

The following guide will be used to keep the tasks of the Master Plan recommendations on schedule. All tasks will be marked as short term (to be implemented in 1-2 years), medium term (to be implemented in 3-4 years) and long term (5+ years). Each task will be assigned a department to take the lead on implementation. The Implementation Guide will be reviewed and updated yearly.

Strategies and Tasks to Improve Neighborhoods

Strategy 1: Monitor neighborhood conditions and enforce ordinances against blight in the community.

Commentary: Blight devalues and demoralizes a community. It sends a message to residents and potential investors about community standards. Blighted areas can deter investment and eventually spread throughout the community, degrading its character. Basic maintenance efforts are not costly; they simply require a consistent and concerted effort. Strategic code enforcement initiatives must be put in place to reduce blight. Traditional efforts, including issuing civil infraction tickets, may actually put the home owner in a position to not be able to afford the necessary.

Tasks:

1. Develop a list of common blight complaints and state which department is in charge of enforcement. Keep a list in each department so complaints can be sent to the correct department. **(Inspections Department, Short Term)**
2. Assemble an interdepartmental task force to coordinate and execute an anti-blight campaign. Protocol and directives should be adopted by the City Council and emphasize the high priority of this effort. Target areas should be identified and consistently monitored. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**
3. Create streamlined forms, notices and enforcement letters for consistency when conducting enforcement efforts. **(Inspections Department, Short Term)**
4. Create educational materials about community maintenance standards to distribute to residents when they request new water service or when assessment records are changed. These educational materials should be widely distributed among all citizens. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**
5. Develop an abbreviated educational piece that can be sent with every notice of violation of the City's blight regulations. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**
6. Organize a blight reduction campaign prior to a crackdown in blight enforcement. Distribute educational materials to all residents and property owners about forthcoming, significant changes in blight enforcement. Provide information that will help residents with general maintenance issues so they have an opportunity to clean up before stepping up enforcement action. **(Inspections Department, Short Term)**
7. Develop a reward system for anti-blight efforts, which could include such things as free vegetable and flower plants in the spring, a summer BBQ picnic, a fall music show, or winter awards dinner. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**
8. Use the annual business registration as a means to upgrade properties and alert property owners to tax credits and other incentives to help them upgrade their properties. **(Clerks Office, Short Term)**
9. Aggressively enforce the City's Dangerous Building Ordinance. **(Inspections Department, Short Term)**
10. Remove dilapidated and vacant commercial and industrial buildings from neighborhoods. As an example, the old factory on Sixth, south of Hume is a blighting influence in close proximity to the High School and detracts from the neighborhood. There are several such buildings in the community that cannot be reasonably rehabilitated and should be removed. **(Inspections Department, Long Term)**

11. Work with businesses to clean-up and screen outdoor storage visible to neighborhoods. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

Strategy 2: Beautify and enhance neighborhood environments.

Commentary: Beauty in this context includes those characteristics of a neighborhood that contribute to a sense of place, meaning, and satisfaction to residents. At its most basic level, neighborhood beauty is the absence of blight. Setting a higher standard of beauty may include landscaping public spaces, installing public art and attractive fixtures, and improving deteriorating streets and sidewalks.

Tasks:

1. Consider reducing public mowing obligations by establishing natural, prairie-like, plantings in parks and along parkways in non-active areas. Choose low-maintenance, native perennials in areas that are not irrigated. **(Public Works Department, Short Term)**
2. Adopt a community gardening ordinance that allows citizens to utilize vacant residential properties to grow fruits and vegetables. Groups of people can use the land for gardening as long as they sign a contract stating that they will keep the property maintained. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**
3. Enlist City employees to develop a garden at each City-owned building to call their own and set an example for the community. **(All Departments, Medium Term)**
4. Establish neighborhood walking routes that coincide with the Safe Routes to School program. Work to make these routes attractive through clean up, marking and low-maintenance landscaping. Consider marking sidewalks with tiger paws or some other creative symbols to delineate the route. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**
6. Establish a beautification awards program for resident and businesses. Have a committee of business owners judge residential efforts and have a committee of residents judge business efforts. Honor the winners of each competition at a City Council meeting with plaques and modest prizes. **(Clerks Office, Medium Term)**
7. Evaluate subareas with neighborhood residents to identify voids of street trees, needed traffic calming measures, street light repairs, benches, community gardens, and other beautification opportunities. Set the expectation that residents will assist with placing and maintaining amenities. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**
8. Investigate narrowing various residential streets and providing additional green space to reduce repaving obligations, provide traffic calming, and possible street side storm water management. **(Engineering Department, Long Term)**
9. Privatize the maintenance of vacant lots to neighborhood groups and allocate funds for the purchase of items or services designated by the group. **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**

Strategy 3: Strengthen and diversify the City's housing stock by creatively leveraging the wide range of programs and funding sources available to the City.

Commentary: Although much of the City's housing stock is mature, it exhibits character and a variety of styles. Many grand historic homes are in need of serious attention but still warrant significant investment because they represent a unique history that cannot be replaced. Still other homes are very small or obsolete because they were either not built to last for decades or their original architecture has been so altered it cannot be reasonably reclaimed. The challenges for the City is to distinguish between those homes worthy of significant rehabilitation from those that are more appropriate for clearing to eventually make way for new, more marketable housing.

Tasks:

1. Target block grant funds and anti-bligh enforcement efforts to a few key blocks to arrest decline. Areas with homes in good condition and higher home ownership rates that are near blighting influences should be targeted first. Infill should be a priority in these areas. Target areas are generally bound by:
 - a. Ninth, Amsterdam, Glendale, and Summit
 - b. Riordan, Barney, Manz, and Hume
 - c. Fifth, Delano, Maffett, and Barney **(Planning Department, Long Term)**
2. Assess whether or not various substandard homes are worth saving due to their unique architecture or historic character and take measures to save them. Those substandard homes not worthy of saving should be the subject of a bundle of condemnation proceedings. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**
3. Use rehabilitation programs other than the City's limited CDBG funds to upgrade homes. For example, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) low interest housing rehabilitation loans through banks could be heavily utilized by residents. Encourage landlords to work directly with MSHDA and participating banks to rehabilitate rental units in neighborhoods. **(Managers Office, Long Term)**
4. Utilize the MSHDA rental rehabilitation program for apartments over storefronts. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**
5. Identify residents in public housing projects who are ready to live in single-family homes as a means to reduce the number of people in aged public housing projects and minimize vacancies in neighborhoods. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**
6. Work with landlords in a concerted effort to increase the quality of rental units in the City. For example, encourage landlords to work directly with MSHDA and participating banks to rehabilitate rental units in neighborhoods. **(Inspections Department, Short Term)**
7. Dedicate CDBG funds to important projects not easily funded by independent rehabilitation programs (e.g., moving historic homes to more viable locations). **(Planning Department, Short Term)**
8. Work with the Muskegon Conservation District in a large-scale energy audit program that targets homeowners with older homes. **(Planning Department, Long Term)**
9. Develop a Citywide weatherproofing campaign with teams of neighbors and youth and systematically work through designated subareas to tackle basic weatherproofing needs like caulking, weather-stripping around doors, etc. A more sophisticated team could provide blown-in insulation in attics. Provide a stipend to youth who help with the program, depositing funds in a bank account on their behalf after they have successfully completed the program. **(Planning Department, Long Term)**
10. Release requests for service for a multitude of homes to get mass purchasing discounts. For example, if 15-20 homes can be re-roofed at once, homeowners could realize a significant savings. City staff could act as project managers for such endeavors. CDBG funds could, but need not be, used to support such an undertaking. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**
11. Likewise, the "mass purchase" of other rehabilitation materials, like windows, insulation, and siding may yield a greater return on housing rehabilitation efforts. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**
12. Actively redevelop land along Summit Avenue, east of Wood Street and the area bound by Cleveland, Wood, Lincoln, and Howden with new, single-family homes targeting "empty nesters." **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**
13. Redevelop an area in close proximity to the downtown for a small market rate townhouse complex to create more activity to support businesses. Areas for consideration include land contained within:
 - Eighth, Sherman, Fifth and Manahan
 - Columbia, Baker, Broadway, and Leahy
 - The existing Farmer's Market site on Center Street **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**
14. Develop a small-scale (16-24 unit) market rate apartment complex south of Sherman, north of Manahan and west of Reynolds near the downtown. **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**

15. Consider establishing Jefferson Street north of the high school as a historic district to preserve this unique and once prestigious area, allowing homeowners to take advantage of historic tax credits to rehabilitate homes. **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**

16. Actively address blighting influences in close proximity to the high school, primarily north of Sherman and south of Hume, and the abandoned industrial use on Sixth Street. **(Inspections Department, Short Term)**

17. Move viable homes from Temple Street, in the industrial area, to vacant lots in nearby viable neighborhoods. **(Managers Department, Long Term)**

18. Move viable homes on Baker, between Summit and Columbia to vacant lots on Leahy and Hoyt, south of Columbia. **(Managers Department, Long Term)**

19. Move viable homes south of Hume between Ninth and Park to reclaimed areas between Ninth and Sixth, north of Manahan. These blocks are not well suited for industrial uses and should be reclaimed as nice pockets of housing between the downtown and developed portions of the industrial park.

20. Consider more actively using the City's power of condemnation to facilitate important neighborhood and public projects. **(Managers Department, Long Term)**

21. Identify small vacant lots that are not viable for housing infill and facilitate the transfer of those lots to well-maintained neighboring single-family uses to make their lots larger and more livable. Develop a policy for lot transfers. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**

22. Identify areas that could be converted to senior cottage development to create a special environment where seniors can live independently, but in the company of peers and with the security of a campus setting. This type of development should be a planned unit development to permit smaller yards and home sizes. Seniors could use equity in their present homes to secure a cottage and be provided with free rent for an extended period of time to "buy" their existing homes for new homeowners, which may include a family member. Possible sites include:

- The large parking lot and underutilized school field fronting Baker, south of Sherman
- Redeveloped areas in East Park Manor as older buildings are removed and relocated closer to Getty and Sherman.
- Assembled vacant lots on Superior Street north of Delano.
- On a portion of developable land near the old wastewater treatment plant. **(Managers Department, Long Term)**

23. Sponsor informational seminars about various financing options, such as reverse mortgages, to help senior citizens stay in their homes longer. **(Managers Department, Medium Term)**

24. Identify larger residential lots for new home infill opportunities. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

25. Shore up areas beginning to exhibit signs of decline through code compliance and infill with new homes that reflect traditional urban design. **(Inspections Department, Short Term)**

26. Phase out the existing mobile home park. It is cramped, dated, and not well suited for new units. Redevelop the site for a more appropriate use such as small-scale waterfront condominiums and limited boat slips with ample waterfront green space and buffers from Little Black Creek. Pre-design the basic elements of a planned unit development to protect natural amenities and control access. **(Managers Department, Medium Term)**

27. Develop urban style duplexes near the downtown to support downtown activities. Possible locations include:

- On Summit near Howden close to Edgewood School
- Infill along Broadway on vacant lots or as replacement development for dilapidated structures (e.g. on the corner of Mason and Hoyt)
- Infill on Sherman between Leahy and Manz **(Managers Department, Medium Term)**

Strategy 4: Develop and sustain a strong sense of community by fostering supportive and cooperative activities in neighborhoods

Commentary: Much like a marketing campaign, the City must send a message about the value of "community" in daily living. This message should instill in citizens the importance of positive connections with one another, with their neighborhoods, and with institutions (schools, social organizations, churches, etc.). Just as marketers brand products by repeating a set of expectations to customers, citizens and institutions need to repeat a community message until it is second nature. The City of Muskegon Heights is a special place where citizens are caring, committed, and cooperative. Attitudes can be changed through communication, persuasion, and consistent branding. The City needs to identify its "brand" and sell it.

Tasks:

1. Strengthen the neighborhood organizations and provide incentives to those that meet regularly and promote community activities. Keep volunteers motivated by providing recognition of their efforts. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**
2. Include youth, senior citizens, renters, and landlords in all neighborhood initiatives. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**
3. Work with the school system to establish extra-curricular activities that serve the greater community. It should also include the mentoring of classmates; high school students to junior high, and junior high to elementary students. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**
4. Establish multiple creative outlets for all citizens that include athletics, music, art, theater, and gardening. Orchestrate several programs in cooperation with the schools, church groups, and the colleges to provide a variety of programming. If individual entities sponsor and fine-tune a single offering, the task is easily managed. **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**
5. Create a community awareness program among neighbors at the subarea level whereby family names, landlord contacts, emergency phone numbers, and other basic information is shared among neighbors to be prepared in cases of emergency. This effort should also include a street safety analysis to monitor such things as street-lighting and inappropriate street activities. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**
6. Identify certified kitchens throughout the community that can be accessed to teach cooking, food preservation, and other skills to youth and adults. **(Planning Department Office, Short Term)**
7. Develop a multi-purpose community center that offers youth, senior services and after hour programming like midnight basketball or evening dances. Various civic groups could sponsor specific nights to ensure appropriate monitoring of activities. **(Managers Office, Long Term)**
8. Consider a program to earn down-payment assistance for first time homebuyers and people seeking housing rehab funds by helping with various community services like ongoing beautification efforts, chaperoning youth events, enlisting and coordinating volunteers for special projects, and teaching a skill to others. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**
9. Investigate the installment of security monitoring in public areas that are known for inappropriate activity. Have monitoring cameras feed to screens in prominent public places, the internet, or in citizen advocate's homes to deter inappropriate activity. **(Police Department, Medium Term)**
10. Develop a tool-lending program through the local library branch. Tools can be signed out just like books for a variety of self-help and home improvement activities. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**
11. Continue important events like the community festival, start of school parade, and community picnic. Expand events to include such things as a youth festival, community concerts, board game competitions, etc. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**
12. Develop community workshops taught by residents and guest "experts" addressing critical topics identified as concerns by the community - personal and home safety, managing budgets and credit,

watching out for predatory lending, tenant and landlord rights, preventing the victimization of senior citizens, identity theft, and living better on limited resources. **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**

13. Find ways to support and develop parenting skills in the community through such things as "Dad's Only Club," a "Mom's Support" group, and group parent and child meetings. **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**

14. Place parenting educational materials addressing key issues like the importance of education, pregnancy prevention, and alcohol, tobacco and drug use, in several accessible places throughout the community including various websites, City hall, the schools, library, and on other highly visible areas. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

15. Document on video oral histories of elders who recall important elements of history and make these stories a component of classroom studies. They should also be loaded on the school website. Youth should help collect and recount local oral history. **(Managers Office, Long Term)**

16. Devise ways to foster multi-generational contact outside family circles whereby youth assist seniors and seniors assist youth. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

17. Develop a job shadow program through the school system to inform the youth of different career paths. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

18. Continue important youth building programs like the Michigan State Police Academy, Pathfinders, and the school-based ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corp). Strengthen these programs and where possible, integrate them with new community initiatives to prevent duplicated efforts. **(Police Department, Medium Term)**

19. Consider providing a community shuttle service that runs a loop within the community, providing access to key community gathering points such as the library, museum, public gardens, parks and farmer's market. The shuttles could run limited times during the week to get citizens without transportation out during the day. Consider using existing church vans for this service. The route could run east/west to collect riders who congregate along stops on Oakwood, Summit, Broadway, Sherman, Hume, and Hackley. Routes for seniors with mobility problems could be worked out with the county Go-Bus administrator.

20. Acquire a general photo inventory of each subarea to monitor the progress of various neighborhood and community-based efforts. **(Managers Office, Long Term)**

21. Utilize tax abatement incentives, such as the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone program, to offer home owners incentives to upgrade their homes. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

Strategy 5: Protect and enhance natural amenities to make the City a desirable place to live.

Commentary: Muskegon Heights has key assets in its wetlands, creeks and waterfront on Mona Lake. These natural amenities are more prevalent throughout the City than many communities of similar size. These types of assets can make a community a desirable place to live. It will be important to protect and enhance these amenities to draw people to invest in the City.

Tasks:

1. Consider implementing a wetlands overlay district in the zoning ordinance. Create a map that would show the locations of critical wetlands, create a 500 foot buffer zone outside of these wetlands, and require stricter stormwater management practices and environmentally conscious landscaping requirements for all new development within the district. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

2. Showcase Mona Lake Park and the waterfront as a recreation and education center. Work with the school system to encourage nature courses on site. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

3. Restore the pavilion at Mona Lake Park. While the land may not be sold because of its ties to the park, it can be leased to a private company while the City maintains ownership. Consider creating a Request for

Proposal and send it out to a list of developers who may be interested in a residential and/or commercial development. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

4. Explore the development of an urban reforestation program in conjunction with youth and civic groups. **(Public Works Department, Short Term)**

5. Develop a series of trails through the community between the downtown and Mona Lake Park. **(Managers Office, Long Term)**

6. Install filters in storm drains near wetlands. Storm drain filters are one of the most effective ways to stop phosphorous, hydrocarbons, oil, sediment, silt and even heavy metals from entering wetlands. Designed to attach easily to storm drains, catch basins, fittings and pipes, these products effectively remove unwanted materials so that only cleaner water is allowed to through the drains. **(Public Works Department, Short Term)**

Strategy 6: Develop a wider choice of market rate housing in the City and continue to upgrade existing housing stock.

Commentary: The city has an abundance of older, modest, affordable homes which are an important part of the city's character. However, in order to appeal to middle class families and empty nesters, a broader range of housing options needs to be provided including condominiums, townhouses and larger single-family homes.

Tasks:

1. Identify residential neighborhoods that have large amounts of adjacent vacant parcels. Consider reducing the minimum lot sizes in these areas to increase the number of buildable lots. Market these areas to developers for cluster development. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

2. Consider lowering the minimum unit sizes for homes and apartments as smaller living units are becoming more popular. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

3. Facilitate the development of townhouses in or on the fringe of the downtown. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

4. Consider relocating the mobile home park to redevelop that prime waterfront parcel and adjacent city land for a higher use. This parcel would make a great location for a market rate subdivision or apartment complexes. **(Managers Department, Long Term)**

5. Promote the development of modernized apartments and lofts above storefronts. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

6. Investigate the feasibility of live/work units in or around the downtown. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

7. Market the community as a retirement destination for residents of Chicago and Detroit. **(Managers Department, Long Term)**

8. Start an aggressive weatherization and insulation campaign that includes youth as part of the work force. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

9. Promote the development of a cottage campus close to the downtown for senior citizen housing. **(Managers Department, Long Term)**

10. Consider the possibility of tiny homes that people will have an easier time financing, then reinvesting in as they have more money to spend. **(Managers Department, Long Term)**

Goals for Downtown

Objective 1 – Fill vacant storefronts downtown.

- There are several vacant store fronts downtown that have remained vacant for several years. Many of these units are becoming deteriorated and in need of renovation before a certificate of occupancy can be issued.

Action Step 1.1 – The City will create an attractive development incentive list to provide to developers. It will be created as a marketing piece, such as a handout or brochure, that will highlight the available incentives that the City can offer for certain projects. These incentives may include the following:

- Tax Abatements -The City should examine all possible tax abatements that are available and determine which ones it will offer. The City should consider offering the following tax abatements offered through the State of Michigan:
 - PA 210
 - PA 255
 - PA 198
 - OPRA
 - NEZ
 - CRP
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) -A TIF is a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure and other community-projects. The City has the ability to implement a TIF for certain projects within the Downtown Development Authority boundaries, as allowed by the Downtown Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan.
- Grants -The City should consider using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for downtown redevelopment efforts. These could include programs for rehabbing residential and mixed-use buildings to bring them up to code. The City should also consider using CDBG funds to create a façade improvement grant that would assist property owners with necessary improvements their buildings. The City should also apply for site assessment funding through the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). There are a few properties in the downtown area that may have been exposed to contamination at one point, which may make redevelopment difficult without assistance for environmental work. The USEPA often issues grant funding for preliminary site assessment work that will cover Baseline Environmental Testing and Phase I work. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

Objective 2 -New buildings constructed downtown will be visually pleasing, attract active storefronts and help create a walkable community.

- Broadway Ave and Peck St have a good amount of buildings that were constructed with zero lot lines, creating a great downtown atmosphere. The new Dollar General was built in this fashion, which blends in with the rest of downtown, even though their initial plans were for a building set much further back from the road. The City should continue to push for zero lot line development in the core downtown area.

- The building inventory located just outside of the core downtown has a mixture of zero lot line development along with other buildings constructed with larger setbacks. The zoning codes should reflect this characteristic and allow for setback flexibility in this area.
- Though many of the buildings downtown were thoughtfully placed, some have become less attractive to potential retailers because of the installation of reflective glass, boarded up windows and the elimination of separate entrances to retail suites. Development guidelines that will attract retail and mixed-uses should be implemented.

Action Step 2.1 – The City will implement a form based code for downtown that will focus on building placement, design and function. Certain design requirements, such as transparent windows and minimum entranceways, can help attract retail to the area. A focus on mixed-use development will create a walkable downtown that will attract people to eat, shop and play. Parking maximums will be implemented in certain areas where there are excess existing spaces. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

Objective 3 – The downtown will support public arts and become a destination to view unique pieces.

- Downtown lacks public art.

Action Step 3.1 – The community will work together to form a grass roots campaign to create more public art. The City and other non-profit organizations will coordinate with the African American Museum to raise money for an outdoor art installation. Community organizations will hold fundraisers to conduct public art competitions that include permanent installations. **(Managers Office, Medium Term)**

- Determine the best building walls to display more murals. Raise money to hire professional mural creators or hold a mural contest with award money.
- Select a prominent business person, community organizer or athlete to recognize with a downtown statue.
- Work with the community and non-profits to raise funds.
- Develop and implement a program to solicit sponsors and establish an endowment for local artists' work.

Objective 4 – The downtown will offer more grocery and dining options and become a food destination.

- The closing of Plumb's left the community with few local options for groceries. If a full scale grocery store does not relocate to downtown, perhaps several niche food markets can fill the grocery void. Downtown is already home to Scott Meats, one of the most popular butcher shops in the County. More specialty food stores; such as a bakery, seafood/local fish market, or fruit/vegetable store; could eliminate the "food desert" for local citizens and bring in outside money from being a culinary destination place.
- Kitchen 242 (located at Muskegon Farmers Market) or the Starting Block (Located in Hart) are options for local startup food businesses that do not have access to commercial kitchens.
- Food trucks are not usually available in the city, even though neighboring communities are beginning to find success with organized food truck events.

Action Step 4.1 – The City will create incentives for local food businesses to locate downtown. On top of the regular tax incentives offered to rehab a building, food business will also be offered an incentive package that could include grants or loans. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

Action Step 4.2 – The City will write a food truck policy and create a permitting process. An overlay district will be created that will establish boundaries for operation. Considerations towards brick and mortar establishments will be taken. The Farmers Market and Rowan Park can be used to hold events where several food trucks can hold a tasting event together. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

Action Step 4.3 – The city will solicit funds to sponsor local restaurants to participate in the Taste of Muskegon, which showcases restaurants from around the County and is held annually in downtown Muskegon. Participation in the event can lead to new customers from around the County that want to visit the brick and mortar location, bringing new consumers to downtown. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

Objective 5 – The community will actively fight blight issues downtown to create a more welcoming atmosphere.

- Many of the vacant storefronts are falling into disrepair. Major investments will be needed to salvage a lot of the buildings.
- There are many dilapidated pole signs around downtown. Many of them are beyond repair and should be removed. Others could be repaired to attract business.
- Some vacant lots downtown have overgrown yards and outdoor storage of materials.

Action Step 5.1 – The City will solicit funding for a façade improvement grant. The grant could be a 50/50 match, which would encourage property owners to repair building facades. Removal of dilapidated signs should be considered for an eligible expense. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

Action Step 5.2 – The City will continue to promote programs such as the 5x5 campaign, which unites the community to actively fight blight issues. Church groups and other non-profit organizations will organize community clean up days. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

Objective 6 – Downtown will be a friendly, walkable, active destination that encourages consumers to stay and explore.

- The central business district is properly developed to encourage walkability, yet foot traffic is relatively low on a day to day basis. Parking is readily available and consumers are often able to park close to retailers. There appears to be an over-abundance of parking available.
- There are limited businesses downtown that offer outdoor activity. Outdoor restaurant seating, beer gardens and sidewalk sales allow consumers to enjoy the public realm. Outdoor uses create an inviting atmosphere that draws customers in.
- Downtown has two parks that are currently closed unless there is a community event.

Action Step 6.1 – The City will work with the DDA to determine if the DOA-owned parking lots are necessary or if they would be better suited for development. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

Action Step 6.2 – The City will develop zoning ordinances that allow for outdoor seating, sidewalk sales and other creative uses to better utilize the public realm. **(Planning Department, Short Term)**

Action Step 6.3 – The community will work together to create more public watch organizations and walking clubs that will help deter crime, especially in the evenings. **(Police Department, Short Term)**

Objective 7 – Downtown will offer a wide variety of transportation options for those who want to visit.

- MATS will be relocating the downtown transfer station located adjacent to the Farmers Market. The City should fight to keep the transfer station downtown close to the core business district.
- Bike lanes should be added to Broadway Ave and Peck St. along with more bike racks throughout the area.
- There are several sidewalks improvements and ADA ramps needed downtown.

Action Step 7.1 – The City will work with MATS to keep the transfer station located downtown. The City will also push to have more covered bus stations located downtown. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**

Action Step 7.2 – The City will incorporate bike lanes downtown where feasible and strategically locate more bike racks throughout the business district. **(Planning Department, Medium Term)**

Action Step 7.3 – The City will seek grant funding to install ADA ramps at all street intersections downtown. **(Managers Office, Short Term)**