

# DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN

CITY OF MEXICO, MISSOURI  
JULY 2011



CITY OF MEXICO



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE  
FOR MISSOURI (DREAM) PROGRAM SPONSORS:



Strength, Dignity, Quality of Life  
**MISSOURI HOUSING**  
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# DREAM Initiative Process



## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of the DREAM Initiative (Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri) is to develop and create a strategic vision for Downtown Mexico that will lead to additional reinvestment and continued revitalization of Downtown.

The DREAM planning process addressed numerous issues related to the function, structure and image of Downtown Mexico. The goal of Mexico's participation in the DREAM Initiative was to identify the opportunities and constraints facing Downtown and develop a revitalization strategy.

The DREAM initiative began with a comprehensive assessment of the existing conditions and functionality of Downtown Mexico. These assessments were used as the basis for the various analyses and recommendations summarized in this report. The Strategic Plan is a resource guide for the community in implementing DREAM Initiative recommendations and proposed improvements in Downtown Mexico. The Strategic Plan provides a 10-year vision promoting creative, positive and attainable change to Downtown. The many participants of the planning process, including numerous citizens and civic leaders, expect the Strategic Plan to be the blueprint for transforming Downtown Mexico into a dynamic center in which to live, play and work.

The Strategic Plan describes the goals developed through the DREAM Initiative and the strategy to achieve those goals, including specific projects and action items. The goals and the action items are described in more detail throughout this report. A summary of the priority goals are as follows:

**Goal One: Establish a Downtown funding mechanism through a Community Improvement District.**

A sustainable funding source is needed to continue the revitalization of Downtown Mexico. A dedicated funding source will provide funds for future improvement efforts and help to maintain existing improvements. While many financial mechanisms are available to raise funds, a community improvement district is the recommendation of the DREAM Initiative planning process. The CID should

be established as either a political subdivision supported by a property and sales tax or a non-profit supported by a special assessment. A CID would also help to support the Village Square Association (VSA) to become the lead organization for Downtown. The Financial Assistance Review estimated that a one-half cent sales tax would generate approximately \$1,159,492 in revenue over a 20 year period. An annual allocation from this potential sales tax for Downtown Mexico would contribute significantly towards Downtown revitalization efforts. The CID funds would benefit downtown initiatives by assisting in administrative and facility costs for Downtown organizations, specifically VSA. The funds could be used as matching funds for state and federal grant programs. Also, these sales tax revenues could be used to market Downtown businesses and assist in economic development and beautification projects throughout the Village Square District.

**Goal Two: Establish the Village Square Association as the lead organization for Downtown Mexico's revitalization.**

The VSA is a voluntary organization, relying on the efforts of people donating their time and abilities to accomplish project-based goals over many years. These successes are only possible through a tireless commitment of citizens and businesspeople who also have families to take care of and businesses to run. As such, the VSA should take the next step to reorganize as a non-profit organization, and ultimately hire an Executive Director and additional staff as necessary to lead all Downtown efforts. The Downtown Community Improvement District will provide financial assistance in this vital endeavor.

**Goal Three: Establish Façade Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund for Downtown building improvements.**

A revolving loan fund should be encouraged, promoted, and expanded to include façade restoration for Downtown buildings. Providing assistance to building owners in removing metal cladding and awnings in a restorative manner will be very effective in improving the aesthetics of Downtown. Utilize existing loan funds, the Mexico CDC, or the proposed Downtown Community

## City of Mexico



Chamber of Commerce office in Downtown Mexico.



One of the many businesses situated on the Village Square of Downtown Mexico.



A view of the differing building facades facing the Village Square.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

City of Mexico

Improvement District for assistance in setting up the program and to use as matching funds for potential state grants and other external funding programs. Using local matching funds to leverage these dollars will also be a sound investment.

### Goal Four: Encourage rehabilitation of Downtown buildings and ensure quality infill projects where necessary.

Downtown buildings have a significant visual impact, especially on the Square, therefore special efforts and extraordinary measures are called for to achieve façade restoration and related building improvements. Special incentives, such as tax increment financing (TIF), will likely be required to persuade property owners to make the necessary improvements. Whether accomplished with an infusion of public dollars or funds raised independently, the right façade improvements will pay dividends to the community by attracting more shoppers and building pride in Mexico's landmark courthouse square. There are also several in-fill development opportunities Downtown that can be developed with high-quality buildings designed in a way that is sensitive to the architectural context of Downtown. Due to extraordinary costs (e.g. demolition or acquisition of multiple parcels), quality redevelopment of these sites may require tax incentives or other forms of public financial participation, such as a TIF. This participation would be warranted if a case can be made that this public participation can leverage private investment and stimulate economic activity Downtown. By designating certain sites as redevelopment or infill priorities in this Strategic Plan, the community is also making an important statement that there are unique opportunities for new construction in Downtown Mexico and that these sites should be priority locations for development.

### Goal Five: Strengthen the Mexico brand and establish a distinct Downtown.

Building on previous branding efforts, local leadership should focus on a singular message to describe Mexico and further develop a brand unique to Downtown and the Village Square Association that creates a cohesive

and exciting image. The brand should be used as a tool for expanding or highlighting the mix of Downtown's businesses. Private businesses, especially restaurants and shops should cooperatively market under the Downtown brand. Other coordinated actions and marketing efforts through the Chamber and the City can help raise regional awareness of Downtown offerings and attract visitors to Mexico.

### Goal Six: Establish gateways to Downtown.

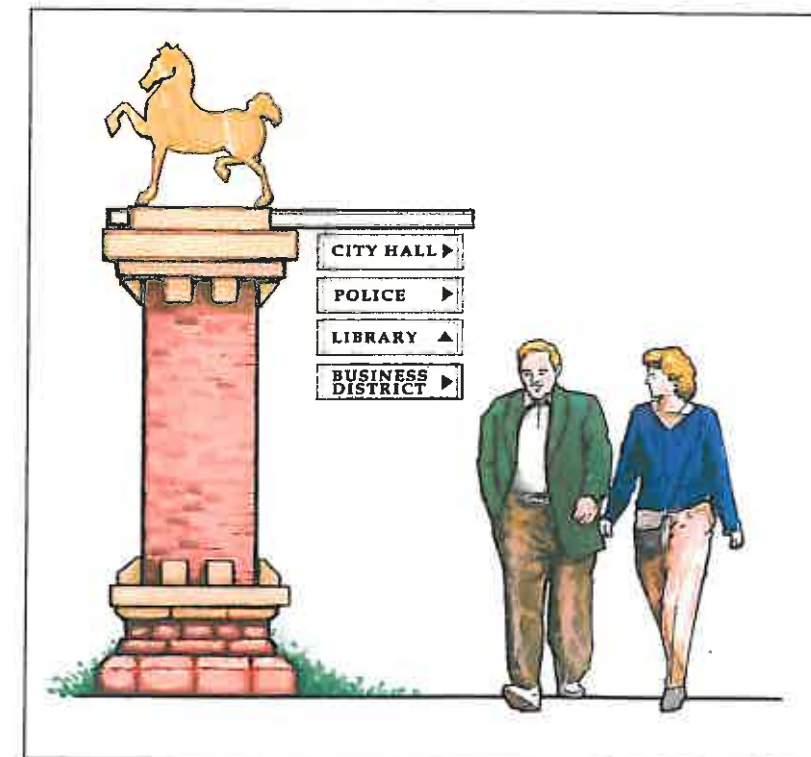
The Village Square is roughly described as the area surrounding the county courthouse and several blocks beyond in all directions. The uniqueness of this district needs to be clearly defined. The design and construction of gateway monument signs at multiple entrances to Downtown will be instrumental in demarcating the "special" district boundaries. The branding efforts previously discussed will be vital to the final design of these monuments. Utilize a combination of CID, municipal and state funding sources to assist with this project costs.

### Goal Seven: Develop a Wayfinding Plan and signage program for the Village Square district.

Attractive wayfinding can alert motorists on Highway 54 that Downtown's cultural attractions, shopping and dining opportunities are just a short distance from the highway bypass. Clark Street, which intersects with the highway, is a direct route north into Downtown Mexico. The Wayfinding signage should be placed along this route as well as any other possible routes into Downtown. Once in the Village Square District, distinct street, parking, and other identification signs should be installed to clearly identify the uniqueness of the district. The Downtown brand will again be utilized on each of these signs to provide a unifying element and carry the special district presence throughout Downtown.



This building, located one block off the Village Square, was renovated and restored for the location of a new restaurant.



Proposed civic wayfinding sign.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

City of Mexico

### Goal Eight: Encourage Existing Retail Expansion and Increase Available Retail Space.

Currently, government and professional services are the most likely reasons for people to make trips to Downtown Mexico, and local leaders must emphasize the various shopping and retail destinations located Downtown. Surveys and focus groups conducted as part of the DREAM Initiative point to the need for entertainment and restaurant uses in Downtown Mexico. In addition to waging a promotional campaign to attract new retail uses and entertainment-related businesses Downtown, the City or Chamber will need to establish a targeted incentive program to encourage expansion and attraction of these businesses. Furthermore, encouraging retail and entertainment businesses to work together to establish consistent evening or weekend business hours, to cross-promote one another, and to collaborate on marketing efforts will create a welcoming environment that attracts visitors and creates a vibrant atmosphere. Supporting new aesthetic and infrastructure improvements throughout Downtown through a possible CID and/or TIF should also be a high-priority objective toward retail attraction.

### Goal Nine: Designate "Signature Streets" within the Village Square District.

As part of a multi-phased approach, City officials should establish priority streets within the Village Square district for streetscape improvements. The proposed streets of Washington, Monroe, Jefferson and Jackson around the square should include improvements to establish a civic identity for the city and downtown such as street trees, street lights, landscaping, wayfinding signage, and art. New infrastructure of pavement, curb/gutters, signals and stormwater facilities should also be implemented where necessary. A streetscape design plan should be developed and implemented for these "Signature Streets." City officials should pursue transportation enhancement fund programs with the State of Missouri for implementation of the streetscape design plan. Once completed, the streetscape improvements can then be duplicated on additional streets until all of Downtown Mexico is greatly enhanced. A sustainable

funding source will be needed to make these types of improvements. The CID can assist in providing a dedicated source to provide funds for future improvement efforts and help to maintain existing improvements.

### Goal Ten: Improve Existing Attractions and Develop New Attractions.

A long term goal which would benefit downtown and the entire Mexico community is the continual improvement and marketing of existing attractions in and around Downtown, such as the Historical and Saddlebred Museums, Miss Missouri Pageant, and Missouri Military Academy events. In addition, developing new attractions will be vital to bring in additional visitors to Downtown. Currently, there are several historic railroad structures to the south of the DREAM boundary which appear to be underutilized. The restoration and reuse of these former depot buildings presents significant opportunities for Downtown Mexico. These building locations and sizes offer great potential for other kinds of civic and celebratory uses, such as a Downtown Welcome Center, Exhibit Hall, Farmer's Market, and/or Trailhead Facility, just to name a few. In the case of a trailhead, a city-wide trail system would serve residents as a recreational facility for exercise and bicycle transportation and connect multiple destinations within the city to Downtown. Downtown would serve as a destination for rest, dining, events and supplies for trail users.

To advance these goals, a number of specific projects are recommended in the Strategic Plan (illustrated on the Plan exhibit labeled "Special Projects Map").

A full Implementation section presenting all the projects, programs, and activities recommended by this Strategic Plan is included as the conclusion of this document.



Existing retail and restaurant options in Downtown Mexico.



Events at the Historical and Saddlebred Museums provide opportunities to utilize and highlight the nearby Village Square.



One of several underutilized former railroad depot buildings located just outside of the DREAM Study area.

# DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

## INTRODUCTION

The State of Missouri recognizes that substantial improvements and investments have already been made in Downtown Mexico. The purpose of the DREAM Initiative is to enhance that investment to sustain revitalization momentum. The DREAM Initiative is a three-year program providing designated Missouri communities with downtown planning assistance. Through the coordination of the Missouri Development Finance Board (MDFB), Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED), and the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC), the DREAM Initiative provides planning and financial assistance to enhance downtown revitalization in Missouri. The DREAM Initiative capitalizes on priority access to existing state financial incentive programs for implementation of the strategic plan. For the planning component of the DREAM Initiative, the State of Missouri retained the professional services of PGAV, Inc., a professional planning and design firm headquartered in Saint Louis, Missouri.

The City of Mexico was selected for the DREAM initiative in the program's second round of applications in 2007. The goal of the DREAM Initiative is to revitalize downtown districts and put them back into productive use. The beginning of the process provides technical planning assistance that culminates in a Strategic Plan detailing a Downtown revitalization effort. The planning assistance program begins with a comprehensive assessment that serves as the foundation for developing the technical components of the downtown plan.

The planning studies and analyses included in Mexico's DREAM Initiative are listed below:

- Organizational Structure Review
- Land Use, Building & Infrastructure Survey
- Community & Consumer Survey
  - Focus Groups
  - Telephone Survey
  - Visitor Survey
- Retail Market Analysis
- Housing Market Analysis
- Financial Assistance Review

- Building & Streetscape Design Guidelines
- Marketing Assistance
- Education Workshops
- Downtown Strategic Plan

The strategic plan emphasizes the use of existing state financial incentive programs for future implementation. Throughout the DREAM Initiative, ongoing project-specific support was provided by the state agencies and PGAV.

The DREAM Initiative recognizes that a substantial investment has already been made in Downtown Mexico. The purpose of DREAM is to help existing investment achieve its highest productive use. Mexico has been provided with technical, creative and financial assistance, and has been given priority for various state grant and loan programs.

## City of Mexico



Existing bandstand in Hardin Park, just south of the Downtown Study Area.



Existing tree wells in Downtown Mexico.



The Chamber of Commerce sign in Downtown Mexico.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

Good planning always engages the public in meaningful discussion and review of ideas. The DREAM Initiative utilized a comprehensive approach to reach out to local citizens and civic leaders to identify the issues regarding Downtown.

The intent of the public outreach was to learn of issues and perceptions of Downtown Mexico. The planning process included communications with the public to learn of the opportunities and constraints in Downtown. Public outreach was also a venue to introduce and build support for the DREAM Initiative Strategic Plan.

Public input and discussion with Downtown stakeholders revealed a great deal of pride in Downtown and a history of community involvement in improvement efforts in Downtown Mexico. The DREAM Initiative builds on these longstanding efforts. The public comments and stakeholders' discussions inspired or directly generated the recommended actions and proposed projects generated throughout the planning process. These actions and projects are outlined in the final strategic plan.

The DREAM Initiative solicited public comments and engaged community conversations regarding Downtown Mexico through a variety of methods, including:

- **Focus Group Meetings**

In the summer of 2008, discussions of Downtown issues and ideas for improvements were facilitated with four separate groups: elected and other officials, students, city residents, and business owners. The group discussions centered around how Downtown is used, how Downtown is perceived, and what improvements can be made to Downtown Mexico.

- **Telephone Surveys**

In the fall of 2008 a telephone survey of 300 residents was conducted to solicit responses to a series of questions about priorities for improvement of Downtown Mexico. The survey was conducted using a randomly selected, statistically representative sample of Mexico residents.

- **Visitor Survey**

Throughout the summer and early fall of 2008, surveys were conducted with 199 visitors to Mexico in various locations throughout Downtown. The purpose was to gauge the perceptions and priorities for the Downtown area from a visitor's perspective.

- **Stakeholder Discussions**

A series of in-depth conversations were held with City staff, Chamber board members and staff, Village Square Association members, key property owners, key business owners and other members of the Mexico community to discuss Downtown issues and revitalization strategies.

- **Public Meetings**

Beginning with a kick-off meeting in the summer of 2008, numerous public presentations and meetings were held to review progress on the DREAM Initiative work in Mexico. These included general annual review meetings and topic-specific presentations regarding, for example, the Downtown retail market or design guidelines alternatives. Meetings were publicized via local media coverage, Chamber newsletters, promotion on the city and chamber web sites and VSA email lists.

## City of Mexico



Initial Assessment Meeting tour in September 2007.



Visitor surveys were taken during special events such as the Soybean Festival in 2008.



Retail Market public meeting in October 2010.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

A key public meeting was held January 2011 to present preliminary goals and objectives for the Downtown Strategic Plan and to get feedback on initial project recommendations for the Plan. Numerous owners of Downtown properties and businesses attended and gave feedback at the meeting, which was held at the Audrain County Courthouse.

- **Education and Communication**

The DREAM Initiative process also included various seminars to educate and inform the local DREAM steering committee participants and key stakeholders on issues pertaining to Downtown revitalization and planning. The seminars were conducted by the sponsor state agencies and other entities, such as the State Historic Preservation Office. Leading practitioners and expert specialists also participated in these workshops, which were held in Jefferson City. Seminar topics included retail business development, historic preservation, building design and renovation, façade loans and incentive programs and engaging public support and community organizations to lead downtown revitalization.

City of Mexico



DREAM Meeting at a Downtown restaurant in September 2007.



DREAM Organizational Seminar in Spring 2008.



DREAM Retail Strategies Seminar in Spring 2009.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The City of Mexico was designated a DREAM Initiative community in the fall of 2007. The planning process for the DREAM Initiative, commenced in the spring of 2008. While the DREAM Initiative culminates in a strategic plan with a 10 year horizon, the DREAM Initiative provided immediate benefits to Downtown Mexico and the surrounding community. The following is a summary of accomplishments in Downtown Mexico since the fall of 2007. Most of the accomplishments were already in progress and not necessarily a result of the DREAM Initiative. However, some of the accomplishments were an effect of the DREAM Initiative, either directly or with the DREAM Initiative in a support role. The end result is progress in the revitalization of Downtown Mexico:

- DREAM Initiative Planning Process – The DREAM Initiative planning process is a commitment of approximately \$193,000 in state funds for planning services, which was leveraged by a 20% local match paid over three years.
- HERO Housing Rehabilitation grant – In 2009, the Missouri Housing Development Commission announced that Mexico would receive a combined grant of approximately \$132,000 for rehabilitation of owner occupied homes along streets in and around Downtown Mexico.
- Downtown Energy Grants – In 2010, the City of Mexico in collaboration with the Mexico Area Chamber of Commerce was successful in obtaining the Energize Missouri Grant from Missouri Department of Natural Resources for \$48,000 to do energy audits and energy retrofits of 29 Mexico businesses. Also in 2010, the city received a \$30,000 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, which is funded through MoDNR for specific upgrades to City Hall.

- Acquisition of the former JC Penny Building – After several years of being vacant, the Mexico Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority acquired the large building located at the corner of Washington and Monroe Streets, on the Village Square. Through the DREAM process, estimates to rehabilitate the interior and exterior of the building were obtained and work is beginning to occur. This project, when completed, will provide additional retail/restaurant space around the Square and inspire confidence for other building owners about the potential for further rehabilitation where needed in the Downtown area.
- Reorganization of the Village Square Association – Although just beginning the process, the Village Square Association is undertaking their establishment as a non-profit entity to more effectively lead the revitalization efforts for Downtown Mexico. The VSA will be charged with consolidating the efforts of the various other existing organizations, including the City, County, Chamber, and CDC relating to Downtown development/redevelopment, marketing, and other activities. Eventually a possible goal is to hire an executive director to enact the strategies and recommendations as a result of the DREAM process.
- Downtown Community Improvement District – In association with the reorganization of VSA, efforts are also underway to form a CID for the Downtown boundaries. An exploratory committee was formed and the first meeting was held in April 2011. Once formed the CID will provide a stable funding source for a whole host of efforts toward the improvement of Downtown and organizational support for the Village Square Association.

## City of Mexico



Existing home in the Downtown Mexico Study Area.



The former JC Penny building located on the Village Square.



A sample of the existing wayfinding signage in and around Downtown Mexico.



DREAM Initiative  
Task Summaries

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The DREAM Initiative included analysis and review of the organizations with a role or interest in Downtown Mexico. The purpose of this review was to understand the roles and responsibilities of the various organizations affecting the function of Downtown. This task focused on examining how these organizations may be improved or adjusted to ensure that the community's Downtown-related organizations are prepared to implement the projects and recommendations outlined through the DREAM Initiative.

The three main organizations that were reviewed included:

- Village Square Association
- City of Mexico
- Mexico Chamber of Commerce

The Organizational Structure Review task resulted in a plan for restructuring existing entities and the formation of new organizations. The primary recommendations for improving the organizational structure of Downtown Mexico are listed as follows:

- **Establish a Downtown Mexico Community Improvement District**

A Community Improvement District is a geographically defined area used to finance public-use projects. CID's can fund a number of projects considered useful or desirable for Downtown. They have also been used effectively in downtown revitalization projects across the country. The CID is governed by a board of directors that may be either appointed by the City or elected by the residents and property owners of the CID. It would be a separate legal entity from the City of Mexico, but to organize it a municipal ordinance is required. The City Council would also review the CID annual budget and submit it to the Missouri Department of Economic Development. CIDs are organized by goal-driven

groups of neighbors working together to make improvements and solve problems. If the Downtown Mexico community were to create a CID, it would have a sustainable, organized method for addressing problems identified as important to the District. Having a CID would create the opportunity to strategically address future needs. A CID will also provide a sustainable funding source for the Village Square Association to more effectively execute core services, achieve recommended projects and staff the organization.

- **Establish the Village Square Association as the lead organization for Downtown Mexico's revitalization**

The development needs of a traditional downtown are unique. The VSA should reorganize as a nonprofit entity and play the lead role in all Downtown-specific revitalization efforts. Once established the VSA should look to hire an Executive Director who is experienced in the unique design aspects and economic development challenges of historic downtowns. This step requires moving the VSA beyond just a voluntary organization and is critical to achieving the Strategic Plan's objectives for Downtown Mexico. An experienced downtown program manager ensures that efforts such as façade improvements, downtown business attraction, promoting downtown events, etc. will continue regardless of ongoing changes to committee structures or external issues.

- **Strengthen the relationship between Village Square Association and existing Mexico Community Development Corporation**

Strive to establish a working relationship between VSA and the Mexico CDC to conduct public benefit projects and redevelopment activities through a provision of loans and equity to small businesses and/or developers.

City of Mexico



**VILLAGE SQUARE ASSOCIATION**

Mexico  
Community  
Development  
Corporation

**PROGRESS MEXICO**

Organizations involved in Downtown Mexico.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

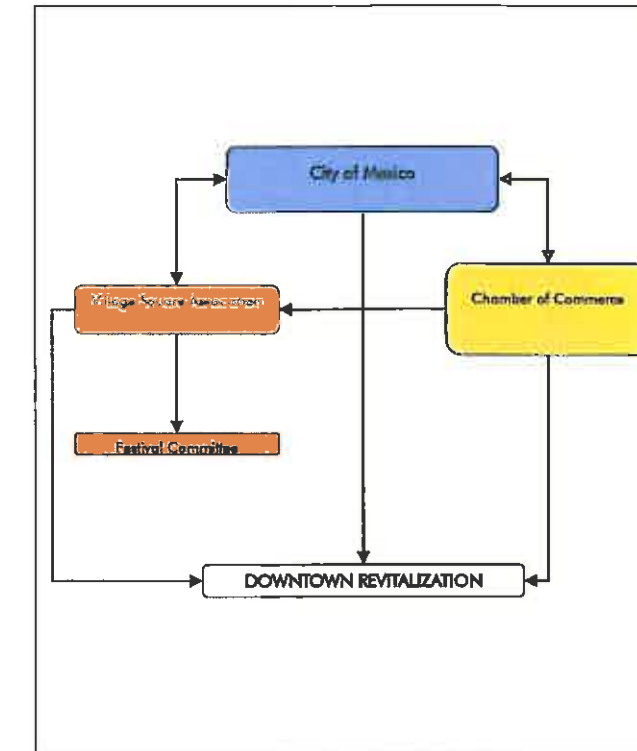
- Establish a Downtown Mexico Business and Economic Development Committee

As noted in the Implementation section of the Plan, several organizations (especially the City of Mexico) will be involved in the execution of the Strategic Plan. The VSA is the logical entity to take ownership of the plan and be its most vocal advocate. The VSA should look to establish a separate committee to focus on existing retail expansion and retail attraction in Downtown. More than one committee will certainly be involved in implementing recommendations and projects outlined in the Plan, but putting a single group in charge of overseeing plan implementation (perhaps the Economic Development or Design committee) will promote a tighter focus on the Plan. Whichever committee assumes this role, it should include at least one member of the City Council to ensure a high degree of coordination between VSA and the City.

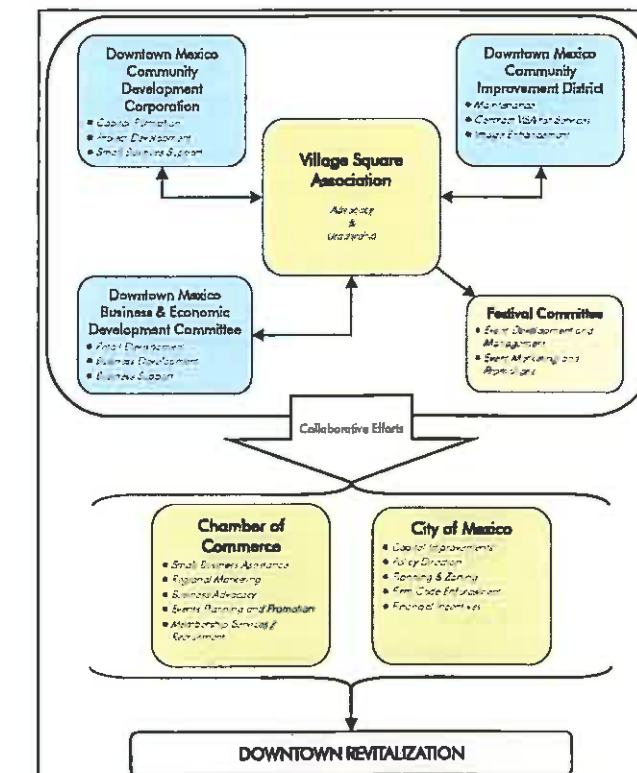
Mexico is in the fortunate position of having a talented pool of volunteers and community leaders committed to Downtown improvement. These volunteers and leaders can only do so much, however, and eventually other responsibilities will take their focus away from Downtown from time to time. Village Square Association will be able to continue improving and revitalizing Downtown Mexico within its new organizational structure as long as certain core elements remain intact. These core elements (a dedicated funding source, a full-time staff person, an action-oriented committee structure and a stakeholder-driven organization) are among the key organizational recommendations of this Strategic Plan.

A full list of goals and objectives for the Organizational Structure can be found in the Implementation Schedule starting on page 38. For a full list of recommendations refer to the *Organizational Structure Review*, April 2009.

## City of Mexico



Existing organizational structure for Downtown Mexico.



Recommended organizational structure for Downtown Mexico.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### LAND USE, BUILDINGS & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Land Use, Building and Infrastructure Survey is an inventory of Downtown Mexico's existing land use, exterior building conditions and the condition of public infrastructure. The survey was conducted in the summer of 2008 and produced more than 20 maps of the Mexico DREAM study area.

The maps included in the Map Reference Handbook were used throughout the DREAM planning process. The conditions data collected as part of the Land Use, Building and Infrastructure Survey helped identify the most pressing issues for Downtown and discover development opportunities for the future.

The data and maps also serve as a "snapshot" of Downtown Mexico. If the data in the Map Reference Handbook (such as building vacancies, deteriorated buildings, and street conditions) is maintained and updated, the City, VSA, and the Chamber can monitor the progress of Mexico's Downtown revitalization progress and identify new development opportunities. If the City or a partner agency has the opportunity to use a geographic information system (GIS) computer application, DREAM data can be directly updated to allow ongoing progress monitoring and facilitate continued project planning. Several conclusions can be drawn from the data displayed in the Map Reference Handbook:

- Based on exterior observation, most Downtown buildings are in fair or good condition, but a considerable number are in poor condition. In some cases this is simply due to deferral of maintenance. A number of buildings have rear walls that exhibit significant repair needs, even though the façade may be in good condition. The Village Square Association should continue to work with property owners to encourage good building maintenance practices and promote rear and side wall improvements.

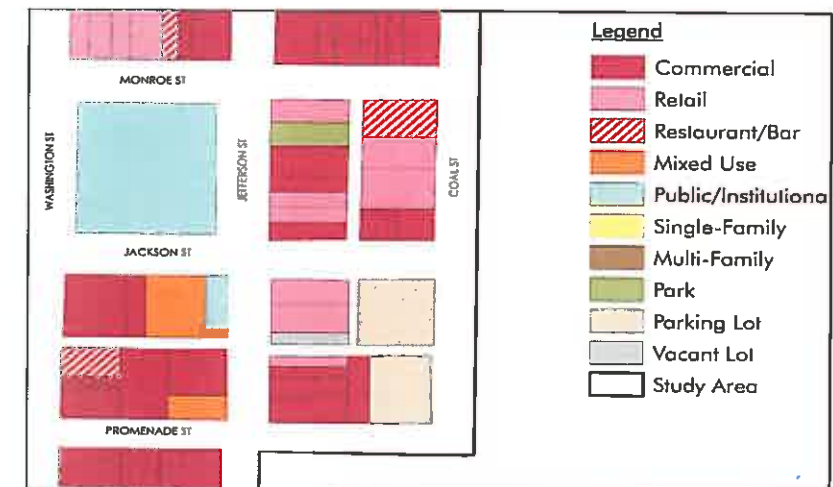
- A number of buildings have upper stories that appear to be underutilized. These upper floors represent an opportunity to increase economic activity Downtown, either as supplemental office space or dwelling units. Even if upper floors are to be used for storage, building owners should be encourage to remove boards over upper floor windows and install appropriate windows and window treatments.
- Due to the layout of the Mexico Square, the amount of parking downtown is adequate. However, a number of private parking lots off of the Square are in poor condition. Upgrade (with new paving, landscaping, lighting, etc.) of these lots should be encouraged. However, paving parking lots also has storm water drainage implications (another important issue for Downtown), so any parking lot work must take drainage impacts into account.
- In general, the physical condition of Downtown Mexico is good. The architectural heritage and the convenient access to government and professional services makes Downtown a great location for new businesses. However, the community must recognize that Downtown competes with attractive "greenfield" sites farther away from the center of the community. Therefore, the physical conditions Downtown (including parking areas, signage, and lighting) must be as attractive as that in Mexico's newly developed areas.

A full list of goals and objectives for the Land Use, Building & Infrastructure Survey can be found in the Implementation Schedule starting on Page 38. The full inventory of the Land Use, Building and Infrastructure can be found in the *Map Reference Handbook*, October 2008.

## City of Mexico



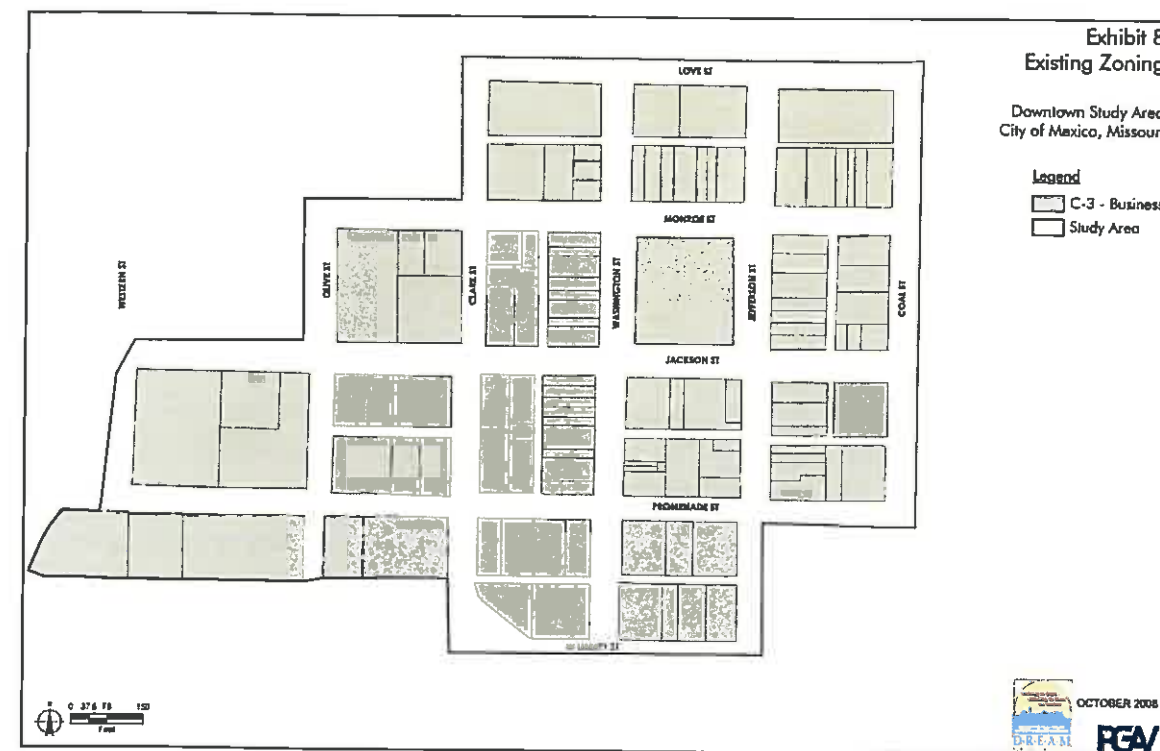
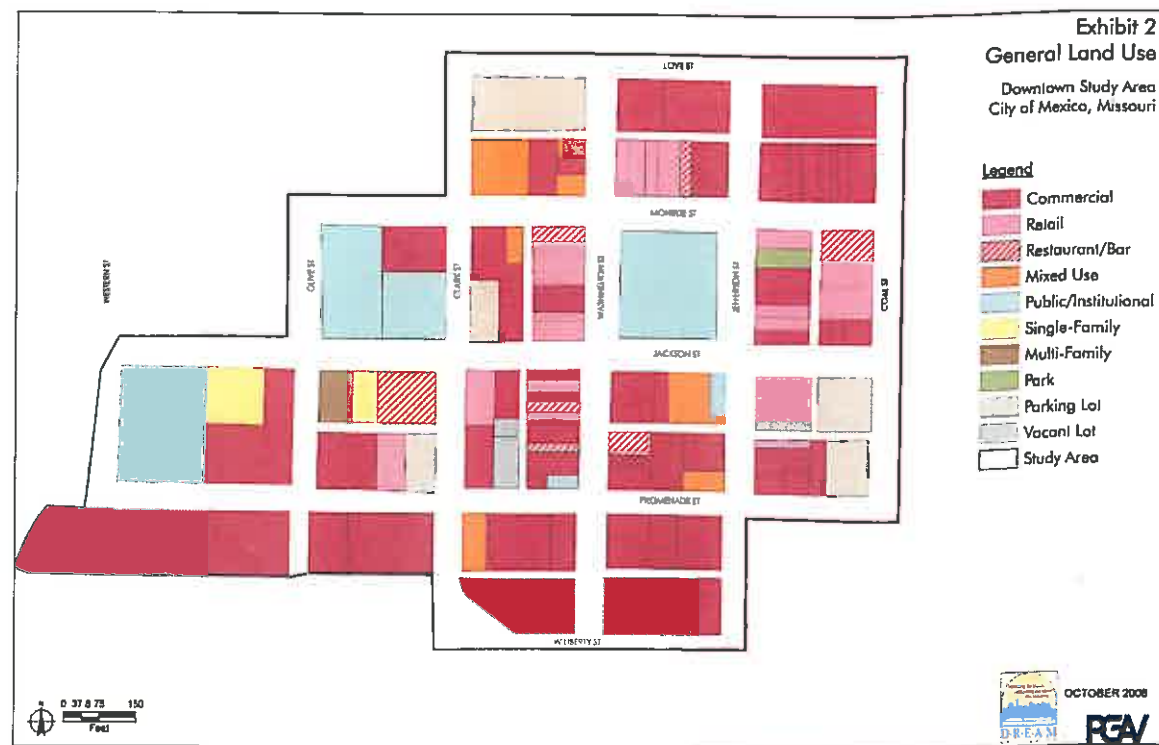
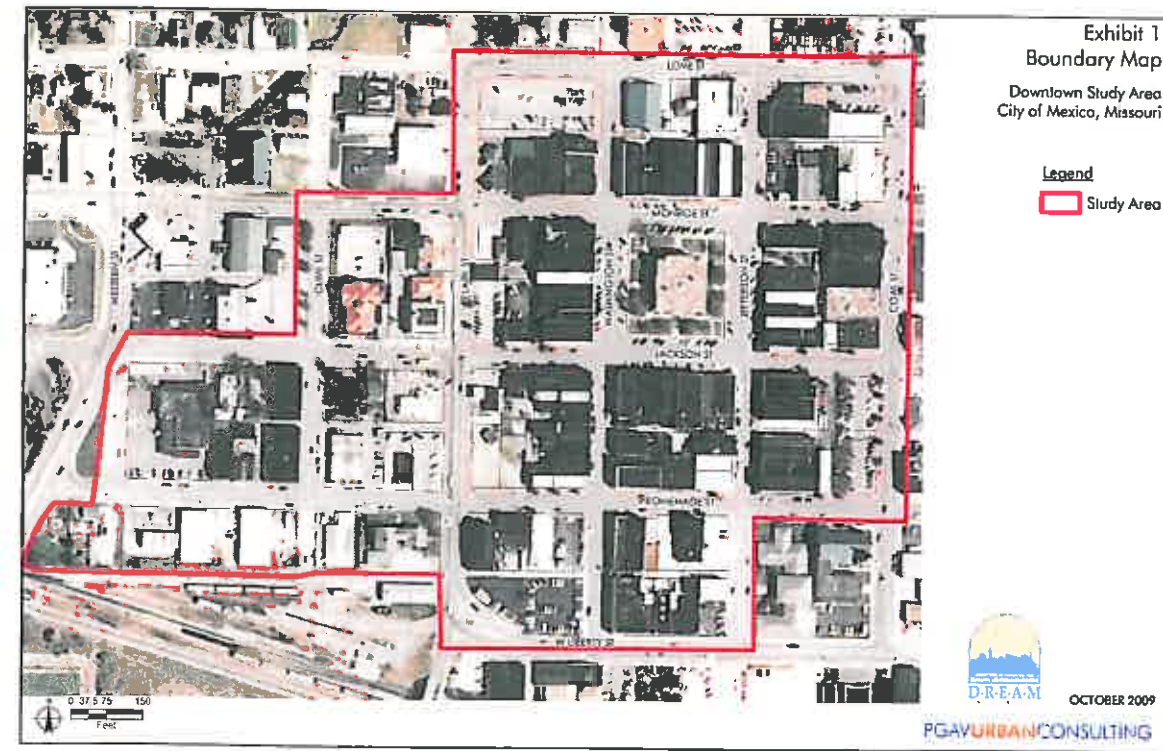
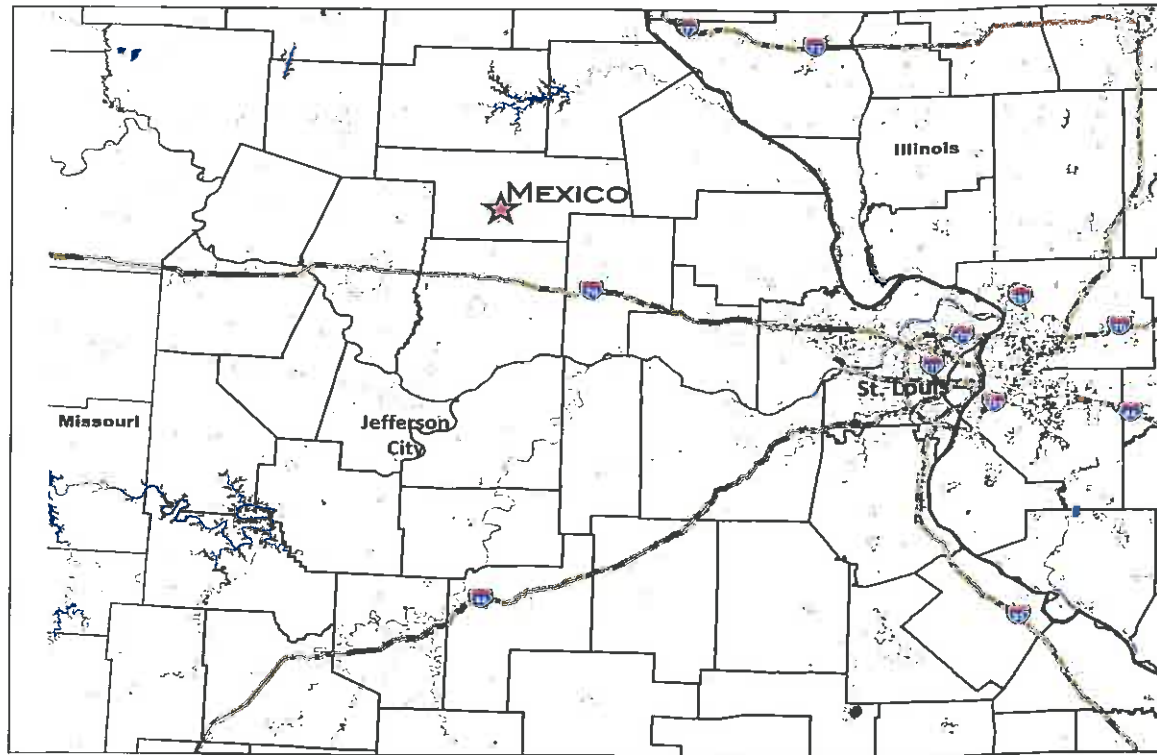
Map Reference Handbook: Detail of Exhibit 7-a Street Conditions.



Map Reference Handbook: Detail of Exhibit 2 General Land Use.



Map Reference Handbook: Detail of Exhibit 3 Building Conditions.



**COMMUNITY SURVEYS**

A comprehensive community survey process was conducted to learn of perceptions and issues regarding Downtown Mexico. The surveys document information obtained from community leaders, business people, and residents of the Mexico area. The information gathered was utilized throughout the planning process.

The DREAM Initiative survey process used two distinct methods to obtain the views, perceptions and interests of residents and stakeholders. First, the consultant conducted focus groups of key stakeholders to allow for in-depth conversation on open-ended questions. After that, a random-sample telephone survey was conducted to allow the widest possible public input on Downtown issues. The process and results of each method are summarized below:

- **Focus Groups**

The focus groups were facilitated by consultants of the DREAM Initiative to engage open discussion regarding Downtown Mexico. Discussion of issues was facilitated with four (4) separate groups: elected and other officials, students, residents, and business owners. In each of the groups, discussion focused on the participants' perceptions of Downtown and realities experienced. Specific opportunities and priorities for improvement and development in the Downtown area were also discussed and documented.

Collectively, all four groups have a mixed view of Downtown Mexico, but most perceived it to be moving in the right direction. Participants view Downtown as a center of government and services, with some limited retail and special events also drawing people. The attractive, historic character of the Square is valued by the community and should be maintained.

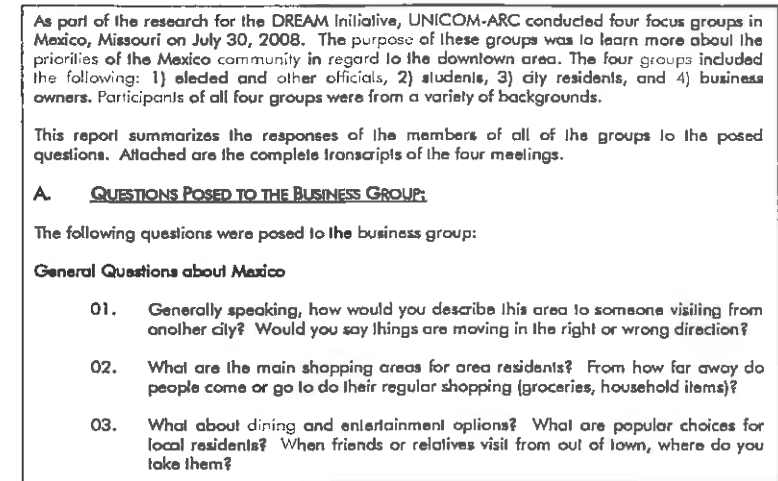
The focus group consensus was that attracting more retail and dining businesses should be the highest priority for Downtown Mexico. The participants also cited the following as high priorities for Downtown: adding residential space, improving building facades (front and back), making the aesthetics cohesive and attractive, improving sidewalks, and improving signage.

In terms of business development and recruitment, focus group participants agreed that Downtown Mexico should focus on independently owned specialty-type shops and restaurants to contribute to a unique, authentic experience. Additional restaurants are especially desired; fine dining, a destination restaurant of some kind, and a variety of casual dining options. The lack of evening retail hours were mentioned as an impediment to Downtown development. Additional retailers desired by the participants included a book store, coffee shop, tea room, small grocery, a bakery, a sporting goods store, and an anchor store of some type. The focus groups recognized the importance of special events downtown and would welcome additional entertainment options, including a nice pool hall, laser tag, and go-carts.

- **Telephone Survey**

In November 2008 a phone survey was conducted to interview a random sample of the Mexico community on their perceptions of Downtown. A random-sample survey is especially useful for getting input from residents who may not necessarily attend public meetings or participate in community organizations.

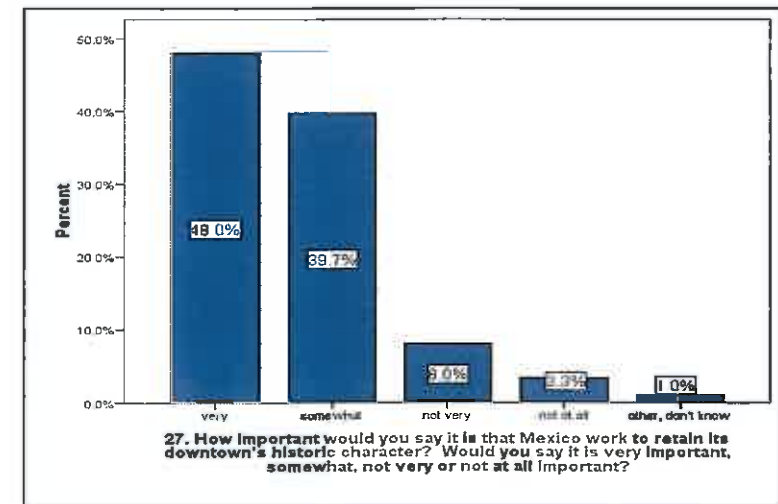
Listed on the following page are key points from the survey results:



Sample of the Focus Group report.



The focus group discussions indicated shops in Downtown should stay open longer in the evening.



Sample results from the Telephone Survey.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

- A minority of respondents (42%) felt that Mexico is moving in the right direction; however more than two-thirds of survey participants felt "good" or "excellent" about most characteristics of Downtown Mexico.

- Nine out of ten respondents stated that retaining the historic character of Downtown is "very" or "somewhat" important.

- The majority of respondents (51.3%) placed a high priority on "revitalizing the downtown area". A higher proportion of respondents (67%) placed a high priority on "attracting more big box retail development" and "repairing major streets" (65.7%), but only 38% of respondents placed a high priority on "upgrading parks and recreation facilities."

- A majority of respondents placed a high priority on adding four types of businesses downtown: family or casual-style dining, fine dining, attractions aimed at teenagers (arcade, skating rink), and clothing stores. A slim majority also felt there is a need for second-story living space.

- Among several potential downtown improvements, more than four in ten respondents placed a high priority on keeping streets and sidewalks cleaner, improving building facades, better landscaping (more flowers and less weeds), and moving utilities underground.

### • Visitor Survey

Throughout the summer and early fall of 2008, surveys were conducted with 199 visitors to Mexico in various locations throughout Downtown. The purpose was to gauge the perceptions and priorities for the Downtown area from a visitor's perspective.

Most of the respondents stated their main purpose of their visit was for a special event (77.2%), followed by dining (52.8%), and shopping (51.4%). A significant majority of the respondents (85.1%) had visited Mexico before. Most (56.6%) felt that Downtown was easy to get around, and that parking (76.3%) and business hours (64%) were convenient. Visitors stated that they would like to see more clothing stores and more shops in general added to the Downtown, and that more family restaurants, children's attractions, and family events would make them more likely to visit Downtown Mexico again. When asked about what physical improvements would make the Downtown more appealing, renovation of historic buildings garnered the largest response (35.9%) out of a list of 13 possible items.

- Despite some variance between the conclusions of the focus groups, telephone survey, and visitor survey, the most important findings are consistent. All surveys concluded that the historic architecture of downtown is a key asset to be protected, downtown revitalization is an important community effort and that adding retailers, restaurants, and entertainment venues are a priority for the future.

A full list of goals and objectives for Downtown Mexico Community Surveys can be found in the Implementation Schedule starting on Page 38. A full listing of responses and comments can be found in the *Focus Group Survey Report, July 2008*, the *Telephone Survey Report, January 2009*, and the *Visitor Survey Report, February 2009*.

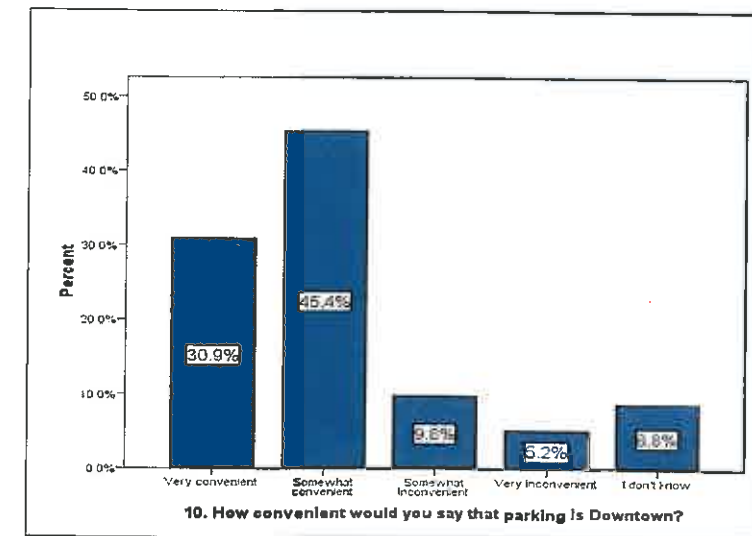
## City of Mexico



According to both the focus group and telephone survey, improving facades of downtown buildings is a high priority.



Most respondents of the visitor survey were in Mexico due to special events and festivals.



The visitor survey documented that visitors feel parking Downtown is very or somewhat convenient.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Financial Assistance Review analyzed many different financial mechanisms that can be employed to promote revitalization in Downtown Mexico. The intent of the Financial Assistance Review was to provide a scan of the available financing mechanisms with supporting financial data supplied by the Missouri Department of Revenue. For purposes of strategic planning it is the opinion of the DREAM Initiative that three of these mechanisms be pursued for Downtown Mexico. within the first few years following the adoption of the plan. They are as follows:

- **Establish a Community Improvement District (CID)**

Establishing a Community Improvement District for Downtown Mexico has the tremendous potential to help revitalization. The City, Chamber, and Village Square Association are leading the process in developing a CID for Downtown.

For demonstration purposes, the Financial Assistance Review estimates the following within the first year of creation of a CID (base year is 2012):

A CID plan utilizing a sales tax option could generate varying amounts contingent on the rate set in the CID planning process. The Financial Assistance Review analyzed potential sales tax revenue that could be generated in Downtown Mexico (sales tax numbers were provided by the Missouri Department of Revenue). If a half-cent (0.50%) sales tax was imposed it could potentially generate about \$36,000 annually in 2012 and by the year 2017, approximately \$44,000 annually. If redevelopment activity continues to grow, these numbers also increase (refer to page 19 in the Financial Assistance Review for Table CID-1 and further detail).

A CID has the possibility of funding a range of projects and activities downtown, such as seasonal banners, promotional events for businesses, trash pickup, security, parking improvements and festivals. CID revenues could also be used to assist with administrative and operational costs for downtown organizations.

Increasing program, marketing, maintenance and infrastructure improvements in Downtown will benefit everyone whether they are property owners, business owners, employees, residents, visitors or customers.

- **Implement Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

The City of Mexico has experience in the utilization of a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) for development projects in the city. Major economic development projects Downtown could be financed through the use of TIF as a development incentive. The use of this economic development tool should follow already established TIF procedures the City has adopted. Another option would be for the City of Mexico to establish a Downtown Tax Increment Financing District. The established district can have a primary emphasis on infrastructure improvements for the Downtown area and be a secure source of revenue.

A Downtown TIF District, covering the DREAM Study area would have the potential to generate approximately \$48,000 annually in incremental revenues by 2015. (This figure is based on projected retail sales and property values pursuant to redevelopment activities described on page 10 of the

City of Mexico



A pocket park in Downtown Mexico can be maintained and further improved with CID funds.



TIF funds could be used to enhance and expand public parking lots to accommodate Downtown visitors/employees.



Streetscape enhancements are also eligible for CID or TIF funding.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

Financial Assistance Review). This revenue could be used for infrastructure improvements such as streetscape, streets/sewers or matching funds for major projects such as burying utilities.

Please refer to Table TIF-1 - Summary of Projected TIF Revenues (PILOTS), on page 15 in the Financial Assistance Review.

- **Establish Facade Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund**

Utilize the MDFB/MIDOC Infrastructure loan program to establish a Façade Revolving Loan Fund to provide gap loan financing for rehabilitation projects throughout Downtown Mexico. CID or TIF funds can be used as the matching component to MDFB funds.

The financial resources for implementing the recommendations of this task summary are listed below. Resources include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- State & Federal Historic Tax Credits
- HeRO Home Repair Program
- Affordable Housing Assistance Program
- Community Development Block Grant

The State of Missouri financing programs are discussed in detail in *Missouri's Economic Development Tool: A Practical Guide to Building a Better Missouri*, published by the Missouri Department of Economic Development and the Missouri Development Finance Board. Refer to [www.ded.mo.gov](http://www.ded.mo.gov) for full report details.

Goals and objectives for Financial Assistance can be found in the Implementation Section. A full listing of all financial mechanisms can be reviewed in the *Financial Assistance Review*, February 2010.

## City of Mexico



Establishing a revolving loan fund will assist property owners with façade restoration.



Funding can also be used for awning removal where desired in Downtown Mexico.



Funds may be used to aid development of a cohesive signage plan for the Village Square.

# DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

## RESIDENTIAL DEMAND ANALYSIS

The Residential Demand Analysis provides insight on the supply and demand for housing in Downtown Mexico. The report also identifies possible locations for additional residential development and general strategies to meet the residential demand of the market. A large majority of the residential units in Downtown Mexico are occupied. There are also some areas with vacancies and underutilized properties. The addition of new residential units would complement the revitalization efforts of Downtown Mexico.

Downtown Mexico can support an additional 71 residential units at this time based on the Residential Market Demand Analysis. The analysis which was conducted in the spring of 2009, estimated that Downtown Mexico could increase it's resident populations with a mix of housing types. The Residential Demand Analysis concluded that the mix of housing could include:

- Market Rate Rental                    23 units
- Affordable Family Rental            16 units
- Affordable Senior Rental            32 units

The Residential Market Demand Analysis of the DREAM Initiative offers the following recommendations for Downtown Mexico.

### • Develop Downtown Housing Marketing Campaign

The Village Square Association and the Chamber of Commerce should develop materials that promote living in Downtown Mexico. These materials should be made available to current and prospective residents and developers, and paired with informational packages that identify a variety of financing mechanisms available from participating banks. The VSA should conduct and market a Downtown Housing Tour each spring.

### • Encourage Development of Upper-Floor Spaces

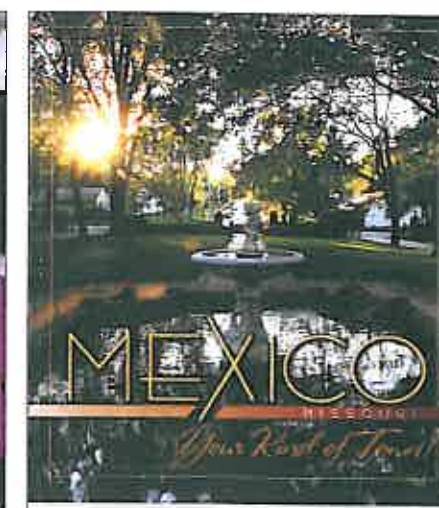
The Village Square Association, with assistance from the City and the Mexico Community Development Corporation, should identify unused and underutilized second and third floor space within Downtown Mexico and assist property owners and/or market to potential developers for conversion to living space.

### • Develop Supplemental Building Code for Downtown

Residential uses in Downtown Mexico present some unique challenges and issues. In addition to enforcing current building codes, the City should look to make exceptions/supplemental standards for residential conversions in Downtown buildings. The Building Department should be able to suggest flexible solutions and options prior to or during the permitting process.

### • Encourage Property Owners to Improve & Maintain Properties

The City and Village Square Association should encourage all property owners to maintain and upgrade current buildings. The City and VSA should explore creating housing improvement programs involving local charities, faith-based organizations and fraternal societies to help with improvements for senior and low income residents. The Home Repair Opportunity Program (HeRO) of the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC) should be utilized when properties are eligible.



Examples of current marketing materials which tout living in the City of Mexico.



Some of the unused or underutilized upper floor space in Downtown Mexico.



The former jail building offers a potential housing redevelopment opportunity in Downtown Mexico.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

- Improve Residential Areas Surrounding Downtown

Downtown revitalization efforts are negatively impacted by surrounding areas which have poorly maintained housing units. These neighborhoods should garner more attention for code and maintenance compliance as well as financial assistance and first-time buyer programs. Target young families and veterans looking for smaller starter homes. Baby Boomers looking to downsize to smaller units would be attracted by condominiums and townhomes. The City and MCDC should coordinate opportunities to apply for MHDC programs such as HeRO, First Place Loans for Veterans and Home Ownership Purchase Enhancement (HOPE) program.

A list of goals and objectives for the residential market can be found in the Implementation Section. A full analysis of the Downtown Mexico residential market is described in the *Residential Demand Analysis* report, March 2009.

## City of Mexico



Existing home in the Downtown Mexico area.



Existing home in the Downtown Mexico area.



Existing home in the Downtown Mexico area.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

City of Mexico

### BUILDING AND STREETScape DESIGN GUIDELINES

The historic character of Downtown Mexico, especially the Courthouse Square, is one of the community's most distinctive and valued features. Accordingly, all of the planning efforts through the DREAM Initiative, including projects recommended in the Implementation section, take into consideration the historic architectural character of Downtown Mexico.

The Building and Streetscape Design Guidelines of the DREAM Initiative offers the following recommendations for Downtown Mexico.

- **Adopt the Village Square Overlay District and Supplemental Design Standards**

The City should look to enact an overlay zoning district for Downtown as a supplement to the City's Zoning and Building Codes. The purpose of the district regulations is to develop a higher standard for Downtown regarding design, preservation, redevelopment, and maintenance. The Village Square Association and the Chamber of Commerce should promote and utilize the design guidelines with property owners within the district boundaries. Better communication between the City (including a proposed Historic Preservation Commission, or HPC) and Downtown property owners will be needed to help property owners buy into these preservation, maintenance and design goals.

- **Encourage Rehabilitation of Downtown Buildings**

The Village Square Association should lead the effort to incentivize property owners and businesses to improve the physical appearance, curb appeal, and

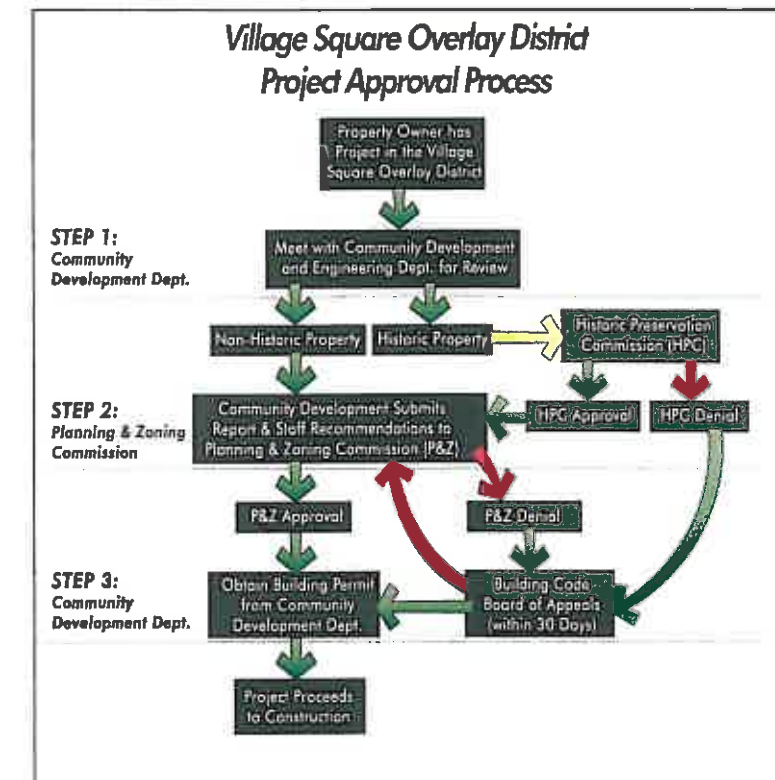
rehabilitation of buildings throughout Downtown. The Village Square District Design Standards should be the guide and the Downtown CID, TIF, and/or RLF can assist with funding. The VSA should showcase any successful rehabilitation efforts where available and monitor a database of vacant floor space. The City should streamline the process for redevelopment if necessary and continue a business friendly atmosphere.

- **Maintenance of Beautification Projects**

The Village Square Association, with assistance from the City and Chamber, should oversee the regular maintenance of Downtown district beautification projects, such as banners, landscaping, public art, and seasonal decorations. The maintenance of these projects should be financed through the Community Improvement District funds. A high level of maintenance prior to and during any special events is critical to the appearance and impressions of Downtown.

- **Establish Gateways to the Downtown District**

The City and Village Square Association should coordinate efforts to complete design and construction of gateway improvements at multiple entrances to Downtown. Community Improvement District funds can assist with the costs of these improvements. Gateways can consist of monument signage, streetscape elements, landscaping, and public spaces. The location and design of these spaces should be based on the Village Square distinct brand and reinforce the uniqueness of Downtown Mexico.



The approval process for a potential Village Square Overlay District.



A good example of historic rehabilitation in Downtown Mexico.

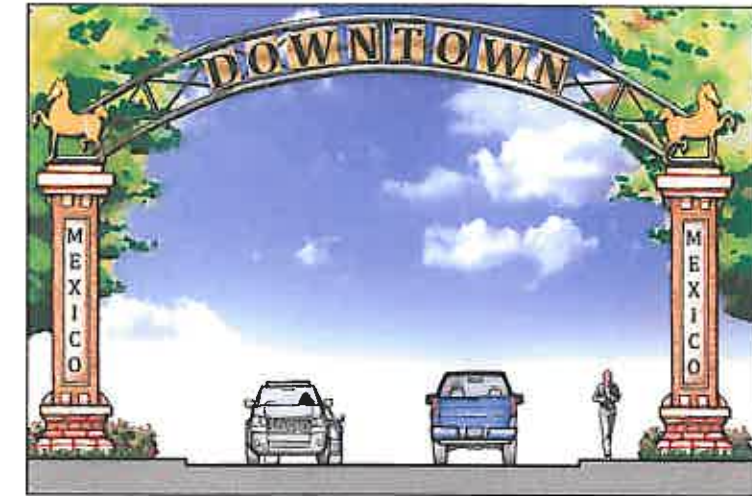
- **Develop a Wayfinding System and Signage Plan for Downtown**

Attractive wayfinding can alert motorists on the highway and other roadways around the city that Downtown's cultural attractions, shopping and dining opportunities, and historic charm is just a short distance away. The Clark Street corridor is especially important as it represents an opportunity to pull cars from several key intersections and create a sense of arrival as vehicles travel north into Downtown. The City should oversee the process to establish and then maintain a system of attractive, consistently designed directional signage.

- **Reutilization of Depot Buildings for Special Projects and Public Space**

The City, with support from the VSA and Chamber, should develop plans for public events, gathering space, and other venues for the underutilized depot buildings south of the Village Square. The redeveloped spaces can assist with visitor attraction and provide additional destinations for the Downtown District. The City will need to open a dialogue with the railroad companies about the potential concepts and utilize TIF and CID funds to assist with these restoration projects.

A list of goals and objectives for the Building and Streetscape Design Guidelines and a summary of potential Special Projects can be found in the Implementation Section. A full analysis of the Downtown Mexico Design Guidelines is described in the *Building and Streetscape Design Guidelines* report, January 2011.



A proposed gateway for Downtown Mexico just south of the Clark Street railroad bridge.



There are many different styles and building types which contribute to the design and character of Downtown.



One of several former depot buildings in the Downtown Mexico area.

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

Retail development is not the only necessary component for a successful downtown, but it is one of the most important factors in the revitalization process, and one of the most noticeable. The Retail Market Analysis undertaken as part of the DREAM Initiative identified challenges and opportunities of retail development. This included a detailed analysis of retail supply and demand in Mexico's retail market. In addition, a set of retail development goals and strategies were prepared.

Downtowns have changed dramatically in the past decades due to changes in lifestyles, spending patterns and merchandising. A major competitor to traditional downtowns are the retail corridors of "big box" and strip center developments along major highways. While these corridors offer a large selection of goods, easy access and brand name merchandise in retail chain stores, they often have a reputation for being short term, limited service and lack a sense of place. Downtown Mexico can offer an alternative to the retail corridors by showcasing its architecture, cultural institutions/ events, and unique shops which provide outstanding personal service and quality merchandise.

The retail market of Downtown Mexico presents an opportunity for real and sustainable growth. The DREAM Initiative study revealed that with the proper additions to restaurants, clothing and home furnishings markets, Downtown could see a increase in retail sales and consumer activity. The vacant first floor spaces of Downtown Mexico would need to be filled with new restaurants, clothes boutiques and niche retail stores to meet the expectations of increased retail activity.

Downtown Mexico consists of 36 acres with approximately 253,300 square feet of total commercial/retail floor space. Of this, over 73,100 square feet is used for retail/restaurant uses and currently generate approximately \$11.2 million dollars in sales annually. The current market generates approximately \$175 per square foot of retail sales. An opportunity for future growth is in the approximately 44,600 square feet of vacant first floor space available in Downtown. The 44,600 square feet of vacancy represents potentially another \$7.8 million in additional sales annually for Downtown Mexico.

The retail market analysis identified unmet retail demand, in the greater Mexico market, which Downtown could capitalize on for future growth. This unmet demand is in various retail sectors as classified by the North American Individual Classification System (NAICS). The retail sectors which present opportunities for Downtown Mexico include the following:

- Grocery Stores (NAICS): Potential unmet demand of \$10.4 million.
- General Merchandise Stores (NAICS): Potential for \$5.2 million in unmet demand.
- Full Service Restaurants (NAICS): Potential unmet demand of \$2.8 million. Surveys revealed the demand of casual, family style and fine dining establishments.
- Building Material and Supply Stores (NAICS): Potential for \$2.2 million in unmet demand for building supply stores.
- Special Food Services (NAICS 7223): Potential for \$2.1 million in sales in catering or banquet hall services.



Existing retail in Downtown Mexico: Merle Norman.



Existing retail in Downtown Mexico: Charm's Hallmark Shop.



Existing retail in Downtown Mexico: Radio Shack.

Some suggestions for increased retail activity are listed as follows:

- **Create Shopping Oriented Downtown Events:**

Create events such as Friday Night shopping events, window display contests and seasonal themes.

- **Increase Available Retail Space:**

Where feasible relocate service uses from the first floor to second floor. VSA should lead the effort in working with local financial institutions to develop a low interest loan program to help provide an incentive for this type of rehabilitation.

- **Establish a Business Recruitment Program:**

Develop a business recruitment program to lure new businesses downtown to fill vacant floor space. The program should include facts and listing of assets of Downtown Mexico. VSA should maintain a database and program of the following:

- Business Inventory: list of existing businesses
- Building Inventory: list of existing buildings, both occupied and vacant.
- Site Inventory: list of existing open/undeveloped parcels.
- Traffic Counts: list of Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of Clark Street, Liberty Street, and Monroe Street.
- Downtown Realtors: list of realtors who have experience with Downtown properties.

The financial resources for implementing the recommendations of this task summary are listed below. Resources include, but are not limited to the following:

- Missouri Department of Tourism
- Missouri Arts Council
- Missouri Department of Economic Development

Generally State agencies are restricted from giving incentives to retail development, but if other businesses are included in the plan, the following programs may be applicable:

- Enhanced Enterprise Zone
- Rebuilding Communities
- Development Tax Credits
- Community Development Block Grants

- The State of Missouri financing programs are discussed in detail in *Missouri's Economic Development Tool: A Practical Guide to Building a Better Missouri*, published by the Missouri Department of Economic Development and the Missouri Development Finance Board. Refer to [www.ded.mo.gov](http://www.ded.mo.gov) for full report details.

A full set of goals and objectives for the Retail Market Analysis can be found in the Implementation Section. All strategies and recommendations as well as the gap analysis can be located in the *Retail Market Analysis*, June 2011.



Existing vacant retail space opportunity in Downtown Mexico.



Existing vacant retail space opportunity in Downtown Mexico.



Existing vacant retail space opportunity in Downtown Mexico.

# DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

## MARKETING STRATEGIES

Effective downtown revitalization efforts acknowledge the need to promote Downtown using a coordinated strategy. Marketing efforts should all be aimed toward attracting customers to Downtown businesses, attracting businesses themselves, and building a coherent brand for the entire Downtown area. The goal of these efforts is to improve the sense of identity and level of participation within the Village Square, both locally and regionally. To create sustainable and long-lasting impacts for the community, Mexico's marketing and communication efforts should focus on supporting five primary objectives. These are listed as follows:

- **Engage Mexico Residents in the Future of the Village Square**

With existing budget constraints, community engagement is going to be the determining factor in the advancement of the Village Square. Getting key stakeholders engaged and invested in the project will provide the needed catalyst for change. With a paid Executive Director and by engaging more residents as members, the Village Square Association can increase its impact exponentially.

- **Strengthen the Mexico Brand**

Competing taglines can be seen on materials produced by the city and the chamber of commerce and it is difficult to visualize a single sense of place. Clearing up this confusion and defining the city's heart and soul can help the community differentiate itself and become more competitive in the region.

- **Improve Mexico's Reputation in the Region and State**

Mexico is home to several unique trades, specifically in plant science, biofuels, refractory brick and equestrian sciences. By establishing a leadership position or stronger connection in these key industries and taking part in regional coalitions, Mexico can improve its position and draw additional investment into the city.

- **Increase Business Investment and Retail Sales in the Village Square**

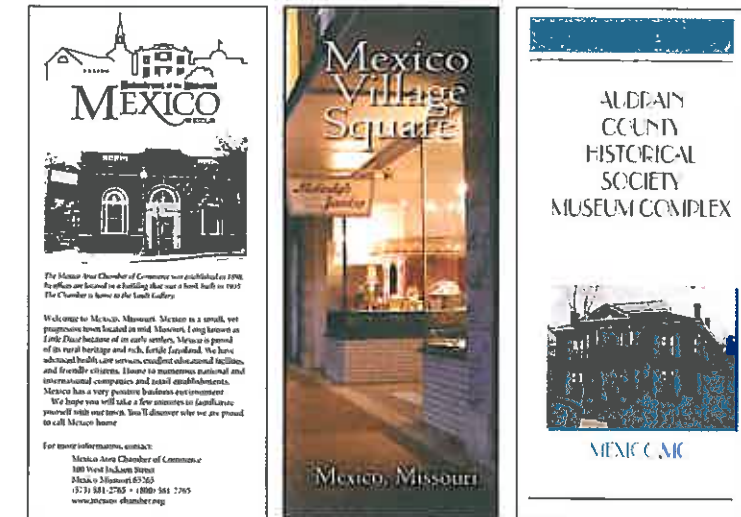
Mexico has unique shops and attractions that bring in people from outside the community. This provides an opportunity to expand that reach and establish the city as a specialty shopping destination. The Village Square also has quality available storefronts and interesting niche markets that could be attractive for small business owners. By making information about available real estate and small business opportunities more easily accessible, Mexico can make strides in attracting new retailers to the Village Square.

- **Establish Mexico as a Tourist Destination**

A vibrant tourism trade offers many potential benefits to assist with Downtown's revitalization. A well balanced mix of retail, services, and recreation will make Downtown a destination, attractive to residents, visitors, and investors. With little additional investment of capital or labor, Mexico tourism could expand greatly to reach entirely new audiences.

A full set of goals and objectives for the Marketing Plan can be found in the Implementation Section. A full list of the marketing strategies and recommendations are located in the *Marketing Plan*, May 2011.

## City of Mexico



Examples of the existing pamphlets put out by various organizations to encourage tourism in Downtown Mexico.



The Miss Missouri Pageant is held annually in Mexico and brings many visitors to the area.



Events such as "Walk Back In Time" helps to attract people to Downtown Mexico.

## OTHER STRATEGIES

In addition to the previously stated recommendations of the DREAM Initiative, Downtown Mexico can enact other potential strategies to help achieve the goal of transforming the Village Square District. These objectives are listed as follows:

- **Consider the Formation of a Historic Preservation Commission and Downtown Historic District**

The City of Mexico should look to become a Certified Local Government for the purpose of protecting the historic architectural character of Downtown. By adopting a local preservation ordinance with specific preservation standards the city can appoint a preservation commission with the ability to review and issue certificates of appropriateness for all building construction within a defined preservation district. In addition, the city should create a recognition program for historic structures and districts.

- **Create Educational Historic District Information Packet**

If formed, the Historic Preservation Commission, assisted by the city and VSA, should create an informational packet for current and potential property owners to tout the advantages of historic status and encourage appropriate decisions.

- **Designate 'Signature Streets' within the Village Square Core.**

The city should designate the streets of Washington, Monroe, Jefferson, and Jackson around the courthouse square as the "spine" of Downtown and prioritize them for public and private sector improvements. These should include aesthetic upgrades, and locating retail, housing, and entertainment options along these streets with the effect of stimulating opportunities on adjacent streets.

- **Expand and Further Develop Park Amenities and Trails**

The city should strengthen the design and appeal of the existing park and trail system as well as add new opportunities to help make Downtown more of an attraction and provide a vital link to the rest of the community. Improvements can include better and cohesive signage and updating of amenities.

- **Establish Downtown Public Amenities for Visitors**

The Village Square Association, with assistance from the city and other organizations, should work to provide a designated Visitor Center with public restrooms, shelter, and a place to rest for visitors to Downtown. The center should provide maps, walking tours, and listings of retailers and restaurants. Utilize TIF and CID funds to develop this amenity.

- **Coordinate Downtown Business Activity**

Through collaboration of the city, Village Square Association, and chamber of commerce, work towards creating a seamless Downtown experience for visitors through coordination of businesses and services within the local tourism industry. Cooperative agreements can lead to coordinated store hours, for example.



This building contributes to the original design and character of Downtown Mexico.



Pocket park on the Village Square.



One of the underutilized depot buildings with potential as a trailhead center or other public space.



DREAM Initiative  
Special Projects

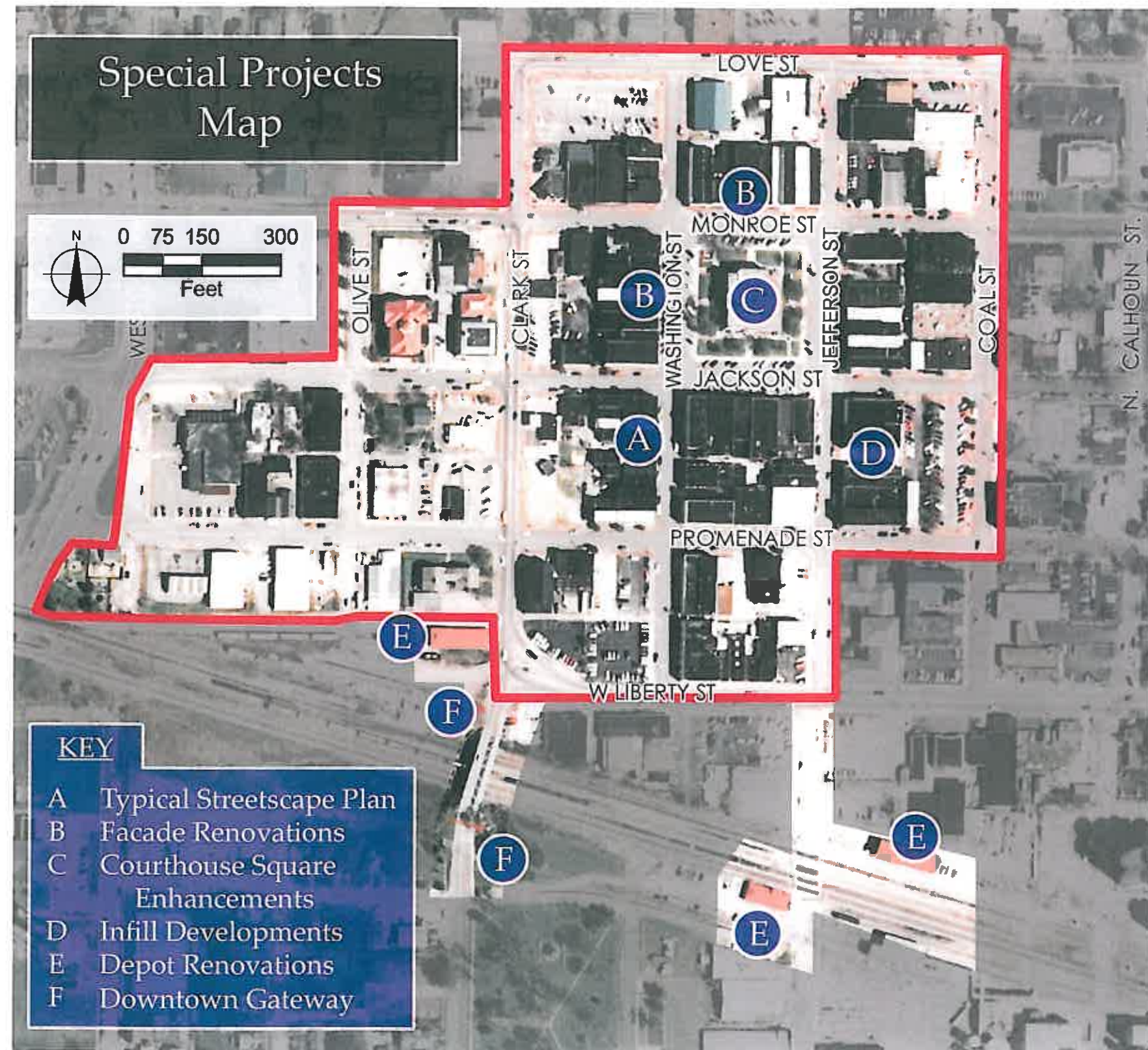
**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

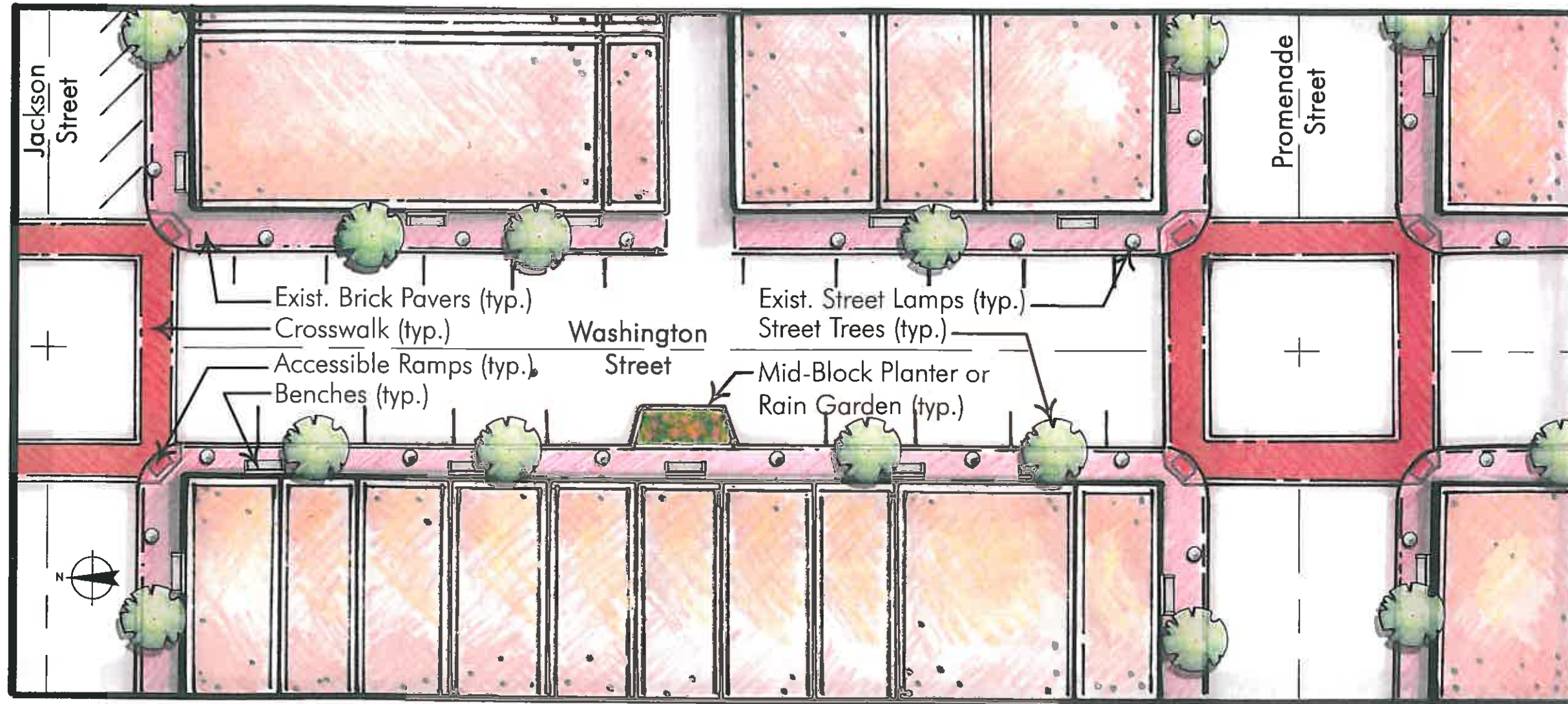
Each component of Mexico’s participation in the DREAM Initiative has resulted in a series of policies, practices or other recommendations intended to improve Downtown. The Strategic Plan consolidates these, but it also lists a series of special projects that have been compiled in a joint effort by the consultant and Mexico’s DREAM steering committee. The projects were also presented for public comment in meetings and presentations conducted throughout Mexico’s participation in the DREAM Initiative planning process.

This map (right) shows a list of possible special projects. Streetscape enhancements, façade renovation, and landscaping upgrades offer early steps and can provide an immediate positive impact on Downtown. Other projects will require long-term commitments, such as building infill possibilities. In addition, Downtown Mexico is bounded by the railroad along its southern edge, with Hardin Park further south, just across the railroad ROW. The park provides vital green space and is located just outside Downtown, adjacent to the Clark Street railroad bridge, which is a major entry-way into Downtown. There are also several historic railroad structures along the ROW which appear to be underutilized. The infill possibilities, bridge-way entrance, and the historic depot buildings all present potential significant contributions to Downtown.

The City of Mexico should determine that improvements to these spaces are necessary projects that will substantially contribute to Downtown’s revitalization. The design priorities for these projects are listed as follows:

- 1) Create dynamic public spaces for civic events and civic pride.
- 2) Establish an attractive “Entrance” for Downtown Mexico.
- 3) Courthouse Square: Reduce the amount of pavement and add green space.
- 4) Depot: Create a space for parking/circulation, events and a design which complements the Depot building.
- 5) Develop new identity of each space through naming, signage, and design.
- 6) Identify areas for monument and wayfinding signage which reflects the heritage of Mexico.
- 7) Adopt a creative design plan based on flexible use, attainable cost and long-term maintenance.





**A: Typical Streetscape Plan**

Proposed Streetscape Improvements for Downtown Mexico: Plan View



Monroe Street  
(between Jefferson and Washington)

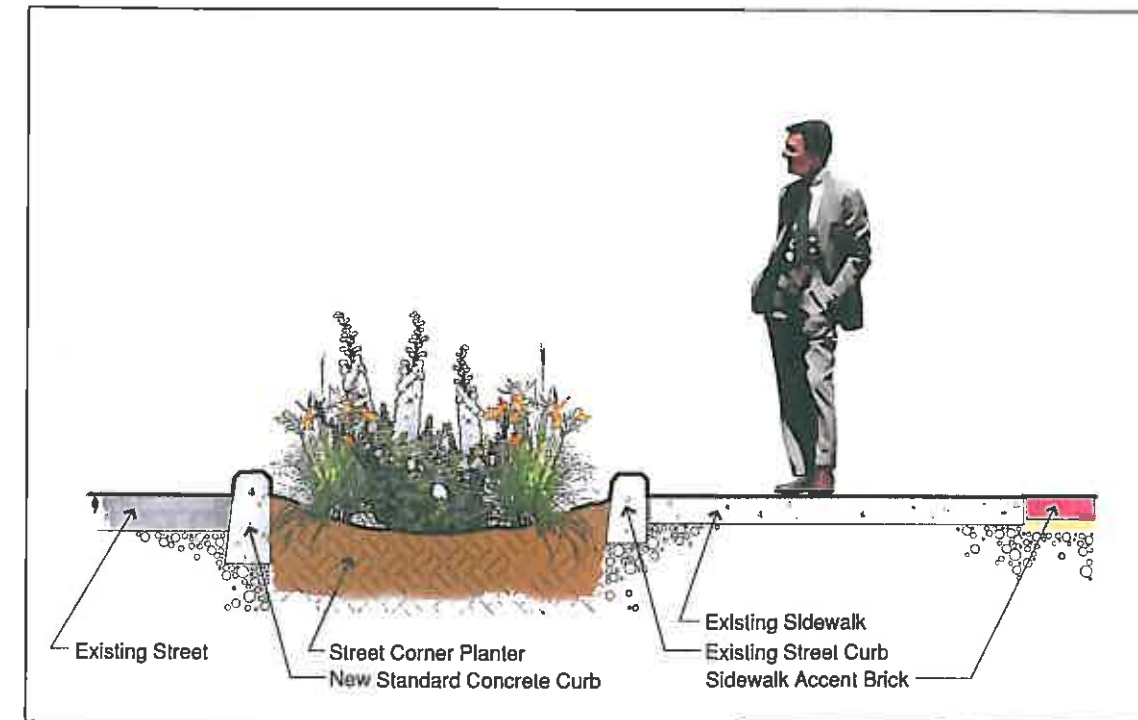
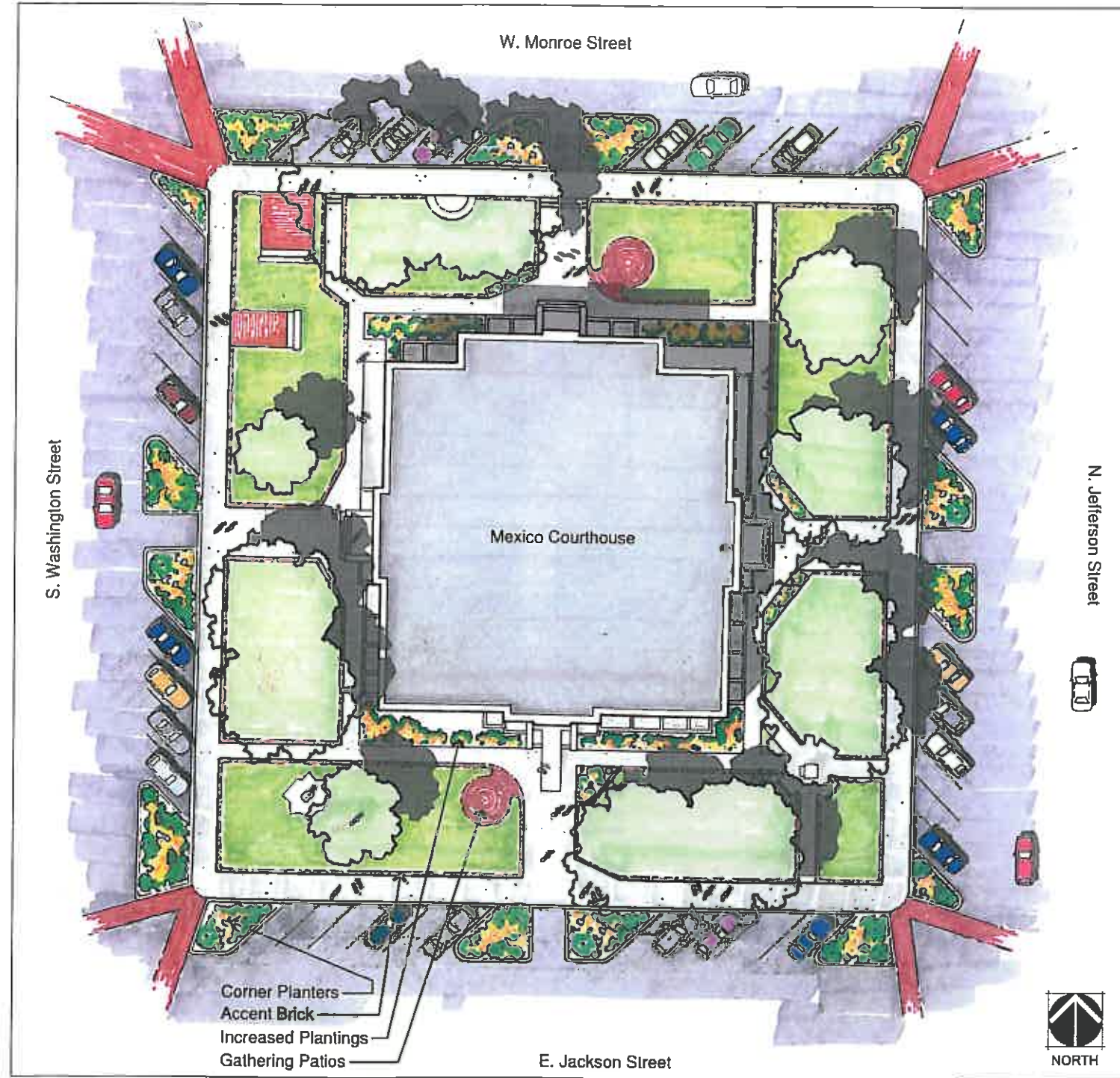
**PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:**

- Remove frame, metal & shingled canopies.
- Remove paint from masonry façade using correct removal methods.
- Remove metal siding from façades.
- Restore original windows.
- Restore original entrances.
- Restore masonry veneer.
- Restore transom windows.
- Restore cornice where applicable.
- Utilize canvas/fabric awnings.
- Install business signage of appropriate scale and design above door.
- Use compatible paint colors.
- Utilize ornaments sign lighting.
- Streetscape of lights, trees & site furnishings

Washington Street  
(between Monroe and Jackson)

**B: Facade Enhancements**

Potential Building Elevation Improvements around Courthouse Square



### C: Courthouse Square Enhancements

Proposed Improvements and Landscaped Corners on Courthouse Square

**BUILDING INFILL SUMMARY:**

- Yes: Building height and emphasis match other buildings.
- Yes: New buildings are same in scale and are aligned with sidewalks.
- Yes: New buildings follow the rhythm of existing buildings.

- Avoid: Building style conflicts with Downtown styles.
- Avoid: Building emphasis is too horizontal and low.



**D: Infill Development**  
Example Infill Building on Jefferson Street



**PLAN SUMMARY:**

The Clark Street Depot is a railroad structure located just west of the intersection of Clark Street and Promenade Street, fronting along the railroad tracks immediately north of the railroad bridge. The depot, which is currently in a significant state of disrepair, appears only to serve as storage for the railroad companies. The depot's location and size offer great potential for other kinds of civic and celebratory uses, such as a Downtown Visitor Center or banquet space.

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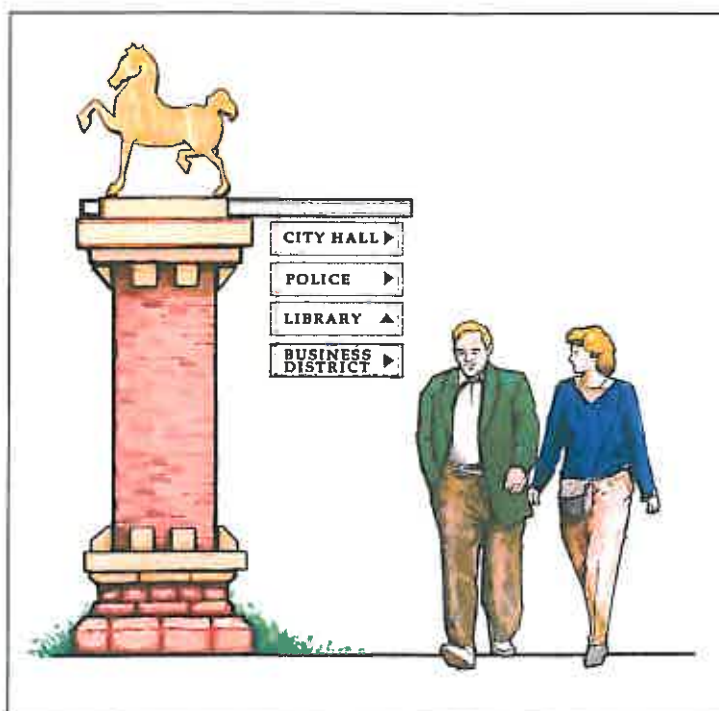
**E: Depot Renovations**  
Potential Welcoming Center or Event Space: Perspective

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**PLAN SUMMARY:**

The Clark Street Bridge serves as the major entrance into Downtown from the south. Currently there is no identification that visitors are about to enter the Downtown as they travel north on Clark Street. As such the opportunity exists for a "Gateway Monument" (right) to clearly identify the unique attributes of the Downtown district. "Village Square" could be an alternative lettering within the arch if so desired.

The proposed wayfinding sign (below) builds off of the gateway feature to continue the saddledbred theme which the City of Mexico is famed for.



**F: Downtown Gateway**

Potential Wayfinding, Gateway and Clark Bridge Improvements: Elevations



# DREAM Initiative Implementation

## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### IMPLEMENTATION

The DREAM Initiative planning process involves a series of analytical and planning activities that are outlined in the previous sections of this document. The DREAM process culminates in a Strategic Plan that ties together all of the various recommendations from the DREAM planning components with a set of key *goals* that will drive Downtown revitalization and special *projects* desired by Downtown stakeholders that will comprise the community's Downtown agenda for the next ten years.

This final section of the Strategic Plan presents a summary and graphic depiction of key Downtown issues, followed by a schedule of the Plan's goals, projects and recommended actions to address these pressing issues.

## City of Mexico



Downtown Mexico has ample vacant upper floor space for commercial service and residential uses.



Alleyways and rear of buildings present unique issues for the aesthetics of Downtown Mexico.



The Clark Street bridge as you travel north into Downtown Mexico.

# DOWNTOWN MEXICO EXISTING CONDITIONS

**LEGEND**

- BUILDING REHAB OPPORTUNITIES
- 2ND FLOOR VACANCY
- EXISTING WAYFINDING
- SOME STREETScape
- PARKING
- VACANT LOT



Implementation

# DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

-  BUILDING REHABILITATION
-  2ND FLOOR VACANCY
-  NEW DEVELOPMENTS
-  RETAIL DISTRICT



Signature Street Priorities

High	Medium
Upper Story Residential Development	Streetscape & Landscaping
Sidewalk & Street Repair	Lighting
Building Façade Improvement	Signage
Retail Identification & Attraction	Improve Rear Façade
Maintenance	



## DREAM Initiative • Downtown Strategic Plan

### IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE

The accompanying schedule, located on the following pages compartmentalize the projects and programs in categories that relate to the DREAM Initiative Tasks.

These include: Organizational Structure; Land Use, Building & Infrastructure; Community Surveys; Financial Assistance; Housing Market; Building and Streetscape Design Guidelines; Retail Market; Marketing Strategies; and Other Strategies. Each project and program is listed by title, description, responsible party, support groups, timeframe, and tools, financial mechanisms techniques and resources. The timeline is based on the prioritization of the projects and their importance to Downtown Mexico.

City of Mexico



The Audrain County Courthouse is the central landmark of the Village Square in Downtown Mexico.



Some of the existing streetscape in Downtown Mexico.



Façade renovation should be a high priority in Downtown Mexico.

**MEXICO DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN SCHEDULE**

**Organizational Structure**

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources
1 Establish Downtown Mexico Community Improvement District	Establish a Committee to develop a CID utilizing the marketing materials and implementation schedule developed through DREAM.	City	VSA/Chamber	Q4 2011	Utilize PGAV CID schedule and marketing materials to begin implementation of CID.
2 Establish the Village Square Association as the lead organization for Downtown Mexico's revitalization	The VSA should reorganize as a non-profit organization and hire an Executive Director to lead the efforts.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q4 2011	Utilize newly formed CID for financial assistance of reorganized VSA.
3 Strengthen relationship between Village Square Association and existing Mexico Community Development Corporation	Work to establish a working relationship between VSA and CDC to conduct public benefit projects and redevelopment activities through provision of loans and equity to small businesses or developers.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q4 2011	Organize formation committee and work with Chamber and Downtown Director throughout creation of the new establishment.
4 Establish Downtown Mexico Business and Economic Development Committee	Establish a Downtown Economic Development committee to focus on existing retail expansion and retail attraction in Downtown.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q1 2012	Utilize marketing materials developed for Downtown and Retail Market Analysis for targeting companies for attraction.

**Land Use & Building Survey**

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources
5 Develop Inventory Database for Downtown Infrastructure	Working with Department of Public Works develop and conduct inventory of downtown assets (fire hydrants, trees, benches, lighting & types, traffic signals & signs, etc.).	City	VSA/Chamber	Q1 2012	This will become part of the GIS data base that will be developed for the Downtown and that will ultimately be available to assist the City and developers in the implementation of the redevelopment and revitalization program for Downtown.
6 Parking Study	Gather ongoing parking data to determine usage and identify need for new parking or redistribution of parking areas in Downtown to correspond with revitalization activities. Evaluate new parking proposals for appropriate size and scale.	VSA	City	On Going	Utilize the parking maps produced for the DREAM Initiative and continue to update and evaluate.
7 Update Land Use & Zoning GIS Data	Continually update Downtown building and infrastructure information as projects are completed and conditions change. Update existing land use and zoning maps produced as part of the DREAM Initiative.	City	VSA	On Going	The City should conduct a field study which inventories the land use, building conditions, infrastructure, available parking, residential units, and commercial vacancies. Zoning maps should also be updated regularly. The City will be provided with digital copies and data used to produce maps for the DREAM Initiative and should develop an automatic process of updating these maps as City records are modified. Every two years the field survey should be repeated. The commercial vacancies for Downtown Mexico should be updated every 6 months.
8 Continue GIS Technology & Education	Continue GIS education for City.	City		Ongoing	City staff responsible for mapping and data base development should be encouraged to participate in professional organizations dealing with Geographic Information Systems and should periodically participate in training seminars as a means of maintaining appropriate skill levels.
9 Interface Tax Maps with GIS Data	Continue to update GIS data when parcel consolidation and parcel divisions occur.	City		Q1 2012	City staff should work with the County Assessor and Mapping Departments to ensure regular updating of the City's parcel maps and ownership information.
10 Produce/Procure new Aerial Photography	2007 Aerial Photography is available from Missouri Spatial Data Information; photography should be updated every other year.	County	City	Q2 2012	The City's GIS staff should maintain contact with State as a means of accessing and utilizing the most current photography available.

**Community Surveys**

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources
11 Continue Visitor Surveys	During major events continue to monitor attitudes and effectiveness of Downtown Revitalization Efforts.	VSA	City/Chamber	On Going	Follow format/procedures developed for the DREAM Initiative including announcements by the local media regarding the timing, location, purpose and value of such surveys.
12 Re-convene Focus Groups	Focus Groups should be held every 5 years to monitor progress throughout the community.	VSA	City	Q1 2013	Follow format/procedures developed for the DREAM Initiative.
13 Conduct Telephone/Mail Survey	Statistically valid telephone surveys should be conducted every 3-5 years as a means of measuring the effectiveness of Downtown revitalization efforts.	VSA	City	Q2 2013	VSA should enter into a professional services agreement with a qualified survey firm.
14 Communicate Survey Results	The information gathered is only meaningful when Downtown leaders, businesses and residents act on it.	VSA	City	Ongoing	Regular VSA meetings, press releases, and business seminars are effective ways to communicate the results. Use of websites and social media are also effective as well as providing membership benefit.

City: City of Mexico  
VSA: Village Square Association

Chamber: Mexico Area Chamber of Commerce  
County: Audrain County

## Financial Assistance

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
15	Establish a Community Improvement District (CID) for the Downtown Area	Establish a CID to act as a funding mechanism for multiple Downtown Improvements as well as help fund the services of the Village Square Association.	VSA	City	Q4 2011	Use DREAM Initiative Financial Assistance Report and Strategic Plan information to support development of a Downtown CID.
16	Establish Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for the Downtown Area	Provide leadership and coordination for strategically evaluating the boundaries and implementation of a Downtown TIF District to support/promote redevelopment efforts.	City	VSA	Q2 2012	Use DREAM Initiative Financial Assistance Report and Strategic Plan information to support development of a Downtown TIF.
17	Establish Façade Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund	A revolving loan fund should be encouraged, promoted, and expanded to include façade restoration. Simply removing the metal awnings and cladding will be very effective in improving the aesthetics of Downtown.	City	VSA	Q1 2012	Utilize existing Loan Fund or CID/TIF funds as matching component to other sources, such as MDFB funds. Work through DREAM sample Loan application for local applicability.
18	Develop Ongoing Funding Identification Mechanism	Consistently evaluate the available private, local, State and Federal funding sources to support public and private projects and programs.	VSA	City	On Going	Establish VSA as contact with funding agencies and keep informed and trained in grant writing.
19	Federal and State Tax Credits for Rehabilitation	Educate property owners about available tax credits as an incentive for improvements to their properties.	VSA	City/HPC	Q1 2012	VSA should host Developer and Property/Business Owner Development Financing Seminars annually that focus on Downtown and bring tax credit experts in selected topic areas together to explain the merits and limitations of such programs.

## Residential Market Analysis

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
20	Develop Downtown Housing Marketing Campaign	Develop appropriate materials that can be distributed to the public and promote Downtown living in Mexico.	VSA	City	Q1 2012	VSA should also prepare a series of informational packages that identify a variety of financing mechanisms that would be available from participating banks. Conduct a Downtown Housing Tour each spring.
21	Encourage Development of Upper-Floor Spaces	Identify unused and under used second story space and market to building owners and/or developers for conversion to living space.	VSA	City/MCDC	Q3 2012	VSA should offer assistance in the conversion of such properties. Developers may also be interested in converting these properties.
22	Develop Supplemental Building Code for Downtown	In addition to enforcing current building codes, the City should look to make exceptions/supplemental standards for Downtown buildings.	City	VSA/Chamber	On Going	Building codes with supplemental regulations should be consistently enforced for Downtown. The code should be enforced by the City and supported by the City Council. Permit process and opportunity to file for waivers should also be clearly defined and communicated.
23	Encourage Property Owners to Improve & Maintain properties	Provide incentives for home owners and landlords to improve the physical appearance and curb appeal of properties.	City	VSA/MCDC	On Going	Continued maintenance and improvements will increase the values of neighboring areas and create an aesthetically appealing atmosphere.
24	Improve Residential Neighborhoods Surrounding Downtown	Promote single family home ownership, quality renovation, and timely maintenance in the residential neighborhoods surrounding Downtown.	City	VSA/MCDC	On Going	Identify properties for redevelopment into single family homes. Coordinate with MHDC on various home ownership programs for young families and veterans.

## Building and Streetscape Design Guidelines

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources	
25	Adopt Village Square Overlay District and Supplemental Design Standards	Develop a higher standard for the Downtown District regarding design, preservation and maintenance.	City	VSA/HPC	Q4 2012	City to enact the district and guidelines as a supplement to the City's Building and Zoning Codes. VSA should promote and utilize the design guidelines with property owners in The Village Square Overlay District.
26	Encourage Rehabilitation of Downtown Buildings	Provide incentives for property owners and businesses to improve the physical appearance, curb appeal, and outright rehabilitation of buildings in Downtown.	VSA	City/HPC	Q1 2013	Utilize the Village Square District Design Standards as a guide and CID, TIF and/or RLF to assist with funding. Look to showcase successful rehabilitation efforts where available and monitor database of vacant floor space. City should streamline processes for redevelopment and continue a business friendly atmosphere.
27	Maintenance of Beautification Projects	Manage the maintenance of the Downtown district beautification projects.	VSA	City/Chamber	On Going	Maintenance of Downtown beautification projects should be financed primarily from CID funds. Projects will include banners, landscaping, public art and seasonal decorations. High level of maintenance during special events is critical.
28	Establish Gateways to Downtown	Design and construct gateway monument signs at multiple Downtown entrances.	City	VSA	Q2 2012	Utilize CID, TIF or state funding sources to develop gateway signs at entrances to Downtown.
29	Develop Wayfinding Plan and Signage for Downtown	Develop Signage with Downtown branding or logo for wayfinding and for better identification of public parking lots downtown.	City	VSA	Q2 2012	Plan should supplement existing signage and make recommendations for the placement of signs to provide direction and information for motorists and pedestrians outside and throughout Downtown.
30	Reutilization of Depot Buildings for Special Projects and Public Spaces	Develop plans for public events, gathering spaces, and other venues for the underutilized depot buildings off of the Village Square to attract visitors.	City	VSA/Chamber	Q4 2012	Open a dialogue with the railroad companies about the potential concepts and utilize TIF and CID funds to assist with these restoration projects.

City: City of Mexico

VSA: Village Square Association

Chamber: Mexico Area Chamber of Commerce

MCDC : Mexico Community Development Corporation

HPC : Historic Preservation Commission (to be established)

## Retail Market Analysis

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources
31 Encourage Targeted Retail Uses	Encourage targeted retail uses and appropriate pedestrian generating activities on the ground floor of all mixed-use and commercial buildings.	VSA	City/BEDC/ Chamber	On Going	Target retail sectors provided through the DREAM analysis and develop an attraction program. Marketing and attraction efforts can be funded by CID. Work with property owners to match available space to desired retail sector. Integrate with marketing and promotion strategies; improve communications with property owners (through meetings and marketing materials); develop inventory of properties; provide incentives for mixed use development; provide educational workshops for business owners.
32 Create a Downtown Business Development Program & Package	Establish & implement a business recruitment program and package. Integrate with marketing and promotion strategies. The Recruitment Package should contain all available data on downtown and services.	BEDC	City/VSA/ Chamber	Q1 2012	The Retail Market Analysis provided as part of the DREAM Initiative will provide guidance relative to the types of businesses that should be pursued for Downtown Mexico. VSA and the Chamber should lead the effort in recruiting new businesses to the area.
33 Develop Seminars for Existing Businesses	Develop a merchant education program to inform business owners about product differentiation, product presentation, window displays, marketing, customer service, business and building maintenance, retail opportunities and trends.	BEDC	VSA/ Chamber	Q1 2012	Seminars should be held regularly and can be concentrated on specific clusters of similar Downtown businesses to focus on specific topics with experts whenever possible. CID to help fund program.
34 Encourage Existing Retail Expansion and Increase Available Retail Space	Expand inventory and increase available retail space in existing buildings through the reconstruction of internal common walls in order to expand building footprints. Where feasible relocate service uses from first floor to second floor.	VSA	City/BEDC/ Chamber	Q1 2013	Develop a low interest loan program to incent this type of rehabilitation.
35 Increase Marketing Efforts & Collectively Market Downtown Retailers	Promote to primarily target area residents, and residents within the secondary trade area defined in the Retail Market Analysis. Serve as one of the many distributors of information about existing stores, new stores, hours of operations, special events, etc.	VSA	BEDC/ Chamber	Q1 2012	Use CID funds to create an advertising campaign that markets Downtown retail.
36 Market a Business Development Loan Program	Establish a revolving loan fund for Downtown business development pursuits.	VSA	BEDC/ Chamber	Q2 2012	Utilize Missouri Development Finance Board RLF funds.
37 Develop a Downtown Directory	Develop a directory or brochure detailing the retailers and type of merchandise offered of all downtown stores.	BEDC	City/VSA/ Chamber	On Going	Use VSA and City mapping to create a Downtown Directory and map.
38 Create Shopping Oriented Downtown Events	Create events such as sidewalk sales, weekly evening shopping nights, storefront display contests, etc. that are focused on shopping.	VSA	City/BEDC/ Chamber	On Going	Develop and market events with CID seed funds.
39 Verify & Update Commercial Vacancies & Store Mix	Track the vacancies and store mix in Downtown. Actively market vacancies and try to fill with stores from the targeted list, working towards the recommended store mix.	BEDC	City/VSA/ Chamber	On Going	Use VSA and City mapping to update maps and retail sector lists.

City: City of Mexico

Chamber: Mexico Area Chamber of Commerce

VSA: Village Square Association

BEDC : Downtown Mexico Business and Economic Development Committee

## Marketing Strategies

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources
40 Engage Mexico Residents in Future of Village Square	Set up VSA as a nonprofit organization with a paid Executive Director to engage more residents as VSA members.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q3 2011	Utilize DREAM Marketing Plan for steps on community engagement.
41 Strengthen the Mexico Brand and Establish a Distinct Downtown Brand	Focus on singular message to describe Mexico and further develop a brand unique to Downtown and the Village Square Association that creates a cohesive and exciting image.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q1 2012	Utilize CID funds for branding effort.
42 Improve Mexico's Reputation in the Region and State	Establish a leadership position in key industries and take part in regional coalitions to draw additional interest and investment toward Downtown Mexico.	City	Chamber/VSA	Q1 2012	Build on existing relationships and forge additional connections, including social media, to keep Mexico at the forefront of development discussions.
43 Increase Business Investment and Retail Sales in the Village Square	Make information available about the real estate and small business opportunities to attract new retailers and business investment to Downtown.	BEDC	City/VSA/Chamber	Q4 2011	Implement opportunities, including social and printed media, buy local campaign, and aesthetic improvements to market the available space and niche market of Downtown Mexico.
44 Establish Mexico as a Tourist Destination	Assess existing strengths and weaknesses to determine effective ways to increase the economic benefits of tourism.	Chamber	City/VSA	Q2 2012	Produce marketing materials with CID funds. Examples of materials include, "Top 10 Things To Do Activities" and "Vacation Packages." Contact Missouri Division of Tourism for assistance.
45 New Logo for Downtown Mexico District	A new logo should be iconic and reflective of the District, building upon the past and future of the Village Square, and Mexico overall.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q1 2012	VSA should consider various alternatives for developing this new logo, including retention of a consultant, a project for students or other organizations, or a competition with a prize.
46 Develop a Downtown Mexico Website	Create a Downtown focused website to be a centralized resource for cultural, entertainment, and hospitality information.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q1 2012	Utilize the Missouri Division of Tourism as a resource for website development.
47 Special Events/Evaluate Calendar of Events	Continue development of annual special events Downtown and develop a strategy to monitor the effectiveness of downtown events.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q1 2012	Utilize Events Committee to identify certain periods and gaps in event types for future event development.
48 Improve Existing Attractions and Develop New Destinations in Downtown	In addition to the Historical and Saddlebred Museum, Miss Missouri Pageant, and MMA events, the restoration of the depot buildings presents new opportunities to attract additional visitors to Downtown Mexico.	City	VSA/Chamber	Q4 2012	TIF and/or CID funds can be used for these type of projects.
49 Develop Downtown Marketing Materials	Develop a coordinated advertising campaign to promote the Downtown as a whole in order to compete in the retail market. Provide oversight in development of marketing materials to support recommended action items.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q4 2011	Produce marketing materials with CID funds.
50 Expand Store Hours	Encourage downtown businesses to maintain hours that respond to customers' needs.	VSA	City/Chamber	Q3 2011	This must be done in a cooperative approach among shop owners and notices of change must be well publicized.
51 Require owners of commercial buildings to provide window coverings and treatments on vacant spaces	Make vacant storefronts visually appealing with treatments and displays from local retailers, art and signage promoting events or other retailers in Downtown Mexico.	City	VSA	Q3 2011	City should utilize zoning and/or property maintenance codes to enact this requirement. Utilize CID funds to assist property owners with the costs associated for new window treatments until such time as buildings become occupied.

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BEDC : Downtown Mexico Business and Economic Development Committee

**Other Strategies**

Objectives	Project/Program/Action Item	Responsible Party	Support Groups	Timeframe	Tools, Techniques & Resources
52 Consider forming a Historic District	By adopting a local preservation ordinance, the City can appoint a preservation commission with the ability to review and issue certificates of appropriateness for all building construction with the defined district.	City	VSA/HPC	Q2 2012	City should look to establish a Historic Preservation Commission, preservation standards and recognition program for historic structures and districts. VSA should utilize informational packages to tout the advantages of historic status to property owners.
53 Create Educational Historic District Information Packet	Create Historic District information packet for current and potential property owners to educate and encourage appropriate decisions.	HPC	VSA/City	Q3 2012	Utilize Design Guidelines and National Register District Information to develop a Historic District Information packet to benefit existing and potential property owners.
54 Designate 'Signature Streets' within the Village Square Core	Designate Washington, Monroe, Jefferson and Jackson Streets as the "spine" of Downtown and prioritize them for public and private sector improvements.	City	VSA	Q1 2012	City and VSA should focus their efforts on a list of priorities including aesthetic upgrades, and locating retail, housing, and entertainment options along these streets with the effect of stimulating opportunities on adjacent streets.
55 Expand and Further Develop Park Amenities and Trails	Strengthen design and appeal of park and trail system to provide an attraction within Downtown and a vital link with the rest of the community.	City	VSA	Q4 2014	City should strengthen connection of park and trails to Downtown, and improve appearance of the park through signage and updating amenities, such as restoration of a depot building for trailhead facility.
56 Establish Downtown Public Amenities for Visitors	Provide a designated Visitor Center with public restrooms, shelter, and a place to rest for visitors of Downtown.	City	VSA/Chamber	Q1 2012	Utilize TIF and CID funds to develop public restrooms and rest area as part of the restoration of a depot building, for example.
57 Coordinate Downtown Business Activity	Work towards creating a seamless Downtown experience for visitors through coordination of businesses and services within the local tourism industry.	City	Chamber/VSA	Ongoing	Through cooperative agreements or business license requirements create coordinated store hours. Through retail development create coordinated retail and services.

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VSA: Village Square Association

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TOP TEN GOALS

