

# STORM LAKE, IOWA

April 23-25, 2024



Conducted By:

Iowa Downtown Resource Center



**IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

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The following report summarizes the observations and recommendations resulting from an Iowa Downtown Resource Center Assessment conducted in Storm Lake, Iowa. In preparation of this report, the Assessment Team learned about Storm Lake’s downtown history, recent planning efforts, economic development and quality of life initiatives.

The Team’s familiarization process began with a review of materials supplied prior to the visit, a pre-visit survey, a driving tour of the city and a walking tour of the Downtown commercial district.

The intensive three-day visit also included interviews with approximately 90 community leaders, individuals and groups representing the public and private sectors. Based upon these activities and the Assessment Team’s extensive working knowledge in downtown economic development, this report summarizes their findings and recommendations for Storm Lake.

## **PURPOSE**

The City of Storm Lake worked with the Iowa Downtown Resource Center, Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), to conduct a Downtown Assessment to raise awareness, educate, make recommendations, and encourage the local community.

This assessment and recommendations should serve as a call to action and provide the community with current information to formulate strategies necessary to address the very serious issue of saving or improving the downtown for future generations.

This report cannot and does not provide all the answers. Ultimately, Storm Lake citizens must explore their options, decide what is relevant and realistic and acquire additional information and resources as they address Downtown’s future.

**“Never doubt that a small group of committed dependable citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”  
-Margaret Mead**

## OVERVIEW

This Downtown Assessment report and recommendations for Storm Lake are based on the Team's downtown development experience. Their beliefs are grounded by the philosophy that for Downtown to re-establish itself as the social and commercial center of the community—the physical heart and soul of the city—Downtown must become more valuable physically, economically, socially and politically.

The health of Downtown has a direct impact upon the entire community's economic well-being. They are inter-related. Downtown revitalization IS economic development. Downtown is a prime location for incubating small business, it is an affordable location for independent businesses and is historically one of the community's major employers. The commercial center provides a compact environment with multiple stories for commerce, government and living spaces, thus reducing sprawl and the cost associated with extending city services and infrastructure. The pedestrian friendly environment is convenient and accessible, serving as the center (community space) for not only commercial trade but also cultural, social, and civic engagement. Historic downtown districts can serve as heritage tourism attractions. A building's condition, the business' viability, and maximization of the building's square footage for income generation affect not only the property's value, but also the value of the neighboring properties and real estate in the entire community. Investments in Downtown allow it to "pay its fair share" in taxes resulting in lessening the tax burdens of its citizens and city government.

Most of our memories are directly associated with a place. We "go back" to places we feel good about. We "go back" to places where we have had positive shopping experiences. We "go back" to places where we have had fun. We "go back" to places we think are important. We are also attracted to places where we think we will have a positive experience. We must strive to make Downtown a "go to" kind of destination, not an avoidable area we pass through on our way to somewhere else.

**The Iowa Economic Development Authority's Assessment Team included five downtown development professionals:**

**JIM ENGLE**, Director, Iowa Downtown Resource Center, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Des



Moines, Iowa. Jim has been with IEDA since January 2014. As director of the Iowa Downtown Resource Center, he oversees all downtown development programs of the authority. His current responsibilities include managing a million-dollar annual budget, overseeing the planning and delivery of technical assistance services, and developing training opportunities for all Iowa communities. Jim's areas of expertise are in organizational development, promotion, business development and working with smaller communities with populations ranging from 400 to 80,000. Prior to joining the IEDA, Jim served as Coordinator of the Wisconsin Main Street Program for 23 years. He also served as the Main Street Executive Director in Oskaloosa, Iowa. He holds a degree in Business Management from Central College in Pella, Iowa. Over the years, Jim has consulted for Main Street programs in Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Washington, Tennessee, and Michigan. He has also presented at many national downtown conferences.

**JEFF GEERTS**, EcoDistricts AP, NCI CS & CM, Special Projects Manager, Iowa Economic



Development Authority, Des Moines, Iowa. Working for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for 15 years and the Iowa Economic Development Authority for the last 13+ years, Jeff has more than 25 years of grant writing, grant management, and program development experience with an emphasis on environmentally sustainable development. Jeff is actively involved with several nonprofit organizations and currently is a board

member of Des Moines Heritage Trust. For 20+ years Jeff has programmed an award-winning international comparative policy course in best practices for community leaders and graduate public administration students in the Drake University College of Business and Public Administration. Along with being an EcoDistricts Accredited Professional and certified in the National Charrette Institute's Charrette System and Charrette Management, Jeff has a Bachelor of Science degree in management science and statistics from St. Ambrose University and master's degree in public administration from Drake University.

**TIM REINDERS** is a downtown revitalization consultant with over 30 years' experience. He has been a local director in Clinton, Iowa as well as working as a Design Specialist at Main Street Iowa. In his role at Main Street Iowa, he provided design services and training to communities across the state. He has also worked in a number of states across the country and has conducted training and presentations at numerous conferences and seminars. He has been involved in local, state and national community development organizations. Tim studied architecture and community and regional planning at Iowa State University.



**DENNIS REYNOLDS** delivers award winning master planning, urban design, site design and public art with his unique combination of innovative design; presentation and listening skills; quick hand drawings; and pro-active facilitation of the design process. Prior to creating his own consulting practice, Reynolds Urban Design, he provided senior level design services and leadership at HOK (Kansas City), Sasaki (Boston) and NBBJ (Columbus). He founded and led the innovative HOK S+V+E "Design Studio," facilitating cutting edge multi-disciplined design concepts. His major projects include Ho Chi Minh City's Thu Thiem Peninsula Master Plan, Nanjing Olympic Sports Park (that hosted the 2005 China Games and the 2008 Summer Olympics), The Great American Ballpark for the Cincinnati Reds and the Dubai Autodrome Formula One Racing Community. As Director of Design for a major Midwest real estate development company from 2005 to 2011, Dennis was responsible for groundbreaking projects including the "New Urbanist" Village of Ponderosa and "Shimmer" lakeside terrace. Recent projects include urban design, site design and public art for the emerging downtown Des Moines Bridge District, the North Kansas City Vision Plan, East Village's City Square, Bondurant's Swings and Fireflies, Overland Park Medical Center's "Heritage" public art trail and Edina Grandview Urban Design Concepts. Dennis has a Bachelor of Arts from Wheaton College with concentrations in Fine Arts, Economics and Group Dynamics and a Master of Landscape Architecture from Kansas State University.



**DEB SPRECKER** has been the Executive Director for Woodbine Main Street since 2009. She guides downtown revitalization and economic development, working with community leaders downtown, in city government, education, and industry. Woodbine Main Street has been recognized for superior efforts in downtown and community revitalization through awards such as a Great American Main Street Award by Main Street America, National Trust for Historic Preservation, a Keep Iowa Beautiful Governor's Award for Community Leadership, and other Main Street Iowa and Preservation Iowa awards. Deb's background includes grant writing for community development, education, and business, and media writing and editing. Sprecker also directs



a private foundation serving children in poverty and is on the Governor's STEM Council for Southwest Iowa. A small-town enthusiast, Sprecker has lived in rural communities in Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa.

## INTRODUCTION

Storm Lake, Iowa, the county seat of Buena Vista County has a population of just over 11,000. Storm Lake's statewide image is influenced by the beautiful lake and park system. The community is served by Buena Vista University, an Iowa Central Community College campus and a wonderful school system. Storm Lake's diverse population also sets it apart from other communities in the area. Beautiful Lake Avenue with its historic homes is the perfect connector of the lake and downtown Storm Lake.



Downtown supports a traditional business mix but the diverse population of the local residents also flavors its business district. The community has an interesting dynamic. Where traditionally downtowns are the hub and meeting place for residents and visitors, the lake itself provides a setting to get together that is unmatched. This is a strength but also must be taken into consideration when selecting/executing the right type of events to bring people downtown.

Downtown Storm Lake has an interesting stock of historic buildings. Some are strikingly beautiful while others could stand a much needed facelift. In doing this Downtown Assessment, the team had the opportunity to raise the bar a bit. Storm Lake isn't starting from scratch. A recent Downtown [Master Plan](#) provides a good roadmap for the community to make improvements. The plan that was initiated by the City, but this team can't stress enough that the plan is for everyone. The City can't be the only implementer of projects. There is opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce, community clubs, churches, etc. to buy into the plan and work together on implementation. Good things are ahead for Storm Lake.

# ASSETS/STRENGTHS

## COMMUNITY

- Lake/parks
- City owned resort: King's Pointe
- Entrance to downtown/Lake Avenue: beautiful homes
- Major employers
- Events such as 4th of July and Wood, Wine & Blues

- Buena Vista/ICCC/schools
- Diversity
- Strong neighborhood connections
- Lighthouse Art



## DOWNTOWN

- Business mix/combination of long-time businesses and new ones/diversity
- Wood carvings/murals/mosaics
- Government Hub
- Compact
- Historic buildings
- Night-time businesses

- Masterplan (with some early implementation wins)
- Interactive Features at Library / flower pots



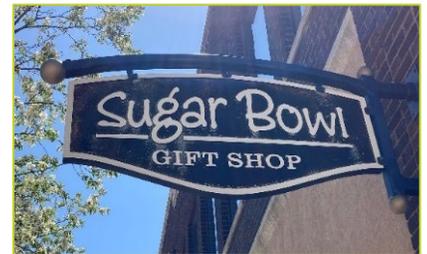
## THE SURVEY SAYS....

The City administered an on-line survey to residents of Storm Lake to get their ideas and opinions about the downtown area. A total of 155 people participated in the survey. A complete summary of survey responses is available for download later in the report. (see resources section)

## PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY TRENDS SHOW.... (answers in order of popularity)

### WHAT ARE DOWNTOWN'S GREATEST STRENGTHS?

- Business mix/variety/locally owned businesses (48)
- Specific businesses (La Juanita's, Bakery) (17)
- Good proximity/location/walkability/well placed sidewalks (15)
- Historic buildings/history/nostalgic look (13)
- Storefronts mostly full (10)
- Easy to park (9)
- Restaurants (8)
- Diversity (7)



### WHAT ARE DOWNTOWN'S GREATEST WEAKNESSES?

- More businesses/diverse businesses/retail/eliminate vacancies (27)
- Building facelifts/maintenance/uniformity/code of colors (14)
- More parking/and around city hall and courthouse for disabled (12)
- Need for specific business types: clothing, bookstore, brew pub, wine shop, etc. (10)
- More restaurants needed (9)
- More greenspace/gathering place/benches (8)
- Maintain flower planters/more flowers in front of each business (8)
- More activities/entertainment (6)
- Appropriate/better signage/awnings/take down obsolete signs (6)

## HOW DOES DOWNTOWN STORM LAKE MAKE YOU FEEL?

- Meh/so so/blah/nothing fancy/neutral/uninspired/bored (22)
- Home/cozy/comfortable (19)
- Empty/depressed/nothing to do/sad/desolate (15)
- Happy/Great/Love it (11)
- Fine/OK (10)

## HOW DO YOU WANT DOWNTOWN STORM LAKE TO MAKE YOU FEEL?

- Excited/energized/vibrant/fun/wow/amazing/in awe (27)
- Welcoming/friendly/inviting/warm (26)
- Enjoyable atmosphere/experience/happy (17)
- Home/comfortable/relaxing/peaceful (16)
- Safe (10)
- Proud (10)

## WHAT WOULD IMPROVE THE BUSINESS CLIMATE OF DOWNTOWN THE MOST?

- More businesses/stores/retail/higher occupancy (36)
- Better curb appeal/building rehabilitation grants/more inviting storefronts (14)
- Better selection of restaurants (11)
- Need more gathering places/greenspace/benches (10)
- Better business hours/evening and weekend hours (7)
- Better parking/dedicated staff parking to open up spots near stores (7)
- More events/festivals to bring people downtown (6)
- More trees/flowers/watering system (6)

## WHAT TYPE OF NEW BUSINESS WOULD BE MOST SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWN?

- Restaurant (see more specific answers in attachments) (57)
- Clothing (31)
- Entertainment (i.e., arcade) (25)
- Bookstore (20)
- Brewery (16)
- Bar (14)
- YMCA/community center/fitness center/wellness (7)

## WHAT PUBLIC AMENITIES ARE MOST NEEDED DOWNTOWN?

- Street seating (80)
- Places for kids (74)
- Greenspace (64)
- Public art (57)

\*Public restrooms mentioned frequently in the “other” section.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Assessment team’s recommendations have been grouped into five themes with suggested time frames for specific projects.

1. Connectivity and Wayfinding
2. Public Realm
3. Curb Appeal
4. Building Rehabilitation and Housing
5. Action and Implementation

It is important to take one step at a time and understand that the longer-term recommendations are not of much consequence until the shorter-term recommendations are addressed.

The Assessment Team hopes Storm Lake will assess each recommendation and develop a plan to implement what is right for Storm Lake. As the process gains momentum, community leadership will need to determine additional strategies and develop approaches that are more sophisticated.

Our hope was/is to work with leaders to identify the strengths, challenges, and opportunities in a constructive way to help the community improve the vitality of the downtown over time. We appreciate the openness and honesty of residents, and we appreciate that community leaders allowed the Assessment Team to be honest in its findings.

## THEME 1: CONNECTIVITY AND WAYFINDING

Downtown Storm Lake is wonderfully walkable, centrally located and easily accessible in the community. Opportunities exist to further enhance the downtown's connection to the community.

Most visitors to Storm Lake from the east are likely to travel along Highway 7 following the highway as it becomes Flindt Drive and eventually Milwaukee Avenue bringing visitors to the north end of downtown at the corner of Lake and Milwaukee Avenues.

Over the long term, look at ways to extend streetscape improvements north on Lake Avenue towards the commercial strip north of downtown and Highway 7. The area includes most of the larger commercial "big box" stores in Storm Lake and could use additional streetscape amenities.

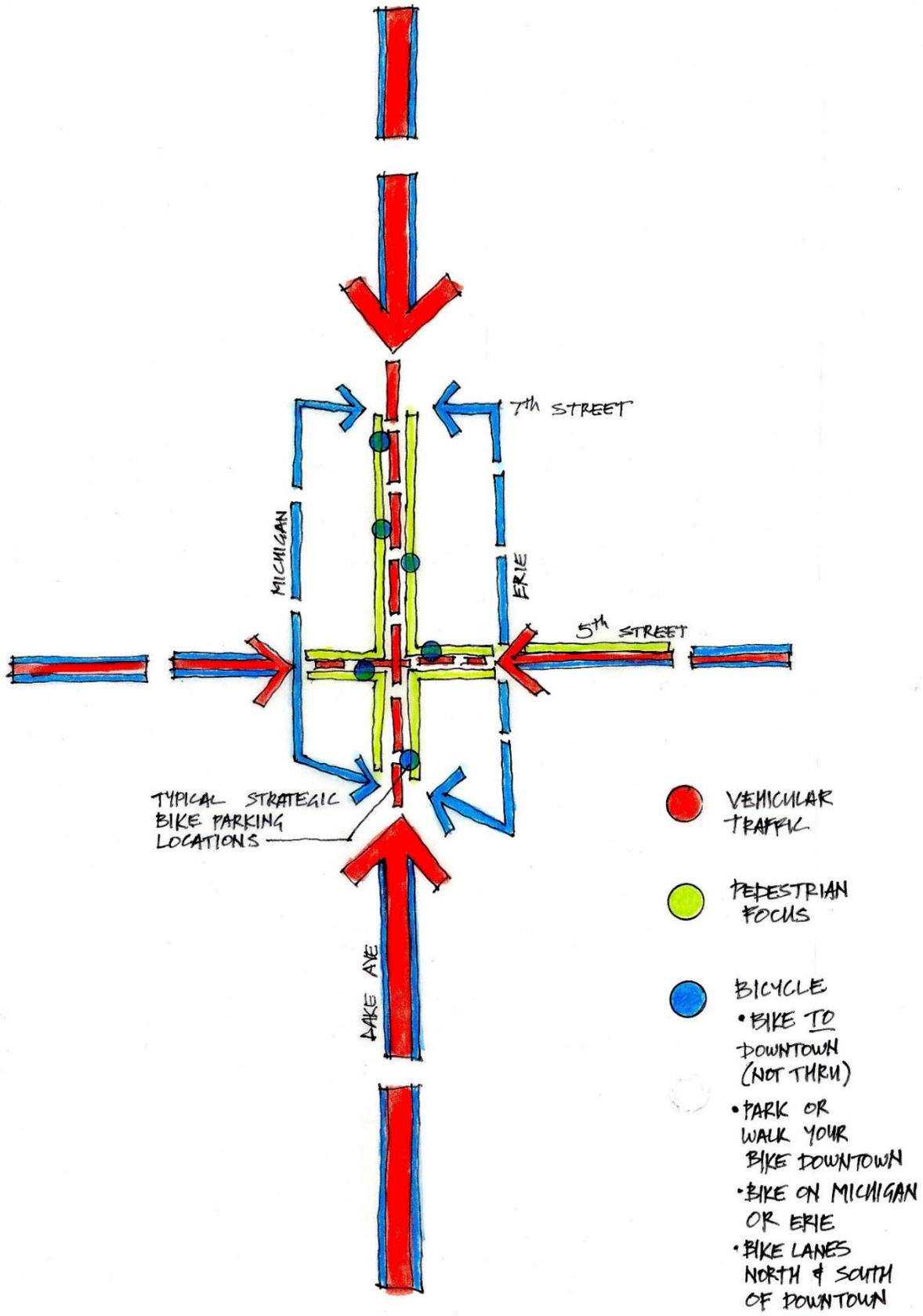
### ACTION STEPS

- The "100% corner" (Main intersection) for downtown Storm Lake is the corner of Lake Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue. Currently, this corner is not really considered to be "downtown," but this corner should be considered to be the gateway to downtown Storm Lake. Over time, this entire block should be considered for redevelopment to create a strong visual anchor at this prime corner. Ideally, this entire block, particularly on the east side of Lake Avenue from 7<sup>th</sup> Street to Milwaukee Avenue, would be purchased by a locally controlled development organization to help control and guide the redevelopment of this area. Downtown streetscape improvements should continue up Lake to the corner of Lake and Milwaukee as well. The ISG prepared Downtown [Master Plan](#) shows these elements one block to the south where planning documents identify the north edge of downtown as 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Using Lake and Milwaukee as a gateway location will help communicate the importance of this intersection to traffic.
- Currently at the Y intersection of Highway 7, West Lakeshore Drive and Flindt Drive there isn't any signage directing visitors to downtown Storm Lake. The Downtown Assessment team suggests that downtown visitors approaching Storm Lake from the east on Highway 7 should be encouraged at the intersection of Flindt Drive and West Lakeshore Drive to continue west on Lakeshore Drive to Lake Avenue and approach the downtown from the south. This same approach could be used to encourage visitors to Buena Vista University to access the university via Lakeshore Drive. The drive

along West Lakeshore Drive is beautiful, featuring the lake and many of Storm Lake's fantastic parks and homes. Downtown visitors coming from the south on Lake Avenue would then be greeted by the gateway improvements suggested for the intersection of Lake Avenue and Railroad Street in the [2023 Downtown Master Plan](#).

- The Downtown Master Plan proposes protected bike lanes on both sides of Lake Avenue. As an alternative to encourage bikers to bike to downtown and not thru downtown, encourage bicyclists to park and explore downtown on foot. Consider adding high quality bike parking amenities at Lake and Railroad and Lake and 7<sup>th</sup> and direct bicyclists to utilize Erie Street and Michigan Street when traveling around downtown.





## THEME 2: PUBLIC REALM

The city of Storm Lake is blessed with many wonderful public assets from the lake itself to the beautiful lakeside parks to the King's Pointe resort. Downtown Storm Lake is also blessed with many assets from a good diverse business mix to wide sidewalks and intact historic architecture.

Unfortunately, many community respondents to the Downtown Assessment survey indicate that downtown Storm Lake currently makes them feel blah, sad, uninspired and bored. Survey respondents indicate they want downtown Storm Lake to make them feel invited, energized, excited and happy. The Downtown Assessment team identified several actions that the community, together, can take to create the energizing and exciting downtown that the residents of Storm Lake are seeking.

In many communities, the streets and sidewalks portion of the public realm can equal 30 to 35 percent of the entire land area in a community. Communities have a finite amount of land available to support the local quality of life while providing the revenue necessary to maintain city operations and services. It is the responsibility of all, and to the benefit of all, that the community maximizes its return on investment in the public realm, including streets and sidewalks. Study after study has shown that downtown properties typically provide the greatest return on a property tax per acre basis. Below are some action steps that the Downtown Assessment team believes will enhance and leverage the public realm downtown to support the greatest return for the community while at the same time supporting the inviting, energizing and exciting downtown that residents of Storm Lake are seeking.

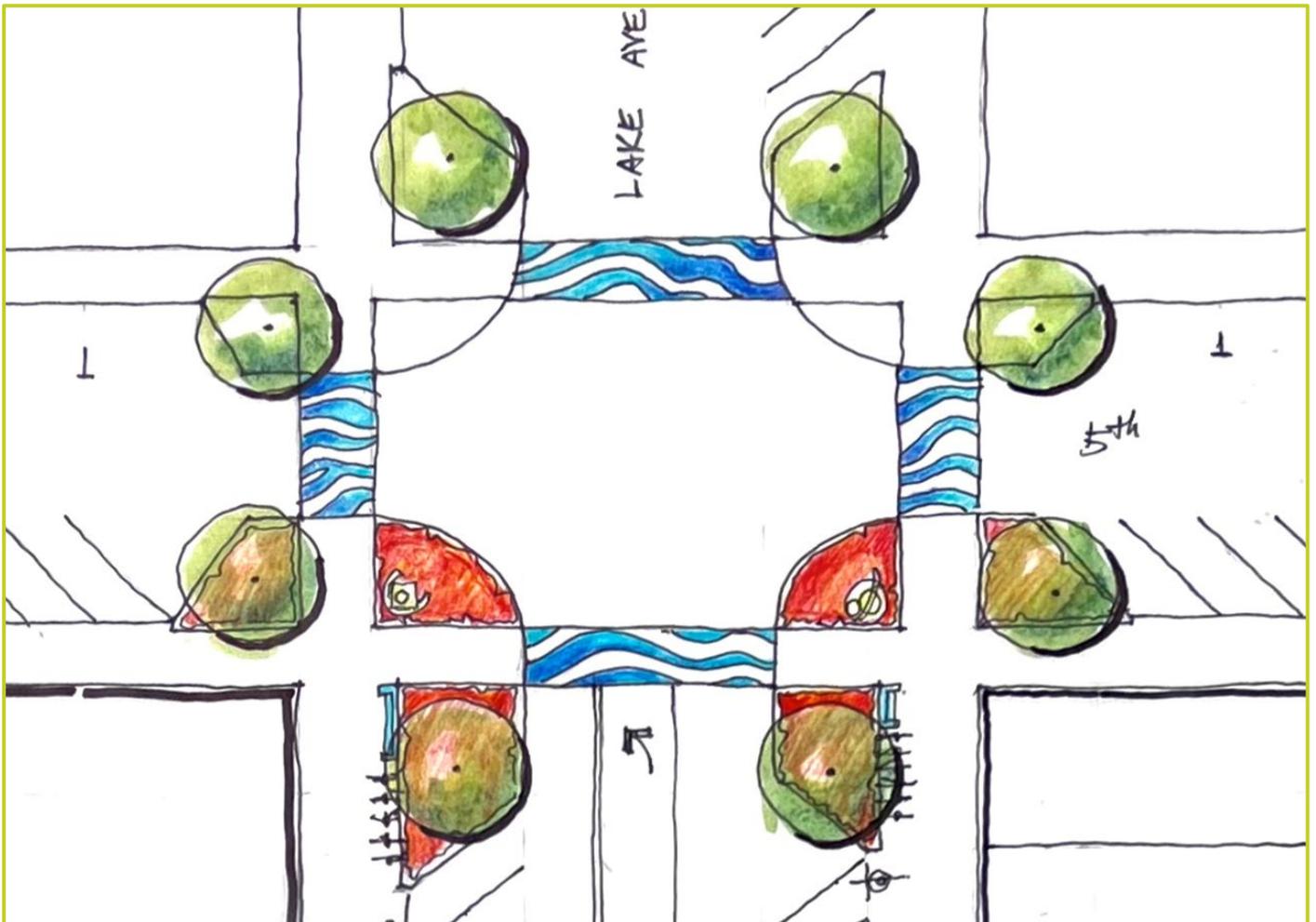
Storm Lake's Downtown [Master Plan](#) was well done and insightful and is a solid roadmap for future investment in downtown. Opportunities identified in the Downtown Master Plan should be implemented in a coordinated and integrated fashion as quickly as possible. The below action steps are listed from quickest and least expensive actions to more lengthy and more expensive actions. Many of these actions were also selected to serve as "quick win" actions to inspire and build momentum for future actions. These actions were also chosen as either complimentary to or chosen as foundational actions in support of the larger Downtown Master Plan the community adopted in 2022.

As these action steps are designed and implemented, keep in mind that these steps should build upon each other to serve the basic needs of downtown visitors while creating a welcoming, comfortable and convenient atmosphere. You also want to create a downtown of experiences that will create memories

and encourage visitors to explore, linger and return. Consider how the improvements to the public realm can be a treat for the senses such as art and window displays as a treat to the sense of sight; live and recorded music downtown play as a treat to the sense of hearing; and delectable smells from local bakeries and restaurants and street plantings to treat the sense of smell.

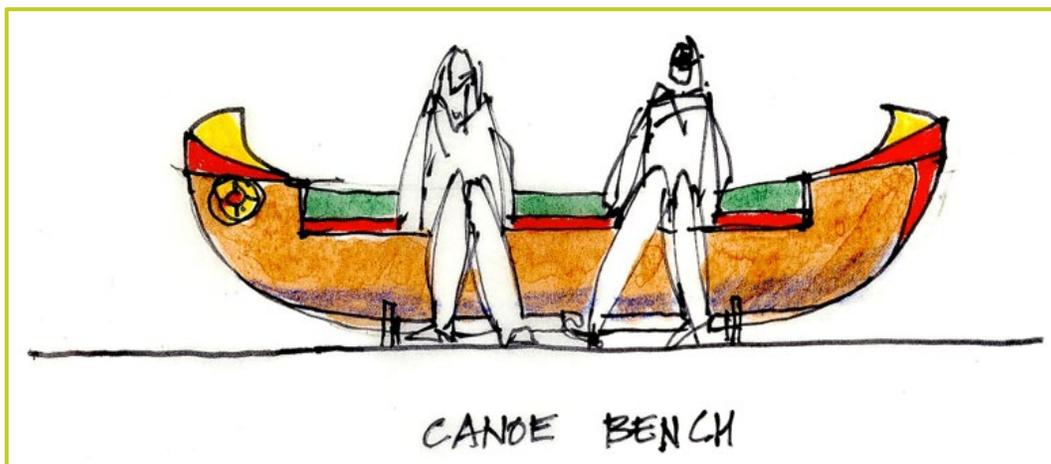
## ACTION STEPS

- **Maintenance** – Restripe the crosswalks and parking lines, pull the weeds, and repair curbs and access ramps. The repainting of the crosswalks creates an opportunity to add color, vibrancy and public art in downtown while improving pedestrian safety. Consider opportunities to create crosswalks that reflect a nautical theme by playing off the stripes seen in the community lighthouses or the sail theme in the public building wayfinding signs. Another option is to integrate the four local school mascots—beavers, tritons, panthers and tornadoes—into the crosswalk paintings.



**Seating** – Install seating frequently throughout downtown and in places where people are likely to gather. Do not place seating against storefront windows as that limits the ability of passersby to view inside the windows. The seating needs to be of high quality but does not need to be uniform. Consider artistic ways that seating might reflect a brand or identity unique to Storm Lake. Below is an idea for seating shaped like a canoe and the concept of creating a beach-like area for seating with chairs that double as a bag toss game. This beach-like seating concept may work well at a corner bump-out or in a downtown greenspace such as the space next to the Tropical Sno. Downtown seating was the most sought after downtown amenity in the pre-assessment survey with 80 (~52%) survey respondents selecting seating as the public amenity most needed downtown.

See page 44 of the [Downtown Master Plan](#) for more information on integrating seating and other amenities into downtown Storm Lake.



**Greenery** – Gather the community together for a “potluck” planting party, potluck meal representing the diverse foods of Storm Lake and celebrating the placement and planting of the new downtown planters. The planters should be planted with colorful vegetation, consistently maintained, and updated seasonally. Planters should not be limited to Lake Avenue. Include planters on other commercial streets in the historic downtown district. Until the existing raised concrete planters are phased out, improve and update the appearance of the planters by incorporating vining plants that will warm and enhance the look and feel of the concrete planters.

Consider utilizing vining plants such as sweet potatoes to create a colorful and edible landscape that might also benefit local food security efforts. Ames Main Street utilized edible plantings in their planters and produced more than 300 pounds of produce (picture below).

Adding an upright sculptural wrought iron piece inside the perimeter of the raised concrete planters might also provide a more updated or enhanced look. A plan to maintain the planters must be in place. Maintenance options may include city staff, city contracting with local youth or a service provider, garden clubs, 4-H or FFA club, or resident and business adoption of planters.



**Public Restrooms** – Establish designated public restrooms serving downtown. City hall and the courthouse may be good options for designated public restrooms. Install wayfinding signs downtown directing visitors to public restrooms.

**Music** – Add music downtown. Adding downtown music can help create a fun, festive atmosphere. Music can be added by installation of a simple speaker/public address system attached to downtown streetlight poles and purchasing a license with a music provider. Iowa communities with downtown music systems include Woodbine, De Witt, and Ida Grove (seasonally).

**Outdoor Dining** – Perhaps one of the “biggest bang for the buck” approaches to add vibrancy and excitement to a downtown is outdoor dining. Work with downtown food and beverage establishments to add outdoor dining. Adding outdoor dining can be as simple as a couple of small tables and a few chairs. Add some colorful plantings to define the outdoor space and add umbrellas for shade and you’ve quickly added outdoor rooms and excitement to a downtown.



**Trees** – Studies show that trees provide many benefits including, shade, habitat, stormwater management, and increased sales. There are two components to this recommended action step.



*(avoid planting trees in center of storefront)*

First, maintain and prune the existing street trees, especially the trees that are located in the center of existing businesses and blocking visibility to business storefronts and signs. Second, replace and add street trees throughout downtown. Key considerations are the right species in the right location with supportive planting infrastructure (access to air and water) and a long-term maintenance plan. Trees should be planted at intersections, community gathering locations and when as part of a streetscape should be planted at the outer edges of business buildings and not in the center of business storefronts. The city of [Des Moines](#) and [Iowa State University Extension](#) provide lists of recommended street trees.



*(plant trees at building/storefront edges)*



**Public Art** – Public art adds vibrancy, color, interest and memories to the downtown experience. The recent mosaic mural installations are fantastic. Identify opportunities to install public art downtown



that is unique to Storm Lake such as the miniature lighthouses, wood carving sculptures, and mosaic murals. As the Downtown Master Plan concepts are detailed for implementation, integrate public art elements into the streetscape infrastructure and amenities. Street and business signs, seating, receptacles, banners, planters, bike racks, crosswalks, etc. are all opportunities for integration of public art. See page 43 of the [Downtown Master Plan](#) for more information on integrating public art into downtown.

**Lake Avenue Median** – 80 percent of residents participating in development of the [Downtown Master Plan](#) favored converting Lake Avenue downtown from four lanes to three lanes. The Downtown Assessment team recommends considering converting Lake Avenue downtown from four lanes to two lanes with a center median and a turning lane at intersections. [See conceptual images on the following two pages.](#)

A center median would slow traffic, make backing out onto Lake Avenue easier and safer, make pedestrian crossings safer, reduce long-term street maintenance costs, and provide green space for trees, plantings, and public art. The use of a recessed median instead of a raised median would also provide an opportunity to demonstrate stormwater best management practices to mitigate local flooding and improve the quality of stormwater runoff from downtown before it reaches the lake. If all of downtown Lake Avenue is replaced, consider removing sidewalk curbs to increase accessibility and flexibility. This type of curb-less design is sometimes referred to as a woonerf and is becoming a popular design approach to creating flexible, festive streets. Woonerfs are currently being installed in the Czech Village area of Cedar Rapids and the East Village Market District of Des Moines (photo below).

**Examples of Woonerfs**  
(curb-less “festival street”)

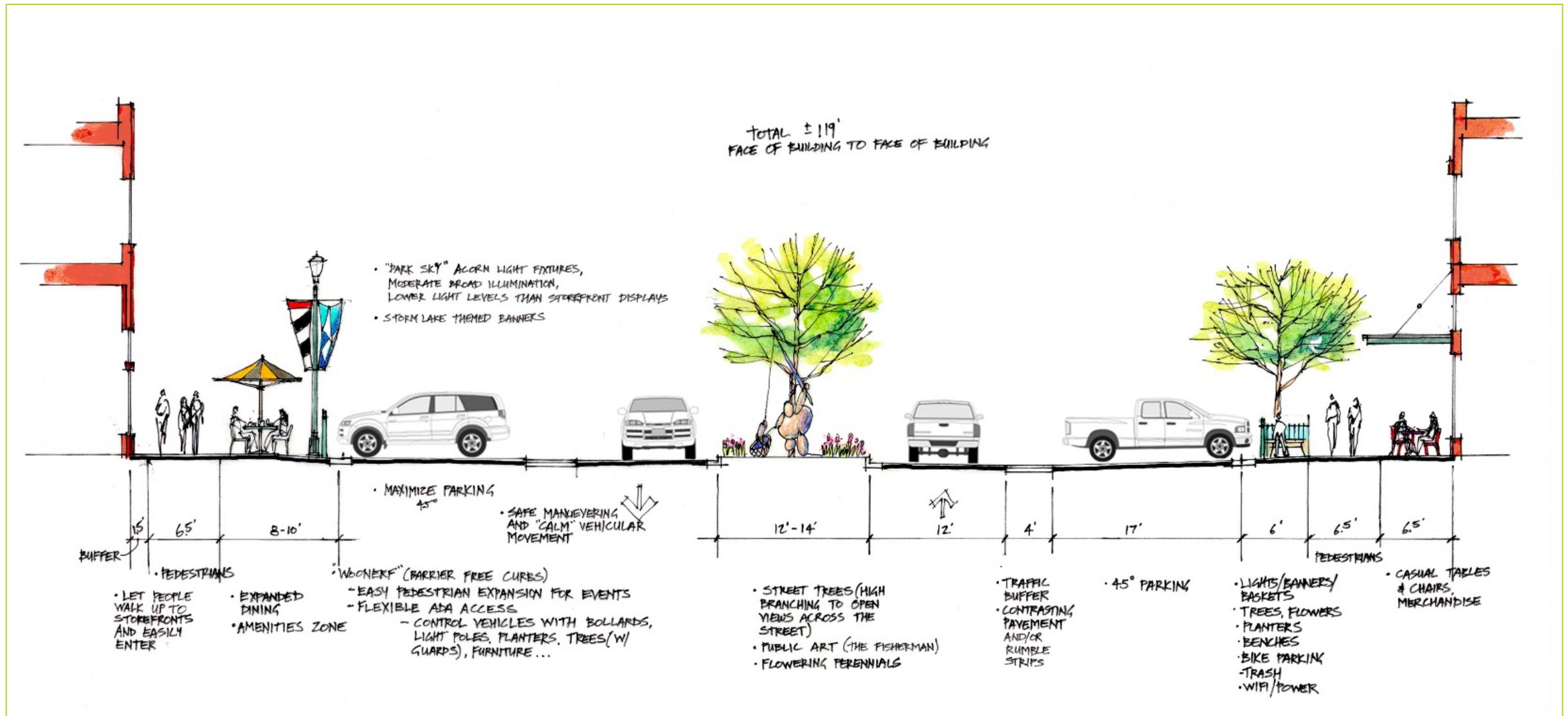
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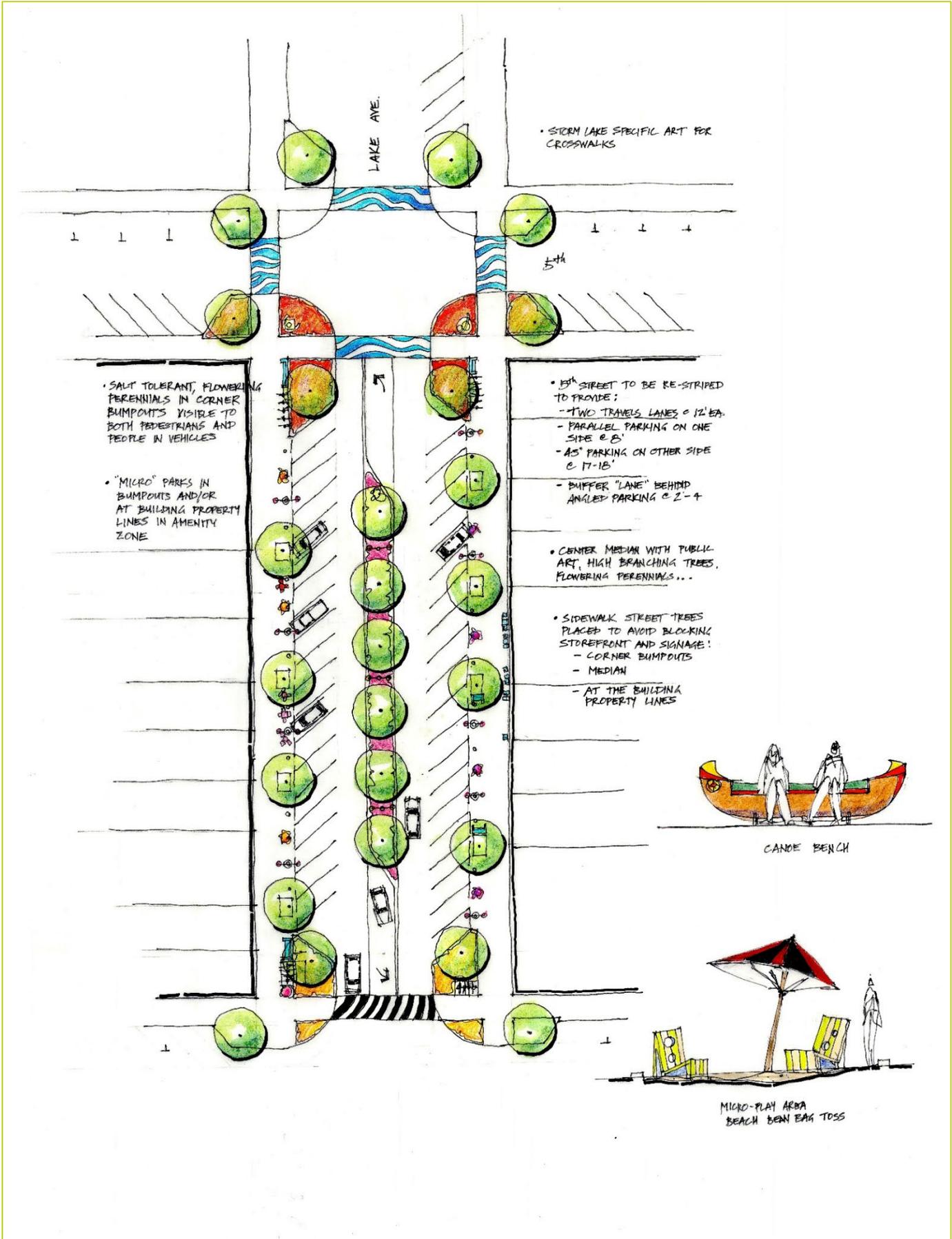


Indianapolis, IN



If there is hesitation to adding the center median, take a page out of the [Better Block](#) playbook and simply restripe the street to try out (temporarily) a center median. Perhaps paint the center median section a different color, temporarily place some public art at the start of the median such as some of the local wood sculpture carvings or scale lighthouses and temporarily bring in some large plants, pots or some trees from a local nursery to provide a sense of the impact a planted center median can have.





## THEME 3: CURB APPEAL

See Pages 49-51 of [Downtown Master Plan](#) for more information on facades and signage.

The general appearance of downtown is important to the overall vitality of the entire community. Downtown is a reflection of local community pride and is a major factor in the image of the entire community. The combination of restored building facades, unique signs, public art, appropriate landscaping and quality street furniture creates an inviting and aesthetically pleasing downtown environment. This inviting environment also encourages people to “linger longer” in the district providing businesses with more opportunities for sales.

Generally, Storm Lake’s downtown has very good character and quality. There are no large vacant lots, especially along Lake, that negatively impact walkability. Downtown storefronts are largely fully occupied. This gives downtown Storm Lake a good place to start. Therefore, visual improvements are generally more focused on enhancing the existing building character and creating amenities for shoppers, visitors and residents.



NO

- LOW BRANCHING
- DROPS FRUIT & BRANCHES
- PRONE TO SPLIT W/ ICE DAMAGE
- BLOCKS VIEWS
- DOESN'T GIVE MUCH SHADE

YES

- HIGH BRANCHING
- DURABLE
- DAPPLED SHADE
- DEEP ROOTS
- OAK, GINKGO, ELM, ...
- PROVIDE AIR & WATER EXCHANGE W/ SOILS, PERFORATED PIPE SYSTEM, GENEROUS PLANTING BEDS

- 3 M FILM GRAPHIC ON STREET LEVEL
- REMOVE SHINGLED OVERHANG & REVEL BRICK FACADE &/OR TRANSOM WINDOWS

• "CINEMATIC" MOZAIK W/ LIGHTING RIBBON

- ACCENT COLORS IN BOLD, CONTRASTING HUES
- AUGMENT ENTERTAINMENT VENUES SUCH AS VISTA THEATRE, RESTAURENTS... WITH ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS BOARD GAMES, THEME NIGHTS, LOCAL ARTIST PERFORMING (MUSIC, ART, ...)

This rendering illustrates the culmination of various recommended approaches and how it enhances downtown curb appeal. Using public art to enhance the altered storefront, relocating the marquee panels and additional entrance enhancements create a visually appealing and interesting façade that respects the traditional character and design of the building.

**Architecture** – Traditional downtown buildings have similar characteristics. These characteristics help create a friendly walkable environment. Most are constructed from brick or stone, often locally sourced and are one to three stories in height. The upper floors have a series of regularly spaced windows. Buildings typically have a regular rhythm of approximately 25' which creates a series of bays, or storefronts along the street. Many buildings are one bay in width. Often, multiple bays are combined into a single building. These characteristics create a regular rhythm and friendly scale along the street.



*The "ribbon effect" can be seen on these buildings on the east side of Lake. The visual impact of alterations to upper floor windows can be seen too. Even so, the buildings have good architectural characteristics that could be easily enhanced with appropriate treatment.*

Historic commercial buildings also included relatively tall storefront openings that included transom windows. These windows provided abundant natural light for the interiors. Over time, these transom window areas have been altered. Many have been covered or removed and replaced with oversized signs and mismatched siding. The interiors were changed with suspended ceilings to disguise new building systems including HVAC, plumbing and contemporary lighting. This often results in a "layer cake" look that visually separates the upper and lower facades of downtown buildings.



*On the west side of Lake, most of the upper windows fill their original openings. Alterations to the transom windows are visible but pic also includes examples of transom window restoration.*

## **ACTION STEPS**

- The ISG downtown masterplan plan should continue to be used as a guide. These documents should be widely available and shared with all businesses and property owners. As buildings change hands and new businesses open, the new owners should be briefed on these resources to help guide their investment.
- The Iowa Downtown Resource Center can also provide direction and assistance. Obtain copies of the [Downtown Design Guide](#) and use it as a reference tool to evaluate façade proposals. Any grants offered for façade improvements should be reviewed and evaluated according to these guidelines by a local review committee. This committee should be comprised of local staff and business representatives. Each member should be familiar with the desired principles and strategies.
- Create local grant programs specifically for downtown building improvements. Conduct an informal survey of building/business owners to determine what type of assistance is most needed and create specific parameters for eligible activities (façade improvements, signs/awnings, roofs, tuckpointing...). The program should emphasize good design and have guidelines attached. A scaled drawing or rendered photograph of the proposed changes and a written description of proposed work and materials should accompany any application. Require owner investment with a

1:1 match. Consider component incentives for example grants for specific types of improvements in certain grant cycles, for example, signs, paint, uncovering windows, etc.

- Perhaps, the most evident priority is to focus visual façade improvement programs on the transom window ribbon. Ideally the transom windows themselves would be restored. Alternatively, appropriately scaled awnings that fit within the traditional openings could be allowed. In cases where removing materials that cover a transom window/opening is challenging due to such things as dropped ceilings, a compatible sign panel may be an acceptable alternative but certainly should be contained to the width of the opening. Typically, materials should be removed and stripped down to the original façade wherever possible. Minimal alterations to the materials, color and scale of the façade should be used. Inappropriate alterations can sometimes be minimized by using a compatible color to the original façade.



*The three-bay building (upper right) shows how restoring the transom and using appropriate awning treatments enhance the original character of the entire façade. Alternatively, the Berg Jewelry building shows a sign that fills the transom ribbon with a sign and awning that are the right scale.*

- A mix of local and state incentives is typically effective to execute a successful building improvement program. Find the right building and apply for the Iowa Economic Development Authority's [Community Catalyst Building Remediation Grant](#). This program offers \$100,000 grants for rehabilitation of underutilized buildings. Downtown Storm Lake has many candidates.

The following programs are administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority for the redevelopment of existing downtown buildings.

- [Community Development Block Grant Downtown Revitalization](#)
- [Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program](#)
- [Community Development Block Grant Upper-Story Housing](#)
- [Nuisance Property and Abandoned Building Remediation](#)
- [State Historic Tax Credits](#)
- [Redevelopment Tax Credits for Brownfields & Grayfields](#)
- [Community Development Block Grant Covid \(CDBG-CV\)](#)
- [Community Catalyst Building Remediation](#)

**Storefronts** – Storefronts are an integral part of a pedestrian friendly downtown. The storefront serves as an invitation for customers to come into a store by showing off merchandise in the windows and directing flow to the entrance. Generally transparent, a storefront helps break down the barrier between the inside of the store and the sidewalk. The top of the storefront has a beam or header to support the upper façade. Visual treatments to the header should also be considered when planning storefront improvements.



*Examples of traditional storefronts in Storm Lake. Both are largely transparent and include traditional transom windows. They also incorporate traditional awning treatments – on the left side with an operable awning and the right with a fixed awning. Either awning treatment is appropriate.*

A typical storefront is also around 24' in width. When placed side by side in a continuous block face, this transparency and regular rhythm and scale helps create a more walkable, inviting district. It is important to maintain this rhythm and scale in the downtown area as a way to encourage strolling and window shopping. Currently Lake Street has a very nice storefront rhythm without any large blank walls or gaps between stores. Maintain the traditional rhythm and transparency of all storefronts along Lake Street regardless of use. Maintaining the traditional rhythm and character of the facades should be a primary goal for the district. Require transparent storefronts for any incentive programs.

## **ACTION STEPS**

- Adopt the Iowa Economic Development Authority's [Downtown Design Guidelines](#) for allowable storefront treatments in Storm Lake, especially regarding transom window areas. Guidelines should include acceptable treatment choices for individual storefront elements, especially the transom window ribbon. Adherence to the guidelines should be mandatory for any incentives used in the district. Some items to incorporate include:
  - Maintain storefront windows including recessed entrances.
  - Remove materials from original masonry piers to reinforce the streetscape rhythm. The piers are important to help reinforce the scale and rhythm of the storefronts.
  - Restore transom windows where possible with glass. New transoms can be clear glass, tinted glass or even leaded/stained glass. Signs can be integrated into traditional transoms as well.
  - Any siding or solid materials used in the transom area should be limited to the original defined opening. The panels themselves can incorporate well scaled signs, traditional awnings, decorative lights or a combination.
  - Treatment of structural beams/headers should be included as well. Exposed cast iron beams are common. Decorative trim is also common especially for Victorian era buildings to coordinate with a decorative cornice. Gooseneck lights can be mounted here. A flush mounted sign panel could also be used to disguise structural components. Traditional awnings are also commonly mounted to these structural beams as well.

The guidelines also address areas like signs, which are discussed in more detail below, as well as treatment for the upper façade, especially the window openings.

The ISG plan includes two examples of storefront treatments – one for traditional storefronts and one for more contemporary storefronts (below). These also provide good basic principles to start with..



Storefront treatment strategies as outlined in the ISG plan. These graphics are pages 50 and 51 of the [Downtown Master Plan](#).

This



- UPPER FLOORS IN GOOD CONDITION EXCEPT FOR WINDOW INFILLS & THRU-THE-WALL AC
- WINDOW TRIM, CANOPIES, DOORS TO CONTRAST WITH EX. HISTORIC BRICK AND STONE
- 60/30/10 RULE: 60% PRIMARY MASONRY MATERIAL, 30% SECONDARY WINDOWS/CANOPIES..., 10% ACCENTS/SIGNAGE

- FOCUS ON TRANSOMS. REMOVE IN-FILL SIGNAGE AND RESTORE WINDOWS. TRANSOM WINDOWS BRING NATURAL LIGHT DEEP INTO DARK, NARROW SPACES
- IF REMOVING TRANSOM IN-FILL IS NOT FEASIBLE THEN COVER IN APPROPRIATE MATERIAL WITH CANOPIES OR INTEGRATED SIGNAGE

- INTEGRATE SIGNAGE LOCATION, COLORS, SCALE, FORM ... WITH HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE
- GIVE SOME "LOVE & RESPECT" TO RESIDENTIAL ENTRIES (ADDRESS, ICON, OPEN TRANSOM WINDOW, OPEN VIEW GLASS PERIOD APPROPRIATE DOORS, FLOWER POT...)

rendering shows simple strategies that can be used to enhance facades downtown. The strategies are similar for most traditional commercial buildings. These strategies generally focus on respecting the traditional façade designs including filling all window openings (including the entire storefront) with glass. Color palettes are consistent on each individual façade for the storefront and window trims to create a consistent appearance and eliminate the "layer cake" look that is created with inappropriate treatment to the transom window ribbon.

**Signs** – Signs are critically important to a successful retail establishment. A good sign not only identifies the business, but it also communicates to potential customers about the nature of the business itself. There are different types of signs that work at different scales - main identifying signs, pedestrian scaled signs and informational signs. They should all work together when communicating to customers to create an interesting image about the business.

Signs are also a form of public art on the streetscape. Unique and interesting signs add to the overall ambience and character of a commercial district.



*Examples of projecting signs and sign brackets. Projecting signs can be a primary sign for street visibility or more pedestrian scaled to help locate and identify a particular business along the sidewalk.*

Currently, the City has a plan to add smaller projecting pedestrian scaled signs in downtown. The plan is to provide the brackets for individual businesses to install their own individual sign. This is generally a good idea so long as variety and uniqueness is encouraged. The City should approve a variety of sign bracket installations including suspending from canopies/awnings, simple functional brackets and ornamental brackets. The bracket should be considered an integral part of the sign design and reflect the character and image of the business.

## ACTION STEPS

- Provide business owners with graphic design services, including logo and sign design as part of any sign grant program. Matching an artist/designer with a fabricator can improve signs in the district. This could be another possible partnership between BVU, the City and the businesses downtown. BVU art students could be a potential source for graphic design services. Encourage unique signs that include three dimensional components to add more character and depth to individual signs.



*Examples of dimensional signs, both projecting and flush mounted.*

- This year, the Iowa Downtown Resource Center’s [“Downtown Forums”](#) are focused on signs. The nearest forum will be in Pocahontas on June 26, 2024. Storm Lake should send a number of representatives to this forum. Attendees should be City staff as well as business representatives.
- Stores also incorporate informational and other signs that add to the overall customer experience. These include things like store hours, details of brands, product lines or other features about the business and signs for sales or other daily specials offered including things like menus. These signs include window graphics, posters and sandwich boards. All of these items need to be included and encouraged as part of Storm Lake’s downtown sign program.



*Examples of window graphics and secondary signs. Temporary sidewalk displays help add to the character and ambience of the district.*

**Window Displays/Lighting** – Merchandise displays help add to the overall ambience of a district. Good window displays encourage strolling and window shopping. Interior merchandise displays can help draw customers into and through the store to linger longer and buy more products. Window displays also act as an inexpensive 24-hour form of advertising for a business by showing customers the image and identity of the individual store.

Window displays should be lit at night, at least in the evening hours. Also lighting the interior of a retail store can also attract attention as well as provide some additional security. Having storefronts illuminated helps encourage evening strolls by making the entire district more inviting. Window displays should be lit every evening until 9:00 or 10:00 PM regardless of store hours. Storefronts with tinted windows should be illuminated at ALL times to help potential customers see the products displayed. Even office or service businesses should have some type of window displays and should illuminate them.

## **ACTION STEPS**

- Hold educational workshops/seminars regarding window displays and visual merchandising. These workshops are generally quite popular with business owners.

- Add window displays to the list of topics/issues the BVU students could select for their annual community service activities. The high schools could also be a good source for some local artistic talent to put their skills to use.
- Recognize businesses that do an exemplary job with their displays and merchandise presentation. This can be as simple as recognition in the newspaper or a traveling trophy. A window display contest coupled with another downtown event is also a simple way to acknowledge good merchandising.



*Window display examples.*

*Notice the importance of nighttime illumination.*

**Details** - Traditional downtown buildings include interesting architectural features and construction details that are no longer incorporated into contemporary buildings. These interesting elements add another layer to the character of historic downtowns. Storm Lake is no exception to this and exhibits a number of interesting construction details.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- Capitalize on this to help build additional excitement and interest in downtown. Architectural scavenger hunts are one simple way to build this excitement. This is as simple as taking a number (12-16 typically) of photos of unique design elements from various buildings in the downtown district and creating a flier illustrating them. Use these fliers during downtown retail events to add another activity – especially for children and spouses – to keep people lingering in the district longer.



*Examples of unique architectural details in downtown Storm Lake.*

## THEME 4: BUILDING REHAB AND HOUSING

Downtown housing is important for a vibrant downtown, especially upper floor housing. Upper floor housing helps provide additional revenue for property owners and increases property values. Downtown residents also add a “24 hour” component to the district that adds additional vibrancy and activity at all hours.



Storm Lake has a number of upper floor units, however no one seemed to have any hard data about the number of units, occupancy levels or the price points for these units. The team heard a number of concerns about residents occupying prime parking spaces keeping them from customers.

### ACTION STEPS

- Survey the entire district to establish the number of existing upper floor residential units, their location, and which buildings have underutilized upper floor spaces that could be redeveloped into additional housing. This data can help when developing policies for downtown especially as it relates to parking and parking management.
- Hold downtown open houses/tours of residential spaces. Include various price points and even show spaces that have yet to be redeveloped. These activities help build additional excitement about downtown living opportunities.

**Parking** – For every downtown commercial district, there isn’t a topic that can be more controversial than parking. Basically, this issue comes down to two major elements – the amount of parking available, and the management of parking rules and regulations. Who should use the available parking spots, how long should limits be, and what kinds of enforcement and penalties should exist for violators?

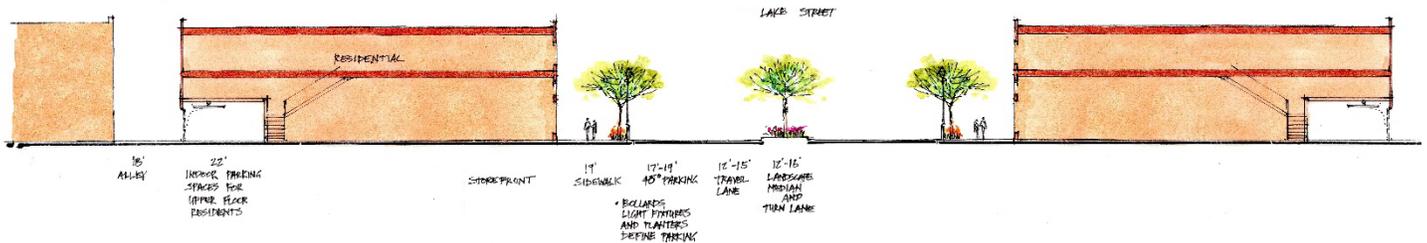
Storm Lake seems to have an adequate supply of parking downtown and minimal parking regulations, including time limits. On street parking is generally plentiful, with most areas having diagonal parking



and other side streets with parallel spots on each side of the street. There are also spots available in public lots on each side of Lake Street behind the buildings.

The largest issue the team heard regarding parking in downtown Storm Lake was the perception that residents regularly occupy on street spots blocking them for shoppers. Accommodating parking for downtown residents is critical for a strong and diverse downtown residential market.

Often, residential parking is provided on site behind the buildings in the area between the buildings and the alley. However, in Storm Lake most of the downtown buildings extend almost all the way to the alley, limiting opportunities for onsite tenant parking behind the buildings.



*The sketch shows this concept of covered garage parking at the rear of buildings.*

## ACTION STEPS

- Providing immediately accessible covered parking to an apartment/condo unit is a nice amenity that can increase monthly rental rates and improve the desirability of the units. Providing covered parking in downtown is difficult but is completely possible by integrating garages at the rear of some existing buildings. Assess the opportunities to convert the rear areas of buildings off the alley for potential parking garages for tenants. Also assess if there are other opportunities in the district that might be able to provide covered parking for tenants, perhaps a multi-purpose carport type structure in a public lot. This could double as a shelter for farmers market or other vendor spaces during events or simply as shaded seating for attendees of the special event. Perhaps dedicated garage spaces in underused buildings can serve this purpose. These are most likely to be industrial type buildings

along or near the railroad tracks or on the edges of the district. These spots would have limited desirability based on their proximity to any residential unit.

- Another strategy to consider is the use of a hang tag or sticker for downtown residents. The City provided the stickers to the landlords for individual units. The sticker system would allow residents to park in designated stalls, including overnight and snow alerts, in various locations in the district, possibly even on Lake. These stalls should be distributed throughout the downtown to provide parking that is a short distance from individual units. For instance, one row in each public lot could be designated for overnight residents at all times. Keep these stalls clustered close together to help with snow removal. Revenue generated from hang tag fees could subsidize the additional costs of snow removal that may be needed to accommodate this special group of downtown parkers. A simple way to designate these spots could be painting the curbs or marking stalls designated as available for downtown residents.
- The ISG Downtown plan also addressed parking and suggested various strategies regarding downtown parking. A survey was conducted and determined that parking supply was generally adequate, and the focus should be on management. The strategies outlined are valid and should be reviewed and implemented as deemed appropriate.

## THEME 5: ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

“WHAT IS DOWNTOWN’S GREATEST STRENGTH?” The survey response showed that your diverse business mix is highly valued. Downtown Storm Lake has a strong variety of locally owned buildings and long-time small businesses. During the Interview process, we heard accounts of businesses downtown with a presence since . . .1913, the 1950s, for more than 25 years. Longstanding business brands are a true asset and sustain traffic patterns to downtown. Along with those long-time businesses come experienced business owners, managers, and employees who can be powerful mentors.



**Biz to Biz Partnerships** – Business-to-business mentoring and partnerships are quietly working, but at this nexus of change and reassessment, connecting and building relationships with new businesses and long-time businesses in a systematic way enhances downtown sustainability (ex: create a private Retailers Facebook account or organize a business card shower for a new business and meet face-to-face for a quick win). Brainstorm other ways to connect with new entrepreneurs.

### ACTION STEPS

- Establish an action group that evaluates opportunity for advertising and marketing Downtown Storm Lake. Ask the Chamber to highlight Downtown as a destination during Lake events, work with the City and the Chamber to re-energize the business expansion grants tied to low-interest revolving loan funds. Signage grants with design guidelines are also good ways to create instant relationships with new business owners and assist with overall design integrity in downtown. Deepening Biz to Biz relationships will pay dividends for the overall sustainability of Downtown Storm Lake.
- Connect with BVU - The Foundry - as staffing changes occur this summer, exploring additional ways the incubator might assist with re-energizing the downtown business climate, coordinating with new business owners (especially those from varied cultural backgrounds) to deliver practical information about small business best practices, connecting them with regional and state resources. (The Interview Sessions revealed many who weren't sure what The Foundry did.) The Foundry building front area might be a great venue to host “pop-up” businesses trying out a business plan.

- The business retention issues the Team heard about during the Interview sessions could potentially be remedied with early mentoring. Increased rates of turnover have negative impacts on the overall brand and public confidence in Downtown Storm Lake. The students who took part in the interview sessions (both High School and University) were eager to be part of action groups. Take advantage of this demographic segment brimming with ideas and energy.
- Emphasize the Downtown as a separate and distinct destination from the lake. Create a subsidiary brand & logo for Downtown Storm Lake using the existing City logo as a design guide.

**Downtown Events vs Lakeside Events** – Many of your important “anchor” traditions and community events take place lakeside...it’s the natural (and smart) place to hold them. The beautiful green stretch of parks at the Lake is an enviable setting and sets Storm Lake apart from other Iowa communities.

## **ACTION STEPS**

- The Downtown Storm Lake planning focus should expand retail promotions and “feet in street” events specifically supporting retail and dining. (A majority of those events would be in the main avenue (street and sidewalks in front of businesses – not so much in rear parking lots). Those locations cut off the energy and purpose of business promotion by locating them in out of the way spaces. Your downtown storefronts are the primary “stage” for promotions and events to leverage nearby open businesses.
- There were many comments about favorite events where the streets were closed downtown: Halloween, “Band Day,” Christmas. These are banner events and bring out a diverse mix of community members. We heard from several groups hungry for more Storm Lake family and neighbor “coming together” events, especially for families with younger children. In fact, several said they usually go “out of town” for birthday party sites and other family entertainment. What better place to fill that void and create memories than in Downtown?
- Image-building Events for Downtown can be as simple as celebrating the new planters downtown (and continuing the “planting” tradition each May Day) by holding a midwestern tradition with a twist: a multi-cultural POT-luck, recognizing diversity, eating on the sidewalks, planting, cleaning, painting

crosswalks or a small mural, sharing a diverse menu with community. Any improvement or change downtown could be a celebratory event, attracting citizens who support their community and are eager to be part of improvements.

**Implementation: Now what? Where do we begin?** Use the Downtown Assessment 2024 and the [Downtown Master Plan 2023](#) as Downtown Storm Lake stakeholders prioritize actionable goals. Both documents are a visual and narrative road map, so get them into the hands of diverse groups of interested community members – from downtown business owners to community volunteers, education & industry, city elected officials and staff. The Assessment and the Master Plan are not City documents – they’re Community documents.



### ACTION STEPS

- Have printed copies available in various places around Downtown – one in each business. Both can be digital downloads on City website for accessibility. Consider holding a live session to reveal the Assessment at an in-person workshop or meeting. This could be an important initial step for an Action Plan and Priority identification to create shared understanding immediately.
- During the Interview sessions, the Assessment Team heard from many parties of a critical need for reorganization of Downtown Storm Lake stakeholders with a goal of re-setting roles and responsibilities. Don't rely on a single organization to carry the load (example: City of Storm Lake or Chamber). Successful downtown revitalization uses a broad group of citizen-leaders to create impacts over a series of years. *Where do you see yourself making the most impact? Do you know someone who might be an asset to action?* It's natural to rely on the "way we always did it" but change will be instrumental to progress.
  - Community Leaders & Residents
  - Downtown Business
  - City Staff & Council
  - Nonprofit Development Grp
  - Chamber & Action Committees
  - Education: staff & students
  - Large Employers & Industry

- The assessment report includes much practical information, resources, and guidance for building Steering Committees, a Downtown Association or Retail Group, Chamber Task Forces for identified priorities. We heard from several dedicated and active community groups working on community



projects; it will take creative realignments to move forward with downtown improvements. Include those organizations and leaders with an established itinerary of community projects and weave their annual plan into downtown needs. They may be willing to re-locate existing activities or events in the downtown district, creating a mutually beneficial traffic layer and added energy.

- Identifying Priorities and Action Planning is foundational to downtown and community development, but Communication before, during, and at completion is a critical implementation step. Be intentional and include communication in every step to build buy-in and trust. Momentum will lean heavily on dedicated leaders organizing task groups and action groups. Success will advance with frequent & creative communication and progress updates. Social media should not be the only method of broad and focused community news sharing – be creative as celebrations and wins occur.

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***“Downtown is the crossroads to everywhere else in Storm Lake.”***

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- The statement above was a direct quote in one of the sessions. The Assessment Team thought it was a perfect way to frame downtown opportunities for Storm Lake. The Survey Responses and the Interview Sessions from Storm Lake citizens supported your fierce pride of place, blue-collar can-do character, and optimism in the future.

## PRIORITIES

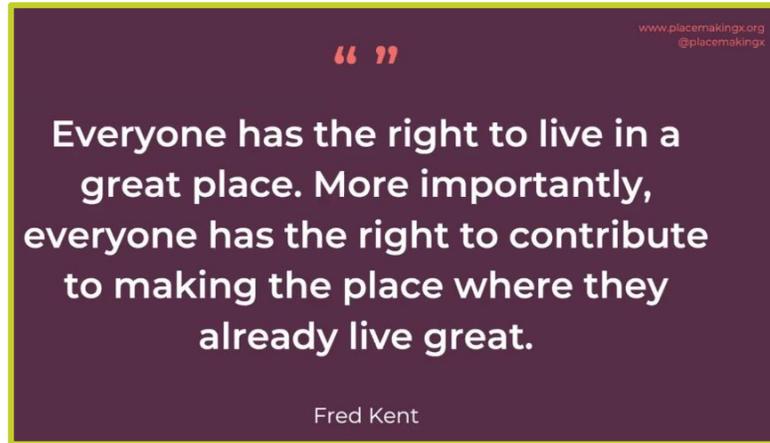
The Assessment team encourages Storm Lake to prioritize projects listed in this report and other opportunities we feel are of importance.

Theme #	Immediate Priorities: (0-6 months)
2	Restripe crosswalks and parking lines; repair curbs and access ramps
2	Pull weeds; develop a plan for continued weed maintenance
2	Develop interesting crosswalks
3	Adopt IEDA's Downtown Design Guidelines and tie to local grant programs
3	Attend Downtown Forums: Power of the Sign
5	Recognize businesses that do outstanding merchandising: via media or traveling trophy
5	Establish action group that evaluates advertising and marketing opportunities
5	Develop series of 4 image building events. Start with a POT-luck celebrating new pots
5	Create ideas to get results of masterplan and this assessment report to the public
Theme #	One Year Priorities (0-12 months)
1	Develop downtown entry/directional signage
2	Install downtown seating
2	Develop planting plan: Incremental
2	Public art plan
3	Evaluate/create local building rehab grants/Consider component grants/Sign grant
3	Apply for Community Catalyst Building Remediation Grant (IEDA)
3	Workshops and mentoring programs for merchandising and window displays
3	Develop an architectural scavenger hunt
4	Survey/audit the upper stories in downtown Storm Lake
5	Business to Business mentoring; Retailers Facebook account; Business card shower
5	Meeting for all stakeholder groups; Define roles and ways to plug into masterplan

<b>Theme#</b>	<b>Longer term Projects: (0-24 months)</b>
1	Add bike parking amenities to include bikers to explore downtown on foot
2	Public restrooms and wayfinding to those restrooms
2	Downtown speaker system/music
2	Work with restaurants to add downtown dining
3	Reimagine/plan for downtown street trees with proper placement
3	Graphic design services to improve logo and sign design
4	Covered parking for residents where possible
4	Hang tag systems for upper story residents that allows for parking overnight
5	Incrementally add retail promotions (perhaps seasonally) in the downtown
5	Develop special event for families in the downtown
<b>Theme#</b>	<b>Down the Road....but plan now: (24 months +)</b>
1	Use quality design to establish the corner of Lake and Milwaukee as the gateway
2	Plan for conversion of Lake Avenue (downtown) from four to three or two lanes
5	Create subsidiary brand/logo for downtown Storm Lake

## CLOSING

It was a pleasure for our team to work in Storm Lake. The community has enthusiastic volunteers and leaders that will make a difference. We hope this visit and report can assist in building a solid plan for downtown projects and improvements. We encourage leaders, organizations and volunteers to work collaboratively. Focus on projects that you get excited about. We are here for continued support. Good luck!



## CONTACTS

Iowa Downtown Resource Center, IEDA, .....	515.348.6180
.....	<a href="https://www.iowaeda.com/downtown-resource-center/">https://www.iowaeda.com/downtown-resource-center/</a>
Keep Iowa Beautiful .....	515.323.6507
.....	<a href="https://www.keeptowabeautiful.com">https://www.keeptowabeautiful.com</a>
ISU Iowa Community Indicators Program Retail Analysis.....	<a href="http://www.icip.iastate.edu/retail">http://www.icip.iastate.edu/retail</a>
Certified Local Governments, State Historic Society of Iowa .....	515.281.6826
CDBG Downtown Revitalization Program .....	515.348.6208
.....	<a href="https://www.iowaeda.com/cdbg/downtown-revitalization-fund/">https://www.iowaeda.com/cdbg/downtown-revitalization-fund/</a>

### National and State Preservation Services and Programs:

National Trust for Historic Preservation .....	<a href="http://www.preservationnation.org">www.preservationnation.org</a>
Main Street America (Main Street America Network Membership) .....	<a href="https://www.mainstreet.org">https://www.mainstreet.org</a>
National Park Service Preservation Briefs .....	<a href="https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm">https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm</a>
State Historic Preservation Office .....	<a href="http://www.iowahistory.org">www.iowahistory.org</a>

- Storm Lake Downtown Assessment Survey Results
- Storm Lake Design Renderings
- Trees Mean Business: City Trees and the Retail Streetscape
- Creative Placemaking Manual
- Design Guidelines
- Retail Events
- Preservation Brief: Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts
- Signs & Awnings for Downtowns
- Upper Story Housing Benefits
- Characteristics of a Successful Downtown
- CDBG-Downtown Revitalization Grant Overview
- Community Catalyst Grant Fact Sheet
- Transom Windows