

City of Monroe Downtown Development Authority

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Place & Main Advisors, LLC wishes to thank the following people for their assistance in the creation of this strategic plan:

Downtown Development Authority Members:

Mr. Joe Peruski, Chair
Hon. Robert Clark, Mayor
Mr. George Boyan
Mr. Scott Goocher
Mr. Scott Kegerreis
Mr. Les Lukacs
Mr. Shaun McGowan
Mr. Tom Steward II
Ms. Mackenzie Swanson
Mr. Anthony Trujillo

City Manager
Mr. Vincent Pastue





March 2017

Monroe Downtown Development Authority
120 E. First Street
Monroe, MI 48161

Dear Monroe Downtown Development Authority Board:

On behalf of Place & Main Advisors, LLC, I am pleased to present you with this Strategic Plan for the Monroe Downtown Development Authority. This strategic plan is the result of numerous hours this board has put forth to develop this document with input from City staff.

This Strategic Plan results in updated Mission and Vision statements for the DDA as well as identifies a series of ongoing, near, mid and long-term projects. While this plan has ongoing and long term projects identified, it is specifically designed to focus on projects to be implemented in a shorter time frame and within the capacity the DDA has. In the end, we are confident in the Strategic Plan we have put forth and your ability to execute it.

Thank you for the opportunity for our firm to work with you. We have truly enjoyed our time with the Monroe DDA and have high expectations for its future.

Sincerely,

Joe Borgstrom, Principal
Place & Main Advisors, LLC

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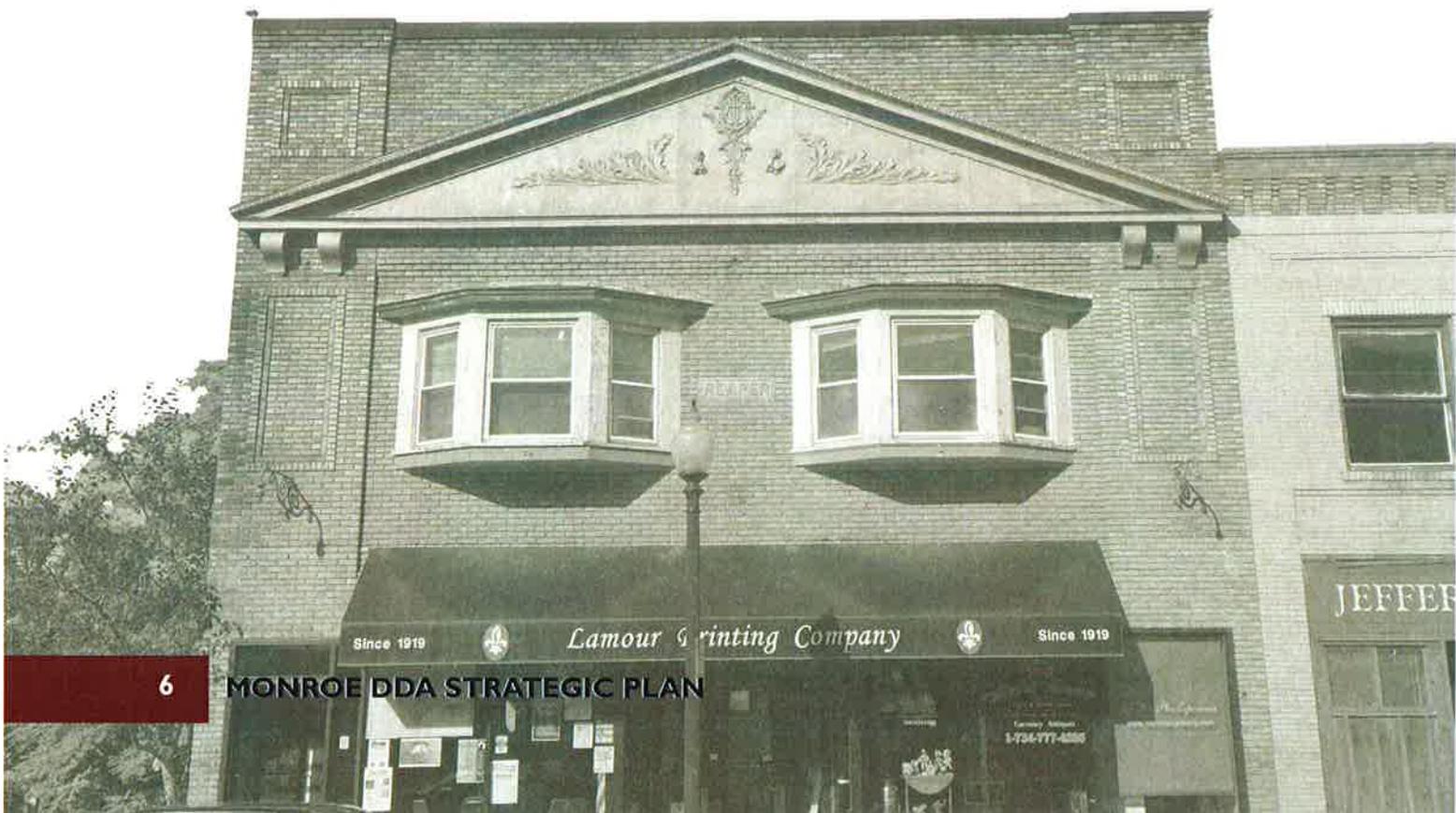
Organizational Statements



Organizational Statements

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Monroe Downtown Development Authority (DDA) exists to serve as the lead organization in the preservation and enhancement of downtown Monroe. Its mission is to provide direction and resources to businesses, property owners and residents in the downtown district. It works for the advancement of downtown through promotion of its businesses and events; the facilitation of redevelopment opportunities; and to increase Monroe's unique sense of place and community. Its goal is to be a dynamic and innovative organization that works with volunteers, other organizations and the City of Monroe for the betterment of downtown.



VISION STATEMENT:

In 2027, downtown Monroe will be a state- and nationally-recognized vibrant and walkable downtown. The storefronts and upper floors are occupied and attract residents to shop and dine locally. It is the preferred downtown in the region for young and successful professionals and retired baby boomers to reside.

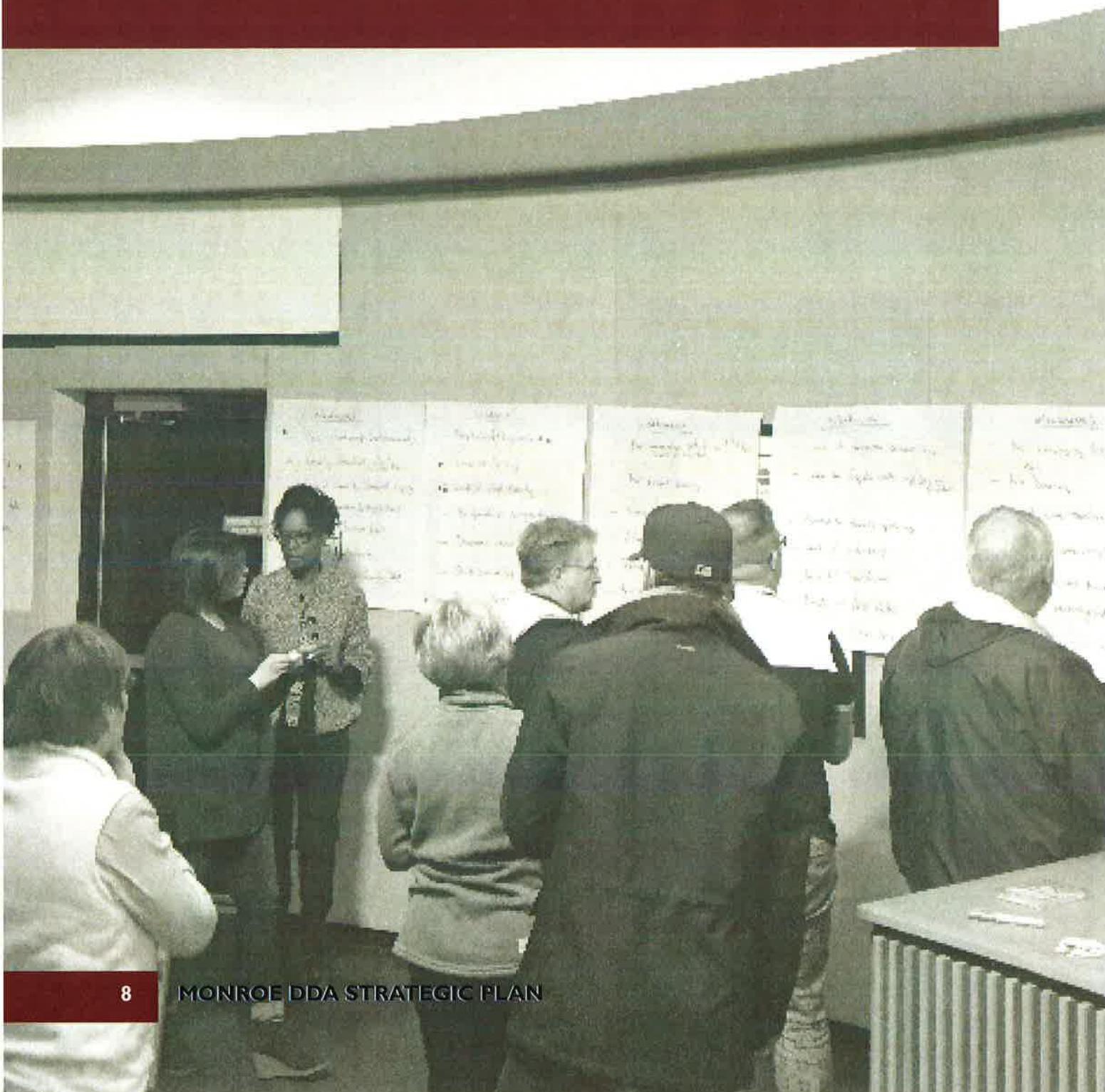
The downtown Monroe retailers and restaurants combine into a lively shopping and entertainment district with an active nightlife. They leverage technology to augment their storefront sales online and to promote their businesses to the community and others in the region.

All historic downtown buildings have made improvements from façade renovations, new signage, and outdoor seating. Empty lots and underused properties are revitalized with productive real estate contributing to the tax base, creating jobs and places to live.

The downtown is connected by an attractive, functional streetscape that is welcoming to pedestrians and non-motorized modes of transportation. The downtown has created greater connection to major employers, education institutes and other attractions in the area such as the River Raisin, National and State Parks, and the Center for the Arts.



Strategic Planning Process



Strategic Planning Process

From November of 2016 to March 2017, the Monroe Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board held a number of special meetings for the purpose of developing this Strategic Plan. On November 15, 2016, the DDA Board conducted a facilitated exercise where a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were formed based on the opinions of the board. On December 6, 2016, the DDA held a similar meeting to gather public input from various stakeholders in the community. Attendees also formed a list of the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They were then asked to vote on the most important items in each area. More than fifty stakeholders participated in the event. The following are the areas for each listed by those items with the number of votes in parentheses ():

DDA BOARD RESULTS

STRENGTHS

River (16)
Riverwalk (7)
Parks (4)
Core Downtown Buildings (3)
Infrastructure (3)
Walkability (3)
History (2)
Festivals & Events (2)
Parking (1)
County Seat (1)
St. Mary's Park (1)
Alley (1)
Size (large) of District
Wildlife
Safety
Museum
Library
Established Businesses
Loft Apartments
Altrusa Park
Available Inventory
People/Community Size
Proximity to Detroit/Ann Arbor
RRCA
Community College
Loranger Park & Fountain
Custer Statue/Monuments
Proximity of Arts & Tourism
Façade Grants
Community Involvement
Entertainment/Bars
Historic Homes/Walkable Neighborhoods

WEAKNESSES

No Organizational Cohesiveness/Too Many Factions (9)
Need More Retail/Lack of Retail (8)
Lack of Entertainment Nightlife Options (7)
Pedestrian Safety (4)
One-Way Streets/Outdated Grid (4)
River & Riverwalk Underused (4)
Community Split -Evolve vs Stay the Same (3)
Cost of Renovation of Buildings (3)
Blight/Property Owner Accountability (3)
Too Dirty (1)
Ugly Alleys (1)
Lack of Code Enforcement (1)
Not Family Friendly (1)
Lack of Partnership with CVB (1)
Parking
District Too Big
Need More Lighting
Sign Ordinance Too Restrictive
Need Appropriate Infill
Need Curbing/Appropriate Repair
Lack of Participation by Merchants
No Cohesive Brand
No Draw for Millennials
Ugly Back of Buildings
Farmer's Market Needs Improvements
Lack of Art/Sculptures
Negative Business Reputation/Perception

Strategic Planning Process (Cont.)

DDA BOARD RESULTS

OPPORTUNITIES

Developmental Growth/Infill (15)
Lofts/Apartments (7)
Become a Destination for Talent and Tourism (5)
Brewery/Distillery (5)
Create a Culture of Success (5)
Better Utilize River- Kayaking/Eco-Tourism (3)
Better Utilization of Tax Increment Financing (3)
Connect Festivals to Downtown (3)
Opportunities for New Businesses/Retail (2)
Extend Business Hours (2)
Capture Anchor Business Traffic (1)
Build Identity/Brand (1)
Improve Facades
Community Calendar
Large Meeting Space
More Local Representation
Partner with CVB to Promote Tourism
Tap into Pro-Medica Residencies
Coordination of Service Clubs

THREATS

Aging Infrastructure (8)
Fiefdoms (7)
Drugs- Heroin/Opioids (6)
Telegraph Road Redevelopment (6)
Lack of Code Compliance (5)
Building Owner Apathy/Community Negativity (4)
Ann Arbor/Dundee/Northville/Tecumseh (3)
Risk Aversion (3)

PUBLIC RESULTS

STRENGTHS

History/Historic Buildings (29)
Locally-Owned Businesses (25)
Walkable (19)
Entertainment- Festivals/Culture (14)
Abundant Parking (8)
Art Center/Fair/Community (6)
River/Riverfront/Riverwalk (6)
Affordable/Attainable Housing (6)
Library System (5)
Public Safety Dept/Law Enforcement (4)
Museums (4)
Safety (4)
Small Town Feel (3)
Local Property Owners (3)
Lots of Trees (3)
Faith Community (2)
Proximity to Lake Erie & Ports (2)
State Park/Nat'l Park/Wildlife Preserve (2)

Strong Volunteer Base (2)
Proximity to Other Cities (2)
Surrounding Farmland (1)
Fishing Pier
Bald Eagles
Strong Non-Profits
Farmer's Market
Surrounding Neighborhoods
Schools
Public Transportation
County Seat
Local Paper
Strong Corporate Presence
Good Access
Green Space
Sports Complex
Heritage Trail
Near Canada

Strong Boards
Famous People/Past
Monuments
DDA
Diverse Attractions
Airport

Strategic Planning Process (Cont.)

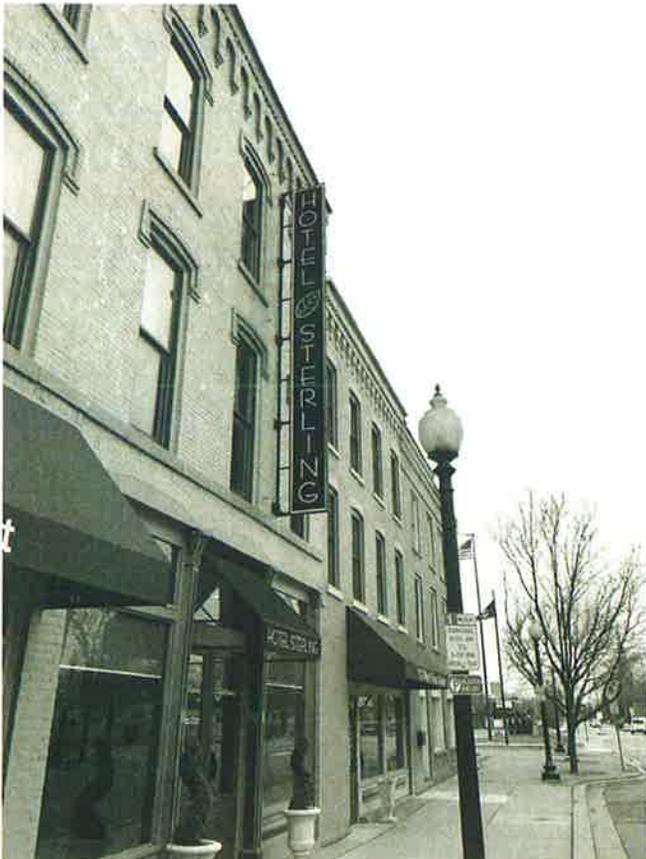
PUBLIC RESULTS

WEAKNESSES

Reputation of City as Not User-Friendly (17)
Lack of Unity (17)
Lack of Vision/Cohesiveness (16)
Inconsistent Business Hours (10)
More Office Than Retail on 1st Floors (8)
Social Media/Websites Not Up to Date (8)
Blight- Downtown Buildings and Houses (6)
Negativity/Pessimistic Attitude (6)
Drugs in Surrounding Neighborhoods (6)
Lack of Marketing/Advertising (6)
Lack of Food Diversity (5)
Lack of Volunteers (5)
Empty Storefronts (4)
Not Forward Looking (4)
Absentee Property Owners (4)
No Micro-Brewery (4)
Parking on the River (4)
Parking- Not Enough/Cost/Enforcement (3)
Downtown Caters to City/County Holidays (3)
Talent Flight to Detroit/Ann Arbor/Toledo (3)
Doesn't Show Appreciation for Design (3)
Lack of Young People Being Involved (3)

Lack of Retail (2)
Lack of Parking Technology (2)
Lack of Visual Arts (2)
Media "No Man's Land" (2)
Doesn't Support Local Businesses (2)
Lack of Market/Grocer (1)
Can't Lure Families/Young Professionals (1)
More Economically Depressed Job Market (1)
Fear of Change (1)
Not a Michigan Main Street Community (1)
Lack of Creativity w Connecting Event/
No Master Calendar (1)

Lack of Quality Storefront Signage
Pro Growth vs No Growth
Shuts Down on Sun
Lack of Mass Transit After 6pm
Renters vs Owner Ratio
Few Events/Entertainment Options after 10pm
Lack of Aesthetic Perception
Lack of Façade Continuity/Design Standards
Mentality Towards Parking
Limited Draw/Anchors Downtown
Lack of Arts Retail
Not Leveraging Historic Landmarks
Lack of Amenities/Leverage of Riverfront
Stigmatism of Public Schools
No Dog Park
People Go Somewhere Else for Something to Do
Lack of Pure Michigan Ads
Lack of High End Restaurant
County Seat
Aging Population
Lack of Youth Activities
Lack of Appreciation for Downtown



Strategic Planning Process (Cont.)

PUBLIC RESULTS

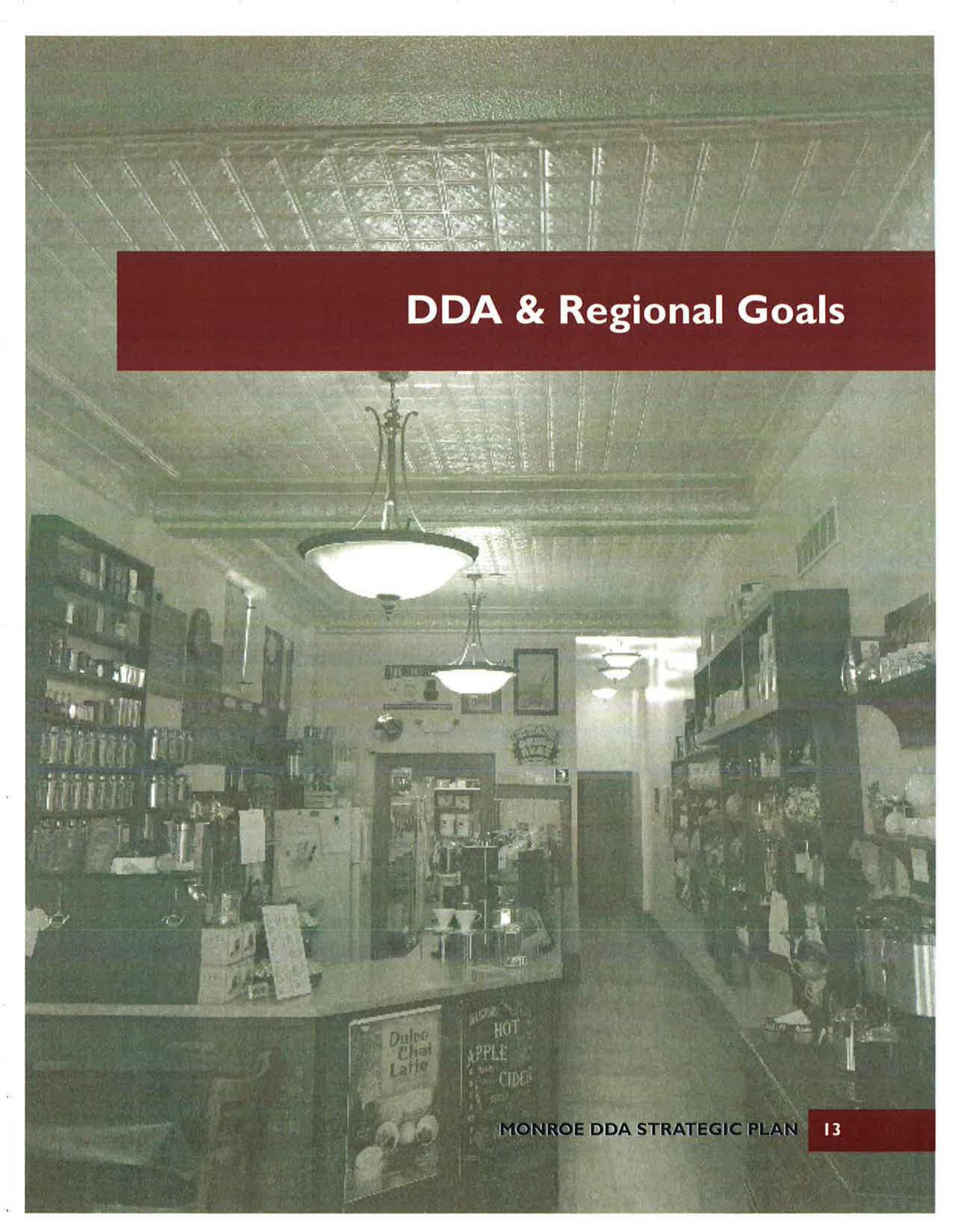
OPPORTUNITIES

Create a Culture of “How To” (50)
Change Perception of City as Hard to Work With (21)
Fix Ordinances to Allow Improvements (15)
Publicize Good Things (13)
Restore “Floral City” Concept/Brand (12)
Regional Center for Experiential Tourism (12)
Satellite Campus for Community College (11)
Connect Events to Each Other and Downtown (11)
Improve Bicycle Infrastructure (10)
Use Vacant Storefronts as “Pop Ups” (9)
Compare Vision Sessions (9)
Expand Farmer’s Market and Relocate (8)
Restore Signage/Murals (8)
Convention Center (6)
Recruit More Volunteers (4)
Community College Incubator (3)
Enhance Diversity of the Community (3)
Actively Encourage Millennial Involvement (2)
Later DDA Meetings (2)
Spruce Up Downtown (2)
Murals (2)
Available Upper Floors for Apartments (1)
Parking Ambassadors (1)
Available Building Stock
Improve Social Media
Revise Parking Policy
More Live Music Targeted to Younger Audiences
DDA to Function in Business and Real Estate Development
“Say One Good Thing” Campaign
Discuss Food Trucks
Retain and Expand Hospital
Tiny Houses/Micro-Units
Business Assistance Team
Re-Evaluate One-Way Streets
Bike Share Program
Create Better Sight Lines
Lead By Doing

THREATS

City Council Hidden Agenda/Divisiveness (32)
Apathy/Lack of Follow Through (26)
Lack of Willingness to Change (17)
Lack of Unity (16)
Franchises (14)
Negativity (14)
Crime (10)
Too Focused on Past (7)
Proximity to Detroit/Toledo/Ann Arbor (6)
Financial Barriers to Younger Entrepreneurs (5)
Population Decline (3)
Declining Standards of Local Businesses (3)
Declining Standards of Community (3)
Lack of Skilled Trades Training (2)
Internet Sales (1)
Sprawl (1)



The image shows the interior of a cafe or bakery. In the foreground, there is a counter with a menu board. The menu board has two sections: one for 'Dulce Chat Latte' with an image of a latte, and another for 'HOT APPLE CIDER' with an image of an apple. Behind the counter, there are shelves stocked with various items, including what appears to be coffee beans and other supplies. A large, ornate pendant light hangs from the ceiling. The ceiling is a drop ceiling with a grid pattern. In the background, there is a doorway leading to another area, possibly a kitchen or storage room. The overall atmosphere is warm and inviting.

DDA & Regional Goals

DDA & Regional Goals

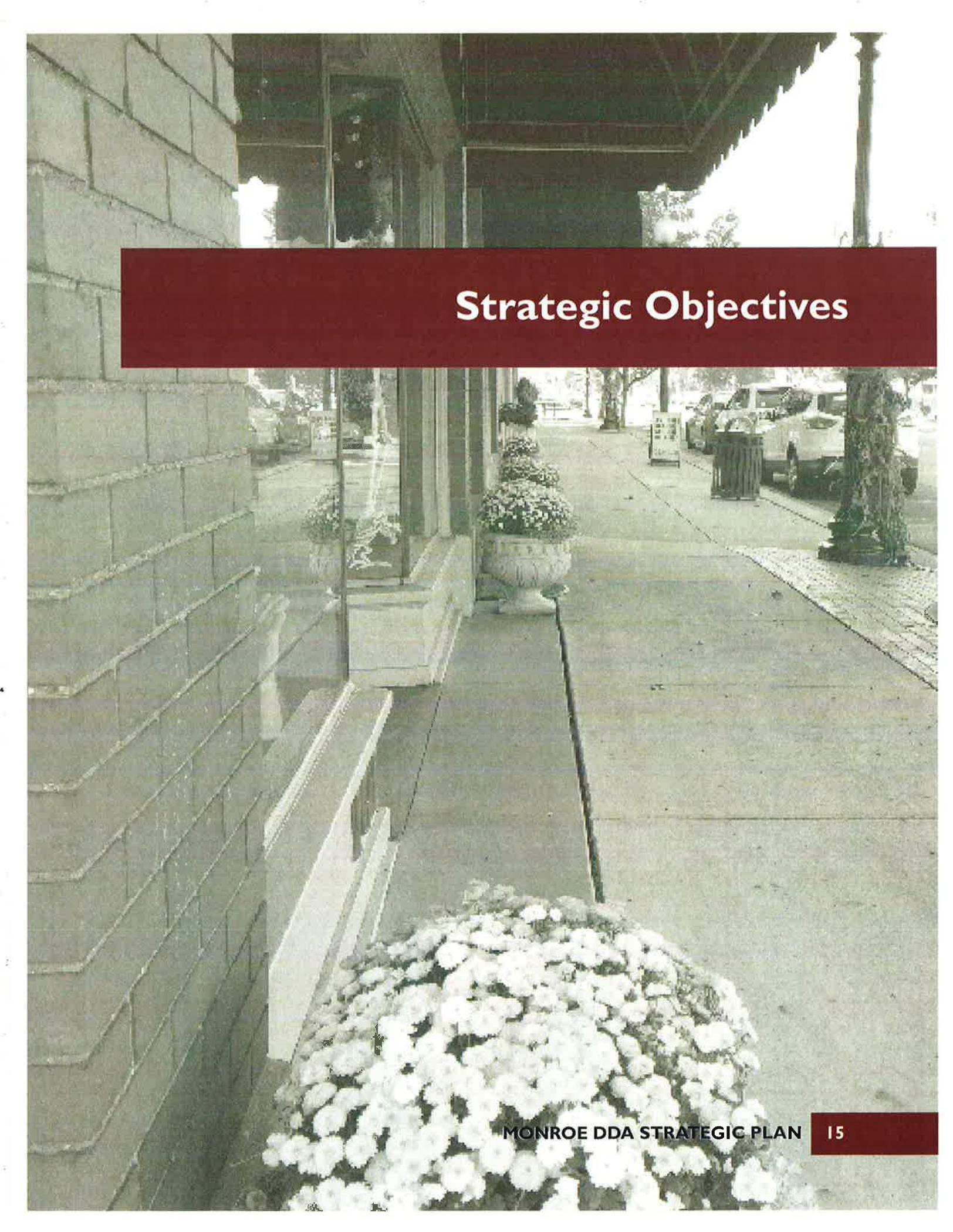
DDA GOALS:

- 1) Inform and educate building owners and public of the actions and accomplishments of the DDA and businesses
- 2) Support downtown businesses and property owners
- 3) Preserve and enhance downtown by facilitating redevelopment
- 4) Market the downtown to encourage people to frequent local businesses and events
- 5) Serve as a leader of the organizations that connect to downtown and link to other community resources
- 6) Establish an environment that promotes residential growth downtown

REGIONAL PROSPERITY GOALS:

The counties of Monroe, Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, and Washtenaw make up Prosperity Region 9. This group of counties have identifies two primary goals for the region.

- 1) Growing and attracting talent to meet industry needs
- 2) Advancing a High-quality and Diverse Regional Transportation System



Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objectives

This Strategic Plan is divided into three main areas: ongoing efforts, short/mid-term objectives, and long-term objectives.

Ongoing Activities

The Monroe DDA currently either directly offers or works with the City of Monroe to provide services to the DDA district. While valuable, these activities should be slightly altered in the areas listed below.

City Services- The Monroe DDA currently undertakes several activities in conjunction with the City of Monroe. These activities include street sweeping and snow removal. These activities should continue as they are considered basic maintenance and serve to provide uniform service throughout the district.

Café Seating- While the permitting process for outdoor seating lies with the city and is allowable, the DDA should strongly encourage outdoor dining at every venue that offers food or beverages. This seating achieves two major goals: 1) From a public perspective, it creates lively street life which both attracts more people and increases safety. 2) It gives restaurants additional square footage to generate sales with little cost. If these restaurants adhere to liquor laws and local ordinances, this activity creates a win-win situation for both businesses and the public.

Banners- Banners play an often-overlooked function in communities. They serve to offer color and vibrancy as well as reinforce the branding of a downtown. As the City of Monroe rolls out their new branding (along with the DDA), this branding should be reinforced through new banners on light poles throughout the district. Furthermore, the city should revamp its existing banner policy to either remove application for a banner and make them standard on all (or every other) light pole or to allow for co-branding with the city/DDA brand on one side of the light pole and the business name (in same color scheme as the city/DDA logo) on the other.



Strategic Objectives (Cont.)

Short to Mid-Term Objectives

This objectives are designed to be implemented in a relatively short timeframe (12-24 months.) These specific tasks are also outlined in the Implementation Work Plan on page 19.

Develop a Comprehensive Communication Plan- One of the most important things an organization can do is to tell its story and the stories of those they serve. By creating a comprehensive communications plan, the DDA can, on an ongoing basis, inform the public, property and business owners of the efforts of the DDA as well as tell the good news stories of the district it serves. The communications plan should include traditional media tools such as press release and media alert templates, but also social media efforts and a schedule of planned and coordinated posts to various platforms.

Lighting and Maintenance on Riverwalk- Both the DDA and public identified the Riverwalk as an underused asset. To help activate this space for longer periods of time, the DDA should look to make the Riverwalk well-lit at night. This will increase foot traffic after dark and provide another reason for people to come downtown. Additionally, the DDA will want to make sure routine maintenance is occurring on the both the Riverwalk and private properties it abuts. Rear facades along the Riverwalk are unattractive and should be targeted for potential façade improvement grants.

Provide consultation services to building owners on converting under-used upper floors into residential or office- Numerous building owners downtown may be interested in converting unused or underused upper floors into either residential units or office space. Offering access to a development consultant could help spur needed redevelopment of these spaces. The DDA should explore securing a consultant to provide these services and assess the level of interest of building owners to use this type of service at either a discounted rate or provided for free.

Expand Façade Grant Program- The DDA should consider expanding the façade grant program to cover interior renovations or at the very least allow interior renovations to be used as match. By broadening the area the façade can cover, it could spur additional redevelopment and dramatically increase the value of properties downtown, thereby increasing tax increment financing (TIF) revenue for the DDA.

Strategic Objectives (Cont.)

Short to Mid-Term Objectives (Continued)

Retail Expansion and Recruitment- The DDA has contracted with LandUse USA to provide a retail Target Market Analysis (TMA). The results of this retail TMA should be shared with every existing business owner in the district. By informing existing businesses of opportunities first, the DDA is supporting local businesses first who could potentially expand before recruiting additional businesses from the outside. Once this data has been shared with local businesses, efforts should be made assess the desire of local businesses to expand. Once that has been determined, then efforts to recruit additional locations from other successful businesses in the region should be pursued.

Promote Residential Units Downtown- The DDA has also contracted to receive a residential TMA from LandUse USA. The results of this TMA should also be shared with property owners. This data could be followed up with the consultation services mentioned above and combined with an expanded façade grant program to create a powerful force for redeveloping properties downtown. In addition, the existing units downtown need to be inventoried and available units marketed.

Long Term Objectives

These objectives are designed with a longer time frame involved (3-5 years.) They should be look at as long term goals within a reasonable time frame for execution.

Redevelopment of Riverfront Parking Lot- The DDA should look to redevelop the parking lot adjacent to the riverfront behind Front Street, west of Monroe Street. The DDA should encourage a mixed-use building or buildings with parking integrated on the lower level, wrapped in retail. This property is a valuable resource and the need for parking downtown can be balanced with the development opportunity this could present.

Infill of Multiple Underused Parcels/Parking Lots- There are several lots currently used for parking the DDA should consider encouraging appropriate infill development on that would serve a higher and better use than parking. Increasing the density of downtown should be a major goal for the community.

Upgrading Streetscape/Multi-modal Transportation Enhancements- As appropriate, the DDA should look to enhance the existing streetscape to enhance downtown's sense of place. This includes traffic calming mechanisms along Monroe Street, added parking for bicycles, and consider protected bike lanes. These improvements should look to create a physical link to other assets in the community such as the River Raisin National and State Parks.

Monroe Downtown Development Authority
Strategic Plan for Downtown

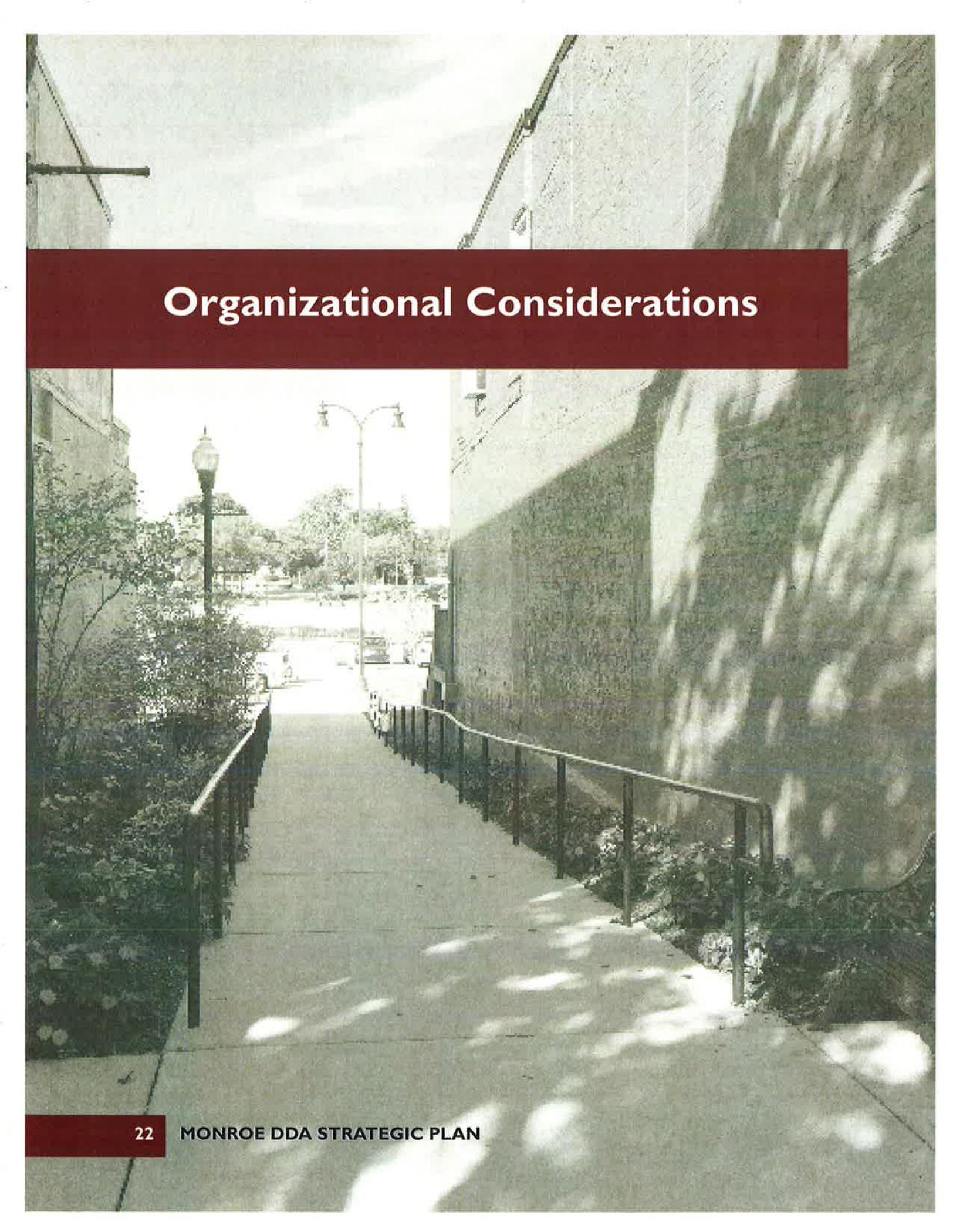
STATUS COLOR LEGEND & TOGGLE

Not Started	In Progress	Delayed	Complete
ON	ON	ON	ON

OBJECTIVE	LOCAL GOAL(S)	REGIONAL GOAL(S)	STATUS	OWNER	SECONDARY	ANTICIPATED			ACTUAL		
						START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE	START DATE	END DATE
1. Develop a comprehensive communication plan	1.4	1	Not Started	Robert Clark	DDA Director	3/15/2017	5/1/2017				
1.A. Develop press release & media alert templates	1.4	1	Not Started	Robert Clark	DDA Director		5/1/2017				
1.B. Complete media contacts	1.4	1	Not Started	Robert Clark	DDA Director		5/1/2017				
1.C. Identify official spokesperson for DDA	1.4	1	Not Started	DDA Director	Joe Penuski		5/1/2017				
1.D. Establish Social Media Channels in addition to Facebook (Instagram, Snap Chat, Twitter)	1.4	1	Not Started	Robert Clark	DDA Director		5/1/2017				
1.D.I. Develop Social Media planning calendar	1.4	1	Not Started	Robert Clark	DDA Director		5/1/2017				
1.D.II. Weekly meetings w retailers to discuss upcoming plans & promotions	1.4	1	Not Started	Robert Clark	DDA Director		5/1/2017				
2. Lighting and Maintenance on Riverwalk	3.6	1	In Progress	Shaun McGowan	Mackenzie Swanson	3/14/2017	9/1/2017				
2.A. Research Lighting Options and Costs	3.6	1	Complete	Shaun McGowan	Mackenzie Swanson	3/14/2017	9/1/2017				
2.B. Research design options and secondary functionality	3.6	1	Complete	Shaun McGowan	Mackenzie Swanson	3/14/2017	9/1/2017				
2.C. Purchase appropriate lighting mechanisms	3.6	1	Not Started	Shaun McGowan	Mackenzie Swanson		9/1/2017				
2.D. Install appropriate lighting mechanisms	3.6	1	Not Started	Shaun McGowan	Mackenzie Swanson		5/1/2018				
2.E. Organize an evening lighting celebration	3.6	1	Not Started	Shaun McGowan	Mackenzie Swanson		5/1/2018				

	2, 6	1	In Progress	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs	3/14/2017	9/1/2017		
Provide consultation services to building owners on converting under-used upper floors to residential or office	2, 6	1	In Progress	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs				
3.A. Determine policy focus of consultation services (all buildings treated the same vs larger buildings favored; cost sharing of services)	2, 5	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.B. Draft and post RFP for construction consultation services	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.C. Review proposals, interviews candidates & select contractor	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.D. Determine estimate of number of buildings able to be consulted with based on contractor fees	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.E. Determine how DDA will prioritize selection/scoring of applying properties	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.F. Publicize program to property owners in the DDA district and potentially recruit most desired/targeted properties	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.G. Select and publicize winners of services	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.H. Provide consultation services to property owner	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.I. Provide results of consultation services to DDA board	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
3.J. Follow up with property owner to determine barriers for moving forward	2, 6	1	Not Started	Joe Peruski	Les Lukacs		9/1/2017		
Expand Façade Grant program to cover interior renovations or allow interior renovations as match	2, 3	1	Not Started	Scott Goocher	Les Lukacs	3/15/2017	7/1/2017		
4.A. Determine policy, thresholds and timing for DDA participation for interior renovations	2, 3	1	Not Started	Scott Goocher	Les Lukacs		7/1/2017		
4.B. Make changes to or create necessary forms to reflect changes	2, 3	1	Not Started	Scott Goocher	Les Lukacs		7/1/2017		
4.C. Publicize, promote and explain changes to downtown property owners	2, 3	1	Not Started	Scott Goocher	Les Lukacs		7/1/2017		
Retail Expansion and Recruitment	2, 4, 5	1	Not Started	Tony Trujillo	Scott Kegerreis	5/1/2017	12/31/2017		

Complete retail TMA through USA	2, 4, 5	1	Not Started	Tony Trujillo	Scott Kegerreis	5/1/2017	12/31/2017
Identify retail TMA with local retailers property owners, detailing what the community has and potential business expansion	2, 4, 5	1	Not Started	Tony Trujillo	Scott Kegerreis	5/1/2017	12/31/2017
Identify downtown businesses who can be based on TMA. Assist with other businesses in the area to meet the profiles identified in the TMA.	2, 4, 5	1	Not Started	Tony Trujillo	Scott Kegerreis	5/1/2017	12/31/2017
Identify retail recruitment package to be used in TMA data and available real estate.	2, 4, 5	1	Not Started	Tony Trujillo	Scott Kegerreis	5/1/2017	12/31/2017
Conduct personal visits to owners of residential units in S.D. and use retail recruitment package to make aware of opportunity	2, 4, 5	1	Not Started	Tony Trujillo	Scott Kegerreis	5/1/2017	12/31/2017
Identify residential units downtown in S.D.	3, 6	1	Not Started	Tom Steward	George Boyan	3/15/2017	12/31/2017
Complete residential TMA through USA	3, 6	1	Not Started	Tom Steward	George Boyan	3/15/2017	12/31/2017
Attend a meeting of property owners to present TMA results	3, 6	1	Not Started	Tom Steward	George Boyan	3/15/2017	12/31/2017
Identify building owners who may be interested in creating upper floor units	3, 6	1	Not Started	Tom Steward	George Boyan	3/15/2017	12/31/2017
Identify identified property owners to be contacted regarding Objective 3.	3, 6	1	Not Started	Tom Steward	George Boyan	3/15/2017	12/31/2017
Conduct an inventory of existing residential units	3, 6	1	Not Started	Tom Steward	George Boyan	3/15/2017	12/31/2017
Identify existing building owners with available units to market to potential residential units	3, 6	1	Not Started	Tom Steward	George Boyan	3/15/2017	12/31/2017

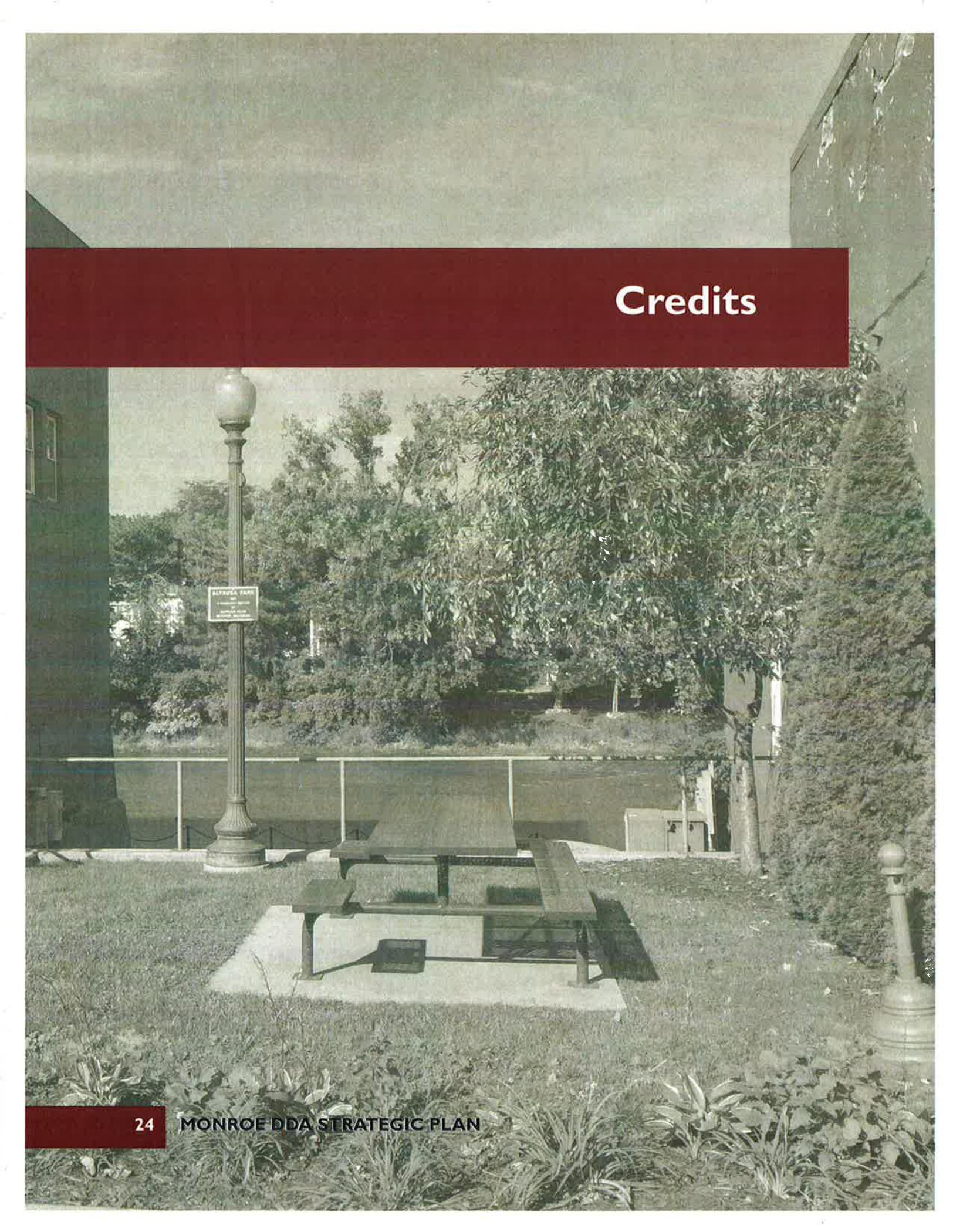


Organizational Considerations

Organizational Considerations

Michigan's Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975) allows for DDAs to do a multitude of types of projects. To achieve these projects, the Monroe DDA has implemented a series of committees, loosely based on the Main Street America™ Four-Point Approach™. These committees act as implementation groups. It is strongly recommended the DDA keep these committees or ones similar. Furthermore, these committees are made up of “doers,” people who make things happen and get things done. As the DDA moves forward, it should be using these committees as the primary source of future board members. The DDA Board needs to evolve in a way that not only morally supports professional staff, but acts as a working board and uses its considerable skill sets for the betterment of the district and the community. By using these committees as a “farm system” to recruit new board members to be appointed by the Mayor, the DDA will move from “finding a warm body to fill a seat” to a more dynamic, active board capable of augmenting the skills of a professional staff member to create greater and faster positive change.



A photograph of a park area. In the foreground, there is a wooden picnic table on a concrete pad. To the left of the table is a tall, ornate lamp post with a globe on top. A small sign is attached to the lamp post. In the background, there is a river or canal, a fence, and several trees. The sky is overcast. A dark red horizontal bar is overlaid on the top right of the image, containing the word "Credits" in white text.

Credits



This Monroe DDA Strategic Plan 2017-2022 was authored by Joe Borgstrom, Principal with Place & Main Advisors, LLC.

Joe Borgstrom's background includes being the leading force behind the rise of the Michigan Main Street program to a national powerhouse in the Main Street community serving more than 40 communities. The program has won an armful of national awards and, most importantly, seen public and private investment communities participating in the program top \$220 million, created more than 1,800 net new jobs, and 226 net new businesses. It is widely regarded as one of the best coordinating programs in the country. Joe is leading Place & Main Advisors' work with the ten Project Rising Tide communities in the development of their respective economic development strategies. He also serves as an instructor for the Redevelopment Ready Communities program for Best Practice 6.1 (Economic Development Strategies) and 6.2 (Branding and Marketing.) Joe created the "Development Taskline" designed to map out the development process and to connect it to the various potential state departments' resources.

Joe is respected nationally in the world of downtown redevelopment and has served in an advisory capacity to counterparts with the Main Street Iowa program and the National Main Street Center. He has been a featured keynote speaker at downtown conferences in Delaware, North Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

He also formerly oversaw project management for his agency's role in Michigan's redevelopment incentive programs (Brownfield and Community Development Block Grant) where his team helped incent projects totaling more than \$2 billion in private investment. He rounds out his twenty-year resume as a former regional chamber of commerce executive, local economic development professional, as well as a downtown development authority and nonprofit board member.



CITY OF MONROE – DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PLAN ADDENDUM

Mission and Vision Statements, DDA Goals

Board Proceedings

Joe Borgstrom, Place + Main, facilitated a mid-point check-in for the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. The board reviewed the mission and vision statements and found them to remain relevant. The board next reviewed the goals. All were determined to remain relevant. Individual discussion regarding the goals revealed these clarifications:

1. Inform and educate building owners and public of the actions and accomplishments of the DDA and businesses; no added comment.
2. Support downtown businesses and property owners; add: three areas of focus are financial support, advocacy and awareness.
3. Preserve and enhance downtown by facilitating redevelopment; the upper floor conversion case study was named as an example.
4. Market the downtown to encourage people to frequent local businesses and events; all agreed that there is room for more marketing.
5. Serve as a leader of the organizations that connect to downtown and link to other community resources; the board questioned whether they should be *leader* or the *facilitator* of communication between organizations.
6. Establish an environment that promotes residential growth downtown; Borgstrom remarked that lack of downtown residential product is not localized and he suggested moving the goal higher on the list.

Additional Discussion

Borgstrom remarked that he reviewed the Downtown Master Plan and found it excellent. The board should **focus now on implementing the Master Plan**; the plan should help the DDA raise the bar on its projects.

- **Promote progress on implementing the Downtown Master Plan**
- Target and reach out to property owners for the Downtown Reinvestment Program

Progress on Strategic Objectives:

Ongoing Activities:

City Services – basic maintenance activities are ongoing, except the DDA stopped underwriting the removal of accumulated snow from the sidewalks because of budget priorities. For example, the DDA paid for extensive tree pruning by the department of public

works to lift tree canopies; it is expected that the DDA will allocate funds for two more years. A preliminary discussion regarding the necessity to investigate the formation of a Principal Shopping District may be required if current and deferred maintenance cannot be absorbed by existing resources.

Cafe Seating - no action has been taken yet; discussion about goals for outdoor seating will be included in streetscape design guidelines. An effort to promote improved seating areas may follow adoption of the guidelines.

Banners - the city does not permit OTR banners any longer. Some new banners were purchased. The DDA bought several varieties of banners about two years ago; when they reach the end of their shelf life, new branded banners may be purchased.

Short to Mid-Term:

Communications Plan - an annual plan is now prepared. Press releases are issued and work is happening to improve external communication through two electronic newsletters, *Downtown Monroe Matters* and *In the District*. The board is focusing on implementing web updates and information sessions to comply with Act 57.

Lighting and Maintenance on Riverwalk - the project grew to Riverwalk Enhancement and Expansion (into Soldiers and Sailors Park, in conjunction with the city council's goals); the plan is due for completion very soon, at which point the board will pick a project to pursue.

Upper Floor Conversion Case Study - the pilot project for consultative/technical services for upper floor conversions is in process. Phase II was approved during the July meeting. An evaluation will occur after Phase II is complete to determine if the pilot program should become a regular incentive.

Facade Grant Program - expanded and renamed to Downtown Reinvestment Program; the program now includes additional eligible expenses such as electrical service, HVAC systems and roof replacement. This year marks the first year for the new program and it will be evaluated to determine if further changes are desirable.

Retail Expansion and Recruitment - new branded brochure was created and shared by email with all businesses and property owners. The next steps are to continue discussions with interested and potential businesses.

Promote residential units - inventoried units (130) and promoting vacancies online; assisting with case study for upper floor conversions as a pilot program. The Downtown Reinvestment program may be expanded further to include interior improvements to bridge the funding gap, if documented.

Long-Term:

Redevelop Riverfront Parking Lot - included in the Downtown Master Plan, there are now three public surface lots identified for redevelopment, including the riverfront lot, the lot at Front and Macomb and the lot at First and Monroe. City Council is eager to discover if there is developer interest in all three properties. A process is likely to be initiated this winter to solicit letters of interest.

Infill of Parking Lots - three public and one private surface lots were identified in the Downtown Master Plan for infill; effort will be made to address as circumstances and interest/opportunity arises. See note above.

Upgrading Streetscape - streetscape design guidelines are nearly complete; the board will pick a project to implement soon thereafter.