



Downtown Dothan *Master Plan*



City of Dothan, Alabama

May, 2007

CITY OF DOTHAN, ALABAMA

DOWNTOWN DOTHAN MASTER PLAN Final Draft Report

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prepared by

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Preface

The Dothan Downtown Master Plan is the result of a highly interactive eleven-month process between the HNTB team and Dothan Community. The overall intent of the study was to formulate a plan and implement a strategy to guide the Downtown's future, focusing efforts on revitalization and economic development. We extend our sincere appreciation to individuals and organizational leaders who, through their determination and perseverance, are shining lights on the future of downtown and its important role in the community, county and region.

We also offer our praise to the Dothan City Manager, Mike West, for having the insight to initiate the downtown Master Planning effort and partnering with key stakeholders to join the project. Additional thanks are extended to Todd McDonald and Steve Spry for their oversight as well as the Dothan Chamber of Commerce, Houston County, Dothan Downtown Group, Wiregrass Museum and greater Dothan community for their participation.

Downtown Dothan Executive Summary

In June 2006, the City of Dothan retained HNTB to help the community prepare a revitalization study for the future—a long term plan with an ultimate horizon of 15 to 20 years. HNTB was hired not only to develop a plan for the future of Downtown, but to craft a vision through a consensus-building process that involved the community, key stakeholders in the Downtown, and Dothan leadership.

The purpose of this plan is to create a framework for the redevelopment of Downtown Dothan. This document aims to create an implementable plan that outlines policies and actions for downtown revitalization.

“Downtown” is often synonymous with life, culture, and economic activity. Unfortunately, many towns and cities have lost their historic mix of activity, density, and uses, and the label often no longer carries as many positive connotations. Throughout the twentieth century, the rise of the automobile facilitated disinvestment in downtowns. As destinations became more auto-oriented it became increasingly difficult for town centers to provide for vehicles while maintaining their urban and architectural infrastructure. Often downtown became a less attractive place while development and investment moved to the periphery of cities. Although each municipality’s story is different, many share these common issues.

Dothan has weathered many of these experiences. The most significant event for the downtown was the construction of Ross Clark Circle. The creation of vehicular bypasses has been a common impetus for economic migration out of many city centers. Although the construction of Dothan’s ring road brought development to the edges of the city, it did so to the detriment of the downtown. In addition to creating opportunities for new development, the ring road has provided a route for traffic around the city rather than through it. This, of course, has reduced traffic congestion within the central city, but it has also reduced the potential for business viability along the major routes in and out of the city.



Historic photograph of Foster Street at Main Street. *Photograph from Slingluff United Insurance website gallery.*



Current photograph of Foster Street at Main Street.



Old Theater on Main Street.



1920's aerial view of Downtown Dothan. *Photograph from Slingluff United Insurance website gallery.*

Whatever the benefits or difficulties the ring road has created, it is an aspect of the city that needs to be recognized in order for the downtown to be revitalized. Partially because of the ring road, but because of many factors as well, Dothan's downtown will never be what it once was. It will not be the commercial heart of the city where residents go for all of their shopping needs. In an age of big-box retail with convenient parking, Dothan's downtown is not well positioned to compete with major retail areas. To be successful, Dothan's downtown needs to reinvent itself.



Dothan Civic Center

Downtown Dothan has significant advantages that can be capitalized upon to make the city center stronger. As the county seat, it is the home of the courts and resultant supporting businesses. Various municipal functions and facilities are located in the downtown, including the civic center. The downtown has important cultural amenities, including the opera house, the Wiregrass Art Museum, the G.W. Carver Interpretive Museum, many murals, as well as historic and architectural heritage. Dothan is also a crossroads. It is a point on a route to the Gulf beaches and a hub for southeastern Alabama, southwestern Georgia, and northern Florida. There are significant businesses located in the vicinity and nearby Fort Rucker is an important federal facility. In short, Dothan has a wealth of opportunity. The challenge is to revitalize by taking strategic advantage of the city's assets.



Wiregrass Museum of Art

Section 1: Introduction

1.1: Goals

Given this context, this plan aims to:

- **Stimulate the revitalization of downtown Dothan** by promoting private and public sector investment opportunities.
- **Foster downtown Dothan as a ‘people place’** through the development of a safe, clean, compact and pedestrian-friendly environment.
- **Strengthen the role of the downtown** as the focal point for culture, entertainment, public administration, and business activity in the region.
- **Provide a framework** for the future allocation of financial resources in the downtown area.
- **Ensure that City planning and development policies** are conducive to development in the downtown area.
- **Create a comprehensive and orderly management system** that balances the demand for long and short term parking in downtown Dothan.
- **Cultivate an image of downtown Dothan** as an active prosperous focal point of the community by facilitating aesthetic and functional improvements to the area.



Poplar Head Park



Aerial view of Downtown Dothan

1.2: Study Area and Context

For the purposes of this master plan, downtown Dothan is bordered by Chickasaw Street and the railroad adjacent to Depot Street on the north, Lena Street on the west, the railroad spur north of Crawford Street and parts of Crawford Street on the south, and on the east by Holman Street in the southern portion extending further east to encompass the railroad spur warehouses then back to Cherry Street and back to a line between North Appletree Street and North College Street. See **Map 1** for the study area boundaries.

This area was defined for study because it encompasses the commercial areas of the downtown as well as areas that present significant opportunities for redevelopment. On the north, the railroad acts as a boundary.

Chickasaw Street serves to extend the northern boundary because the area further north of it relates almost exclusively to Oates Street and not the downtown commercial area. Just to the south of Chickasaw Street and east of Oates Street is a substantial opportunity for redevelopment that can relate to the downtown. Lena Street was chosen as the western boundary because it separates the commercial and office uses along the Oates Street corridor and residential uses further to the west.

Although the railroad in the southern portion of the study area would seem to form a boundary, there are important commercial areas and opportunities for redevelopment south of the railroad that relate to downtown and, therefore, these areas have been included in the study area. The properties along Crawford generally are still commercial, the area south of this is primarily residential, and the boundary was chosen to reflect these uses. The boundary was chosen to reflect these uses.



Southeast Alabama Medical Center

The area east of Holman Street does not strongly relate to the downtown. North of East Street, the study area extends further to the east because there are warehouses and vacant properties that may provide good opportunities for redevelopment that can enhance the downtown area. The eastern boundary was defined so as to include commercial properties and vacant areas but not to include areas that are primarily residential. In short, the study area represents the downtown commercial core.



Flowers Hospital

Within the ring road, commercial activity is located along major arterials: Main Street (US 84), Oates Street (US 231), and Reeves Street (US 431). The remainder of the city is comprised primarily of residential neighborhoods.



Sony Magnetic Products

Major businesses within Dothan and in the near vicinity include the Southeast Alabama Medical Center, Flowers Hospital, and Sony Magnetic Products. These are strong contributors to the local economy. Southeast Alabama Medical Center is the closest to the downtown and has the greatest potential impact on the study area. Within the downtown, employers include WTVY-TV, Houston County and federal courts, law firms, the Dothan Eagle newspaper, and other businesses.

1.3: Organization and Context

The Downtown Dothan Master Plan is organized into seven parts as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Downtown Dothan Planning Process
- Section 3: Research and Observation
- Section 4: Downtown Summary Analysis
- Section 5: Implementing the Master Plan
- Section 6: Economic Development
- Section 7: Implementation

Section 2: Downtown Dothan Planning Process

2.1: The Planning Team

The planning team was led by HNTB Corporation in conjunction with Dothan city staff and in consultation with Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia (South Carolina) Development Corporation.

2.2: Listening Process

Community input was an important part of the planning process. HNTB met with City staff and the Downtown Group to discuss issues and all applicable aspects of the downtown. Meetings were also held with downtown business leaders, community representatives, and other downtown stakeholders. In addition, HNTB conducted one-on-one interviews with various members of the downtown community. These activities occurred over a year-long process:

Trip 1: Kick-off Meeting, June 2006

- Reconnaissance
- Field Work
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Meeting with Core Working Group-Steering Committee

Trip 2: Preliminary Presentations, October 2006

- Meetings with Stakeholders
- Presentations
 - Steering Committee
 - City Commission
- Community Input

Trip 3: Refinement of Ideas, December 2006

- Meetings
- Public Presentation at City Hall
- Project Briefing to City Commission
- Input – Refinement

Trip 4: Final Presentations, May 2007

- Meetings
- Final Presentations to the Public and to City Commission

2.3: Stakeholder Interviews

The following community members were interviewed by the consultant team, and their input included in this report:

- Charles Buntin, Tom West Company
- Charles Burch, Grand Central Station
- Mark Culver, Houston County Commission Chair
- Sherie Cunningham, Downtown Group
- Ronnie Dean, Southeast Alabama Medical Center
- John Edge, Wiregrass Foundation
- Don Fabiani, Wiregrass Festival of Murals
- Jimmy Grant, Dothan Chamber of Commerce
- Cynthia Green, City of Dothan
- Thomas Harrison, Dothan Chamber of Commerce
- Bob Hendrix, Dothan Alabama Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Mike Herring, Movie Gallery
- Walter Hill, Wiregrass United Way
- Daniel Howell, Downtown Group
- Mit Kirkland, Scenic Cable
- Ruth Nelson, Real Estate Investments LLC
- Amos M. Newsome Jr., City of Dothan
- Mark O'Mary, Dothan Chamber of Commerce
- Ron Owen, Southeast Alabama Medical Center
- Forrest Register, Register Realty Company
- Susan Robertson, Wiregrass Museum of Art and Conference Center
- Mike Schmitz, Mike Schmitz Automotive Group
- Rick Smith, Southeast Alabama Medical Center
- Wendell Stepp, Wiregrass Festival of Murals, HPC
- Jane Thrower, E. R. Porter Hardware
- Steve Turkoski, Dothan Chamber of Commerce
- Bob Woodall, Bob Woodall Air Care

2.4: Area Analysis

In addition to the listening process, HNTB conducted a thorough site analysis and photographic reconnaissance to categorize opportunities and challenges within the study area, establish a contextual relationship of land use and ownership patterns, and identify key development and redevelopment sites. HNTB reviewed existing documentation provided by the City of Dothan, which included:



View along Saint Andrews Street



Business along Foster Street

- **City of Dothan Future Land Use Plan (1999, revised 2003)**

This plan recommends that downtown revitalization will be a result of public-private partnership in order to improve streetscape amenities and construct brick sidewalks and revise on-site parking standards in the core area. This plan recommends expanding the historic district to include the Dixie Area and Cherry Street AME Church. It also recommends changing local ordinances to treat poorly maintained buildings as nuisances.

- **2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan (April 2006)**

This plan focuses on roads and other transportation projects that affect the entire metropolitan area. One item in particular is applicable to the revitalization of Downtown Dothan. The Wiregrass Transit Authority has identified the need for a downtown fixed-route transit system with vintage style trolleys. This would be especially important in establishing the downtown area as a tourist attraction.

- **Downtown Revitalization and Murals (Undated)**

This downtown plan identifies a list of existing incentives for downtown development. Included among them are historic district property tax relief, federal rehabilitation tax credits, and loan programs, including SBA financing, foundation grants, RLF financing, and CDBG funding. Additionally, this plan outlines downtown attractions that can be the focal points of a revitalization project. Targeted attractions downtown were the Civic Center, the Dothan Opera House, and the Wiregrass Museum of Art.



Mural depicting George Washington Carver

- **City of Dothan Revitalization Project Plan Draft
(Undated)**

This plan covers five aspects of Dothan, with strategies to improve the downtown area. The five categories are infrastructure, public relations, resources, economic development, and quality of life. The strategies recommended for infrastructure include the enforcement of parking rates and the maintaining of government services downtown. For public relations, the report recommends that a marketing plan be developed and implemented for Dothan. The resources recommended are a Business Improvement District (BID), Community Development Corporation (CDC), and Downtown Redevelopment Authority. To bolster economic development, the plan recommends the development of a small business incubator and downtown conference center. And to improve the quality of life in Downtown Dothan, the plan recommends the initiation of a green space plan and the creation of visitor services downtown.

2.5: Strategy Development

The listening process, review of existing plans and regulations, and analysis of existing conditions resulted in the identification of key issues and provided input for the development of this master plan. This master plan is a long-term vision for the future that will be implemented within a horizon of 15-20 years. As with any master plan, it is intended to be a responsive document that is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. A strategy for implementation is included in this plan that identifies initial projects and actions steps in Section 7.

Section 3: Research and Observation

To understand what needs to be done, we must understand where we are. Therefore, this section examines Downtown Dothan's existing conditions.

3.1: Existing Conditions

As with any area, Downtown Dothan has a mix of uses, building types, and levels of improvement to properties. Relatively recent civic improvements include a park at the corner of Oates and Main Streets, a small park along Foster Street, and a fountain between the Wiregrass Art Museum and Main Street. Streetscape improvements have been made to Foster Street and some adjacent streets as well as the intersection of Depot Street and East Powell Street. The series of murals throughout the downtown is a significant existing asset. Downtown Dothan is home for the Civic Center, the police department, the county court, and federal court. Businesses range from cafés to hardware stores.

Possibly the greatest challenge the downtown faces, is the relatively high number of vacant or underutilized buildings. Some of these are historic structures and have the potential to highlight Dothan's architectural heritage. Others are not as architecturally significant and may allow for redevelopment.

A substantial portion of the downtown has been altered over time to accommodate vehicles through the widening of streets at the expense of sidewalks and the pedestrian zone or the demolition of buildings to provide parking lots. As the downtown has become more vehicle-friendly, it became less people friendly. Part of the city's challenge is to provide greater "people-friendliness" that can help to improve visitors' experience of downtown.

Map 2 depicts existing conditions for downtown Dothan. The map illustrates the characteristics of Downtown Dothan, including some of the opportunities and constraints that this plan addresses. Tourist attractions and murals are highlighted to show their distribution across the downtown area. Additionally, roads are classified by type, and major entrance nodes are shown. From this exhibit, it is evident that there is a large amount



Streetscape improvements and mural at Saint Andrews Street and Main Street



Refurbished building on Foster Street



Vacant building on Foster Street

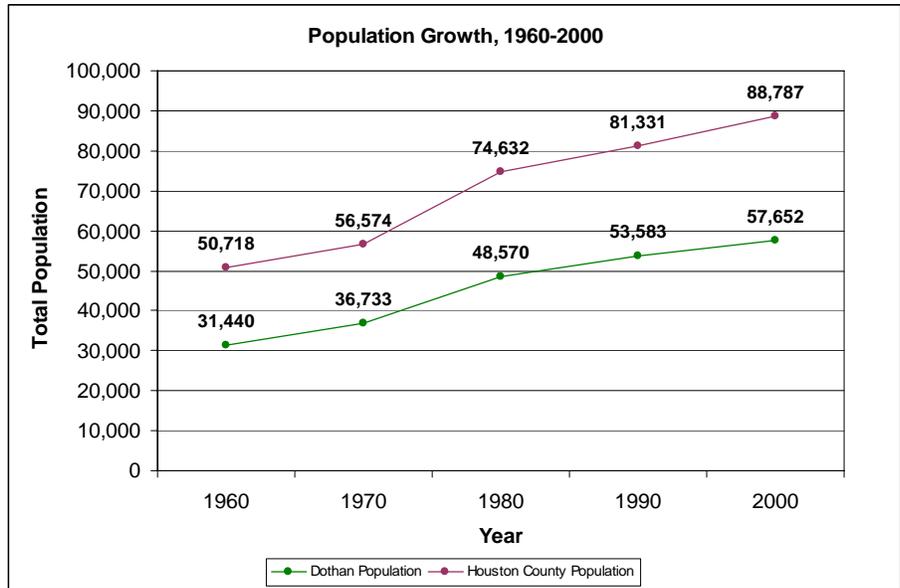


Vacant building and vacant parcel on Main Street

of impervious area in Downtown Dothan: surface parking lots are abundant, and green open spaces is lacking.

3.2: Downtown Characteristics

Dothan's population grew consistently between 1960 and 2000. The following table shows the population trends in Dothan and surrounding Houston County. Throughout this period, Dothan has consistently made up about 65 percent of Houston County's population.



Source: 2000 Census Data, Tables P1, P2, H5

The Downtown area itself is characterized primarily by commercial and office uses, with very few residential units. Dothan had more than 57,000 residents in 2000, but only 80 lived within the boundaries of the study area. This number excludes 383 detainees at the Houston County Sheriff's Department jail facility on N. Oates Street.



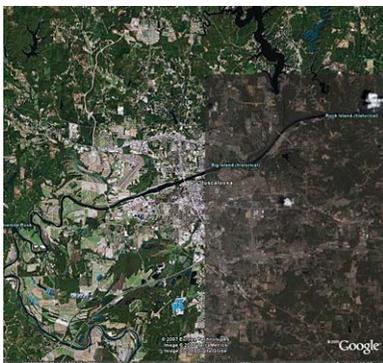
Auburn, Alabama



Decatur, Alabama



Dothan, Alabama



Tuscaloosa, Alabama

3.3: Comparable City Redevelopment

Dothan has many of the same population and housing characteristics as other Alabama cities such as Auburn, Decatur, and Tuscaloosa. For a city of its size, it struggles with the same issues of downtown disinvestment and urban sprawl. The comparable cities provide some ideas for the redevelopment of Downtown Dothan.

Though the household, population, and metropolitan area populations are comparable in these four cities, land use patterns are different. Dothan has by far the largest land area of all:

	Area in Square Miles	2005 Population	People Per Square Mile
Auburn	54.4	49,928	917.79
Decatur	53.4	54,909	1028.26
Dothan	86.8	62,713	722.50
Tuscaloosa	56.3	81,538	1448.28

Source: 2005 Census Population Estimates

While Auburn, Decatur, and Tuscaloosa are similar to Dothan in demographics, Dothan has the most sprawled out land use pattern. This has ramifications for downtown reinvestment, as Dothan has large concentrations of people removed from the downtown, making the renewal of Downtown Dothan more challenging.

Auburn has promoted its downtown as the center of a “City of Villages”. Though it is the center of many community events and attractions, downtown Auburn also suffers from disinvestment and a lack of parking. The city’s long-range plan seeks to enhance the downtown character, improve parking for downtown attractions, include green infrastructure elements, and preserve historic buildings in the downtown core. While there are peripheral residential uses in the downtown area, additional mixed-use development is encouraged.

Decatur is the most demographically similar Alabama city to Dothan. In 2004, Decatur established a Downtown/Riverfront Redevelopment Authority to govern the redevelopment of downtown Decatur. Projects are funded through revenue bonds and Tax Increment

Financing (TIF), and are divided among six priority focus areas. HNTB completed the 2004 Envision Decatur plan, recommending the development of ceremonial gateways as well as targeted improvements along the river to attract regional water enthusiasts.

Though more populous than Dothan, Tuscaloosa recently completed an urban redevelopment plan for its downtown. The plan proposes the redevelopment of a six block area. Federal funds will be used to acquire blighted properties that will be redeveloped as an urban park/plaza, town homes, and a mixed-use (commercial, office, and residential) center. The plan also recommends additional parking, infrastructure improvements, and streetscape amenities.

3.4: Assets and Opportunities

Dothan has a strong foundation on which to build. Many assets and opportunities can be utilized to revitalize the downtown, including:

- A proud history for Poplar Head Spring.
- Historic buildings with the potential for adaptive reuse.
- A significant downtown employment base.
- Parts of Dothan are highly walkable, as streets follow a grid pattern and are at a compact scale. Residential neighborhoods are adjacent to downtown and serve as a potential market area. It is possible to walk through the downtown in 5-10 minutes.
- The city is rich with cultural amenities and murals, and there has been recent public and private investment in the downtown area.
- Transportation access to the downtown area is strong, with parking available and transit improvements planned.
- There are a number of sites that have great tourism potential, including the Wiregrass Museum of Art, G.W. Carver Interpretive Museum, the Dothan Opera House, Civic Center, and library.



Statue honoring the founding of Dothan



George Washington Carver Museum



Mural depicting the Dothan "Riot" of 1889

3.5: Issues and Constraints

Despite these strengths, Downtown Dothan has a number of obstacles to overcome in revitalization.

- There is a lack of a sense of entry or arrival into the Downtown, specifically along Oates Street and Main Street.
- There is no central focal point in the downtown area (such as a town square central public gathering place).
- The historic building stock needs to be stabilized and improved.
- Pedestrian access and circulation needs to be prioritized and enhanced.
- Parking needs to be addressed, as many people believe that there is too little parking. Some of this is attributable to the fact that parking that is available is not close to downtown attractions. Some of the parking that is in close proximity could be used more efficiently or consolidated for use by adjacent properties.
- Downtown Dothan has lost business to the surrounding suburban areas.
- A critical mass of retail establishments has yet to be reached. Once such a point is achieved, the downtown will develop a stronger identity as a retail destination and attract more retail and visitors.
- Crime and safety are important issues, especially during evening hours and around entertainment venues.
- There is no Dothan Department of Economic Development, so businesses in the area have no central resource to go to for help, and the city has no one agency focused on business development and retention.



Vacant building on Oates Street



Stark street environment



Underutilized lot in north portion of the downtown



Parking area by Civic Center

3.6: What are Dothan Residents saying about Dothan?

Throughout the public participation process, community members discussed their vision for Downtown Dothan's future. Among the ideas HNTB recorded during interviews were:



Mid-block link between Saint Andrews Street and Foster Street

Transportation and Parking Improvements

- Need to increase connectivity of people to the downtown and create momentum forward with revitalization
- Is a multi-level parking structure possible in the downtown area?
- Traffic should be slowed at some locations to make streets more pedestrian friendly.
- Other pedestrian friendly improvements are needed
- There is a need for "Inner-Block" pedestrian connections



Historic photograph of Main Street.
Photograph from Slingluff United Insurance website gallery.

Downtown Experience

- There is a nostalgic desire for downtown to be as it once was
- Brighter street lighting is needed
- Need to build an identity - cultural, arts, murals, "crossroads," Poplar Head
- Entryway beautification is needed.
- Undergrounding utilities on Main Street could provide streetscape benefits
- A lineal green space around Downtown would be a community amenity
- "Clean, Safe, Well-lit Downtown" would make it attractive to visitors and residents

Redevelopment Priorities

- Get rid of the current motels, they have a negative impact on the downtown
- Is there abandoned structure legislation?
- The county can be a partner for revitalization through the following:
 - Assistance in code enforcement
 - Being part of a parking solution
- The Convention Center is obsolete; a strategy should be developed to replace it or improve on it



Downtown motel

- Redevelop “Borden's” Site as an anchor to North Downtown
- “Real” development incentives need to be created
- The Historic Preservation Commission is limiting reinvestment
- Property ownership is a hindrance to redevelopment
- Construct new state-of-the-art library
- Performing Arts Center – Wiregrass Foundation
- Banks cause limitations to reinvestment
- State lending regulations
 - Not been creative in offering low interest loans
- Finances
 - Pass a sales tax increase
 - Retire debt
 - Accrue revenue annually for revitalization

3.7: Key Initial Observations

Prior to this report, Fred Delk and a colleague were invited to Dothan to offer their initial observations and recommendations for the revitalization of Downtown Dothan. They initially recommended the following initiatives:



The train depot is a good example of an important historic building that should be saved and adaptively reused.

1. Use the Downtown Dothan Master Plan to shape downtown development.
2. Save every possible historic building. Use demolition only if all other measures will not work. Use the existing historic district ordinances to prevent further deterioration of vulnerable buildings.
3. Adopt a downtown theme, such as a Center of Entertainment, Culture and Arts.
4. Increase the use of the Civic Center and the Opera House.
5. Expand the use of murals. Keep the theme of Dothan culture and history.
6. Create new downtown events to bring people downtown.
7. Organize an effective Development Corporation or reenergize the existing Development Authority to help advance development.
8. Use tax incentive programs to maximum advantage.
9. Identify funding for bridge loans and other incentives to facilitate targeted properties or projects.
10. Work with local banks to develop targeted loan programs.
11. Explore residential opportunities in and around the downtown area, including senior housing.
12. Encourage downtown residential infill projects in vacant or underutilized buildings.

These recommendations are described in more detail in Section 5.

Section 4: Downtown Framework

4.1 Transportation Network



Oates Street

The vehicular transportation infrastructure within downtown Dothan is dominated by the Oates Street and Main Street corridors. Oates Street (State Route 231) connects to the state capital, Montgomery, to the north. To the south it connects to Panama City and the Gulf beaches. Oates Street also connects to State Route 431 to the north, linking Dothan to Columbus, Georgia. Main Street (State Route 84) connects to Enterprise and Fort Rucker in the west, and indirectly to Florida's state capital, Tallahassee, in the east. Although not on an interstate, Dothan is well connected to the region.



Main Street

Because of Ross Clark Circle, much of the through traffic on these state routes is diverted around the downtown, especially for drivers that are familiar with the area. This spares Dothan's downtown what could be a very burdensome amount of traffic. However, it also reduced the number of people who pass through Dothan and stop in the downtown. Instead, they eat, sleep, and shop at facilities on Ross Clark Circle.



Route 84 (Main Street) near Ross Clark Circle and the Southeast Alabama Medical Center

The state routes not only connect to other cities in the region, but link the area to downtown. Other minor roads link to the downtown, but Oates and Main Streets are the primary vehicular connection to the Dothan's center.

Route 231 is the main commercial corridor through the middle of the city. Strip-type commercial development abuts the road, both north and south of downtown, as well as through much of the downtown itself. Although Route 84 does not have quite as many commercial uses along the corridor, it connects to some of the largest employers in the City. To the east, the intersection of Route 84 and Ross Clark Circle is the location of the Southeast Alabama Medical Center. To the west, outside of Ross Clark Circle, Flowers Hospital and Sony Magnetic Products, front on Route 84. In the downtown, Main Street (Route 84) has a small section of dense commercial frontage between Oates Street and Saint Andrews Street.

4.1.1: Primary Commercial Corridors

Historically, Foster Street and Main Street formed the respective north/south and east/west axes of downtown Dothan. They were commercial spines and the areas surrounding them formed the heart of the city.

Main Street divides streets north and south and Foster Street divides streets east and west. Over time, much of the commercial development has shifted from Foster Street to Oates Street, primarily because of its importance as a transportation route and because of its greater flexibility in vehicular accommodation. Although much of it is dilapidated and/or vacant, some of the historic building stock on Foster Street remains. Main Street is an important transportation route, and the commercial development along it has not been diverted elsewhere to the same extent as on Foster. However, there are vacant and underutilized buildings along this corridor as well. Although both Foster and Main Streets retain some commercial development, both have properties that need to be rehabilitated.

Oates Street, Main Street, and Foster Street are the three primary commercial corridors in downtown Dothan. However, each has a different feel and each presents different challenges and opportunities. Oates Street and Main Street are both very automobile-dominated. However, buildings along Oates Street typically have much greater setbacks than those on Main, and parking is usually integral to each business. Main Street has narrow setbacks and no parking between the road and buildings. Foster Street is not a vehicular through route, and as such is more pedestrian friendly. Although at times the street has many cars on it, they are generally parked or traveling at a low speed.

4.1.2: Minor Commercial Corridors

Two other minor commercial corridors within the downtown are Saint Andrews Street and Powell Street. Both carry a small volume of traffic, are not densely populated with buildings, and have adequate parking. However, the density of businesses is low and these two corridors are secondary to Oates, Main, and Foster Streets. Other streets within the downtown are either residential or connect the commercial corridors.



Foster Street Commercial Corridor



Businesses along the south side of Main Street



Saint Andrews Street

4.1.3: Transportation Hierarchy

The hierarchy of streets in downtown Dothan is shown on **Map 3**. Oates Street and Main Street are depicted as arterial corridors, meaning they are the main vehicular routes through the downtown. The map also indicates that these two corridors should be targeted for street beautification and pedestrian improvements. The type of improvements for these streets would be different than improvements for other corridors in the downtown. The scale of the cross section in many areas allows for greater setbacks, larger planting areas, and curb cuts for businesses.

4.1.4: Gateways

Three intersections act as gateways into the downtown. These are thresholds that mark the point of progression from the surrounding city to the denser, and what should be more vibrant, downtown core. The gateways are based primarily on geographical location, but also relate to the surrounding uses:



Intersection of North Oates and Powell Streets



Main Street gateway at Oates Street

- The **northern gateway** is at the intersection of North Oates and Powell Streets. North Oates Street is clearly the most significant means of entry from the north. The intersection with Powell Street has opportunities for redevelopment which could architecturally act as an announcement of arrival into the downtown. This intersection should also strengthen the link to the commercial core area at the intersection of Powell and North Saint Andrews Street by the old train depot.
- The **gateway from both the south and the west** into the downtown is the intersection with Oates Street and Main Street. From a transportation standpoint, this is the southwestern corner of the downtown. Railroad tracks block off the downtown further to the south and Oates Street is the first major intersection when coming from the west on Main Street. The County Courthouse is a significant public and architectural feature at this point. However, the parking lot in the northwest quadrant of the intersection is not conducive to a gateway. The park improvements in the

southwest quadrant of the intersection have been successful. However, a commercial billboard is not necessarily the best gateway icon for a city and additionally the park is little used. This area may be a good candidate for redesign in the future.



Main Street at Museum Avenue gateway

- The **gateway into downtown from the east** is at the intersection of Main Street and Museum Avenue. This is a major intersection that includes three streets as well as a railroad. It is located close to the iconic founding spot of the City, Poplar Head spring. It also connects to the Wiregrass Museum of Art and the Civic Center to the north. This gateway has potential for roadway, park, and building improvements.



Masonic Temple at the corner of Troy Street and Oates Street

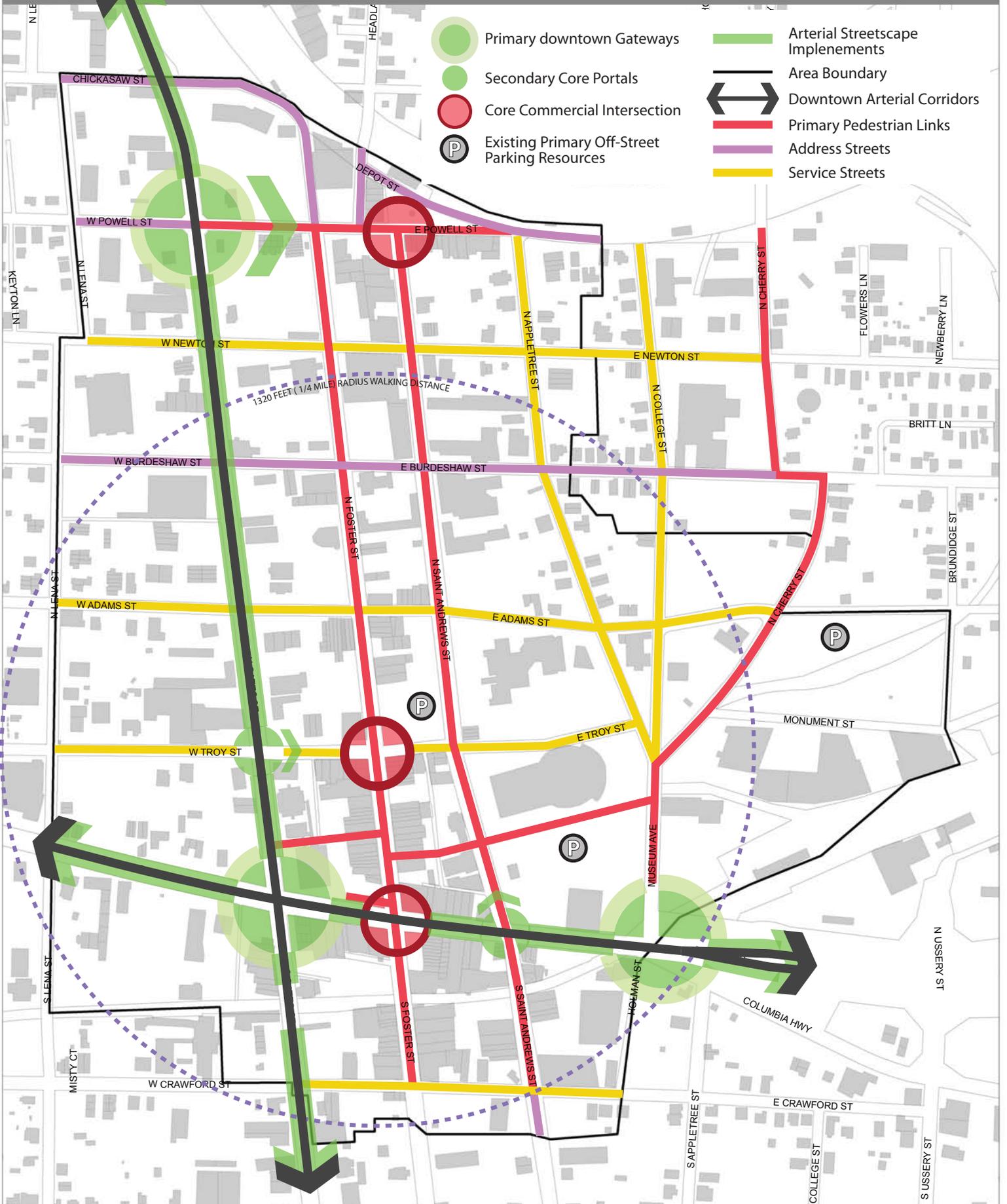
4.1.5: Secondary Core Portals

In addition to the primary gateways, intersection nodes should act as points of entry from the primary arterials (Main Street and Oates Street) into the Foster Street commercial corridor. These points are on Oates Street at Troy Street and on Main Street at Saint Andrews Street. The intersection of Foster and Main Streets is also an entry portal, but is discussed under the next section—Core Commercial Intersections.



Intersection of Main Street and Saint Andrews Street

- The intersection of Main and Troy Streets could be utilized to bring further attention for this is an entry point to the core commercial area at the intersection of Foster and Troy Streets and the parking resource that is located at that location. West Troy Street currently is designated for one-way westbound traffic. For it to act as a link into the downtown core, two-way traffic should be restored.
- Saint Andrews Street at Main Street is an important entry point to the Civic Center, the police station, and the large parking resource adjacent to the Civic Center. This is a good location to direct people into the downtown and to notify visitors of parking opportunities.



4.1.6: Core Commercial Intersections

There are three areas identified as core commercial intersections on the Transportation Hierarchy Map.



Parking area at the northwest corner of the Foster Street and Main Street intersection



Parking lot at the northeast corner of the Foster Street and Troy Street intersection



Train Depot area at the intersection of Powell Street and North Saint Andrews Street

- The intersection of Main Street and Foster Street can arguably be considered the center of Dothan. It is where north/south and east/west streets emanate from, and it is historically where the two most important commercial streets met. There are still many commercial uses around this intersection. The parking lot in the northwest quadrant presents an opportunity for a town square or urban plaza for the County Courthouse. It also can act as a pedestrian link between the points east and the courthouse. This point should also direct interest off of Main Street, north and south along Foster Street.
- A commercial core area at the intersection of Foster Street and Troy Street would help to anchor the primary commercial component of Foster Street between Main and Troy Streets. This space is also adjacent to the Federal Courthouse and parking, which could be reconfigured to allow for a public space in this location.
- The third commercial core area is at the intersection of North Saint Andrews Street and Powell Street. This location has a unique character. It is faced by low retail buildings on the south and west, and by the train depot on the north. It is adjacent to the railroad tracks and has an interesting water tower in the center of the space that should be addressed as an opportunity for highlighting the area. This location can act as a town square that anchors the northern end of the downtown and has businesses appropriate to its immediate proximity to residential neighborhoods.

4.1.7: Pedestrian Links

Primary pedestrian links are shown along the more pedestrian friendly corridors and in other areas that are important links between commercial or public uses, or to the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to the downtown arterials, these should also be priorities for

streetscape improvements or maintenance of improvements that have already been made.



Improved pedestrian conditions along Foster Street



Unimproved section of North Saint Andrews Street



Potential area for pedestrian link through Civic Center parking lot



Powell Street

- Foster Street is the most important of the pedestrian links. Whereas Oates Street is the primary vehicle oriented commercial street, Foster Street is the primary pedestrian oriented commercial street. The entire length between Powell Street and Crawford Street is important. The section between Crawford and Troy Streets is the main commercial portion. However, the segment between Troy and Powell Streets is also significant because it forms a connection between the Foster Street commercial core and the core commercial area at the train depot and also because it is envisioned that this segment will see redevelopment and increased commercial activity.
- Saint Andrews Street does not have quite the same commercial importance as Foster Street, but it is important from a pedestrian standpoint because it has a mix of some commercial uses, and also civic uses. It forms a secondary link to the commercial core area at the train depot and connects this area to the Civic Center.
- An important pedestrian link which exists today, but should be strengthened is an east/west connection between the Wiregrass Museum of Art and the County Courthouse. This link connects many of the most significant features of the downtown. There are two important segments to this link. The connection across the Civic Center parking lot provides increased access to Wiregrass Museum of Art and the Civic Center from the West, but also connects the large parking facility to the commercial downtown and the Opera House. The link further to the west connects the Civic Center parking lot to Foster Street and with a north and south branch to the County Courthouse. This link should be formalized and identified as a primary pedestrian route in order to encourage parking in the Civic Center lot for users of the Courthouse and the Foster Street commercial corridor.
- The portion of Powell Street between Oates Street and the train depot currently is not an important pedestrian connection. However, with



North Cherry Street

redevelopment and increased use in this area it will become more important to highlight it as a pedestrian connection. It connects the Oates Street commercial corridor to the train depot commercial core and to the residential neighborhood beyond.

- North Cherry Street has been designated as a primary pedestrian link because it is an extension of the east/west link within the downtown and connects the adjacent residential neighborhood to the downtown.

4.1.8: Address Streets

Address streets act as links between corridors or between the downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. They indicate a priority level between primary pedestrian streets and service streets.

4.1.9: Streets Summary

Various streets in the downtown have their unique character and potential. This section briefly summarizes this for selected streets in the downtown.



Oates Street

- Oates Street used to have a very different character than that of today. The west side of the street was residential, having large houses with wide set-backs. Today it is a vehicular commercial route dominated by parking lots and box retail, commercial, and some offices. This street has a fairly wide cross section and appears even wider because of the setbacks of buildings from the curbs. Development along this corridor could be summarized as being somewhat typical suburban strip development. Although this is not necessarily what the goal should be for the downtown, the nature of the street cannot necessarily be changed. It is a major arterial through the downtown and is very vehicle oriented. Changes that can be made to improve the corridor are street tree and other plantings, consolidation and organization of parking resources, sidewalk and other streetscape improvements, and redevelopment with new



Main Street

buildings figuring more prominently while parking is recessed behind them.

- Like Oates Street, Main Street is also a major arterial. However, it differs in that within the downtown the building setbacks are much smaller. In fact, in many places they are too narrow and there is not sufficient sidewalk space. Although the smaller cross section is conducive to a more urban setting for this area, it does create challenges. The narrow sidewalks are not pedestrian friendly, especially when it is considered that there is no parking buffer between the sidewalks and the street travel lanes. Historically, Main Street had parking on the street. Since the parking has been removed it has made viability for some businesses on the corridor more difficult. Most of the businesses that are more successful have parking that is easily available behind them. This is mostly possible on the south side of the street. On the north side, there is no room for parking behind buildings. As a result, there are large numbers of vacant businesses. The challenge for this street is to better connect the businesses to parking resources and to promote pedestrian friendliness. If there is a critical mass of vacancies that is met, customers will be more willing to walk a short distance to visit some of the less accessible sites along this corridor.
- Foster Street has a lot of potential as an intimate pedestrian oriented commercial street. The cross section is relatively small, there is on-street parking and other parking resources relatively close, and although sidewalks could be wider they are generally sufficient. The current challenge the street faces is the number of building vacancies and the condition of some of the buildings along the street. The type of businesses that would be most appropriate for this area are small boutique style businesses that don't compete with big-box retail on Ross Clark Circle. Additionally, there is a perceived need for dining establishments and other businesses that could cater to downtown workers and residents. Some of the upper stories of buildings along Foster Street can also be used as residences. The northern segment of Foster



Foster Street

Street does not have quite the same character of that as the southern segment. As needs allow, a greater density of businesses could be extended north over time.



North Saint Andrews Street



Museum Avenue



Troy Street

- Saint Andrews Street is a parallel to Foster Street but has a different character. It has a much larger cross section than that of Foster and a much lower density of buildings. The Civic Center and Police Department are two major public uses on this street. The Civic Center as well as the area north of Troy Street offer surface parking. The southern segment of this street is fairly stable. However, the portion north of Troy Street has many underutilized lots and vacant buildings. As these areas are redeveloped the street should improve. The southern segment of the street has a center turn lane. Based on the amount of traffic that this street has, it may not be necessary. The space could potentially be used for pedestrian improvements or parking.
- Museum Avenue has a very low density of uses along it. The primary uses are the Wiregrass Museum of Art and the Civic Center. It also acts as an entry point into the residential neighborhood to the north. Although this corridor is not a priority for improvements, as adjacent improvements to parkland, the Civic Center parking lot, or the Art Museum are made, improvements could also be implemented along the street.
- Troy Street acts primarily as an east/west connection within the downtown. It currently is one-way from Saint Andrews Street to Oates Street. Other than a few retail uses, the major uses on it in this segment are the Federal Court and the municipal parking lot between Foster and Saint Andrews Street. Changing this street back to two-way traffic should be considered. This street can act as an entrance to the Foster Street commercial corridor and the municipal uses on Saint Andrews Street from Oates Street. This currently is not possible because the street only exits onto Oates Street. The other option for this street would be to make it one-way east bound rather than west bound.
- Powell Street is currently not a significant street within the downtown. However, with increased

importance and use of the train depot commercial core and as the Borden site and adjacent sites are redeveloped, Powell Street will become more important.

4.1.10: Public Transportation



A private shuttle bus service

Other than private vehicles, residents and visitors are left with few transportation alternatives in downtown Dothan. Taxis provide one alternative, but they are not common and would generally need to be called for service. The Wiregrass Transit Authority provides bus service, however it is required that reservations are made a week in advance for customized service, so it is not a convenient option for travel within the downtown. There is also a Greyhound bus station at the corner of South Foster Street and Washington Street, but this is for long distance travel, not local service. There are railroad tracks both north and south of the downtown, but these are only used for freight. Resultantly, private vehicles and foot or bicycle travel are the only viable options for transportation within and to the downtown.

4.1.11: Transportation Improvements

Transportation network improvements should include pedestrian zone and aesthetic enhancements to corridors identified as downtown arterials, primary pedestrian links, and address streets, with minor improvements as necessary to service streets. The level and type of improvements will vary with the type of corridor. Specific initiatives are identified in Section 5 of this report.

4.2: Land Use

The predominant existing land uses within the downtown study area are depicted on **Map 4**. Using this as a basis, a framework for future land use and development was created and is depicted on **Map 5**. For the most part, major changes are not proposed. The framework presents more of a guide for the character of different sectors within the downtown and what type of development would be most desirable in each of these. The proposed land use is broken into six categories: core commercial, corridor commercial, institute/civic, residential, service and park.

4.2.1: Core Commercial



Foster Street core commercial area

The area of core commercial should act as the spine of the downtown that ties one side to the other and connects the north and south portions of the study area. This area is centered on Foster Street. To the north it focuses on the area around the old train depot. South of Main Street it expands to encompass the various commercial properties in that area. Core commercial is mixed-use development. Types of uses included in this are relatively small scale retail, offices, condominium or apartment residences, and boutique uses such as artist studios and galleries. This should be a very pedestrian friendly zone that caters to visitors, workers, and residents alike. Most parking for this area is either on-street, in public surface lots, or in potential future parking garages. Because of the mix of uses, this zone should work well for tying the downtown and other uses together. At the same time, it acts as a buffer between areas that may have somewhat incompatible uses. The core commercial zone is the most important area of focus for revitalization because of its crucial function as the heart of the downtown.

4.2.2: Corridor Commercial



Commercial buildings along Oates Street

The corridor commercial area follows the Oates Street corridor and extends west to Lena Street. This area is currently almost entirely commercial. Uses in this area are not, and are not proposed to be as mixed as those in the core commercial area. Although some residences may exist along Lena Street, the law offices and other

light office uses in the area are a good buffer between the greater impact commercial uses on Oates Street and the residences west of Lena Street. The retail, office, and service uses on Oates Street include on-site parking. This lends a very different character to the corridor than that of Foster Street. On-street parking is not available except for on the smaller streets off of Oates. Improvements should be made to the pedestrian environment in this area. Vacant or underutilized properties have potential for redevelopment.

4.2.3: Public & Institutional

For the most part institutional and civic uses should remain in their current locations. There may be room for expansion of some facilities or redevelopment of properties. There may also be future potential for one or more parking garages as the need arises. With institutional properties the main component of revitalization will be making improvements to the properties and buildings, and as necessary, redevelopment or facility additions.



Police Department along Saint Andrews Street

4.2.4: Residential

Most of Dothan's downtown is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Some of these residential neighborhoods are included in the study area boundary. There are a few residents along Lena Street. The other residential area within the boundary is the area north of East Adams Street and west of North Saint Andrews Street. This area also includes vacant warehouses and other structures. These structures should be encouraged to revert to a primarily residential use so that it is compatible with the adjacent residential area and helps strengthen the residential component to the downtown and helps connect the downtown to the adjacent neighborhood rather than separating it with a barrier of incompatible uses.



Residential area east of the downtown



Warehouses near the railroad tracks east of Museum Avenue

4.2.5: Service

Service type commercial uses which include warehousing and similar types of facilities can be located at the periphery of the downtown adjacent to the railroad tracks in the southeast portion of the study area. These

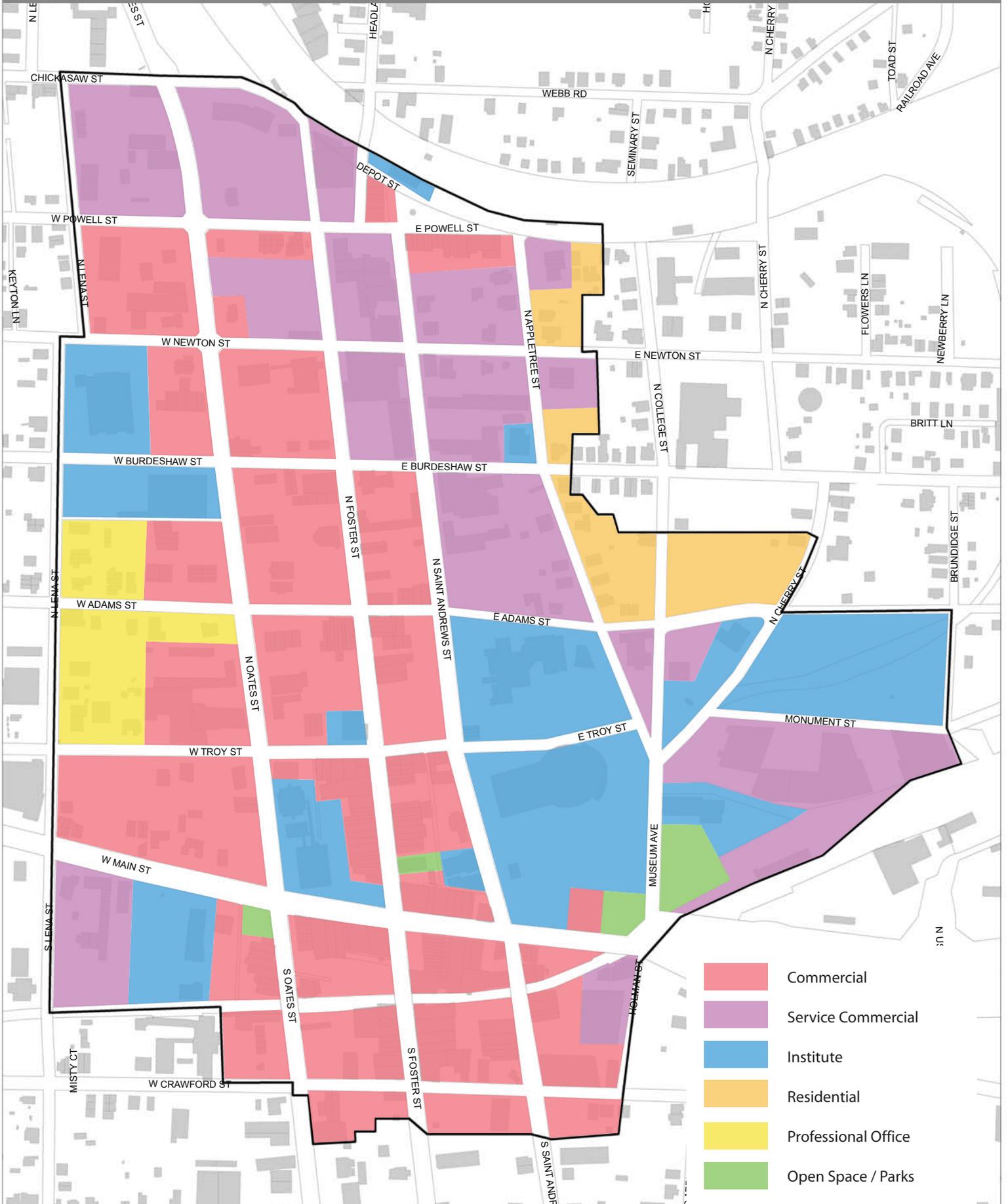
types of uses should not be located in areas where they would act as a barrier between other land uses.

4.2.6: Parks

There are a few pocket parks within the downtown. But the primary park-area opportunity for the downtown is at the northern half of the intersection of Main Street and Museum Avenue. This is near the source of Poplar Head spring, the area is relatively open, and it presents a good opportunity for further improvement as a formalized green oasis within the downtown.



Open area north of the Main Street and Museum Avenue intersection



Map 4



4.3: Redevelopment Opportunity Sites

There are several types of improvement areas that are depicted on the Summary Analysis exhibit, **Map 6**, which indicates what type of implementation is most suitable for each area. The categories depicted are primary downtown gateways, secondary downtown portals, strategic public realm opportunities, primary streetscape investment corridors, secondary streetscape investment corridors, significant pedestrian linkages, development opportunity areas, and priority redevelopment areas. Primary downtown gateways and secondary downtown portals are discussed under sections 4.1.4 and 4.1.5. Significant Pedestrian Linkages is discussed under section 4.1.7. The other redevelopment opportunities are discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1: Strategic Public Realm Opportunities

There are three important areas in the downtown for strategic public realm improvements. These are at the intersection of Main Street and Foster Street, the intersection of Troy Street and Foster Street, and the intersection of North Saint Andrews Street and East Powell Street by the train depot.



Intersection of Foster and Main Streets



Intersection of Foster and Troy Streets

- Of the public realm opportunity areas, the Foster/Main Streets intersection is the most important. This is the symbolic and roughly geographic center of Dothan. This point is also important for attracting attention north and south on Foster Street from Main Street. A distinctive building anchors the northeast quadrant of the intersection. The northwest quadrant presents a good opportunity for the creation of a town square or plaza that relates to the County courthouse, to Foster Street, and to Main Street.
- The intersection of Foster and Troy Streets presents a similar opportunity. However, this location is more of a destination point that anchors the north segment of the primary Foster Street retail corridor rather than a point to draw visitors in. This intersection also has room for a plaza space feature and is faced on the northwest quadrant by the historic structure of the old City post office which is now the Federal Court.



Intersection of Powell and Saint Andrews Streets



Foster Street just north of Main Street

- Although it would serve a similar function to the other two spaces, the area in front of the old train depot has a different character. This space is not quite as urban, but still includes interesting architecture and retail space. This point anchors the north end of the downtown. It is good location for another city square or plaza.

4.3.2: Priority Redevelopment Area

The priority redevelopment area encompasses much of what was the historic commercial core of Dothan. It is centered on Foster and Main Streets. This zone is bounded on the north by Adams Street, in the south by Crawford Street, in the west by Oates Street, and in the east by Saint Andrews Street and Holman Street. This is the area that needs to work in order for downtown Dothan to renew its vitality. This will primarily consist of filling vacancies and attracting businesses, but will also include redevelopment of properties and where space allows, the construction of new facilities. The priority redevelopment area comprises much of the historic commercial downtown of Dothan. As such it also has a relatively high number of historic structures. These should be seen as assets for displaying the heritage of the City. Through adaptive reuse, many structures can become interesting or unique businesses or residents that contribute to the vitality of the downtown. Some businesses have already accomplished this, primarily on Foster Street.

4.3.3: Development Opportunity Areas

There are many areas designated as development opportunity in the Summary Analysis. These are somewhat scattered through the downtown, but are predominantly located in the northern and western parts of the study area. These properties are either vacant or have underutilized buildings that should either be developed or rehabilitated according to what is most appropriate for the use in that area, following the Land Use Framework.

- The northwest quadrant of the Main Street and Oates Street intersection is a prime site for redevelopment. It is currently a parking lot which



Parking lot at the northwest quadrant of the Main Street and Oates Street intersection



Warehouses to the north of the Wiregrass Museum of Art



Vacant school building

is used primarily by the County Courthouse. There are also small underutilized buildings north of the parking lot extending to Troy Street which increases the potential size of the redevelopment opportunity. This location is at the most visible intersection in downtown Dothan. As such, a parking lot is not the best use. This is a “100% location” and should have an urban development orientation. A parking garage or surface parking could be included behind development that faces the street. Parking for the courthouse could be partially provided this way, but also the parking area at the Civic Center and at the Foster and Troy Streets intersection should be utilized by the Courthouse. That would allow for a better use on this site.

- The warehouses and properties to the north and west of the Wiregrass Museum of Art should be assessed for potential redevelopment. There is significant opportunity for adaptive reuse of existing building stock or redevelopment for a greater critical mass of development. Underutilized warehouses could be redeveloped as artist studios or other compatible uses similar to the old train depot to the southeast of the museum. The proximity to the museum and to residential neighborhoods lends this area to such uses.
- The vacant school building at North College Street and East Burdeshaw Street as well as the block to the south of this presents an opportunity for redevelopment. Both of these blocks are within a residential neighborhood and should be redeveloped for residential use. The school is a valuable addition to the architectural heritage of the downtown. The building should be preserved, but adapted for use as condominiums, assisted living, or other similar residential use. The block to the south of the school is mostly vacant parcels. This should be developed with infill single family homes or could potentially be incorporated into redevelopment of the school property if additional property is required for the proposed use.
- The old Coca-Cola bottling facility between East Burdeshaw Street and Adams Street, west of North Saint Andrews Street is a good opportunity



Old Coca-Cola bottling facility



Foster Street north of Adams Street



The old Borden's Ice Cream site

for redevelopment. Reuse of the existing building should be strongly considered as it is part of the downtown heritage. There is also a large amount of undeveloped property in this block that could include new development as part of redevelopment of the Coke plant. Development of the site should be primarily residential, but could include retail on the ground floor facing North All Saints Street.

- The three blocks between North Foster Street and North St. Andres Street from Adams Street to Powell Street as well as two blocks to the east and a block to the west are presently underutilized and are potential sites for redevelopment in the northern portion of the downtown. In this area many of the buildings are vacant or are on underutilized properties. There are also large amounts of surface parking in this area. As other parts of the downtown redevelop and are revitalized, this northern section of the downtown will become more attractive for reinvestment and the commercial uses to the south and the commercial hubs at the train depot and Foster Street can become a strong corridor of commercial activity with potential for residential uses in upper floors.
- The old Borden's Ice Cream site located east of North Oates Street between the railroad tracks and Powell Street is a prime site for development. This is a relatively unencumbered site that anchors the north end of the downtown. There is a large amount of available land in this location that would allow for a fairly wide variety of development potentials. The site is located on one of the main arterials through the downtown and is adjacent to the commercial hub at the train depot. Development on this site would probably be best as large retail or office development. Parking could be provided interior to the blocks to allow for building frontage on the streets.
- If a new library is constructed for downtown Dothan, the existing building and/or site will become available for redevelopment. This would be well suited for a variety of uses, including residential or office space.

4.3.4: Streetscape Investments

The Summary Analysis identifies areas for streetscape investments. Some of the high priority areas have received some level of improvements. These should be maintained, but where appropriate should also be further enhanced. Secondary streetscape investment areas should also be improved, but it is not necessary that they receive the same level of investment, and they only should be addressed after the priority areas have been improved.



Foster Street sidewalk south of
Troy Street



Foster street north of Adams Street

- The primary streetscape investment areas focus along Foster Street and Saint Andrews Street between Adams and Crawford Streets. As this area is in the priority redevelopment area it is important that the streetscape reflect this. The improvement of these streets is an opportunity to create a positive impression, to denote the downtown core, and to attract reinvestment to adjacent properties. Streetscape improvements can also be combined with other public realm improvements such as the creation of plaza spaces.
- Secondary streetscape investment areas continue the streetscape improvements on Foster and All Saints Street to the commercial core area/town square at the train depot. The treatment for these segments could be the same as that between Crawford and Adams Street or could be slightly different. The main point is that these improvements north of Adams Street have a lower priority than those to the south.

Section 5: Downtown Dothan Master Plan Recommendations

This section is presented in eight focus areas, each with specific goals and programs for improvement: The Downtown Dothan Master Plan is depicted on **Map 7**.

1. Strengthening Dothan's Community Image
2. Stimulating Economic Development
3. Wayfinding and Signage
4. Public Realm Improvements
5. Access and Circulation
6. Open Space and Linkages
7. Parking
8. Organizing for the Future

5.1: Strengthening Dothan's Community Image

Many unsuccessful cities are indistinguishable from thousands of others and have nothing that makes them stand out. Fortunately for Dothan, the city has quite a lot that gives it character and makes it unique. Dothan is a "Cultural Crossroads". Its location is a geographical crossroads, but it is also a center of art, music, and culture in the region. The key to enhancing the city's image is to embrace the positive themes which give Dothan its identity, and to develop these themes even further.

Community stakeholders are encouraged to gain consensus on a 'community image' or branding of the downtown area. Once established, this image should be built into future marketing and promotion of the area. There are various themes that underlie the community image of Dothan.



Dothan Opera House

- Hub of the Wiregrass – Dothan is the largest city within 80 miles and is located in the heart of the Wiregrass. The economy is varied and includes the medical industry, technology, aerospace, and agriculture.
- Cultural Crossroads – The many murals in the City are a strong asset and the City has a significant art community. The Wiregrass Museum of Art is a vibrant part of the community and is a visitor attraction. The Opera House is an important gathering space for musical and other



Peanut in front of Civic Center

performances. The G.W. Carver Interpretive Museum also provide a unique and informative experience for visitors.

- Peanut Capital of the World – Half of the peanuts grown in the United States come from within 100 miles of Dothan. George Washington Carver also plays a part in this theme. This can also be tied to a larger agricultural theme that includes the history of cotton in the region.
- Civic Center – As the Houston County seat, Dothan is the center of many civic functions. The County and Federal Courts are located in the downtown. The Civic Center building itself is distinctive architecturally and offers a gathering space for the city.

One main theme should be chosen to represent the city; however the other aspects that make the City unique should also be addressed and communicated in marketing efforts. Whatever the theme, a unified marketing campaign can promote the idea to attract more interest in supporting downtown redevelopment. This theme should be incorporated into future marketing materials for Downtown Dothan.

Dothan's history should also be incorporated into revitalization of the downtown to strengthen the community image. Poplar Head Spring and a variety of historic architecture are important aspects of the City's heritage that should be highlighted.

5.1.1: Formalize Town Squares

There is currently no central town square in Downtown Dothan. Town squares are pedestrian friendly places for people to gather, as well as spaces from which to venture to the surrounding areas.

This report recommends three new town squares in Dothan: at the intersection of Foster Street and Main Street, at the intersection of Foster Street and Troy Street, and at the train depot.

The two Foster Street nodes anchor the ends of the main commercial core.



Location for town square at the intersection of Main Street and Foster Street

- Foster Street/Main Street acts as a gateway to pull attention up Foster and also as a pedestrian connection and plaza for the courthouse. A formalized town square or town clock could create a ceremonial public space for Dothan residents. In addition to beautifying the streetscape, a town square provides an additional attraction downtown and a place for community gathering. Although the front door to the County Courthouse is on Oates Street, this space should also act as an outdoor plaza for the Courthouse. People currently gather outside the courthouse. This space would formally provide them with a place to do such and would connect people to the Foster Street corridor and parking resources north on Foster and to the east at the Civic Center.
- The Foster Street/Troy Street intersection is an attractive site for a new town square. Located only a block off the main state road intersection, it is surrounded by pedestrian-scale buildings. It is also located in the center of the four key redevelopment blocks. A town square at this location could create economic development synergies that radiate throughout the downtown area. This parking lot to the north and east of this location could potentially be developed in the future as a bi-level parking garage with an entrance on Foster Street and a lower level entrance on Saint Andrews Street. Depending on the amount of room available, such a garage could be faced with businesses on the town square. There may also be future potential for redevelopment of the northern portion of this site, which could possibly be combined with the creation of a parking garage. This could be a good location for a public building such as a new library, a museum, or a similar public amenity.
- The train depot is a smaller neighborhood retail area for the surrounding residential uses. The train depot area is currently used primarily by residents of the nearby neighborhood, but once the commercial cores are connected there may be greater possibilities for attracting a larger market. A public space in this area would focus around the water tower and on the building faces surrounding the triangular space. The historic depot and the



Location for town square at the intersection of Foster Street and Troy Street



Location for town square at the old train depot

water tower are two elements that give this space a unique feel. Although the goal is to connect this area to the main part of the downtown, it also presents an opportunity to maintain a space that has a somewhat rural feel to it within the downtown.

5.1.2: *Clean and Safe*

Downtown Dothan suffers from a perception of not being safe. In order to invalidate this perception, surrounding neighborhoods should be strengthened with community improvements.

Bars and clubs add vitality to a downtown area and benefit the community, but there have been opponents to these uses downtown. A balance between the opportunities presented with bars and the needs of downtown residents should be found.

The downtown 'Clean and Safe' program should continue to be supported. 'Clean and Safe' programs provide funding for the maintenance and upkeep of downtown public spaces to encourage a more positive perception of a downtown area. Maintenance and safety are inexpensive investments, but their presence is very important in establishing Downtown Dothan as an attractive place to shop, live, and visit.

5.1.3: *Architectural Amenities*

Downtown Dothan has a variety of historic structures throughout the downtown, including the Opera House, Federal Court, Train Depot, Masonic temple, and the Carver Museum. The sheriff's office (adjacent to the County Court) and the Civic Center may also have some historic architectural significance.

An effort should be made to protect and preserve all historic structures throughout the downtown area. The preservation of historic buildings contributes to the character of Downtown and increases property values in the area. However, there have been a number of architectural losses in Downtown Dothan, including the church at Main Street and Oates Street, the old County Courthouse, and the church on Foster Street.

Several historic downtown buildings have been successfully revitalized, including the photo studio along the southern train tracks, the Foster Street Café, Snobs, and the law offices at Main Street and St. Andrews Street. When possible, historic buildings should be retained or revitalized to maintain the downtown character.



The Cherry Street AME Church is an historical and architectural amenity for the downtown

With two historic districts covering the study area, the historic quality of the area should be preserved. The historic district should be expanded to include the Dixie Area and the Cherry Street AME Church.

5.1.4: *Tourism Potential*

In addition to building up conference and hospitality facilities, Downtown Dothan should be promoted as an area tourist attraction, as it has a concentration of cultural amenities. As another county/area-wide tourist center, various attractions can be highlighted, including the Wiregrass Museum, the Opera House, and the city's collection of murals. As much as possible, marketing should be coordinated with other Convention and Visitor Bureaus to attract through traffic to the Gulf beaches.



Mural at Poplar Head Park

Downtown Dothan should promote itself as the cultural hub of the Wiregrass region. Art, downtown murals, and museums should be strongly promoted. The Downtown could also attract art festivals, traveling exhibits, and artists. Similarly, the Opera House can be utilized for a variety of musical performances and theater events. The existing art and music resources in Downtown Dothan should be used to attract additional cultural amenities.

Specific actions that could improve tourism include:

- The construction of a new conference center and hotel to attract regional conferences and draw business downtown
- The creation and maintenance of downtown facilities for visitors, such as a Downtown Visitors Center, in addition to the existing Dothan Visitors Center on Ross Clark Circle
- The promotion of downtown cultural events, such as the Dothan Opera House, the Civic Center, and the Wiregrass Art Museum
- The promotion of local sporting events, including the Future Masters golf tournament, packaged with downtown attractions and accommodations
- Signage improvements from major connecting roads, highlighting Downtown Dothan attractions
- The highlighting of downtown events and attractions within the Dothan Alabama Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), especially on the organization's website

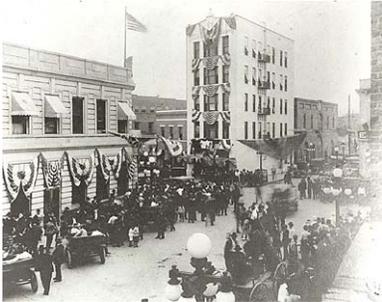


Garden at the Wiregrass Museum of Art

- Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act in all future construction, and improvement of existing sidewalks that are not up to ADA standards, to ensure that Dothan is accessible to all those that wish to visit

These attractions and improvements should be targeted specifically in *Downtown* Dothan. Major venues should be located in the downtown when at all possible.

5.1.5: *Grow Dothan Events*



Photograph of the 1922 Poplar Head Parade. *Photograph from Slingluff United Insurance website gallery.*

By promoting Dothan as a center of events, residents from surrounding areas can be drawn to the downtown area. Existing events include the National Peanut Festival, Garden Tour, Festival of Murals, and Wiregrass Heritage Festival. The Downtown Group should continue to sponsor events. By organizing to seek sponsors and partnering with downtown merchants, marketing costs can be cut while having the added benefit of promoting downtown businesses. Events should be geared towards the Arts and Culture theme, and the existing Civic Center should be used to any extent possible. Other potential sites for stage events include the intersection of Troy Street and Foster Street, Foster Street Park, Poplar Head Park, and the Civic Center parking lot.

During various downtown events, existing parking throughout the downtown should be utilized. For large events, off-site parking could be providing by using a shuttle service.

5.2: Stimulating Economic Development

Economic development is crucial in any downtown revitalization. The goal of the economic development program should be to bring more people downtown, rather than having them go outside Ross Clark Circle. The downtown needs to provide convenience retail to address local workers and residents, but should also provide retail attractions that are not available elsewhere.

Vacant buildings and businesses need to be filled in order to make the downtown a more vibrant district. A critical mass needs to be reached in the downtown to encourage additional businesses in the area. A large mixed-use development (or redevelopment) would be instrumental in creating the necessary conditions, by providing customers (in residential units) and commercial activity at the same time.

Where appropriate, sites should receive new development. The City's challenge is to attract businesses or residents to fill the vacant buildings and to invest in the downtown in redevelopment of key sites. An Economic Development director or an independent downtown "champion" can work with businesses to find appropriate locations downtown while working with developers to encourage additional redevelopment.

Note: The particular role of the Downtown Dothan Redevelopment Authority is described in Sections 6.1.2 and 6.1.5.

5.2.1: Downtown Development Districts

Downtown Development Districts have been identified for focused economic development and capital improvements. Such districts include government and institutional, commercial/employment, corridors, Foster Street commercial, service, and residential. Additionally, a "destination venue" should be considered for downtown as a catalyst for continued economic development. For example, the addition of a professional sports complex would draw tourists and visitors from throughout the region, thus providing increased business for hotels, restaurants, and other retail options. Downtown Development Districts are identified on **Map 8**.



Oates Street



Foster Street is the heart of the downtown historic core



Dothan Civic Center



Wiregrass Museum of Art

- Oates Street Corridor (District 1) – The Oates Street corridor is a vehicle oriented commercial corridor. Development within this district should include commercial and office uses with some potential for civic uses that might relate to the County or Federal Courthouses. The detention center located on this street should be identified for future refurbishment or potential future relocation.
- Downtown Historic Core (District 2) – Development within the downtown core should be encouraged to be mixed use in nature with retail uses on the ground levels and possibly some of the upper levels, but with residences or office uses on most of the upper levels. This zone is conducive to smaller boutique type retail and service retail such as restaurants, cafés, and bars. The current businesses in this district are appropriate to the zone. Similar businesses should be encouraged to fill vacancies or redevelop dilapidated sites.
- Civic City Hub (District 3) – There are no significant opportunities for new development within this district. However the civic parking lot should be reconfigured to more efficiently provide parking and to provide parking for the downtown and Wiregrass Museum of Art in addition to the Civic Center. This zone also includes the Poplar Head Spring which is a potential area for improvement.
- Cultural/Arts (District 4) – The portion of the downtown centered around the Wiregrass Museum of Art presents an opportunity for development or adaptive reuse of buildings that relate to the museum and a cultural and arts theme. This could include expansion of the museum and the creation of artist studios in adjacent warehouses or as part of new development. The park area to the south of the museum could be formalized as a public park that includes a significant public gathering area.
- Residential (District 5) – This area includes an old school building that has potential for redevelopment as condominiums or assisted living. This district includes a large amount of vacant lots and properties in a low state of



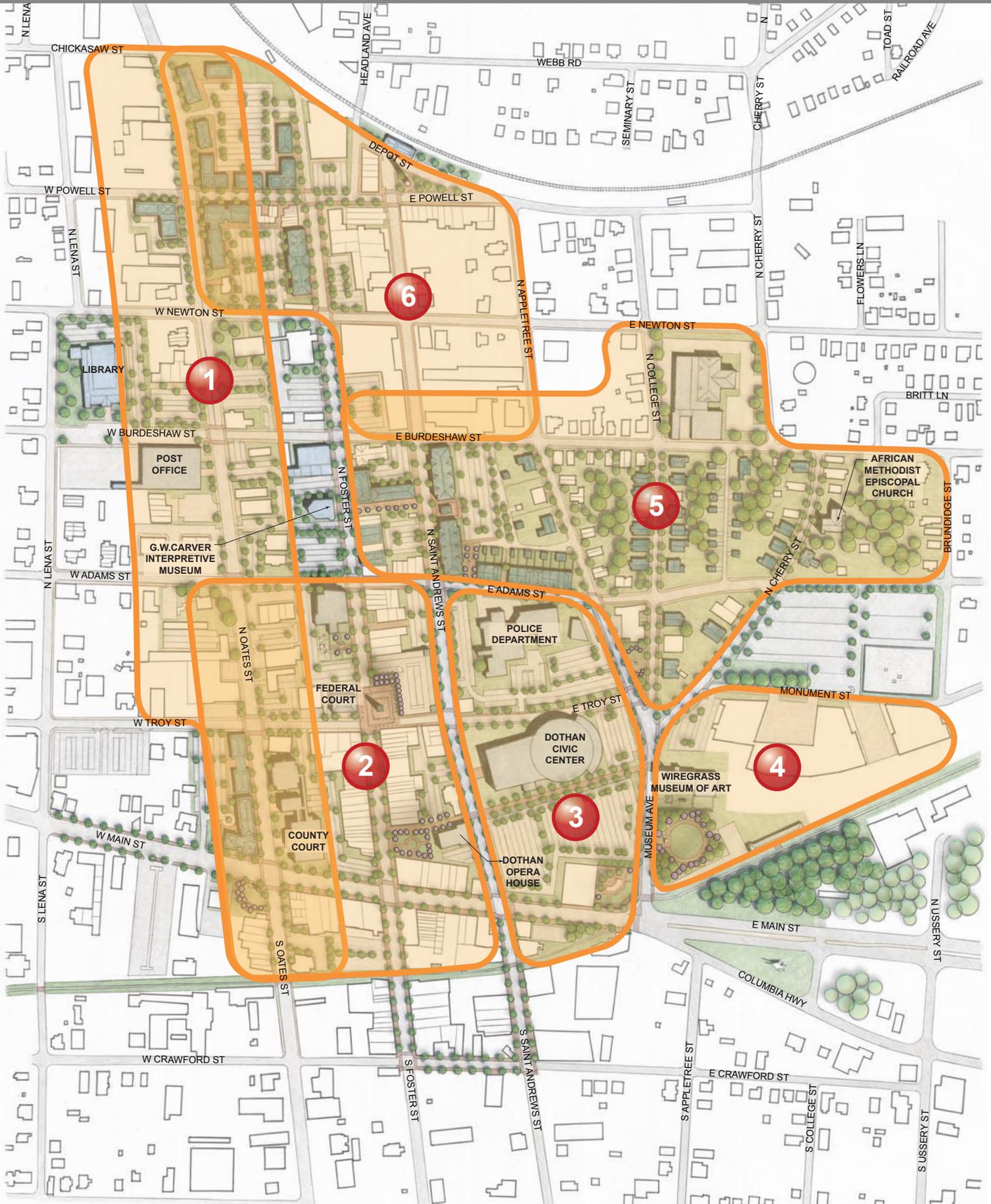
Old school building



Meadow Gold site

maintenance. There is substantial opportunity for development of these sites as residential use which will help strengthen the neighborhood and provide additional residences close to the downtown.

- Significant Redevelopment Area (District 6) – This area is comprised of much of the northern part of the downtown. There are many surface parking lots and underutilized buildings in this zone. The vacant Meadow Gold site is a prime opportunity for redevelopment. Much of this area has fairly large, unencumbered sites.



5.2.2: Redevelopment Partnerships

To implement economic development initiatives and rejuvenate downtown, it is recommended that the city partner with other government institutions, the Dothan Chamber of Commerce, Houston County, and the private sector to target catalytic district initiatives. Projects can become “catalytic” when they inspire other projects in an area; for example, the addition of housing downtown could encourage the development of restaurants and retail options in the same area because of the built-in consumer base. Together, common goals for downtown should be identified, and joint projects to achieve those goals should be pursued.

5.2.3: Follow-On Strategies

It is also recommended that the City, Chamber, CVB, and DTG unite to form a cohesive Economic Development Strategy. A unified strategy would allow for cooperation in planning and implementing downtown improvements. In addition to an Economic Development Strategy, a Downtown Marketing Strategy should be developed to attract more business to the downtown area. In coordination, these two strategies could be very effective in channeling more revenues to Downtown Dothan.

Recruiting potential business owners is also an important aspect of economic development. Development site marketing and developer solicitation should be promoted to attract new investment downtown. Specifically, a development prospectus should be prepared, and project development information should be shared. A cohesive Retail Recruitment Strategy should be adopted.

5.2.4: Targeted Investments

The entire downtown district can benefit from investments in specific sites. For example, the Arts and Culture theme could be expanded by partnering to build a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center. This would draw more activity downtown, especially after standard business hours.

The Train Depot has seen recent reinvestment. It is recommended that the city capitalize on this development to spur other private investment in the North Downtown area.

While the Civic Center is a valuable public facility, it could use revitalization to ensure it is drawing the surrounding community to the downtown. It is recommended that the governing body re-program and maximize the use of the Civic Center.

The Wiregrass Museum of Art is also a community asset. There has been discussion of the Museum creating a nearby Artists' Village, which would consist of live-work studio space and galleries. A project of this nature would strengthen the eastern part of Downtown Dothan as a Cultural and Arts District.

Artist's studios are a natural use for downtown buildings in Dothan. Existing structures adjacent to the Wiregrass Museum are ideal for art studios, and possibly conversion to live/work space for artists. Buildings in the downtown can easily be converted to studios with a central gallery. These spaces can become activity centers for evening art show openings as artist coops lease the galleries for events from private shows to parties to public openings.

Most artists prefer raw space with little up fit provided, preferring instead to build out and personalize spaces. Art studios can be created from spaces providing little more than partition walls and a centralized bathroom. Some artists require a sink and running water. Industrial artists, sculptors, glass blowers, furniture makers may require large spaces and will need to be segregated from other studios for noise and safety reasons.

Art space as an economic development driver has been widely exploited all across the country and numerous agencies; white papers and funding models exist. A number of these resources have been provided as addendum to this report.

5.3 Wayfinding and Signage

Keeping visitors well-oriented is important, from the large scale (identifying highway exits that lead to Downtown Dothan) to the small scale (guiding visitors from a parking lot to an attraction). Keeping people oriented and providing information for visitors can be accomplished through wayfinding and signage. In addition, these features can also notify travelers of the existence of the city and features in the city of which they are not aware.

5.3.1: Regional Wayfinding

Although this report focuses on the downtown, wayfinding and signage within the region that indicates the location of Dothan are beneficial to the downtown as well as the overall City. Wayfinding for Dothan should start at the I-10 and Route 231 interchange. There may be an opportunity at this location to not only indicate the exit for Dothan, but to advertise “Historic Downtown Dothan” as well. Likewise this type of signage should be included as far out on Routes 231, 84, and 431 as possible to help draw people into the City and the downtown. On Ross Clark Circle it should be ensured that there are signs of the historic downtown at the intersections with 231, 34, and 431. Many areas have particular signs that indicate historic locations or points of interest. This could be used to indicate Downtown Dothan at the various locations discussed as well as any other strategic locations that might be identified – Fort Rucker is one example of another potential location for signage.

5.3.2: Ceremonial Gateways

Gateways and/or signs should be located at strategic locations to announce entry to Downtown Dothan. Ceremonial gateways are entry points into Dothan that indicate “Now you are entering Dothan.” These gateways should present a strong face to incoming traffic and create a good first impression. Some elements that might be incorporated into the gateways are walls, signs, open space, and ornamental plantings. The most important consideration is that they present Dothan’s character. Material selections should be carefully made and designs should be appropriate to Dothan’s history



Example of a gateway feature

and the image it wishes to project. Listed below are the three strategic points at which these should be located:



Billboard at the intersection of Oates and Main Streets



Poplar Head Park at the intersection of East Main Street and Museum Avenue



Intersection of Oates and Powell Streets

- South Oates Street and Main Street – This location is the main entry point to the downtown from both the west and the south. Improvements have been made to a pocket park at this location. However, the most prominent feature of this park is a large advertisement billboard. This is not the most appropriate method of announcing the arrival to an historic downtown. Options should be considered for refurbishing this park, and possibly incorporating redevelopment of the properties to the south as part of changes to the park. The County Courthouse diagonally across from the park should also be looked at for gateway opportunities. In addition to this area, the point at which South Oates Street crosses the railroad tracks is an arrival threshold where at which point the gateway can be seen. Improvements to the bridge at this point, including ornamental lighting could be a beneficial precursor to the gateway.
- East Main Street and Columbia Highway – This location is the entry point to the downtown from the east. At this point the highway stops and the road cross section becomes more urban. Although the memorial park to the south provides a large amount of open space, it is not in the downtown. The current Poplar Head Park is the best opportunity for gateway features and signage. It is well oriented and positioned to announce the entry to the downtown.
- North Oates Street and Powell Street – From the north the entry into the downtown is slightly more ambiguous than at the other locations. However, this point offers a good entry point because of its connection to the core commercial area at the train depot and it is the point where Oates Street opens up from the being immediately adjacent to the railroad corridor. Signage and gateway features could be incorporated into new development on the Borden's Ice Cream site.

5.3.3: Secondary Portals

Secondary portals are significant because they are locations that should draw attention off of the vehicular



Model signage for downtown attractions

corridors of Oates and Main Streets into the downtown core.

- North Oates Street and Troy Street – This intersection is important for drawing traffic and visitors traveling north or south on Oates Street into the Foster Street corridor. Signage for parking or other features could be located at these locations.
- East Main Street and Saint Andrews Street – This intersection should draw people to parking facilities by the Civic Center.
- East Main Street and Foster Street – This location is identified for a commercial core zone and a town square. It is important for drawing people north and south on the Foster Street corridor.



Example of pedestrian-oriented directional signs

5.3.4: Signage

The existing network of directional signs in Dothan should be expanded and enhanced to better serve the public. This should be done at a vehicular scale, with a directional wayfinding sign system for traffic, and at a pedestrian scale. For pedestrians, wayfinding directories should be located at key locations, including destination venues, municipal and non-municipal off-street parking lots, and specific pedestrian ‘trail’ points of embarkation. The sign ordinance should be evaluated and modified as needed.

5.4 Public Realm Improvements

Public realm improvements are opportunities in which the city, county, or state can enhance public rights of way or other public property. These projects can often be easier to accomplish than persuading the private realm to develop sites that are not publicly owned.

Because rights of way make up the majority of Dothan's public property, most public realm improvements will be streetscape improvements. Improvements should be carried out in a well-organized, unified, and high-quality manner.

5.4.1: Improvement Elements

There are various elements that can be used in the public realm to provide amenities, greater safety, and enhanced visual appeal to the public.



Example of brick accents on a concrete sidewalk



Example of a crosswalk with brick pavers

- **Sidewalk Improvements:** Sidewalk improvements can include widening, replacement, and creating new sidewalks. Concrete might be converted to brick paving, tree lawns or tree pits can be introduced, and curb ramps could be converted or added. Brick materials may be most appropriate for Downtown Dothan.
- **Bumpouts/ Neckdowns:** These are features usually located at intersections where the road narrows and the pedestrian realm is enlarged. They can be used to provide greater safety at pedestrian crossings, to calm traffic, and to increase the plantable and pedestrian area along a street. Bumpouts may be appropriate on St. Andrews Street.
- **Crosswalks:** Pedestrian crosswalks should be located at all intersections that are significantly used by both pedestrians and vehicles. Crosswalks can be painted, but in higher priority areas and areas where enhanced aesthetics are desired, concrete, brick, or stone pavers could be used.
- **Utility Relocation:** Utility relocation, usually in the burial of utilities, is often the most costly streetscape improvement, but it is also the improvement that perhaps makes the greatest visual improvement for a street. When planning a long-term improvement for a street, utility

relocation should be a component of the improvements. Utility relocation should be made on priority streets first, with relocation eventually coming to all the other minor streets. A longer-term strategy should be developed to evaluate the removal or relocation of overhead utilities. Undergrounding or relocating the utilities to the rear of properties would greatly improve the public environment.



Example of street lighting with decorative hanging flowers

- **Lighting:** Streetlights and pedestrian lights are important for safety, but they can also be visual enhancements for the street. Choosing lights that are attractive can turn what could be a negative feature of a street into a positive feature. Dothan should choose one light style for the entire downtown, or designate light styles by streets or districts. This will enhance unity within the town and help strengthen a sense of identity for the downtown.
- **Furniture:** Public furniture can include benches, trash receptacles, planters, and in some locations tables and chairs. They can be important amenities in areas where a large number of pedestrians pass by or congregate. As with lighting, there should be some consistency with the styles and types of furniture that are used throughout the downtown.
- **Street Trees:** An element which often goes unnoticed, but is almost always a component of the nicest urban neighborhoods, is large mature trees. Large trees provide shade, cool their environment through evapo-transpiration, help reduce runoff and thus flooding, provide improved visual aesthetics, and help to humanize a streetscape. Dothan is in need of the benefits (especially shade) that street trees provide. Street trees should be used along all streets where it is possible to plant them, and efforts should be made to make planting possible where it currently is not. One benefit of burying utilities is that it allows for the planting of large trees, which offer greater benefits than small ornamental trees. For Dothan, it would be appropriate to plant poplars (which were most likely tulip-poplars, *Liriodendron tulipifera*) at least in the vicinity of Poplar Head spring. This would tie into the City's heritage and



Example of shrubs and trees used to screen parked cars

help strengthen its identity. A plan for the planting and maintenance of street trees and other plantings will also be necessary.

- Other Plantings: Shrubs and low trees can be planted to screen various elements such as parked cars. Ornamental trees and shrubs can be used to enhance the visual appearance of focus points such as gateways. Hanging planters and ground planters can be used for seasonal plantings to provide color and interest to streetscapes.

5.4.2: Streetscape Initiatives

Past streetscape improvements should be built upon, and longer-term capital improvements should be developed for:



One-way traffic, angled and parallel parking on Foster Street

- North and South Foster Street: Parallel parking is recommended on both sides of the street. This street should also be considered for two-way access. The large curb on the west side of the street should be removed and the street should be made handicap accessible. Street trees should be provided where possible. Additionally, the removal of angled parking from Main Street to Adams Street should be considered. Sidewalks should be expanded for additional outdoor venues, and improvements should be added to make the west side ADA compliant.
- North and South Saint Andrews Street: South Saint Andrews Street has a wide cross section that is underutilized. Bumpouts or even a median could be introduced. Street tree plantings are especially important for this corridor. Improvements to sidewalks in some areas should also be made over time.
- Troy Street: This street is blocked by the church on Lena to the west and pinched by the Civic Center and Police Department to the east. Currently the street is one-way going out of the core commercial area. This street should be changed to a two way street or at the least made one-way going in toward Foster Street from Oates Street.
- Oates Street: This is essentially a suburban street, but efforts should be made to incorporate it into



Saint Andrews Street



One way traffic and angled parking on Troy Street



Oates Street



Large expanse of paving at Main Street and Museum Avenue



Museum Avenue



Powell Street west of the train depot

the rest of the downtown. Sidewalks should be improved, street trees planted, and landscape buffers from the street should be introduced. This corridor should not be one large expanse of paving. The relocation or architectural renovation of the jail should be considered. This feature may make redevelopment of some of the nearby areas more difficult – especially for residential uses.

- Main Street: Streetscape improvements have been made for much of Main Street. It should be ensured that these are maintained. Also, additional improvements should be considered such as more prominent crosswalks at Oates, Foster, and Saint Andrews Street and Museum Avenue. Furniture and signage are other features which should be considered. The intersection at Museum Avenue is a very large expanse of paving. Redesign of this intersection should be looked at.
- Museum Avenue: Streetscape improvements to Museum Avenue would help tie this area to the downtown. The creation of an “artist village” or any addition to the Wiregrass Museum of Art would be a good time at which to make improvements. Streetscape amenities should include brick paving, ornamental pedestrian lights, and furniture.
- Powell Street: As the train depot commercial core area is further developed and the Borden’s Ice Cream site and other adjacent sites are developed, the Powell Street Corridor between Oates Street and the train depot should receive streetscape improvements. This should be incorporated with new development along the corridor.

5.5 Access and Circulation

An organized system of both vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation for the downtown helps to make the downtown more livable and can ease and enhance the experience for visitors. Access and circulation improvements increase safety, communicate a hierarchy of streets, vehicular uses, and pedestrian uses, and provide aesthetic benefits.

5.5.1: Intersection Improvements

Targeted intersection upgrades throughout Dothan can have widespread influences on the appearance and perception of Downtown. The following intersections should be priorities:

- Foster Street and Troy Street should be embellished to create a 'town square'. Crosswalks at this intersection should be more visible, possibly with ornamental paving.
- The Foster Street and Troy Street intersection should be incorporated into a town square design in the northeast quadrant of the intersection.
- Powell Street and Depot Street improvements should be made as part of the core commercial area.
- Powell Street and Oates Street should receive gateway improvements including crosswalks and entry signs.
- Troy Street and Oates Street should receive directional signage to the commercial core and other applicable improvements.
- The Oates Street and Main Street intersection is very significant. Gateway elements should be important additions at this location as well as crosswalk and other pedestrian improvements.
- Saint Andrews Street and Main Street is a directional point for entering the civic center area. Directional signage, crosswalk, and other necessary pedestrian improvements should be made.
- The Museum Avenue and Main Street intersection needs to be redesigned to reduce the amount of paving and create a more pedestrian friendly environment. Additionally, a stronger connection should be made to the Wiregrass Museum of Art.

5.5.2: Corridor Improvements

Dothan has a pedestrian-friendly layout, with a street grid network and short blocks. In order to encourage additional pedestrian activity, the following corridors should be prioritized:

- Oates Street is a vehicle oriented corridor. Accommodations should be made to better provide for pedestrians and to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the corridor.
- Main Street could use improvements primarily between Saint Andrews Street and Museum Avenue. Other strategic improvements should be targeted.
- Foster Street should be considered primarily as a pedestrian street. This corridor could be altered to change angled parking to parallel parking, make traffic two-way, and provide pedestrian streetscape enhancements.
- Saint Andrews Street has a lot of room available for pedestrian and planting improvements. This opportunity should be used.
- Museum Avenue is an important link to the Wiregrass Museum of Art. The importance of the museum should be emphasized by improvements to the street.
- Powell Street will become a more important connection as the train depot commercial core area is further developed and as new development occurs along the street.



Example of shaded green open space

5.6 Open Space and Linkages

Green, shaded, open spaces provide a respite from the concrete and masonry environment of urban settings. They provide places for workers and residents to eat lunch, relax, and interact. They are gathering places, but also provide visual benefit by breaking the monotony of buildings or barren spaces. Trees in these spaces provide health benefits through pollution removal and by cooling the air. Linkages are pedestrian friendly routes that connect open spaces or other destinations. Shade trees, especially in a relatively warm climate city such as Dothan, are important for providing pedestrian comfort. Additionally, there is a multitude of benefits that green space provides: air quality improvements, shade, visual appeal, stress relief, active recreation opportunities, stormwater abatement, downtown cooling, and scaling down large buildings.

5.6.1: Ceremonial Open Spaces

Ceremonial open spaces improve the character of the downtown and encourage pedestrian activity and street life. Gateway spaces provide a sense of entry into Dothan and help define the urban character of the area. There are three opportunities for ceremonial/gateway spaces in the downtown area.

- Oates Street/Main Street Gateway: This area should be redesigned unless it eventually becomes the site of a new building. The park could become better utilized if the vacancies on Oates Street south of this point are filled with compatible uses, such as dining with outdoor seating along the park. Parking and access present a challenge for the surrounding buildings.
- Park on east side of Foster Street just north of Main Street: This could be an extension of the Foster Street/Main Street plaza. This park has a similar level of design as the Oates Street/Main Street gateway. It needs to be redesigned to better reflect the urban character of the downtown and to address linkages.
- Poplar Head Park: This park was recently converted to a parking lot. The park should be restored, and it should include the area west of

Museum Avenue and the area east of the Museum, and north and south of the railroad. This should be designed as one cohesive park. The portion east of the Museum should celebrate the spring and poplar trees. If possible, the spring should be daylighted. This park has the opportunity to be a shady, interesting location where a visitor can rediscover the root of the city. This is Dothan's park and its historic heart, and both of these concepts need to be properly addressed. Planting poplars (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) at this location would be an appropriate link to Dothan's natural heritage. The area south of the museum would be better utilized for an amphitheater or public green than the current one at the road intersection. This area is larger and quieter and provides better opportunity for gatherings.

Additional open spaces should be created throughout the city as focal amenities in specific redevelopment districts. These open spaces will create a network throughout the city.

5.6.2: Plaza Areas

Outdoor plazas allow residents and visitors to congregate downtown in a public area. By situating plazas near retail and entertainment attractions, the downtown will establish itself as a distinct location with a sense of place. The sense of community that is associated with outdoor plazas would greatly benefit Downtown Dothan. The following are recommendations for the establishment of focal plaza areas:



Example of an outdoor public plaza

- A “new” town square at Foster Street and Troy Street. This can be the downtown's main plaza and town square. It should relate to the courthouse, to Main Street, to Foster Street, and to the pedestrian link east of Foster Street. The plaza/open space should wrap around to the main entrance of the Courthouse building. Most parking for the court should eventually be located east of the building rather than across Oates Street. The plaza should address this.

- Foster Street and Troy Street: This area helps anchor the commercial corridor. This is a quieter, more pedestrian-friendly alternative to the Foster Street/Main Street space. The challenge will be to get activity around it in order to make it a “live” space, rather than the inactive federal court and parking lot.
- The train depot. This area has a semi-rural, industrial feel. It should be used as an opportunity for providing the character for this plaza/square. Designing this area as a “town square” can provide a space for the surrounding residential neighborhoods and the immediately adjacent business. Additionally, this area should eventually more strongly connect to Oates Street and the Foster Street commercial corridor.

5.6.3: Open Space Linkages

A longer-term implementation plan should be developed to promote area-wide accessibility between the downtown to outlying neighborhoods and public, cultural, environmental, and historic resources.

- The Civic Center parking lot connects the Wiregrass Museum and parking to the opera house, Foster Street, and the County Court. This is an important link, and it should be developed as a tree-lined promenade. This should be done in conjunction with redesign of the Civic Center parking lot. This is an important connection that should be formalized and celebrated.
- St. Andrews Street and Foster Street should be linked with a continuation of the pedestrian promenade through the Civic Center parking lot. This link should also be seamlessly incorporated into the design of the pocket park along Foster Street.
- A stronger link should be made from the pocket park on Foster Street to the courthouse following the proposed plaza space at Foster and Main Streets, but potentially also at a mid block connection point further north on the west side of Foster Street.
- The railway to the south of Main Street could have future potential as a pedestrian/bike greenway. If

this corridor falls out of use or if there is sufficient right of way to allow for a shared use path, this corridor could become an amenity for the downtown and a link to surrounding neighborhoods.

5.7 Parking

The lack of accessible parking is a problem in the downtown, but additional parking lots by themselves will not aid a downtown revitalization. A balance between appropriate parking spaces and appropriate development will need to be found for revitalization to be successful.



Example of structured parking with appropriate street frontage

One way to accommodate additional parking without the eyesore of typical surface parking lots is to develop structured parking. A two-level parking structure at the northeast corner of Foster Street and Troy Street should be considered as needs dictate. The southwest corner of the new structure should incorporate a civic “town square” element.

The drive-thru bill payment window adjacent to City Hall should be removed to increase parking in this quadrant. Additionally this entire parking resource should be redesigned to be more efficient, incorporate a pedestrian promenade link, and to include shade trees.

Off-street parking resources throughout the downtown should be consolidated, unified, and improved. There are large areas of surface parking that are underutilized. Better use of these areas should be addressed before the creation of new parking facilities is considered.

Part of the “parking problem” is a perception issue. The links to existing parking need to be much more strongly emphasized. Changes in parking should be addressed according to what is shown in this plan. There seems to be a very strong correlation between building vacancies and the lack of immediately adjacent parking. Parking resources need to be better connected to retail, and the retail needs to be inter-compatible so that customers will be likely to visit more than one store. Many people will not walk far to go to one store, but will be more likely to walk a distance if they can go to several establishments.

Many of Downtown Dothan’s parking lots lack organization, buffering, landscape amenities, and efficiency. Listed below are some steps which can be made to improve the parking situation:

- Consolidate: Through cooperation, various property owners can combine their parking areas

into connected, more efficient lots. When each business has its own entrance and exit and follows its own designs, there can be a great loss in efficiency of space.

- **Buffer:** Parking lots should be buffered from sidewalks and streets. In some parts of Dothan's downtown, cars interfere with pedestrian access. There should be a minimum buffer space between parked cars and sidewalks or streets. In addition, buffer areas could include shrub and hedge plantings to screen views of cars.
- **Redesign:** In conjunction with consolidation, parking lots should be redesigned to meet code requirements, to be most efficient, and to reduce the impact of the parking lot—making it more attractive and breaking up parking into smaller units.
- **Trees:** Parking lots should include trees along the edges and planted in islands within the lot. Trees provide shade, reduce heat in the downtown, mitigate the visual impact of parking lots, and uptake stormwater.
- **Lights:** Lighting should be provided for parking areas that do not have any. Lighting will improve safety, making these areas more comfortable at night, and will help to give a more human scale to the large expanse of paving.
- **Bio-retention Areas:** Whenever possible, bio-retention areas, where rainwater can infiltrate into the ground, should be incorporated into parking lots. These can improve water quality and reduce the water quantity running directly into streams.



Example of parking lot with buffer screening and trees

5.8 Organizing for the Future

Revitalization of Dothan's downtown is a process that has already begun. As such, all those involved are aware that it is a process that takes time. However, although the overall goal may take many years to achieve, there are various steps along the way that will need to be taken. Some steps may be short-term, but can still produce visible results and also provide the foundation for the achievement of future goals.

5.8.1: Partnerships

In order to successfully revitalize Downtown Dothan, stakeholders must work together in order to implement the recommendations made in this report. A philosophy of partnering should be adopted between the City of Dothan, Houston County, State of Alabama, Dothan Chamber of Commerce, and the Wiregrass Foundation.

5.8.2: Priorities

The following strategies are recommended for the successful implementation of this plan:

1. **Share the Plan:** Meet with city, county, state, universities, hospitals and other constituencies to share the vision for Downtown Dothan's future. Encourage the participation of other agencies in implementing the plan.
2. **Parking:** Reconsolidate parking at the Civic Center. Upgrade and improve parking resources by providing lighting, signage, and landscaping.
3. **Marketing:** Develop a new marketing campaign focusing on a theme for Downtown Dothan. Brochures and other materials should be utilized to advertise the attributes of the downtown area.
4. **Implementation:** Map out a short-, medium-, and long-term implementation strategy for capital improvement projects that will support downtown revitalization. See Table 1 in Section 7 for this implementation strategy.

5.8.3: Implementation Tools and Funding Mechanisms

There are programs already in place that can be used in the implementation of this plan. The following tools can be used to target new development downtown and encourage economic development:

- Tax abatement
- Land value taxation
- Revolving loan funds, either regional or local
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program
- Federal low-income housing tax credits
- Historic rehabilitation tax credits
- Live Near Your Work programs and incentives
- Micro-Enterprises Grant Assistance
- Neighborhood Business Development Program
- Alabama Economic Development Assistance
- Special purposes loans
- Incubators
- Zoning amendments

Section 6 outlines some of these economic redevelopment strategies in more detail.

5.9 Zoning Recommendations

The entire Downtown Dothan study area is located within the B-1 zone. This zoning permits professional and business offices, retail stores, hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and multi-family dwellings. With an appeal, B-1 zoning allows outdoor advertising structures, places of assembly, large wholesale retailers, hospitals, and warehouses. The only prohibited uses in B-1 zoning are coal yards and other non-specified industrial uses.

B-1 zoning allows building heights up to 145 feet, or 10 stories. Buildings may occupy up to 60% of gross lot area. Buildings in the B-1 zone must provide 1 off-street parking space for every 400 square feet of gross floor area. Additionally, indoor places of assembly like churches and restaurants that are located in the downtown core area are not required to provide any off-street parking.

Current zoning allows large signs throughout the downtown area. The Zoning Ordinance permits signs up to 32 square feet, and billboards up to 400 square feet, in the B-1 district. Signs of this size could detract from the downtown character and appearance.

The study area's B-1 zoning includes no regulation on the width of sidewalks. B-2 and B-4 zoning requires a minimum width of 6 feet.

5.9.1 Downtown Overlay Zone Recommendation

The existing zoning is appropriate for the downtown area, but B-1 zoning includes recommendations and requirements that are not specifically applicable for downtown. Because the downtown core area has unique redevelopment challenges, a Downtown Overlay District should be established. This district should cover the same boundaries that are described as the "downtown core area" in Section 114.4 of the Dothan Zoning Ordinance.

The City of Dothan should enact a Downtown Overlay Zone for the area bounded by Crawford Street to the south, College Street to the east, the railroad tracks and Powell Street to the north, and Lena Street to the west. The purpose of this zone is to create a more compact,

livable downtown area that would encourage increased pedestrian activity, mixed-use development, and high quality urban design characteristics.

Development of the overlay district should incorporate the following standards and requirements:

1. Parking

- a. Joint parking regulations should be established for new development in Downtown Dothan. Shared parking is especially effective when the uses' peak periods of parking demand are staggered. Where public parking structures exist, core sites are often relieved of meeting any on-site parking requirements and spaces are reserved for them in parking structures.
- b. Even though adequate parking is important in Dothan, a scattershot pattern of parking lots makes it impossible to create a compact, pedestrian-friendly downtown that has continuous, street-related facades and activities. Joint parking regulations and the construction of a shared parking structure are key steps in the revitalization of Downtown Dothan.

2. Street Frontage

- a. All new construction or improvements should be built to property lines. Whenever nearby buildings are primarily built to the sidewalk, the shapes and forms of new construction should create a strong, well-defined base at pedestrian level that fits well into its context.
- b. To allow adequate light and air, tall buildings (over 10 stories) should generally:
 - 1. Keep 100 feet between other tall buildings within the same block.
 - 2. Make sure the upper stories of tall buildings are progressively narrower.
- c. Any parking garage visible from the street should be integrated into its surroundings

- and provide an active and inviting street-level use and appearance.
- d. Surface parking lots should ideally not create gaps along the street and sidewalk. Any surface lot in Downtown Dothan should:
 - 1. Use landscaping, trees, colonnades, or other construction to maintain the line formed by buildings along the sidewalk.
 - 2. Make sure there is adequate perimeter landscaping that is high enough to screen but low enough to let people feel safe.
 - 3. Interior landscaping should especially include shade trees.
 - 4. Provide adequate direction and information signs for motorists.
 - e. Open space should reinforce the sense of building frontage along the street. Any newly developed or improved open space should use fences, trees, benches, or other landscaping as a way to continue the sense of building frontage along the sidewalk.
 - f. For the sake of visual continuity, large shade trees can be planted should be planted in the right-of-way every 25 feet to 35 feet along the curblineline to create a continuous canopy.
 - g. The zoning ordinance should include a provision for B-1 sidewalk widths, and that the minimum width be at least 6 feet.



Example of downtown-appropriate retail signs

3. Signage

- a. Signs should be sensitive to the architectural character of the district, building, and project. Accordingly, integrate the sign into the design of the building or project.
- b. Avoid gaudy, moving, or harshly-illuminated signs.
- c. Billboards of any kind should be prohibited in the downtown core area.

- d. The 32-square foot area limit for signs in the downtown area should be amended, and a smaller, more pedestrian-oriented sign scale should be established.

5.9.2 Special Exception Uses

Because of the lack of distinction in permitted uses, the downtown has conflicts in uses, such as an overabundance of bars and taverns near residential units. The proximity of bars to residences leads to noise and traffic violations. The adverse impacts affect nearby residences and shops.

First, Dothan should also consider the formation of downtown theme districts, such as an entertainment district for bars and restaurants, to concentrate these uses and reduce potential conflicts. These districts can be established with specific overlay zones that recommend appropriate uses for an area.

One district that already has a foothold in Downtown Dothan is the Arts and Culture district. The area surrounding the Wiregrass Museum of Art has been considered for an artist's village, a live-work development that would encourage additional housing downtown as well as additional cultural opportunities. This parcel is currently zoned M-1, or light industrial. There is currently no language in the Zoning Ordinance that would allow a live-work project as proposed. The Downtown Development Authority should aid the Wiregrass Museum in discussing this matter with the Board of Zoning Appeals. The co-location of the museum and the Artists' Village could create a strong cultural amenity in the eastern downtown area.

In addition to separating some uses through districts, Downtown Dothan should enact more stringent special exception uses. There are no regulations in the Zoning Ordinance that restrict the types of uses that can be adjacent to one another in the B-1 district.

Special exceptions are sometimes referred to as conditional uses or some similar term. The term refers to a use that is compatible with and related to the uses that are permitted by right in a zoning district. However,

because of its nature it requires additional review and must comply with some additional standards so that it does not have a harmful impact on the surrounding area.

The ordinance should specify the factors to be considered and the standards to be applied by the Board of Zoning Adjustment in considering special exceptions. These standards can address off-street parking and vehicle circulation, buffering and landscaping, signage, lighting, and control of noise, glare, and hours of operation.

Because bars present a specific issue for downtown, new bars should be regulated by special exception regulations, rather than by-right development. If additional bars in Downtown Dothan are covered by special exception regulations, they would be required to show that such use in a specified location will comply with all the conditions and standards specified in the Zoning Ordinance and/or imposed by the Board of Zoning Adjustment at their discretion. This would require any developer who wished to establish another bar downtown to meet certain requirements in order to secure approval for the project. By regulating the creation of new bars downtown, appropriate locations can be found and adverse impacts minimized.

Section 6: Economic Development

Downtown Dothan is fortunate to have a strong core of public institution and entertainment uses.

The City of Dothan, Alabama is uniquely positioned to effect a full-scale redevelopment of its downtown area. While Downtown Dothan has substantial tracts of vacant and under-utilized developable property, it is fortunate to have a strong core of public institution and entertainment uses. This combination, coupled with the national trend towards downtown living, creates a formula for a successful downtown.

This section of the Master Plan for Downtown Dothan outlines broad economic development steps. The policy recommendations, revitalization strategies, funding opportunities, and economic development goals, opportunities, and partnerships, can result in substantial reinvestment and revitalization in the downtown Dothan area.

6.1: Ten Steps to Development Success

1. Adopt the Master Plan for Downtown Dothan:

The Board of Commissioners of Dothan should adopt the master plan to convey a strong and consistent message to the community and area businesses that downtown development is a priority of leadership.

2. Approve the reauthorization of the Dothan Downtown Development Authority:

The Board of Commissioners has a powerful tool in the existing legislation and should thus reconstitute the Downtown Development Authority. The appointment of a new Board of Directors and the hiring of an Executive Director and staff will energize and spur the downtown redevelopment effort.

3. Hire a Director for the Dothan Downtown Development Authority:

The DDRA should hire an Executive Director with a strong foundation in economic development, a thorough knowledge of revitalization tools, and the ability to work with the business community, developers, and the public.

The hiring of an Executive Director is an essential early step in communicating the priority mission of the Authority and bringing new vision, enthusiasm, and energy to the revitalization effort.

4. Establish incentive programs:

The DDRA should establish a list of economic development tools and create local incentives to assist in the redevelopment of downtown Dothan. Economic development tools will include local, state, and federal incentives, many of which already exist and others, which may be created specifically for Downtown Dothan.

5. Conduct a property and building inventory:

The Economic Development Master Plan for Downtown Dothan has established basic land use patterns and opportunity sites. The Downtown Dothan Redevelopment Authority should create a comprehensive inventory of property in the area to include parcel and building size, ownership, values, and development opportunities. The inventory process will identify opportunity sites in the target area and narrow the list of possible partnership and development projects.

6. Establish a land assembly program:

The Dothan Downtown Development Authority should establish a land assembly program to consolidate parcels of land for economic development. This program may result in identification of opportunity sites and consolidation of parcels to allow for larger-scale development than otherwise would be possible. The Development Authority may consider the development of a land bank program for the purchase and consolidation of sites to allow these sites to be marketed for preferred development. The land bank fund can be used as a revolving fund, with land purchases and the resulting development, funding the purchase of additional property.

7. Acquire Blighted Properties for redevelopment:

The DDRA and the City of Dothan should establish a plan to acquire the most blighted properties and offer those for development partnerships or private redevelopment. While code enforcement and eminent domain are possible routes to this end, the land bank strategy mentioned above will provide a more politically

A land assembly program should be established to consolidate parcels of land for economic development.

sensitive way to the same end. The purchase of particularly hard-to-develop and blighted properties can be the easiest way to work with absentee owners. A process to clear title and purchase these properties should be established, using incentives and tax advantages for the owner where possible. The DDRA can then develop a library of information and incentives on each parcel and sell the property to the appropriate entity for private development.

Vacant land and derelict buildings offer opportunity for change and redevelopment into catalyst sites.

8. Create an infill development strategy:

Develop a plan to target vacant or underutilized properties that may detract from or slow progress in the downtown Dothan area. Vacant land and derelict buildings offer opportunity for change and redevelopment into catalyst sites. To seize these opportunities, it is necessary to inventory locations of land and vacant and derelict buildings and create an inventory of challenges and opportunities. This process will allow the targeting of new development partnerships, special incentives, and a concentration of efforts to particularly valuable projects that can help create additional development spin off.

9. Create a downtown residential development strategy:

The nationwide trend towards downtown living can create a real buzz about the revitalization of downtown Dothan. An inventory of residential development sites, coupled with incentives, partnerships, and other assistance, will facilitate additional development. This Master Plan for Downtown Dothan identifies a number of existing buildings in which residential development is likely and opportunity sites for creation of new residential communities. The residential revitalization of downtown will breathe new life into surrounding neighborhoods. New restaurant, retail, and other commercial development will naturally occur when more people live in the area.

10. Create a retail strategy and recruitment program:

The DDRA should work with the Downtown Group and the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce to establish a retail strategy and related recruitment program for the downtown area. While retail development is not likely to be the strongest phase of early re-development of downtowns, businesses that encourage residential

development should be strengthened. The creation of a pedestrian environment will result in the need for additional retail business. Shops, restaurants, and services already in the Dothan area can be encouraged to create “second” businesses, and appropriate incentives should be established when necessary to encourage these businesses.

The creation of a plan for the success of the redevelopment of the downtown area will be an on-going and deliberative process.

6.2: A One-Year Startup Plan for the Dothan Downtown Development Authority

The following one-year plan will serve as a preliminary action plan for the DDRA. After the Board of Commission reauthorizes the DDRA and appoints a new Board of Directors, the Board will hire an Executive Director for the organization. This new leader will create a plan to carry the organization forward in conjunction with the Board of Directors and other development partners in the Dothan area.

While this one-year-plan is outlined incrementally, the timelines and start dates should be flexible. The decline of downtown Dothan to its present stage has taken decades. The creation of a plan for the success of the redevelopment of the downtown area will be an on-going and deliberative process.

First Quarter

- Establish a highly visible office in the target area. This office location should, in itself, be a catalyst project and showcase the redevelopment effort.
- Meet with appropriate city and county authorities to begin the creation of a property inventory of the target area and the entire downtown area.
- Director begins to execute economic development projects and partnerships.
- Hire a local public relations/advertising firm to develop a professional logo, template for a newsletter and website, and a brochure with a brief description of the plan of action and maps of the downtown and the target area.
- The Executive Director should begin meeting with economic development partners and community groups to establish relationships and foster development awareness. A quarterly meeting

schedule with participating partners should be established to provide status reports on the progress of the DDRA.

- The Executive Director and Chairman/ President of the DDRA Board should establish contacts and develop relationships with local news organizations and communicate the progress of the organization.
- Develop a PowerPoint presentation about the plan to revitalize downtown Dothan and take this program “on the road” to local civic groups to begin selling the vision.

Second Quarter

- Complete the property inventory of downtown and the target area.
- Identify “key development sites” that are most likely catalyst projects determine needed incentives to target to these possible projects. Begin meeting with possible developers and owners about these sites.
- Develop a list of incentives that already exist in the community. At the same time start laying the groundwork for creation of new incentives and programs to assist in the redevelopment process.
- Interview and hire a tax attorney or accountant to assist with non-profit matters.
- Interview and hire a real estate or development attorney to assist the Executive
- Complete an inventory of publicly owned property in and around the target area and determine what land could be used for development partnerships.
- Complete development of incentives lists. Work with city leaders to determine currently used incentives and ways to adapt these to use in urban areas. Consider expansion of façade grants, sign programs, streetscape improvements adjacent to substantial developments, etc.
- Begin gathering examples of RFP/RFQ Documents and work with legal council to adapt to the needs of the DDRA for solicitation of projects and development partnerships.
- Host meetings with local financial institutions to determine the level of private sector funding that is available for downtown Dothan. Consider the

establishment of a Downtown Loan Pool for DDRA and development partners.

- Discuss a local bank becoming a New Market Tax Credit participant. Continue to hold quarterly meetings of financial partners.

Third Quarter

- Begin talks with the Wiregrass Foundation, local arts groups, and the Downtown Group about the establishment of a comprehensive art strategy for downtown Dothan. This strategy should take advantage of the mural program and could include creation of art studios and galleries to spur the interest of the “creative class” in the revitalization effort.
- Create a “hit list” of the most possible residential development sites or projects. Include appropriate information to assist in creating interest in these sites, i.e. surveys, environmental reports, historic studies, etc.
- Create a list of developers and possible development partners in Alabama and the southeast. Include established residential developers, historic preservation development specialists, elderly and Labor Market Information (LMI) developers and other possible development partners.
- Meet with Alabama Historic Commission and the Dothan Historic Preservation Commission and establish a study to determine key historic preservation properties in the target area and downtown. Determine how DDRA can work with existing preservation groups, processes, and incentives to effect historic preservation as a key incentive in the downtown development process.

Fourth Quarter

- Create a site marketing and developer solicitation package. Include specific site information, maps, statistics, and incentives for targeted development sites.
- Establish a DDRA and City of Dothan policy for incentives to include public infrastructure, façade and sign grants/loans, business assistance

programs, rental subsidy, bridge loans, partnerships, etc.

- Begin working with City of Dothan offices on plans for parks, pedestrian connectors, streetscape improvements and other public sector projects.
- Establish a revolving loan fund or loan pool for business creation and assistance, bridge loans, land bank, etc.

The possibilities for local programs are vast, and these programs can be easily tailored to fit the needs of the City of Dothan or even specific areas of the downtown.

6.3: Incentives: An Economic Development Tool Kit for Dothan, Alabama

Local Program Ideas

The City of Dothan already has programs directed to assist the redevelopment of downtown. This section shows these and some additional programs that could be developed and enhanced by the city and the newly formed DDRA. The possibilities for local programs are vast, and these programs can be easily tailored to fit the needs of the City of Dothan or even specific areas of the downtown.

A Local Bank-Funded Loan Pool

Many communities trying to revitalize downtowns turn to local banks in an effort to support the financing of their project. Low-interest loan pools are an attractive way for banks to participate in the process, spread the risk, and provide an infusion of capital into the target area.

Most loan pools involve a number of banks, but a single financial institution is all that is necessary. Generally the participant with the largest contribution to the pool is tasked with servicing the program and will handle all applications and payments. Some pools dedicate funds at normal market rates to a specific geographic area. Occasionally pools will find ways to reduce rates for qualified borrowers (e.g., Prime rate minus 2%). Loans are secured, and risk is evaluated according to normal lending practices.

In some cases local governments or development authorities can provide funding to buy down interest rates for borrowers through contributions to the fund or direct payments of a portion of the interest by the entity.

Non-Profit-Facilitated “Bargain Sales”

This tool, available to not-for-profits, can allow a tax break to a property owner who sells a building or land to the non-profit entity for less than its appraised value. This can facilitate the purchase of property at reduced costs.

Community Development Block Grants

The City of Dothan, as a federal entitlement city, receives an allocation of federal Community Development Block

Grant monies annually which can be utilized in a variety of ways to benefit the downtown redevelopment effort. City of Dothan staff members are well-versed in eligible activities and can develop some creative programming for any portion of funds the city may wish to allocate to these efforts, including the following: (a) Façade Loans/Grants-The City of Dothan has \$25,000 of CDBG funds allocated to a façade loan program. Matching grants and loans can result in substantial accomplishments, and these type improvements are often catalysts for adjacent property owners to initiate improvements. (b) Sign Loan/Grants-The sign loan program is another eligible activity for the use of CDBG funds. These programs can be particularly successful if sign design standards result in creative or unusual signage. Sign programs can be funded by a number of sources.

The city of Dothan currently has in place several policies that result in substantial cost savings for a qualifying development project in the downtown.

TEA 21 Highway Grants

The City of Dothan currently manages TEA 21 and other Transportation Enhancement monies through the MPO. Downtown revitalization and transportation improvement projects are generally eligible activities. These funds can be used for pedestrian improvements in some cases. This type enhancement of sidewalks and lighting in the area of a redevelopment project is often a good enticement to a privately funded project.

City of Dothan Fee Waivers

The City of Dothan currently has in place several policies, which result in substantial cost savings for a qualifying development project in the downtown.

Landfill Fee Waivers: The City of Dothan will waive 50% of landfill fees for projects, which exceed \$150,000.

Construction Permit Fee Waivers: Full waiver of construction permit fees on qualifying projects.

Business License Reduction: Qualifying projects receive a 75% reduction in business license fees, and a 50% reduction in these fees the second year of business.

Create a development “library” for targeted projects

Redevelopment of existing structures is particularly difficult to achieve. Private developers often avoid these

Environmental assessments, structural analyses, land surveys, historic resources surveys, and other documentation or evaluation tools can be paid for by the DDRA and utilized by a series of private developers until an ultimate deal is accomplished.

projects because of the high up-front risk and the investment in time and money required just to determine if the project will work. The DDRA should consider creation of a development library for particularly complex properties, and invest in studies and assessments that make that early determination by a private developer or development partner easier. Environmental assessments, structural analyses, land surveys, historic resources surveys and other documentation/evaluation tools can be paid for by DDRA and utilized by a series of private developers until an ultimate deal is accomplished. This library of project information can grow with each developer's planning process, paving the way for a later development effort.

Special Tax Districts

The State of Alabama law provides a number of ways to finance public improvements and finance substantial private projects that benefit the public good.

Tax Increment District

Alabama law allows the creation of a Tax Increment District (TIF) in areas that have been determined "blighted or economically distressed". The district does not result in any increase in tax but rather will re-direct tax dollars to a special "tax increment fund" to pay for public improvements defined in a project plan. TIF districts can operate up to 30 years and the law allows local governments to sell bonds or borrow from financial institutions or from a local government general fund for improvement projects.

Property tax rates in Dothan are very low, and a TIF District is not likely to be a primary source for financing public projects but may play some role in these projects.

Self-Help Business Improvement District

Alabama lawmakers are currently considering a law allowing the creation of Self Help Business Improvement Districts. The proposed legislation defines "an area in which a special assessment may be levied on owners of real property located within the geographical area for the purposes of providing supplemental services within the district promoting the economic and general welfare of the district." This legislation, if passed, may provide a

good funding source for downtown clean and safe programs and other economic development programs.

Other financing options in Alabama include:

- Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts
- Commercial Development Authorities
- Alabama Improvement Districts

Environmental Assistance

Environmental issues will be one of the major obstacles in the redevelopment of downtown Dothan. Asbestos, underground storage tanks, chemical spills, and railroad right-of-ways will all present environmental challenges. Fortunately there are resources to assist both public and private development.

EPA Brownfield's Programs

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a number of grant programs that could provide substantial assistance to the downtown redevelopment project. Brownfield's Assessment Grants and Petroleum Assessment Grants applications are available each December. These grants are for up to \$200,000 each, and can last 3 years. Funding can pay for Phase 1 and Phase 2 environmental assessments of eligible properties, as well as development of health and safety and clean-up plans. These grants, if successful, can lead to eligibility to substantial loan/grant programs for the actual clean up from the EPA. These programs have the added benefit of creating a permanent revolving loan for environmental clean up at the local level.

An application for EPA Assessment Grants for the Downtown Dothan Redevelopment Project is relatively simple to prepare and the likelihood of successful funding is good. Environmental assessment of any sub-standard redevelopment structure is likely to be required. These funds can be a key part of the tool kit for Downtown Dothan.

Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)

This state agency can assist the City of Dothan with the application for the EPA grants and may also have funding available for similar projects in the absence of such grants. If substantial clean-up projects are necessary,

EPA grants can lead to eligibility to substantial loan/grant programs for the actual clean up of sites. These programs have the added benefit of creating a permanent revolving loan for environmental clean up at the local level.

the ADEM will likely manage the Voluntary Cleanup Contract, which will protect the property owner from future environmental liability.

Tax Credits

The Federal and State Governments offer tax credits to promote and encourage private development, especially for development that has a public benefit but may prove too costly or unfeasible without these special incentives. The DDRA should have a basic understanding of tax credits and other resources and can serve as a clearinghouse and referral agency for these benefits.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Currently, federal law provides a 20% federal income tax credit for income-producing, rehabilitated buildings. This federal credit is available for buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as contributing to a district. All rehabilitation work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Assistance with Historic “Part 1” Historic Preservation Tax Credit Applications

The DDRA may wish to provide technical assistance for property owners to determine if their buildings are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and therefore are eligible for federal and state historic preservation tax credits. The Alabama Historical Commission administers both programs for the State of Alabama. A Historic Preservation Certification Application is the first part of the process used by the federal Department of the Interior in determining eligibility. The DDRA could provide this service directly, or could contract this service with a local preservation consultant or the Dothan Historic Commission.

Alabama Historic Preservation Tax Credits

The Alabama Historic Preservation Tax Credit creates a similar statewide program available to both income-producing and residential properties. This incentive can reverse disinvestment and blight in historic neighborhoods through home ownership and is ideal for historically designated areas in downtown Dothan. The tax credit is attractive to current homeowners as well as families on the cusp of home ownership.

The Federal and State Governments offer tax credits to promote and encourage private development, especially for development that has a public benefit but may prove too costly or unfeasible without these special incentives.

The Alabama Historic Preservation Tax Credit

1. Creates a state tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic properties. This includes both income-producing and non-income-producing properties.
2. Creates a 20% state tax credit for rehabilitating an income-producing historic property. Rehabilitation must be substantial. (Can be combined with current 20% federal tax credit).
3. Creates a 20% state tax credit for rehabilitating residential historic properties. Rehabilitation must be substantial; expenses must exceed \$25,000 within a 24-month period. In the case of a historic house located in a HUD target area, a 25% state tax credit is available. The maximum credit for a residential rehabilitation is \$30,000 per dwelling unit.

Wallace Lidd Historic Preservation Tax Reduction

The State of Alabama offers a reduction in property tax for eligible historic buildings from the 20% commercial rate to the 10% residential, non-homestead rate. While property taxes in Dothan are low, this 50% reduction is a good additional incentive for downtown redevelopment.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program is run by the IRS and allows companies to invest in low-income housing, while receiving 10 years of tax credits. This important program works with state housing finance agencies to administer the program on a state level. Housing credit units are privately owned by developers and are run at a profit. These credits can be used for low-income, elderly, and handicapped residential projects. In exchange for the Housing Credits, the developer must reserve either 20 percent of the units for residents who earn 50 percent or less of the median income or 40 percent of the units for residents who earn 60 percent or less of the median income. The financial incentive provides a dollar-for-dollar reduction in federal tax liability for developers of income-restricted housing. Alabama Housing Finance Authority administers the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program in Alabama. AHFA directs a competitive, unbiased application process and closely monitors existing projects to ensure their compliance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines. The DDRA should seek out and develop a relationship

with the AHFA and direct projects to this agency and support appropriate applications for tax credits.

The New Market Tax Credits program promises to channel billions of dollars of new private investment into economically distressed cities, neighborhoods, and rural areas. Downtown Dothan is eligible for this program.

New Market Tax Credits

The New Markets Tax Credit Program permits taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in designated areas. The credit provided to the investor totals 39 percent of the cost of the investment and is claimed over a seven-year credit allowance period.

The New Market Tax Credits program promises to channel billions of dollars of new private investment into economically distressed cities; neighborhoods and rural areas and downtown Dothan Alabama is eligible. The DDRA will find that the most efficient way to use the NMTC program is to work with one or more of the large national financial institutions that have obtained credits as opposed to applying directly for a tax credit allocation. No Alabama banks are in the program, but most large Atlanta based banks are participants. The DDRA should consider seeking out these banks and considering participation in the program

6.4: Arts and Culture as an Economic Development Tool

Downtown Dothan is in an especially favorable position to capitalize on the arts and culture in the redevelopment effort. Artists love downtowns, and the older buildings, creative spaces and lower costs of the downtown area can provide opportunities for arts and culture to flourish. Cultural assets already in downtown Dothan include parks, the Wiregrass Museum the murals and the opera house.

6.5: Duties and Responsibilities of Downtown Management

“Effective communities appear to be different, not because of economic or demographic or regional factors, but because they are simply better educated as a community. That is, they are good at educating the whole community in the community’s business.”

-David Matthews, Kettering Foundation

With the reauthorization of the Dothan Downtown Development Authority, the City of Dothan is fortunate to have several organizations working together to accomplish the goal of the revitalization of the downtown area. This section defines general board governance issues and discusses optimal missions for each of these organizations in an attempt to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources.

Optimal Missions for the Major Economic Development Players in Dothan, Alabama

DDRA

The Dothan Board of Commissioners has created the DDRA and provided them with the authority and the tools to implement the Master Plan for Downtown Dothan. The Board and the Executive Director should immediately begin developing a Vision Plan and Work Plan for the organization, coordinating it with the Dothan City Commission, downtown business people and the entire community.

The roles of the DDRA Board and the Executive Director should be clearly defined and separated as described in

the attached table of General Governance which shows what responsibilities should be handled by the Board and those handled by the Executive Director. The Board develops broad policy and assists the Executive Director in the creation of the organizational work plan. The Executive Director is in charge of the organization, running the day to day operation and implementing the over-all work plan. These roles are important to insure that the organization speaks with a single voice and works toward the implementation of a single mission.

The re-creation of the Dothan Downtown Development Authority by the City of Dothan is a strong signal of commitment of the city's determination to recreate the downtown area and infuse the area with a new and strong level of economic activity.

The City of Dothan

The re-creation of the Dothan Downtown Development Authority by the City of Dothan is a strong signal of commitment of the city's determination to recreate the downtown area and infuse the area with a new and strong level of economic activity. The City Commission should strive to appoint the strongest board possible to the DDRA, real downtown advocates and supporters in an effort to create a vision for the downtowns future. The DDRA Executive Director should develop close relationships with the members of the city commission, manager and city staff, creating a strong working bond that will help implement the mission of the DDRA.

The Downtown Group

Dothan is fortunate to have the Downtown Group established as a strong and active organization representing merchants and property owners. The Downtown Group has a strong record of promoting special events and providing communications. The support of this group to the newly formed DDRA and the executive director, and the relationships of the DDRA and the Downtown Group must be cultivated and nurtured. If possible the Executive Director of the DDRA should sit on the Downtown Group board of directors, and a member of the Downtown Group board could serve in an official or ex-officio capacity on the DDRA board. Coordination and cooperation is essential to the success of each of these groups and their missions.

The Houston County Chamber of Commerce

The City of Dothan in the past made the determination to relegate most economic development activities to the Houston County Chamber of Commerce. This is a unique position taken by the city as most communities

provide for a more formalized in-house economic development structure. If the DDRA is to succeed in the plan to revitalize downtown the organization will need the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce, its Executive, and any staff working on economic development for the Chamber. Close relationships should be cultivated between the DDRA Executive Director and the Chamber Executive. A cross relationship between boards of the two organizations should be developed. The success of the DDRA will be seen as a win for the Houston County Chamber of Commerce.

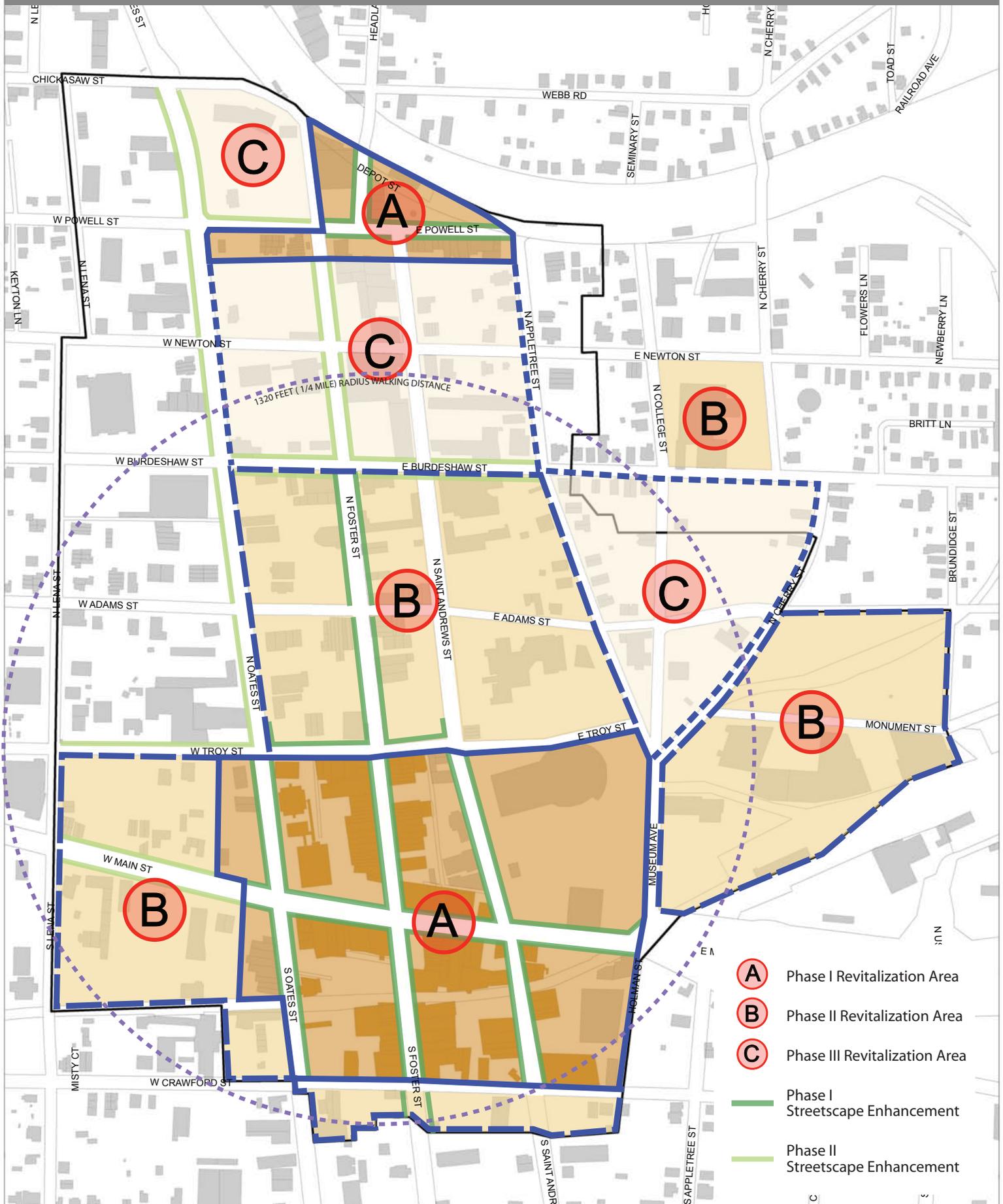
General Governance Issues

Board governance is a deciding component of organizational effectiveness and a crucial part of the functioning life of non-profit and public sector organizations. There are two keys to successful boards: One is getting the best people as members and the other is making sure that there is clarity about what the board is supposed to do. The roles of the Executive Director and the board and board chair need to be clearly defined to avoid conflicts or confusion.

Section 7: Implementation

The recommendations in this plan are intended to be implemented at various points in time—they are not all achievable in the short term. However, it is recommended that certain areas of the downtown receive first priority in streetscape and redevelopment opportunities. **Map 9** indicates these areas.

Initial investments should be concentrated within the core areas. A “hop-sotch” pattern of reinvestment should be avoided. The Foster Street corridor, especially between Main Street and Troy Street, is the key component to downtown redevelopment. This area should be the number one priority for improvements to the downtown. The rehabilitation of the train depot provides an opportunity to capitalize on the potential of this point and the large potential some of the adjacent properties have. Improvements should be targeted and phased outward from the core area. As improvements are completed within the core areas, vacancies have been filled, and core area goals have been attained, the focus of redevelopment can shift to parts of the downtown that connect the commercial cores.



- A** Phase I Revitalization Area
- B** Phase II Revitalization Area
- C** Phase III Revitalization Area
- Phase I Streetscape Enhancement
- Phase II Streetscape Enhancement

Map 9

Development within Dothan's downtown should be prioritized, with some projects occurring before others. Some projects may be dependant on preceding projects.

- **Short-term:** Actions that are already underway or that should be accomplished within the next two years. These projects can be potentially put into place by the city agencies listed under existing operating budgets or the private sector.
- **Mid-Term:** Actions that may be implemented between two to four years from now. These projects may require engineering and design work.
- **Long-term:** Actions to be implemented in two years or more. These projects may require inclusion in the City of Dothan's capital budget or substantial investment by the private sector. These projects are competing with others for funding; therefore, community support is essential to the successful implementation of these actions.

The following outline presents a schedule for initiating projects within a 24 month period:

Table 1: Implementation Strategy Matrix

Item	Proposed Action / Project	Entity Responsible	Grant Opportunity	Timeframe
PHYSICAL PROJECTS / CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS				
1	Continue streetscape enhancements on S. Foster Street and S. St. Andrews Street, near the railroad right-of-way.	City of Dothan	TEA 21 Grants	Short-Term
2	Consolidate off-street parking resources along W. Newton Street between Oates Street and Foster Street.	City of Dothan	N/A	Short-Term
3	Promote strategic infill redevelopment along N. Foster Street between Burdeshaw Street and Adams Street.	City of Dothan	Federal/State Tax Credit Incentives	Short-Term
4	Target infill redevelopment to anchor North Downtown, Oates Street, Powell Street, and N. Foster Street.	City of Dothan	EPA Brownfields Programs	Short-Term
5	Create shared parking resources along N. Oates Street between Newton Street and Burdeshaw Street.	City of Dothan	N/A	Short-Term
6	Promote landscape improvements by private downtown property owners to help "re-green" the downtown.	City of Dothan	Construction Permit Fee Waivers	Short-Term
7	Save every possible historic building. Use demolition only if all other measures will not work. Use the existing historic district ordinances to prevent further deterioration of vulnerable buildings.	City of Dothan	Historic Preservation Tax Credits (Federal and Alabama)	Short-Term
8	Create a revitalized gateway feature at the intersection of Oates Street and Main Street	City of Dothan	CDBG Sign Loan/Grants	Mid-Term
9	Promote re-use/redevelopment of underutilized buildings on the west side of S. Oates Street.	City of Dothan	Federal/State Tax Credit Incentives	Mid-Term
10	Construct pedestrian-friendly intersection along Main Street at Oates Street, Foster Street, St. Andrews Street, and Museum Avenue.	City of Dothan	TEA 21 Grants	Mid-Term
11	Create a significant gateway feature at the intersection of E. Main Street and Columbia Highway.	City of Dothan	CDBG Sign Loan/Grants	Mid-Term
12	Create enhanced pedestrian linkages to parking and downtown attractions, including the Civic Center.	City of Dothan	TEA 21 Grants	Mid-Term
13	Reutilize existing "vest pocket" park along Foster Street.	City of Dothan	CDBG Funding	Mid-Term
14	Remove or relocate drive-through facility at City building to create additional parking.	City of Dothan	N/A	Mid-Term
15	Create a "Town Square"/Plaza focal node at the intersection of Foster Street and Troy Street.	City of Dothan	CDBG Funding	Mid-Term
16	Incorporate enhanced spaces at specific mural locations where achievable.	City of Dothan	TEA 21 Grants	Mid-Term
17	Consider adaptive reuse of existing structures near the Wiregrass Museum of Art.	City of Dothan	Federal/State Tax Credit Incentives	Mid-Term
18	Evaluate a "Rails to Trails" opportunity along existing rail right-of-way.	City of Dothan	Rails to Trails Conservancy, FHWA	Mid-Term
19	Analyze and promote residential development along N. College Street between Burdeshaw Street and Adams Street.	City of Dothan	Federal/State Tax Credit Incentives	Mid-Term
20	Promote adaptive reuse of school at College Street and Burdeshaw Street- senior housing/community center, etc.	City of Dothan	CDBG Funding	Mid-Term
21	Create a significant gateway feature along Oates Street at the intersection with Powell Street.	City of Dothan	CDBG Sign Loan/Grants	Mid-Term
22	Create enhanced streetscape and plaza at E. Powell Street and Depot Street to anchor N. Foster Street and St. Andrews Street.	City of Dothan	TEA 21 Grants	Mid-Term
23	Expand the use of murals, while keeping the theme of Dothan culture and history.	City of Dothan	N/A	Mid-Term
24	The existing network of directional signs should be expanded and enhanced to better serve the public.	City of Dothan	CDBG Sign Loan/Grants	Mid-Term
25	Reconsolidate parking at the Civic Center. Upgrade and improve parking resources by providing lighting, signage, and landscaping.	City of Dothan	TEA 21 Grants	Mid-Term

Item	Proposed Action / Project	Entity Responsible	Grant Opportunity	Timeframe
26	Design and construct strategic entrances to Downtown Dothan to create a sense of entry, especially at the entry points of Oates Street & Main Street, Main Street & Columbia Highway, and Oates Street & Powell Street. Additionally, ceremonial gateway entrances should be considered for Railroad Bridge & S. Oates Street, N. Oates Street & Troy/Burdeshaw/Powell, and E. Main Street & Foster/St. Andrews/Museum.	City of Dothan	CDBG Sign Loan/Grants	Mid-Term
27	Consider the most highly-trafficked intersections for priority pedestrian safety improvements, including crosswalks, pedestrian signalization, and lighting improvements.	City of Dothan	TEA 21 Grants	Mid-Term
28	Target longer-term reuse or redevelopment of "older service commercial uses".	City of Dothan	CDBG Funding	Long-Term
29	Consider restructuring of Foster Street to two-way with parallel parking on one or both sides.	City of Dothan	N/A	Long-Term
30	Consider a bi-level parking structure between Foster Street and N. Saint Andrews Street as demand warrants.	City of Dothan	Private Developer	Long-Term
31	Promote the redevelopment of the northeast corner of Oates and Main to reinforce this gateway with urban building orientation.	City of Dothan	EPA Brownfields Programs	Long-Term

ORGANIZATION

1	Adopt a community theme and establish a community image branding plan. This image should be built into future marketing for Downtown Dothan.	Chamber of Commerce	N/A	Short-Term
2	Within the marketing campaign, promote Downtown Dothan as an area tourist attraction.	Chamber of Commerce	N/A	Short-Term
3	Use tax incentive programs to maximum advantage.	DDDA	N/A	Short-Term
4	Identify funding for bridge loans and other incentives to facilitate targeted properties or projects.	DDDA	N/A	Short-Term
5	Identify Downtown Development Districts for focused economic development and capital improvements.	DDDA	N/A	Short-Term
6	Continue to sponsor events downtown to draw residents from the surrounding area. Gear events towards the Art and Culture downtown theme, and use the existing Civic Center if at all possible.	Art: Downtown Group	Downtown Group	Short-Term
7	Establish a land assembly program to consolidate parcels of land for economic development.	DDDA	CDBG Funding	Short-Term
8	The City, Chamber, CVB, and DTG should unite to form a cohesive Economic Development Strategy.	City of Dothan, Chamber of Commerce, CVB, DTG	N/A	Short-Term
9	Organize an effective Development Corporation, or reenergize the existing Development Authority to help advance development.	City of Dothan, DDDA	N/A	Short-Term
10	Hire a director for the Dothan Downtown Development Authority.	DDDA	N/A	Short-Term
11	Create a retail strategy and recruitment program for the downtown area.	DDDA, Downtown Group, Chamber of Commerce	Business License Reduction Fee Waivers	Short-Term
12	The city should partner with other government institutions, the Dothan Chamber of Commerce, Houston County, the Wiregrass Foundation, and the private sector to target catalytic district initiatives.	City of Dothan, Chamber of Commerce, Houston County, Wiregrass Foundation	N/A	Mid-Term
13	Consider the formation of a Business Improvement District to fund the maintenance and marketing of Downtown Dothan.	DDDA, City of Dothan	N/A	Mid-Term
14	Conduct a comprehensive property and building inventory to include parcel and building size, ownership, values, and development opportunities.	DDDA	N/A	Mid-Term
15	Establish a plan to acquire the most blighted properties and offer those for development partnerships or private redevelopment.	City of Dothan, DDDA	Low Income Housing Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits	Mid-Term
16	Create an infill development strategy. Develop a plan to target vacant or underutilized properties that may detract from or slow progress in the Downtown Dothan area.	DDDA	Construction Permit Fee Waivers	Mid-Term
17	Develop a downtown residential development strategy, using the areas identified in this plan for the primary investments.	DDDA	Construction Permit Fee Waivers	Mid-Term

Item	Proposed Action / Project	Entity Responsible	Grant Opportunity	Timeframe
18	Develop a longer-term implementation plan to promote area-wide accessibility between the downtown and outlying neighborhoods and public cultural, environmental, and historic resources.	DDDA, City of Dothan	N/A	Long-Term

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Continue to support the downtown "Clean and Safe" program.	City of Dothan	Self-Help Business Improvement District Funding	Short-Term
2	Develop an infill development strategy to target vacant or underutilized properties that may detract or slow progress in the Downtown Dothan area.	DDDA	Low Income Housing Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits	Short-Term
3	Use tax incentive programs to maximum advantage.	DDDA	N/A	Short-Term
4	Identify funding for bridge loans and other incentives to facilitate targeted properties or projects.	DDDA	N/A	Short-Term
5	Establish a Downtown Overlay Zone as described in Section 5.9, including provisions for parking, street frontage, and signage.	City of Dothan, Board of Zoning Adjustment	N/A	Short-Term
6	Create a downtown residential development strategy to breathe new life into surrounding neighborhoods and attract new retail, restaurant, and commercial development.	DDDA	N/A	Mid-Term
7	Create a retail strategy and recruitment program.	DDDA, Chamber of Commerce, CVB	N/A	Mid-Term
8	Work with local banks to develop targeted loan programs.	DDDA	N/A	Mid-Term
9	Identify funding for bridge loans and other incentives to facilitate targeted properties or projects.	DDDA	N/A	Mid-Term
10	Encourage downtown residential infill projects in vacant or underutilized buildings.	DDDA	Low Income Housing Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits	Mid-Term
11	Explore residential opportunities in and around the downtown area, including senior housing.	DDDA	N/A	Mid-Term
12	Enact more stringent special exception uses that govern the location of bars and other businesses that have undesirable impacts on surrounding communities.	City of Dothan, Board of Zoning Adjustment	N/A	Mid-Term

