective:

Enhance Marketing

Initiative:

**Marketing and
Prospecting Tools**



Initiative: Marketing and Prospecting Tools

Development of materials that can be used in prospecting efforts directed toward businesses that might consider locating in Luverne's commercial areas.



Relation to commercial area revitalization

Enticing businesses to locate or relocate in Luverne is not a matter of chance. Rather, it will take the concerted effort of a group charged with engaging prospects and “selling” Luverne. To do this, a group needs to be armed with promotional materials that demonstrate the kind of environment that Luverne offers.

While a good prospect will likely do their own research, there is information that could be provided more actively. A promotional package might include basic information about the community and its assets, including features of the community that might entice a prospect to locate a home and business in the community. In fact, a recently hired professional for a prominent local organization found Luverne’s arts focus to be a real attraction, and perhaps the distinguishing factor in the choice to relocate to Luverne. In that case, as it might be for many prospecting efforts, it’s finding a connection at a very personal level that will make the difference. This requires real research, but the personal connection is something that could be part of the Luverne “brand.”

Prospects will be interested in more quantitative information as well. Statistics on local sales (based on sales tax information), visitor counts, traffic counts, census information, and similar information will help as prospect understand the local market. As this information changes over time, keeping it up to date will be important.

Competition is not always undesirable for a prospective business. In some cases, businesses would rather locate in a community where similar businesses exist. Including a list of businesses—or even a map indicating existing businesses—might be an important element of a marketing package.

New businesses often ask about assistance programs

that will help with building renovations, business advice, or other methods of helping get their enterprise established. Providing prospects with a list of local assistance programs, incentives, or other resources could be critical to their decision.

Incentive

Design

Assistance

Other local businesses similar

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives

Objective:

Enhance Marketing

Initiative:

**Marketing and
Prospecting Tools**



Objective:

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

**Customer Skills
Training**



Initiative: Customer Skills Training

Building an attitude of customer service that attracts customers and builds a positive identity for Luverne



Relation to commercial area revitalization

Nearly all customers have a choice. Things like value, selection, and convenience weigh heavily into a customer's decision, but the intangible of service can, in many cases, become a more positive factor for a community striving to improve its vitality. Comparisons to consumer options in Sioux Falls are frequently made, with larger volume retailers and the aggregation of shopping opportunities creating a draw toward that community. Luverne, very simply, will never have the range of retail opportunities that a city the size of Sioux Falls can offer.

The issue is that the larger volume retailers know that customer service is a key to their success. While they might not have the ability to so readily incorporate consistently high quality customer service, companies like Wal-Mart have customer service as one of their primary goals. Sam Walton has stated that "The goal as a company is to have customer service that is not just the best, but legendary."

That doesn't mean retail and consumer services can't exist in Luverne. Several Luverne businesses have demonstrated a capacity to compete with similar enterprises in Sioux Falls, but they rely on an orientation to quality products and services AND customer service. While not every business can change its line to create a higher quality product, nearly every business can benefit from better relationships with customers. Engaging people as they shop, offering help while they shop, and directing them to other local businesses and area attractions can result in a positive image in consumers. Successful business people will suggest that this level of attention to customer needs is every employee's responsibility.

Sometimes it takes more than a reminder that this is the way of business in a small town. Reinforcing

customer service messages can occur through direct interaction between owners or managers and employees, but it can also happen through more direct training and education sessions and events.

An orientation to customer service extends beyond the sales floor. Employees are promoting Luverne, and as they engage customers in one store, they begin the process of sharing that customer with all of Luverne.

Lead entity

The Chamber of Commerce might be the best resource in Luverne to lead this initiative.

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

This initiative should be initiated early in the implementation process as it has the potential for shaping a more positive response even before physical changes can be effected in the community.

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives

Objective:

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

**Customer Skills
Training**

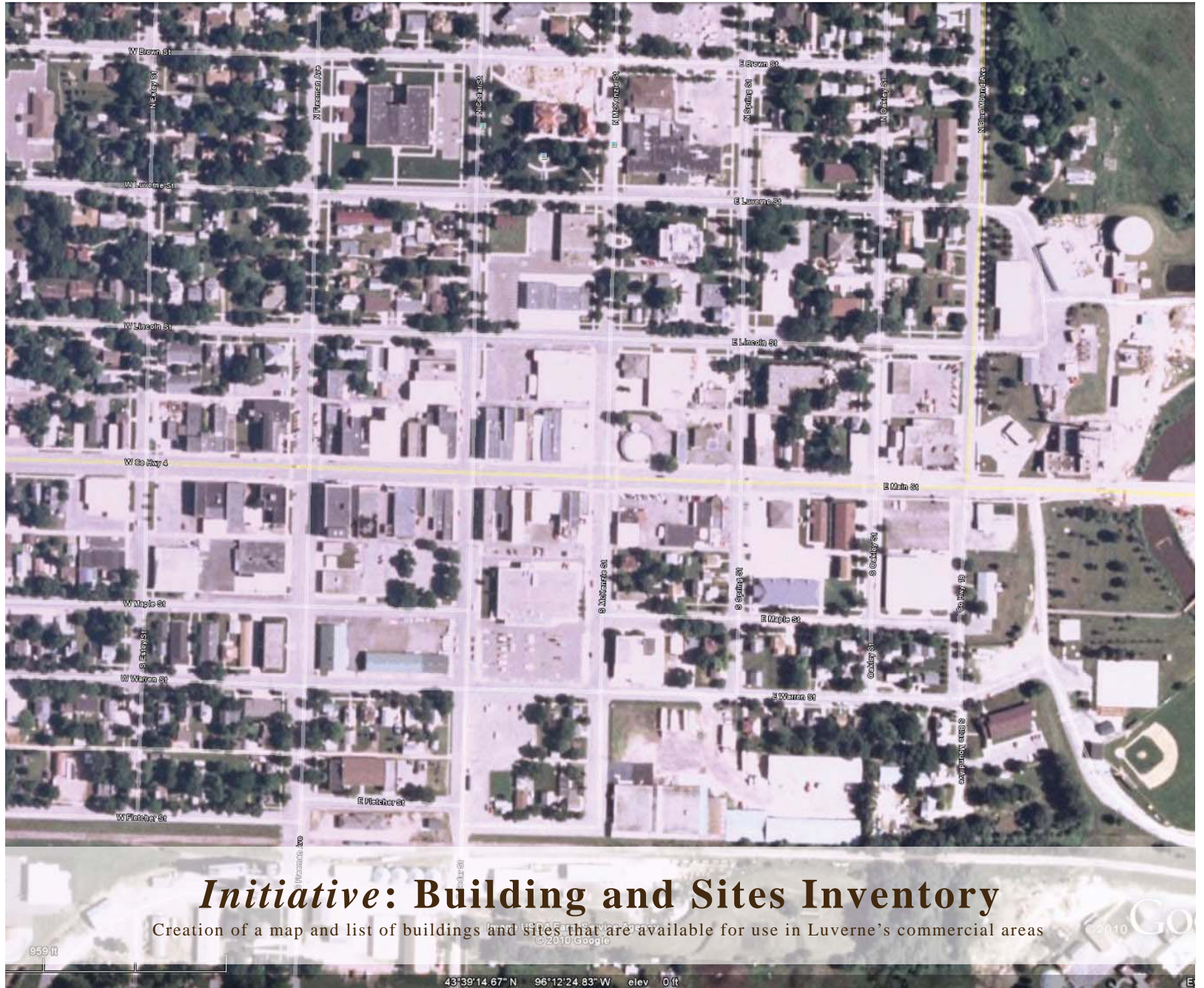


Objective:

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

Building and Sites Inventory



Relation to commercial area revitalization

When a business is considering relocation to Luverne, finding them an appropriate space is a key consideration. It can be difficult to ascertain which properties are available and how suitable each property is for the intended use. Lack of this kind of information can be a barrier for new businesses.

A building and sites inventory would provide a centralized resource for new or relocating businesses seeking to rent or buy property. It could provide a map and list of potential addresses with a brief summary of their key attributes and contact information for the owner or real estate agent associated with each site.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software could be used to maintain a map and database of information. This information could be made available online or printed as part of a package of marketing materials.

Making this kind of information easily accessible and up-to-date could give Luverne an advantage over other communities when being considered by new or relocating businesses.

Lead entity

Chamber of Commerce?

Supporting entities

City staff, property owners

Community priority**Timing/sequence****Potential costs**

Costs to hire a consultant to design the inventory format or buy appropriate software. Ongoing costs to maintain the inventory.

Potential funding sources

Since this resource would provide valuable advertising for property owners, it is likely that they could be charged a small fee for a listing, which would support the maintenance of the inventory.

Key steps prior to implementation**Related initiatives****Objective:**

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

**Building and Sites
Inventory**



Objective:

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

Branding



Initiative: Branding

Development of a consistent identity that represents Luverne to visitors, customers, and residents



Relation to commercial area revitalization

When a product, a service, or a business is readily identified by a consumer, it's branding. The idea of a brand can also be applied to a community, although it might seem a more abstract notion as it is applied to Luverne. Still, this community has an identity, and a way that people—from outside and from within—think about it. In a branding exercise, those thoughts are distilled to a few, discreet ideas that can be used to identify the community. Most often, the translation of a branding exercise is a logo; in reality, branding can be carried into most every aspect of how the community represents itself. And businesses can find a tie to that brand as well, allowing them to carry their own identities toward the community brand.

Because the brand is more than a logo, and because it must speak to so many audiences, the process of creating a brand should rely upon experts with skills and experience in working with communities—particularly those with experience in smaller communities. The process is likely similar to the process of creating the strategic plan, where business owners and citizens are engaged in sessions directed to identifying those elements common to their identity in Luverne. Likely, several possible brands will emerge from this process, and like the strategic planning process, a group representing the broad interests of Luverne will choose the brand option that best fits Luverne.

A critical part of the branding process is identifying how it is used, and then training business owners and others on the ways it is applied. It's not that there are rules, but if used indiscriminately, the brand can lose its power as a marketing tool for Luverne.

Lead entity

The City of Luverne and the Chamber of Commerce, as an organization that best represents businesses in

Luverne, could share in the responsibility for leading this initiative.

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

As part of the process of implementing the Branding initiative, a core group might research possible branding consultants, frame a process for engaging a qualified firm, and then work with the firm to develop a brand for Luverne.

Related initiatives

Objective:

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

Branding



Objective:

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

**Snow Emergency
Plan**



Initiative: Snow Emergency Plan

Put a plan in place that makes Luverne the “place to be” when the road is impassable.



Relation to commercial area revitalization

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives

Objective:

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

**Snow Emergency
Plan**



Objective:

Enhance marketing

Initiative:

**Interim Executive
Housing**



***Initiative:* Interim Executive Housing**

Provide furnished housing or extended-stay hotel rooms



Relation to commercial area revitalization

Lead entity

Supporting entities

Community priority

Timing/sequence

Potential costs

Potential funding sources

Key steps prior to implementation

Related initiatives

Objective:

Enhance Marketing

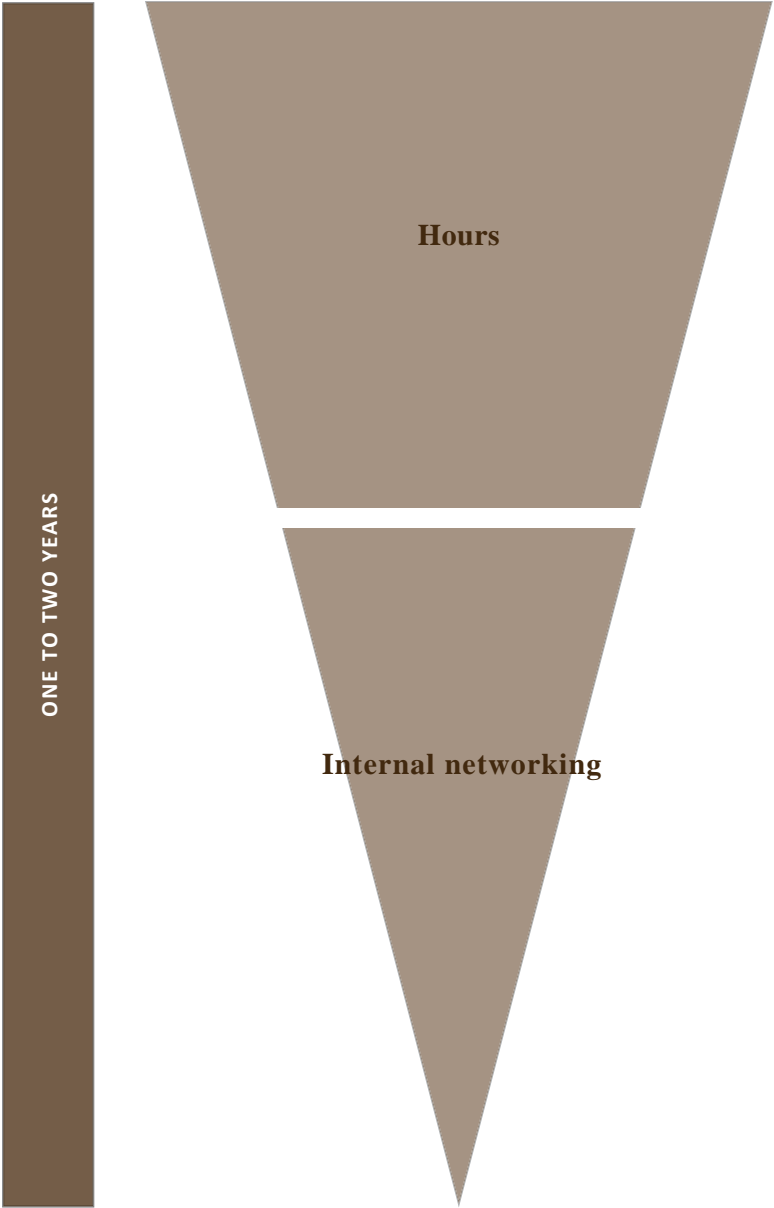
Initiative:

**Interim Executive
Housing**



Objective:
Increase business
cohesiveness

Path to Objective:
Increase business cohesiveness



Objective achieved:
Increase business cohesiveness





Objective:

**Increase business
cohesiveness**

Initiative:

Hours

Initiative: Hours

Develop a set of unified hours



<i>Objective:</i>	
Increase business cohesiveness	Relation to commercial area revitalization
<i>Initiative:</i>	Lead entity
Hours	Supporting entities
	Community priority
	Timing/sequence
	Potential costs
	Potential funding sources
	Key steps prior to implementation
	Related initiatives



Objective:

**Increase business
cohesiveness**

Initiative:

Networking



Initiative: Networking

Build relationships with social and training events



<i>Objective:</i>	
Increase business cohesiveness	Relation to commercial area revitalization
<i>Initiative:</i>	Lead entity
Networking	Supporting entities
	Community priority
	Timing/sequence
	Potential costs
	Potential funding sources
	Key steps prior to implementation
	Related initiatives



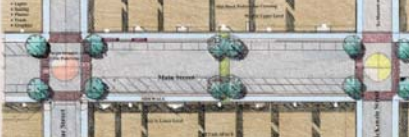


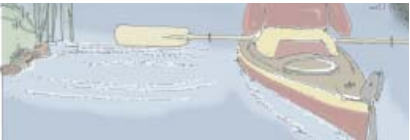



Objective: Improve Aesthetics

	Initiative:	Priority:	Resources:	First steps:
	South Kniss Corridor	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City streetscape funds • County road repair • Kniss businesses • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine county's plans for road repair • Examine available grant programs • Explore city streetscape plans and funding
	Create a vibrant streetscape	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City streetscape funds • Main Street businesses • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore city streetscape plans and funding • Examine available grant programs
	Restore historic buildings	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street businesses • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine available grant programs • Identify willing businesses
	West downtown gateway	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City streetscape funds • Main Street businesses • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore city streetscape plans and funding • Examine available grant programs
	Freeman Street Corridor	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City funds • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore city streetscape plans and funding • Examine available grant programs






Objective: Create Vitality

	Initiative:	Priority:	Resources:	First steps:
	Rock River Campground	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City land • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine optimum location • Develop proforma
	Mix in destination shops	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify local businesses with a wider draw • Develop marketing plan • Identify grant or tax programs
	Parking	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City streetscape funds • Main Street businesses • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore city streetscape plans and funding • Examine available grant programs
	Farmers market	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing farmers market group • Chamber of commerce • City • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine needs of existing group • Identify potential location • Examine available grant programs
	Power plant redevelopment	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City funds • Local business people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine long-term availability of building • Develop proforma
	Canoe and kayak trail	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City park funds • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine official
	Restore and reuse depot	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses • Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine official status of property










Objective: Strengthen processes



	Initiative:	Priority:	Resources:	First steps:
	Development review process	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate existing review process• Analyze support tools provided by other cities• Develop a program for assisting applicants
	Link incentives to projects	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff• Chamber of Commerce• Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify local and regional programs• Identify local projects seeking help
	Historic preservation guidelines	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff• SHPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate existing guidelines and grant programs• Analyze comparable successful programs



Objective: Enhance marketing

	Initiative:	Priority:	Resources:	First steps:
	Branding	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff • Chamber of commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire someone
	Customer service training	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key businesses and personnel • Develop a training program
	Marketing and prospecting tools	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with branding consultant to develop marketing plan
	Building and sites inventory	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • City staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential properties • Assemble a map and property information
	Snow emergency plan	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key businesses and personnel • Develop a plan
	Interim executive housing	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential properties • Work with businesses to evaluate needs
				

Objective: Increase business cohesiveness

Initiative:	Priority:	Resources:	First steps:
 <p>Hours</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City businesses• Chamber of commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a plan for downtown business hours
 <p>Internal networking</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chamber of Commerce• Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze comparable programs in other areas• Develop a program of social and training events where local business people can interact

