

UPTOWN PLAN

WESTERVILLE, OHIO



ADOPTED: May 6, 2014
PREPARED BY MKSK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Steering Committee and City of Westerville

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Craig Treneff, City Council
Paul Johnson, Planning Commission
Diana Welling, Uptown Review Board
Rebecca Vazquez-Skillings, Otterbein University
Debbie Bennati, Uptown Merchants Association
Jeff Hartnell, Visitors & Conventions Bureau
Rick Rano, Realtor/Broker
Tamara Krause, Uptown Property Owner
Doug Winbigler, Uptown Merchant/Property Owner
Gerhard Hillmann, Uptown Resident
Mary Lou Prouty, Uptown Resident

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Larry Jenkins, Vice Chair
Diane Fosselman, Mayor
Jenifer French, Vice Mayor
Kathy Cocuzzi
Mike Heyeck
L. Pete Otteson

WESTERVILLE CITY MANAGER

David Collinsworth, City Manager

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Matt Whitehead
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Ross Lisman
Mary Lou Prouty
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Gregory Madsen
Del Robeson
Dennis Blair

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Paul Johnson, Chair
Gerry Domanik
Brian Szuch
David Berger
Amy Koorn
Dave Samuelson
Diane Fosselman
Jenifer French, Council Representative
Mike Heyeck, Council Representative

Stakeholder Interviews

ORGANIZATIONS

Otterbein University: Rebecca Vazquez-Skillings
Westerville Public Library: Don Barlow, Director
Westerville City Schools: Jeff LeRose, Executive Director of Business Operations
Uptown Merchants Association: Debbie Bennati, President
Westerville Area Chamber of Commerce: Janet Tressler-Davis, President
The Arts Council Of Westerville: Jane Denick
Westerville Historical Society: Bill Merriman, President
Church of the Messiah: Jim Wilson, Senior Pastor

UPTOWN RESIDENTS

Mary Lou Prouty
Billy Saltz/Jim Saltz
Gerhard Hillmann
Sandy Ortega
Ted Chaney

UPTOWN BUSINESS OWNERS

Amish Originals: Doug Winbigler
Jimmy V's: Jim Velio & Mario Nedelkoski
Dairy Queen: Sonny D'Andrea
Marketing Galore: Elaine Reid
Uptown Westerville Farmers' Market: Linda Foor, Manager
Gallery 202: Renee Kropat
Suite 59: Gerry Domanik
Generations Dance Studio: Angie Haver

UPTOWN PROPERTY OWNERS

Hale Whipkey
Denny & Gene Brunton

Planning Team

CITY OF WESTERVILLE

Julie Colley, Assistant City Manager
Karl Craven, Planning & Development Director
Bassem Bitar, Senior Planner
Jeff Buehler, Planner
Lisa LaMantia, Planner
Chelsea Nichols, Planning & Zoning Secretary
Molly Gaudio, Planning Intern
Randy Auler, Director of Parks & Recreation
Michael Hooper, Parks & Recreation Development Administrator

MKSK (Planning, Urban Design, Landscape Architecture)

Keith Myers, Senior Principal
Chris Hermann, Principal
Aron Fraizer, Associate
Danielle Myers, Planner

BENJAMIN D. RICKEY & CO. (Historic Preservation)

Nancy Recchie, Principal
Jeff Darbee, Principal

TRANSASSOCIATES (Traffic Engineering)

Doyle Clear, Project Engineer

LINCOLN STREET STUDIO (Architecture)

Ruth Gless, Architect
Joe Moss, Architect

KELLEY DESIGN CO. (Architectural Illustration)

Paul Kelley, Principal

MINDMIXER (Interactive Web Site/ Web Hosting)

CITY APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

PLANNING COMMISSION CASE AND APPROVAL:

PC 2013-16 on March 6, 2014

UPTOWN REVIEW BOARD CASE AND APPROVAL:

URB 2014-09 on March 6, 2014

DATE OF COUNCIL ADOPTION:

May 6, 2014

RESOLUTION 2014-06



UPTOWN WESTERVILLE IS THE HEART OF THE WESTERVILLE COMMUNITY.

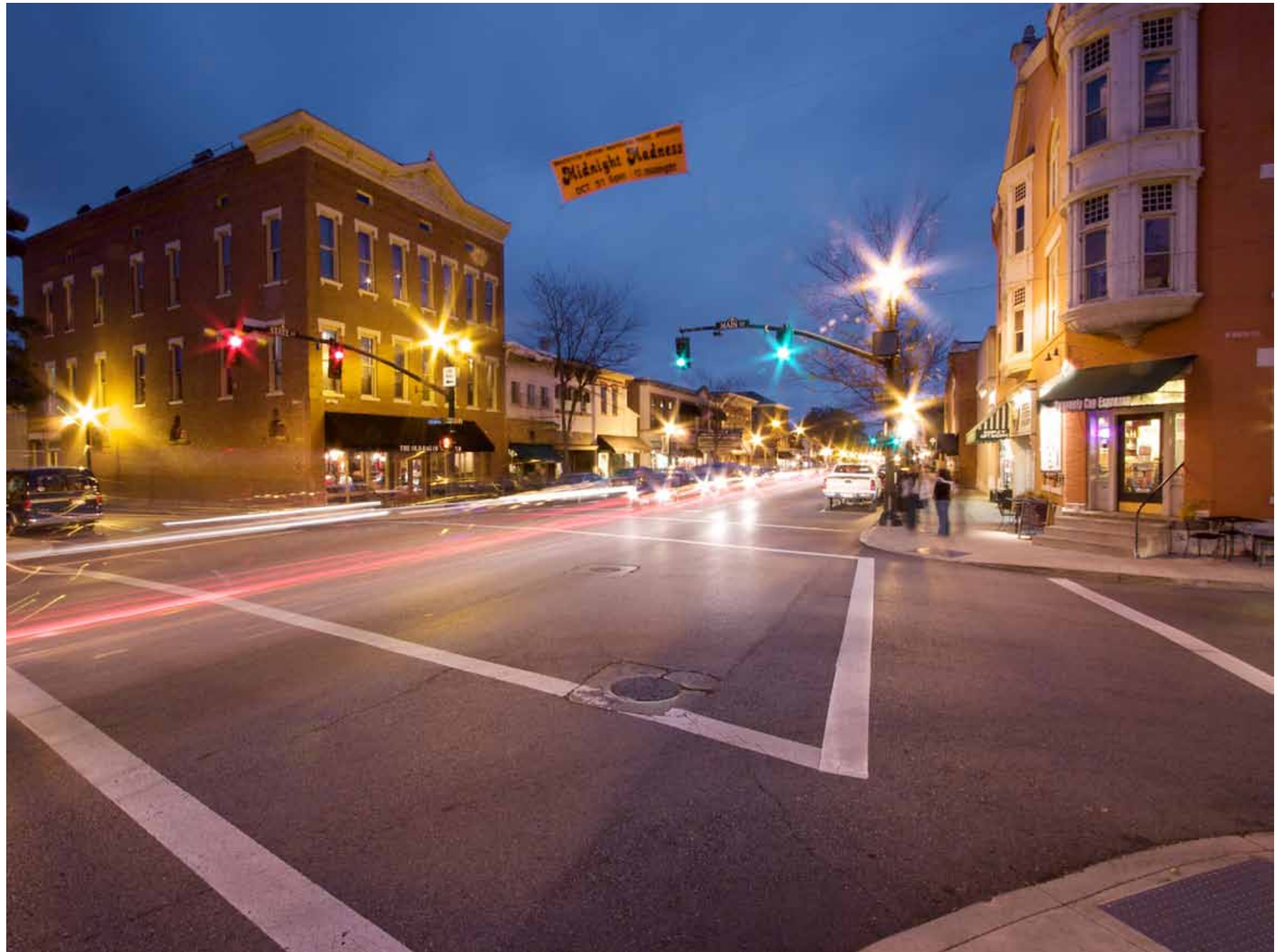


BUSINESSES MAKE STATE STREET ATTRACTIVE AND INVITING.

A special thanks is extended to current and previous elected officials, board and commission members, residents, property owners, business people, and volunteers who care so passionately about Uptown Westerville and have worked so tirelessly to make Uptown what it is today. We also acknowledge all of the previous studies performed to document, preserve, maintain, and improve its character and vitality. We hope to build upon your efforts with this Plan.

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State Street at Night in Uptown. Photo by Mike Doel.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Uptown Westerville is a tremendous asset of the City of Westerville and Central Ohio. Uptown encapsulates not only the heritage and pride of Westerville, it provides the mixed use environment that is in growing demand by the market place. People are drawn to Uptown because of its inviting scale, historic form, unique character, active storefronts, and walkability. It exists in this great condition because of the tireless efforts of generations of Westerville residents, business owners, city officials, and Uptown champions. This Uptown Plan seeks to build upon these efforts.

Today the community is asking, “What’s next? Where should the city and community focus their efforts to continue to improve, guide, and differentiate Uptown?” This document represents the guidance resulting from the community’s thoughtful consideration of these questions. Indeed the community was heavily engaged in shaping this plan. In addition to the Steering Committee and stakeholders, over 100 participants attended public open houses during the project and an additional 260 community members engaged in the process through the PlanUptown.com website. Together over 640 individual comments and ideas were generated providing invaluable and inspiring direction. The Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan is a compilation of our efforts, as a community, to provide a meaningful and exciting direction for the future of Uptown.

The readers of this plan will find recommendations for both physical improvements and policy enhancements to consider, explore, and advance. Most of the policy considerations relate to public initiatives and efforts that are the responsibility of the City. The proposed physical improvements run the gamut from public reinvestment within the right-of-way and improvements on city land to encouraging private investment and development that is additive to the character and vitality of Uptown. This plan encourages the exploration of City partnerships with other institutions and public/private cooperation to leverage improvements that benefit Uptown and the greater community. The ideas presented herein were generated through community dialogue. While aspirational, they are achievable and grounded in the reality of the market place.

The Changing Marketplace

Communities are being affected by shifting societal changes. Changes in

demographics, economics, lifestyle expectations, and technology are shifting how and where people live, work, and enjoy life. These changes are slowly (and sometimes not so slowly) transforming our communities, and this is reflected in our built environment. There are growing populations that prefer a physically appealing and amenity-rich community with a walkable town center, a diversity of housing types and densities, a dynamic and mixed use retail environment, and an array of transportation options so that it is not solely reliant on the automobile.

These trends represent a great opportunity for places like Uptown, which is well-positioned to take advantage of them. This includes building upon features such as Uptown’s unique character and compact form, its nicely appointed streetscape and public spaces, its community events, the social interaction it fosters, the contiguity of Otterbein University and the opportunities it provides, the potential for multi-story infill housing and upper floor residential units, its increasingly vibrant local retail space with restaurant and potential entertainment anchors, and its easy walkability and proximity to regional bike trails and parks.

As the first step of the Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan, Randall Gross conducted a market study of Uptown in 2011. This Uptown Market Analysis and Business Development Strategy found that the consumer environment is attractive and appealing and that the Uptown District is performing well by offering an interesting mix of specialty businesses in a walkable environment. The study estimates that Uptown generates about \$29.2 million in annual sales from over 80 retail establishments representing over 150,000 square feet of space. It concludes that existing demand warrants an additional 40,000 square feet of retail space in the convenience, entertainment, restaurant/bar, and shopping goods sectors. It further projects that there is an opportunity to attract an additional 113,000 square feet of retail space to Uptown through a tenant mix anchored by a performance/entertainment venue in conjunction with Otterbein University, a specialty food store, and a specialty department store.

While the market study recognizes that Uptown competes with the Polaris and Easton commercial hubs as well as local retail areas along Polaris Parkway/Maxtown Road and Shrock Road/South State Street, it recommends that Uptown builds upon its authenticity. For this reason, the study advocates that Uptown distinguish itself by focusing on its strengths of walkability and historic

ambience, local and sustainable products, an Otterbein-partnered cultural and entertainment venue, and unique events. It also suggests that creative business signs be encouraged, that district gateways be considered, and that a high priority be placed on signage or “creative mechanisms” to direct drivers to available parking. It concludes by stating that “opportunities for densification should be explored further in order to create a more critical mass as a regional destination,” including consideration of a thoughtful expansion of the district boundaries. More specifically, it recommends identifying three key sites for the anchor mixed use development highlighted in its business mix and converting several existing vacant sites to “parks, event space, and/or heritage functions” and multi-story infill development with ground floor retail.

Activating Uptown Potential

With the Uptown Market Analysis as a foundation, the Uptown Plan gathered input and direction from the community, Steering Committee, public meetings, and PlanUptown.com website and identified catalytic efforts that would physically improve the function and vitality of Uptown. These ideas were further developed into the Catalytic Projects contained in Section III. The nine catalytic projects are:

1. Implement streetscape improvements along major Uptown corridors.
2. Create a system of new public Uptown alleys parallel to State Street behind the commercial businesses.
3. Enhance the existing mid-block pedestrian vias (walkways) to draw people from the parking areas to State Street.
4. Add bicycle connections and amenities that make Uptown a hub in the regional bike system.
5. Create a civic space in the core of Uptown to provide a community gathering place and amenity that draws people to Uptown.
6. Pursue preservation of the State Theater as a community asset.
7. Consider infill opportunities along State Street and major crossing streets to allow for the continued growth and development of Uptown.
8. Investigate the potential of building a parking deck in Uptown.
9. Continue to advance and implement a gateway and wayfinding system.

In addition to the catalytic projects, a group of planning and development policy

tools are proposed to suggest potential financing and partnership opportunities to help advance desired outcomes in Uptown and enable the catalytic projects. Section IV describes these Planning and Development Tools and they include:

1. Nominate the Uptown District to the National Register of Historic Places to enable it to be eligible for federal and state tax credits for building renovations and improvements.
2. Achieve Certified Local Government status for the City to assist with Historic District nomination.
3. Investigate the potential of a Special Improvement District to aid Uptown merchants in promoting and advancing the businesses and district.
4. Consider participation in the state’s Main Street Program as a resource for Uptown.
5. Examine the Uptown District Boundaries to determine whether adjustments are appropriate and could provide positive benefits.
6. Review and amend the Zoning Code to facilitate the objectives of this plan.
7. Expand the Façade Improvement Program to incentivize additional privately-led improvements in Uptown.
8. Expand the City’s Tax Abatement Program to encourage residential renovation in targeted areas.
9. Consider the creation of a Land Bank to acquire targeted sites as they become available.
10. Study the creation of an Uptown Tax Increment Financing District to advance desired public improvements and catalyze private investment.
11. Identify and prioritize projects in Uptown to be funded by the City’s Capital Improvement Program.

While each catalytic project and policy change individually can provide benefits to Uptown, when implemented together they will create a synergy that will position Uptown Westerville for success over the next decades and ensure that it is embraced, loved, and cared for by the next generation of Westerville residents.

Investing in Uptown

One of the important messages that came out of the community discussions regarding Uptown was that city investment is critical to the future success of

Uptown. Current efforts are greatly appreciated, but more is desired to achieve great things for Uptown and Westerville. The City of Westerville, like many growing cities, spends millions of dollars on public infrastructure to attract new private development in green field sites around its fringes – this includes public dollars on new roads, widened streets, new sewer and water lines, new utility lines, expanded police and fire service, etc. The greater community of Westerville understands that this public investment attracts private investment and provides returns to Westerville. Stakeholder representatives and meeting attendees want to see this same level of thinking, and investment, applied to Uptown and believe it will produce great dividends.

The more the City strategically invests in public realm and public infrastructure improvements in Uptown, the greater private investment and reinvestment it will attract. In an authentic built environment like Uptown, the key is to invest strategically and appropriately so that the features that make it so attractive and special are preserved and enhanced. The other critical point is understanding that in Uptown, projects like parking decks, alleys, and civic space are public infrastructure investments that will attract private developers to invest here. Likewise relocating utility lines or consolidating land to make a site market ready for appropriate infill development is economic development in Uptown, just like it is in other parts of the city. Similarly, incentive programs like the Facade Improvement Program and opportunities for historic tax credits are important tools that help motivate building owners to reinvest.

Success is in the Details

There is a point of particular importance for those charged with implementing this plan and reviewing future projects in Uptown. This point is that in walkable, intimate places like Uptown Westerville, the small details and the form of the built environment are critically important to success. We have to continue to design and build for the human scale, not the automobile. The goal is not to convey information to someone driving by at 35 mph and hope they stop. The goal is to convey a great sense of place that is inviting to discover by foot. Uptown is already rich in this trait, but there are places where it breaks down. These are the areas this plan aims to address.

As the Uptown alleys, pedestrian vias, civic space, infill development, and

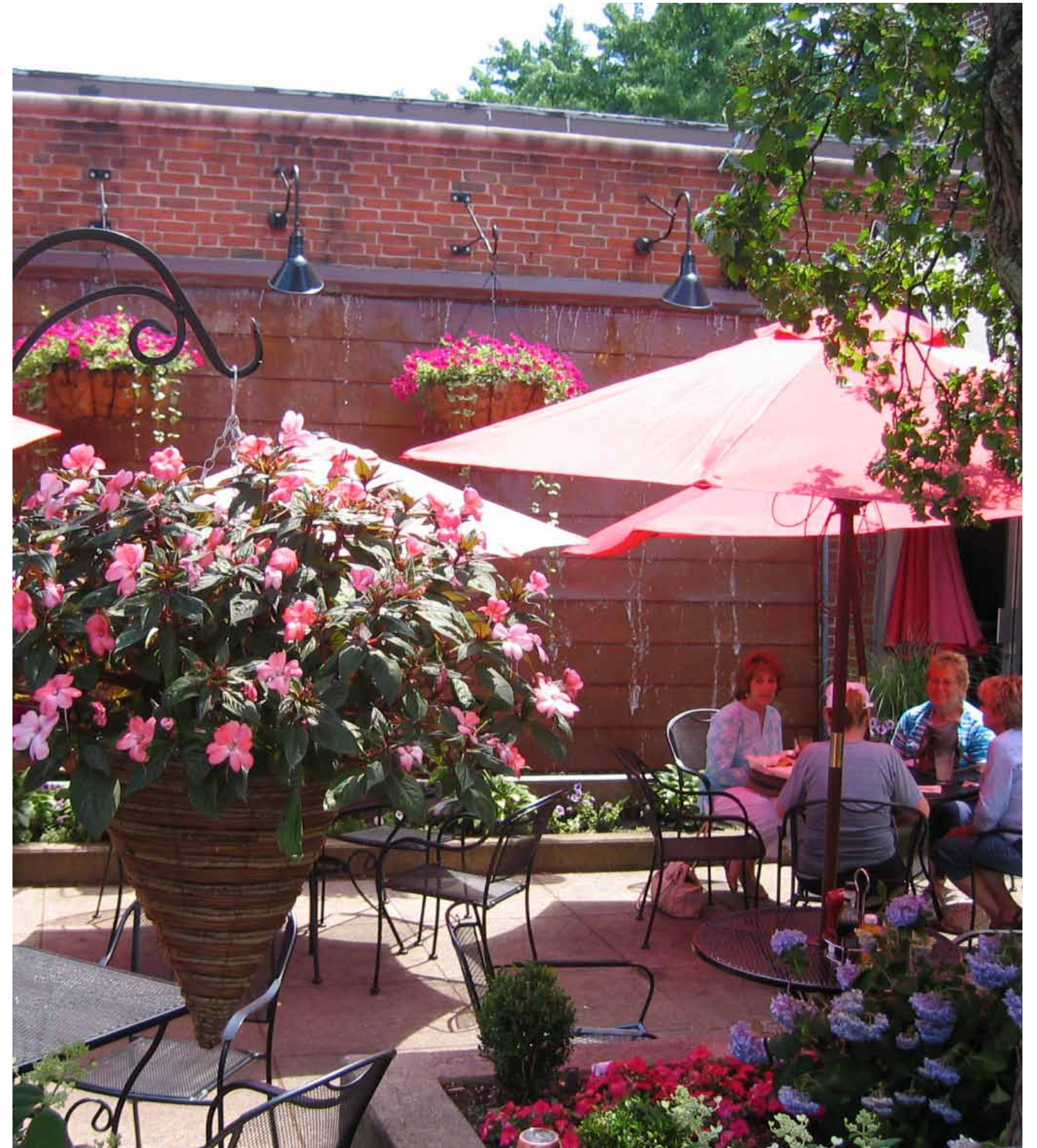
streetscape improvements are implemented, their design must focus on the pedestrian experience and comfort, complementing the historic fabric and character of Uptown. These projects cannot be engineered as if they are being built in a subdivision, retail shopping center, or office park. Such a result would detract from the very character the community is trying to enhance and distinguish as unique in Uptown. The traits and characteristics that make Uptown charming must be embraced, protected, and incorporated into new projects.

As an example, consider the proposed Uptown Alleys. They should not be designed to be wide, curvy suburban streets or even parking lot drives. This would make them neither distinctive nor appropriate for their context. They need to be linear and feel narrow with rich materials and a strong relationship to the buildings they serve. They need to be designed to accommodate a mix of modes and activity because the community wants bicyclists and pedestrians to feel comfortable using them together with cars. This requires careful, deliberate, and well-crafted design.

We are trying to attract people - families out for an afternoon, couples meeting for dinner, people out shopping, the community gathering and celebrating together, students of all ages exploring and learning. To attract people and make their experience memorable, the physical environment we create should be interesting, beautiful, quirky, enjoyable, artful, safe, stimulating, and most importantly authentically and uniquely Uptown Westerville.

Uptown's Time is Now

Westerville is passionate about Uptown. This is reflected in the community's interest and participation in this plan. Many different trends are converging to make this next decade a decade of opportunity for Uptown. The Steering Committee, stakeholders, and public participants in this planning effort sense this. The past efforts of the City and Uptown supporters are paying off. People are reinvesting in Uptown properties and residents continue to rediscover the physical heart of their community. We all recognize that more potential exists. This plan is the community's heartfelt direction on projects and efforts to pursue to continue to elevate Uptown and maximize its benefits for all of Westerville. The time for Uptown is now.



Jimmy V's beautiful outdoor patio space along State Street and College Avenue in Uptown.

I. INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Background

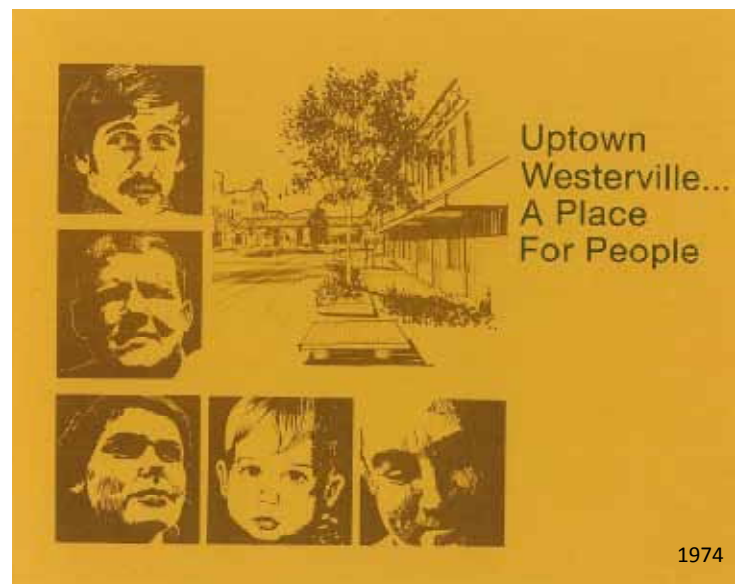
For almost two hundred years, Uptown has been the heart, soul, and identity of the City of Westerville. The role and function of Uptown has adapted with the times as Westerville has grown in geographic area and population, and as market changes and infrastructure improvements transformed the region. Today, Uptown Westerville is home to many of the city's historic structures, City Hall and much of the city government, the public library, numerous local businesses and institutions, and many cherished community events. It represents much of what is special and authentic about the City of Westerville.

Uptown has weathered the times well, due in large part to decades of active community involvement and the City's on-going efforts to protect and enhance Uptown, particularly since 1973. In fact, Uptown is one of the best preserved and most prosperous historic town centers in Central Ohio. Uptown's blend of historic built environment, engaging and appealing streetscape, and bustling shops, boutiques, and restaurants are all features other cities are now striving to achieve.

While authentic town centers like Uptown are experiencing a recent renaissance from renewed interest and investment, the intense changes in development patterns, commercial market forces, and transportation systems of the previous sixty years have buffeted their fabric and sustainability. Uptown, and areas like it, have had to cope with the migration of commercial office, retail, and institutional uses to new development sites with larger building footprints and abundant surface parking near major highways. Today Uptown Westerville faces competition from web-based commerce, nearby retail corridors (like South State Street, Polaris Parkway, and Maxtown Road), major regional shopping centers (like Polaris Fashion Place and Easton Town Center), and alternate community retail nodes. At the same time, demographic and societal changes are leading people and companies to desire new buildings for living and working in vibrant, walkable historic cores like Uptown. This is accelerating the dynamic market changes that Uptown must respond to physically and operationally, yet within its historic context. While the City has continued to respond to the issues of the day confronting Uptown, there is a need to



WESTERVILLE HAS GROWN FROM A SMALL VILLAGE TO A CITY OF OVER 36,000 COVERING 12.5 SQUARE MILES.



UPTOWN'S LAST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ADOPTED IN 1974.

think strategically and knit together the various studies, plans, investments, policies, and regulations that have been developed for Uptown into a single strategic vision.

The City of Westerville recognizes this confluence of forces and commissioned this new comprehensive plan for Uptown in order to address these changes, properly preserve the district, and guide its continued development. The goal of the plan is to take a fresh look at the challenges and opportunities facing Uptown Westerville and collaborate with the community to develop a strategic plan that guides Uptown's success into the future.

Need for a Plan

Although other plans for the Uptown area have been created, a plan focused on the preservation, growth, and development of the Uptown district has not been conducted since 1973-74. In order to address the numerous changes and development pressures that have arisen since that time, and to ensure that Uptown grows in a way that builds upon its strong historic character, a new Uptown Comprehensive Plan is needed.

The 2014 Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan is written to provide direction for the community in the context of current conditions, opportunities, and the regional climate across the next ten years or so. Still, this plan is based on conditions and trends that exist today. As with any other planning document, it is expected that this comprehensive plan will be reviewed, and periodically updated to reflect changes in conditions and community priorities. The strategies of this plan could be updated more frequently to accommodate new opportunities and build upon the successful completion of improvements and new development outlined herein.



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION WAS ENCOURAGED AT PLANUPTOWN.COM.

WHY HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

1. The last comprehensive plan for Uptown was completed in 1974.
2. Uptown Westerville is the historic core of the City.
3. The community desires to maintain Uptown's unique identity.
4. Uptown is one of the economic generators of the City of Westerville and has the potential to be more so.
5. Uptown must remain a competitive retail and service environment.
6. Uptown aspires to be the destination/centerpiece for community.
7. Uptown must adapt to 21st century trends (in terms of market forces, demographics, transportation, etc.).
8. Authentic town centers are emerging hot real estate markets.
9. There are opportunities to coordinate efforts with Otterbein University.
10. Improvement through private investment is desired in the Uptown commercial district and surrounding neighborhoods.
11. There is a need to unify various component Uptown studies.
12. It is time to build consensus and provide direction moving forward.

Goals of the Plan

While the City has been very successful in preserving and fostering Westerville's historic core, the purpose of this comprehensive document is to guide future growth, investment, development, and preservation efforts in Uptown. Planning documents are invaluable tools for districts like Uptown because of the community discussions and attention they create, the consensus that is developed, and the future guidance they provide. The primary aim of this comprehensive plan is to ensure that Uptown grows in a way that preserves its existing historic integrity, while advancing its economic vitality and reinforcing its place as the community gathering spot for Westerville.

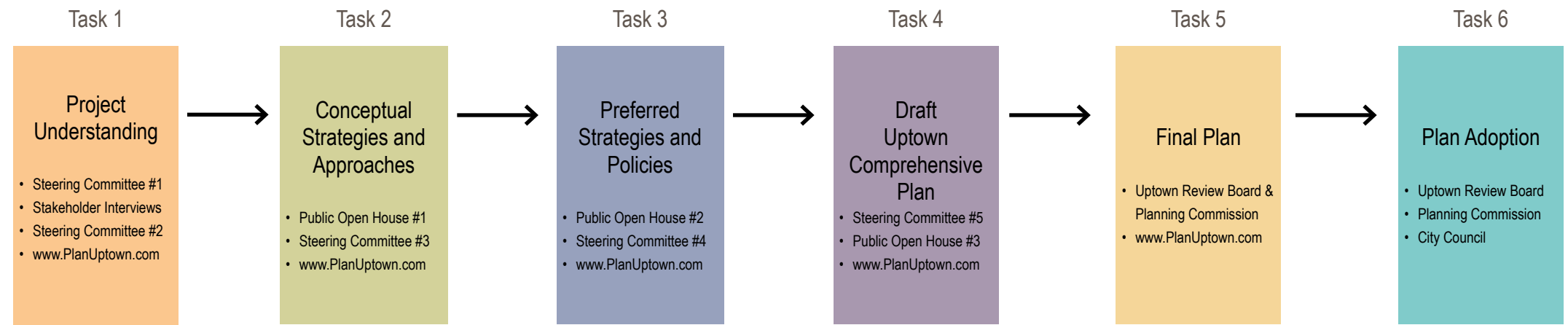
THE UPTOWN PLAN SEEKS TO:

1. Maintain and enhance the quality of life in Uptown;
2. Identify, preserve, and enhance the existing amenities and unique charms of Uptown;
3. Help businesses and institutions be successful in the changing market place;
4. Improve the effective use and format of parking in Uptown;
5. Strengthen the built environment, particularly the retail storefronts and upper floor residential and office;
6. Improve and program the public realm;
7. Advance the status of Uptown as a community destination;
8. Fortify connections to the Otterbein University campus and surrounding neighborhoods;
9. Cultivate consensus on planning and development issues and leverage opportunities available to the City & Uptown;
10. Guide public and private investment;
11. Promote strategic infill opportunities; and
12. Enhance the overall design and character of Uptown.

Plan Process

In September 2012, the City of Westerville engaged the MKSK project team to create the Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan. This planning effort was intended to build upon the Uptown Market Analysis & Business Development Strategy completed separately in 2011. The Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan project was divided into five tasks. These general tasks were: 1) Project Understanding, 2) Conceptual Strategies, 3) Preferred Strategies and Policies, 4) Draft Plan, and 5) Final Plan. The final task, Plan Adoption, occurred in the first quarter of 2014. This plan was guided by an expert group of City of Westerville staff and an eleven-member Steering Committee representing a broad array of Uptown stakeholders.

A major component of the planning process was community engagement and public input. To this end, the process encouraged input from Uptown stakeholders and Westerville residents through each task. This included intensive stakeholder interviews across two weeks at the beginning of the study to help the project team understand issues and opportunities facing Westerville as well as the community's desires for the district. It also included three public meetings at important points in the planning process (January, February, and April 2013) as ideas were gathered, initial concepts and strategies developed, and final catalytic projects recommended.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASKS & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A critical resource for the Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan was www.PlanUptown.com. This website provided a 24-hour-a-day forum where any interested individual of the community could provide suggestions for the plan, review materials generated by the project team, and discuss ideas and concerns related to Uptown. By the time this plan was drafted, over 260 people had participated and provided comments on the PlanUptown.com website, generating over 640 web interactions related to the plan and Uptown. Overall, more than 25,000 individual page views occurred on www.PlanUptown.com representing an impressive amount of community participation.

Together these resources provided great insight and opinions that directly shaped the recommendations of this plan. Engaging as many invested parties as possible helped to ensure that this plan addresses the immediate concerns and needs of Uptown, while also advancing the shared interests of those in Uptown and the greater Westerville community. As an adopted plan, the Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan serves as a guiding document for city officials and staff, land owners, residents, business owners, and any future developer in the Uptown area.

Plan Overview

The Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan is divided into six sections. This is the first section: Introduction. This section provides an overview of the planning process and the substantial public engagement. The next section, Existing Conditions, reviews the state of Uptown as it exists today. It includes a review of the Steering Committee and public input, the 2011 market analysis, and shifting societal trends that are impacting or will impact Uptown and the City of Westerville. The third section, Catalytic Projects, identifies opportunities arising from these conditions and potential momentum-inducing projects that will generate additional positive change to improve Uptown. The fourth section, Redevelopment Scenarios, demonstrates how a number of these catalytic projects could be implemented to transform a block in Uptown. The fifth section, Planning Tools, examines a number of tools and strategies to consider implementing in Uptown. The final section, Recommendations, reviews recommendations to advance the various identified catalytic projects and the implementation steps to accomplish them.

COMMUNITY INPUT AND DIRECTION

Public Input

Public input played a critical role in guiding the development of this plan. The community provided knowledge, input, and direction to the project team through stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and www.PlanUptown.com.

Stakeholder Interviews

The stakeholder interviews occurred early in the planning process and helped the project team gain important insight into the past, present, and desired future for Uptown. In particular, these interviews allowed the project team to meet one-on-one with people who directly, or through their organization or business, play an important role in the success and vitality of Uptown, and who have an in-depth knowledge of the challenges and opportunities it faces. The information gained through the stakeholder interviews and meetings with the Steering Committee helped augment that provided by the City staff, previous plans and histories, and through team site visits.

In general, stakeholders indicated an overall satisfaction at the progress Uptown has made over the past ten years, particularly in the areas of reinvestment, retail stores, events like the Farmers' Market and Fourth Fridays, and the streetscape beautification. Additionally, the recent ability for businesses to obtain liquor licenses has encouraged new restaurants to open in Uptown, helping to bring more people and vitality to the district into the evening. There is a feeling that more people are becoming aware of Uptown Westerville and all it has to offer. Stakeholders also expressed a fondness and affection for Uptown – particularly for its historic atmosphere, easy walkability, and sense of community. People stated that Uptown provides a central location in the community that fosters social interaction, offering a gathering place to meet fellow residents and build relationships. Stakeholders indicated that the terms they most often hear others use to describe Uptown are: cozy, warm, charming, quaint, and historic. The strong foot traffic is seen as Uptown's biggest asset – that the environment is conducive to people strolling along State Street to patronize its businesses.

Stakeholders had a much broader geographic sense of what composes Uptown than the official boundaries. Only those most familiar with the Uptown District and the related Review Board had a strong grasp of the official physical

boundaries of Uptown. There was a sense that Uptown included everything west to Otterbein University, north to Old County Line Road, east to the industrial area, and farther south than Walnut Street.

Concerns expressed by stakeholders varied. They ranged from frustration with existing parking conditions to the need to extend business hours of Uptown merchants. The most common concern expressed was that the district must continue to be a vibrant place that attracts people to Uptown. This feedback is summarized in the table on the opposite page.

Steering Committee Meetings

Six Stakeholder Meetings were held. The Steering Committee was made up of 11 area leaders to help guide the process.

Public Meetings & PlanUptown.com

More than 100 people attended the three public meetings that were held as part of this process. At the first public meeting, attendees were asked to react to the existing conditions information and the summary of the stakeholder interviews. In general, there was broad agreement. Attendees were also asked for their ideas for Uptown. These influenced many of the proposed catalytic projects in the next section. The second and third public meetings involved review and refinement of these potential projects and recommendations. Comments from these meetings are found with each topic in the next section of this plan.

The largest amount of public input came through the PlanUptown.com website from December 2012 through June 2013. In fact, www.PlanUptown.com reached over 260 community members and sparked over 25,000 page views. Over 640 individual ideas and/or comments were submitted to the website and at the public meetings to aid this project.

Similar to the public meetings, the website helped share existing conditions analysis, initial catalytic projects, and project recommendations, all while soliciting comment and input from site visitors. Good dialogue and many great suggestions resulted from www.PlanUptown.com and are reflected in this plan.

3

PUBLIC MEETINGS / OPEN HOUSES

100+

PUBLIC MEETING / OPEN HOUSE ATTENDEES

6

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

260+

WEB SITE PARTICIPANTS

22

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

640+

COMMENTS, IDEAS, & VOTES SUBMITTED



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES WERE WELL ATTENDED, PROVIDING OVERVIEWS OF MATERIALS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ONE-ON-ONE DIALOGUE AND FEEDBACK.



CLOSEUP OF A PAGE FROM THE PLANUPTOWN WEBSITE, WHICH FACILITATED COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AND CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Satisfaction at progress Uptown has made
- Uptown is cozy, warm, charming, and quaint
- People love Uptown's:
 - Walkability
 - Historic atmosphere
 - Sense of community
- There is a broader sense of what is "Uptown"
- Uptown's biggest asset is foot traffic
- Need to give people a reason to come to Uptown
- Need to concentrate on creating/maintaining attractors
- Uptown is turning into an entertainment district
- The Library is trying to be a gathering space
- Westerville has blue collar roots
- Unified direction / consensus is near impossible to achieve
- There is a sense of a divide between North and South Westerville
- There is not a strong link (retail, physical, etc.) between Otterbein University and Uptown

WANTS AND DESIRES

- More public space / More gathering spaces
- Save the State Theatre
- More unique shops
- Get more people walking / foot traffic / shoppers
- Close down Main Street to traffic and make it a pedestrian street for events
- Parking garage
- Otterbein bookstore
- More / better connections to Otterbein

ISSUES

Parking

- Signage – what is available & where
- Issue during certain times
- Willingness to walk is problem
- Who is using the parking – i.e. owners & employees
- Restaurants demand a lot of parking
- It is church's #1 issue

Civic Gathering Space

- Lack of community gathering, event, performance, & play space on State Street

Housing Stock

- Student rental housing is destroying the housing stock & affecting appearances

Uptown Retail

- Issue with only day time hours
- Desire for gateways / visual indicators for Uptown
- Road signage to Uptown
- Need to appeal to students

Festivals & Events

- Fourth Fridays are not long enough
- Need better communication between various festival organizations

Uptown Review Board

- Boundary doesn't reflect perceived boundary (but don't expand)
- Decisions are arbitrary and make modernization difficult



AREAS TO EXAMINE

Based upon feedback from the Steering Committee, the general areas of focus for the Uptown Plan should be:

- Building and Site Uses
- Synergies and Relationships
- Existing Amenities and Unique Character
- Urban Design
- Public Realm
- Parking Supply and Function
- Traffic Impacts and Access
- Bike and Pedestrian Environment
- Connectivity with Surrounding Neighborhoods
- Relationship with Otterbein
- Programs, Funding, and Codes
- Potential Catalytic Projects

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Study Area

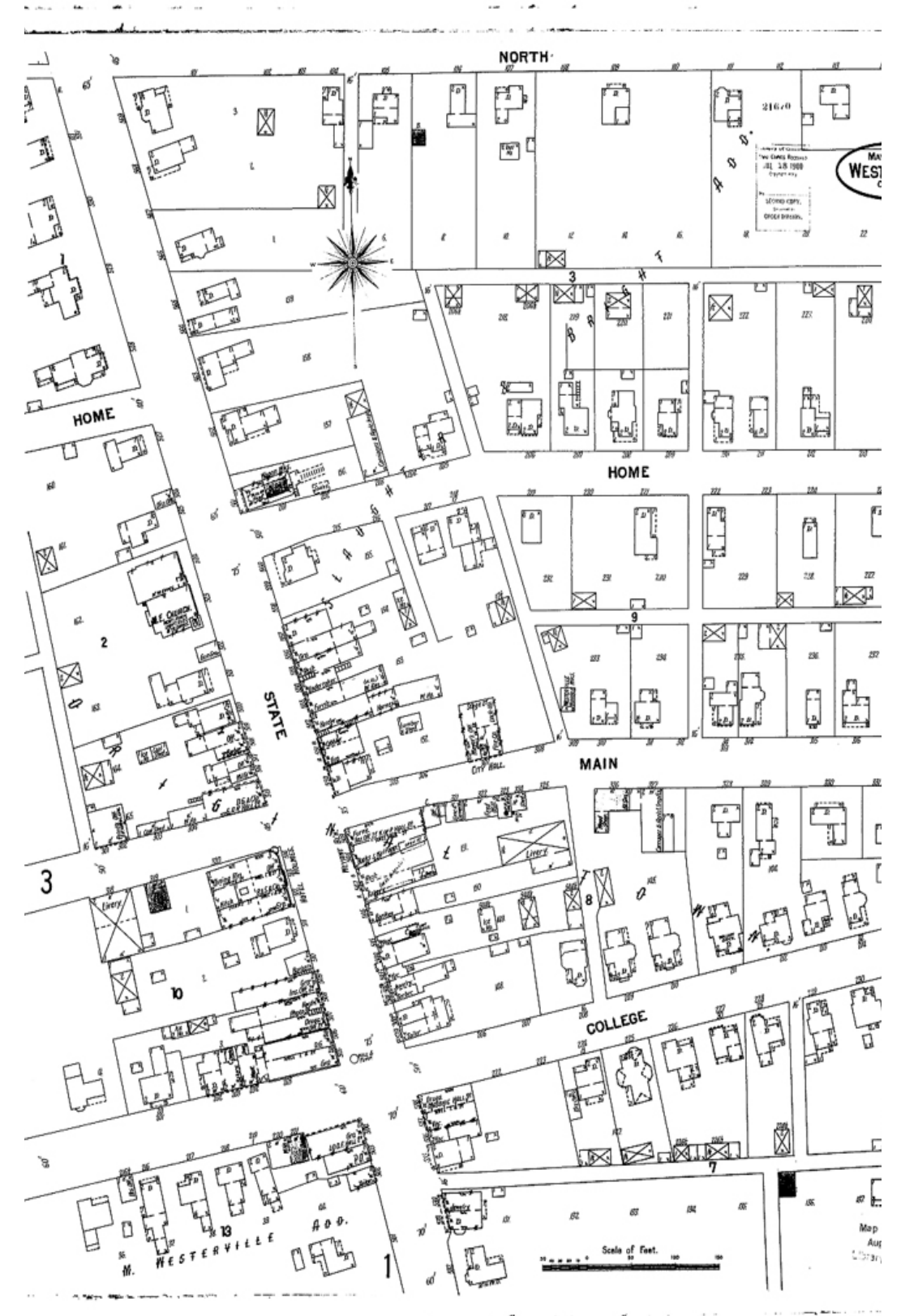
Uptown Westerville (highlighted in orange on the map) comprises the central portion of Olde Westerville. This is the primary study area for the Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan. Uptown is located along State Route 3, also known as State Street, which serves as the north-south spine of the district. The Uptown boundaries were established in 1973 and generally include the commercial uses and commercially zoned properties that have existed since the introduction of zoning in the city in the 1920s. Thus the district follows State Street from Lincoln Street on the north to Walnut Street on the south. This is the primary planning study area because it is here, in the commercial center, where many of the concerns of this Plan are focused, such as parking, traffic, access, mix of uses, renovation, appropriate infill, and amenities.

Surrounding the Uptown district is the area known today as Olde Westerville (highlighted in blue on the map). This is the boundary of the original village that stood as a separate community for over 100 years. This area comprises most of the secondary study area because of its physical connections and shared history with Uptown. To many people, Olde Westerville and Uptown are one. Olde Westerville is important because it contains the housing that supports Uptown, is part of the same original town street grid, and contributes structures and character that are essential to Uptown. The general boundaries of the secondary study area are Old County Line Road to the north, the County Line-Schrock Trail (former railroad tracks) to the east, Walnut Street to the south, and Alum Creek to the west.

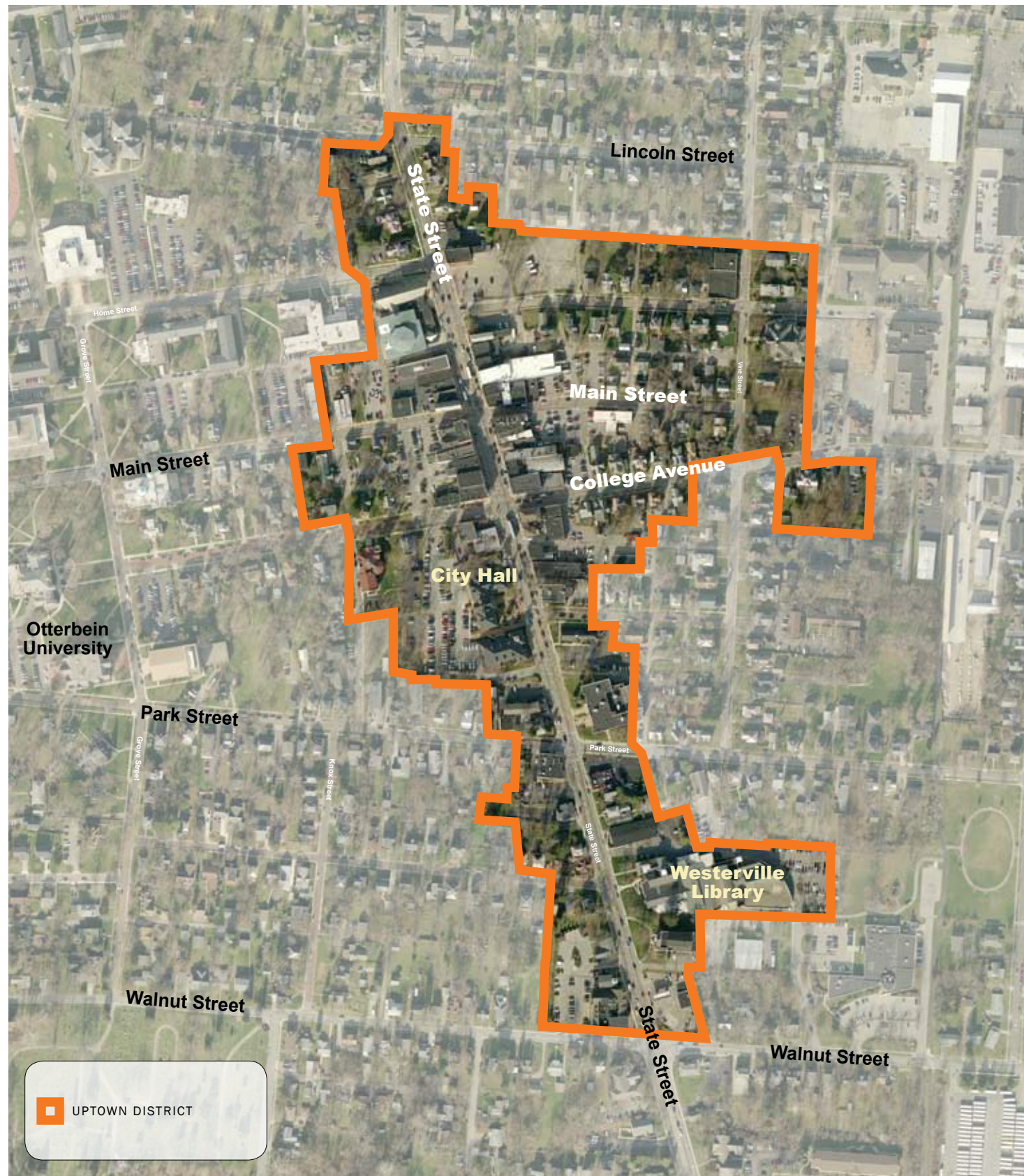
An important part of the secondary study area is Otterbein University. Since its founding in 1847, Otterbein University has had a symbiotic relationship with Olde Westerville and Uptown. Because of its students, faculty, staff, visitors, events, and support infrastructure, Otterbein University affects the surrounding area – from students that live in the surrounding neighborhoods, to parking needs and facility growth needs, to potential customers for Uptown businesses, to events and the vitality that it provides to the community. Otterbein University is in the process of preparing its own physical plan to help guide its growth. The implementation of these two plans should be coordinated in a partnership between the City and Otterbein.



THE UPTOWN PLAN'S STUDY AREAS AND OLDE WESTERVILLE DISTRICT



BUILDING FOOTPRINTS IN UPTOWN AS RECORDED IN 1900. SOURCE: 1900 SANBORN MAP



UPTOWN PLAN PRIMARY STUDY AREA.

A Compendium of Uptown History

The history of Uptown Westerville, comprising the central portion of Olde Westerville, is closely linked with the history of the community as a whole. The Uptown district boundaries, established in 1973, generally follow a commercial zoning pattern, which has existed since the introduction of zoning in the community in the 1920s. Surrounding this district is the area known today as Olde Westerville, the original village that stood as a separate community for over 100 years.

From the time that it was platted in 1839 until about 1960, Westerville indeed was a distinct, self-contained community of northeastern Franklin County. Its rich heritage is derived from its history as an independent farming community and college town, as well as a nationally-known center for the temperance movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Westerville became a city in 1961 with a population of about 7,000 people. In the ensuing years, the city experienced steady growth as it expanded in terms of both geography and population. Previously rural areas were developed to provide housing for the rapidly growing Columbus metropolitan area. A major annexation of 941 acres at the northwest side of the community in the 1990s also led to rapid expansion in office and retail space including significant investment in hospitals and medical offices. The annexation allowed for various roadway improvements and better connections to surrounding highways. Municipal services, public school programs, industry, and shopping have all expanded to serve a present-day population of nearly 40,000 and an area of 12.5 square miles.

While the precincts within the annexed areas allowed alcohol sales, the historic core of the city remained dry until voters approved alcohol sales at a number of Olde Westerville establishments through site-specific local options. In 2006, Michael's Pizza at 15 E. College Avenue served the first beer in Uptown Westerville after many decades of dry tradition.

In many ways, the rapid pace of Westerville's growth during the past 40 or 50 years has allowed the older section of the community to remain relatively unchanged. New suburban-style housing and commercial developments are focused elsewhere in the community, while rehabilitation and reinvestment are the watchwords in Olde Westerville.

As the historic center of the community, the Uptown District has been a focus for both public and private investment in recent years. Public commitment to the area is demonstrated by streetscape improvements and construction of a new municipal complex in the heart of the district during the 1980s. Substantial private investment is evident in the many historic buildings, which have been preserved and reused. Importantly, the Westerville Uptown Review Board has provided design review protection for the Uptown District since 1973, helping to ensure that the historic character of this area is preserved and enhanced. In addition, the Westerville Uptown Merchants Association (WUMA), the Westerville Visitors and Convention Bureau (WVCB) and the adjacent Otterbein University have all invested in the area. All of these combined efforts have resulted in Uptown Westerville's place today as one of the most viable historic commercial and residential districts in central Ohio.

*Excerpt from:
The History of Uptown Westerville - March 2012*

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Uptown Land Use

State Street is the main corridor through Uptown. It serves as the heartstring of both the district and the Westerville community. The Uptown businesses, restaurants, and boutiques extend between Home Street to the north and Walnut Street to the south, with a majority located between Home Street and Winter Street. As is the case with historic town centers, most of the buildings preceded the automobile, so the buildings address the State Street sidewalk and are side-by-side, effectively having zero front or side building setbacks. Meanwhile the parking and service is located behind the shops off alleys. This makes for a charming and compact commercial street perfect for strolling and visiting multiple destinations.

Most of the structures on State Street are commercial buildings that are two to four stories in height, creating an attractive built edge framing the street. In the surrounding area, most of the buildings are residential structures two stories in height. In the commercial core, the first floors of these buildings have large windows showcasing boutique displays and restaurant activity. Currently the second and third floors of the Uptown buildings are less successful, with a number of vacant spaces. This provides opportunities for renovation and new office and residential uses to be introduced back into the district.

The lot depth and building depth of the structures along State Street varies, as one would expect in an older platted town. This makes the circulation and service system behind State Street more fragmented and less intuitive. Most of the blocks are serviced by alleys or drives with the rear portions of the lots converted to surface parking for patrons and employees. As a result, the rear/back areas of the State Street commercial corridor have not received the same level of attention as the public face of State Street. Still the forms and spaces they create add authentic character to Uptown.

While the majority of the commercial land use is located along State Street, there are businesses located on the side streets as well, particularly College Avenue and Main Street. Most of these businesses are located in what were once traditional residential homes that have been converted into business uses. The connectivity from State Street along College Avenue and Main

Street must continue to be reinforced if the vitality and success of these local businesses is a priority. There are also a few original residential structures located along State Street in Uptown, specifically several south of Park Street as well as a group north of Home Street as the district transitions back to residential neighborhoods. Some of these residential structures have also been converted to business use.

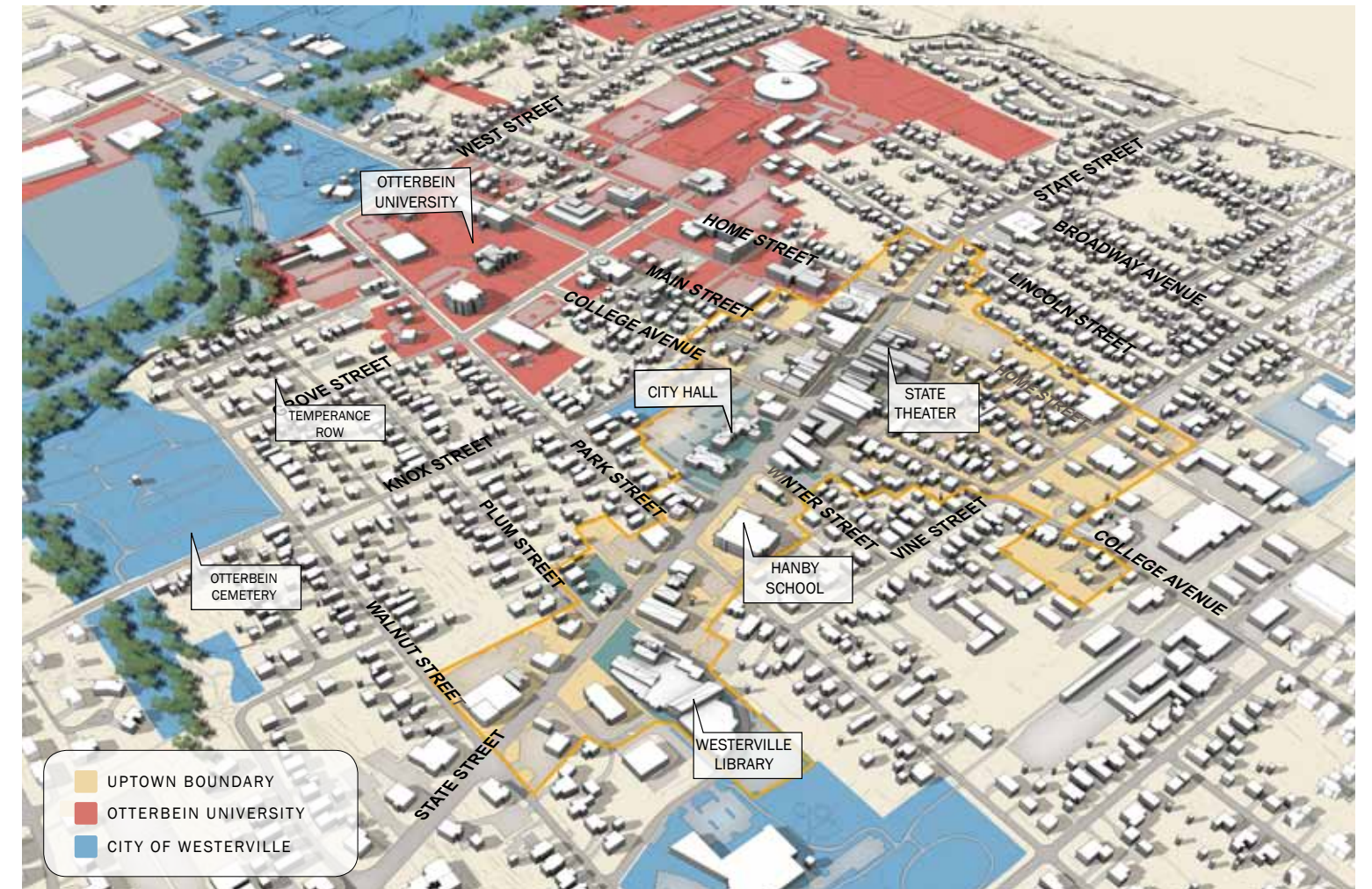
In addition to its commercial uses, State Street is also the civic core of Westerville with City Hall, local government offices, and the original Westerville Post Office all located along the same street block south of College Avenue. Similarly, the institutional uses located in the district complement the retail and civic uses and strengthen the local and regional draw of Uptown. Examples of these include the Hanby School at the northeast corner of Park Street, the Westerville Public Library across from Plum Street, and several churches including the Methodist Church of the Messiah at Home Street and the First Presbyterian Church on West College Avenue.

Uptown District

As mentioned earlier, the Uptown District is the smaller, commercial center of the larger area of Olde Westerville. The Uptown District designates the area the city recognizes for special and enhanced streetscape features and amenities in the public realm, such as: decorative street lights and mast arms; lush hanging flower baskets; brick sidewalk edges and specialty pavers; decorative benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks; unique signage and wayfinding; public parking lots; etc. In addition, this area is where special programs and incentives are in place for building improvements (such as the Facade Improvement Program) and community events and festivals.

The boundaries of the Uptown District also currently align with the Architectural Review District (ARD). The Architectural Review District is a specially zoned area in which the Westerville Uptown Review Board (URB)

Uptown District

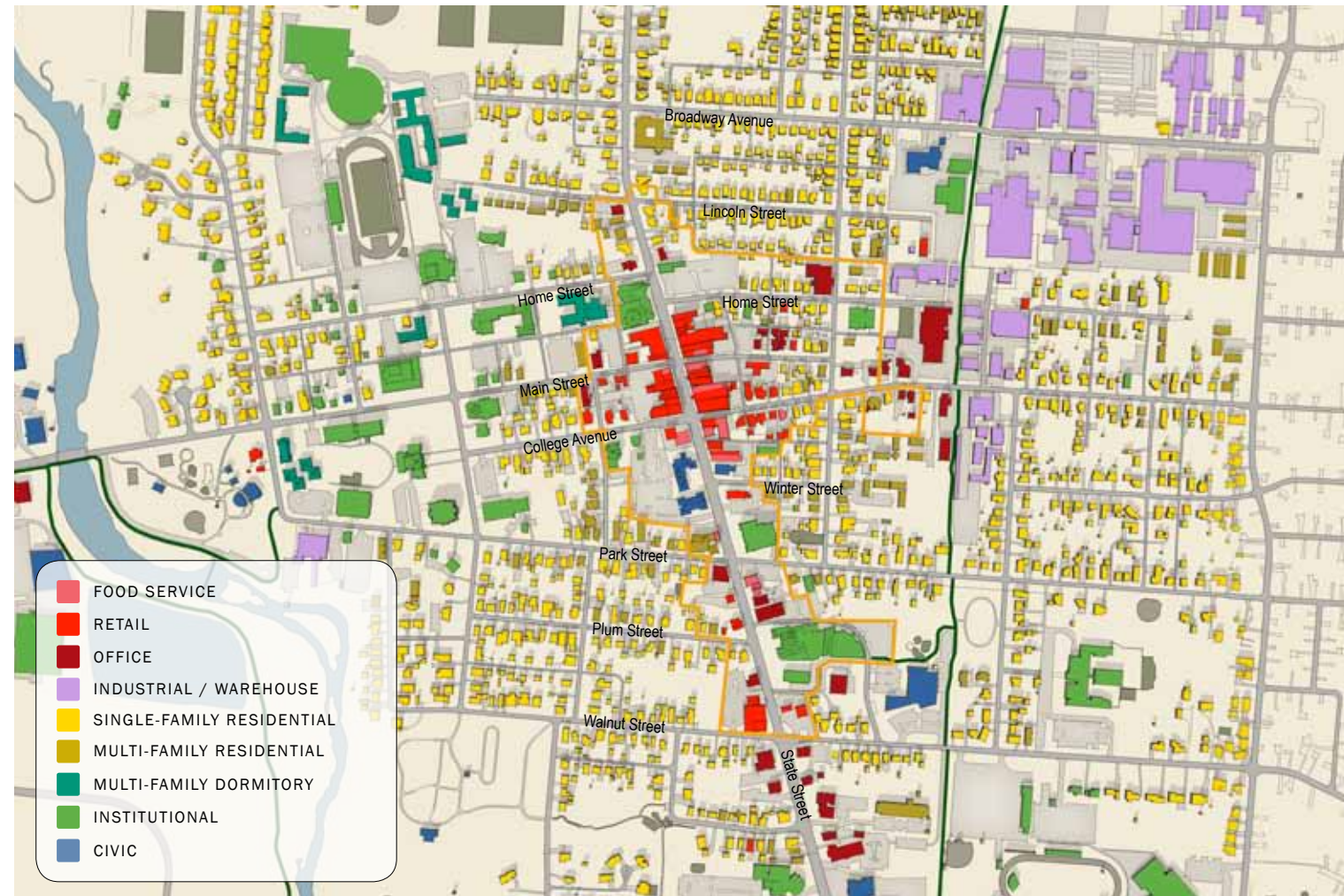


is responsible for reviewing architectural and exterior site changes in order to protect and promote the historic character of Uptown. This includes things like new or replacement signs, building renovation and modification, new development, building materials and colors, outdoor dining and display, parking lots and parking requirements, landscape and screening, etc. The Uptown Review Board has been reviewing development applications since its creation in 1973. Zoning is explored in more detail on the next page.

The location of the Uptown District/Architectural Review District boundary is based upon efforts and input dating to the the 1970's. For various historical and land use reasons, different parcels were included or excluded from

the District. As a result, while the Uptown boundaries for both the UD and the ARD include the businesses and institutions along State Street, they are not very intuitive. One must refer to a map to discern what properties are included within the Uptown District/Architectural Review District. For example, the Uptown boundary does not encompass many residential blocks or the majority of the surrounding Olde Westerville. This area is often perceived to be part of Uptown, however it falls outside the official boundary. As many conditions and opportunities have changed, it appears appropriate to revisit both the Uptown District and Architectural Review District boundaries.

Land Uses

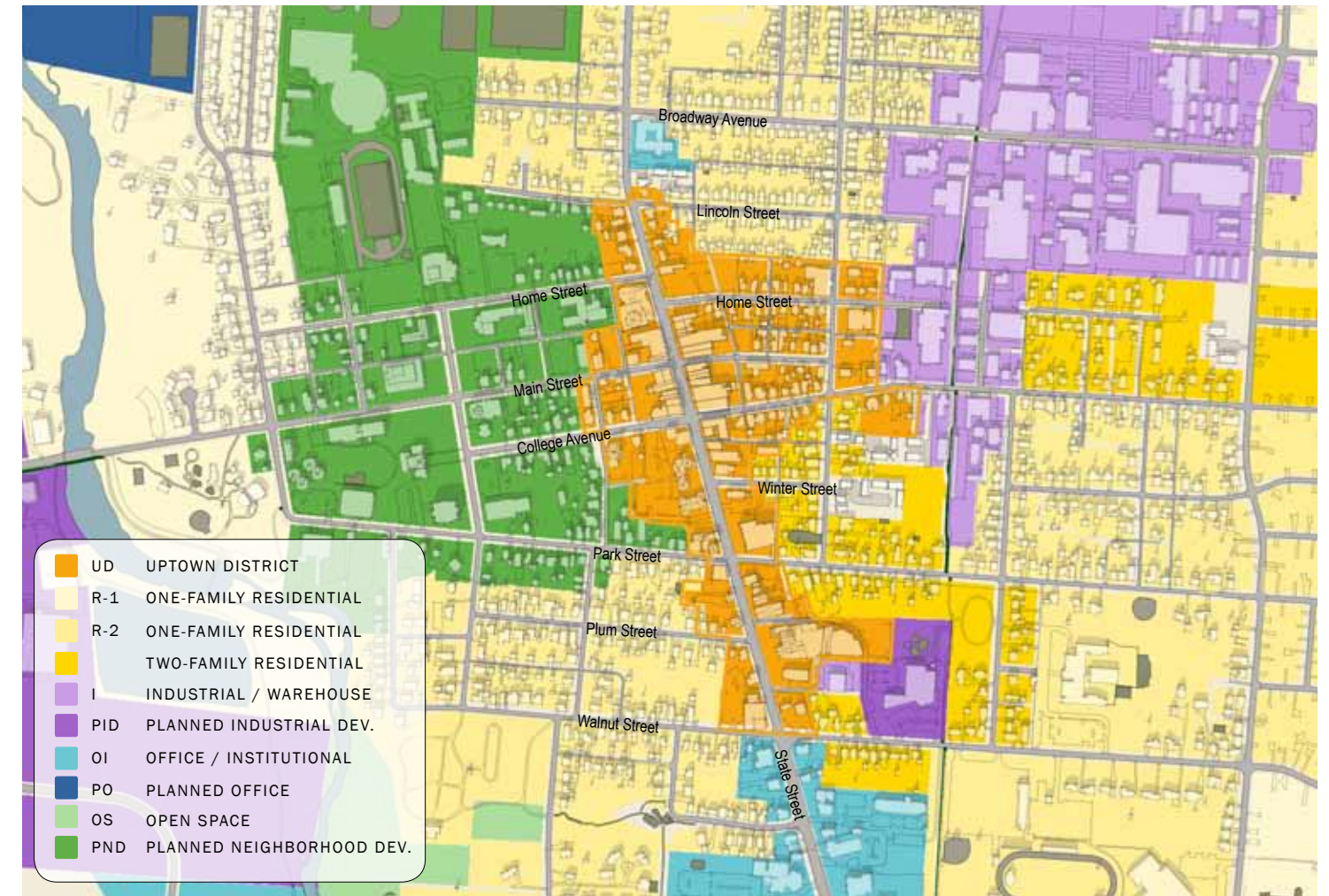


Land Uses

One of the largest land owners in Olde Westerville is Otterbein University. Otterbein is located adjacent to the west of the Uptown District. The University's property borders Uptown, with dormitories and the University's Campus Center located along Home Street. Strengthening ties to the neighboring University creates an opportunity for Uptown to strengthen its identity as a college town, capitalizing on both a population of students and faculty and an destination draw to the area. Because of its historic character, Uptown is designated with a special Uptown District zoning. This zoning was created to protect the existing character of the district through high development and renovation standards and the promotion of pedestrian amenities. Bordering the Uptown District

to the west is the Planned Neighborhood district, which includes Otterbein University. This district allows for low-to-medium density multiple family housing in addition to institutional uses that complement the residential. These zoning conditions create the opportunity for market-rate rental housing to arise in the Olde Westerville neighborhood. A manufacturing district borders it to the east. This area originated from the railroad line that has since been converted to the Maxtown-Schrock Trail, which is also part of the Ohio to Erie Trail. While the majority of this manufacturing is still in operation, portions are not. Because of the trail and the district's close proximity to Uptown and Olde Westerville, how to best utilize the buildings that are no longer in operation will be an important consideration as Uptown continues to develop.

Zoning



Zoning

Because of its historic character, Uptown is designated with a special Uptown District zoning. This zoning was created to protect the existing character of the district through high development and renovation standards and the promotion of pedestrian amenities. Bordering the Uptown District to the west is the Planned Neighborhood district, which includes Otterbein University. This district allows for low-to-medium density multiple family housing in addition to institutional uses that complement the residential. These zoning conditions created the opportunity for market-rate rental housing to arise in the Olde Westerville neighborhood. This has been a point of controversy

among residents who feel the neighborhood would be strengthened by allowing for only single-family housing. While Otterbein borders Uptown to the west, a large manufacturing district borders it to the east. This area originated from the railroad line that has since been converted to the Maxtown-Schrock Trail, which is also part of the Ohio to Erie Trail. While the majority of this manufacturing is still in operations, portions are not. Because of the trail and the district's close proximity to Uptown and Olde Westerville, how to best utilize the buildings that are no longer in operation will be an important consideration as Uptown continues to develop.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Regional Transportation

Within Westerville there are three major north-south roads: Cleveland Avenue, State Route 3, and Sunbury Road. These roads are not only primary local connections, but are regional connecting roads as well. Because of this, they often endure heavy traffic flow through Westerville. For example, State Route 3, which becomes State Street, carries approximately 21,000 vehicles a day. The design of this corridor must move be able to move this heavy traffic efficiently through the area to keep congestion down. This often means wider roads with numerous travel lanes. However State Street is the primary corridor through Uptown, and such conditions would not be conducive to the existing character or desired feel of Uptown. Instead, slower traffic speeds are needed through Uptown in order to encourage pedestrian activity and allow for easy access to the shops along State Street for motorists. Therefore, this corridor must balance the need to move motorists effectively while also serving as an important commercial corridor. The heavy congestion that challenges State Street and State Route 3 are also challenges for Sunbury Road and Cleveland Avenue. These corridors must balance the need to effectively move traffic with preserving the character of the corridor. For State Street, this means preserving the narrow, slower-moving, nature of the road.

Street Grid

On a local level, the traffic problems along State Street are compounded by the lack of connections that come from an incomplete street grid around this corridor. Street grids are important to transportation because they allow for multiple connections from all directions. Multiple connections create additional route options for drivers, helping to disperse traffic and decrease congestion. Within Uptown, the alternatives to State Street are Vine Street, Grove Street, and Knox Street. However these roads do not connect completely through Uptown and are located on the periphery of the district. As a result, to get to the shops, restaurants, and businesses in the district, State Street is the only option. This forces local traffic to add to the regional traffic using State Route 3.

While there is a lack of north-south streets in Uptown, there are well-connected east-west cross streets. These roads help to connect Otterbein University and Olde Westerville to Uptown, and create the opportunity for gateways into these distinct but complementary districts.

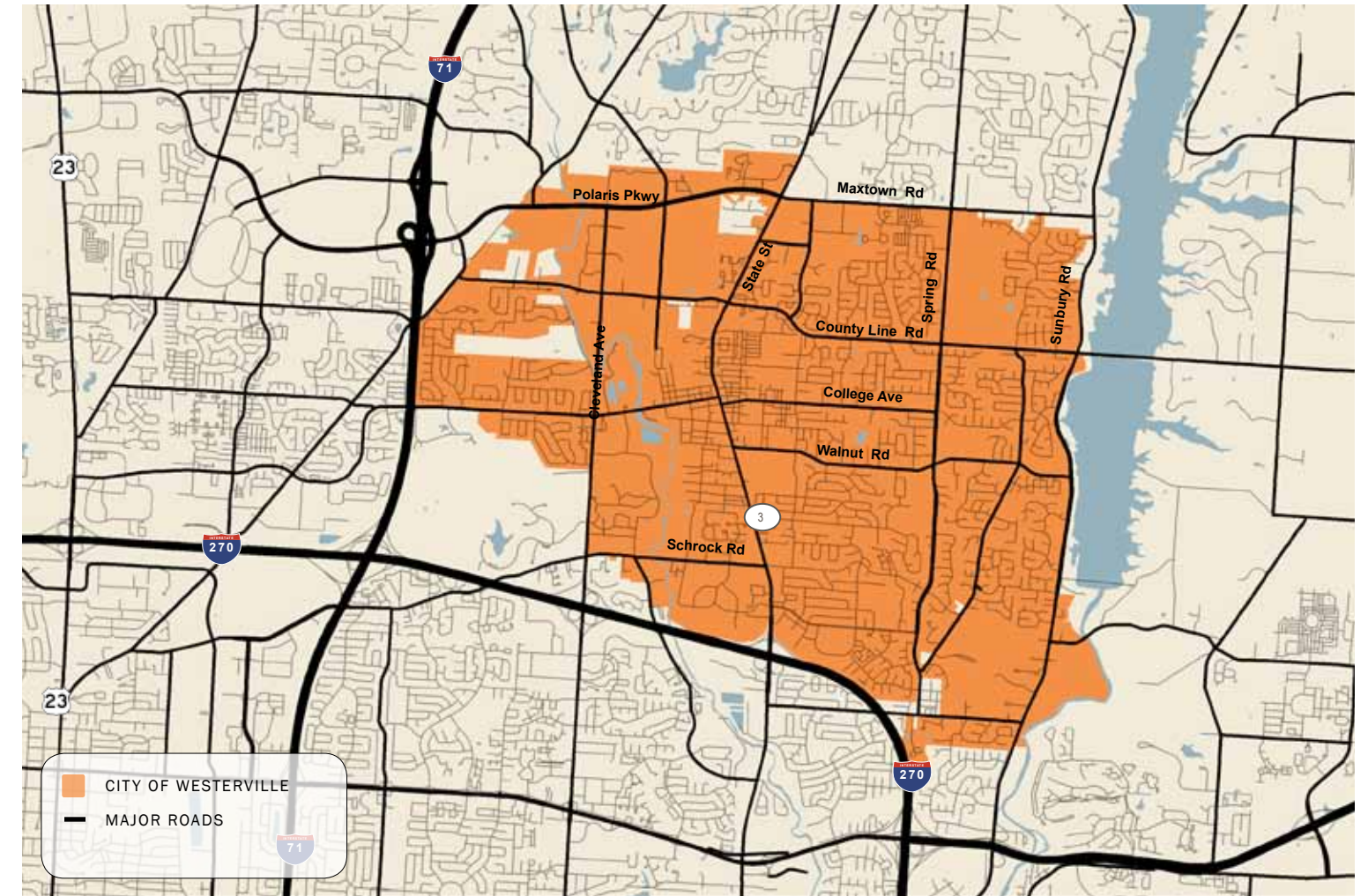
Parking

An important component to the transportation system in Uptown is parking. The most voiced concerns by stakeholders and Westerville residents were the existing parking conditions. Currently, there are 561 public parking spaces, 416 private business parking spaces, and 103 on-street parking spaces. This totals 1,080 existing parking spaces in Uptown, which is more than the estimated 977 parking spaces needed to meet the need of Uptown businesses. Despite the fact that there are more spaces than needed for the local shops, restaurants, and businesses, most believe that there is in fact a shortage of parking.

This misperception is due to the unintuitive design of the parking areas located behind the State Street shops. This design problem, coupled with the heavy traffic along State Street, can create a challenging parking experience for visitors. What is needed is alternative north-south routes for motorists that run parallel to State Street. Connecting this new corridor to the east-west cross streets creates the opportunity to move motorists through Uptown at a slower, rate and with less congestion. This would benefit not only Uptown businesses, but other major parking users such as Otterbein University, the Westerville Public Library, and the numerous churches.

While there is not currently a parking shortage in Uptown, consideration should be given to how the continued development of Uptown will impact this need. According to the 2011 Uptown Market Study, Uptown has the potential to grow by 190,000 square feet of warranted retail space by 2015. This growth will require additional parking for an increased number of patrons that will be attracted to the area. Therefore, the Uptown Plan should further address both the existing parking shortage perception and the need to include additional parking to allow for the continued growth of Uptown.

Regional Transportation System

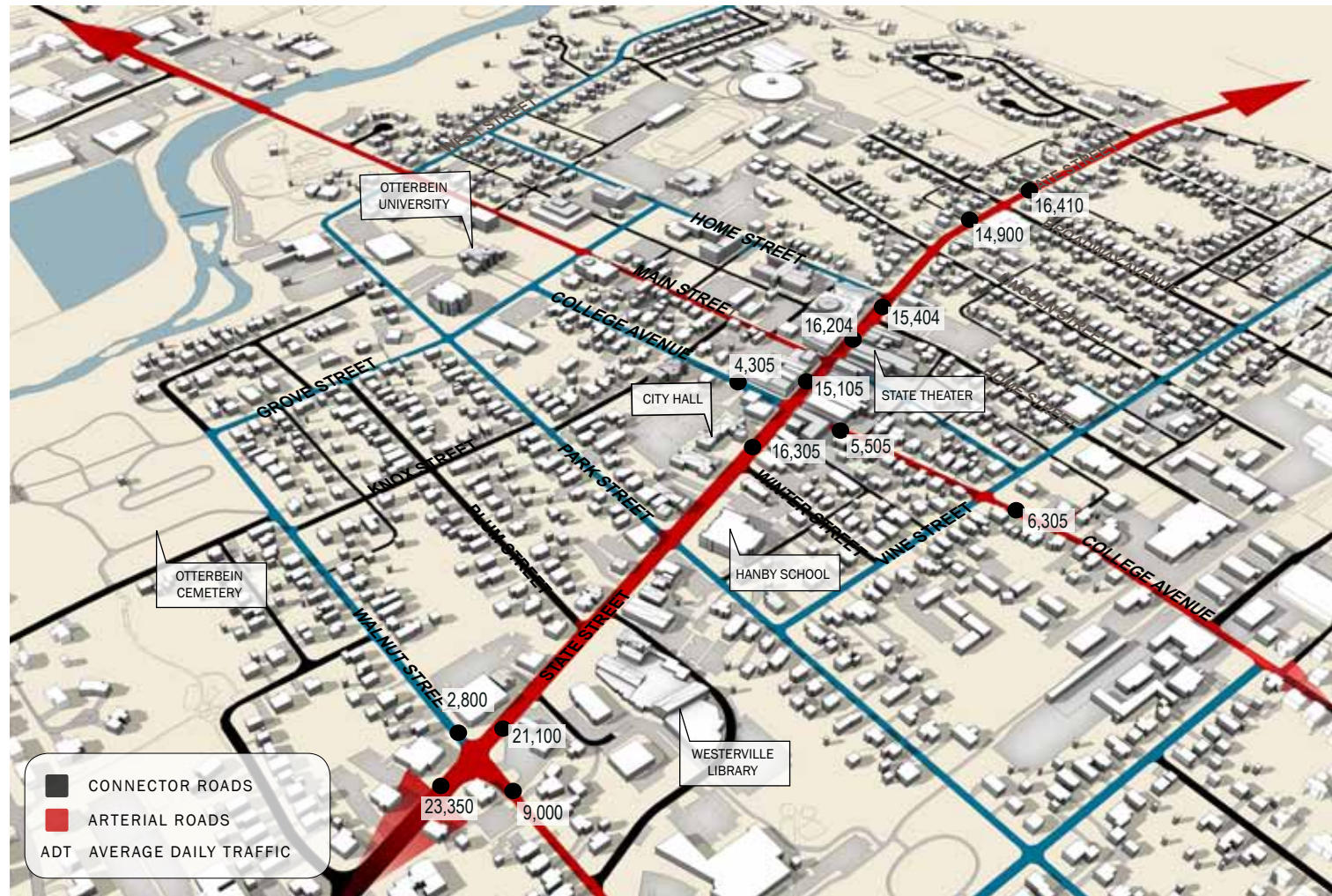


STATE ROUTE 3 IS A MAJOR NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR IN WESTERVILLE.



AS STATE ROUTE 3 RUNS THROUGH UPTOWN, CONGESTION CAN FRUSTRATE DRIVERS AND PEDESTRIANS

Street Grid



Parking



HEAVY TRAFFIC CAN CREATE UNPLEASANT, AND POTENTIALLY UNSAFE, CONDITIONS FOR PEDESTRIANS



UPTOWN IS WELL-CONNECTED TO THE EAST AND WEST THROUGH ITS CROSS STREETS



DESPITE THE POPULAR PERCEPTION, THERE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH PARKING NEEDED TO SUPPORT RETAIL IN UPTOWN



EXISTING PARKING AREAS ARE UNINTUITIVE TO DRIVERS AND CAN CREATE CONFUSION AND FRUSTRATION.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Uptown Connections

The ability of Uptown to act as the social and commercial core of Westerville is dependent upon its ability to bring people into the district. In general, economic research has shown that in order to support a typical corner store, generally between 1,500 and 3,000 square feet in size, 1,000 homes need to be located within a five minute walk of the store. This provides the needed number of customers to patronize the shop. This research shows that in order to support the numerous shops of Uptown, the district needs to be well-connected. It needs to be able to bring patrons to its shops easily and with as short a commute as possible.

Uptown has the distinct advantage of having several untapped populations that it can connect to its numerous shops. These are the adjacent Olde Westerville and student body of Otterbein University. Both of these communities include the needed population to support Uptown's shops, restaurants, and businesses. Enhancing connections to these areas will help draw this population to the district. Additionally, Uptown is located between two popular bicycle trails, the Alum Creek Trail and the Ohio to Erie Trail. These trails not only act as regional connections, but also provide an additional connection to the district within Westerville. Therefore, it is important for Uptown to create strong connections to Olde Westerville, Otterbein University, and the nearby bicycle trails in order to attract the needed customer base to encourage the success of the district.

Otterbein University

Within a five minute walk from Uptown is Otterbein University. This institution is an important partner for Uptown, because of its 3,100 students that eat, study, and live within less than a quarter of a mile of Uptown. Despite the proximity that the University is within a five-minute walk from Uptown, there is not a strong physical or visual relationship between the University and Uptown. However, by providing amenities that college students want, like restaurants, a college book store, and entertainment options, Uptown can capitalize on this existing population to support its local commerce.

Olde Westerville

Uptown's surrounding residential neighborhood, Olde Westerville, also contributes to its economic base. With the majority of the neighborhood being

within a five-minute walk from State Street, it is important to create strong pedestrian connections to Uptown. Using design tools such as streetscape improvements and gateway features can create comfortable pedestrian connections, while helping to strengthen the fabric of the neighborhood.

Olde Westerville is also important because of the supporting historic infrastructure it provides to Uptown. The historic homes and grid roadway system complement Uptown's historic charm and add to the character and ambience of the district. Despite the appeal of Olde Westerville, it has not been as well maintained overall as might be expected. In many Central Ohio communities, such as Worthington and New Albany, the neighborhoods surrounding the cities town centers are highly desirable locations with strong connections to the commercial core. Olde Westerville has the potential for this type of success; however, despite a recent increase in interest in the area, it has not seen the investment of comparable neighborhoods in other communities. Encouraging the continued preservation of the historic single-family homes will help strengthen the fabric of this neighborhood.

Bicycle Connections

Along the periphery of Olde Westerville are two bike trails that provide the opportunity for Uptown to be a regional destination place. To the west, bordering Otterbein, is the Alum Creek Trail. Located a quarter mile from Uptown, the trail when completed will stretch from Westerville south for 16 miles to Three Creeks Metro Park. Additionally, the Ohio to Erie Trail is located a half mile away from State Street. This trail connects Cleveland with Cincinnati by way of Westerville. Already the City has taken measures to increase its role as a cyclist hub with the creation of the new Bike Depot at Hanby Park along the Ohio Erie Trail. By creating connections between these to trails through Uptown, the district can attract regional cyclists looking for food, drinks and respite in Uptown. This can help build its role as a destination location for cyclists passing through Central Ohio.

Open Space And Trails

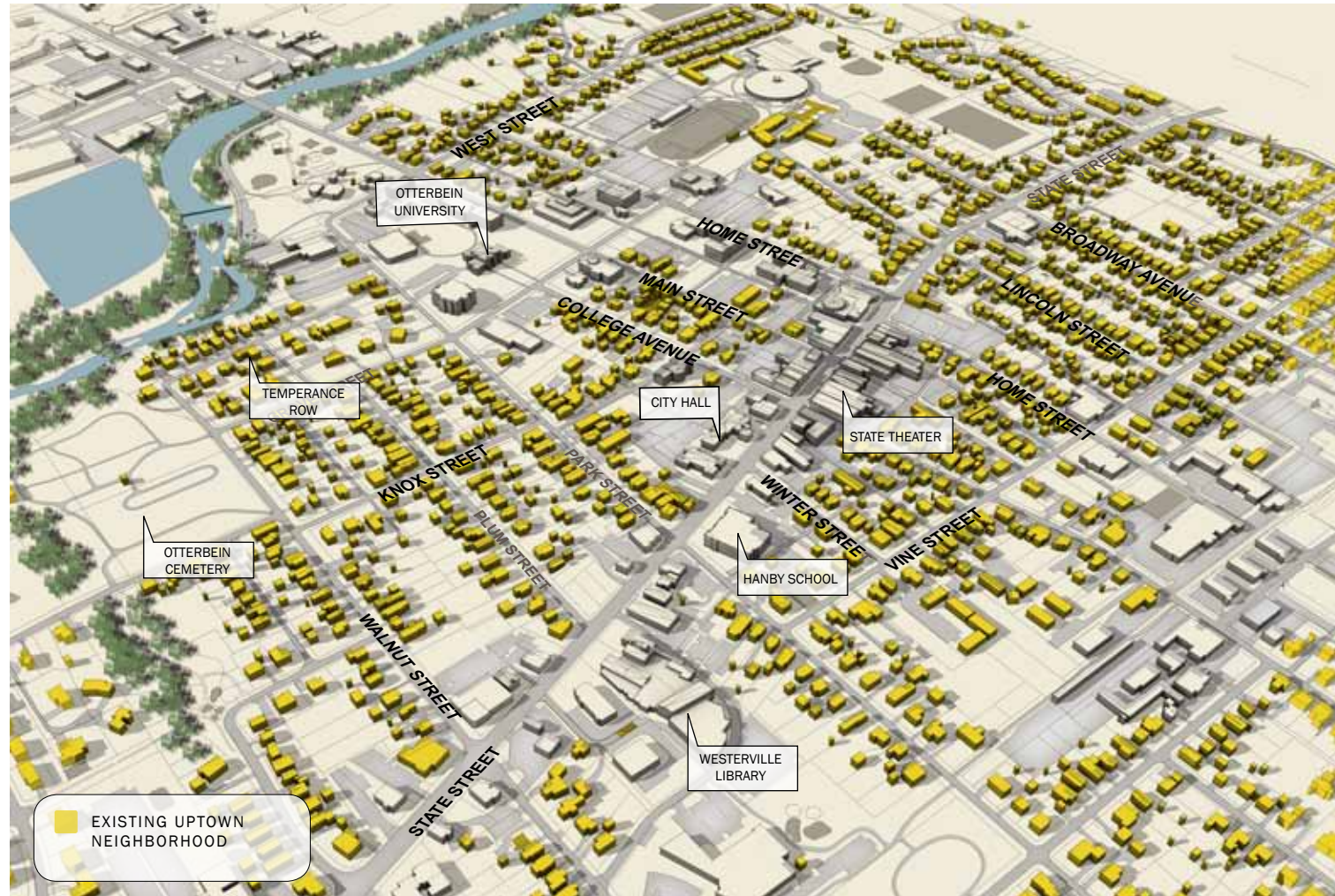


UPTOWN IS LOCATED BETWEEN TWO REGIONAL BICYCLE TRAILS, ENABLING POTENTIAL REGIONAL CONNECTIONS TO THE DISTRICT

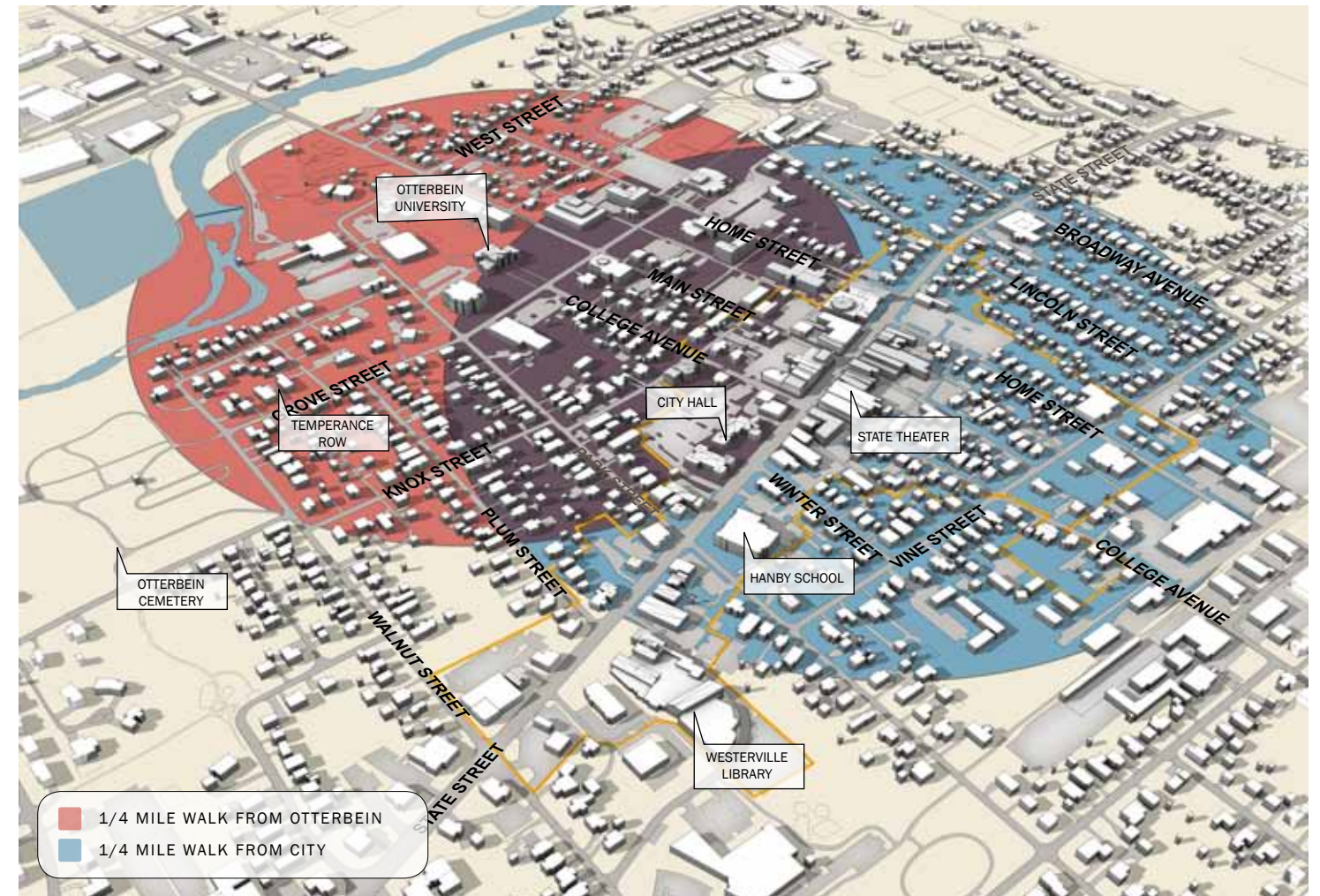


CREATING CONNECTIONS TO THE NEW BIKE DEPOT WILL HELP UPTOWN BECOME A REGIONAL BICYCLE HUB

Neighborhoods Surrounding Uptown



Uptown Relationship With Otterbein University



THE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS OF OLDE WESTERVILLE CONTRIBUTE TO THE POPULATION BASE NECESSARY TO SUPPORT UPTOWN SHOPS AND BUSINESSES.



ENHANCED CONNECTIONS TO UPTOWN WOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL, HELPING INCREASE THE APPEAL OF THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS.



OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY IS WITHIN A FIVE-MINUTE WALK OF UPTOWN, CONNECTING THE DISTRICT TO 3,100 STUDENTS AND THEIR FACULTY, SUPPORT STAFF, AND VISITORS.



UPTOWN COULD STRENGTHEN ITS TIES TO OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY THROUGH BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS THAT PROVIDE OFFERINGS TO STUDENTS, SUCH AS A COLLEGE BOOKSTORE.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Uptown Planning Efforts

The City of Westerville created the Uptown District boundaries in 1973 and established the Westerville Restoration and Review Board (later renamed the Uptown Review Board) to ensure that the historic character of Uptown was preserved and enhanced. The City followed this with the first, and only, comprehensive planning effort for the Uptown District in 1974. This original Uptown comprehensive plan is titled "Uptown Westerville... A Place for People" and was produced by Nitschke-Godwin-Bohm. This plan shows that some of the same issues facing Uptown in 1974 continue to be concerns today, such as parking, traffic circulation, a wider selection of products and services, and to a lesser extent, identity.

Since that time, the City has periodically studied Uptown with single-focus evaluations and plans. These include Judith Williams' Historic Building Survey & Evaluation, which took place in 1991. That effort included an evaluation of the architectural review district's boundaries and provided a written and photographic record of each building in the district including its level of significance. In 1995, the Uptown Review Board adopted the Uptown Westerville Design Guidelines to help guide appropriate building renovations and infill development in the Uptown District. In the same year, the City also established the Olde Westerville Special Overlay District Development Standards to provide flexibility in lot coverage and setback requirements for smaller, older lots while establishing criteria to limit demolitions in the area surrounding the Uptown District.

In the past ten years, the City has worked to create investment incentive programs for the Uptown area, as well as improve signage and wayfinding in Uptown. The incentive programs include the Uptown Westerville Façade Improvement Program and Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Tax Abatements. The Façade Improvement Program provides matching grants to property owners or tenants for comprehensive restoration or substantial improvement to their Uptown building façade. The Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Tax Abatements provide property tax abatements for constructed or improved commercial, office, industrial, or mixed-use buildings. The signage and wayfinding studies include the Uptown Westerville Signage/Identity/

Wayfinding Conceptual Design Development Plan by Degnen & Benjamin D. Rickey Co. in 2002 that established improved logos and wayfinding signage systems, and the Uptown Westerville Information Kiosk Program by Denzer Design Group in 2010 that further refined, designed, and located directory kiosks. These will be discussed further in the Catalytic Projects Section of this plan.

Most recently, the City commissioned Randall Gross/Development Economics to conduct a market study for Uptown as part of the first step of the renewed comprehensive planning efforts for the district. The Uptown Market Analysis & Business Development Strategy was completed in 2011 and found that the Uptown District can absorb an additional 113,000 square feet of commercial space comprising various use categories. It is discussed further on the following page. All of these efforts and materials clearly impart the importance of the Uptown area to the city and community of Westerville.

It is important to note that there are two other significant planning efforts occurring concurrently with this one. The first is a campus master plan for Otterbein University. The Campus Master Plan at Otterbein University is focused on transforming the University into a 21st century campus. The second effort is the Westerville Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Master Plan (also referred to as the WPROS Plan), which is an update to previous city park plans. This planning effort examines the future park and recreational needs of the City. It includes community surveys and ideas that link with those provided herein for Uptown. Coordinating future Uptown efforts and improvements with the recommendations of Otterbein University's campus master plan and the City's parks and recreation plan is an important implementation step.

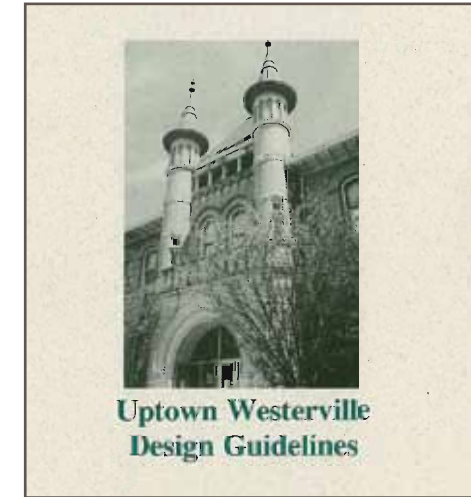
1991 & 1993

Historic Building Surveys & Evaluation



1995

Uptown Design Guidelines



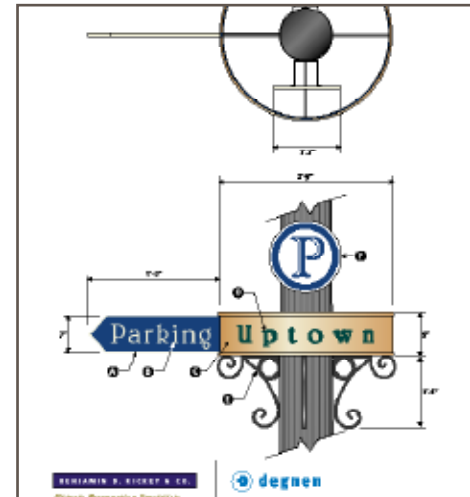
1996

Olde Westerville Development Standards



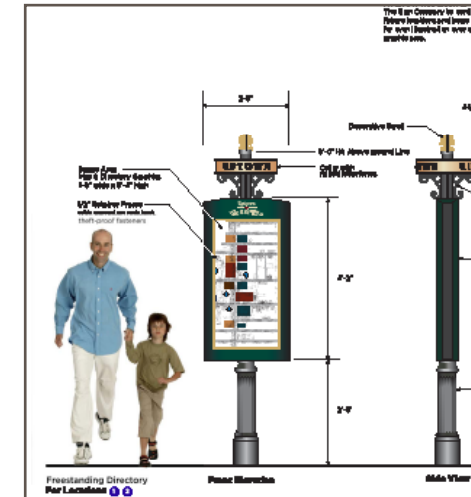
2002

Signage/Identity/Wayfinding Plan



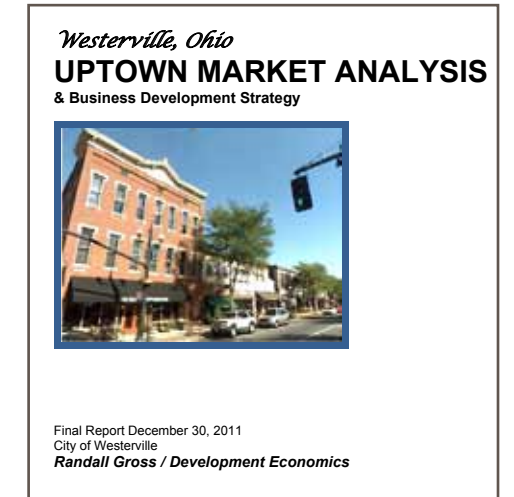
2010

Information Kiosk Program



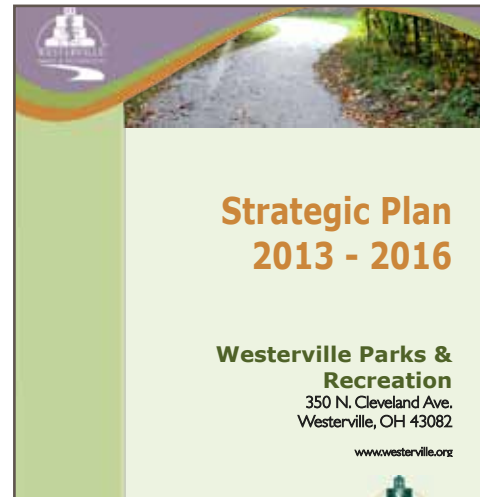
2011

Market Analysis & Business Development Strategy



2013

City Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Master Plan



2014

Otterbein University Campus Master Plan



Uptown Market Analysis

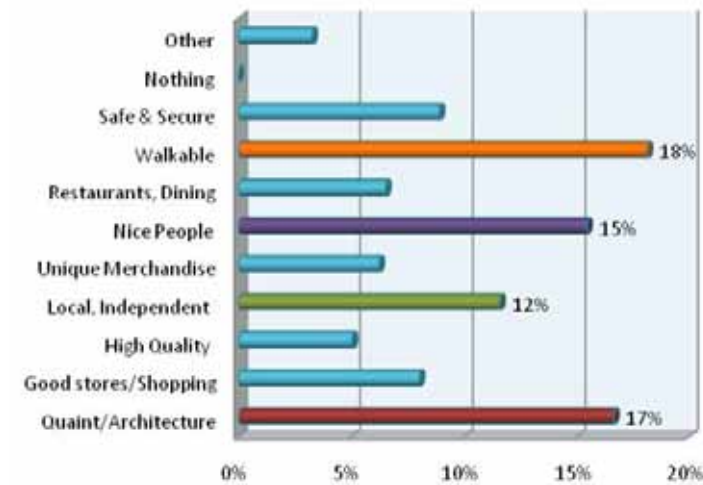
The 2011 Uptown Market Analysis by Randall Gross/Development Economics provided valuable surveys and public opinion information that helped to inform the Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan. The market analysis studied the existing market conditions within Uptown, evaluating what drew people to Uptown, what types of businesses currently exist, what types of businesses people would like to see in the district, and what types of businesses there was market for. Currently in Uptown, the majority of the existing businesses, 38%, are shopping goods. These include boutiques, antiques and clothing stores among others. Restaurants and food-oriented businesses are second with 27%. Additionally, what brings people to Uptown was mostly to eat out at restaurants, while the second most popular reason was for work. Only 11% of surveyed individuals said they came to Uptown to shop. These statistics reveal the need to increase Uptown's role as a shopping destination both locally and regionally.

In addition to gaining insight into the market conditions of Uptown, the Market Analysis provided information on the existing public perception of Uptown. When asked what the strengths of Uptown were, an Uptown Consumer Survey showed the walkability and quaint character and architecture of the district were its two greatest strengths. Uptown's greatest weakness at 32% was difficulty of parking.

These statistics and opinions helped the Planning Team understand the existing assets, opportunities, and challenges of Uptown. They provided background that helped show how important the historic charm and character of the area was to the community, how these characteristics should be used to encourage further economic investment in the area to strengthen the draw it has as a commercial district, and how parking will need to be addressed as the district grows. This information was further informed by public input throughout the planning process to help the Planning Team imagine catalytic ideas that would address Uptown's challenges and encourage new development that will allow the district to grow in a way that allows it to best serve the community.

Strengths of Uptown: Uptown Consumer Survey

Sources: Otterbein College and RGDE



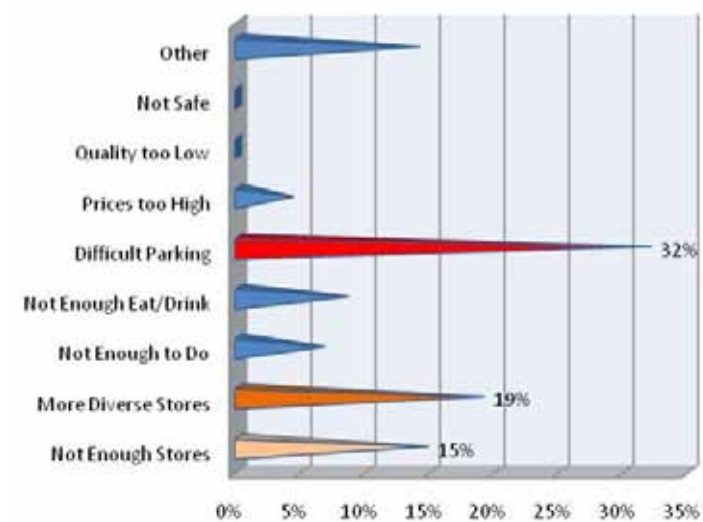
Uptown Westerville Retail Use by Type

Sources: Franklin County Auditor, Business Owners, and Randall Gross / Development Economics



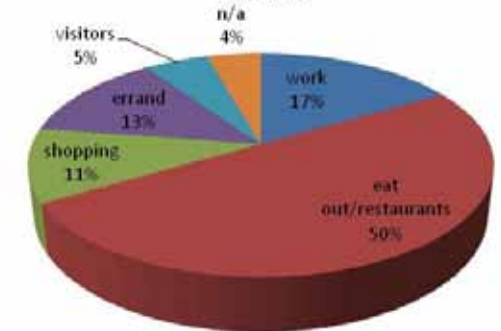
Weaknesses of Uptown: Uptown Consumer Survey

Sources: Otterbein College and RGDE



Reasons for Visiting Uptown: Uptown Online Survey

Source: RGDE



III. CATALYTIC PROJECTS



CATALYTIC PROJECTS

Introduction

A number of issues, challenges, and opportunities were identified by the community as part of the initial Project Understanding phase of the project. Most of the issues and opportunities raised through the stakeholder interviews, the steering committee meetings, the public meetings, and PlanUptown.com website can be divided into two categories: 1) Needed and desired physical improvements within the Uptown environment; and 2) Potential policy changes and opportunities in terms of regulations, organizations, partnerships, operations, etc. As a result this plan is divided into a section on “Catalytic Projects” which examines the potential physical improvements in Uptown, and “Planning and Policy Tools” which explores the regulatory and policy opportunities. This section reviews the Catalytic Projects and Ideas.

The City and community recognize that Uptown has a very strong foundation for planning efforts to build upon. The areas identified by the Westerville stakeholders and residents as priorities moving forward are the following:

- Build upon the existing streetscape of Uptown to enhance the district for pedestrians and continue to build Uptown’s identity.
- Address parking issues in Uptown to facilitate the ease of patronizing/visiting the district, but without negatively affecting its character.
- Continue to improve wayfinding to and within the district.
- Advance Uptown’s role as the heart of the Westerville community by providing a space for daily gathering and special community events.
- Save and re-purpose the State Theater in a way that allows it to better serve the Westerville community and act as an attraction for Uptown.
- Encourage further growth and development within Uptown, including appropriate infill development, renovation, and use of upper floors.
- Improve the connectivity and linkages between Uptown and the surrounding neighborhoods and Otterbein University.
- Enhance bicycle connections to Uptown locally within Westerville, and regionally to the larger trail network.

Catalytic Projects

In order to address these community priorities, nine catalytic ideas are proposed for the Uptown Westerville Comprehensive Plan. These ideas were developed into potential projects in the following pages to directly respond to public input voiced throughout the planning process. These projects are designed to act as catalysts for Uptown: to attract and increase visitors, business, vitality, and community pride. The nine catalytic ideas are:

1. Implement streetscape improvements along major Uptown corridors.
2. Create a system of new public alleys parallel to State Street behind the commercial businesses.
3. Enhance the existing mid-block pedestrian alleys to draw people from the parking areas to State Street.
4. Add bicycle connections and amenities that make Uptown a hub in the regional bike system.
5. Create a civic space in the core of Uptown to provide a community gathering place and amenity that draws people to Uptown.
6. Pursue preservation of the State Theater as a community asset.
7. Consider infill opportunities along State Street and major crossing streets to allow for the continued growth and development of Uptown.
8. Investigate the potential of building a parking deck in Uptown.
9. Continue to advance and implement a gateway and wayfinding system.

These catalytic ideas have been presented to the community through public meetings and via PlanUptown.com, and they have been revised and adjusted based upon the input received. While each idea individually has numerous benefits for Uptown, when implemented together they will create a synergy that will make Uptown a more successful and dynamic historic heart of Westerville and the region moving forward.



Streetscape Improvements



New Uptown Alleys



Pedestrian Walks/Vias



Bike Connections



New Civic Space



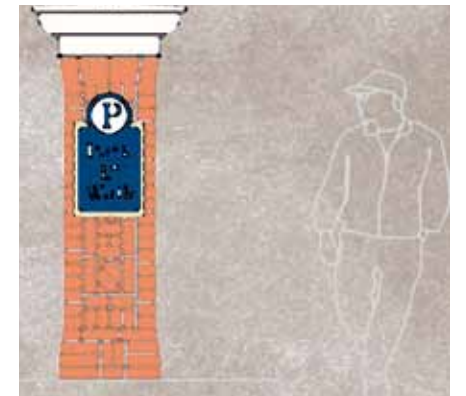
Active State Theater



Infill Opportunities



Parking Deck



Gateways and Wayfinding

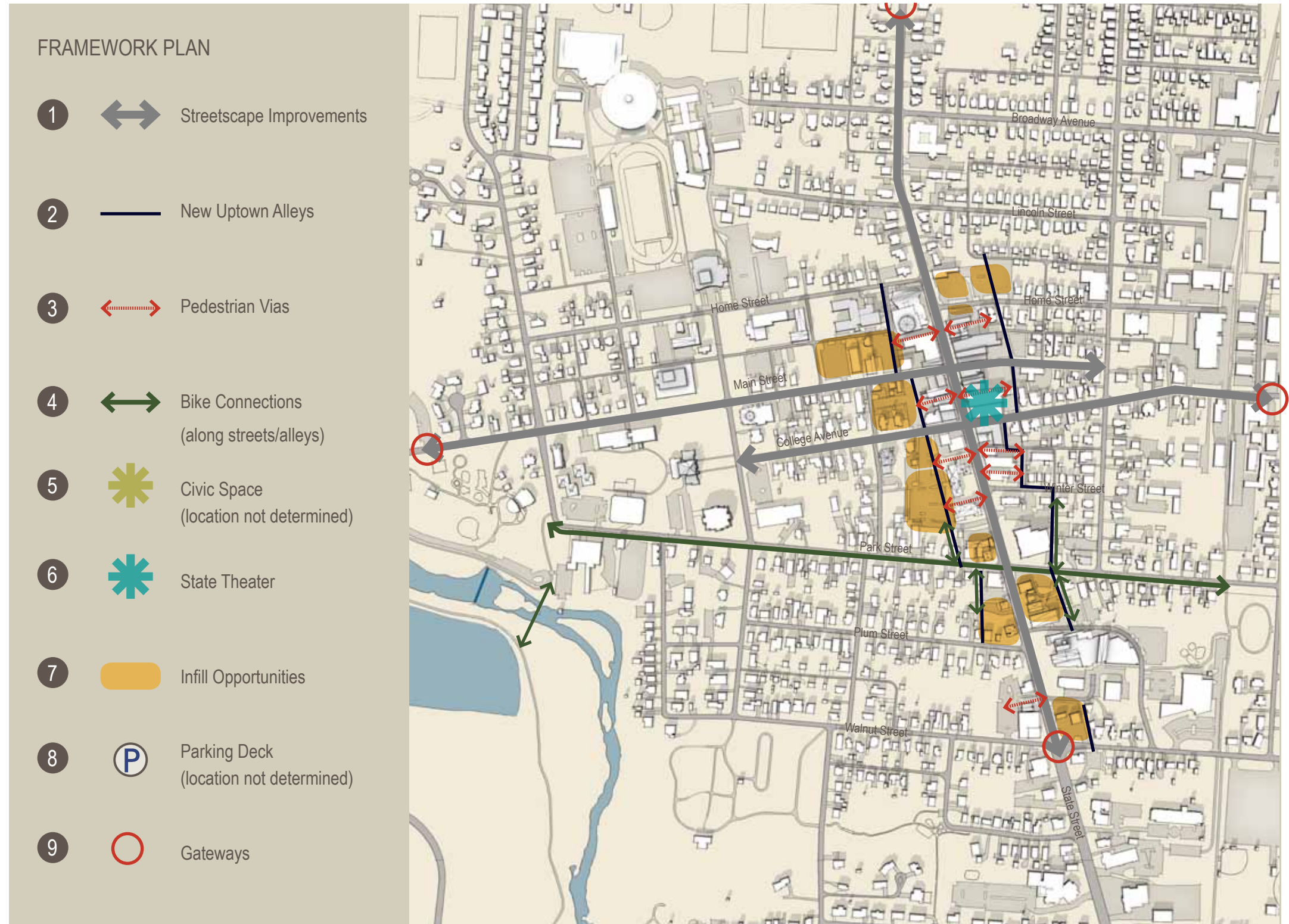
Framework Plan

The Framework Plan to the right illustrates how all of the nine catalytic ideas could work together to transform Uptown. While many of the nine catalytic ideas have a set physical location for implementation, two do not (the Civic Space and the Parking Deck) and three are shown in generally preferred locations (the New Uptown Alleys, the Bike Connections, and the Infill Opportunities). It is also worth noting that several of these, such as the Infill Opportunities and the State Theater, require the property owner to initiate, and others require participation of the property owner, such as the Pedestrian Walkways/Vias.

In this Framework Plan, streetscape improvements are planned for State Street, Main Street, and College Avenue. Both Main Street and College Avenue are important corridors because they draw people into Uptown. These streets should be enhanced to continue the aesthetic charm of Uptown and act as gateways to Olde Westerville. The streetscape improvements to State Street are planned to enhance pedestrian enjoyment and safety along this vehicle-heavy corridor. Additional streetscape improvements are recommended for Park Street to allow it to act as a bike connector to Uptown.

Creating a public alley system that runs parallel to State Street allows cyclists to exit Park Street and easily access Uptown. These Uptown Alleys also help to re-organize parking and access, making it more intuitive, efficient, and attractive. The Framework Plan shows how these alleys approximately follow the drives that exist behind the State Street buildings today. Implementing this idea coupled with the embellishment of the current mid-block pedestrian walks will create an inviting and memorable way-finding system from the parking areas to the activity on State Street.

Other catalytic ideas include the creation of a civic space along State Street for community gathering and events, the renovation of the State Theater, and the development of potential infill sites -- for mixed-use buildings along State Street and residential infill along the cross streets -- to help strengthen the fabric and vitality of Uptown. Such projects could be serviced by a public parking deck located in close proximity to State Street, which could help address the existing parking challenges and encourage further redevelopment. While the location of certain catalytic ideas, such as the civic space and parking deck, would need to be determined with further study, all nine ideas work together to build upon Uptown's strengths and enhance its ability to attract visitors, businesses, and residents.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

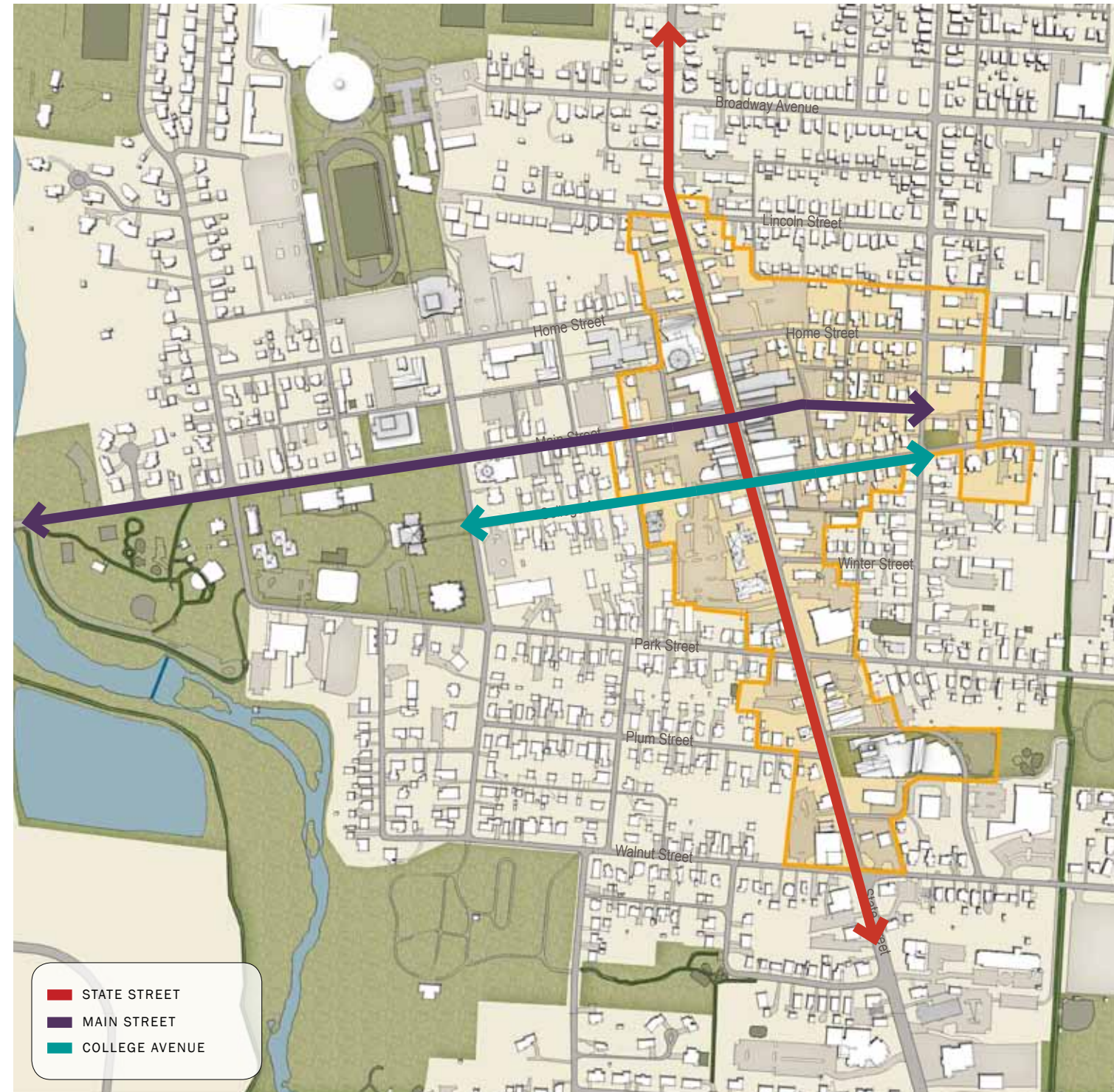
Idea

Generally, the streets within and connecting to Uptown are attractive. Hanging baskets, potted plants, and Uptown banners line the sidewalks along State Street, while tree-lined residential cross streets enable connections to nearby Otterbein University. Despite these strong features, there are still streetscape improvements which are necessary to make Uptown safer for pedestrians and better connected to surrounding neighborhoods.

Because State Street is such a heavily traversed vehicular route, traffic calming measures should be introduced to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort along this main corridor. Curb extensions (see State Street Concept on following page) at intersections will help to protect on-street parked cars, decrease the distance pedestrians have to cross the street, and enhance their visibility when crossing, forcing drivers to slow down. Additional amenities such as street trees, lush landscaping, and outdoor dining will also help promote the perception of Uptown as a predominantly pedestrian area. Addressing the varied sidewalk widths along State Street is also a necessity. Creating a sidewalk with adequate width will allow for amenities while still comfortably accommodating pedestrians. It will also help give a uniformed appearance to Uptown, allowing visitors to know when they have entered the district.

Street improvement considerations should also be given to Main Street and College Avenue. These two residential streets are important because of their ability to connect Uptown with Otterbein University. Main Street acts as a strong vehicular gateway to the university. In order to enhance this corridor, utility lines should be buried, surface parking lots should be screened, and academic and residential infill should be pursued to enhance the town and gown relation. Additionally, the opportunity exists to emphasize the role of College Avenue as a ceremonial gateway to Otterbein University. The existing brick paving distinguishes this corridor from others. This coupled, with a potential gateway element, could help to strengthen the connection to the university.

Potential Locations



FOCUS STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS TO UPTOWNS THREE SIGNATURE STREETS STATE STREET, MAIN STREET, AND COLLEGE AVENUE.

Concept Summary

Concerns:

- State Street Traffic Volumes
- North-South Road System

What We Heard:

- How to reduce traffic impact on strolling and storefront retail experiences like outdoor dining?
- State Street's streetscape has many strong features already including hanging baskets and banners.
- The varied sidewalk widths should be addressed.
- There is some concern about pedestrian safety when crossing State Street.
- Additional outdoor dining is desired.

Recommendations

- Add bump-outs intersections to improve pedestrian crossing safety by:
 - Slowing traffic
 - Providing additional amenity zones (for landscape, seating, etc.)
 - Adding curb extensions at pinch points (ex. Old Post Office, State Street Theater)
 - Shortening pedestrian crossings at intersections, making more pedestrian friendly
- Implement unique crosswalk pattern using paint or brick materials
- Create more consistent sidewalk widths for pedestrians within Uptown, widening sidewalk where it currently narrows
- Use Uptown streetscape at CVS sidewalk as standard for detail:
 - Wide concrete sidewalk
 - Widen sidewalk at narrow points; add street trees
 - Widen and add brick curb walk where missing; add street trees
- Add median for mid-block crossing at City Hall
- Emphasize on-street parking differentiation
- Continue to improve the pedestrian experience
- Emphasize lush landscaping
- Create opportunities for outdoor seating & dining
- Extend streetscape (streetlights, hanging baskets, mast arms, etc.) north to make Old County Line the physically identifiable northern boundary of Uptown

Concept - State Street

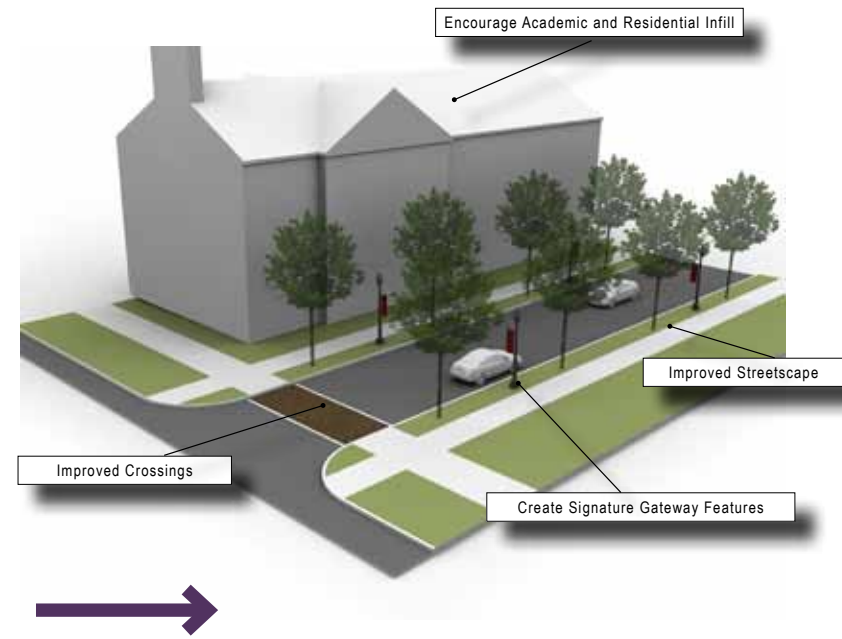


State Street Streetscape Improvement Strategies

- Add bumpouts at intersections
- Curb extensions for pinch points (ex. Old Post Office, State Theater)
- On-street parking differentiation
- Unique crosswalk pattern
- Consistent sidewalk width
- Landscape for buffering



Concept - Main Street

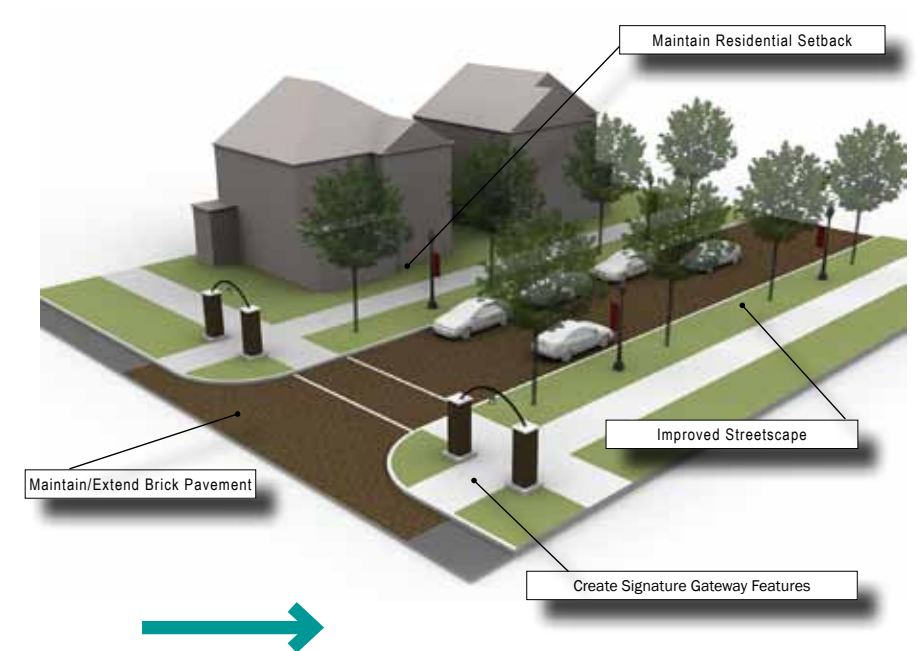


Main Street Streetscape Improvement Strategies

- Bury overhead utilities
- Improve streetscape
- Screen surface parking lots
- Create signature gateway elements
- Academic residential infill



Concept - College Avenue



College Avenue Streetscape Improvement Strategies

- Enhance College Avenue as ceremonial gateway to Otterbein University
- Maintain and extend brick street
- Bury overhead utilities
- Encourage residential and academic infill
- Maintain existing residential setback
- Create signature gateway elements
- Screen surface parking lots



UPTOWN ALLEYS

Idea

The Uptown Alleys proposed by the Uptown Plan are designed to achieve multiple positive benefits for Uptown and the commercial district. These include:

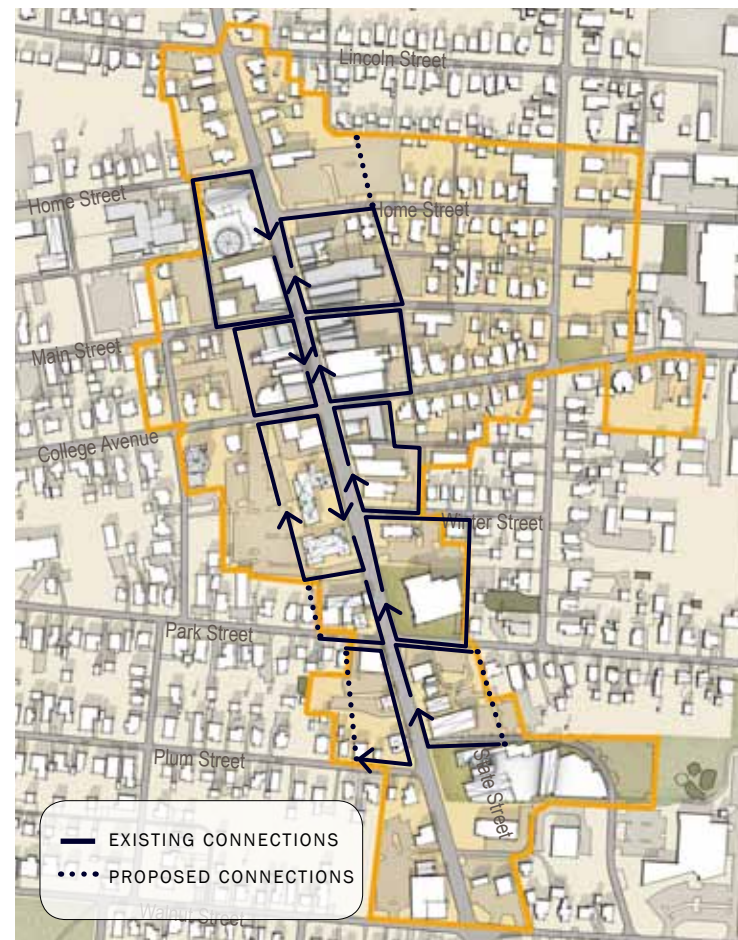
- Improving wayfinding, to attract more visitors and shoppers by providing an attractive and intuitive linkage that closely parallels State Street;
- Providing multi-modal circulation, creating a welcoming passageway for bike and pedestrian circulation;
- Connecting the parking nodes to the pedestrian vias & State Street buildings;
- Enhancing the character of the areas behind the buildings;
- Creating dynamic space for outdoor dining and gathering that doesn't have to compete with State Street traffic; and
- Responding to the urban environment of historic Uptown.

One of the most important functions of these alleys is their ability to improve wayfinding in Uptown. Locating the alleys close to the rear of the State Street buildings makes them to feel like a part of the State Street circulation system and environment, and enable people to encounter them immediately after turning off State Street. This creates an intuitive around-the-block circulation system that allows visitors to easily access Uptown parking. The alleys need to have rectilinear geometry. This allows them to respond to the historic urban context of Uptown, as well as to create a connected system that spans the blocks along State Street.

The Uptown Alleys provide an opportunity to improve the quality of the areas behind the State Street buildings, creating spaces that will become unique and identifiable to Uptown. While these alleys provide access to the surface parking lots behind State Street, they are not parking lot drive aisles. The alleys need to be located between the parking lots and the buildings as this creates an edge that separates the active, people-oriented space around the buildings and pedestrian vias from the automobile-oriented parking lots. These parking lots should be located behind the alleys and accessed from drive aisles off of the alley. Where there is room, it is appropriate for parallel or head-in spaces to be placed along the alley to provide quick stop and drop-off/pick-up for customers, but nothing more.

The alleys should be designed for both vehicles and bicyclists. The City and Uptown merchants want to encourage the growing bicycle traffic to visit Uptown. However bike traffic is not appropriate or safe on busy State Street or on the pedestrian-oriented State Street sidewalks. The proposed Uptown Alleys create a great opportunity to provide an alternate route to connect Uptown for bicyclists of all ages. Thus they should be designed to accommodate bicycle use as well as the slow moving traffic.

The proposed Uptown Alleys must have a specific aesthetic that appeals to a human scale and psychology. Because of the desired purposes of the alleys, they should be designed with a rich use of materials, an attention to detail, and amenities to be enjoyed by the pedestrian, bicyclist, and visitor. Incorporating these will make the alleys an identifying feature of Uptown.



POTENTIAL LOCATIONS OF THE NEW PUBLIC ALLEYS SYSTEM

Concept



NEW PUBLIC ALLEY CONCEPT - TYPICAL SECTION



AREAS BETWEEN THE BACKS OF BUILDINGS AND THE ALLEYS COULD PROVIDE A MUCH NEEDED LOCATION FOR OUTDOOR SEATING



THE NEW ALLEYS COULD PROVIDE ACCESS TO UPTOWN FOR CYCLISTS

Concept Summary

What We Heard:

- Help lighten State Street congestion with circular traffic movement.
- Create better connection between parking areas and State Street.
- Opportunity for bicycle amenities and connections through Uptown.
- Pedestrian-dominant area.
- Opportunities for sustainable practices.

Recommendation:

- Create system of new public alleys parallel to State Street behind the commercial businesses.

Benefits:

- Creates intuitive circulation system for vehicles looking to park.
- Rear Alley system shortens search loop.
- Keeps parking traffic from drifting into neighborhoods.
- Provides:
 - Access to parking areas & service
 - Materials & design that invites the public
 - Close proximity to rear of buildings
 - Bike routing & accommodations
 - Pedestrian connections
 - Pervious pavers & bioswales

NOTE: Could be one-way, but two-way desired.

Strategies:

- Connect the parking fields with rear access alleys
- Run length of Uptown
- Achieve linear flow between blocks
- Create access loops
- Consolidate curb cuts on cross streets
- This simplifies the layout and makes wayfinding more intuitive



EXISTING CONDITION



POTENTIAL VIEW OF THE NEW PUBLIC ALLEYS SYSTEM

Note: This graphic is for illustrative purposes only. It shows improvements on both public and private property. Any improvements on private property would be up to the land owner.

UPTOWN ALLEYS

Concepts

To accomplish all of the desired objectives of the Uptown Alleys, the design of the alleys is critical. Specific design considerations include alignment, width, location relative to the buildings, connectivity to the parking lots, short term parking and service needs, pedestrian and bike accommodations, and materials. The design must respond to the historic urban character of Uptown, while creating an intuitive wayfinding environment, effective service and access to Uptown businesses, and creating dynamic public spaces. The following exercise explores important design considerations, and how they could apply to the Uptown Alleys. It is likely that several of these forms will be needed to fit the alleys within the existing blocks and built environment of Uptown. The adjacent illustrations show three different forms that were explored for the design of the Uptown Alleys, with the major difference being whether the alley is curbed or flush and how parking is accommodated.

The recommended concept is shown larger at the top right. This shows a twenty-foot wide alley that provides two-way traffic, with head-in parking on the State Street building side and an eight-foot wide multi use way for bicyclists and pedestrians on the public parking lot side. It uses a dark grey brick paver material to provide contrast with the many red brick buildings in Uptown, as well as reflect the practical realities that the alleys will get dirty. The head-in parking adjacent to the rear of the Uptown buildings provides a place for short term and ADA-accessible parking. Adjacent to this parking is a curb and sidewalk to convey people to the business' rear storefronts and the pedestrian vias. The multi use bicycle and pedestrian lane is at grade with the alley and has lighter pavers for its own identity. It is also physically separated and protected by decorative bollards that could be temporarily removed for special events. Drainage from this area and the alley could go to a center drain system and/or into stormwater landscape areas between it and the parking lot pods. The alley design provides opportunities for decorative lighting and landscaping. The parking lots will have access points from the alley. The result is a cross section that serves many desirable functions while creating a strong character-providing amenity for Uptown.



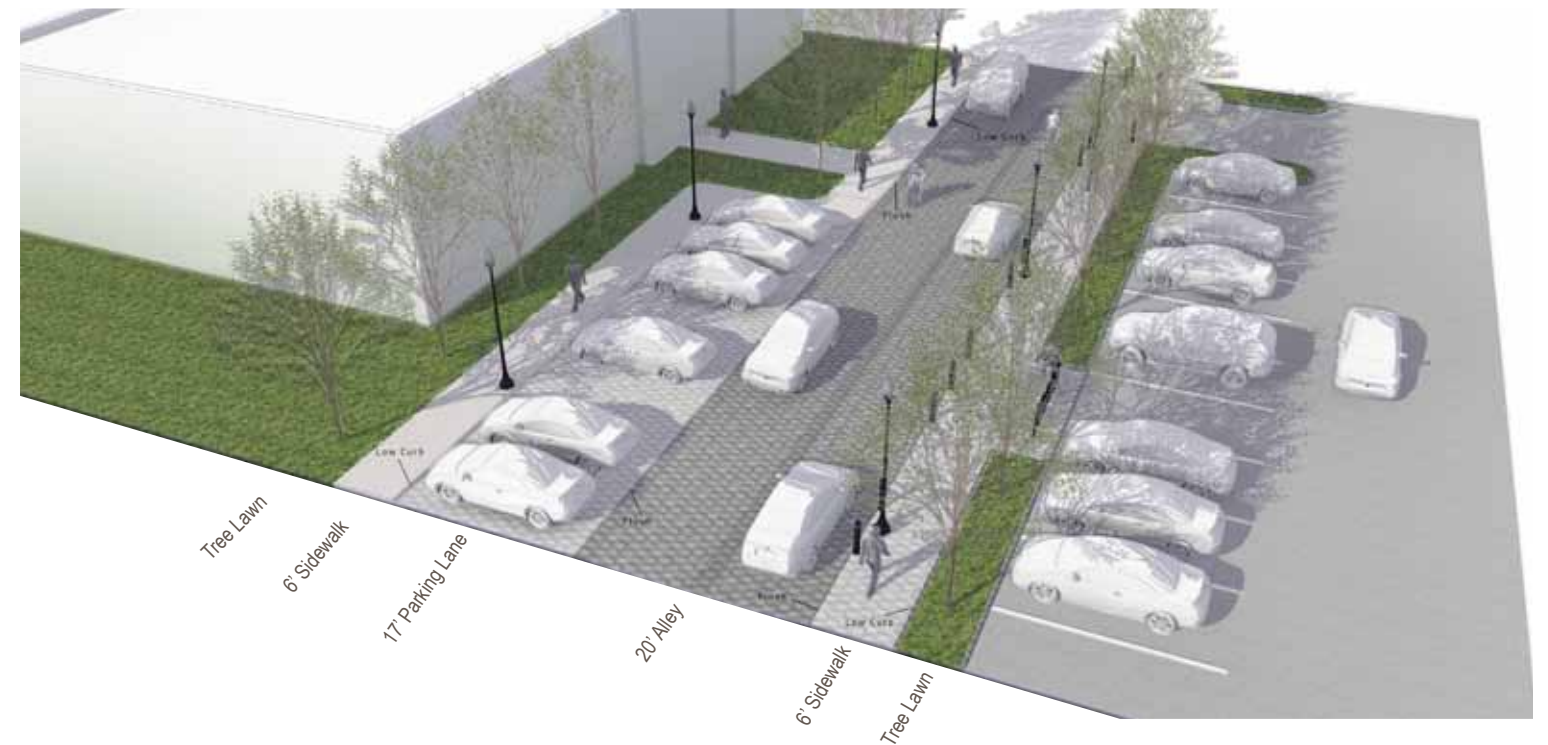
ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT DETAIL 1 - RAISED SIDEWALK ON PARKING AND BUILDINGS SIDES OF ALLEY



ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT DETAIL 2 - PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS FLUSH WITH ALLEY, SEPARATED BY DECORATIVE BOLLARDS



ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT DETAIL 3 - PARALLEL PARKING WITH RAISED SIDEWALKS ON BUILDING AND PARKING SIDES OF ALLEY



NEW PUBLIC ALLEY CONCEPT - RECOMMENDED SECTION
DARKER BRICK TO ACCENT THE RED BRICK COMMONLY USED FOR BUILDING FACES. RAISED SIDEWALK ALONG BUILDING SIDE, COHESIVE WITH EXISTING BUILDING ENTRY POINTS. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY ON PARKING SIDE FLUSH WITH ALLEY - DECORATIVE BOLLARDS ALONG WALKWAY



NEW ALLEYS COULD PROVIDE EASY ACCESS TO PUBLIC PARKING LOCATIONS



PERVIOUS PAVERS COULD BE USED IN THE NEW ALLEYS TO MANAGE STORMWATER

PARKING LOT CHARACTER ELEMENTS

Landscaping & Screening

The unique and charming character of Uptown's streetscape is an important identifying feature for the district. As such, it is important that any new additions to the district further enhance its appearance rather than detract from it.

The improvements proposed through this Uptown Plan, such as the pedestrian vias and Uptown Alleys, suggest engaging the parking lots behind State Street buildings to become a more active part of Uptown. Doing so, however, will require that the parking areas are improved to represent the Uptown streetscape character so apparent along its main corridors. In order to accomplish this, careful consideration needs to be given to the landscaping and screening of these areas.

Parking in Uptown has been an important consideration of this plan. The proposed solutions have helped reorganize existing parking to make it more efficient. While the layout of the parking areas is important, so also is the design of landscaping and screening to these areas. Parking located in the Uptown district should include lush landscaping within parking lot islands. The landscaped islands are important to the parking lot design. They prevent the parking lots from appearing barren and unattractive. Instead it will help them blend in better to the surrounding Uptown landscape.

Additionally, carefully planned parking lot screening will help these areas blend seamlessly with the surrounding streetscapes and buildings. When parking is located along a street, high-quality fence options, such as bushes, brick walls, or wrought iron fence, should be used to separate the parking area from the sidewalk and streetscape. These options will help to camouflage the parking areas within the streetscape, while preventing any holes from being created along the street.

When parking areas are located adjacent to residential and commercial buildings, screening becomes very important. Proper use of the fencing and hedging material will soften the noise, lighting, and appearance of these areas. This will help to alleviate their impact, allowing them to blend.

Finally, consideration should be given to screening utility elements that may detract from the character of Uptown. Examples of these may include dumpsters, generators, etc. Enclosing these features with fencing options that coincide with the existing architecture and style of Uptown will create an attractive alternative to allowing these to be viewed by Uptown patrons. When screening dumpsters and such, brick and other materials already found in Uptown should be used.

Dumpster Enclosures



DUMPSTER SHOULD BE ENCLOSED BY ARCHITECTURAL MATERIALS



DUMPSTER ENCLOSURES DESIGN COULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE BUILDING

Parking Lot Screening



PARKING LOTS SHOULD BE SCREENED WITH A COMBINATION OF LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURAL SCREENING



PARKING LOTS SHOULD BE SCREENED WITH A COMBINATION OF LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURAL SCREENING

Trees in Parking Lots



TREES AND LANDSCAPE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED IN PARKING LOTS



TREES AND LANDSCAPE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED IN PARKING LOTS

PEDESTRIAN VIAS

Idea

One of the unique features of Uptown is the collection of existing walks located in State Street's mid-blocks between the buildings. These walks connect the front of State Street to the parking and behind-the-building area of Uptown shops. They provide easy connectivity from the parking to State Street retail and restaurants. Emphasizing the unique character of these walks can transform them into pedestrian vias, making them part of the Uptown experience.

Several of the existing mid-block walks have strong existing character that adds to the charm of the district. For example, the Via that runs along the side of the U.S. Post Office and Java Central is a well used space, with people working and studying at the tables located along a winding brick path, while music plays overhead. This creates a space in which patrons want to stay and linger. This should be replicated with the other pedestrian vias in Uptown to create unique spaces that portray the character of Uptown.

Each Via should have its own identity. Different amenities such as tivolli lighting, outdoor seating and dining that spills over from an existing restaurant, public art and murals unique to Westerville, specialty pavers, and landscaping can all be incorporated into the space. These vias also create the opportunity for green infrastructure with the use of permeable pavers. By introducing these features, the existing mid-block walks can become pedestrian vias, a unique feature for Uptown.

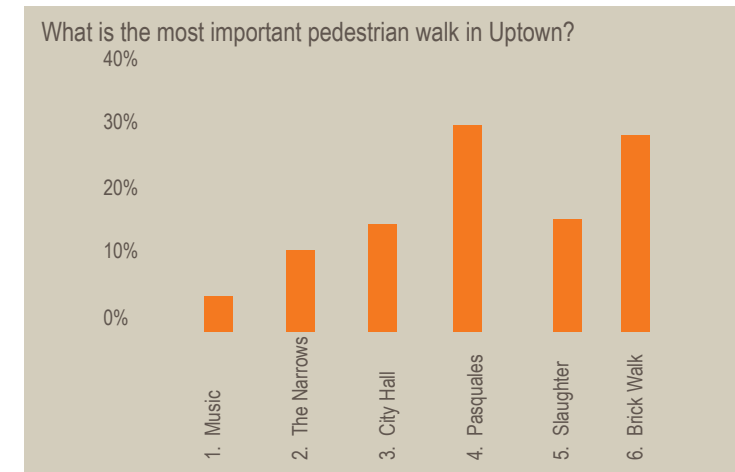
As part of the public participation, www.PlanUptown.com users were asked which existing pedestrian walks were most important to Uptown. The walks next to Pasquales and the brick walk next to Java Central were voted the two most important. The potential concepts on the opposite page illustrate what these vias could become. These are conceptual diagrams created for inspirational purposes only.

Potential Locations



MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN VIA LOCATIONS

Concept Priority



Concept Summary

Concerns:

- Once parked, how do we draw/invite people to the State Street storefronts?

What We Heard:

- Existing walkways a unique character of Uptown
- Desire for additional tables and outside dining opportunities in mid-block walkways
- Opportunity to help create a more intuitive connection with parking
- Introduce unique features such as lighting, public art, and murals
- Build upon example of walk along Java Central

Recommendations:

- Enhance the existing mid-block walks, making them pedestrian vias that draw people from the parking nodes to State Street.

Benefits:

- Become wonderful areas to discover and use.
- Create enjoyable connections between rear parking lots and State Street storefronts.
- Aids with way-finding.
- Creates opportunities for retail frontage and use.
- Opportunity to enhance unique Uptown & Westerville Brand/Identity
- Conveys people to State Street storefronts and activity from rear parking nodes
- Each can have unique name, identity, and character. Example "Pasquale's", "the Narrows", etc.

Features might include:

- Tivoli lighting
- Seating
- Public art & murals
- Landscape
- Specialty pavers
- Fine materials & details for pedestrians
- Opportunity to address drainage, maybe even permeable pavers.
- Potential for special sign/light/marker at each that makes them identifiable along State Street and rear alleys.

Mid-Block Pedestrian Via Concepts



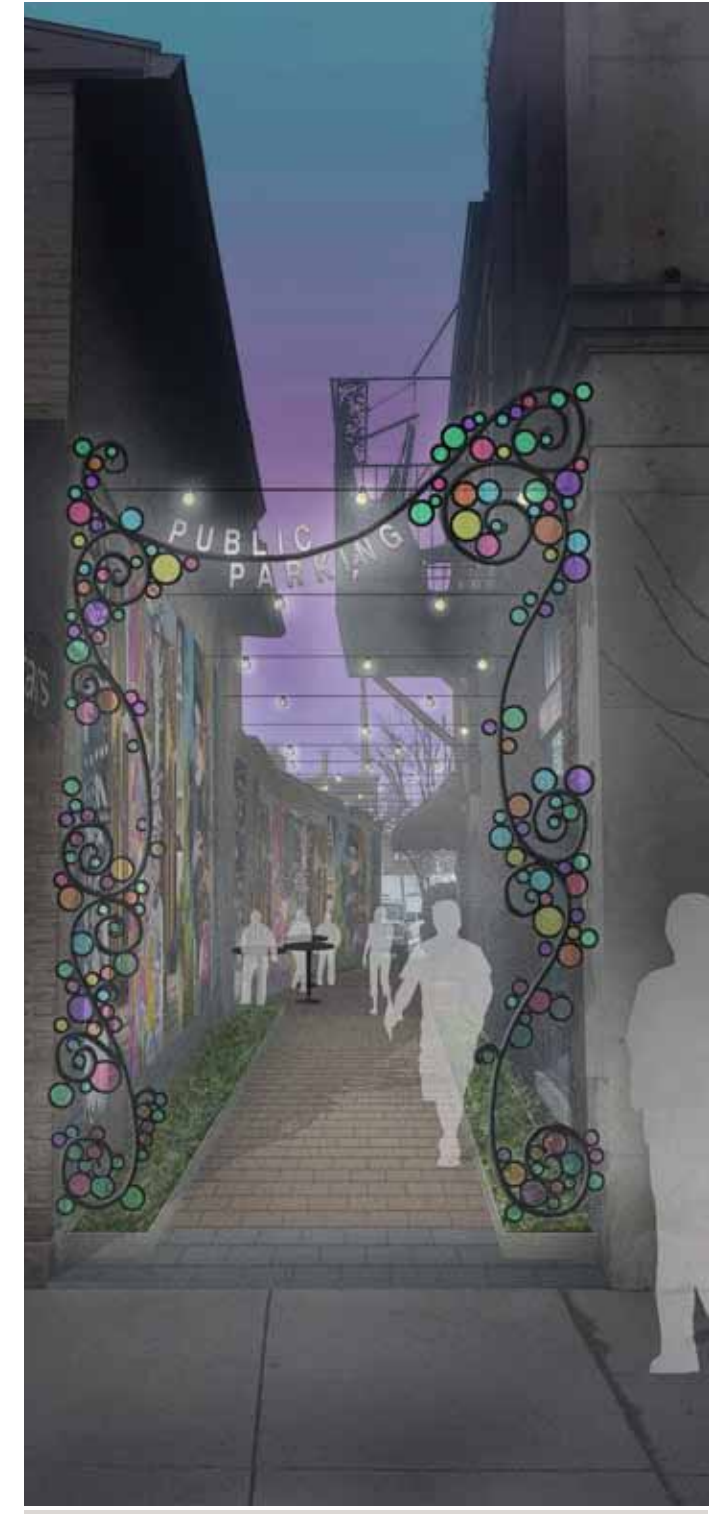
"THE NARROWS" - EXISTING



"THE NARROWS" - CONCEPT *



"PASQUALE'S" - EXISTING



"PASQUALE'S" - CONCEPT *

* Note: These graphics are for illustrative purposes only. They show improvements on private property. Any improvements on private property would be up to the land owner.

BIKE CONNECTIONS IDEA

Uptown and Regional Connections

One of the advantages of Uptown is its centralized location between several different recreational bike trails. Both the Ohio to Erie Trail and the Alum Creek Trail run through the city and are in close proximity to the historic core. This creates an opportunity for Uptown to attract trail users as a potential new market, allowing it to act as a hub connection for the Ohio to Erie and Alum Creek trails. In order to accomplish this however, bicycle connections within Uptown need to be enhanced and bicycle amenities should be introduced.

Uptown bike connections can be easily accomplished through the use of the Uptown Alleys and by introducing bicycle accommodations along Park Street. Park Street is an important cycling connection because of its direct, linear path from the existing Westerville Bike Hub through Uptown towards the Alum Creek Trail. While the addition of a bridge would be needed to connect riders from the trail to the east side of Alum Creek, once done, Uptown could become a hub for those using the trail. Connecting the Uptown Alleys along State Street to Park Street would create the final link to connecting to the Alum Creek Trail.

In addition to these local trails, Uptown has the potential to connect to other recreational trails and facilities in the area. Through newly proposed local bicycle routes, the district could become part of a larger Westerville trail network connecting Uptown with Sharon Woods Metro Park and the Westerville Community Center. At a larger scale, Westerville is also poised to become part of the new Route 50, a national trail that will connect Washington D.C. to San Francisco, California. Creating connections from these trail networks to Uptown would help establish the district as a bicycling hub.

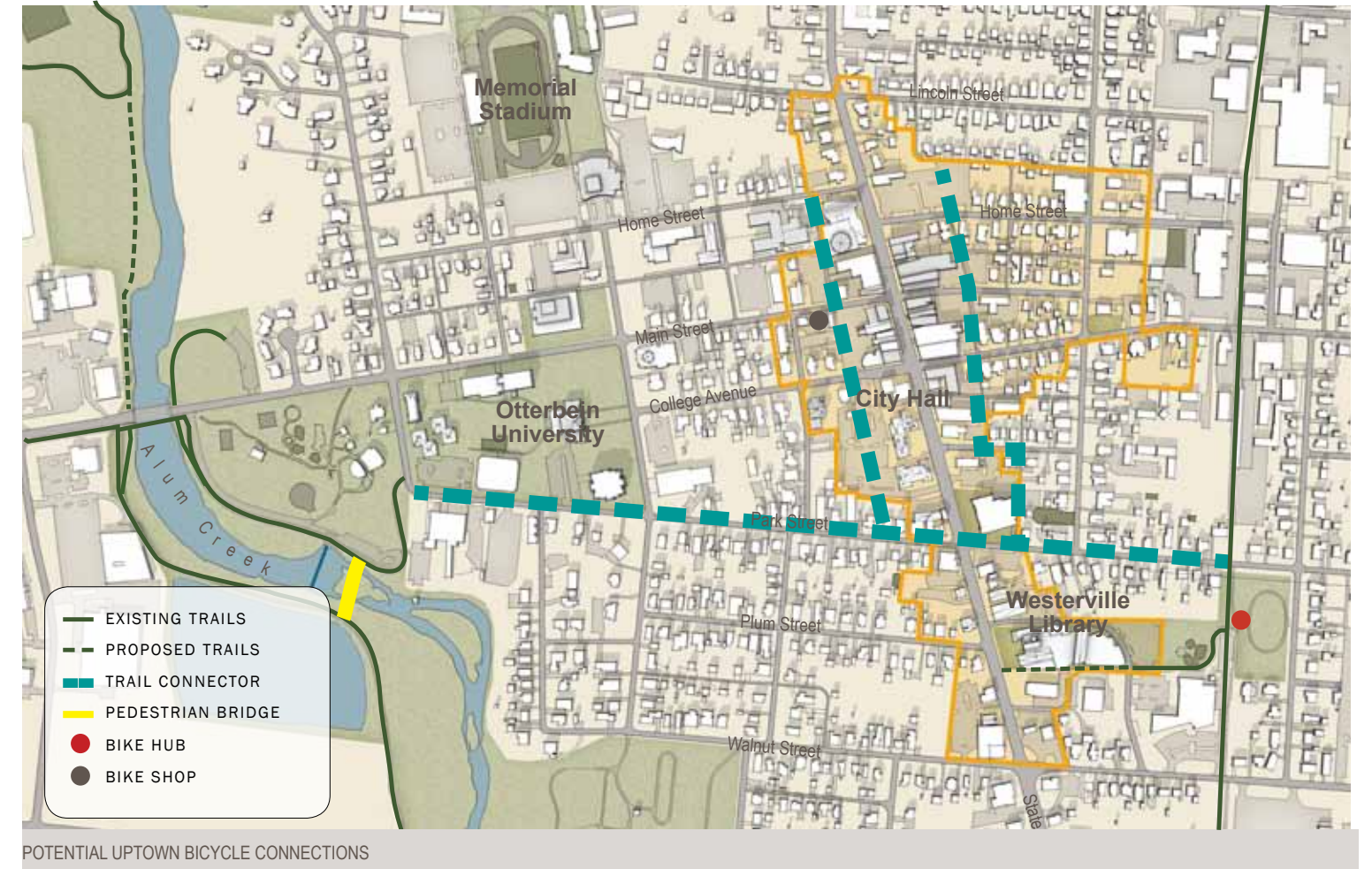
Concept - Park Street



Park Street Connector Strategies

- Connect the Ohio Erie Trail to Uptown
- Connect the Alum Creek Trail to Uptown
- Create a connector between the Ohio Erie Trail and the Alum Creek Trail

Uptown Connections



CONNECTING SHARON WOODS METRO PARK, THE WESTERVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER AND UPTOWN COULD CREATE A WESTERVILLE TRAIL NETWORK.

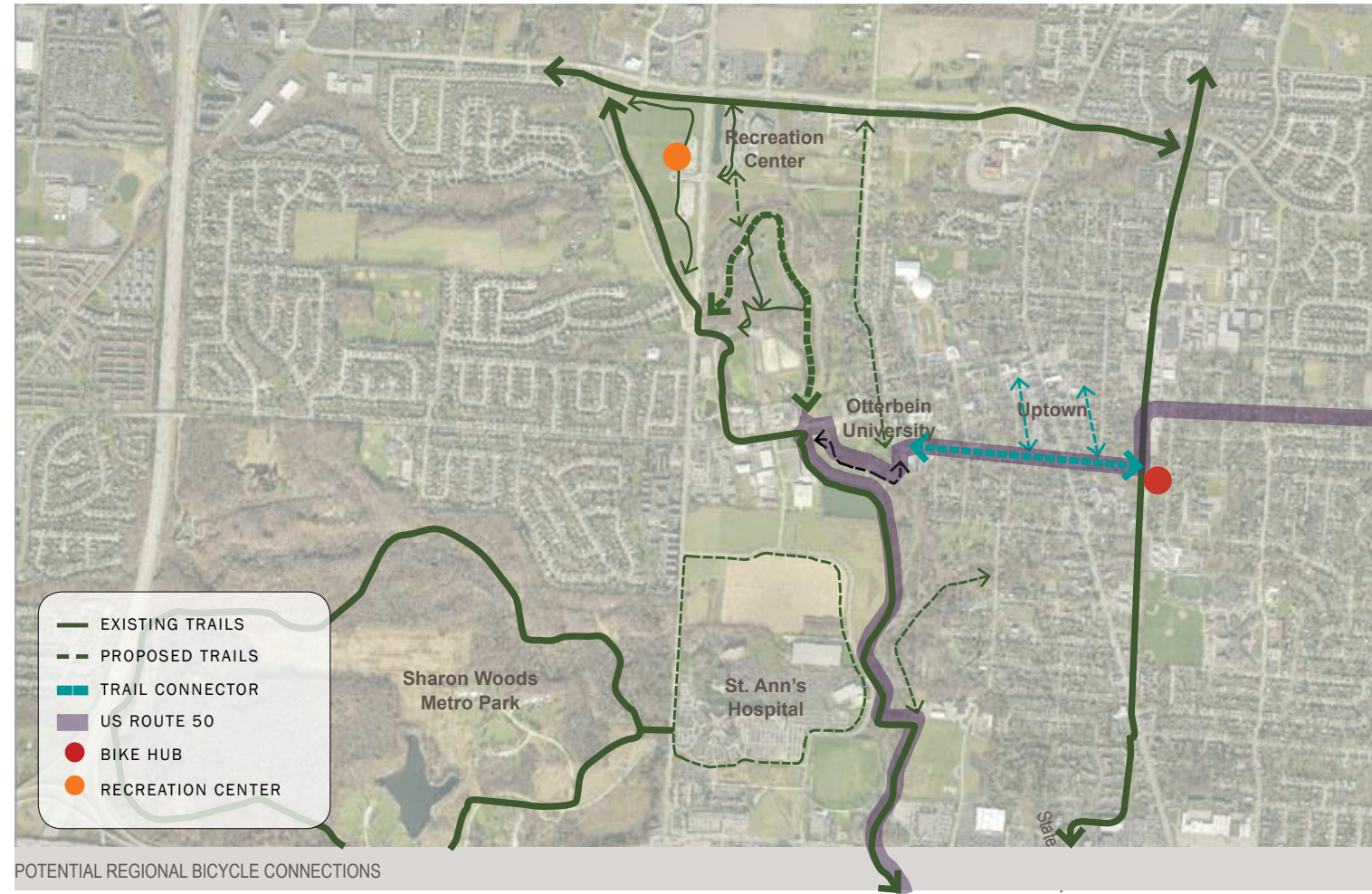


THE EXISTING ALUM CREEK COULD BE LINKED TO UPTOWN THROUGH THE ADDITION OF A BRIDGE OVER ALUM CREEK



PUBLIC ALLEYS COULD CONNECT UPTOWN TO REGIONAL EXISTING AND PROPOSED BICYCLE TRAIL NETWORKS.

Regional Bike Connections



POTENTIAL REGIONAL BICYCLE CONNECTIONS



SHARON WOODS



WESTERVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER



UPTOWN WESTERVILLE

Uptown Bike Amenities

In order to transform Uptown into a bicycling hub for Central Ohio, it is important to make access to the district as easy as possible, while also providing the amenities cyclists need.

To attract cyclists from the nearby trails into Uptown, additional bike trails and on-street bicycling accommodations, such as sharrows, should be considered. When creating these connections, it is also important to consider the new Westerville Train Depot/Bike Hub. Completed in 2012, the Hub was the first of its kind in Central Ohio. Its location off of the Ohio to Erie Trail allows cyclists to stop and rest, fill up on water, use the restroom, and travel into Uptown. Creating connections that link this to other trail systems by way of Uptown would help to reinforce the district as a cycling destination. Park Street will play an important role in this connection, acting as the direct route from the Bike Hub, through Uptown, to the west side to the Alum Creek Trail. US Route 50 is proposed to travel along this road from the east side of Uptown to the Alum Creek Trail.

Building upon what the Train Depot/Bike Hub began, Uptown should also consider introducing additional bicycle-oriented amenities in Uptown. Such amenities should include additional bicycle racks, bike storage and lockers for cyclists, water stations, restrooms, and potentially overnight camping/inn accommodations. Providing respite for cyclists, and making it easily accessible, will allow Uptown to become the first cycling hub in Central Ohio, and will help to encourage economic activity in Uptown.

Concept Summary

Concerns:

- How to increase bike connectivity to Uptown?
- Is there opportunity to serve as hub connection for Ohio to Erie and Alum Creek Trails?
- Are there needed bike amenities missing?

What We Heard:

- There are many local amenities, such as the Westerville Community Center, that could be connected to Uptown through bike connections.
- Westerville's new Bike Hub could be more intertwined with Uptown.
- Should introduce cycling amenities in Uptown.
- Potential for an inn or overnight facility.

Recommendations:

- Add bike connections and amenities that make Uptown a hub in the regional bike system.

Benefits:

- Uses new Uptown Alleys for bike connections to Uptown
- Links Bike Hub with bike amenities/services
- Adds additional bike amenities
- Provides direct connection between Bike Hub (Ohio to Erie Trail) and Alum Creek
- Make connection(s) between Uptown and the Community Center
- Make connection(s) with Sharon Woods, as well as the Alum Creek and Ohio to Erie Trails
- Integrates "Route 50" with the Uptown bike system

Potential Bike Accommodations:

- Bike racks
- Bike lockers
- Bike routes
- Public restrooms
- Overnight camping / inn accommodations. Already have great site started with Bike Hub and surrounding green space.
- Drinking fountains
- Tire pump/repair station

CIVIC SPACE

Idea

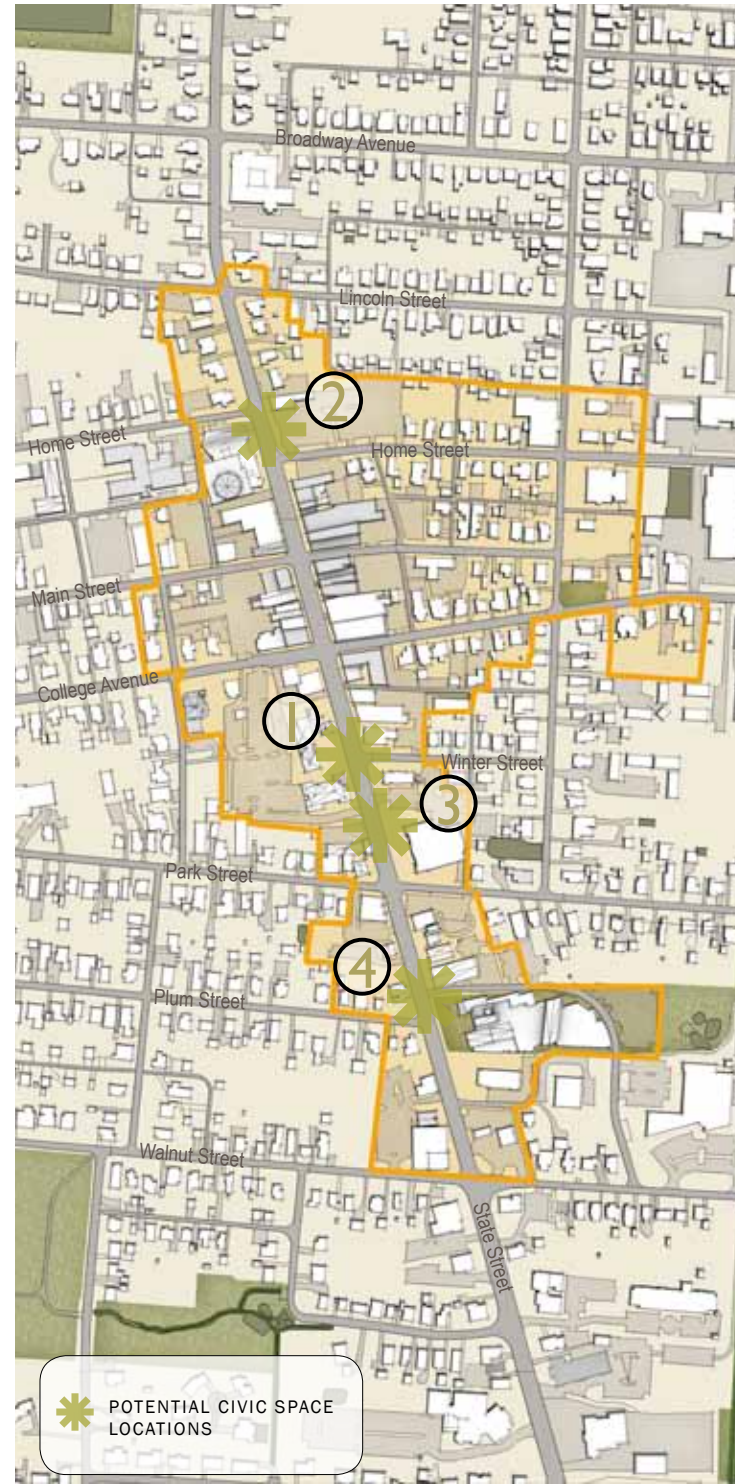
One of the unique features of State Street is its role as a community gathering place for both Uptown and the City of Westerville. The numerous shops and restaurants draw families, visitors, and university students on a daily basis, while community events, such as Fourth Fridays and the weekly farmer's market, also take place along this corridor. While State Street is a site of constant activity, it lacks a dedicated space for people to gather. By creating a civic space, Uptown can have a space dedicated to community interactions and gatherings.

A new civic space will serve two major functions. First, it will provide a daily attraction for residents and visitors. Potential greenspace or a splash pad water feature that could be included in the civic space would provide a place people want come to, or to stop and linger at when already visiting the district. Secondly, a new civic space will provide a location to host community events Uptown has become known for, such as the Farmer's Market and Fourth Fridays. It will also allow for new events such as concerts, movie nights, and others.

The design of the civic space can vary depending on the desires of the community. Including certain features, however, will help create the opportunity for daily activity. A water feature, benches, a pergola, and a lawn space all create a flexible space that encourages multiple uses.

Along State Street there are several locations that have been strategically identified as feasible sites for a civic space. These are designated on the map to the right. The rendering on page 41 is an illustrative rendering, depicting what a civic space might look like. This illustration is meant for inspirational purposes only.

Potential Locations



POTENTIAL LOCATIONS ALONG STATE STREET FOR A NEW CIVIC GREEN SPACE

Concept Summary

Concerns:

- Is there an existing civic space serve current daily and special event needs in Uptown?
- What would residents, visitors, businesses, and the city desire as civic space features?
- Is a new space needed or can existing spaces be repurposed?

What We Heard:

- One of the things Uptown could really benefit from is a civic green space.
- Should be located on State Street.
- Should include a splash pad or water feature.
- Potential food truck location.
- Space for programmed events and informal gathering

Recommendation:

- Create civic space in core to provide community gathering place and amenity that draws people to Uptown.

Benefits:

- Creates missing, desired amenity.
- Enhances the surrounding retail by drawing potential customers to Uptown.
- Provides gathering place for community and families.
- Designed as flexible space for many activities from performances, to movie night, to play, to farmer's market.
- Adds to the economic vitality and value of Uptown.
- Multi-use for current daily and special events
- Gathering space
- Kids play
- Kiosk stands/food trucks
- Moveable chairs and tables
- Fireplace
- Art
- Festival location
- Alternate Farmers Market location (if development occurs on existing site/or desire arises)

Potential Character



BIRDS EYE VIEW OF POTENTIAL CIVIC SPACE

Note: This conceptual illustration does not imply that this is the only appropriate location for consideration of this use or commit the city to the acquisition of this or any other privately held parcel.



A WATER SPLASH PAD FEATURE COULD BE INCLUDED



PLAZA SPACE COULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE DESIGN



A PERGOLA COULD CONTINUE THE BUILT EDGE ALONG STATE STREET



THIS SPACE COULD BE THE HOME TO THE FARMERS MARKET

STATE THEATER

One of the most recognizable buildings in Uptown is the State Theater. The Theater presents a unique opportunity for the district. This historic and iconic building, with its classic marquee, was one of the most popular topics of discussion throughout the Uptown planning process. Once a popular movie theater, the State Theater saw a decline in attendance in the 1950s and 1960s, leading to its sale. After several different retail uses, it became home to “Amish Originals” in 1992, which relocated to another location in Uptown in 2012. As a result, the State Theater building was available for purchase during the development of this plan. Recently, the building was purchased with the intent to continue its use of the first floor for retail space.

The year-long period of availability generated a great deal of dialogue in the community about the significance of the State Theater to Uptown and to Westerville. Many viewed this as a rare window of opportunity for the community to influence the future use of the building, allowing it to be repurposed to a more beneficial use for the community and a more prominent and active anchor of Uptown. What the experience crystallized for the supporters of Uptown is the need to be prepared with a plan of action should the building come up for sale again in the future.

While there were many different ideas proposed throughout the Uptown planning process as to the most beneficial use of the State Theater, the general consensus was that the theater should return to a community-oriented purpose that preserves the building's unique features, character, and facade. Examples of these proposed uses include:

- a performing arts theater (possibly in collaboration w/Otterbein)
- a movie theater
- an event venue
- an arts center (possibly in collaboration with Otterbein University)

Whatever use is deemed most appropriate use of the theater, it is strongly recommended that if it comes up for sale again, the City of Westerville should take an active role to help ensure the building is preserved and repurposed in a way that serves Uptown and the Westerville community.



THE HISTORIC FACADE AND MARQUEE OF THE STATE THEATER MAKES IT ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC BUILDINGS IN UPTOWN.



THE STATE THEATER'S CENTRAL LOCATION IN UPTOWN CREATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO REPURPOSE IT AS A DESTINATION PLACE, HELPING TO DRAW PEOPLE TO THE UPTOWN DISTRICT.



PREVIOUSLY, THE STATE THEATER WAS USED AS A FURNITURE RETAIL STORE.

Location



LOCATION OF THE EXISTING HISTORIC STATE THEATER

Concept Summary

Concerns:

- What will happen to the State Theater in the future?
- Can the State Theater return to being a more dynamic anchor for Uptown?

What We Heard:

- Save the State Theater
- Help make it a destination draw for Uptown

Benefits

- One of the buildings most identified with Uptown.
- Potential for active retail storefronts and second floor residential units.
- Destination location within Uptown.
- Strong activity node would serve as attraction and economic generator for Uptown.
- Site for potential collaboration among City, Uptown, Otterbein, local schools, local organizations, and local businesses.

Recommendations

- Pursue preservation of the State Theater as a community asset.
- Should the State Theater be available for sale again, City should secure option to purchase for a specific period of time (at least six months) to pursue a feasibility study that would evaluate future uses, potential partners, sources of funding and ongoing operations, and community benefit.
- Develop the feasibility study ahead of time to be prepared.

Case Studies

While the State Theater situation is unique to Westerville, there are other examples within Central Ohio of how the preservation of a locally iconic building has helped to benefit the community. The following details three such examples, the Village of Granville's Bryn Du Mansion, the City of Delaware's Strand Theater, and the City of Newark's Midland Theatre. These examples illustrate how, when the opportunity presented itself, these municipalities encouraged the purchase of and continued care for these historic community buildings. While the majority of these historic buildings required significant renovation, they are once again contributing to the community serving both its residents and accommodating special events. Westerville has the opportunity to follow the example set by these Central Ohio municipalities. By helping facilitate the purchase and renovation of the State Theater, the City can return the theater to the Westerville community, providing a rejuvenated local destination for Uptown.

Midland Theatre - Newark, Ohio



THE POPULARITY OF THE RENOVATED MIDLAND THEATRE HAS ONLY CONTINUED TO GROW IN THE EIGHT YEARS IT HAS BEEN BACK IN OPERATION.



A HISTORIC POSTCARD DEPICTING THE MIDLAND THEATRE DURING ITS TIME AS A MOVIE THEATRE.

- Opened in 1928, the Midland Theatre operated as a movie theater for the next 50 years.
- It sat vacant from 1972 until it was purchased by The Longaberger Company in 1992.
- After an eight year, \$8.5 million renovation, the theatre re-opened to the public in 2000.
- Operation of the theatre was handed to the Newark Midland Theatre Association, a local volunteer, non-profit organization.
- The 1,241 seat theater is now used for live musical performances, plays, films, and is often rented for both private and community events.

Bryn Du Mansion - Granville, Ohio



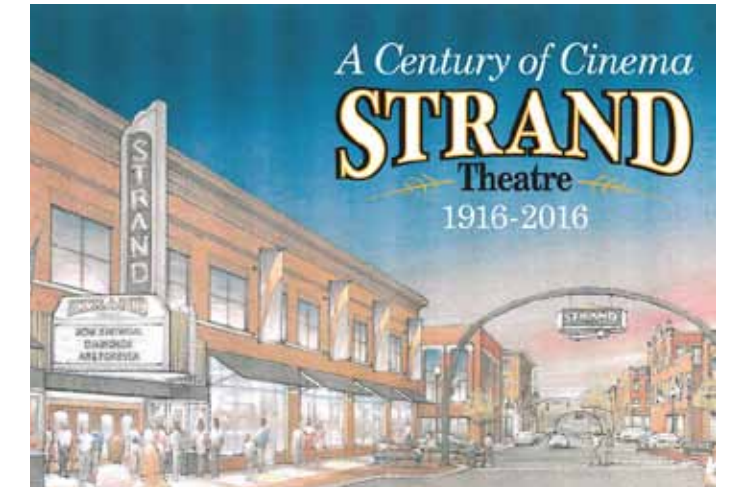
THE BRYN DU MANSION IS HOME TO NUMEROUS COMMUNITY EVENTS SUCH AS REGULAR POLO MATCHES ON THE FRONT LAWN.



THE BRYN DU MANSION IS ALSO A VERY POPULAR WEDDING VENUE.

- After serving multiple uses, including as offices and as a restaurant, the Bryn Du Mansion was purchased by a private owner in 1995.
- In 2002 the property became available for purchase.
- The village of Granville held an advisory election to determine public support for the Village purchasing the property; 63% were in favor of it.
- The Village purchased the property, placing its care and management in the hands of an elected commission.
- The Bryn Du Mansion is now home to numerous community events, and is in high demand for private event rentals such as weddings.

The Strand Theater - Delaware, Ohio



THE STRAND THEATRE IS THE PRIMARY FOCAL POINT OF THE ON-GOING DEVELOPMENT OF THE DELAWARE CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT.



OPENING ITS DOORS IN 1916, THE STRAND THEATRE HAS CONTINUOUSLY SHOWN CINEMA FILMS FOR THE PAST 94 YEARS..

- The Strand Theatre has been in operation for the past 94 years.
- After a series of private owners operated the theatre, it became available for purchase in 2002.
- To ensure its preservation, the Theatre was briefly purchased by Ohio Wesleyan University until the creation of the Strand Theatre and Cultural Arts Association, a non-profit organization which currently owns and operates the theatre.
- Currently under renovation with economic development money granted by the City and Delaware County, the theatre is the primary focus of the development of downtown Delaware's cultural arts district.

REDEVELOPMENT & INFILL

Idea

Residential infill is an important component to Uptown as it continues to grow. Currently, there is a limited amount of residential land use within the Uptown district, a fact that stakeholders felt strongly needed to be improved upon. While single-family housing is important to strengthen the residential feel of the Uptown cross streets, efforts should also be made to introduce higher-density, multi-family residential within the district boundaries. Specifically, this form of residential should be targeted to areas immediately adjacent to State Street. Multi-family infill in such sites will be appealing to both university students and young professionals, two demographics that would add to Uptown's consumer base.

Within Uptown are several locations that have the opportunity for additional residential or mixed-use infill development. While any infill efforts will inevitably be carried out by the private sector, identifying key development locations is valuable. Doing so will enable the City of Westerville to influence future investment, helping to ensure that Uptown grows in a way that preserves and enhances the district's existing charm.

Along State Street there are several locations that should be considered for mixed-use infill development. This type of development should be two to three stories, with commercial use on the first floor, and office or residential on the second and third floors. Such land use is consistent with historic town centers, such as Uptown. Currently, there are several existing buildings along State Street that have retail on the first floor and vacant second and third floors. These buildings should be encouraged to develop residential or office on the second floor.

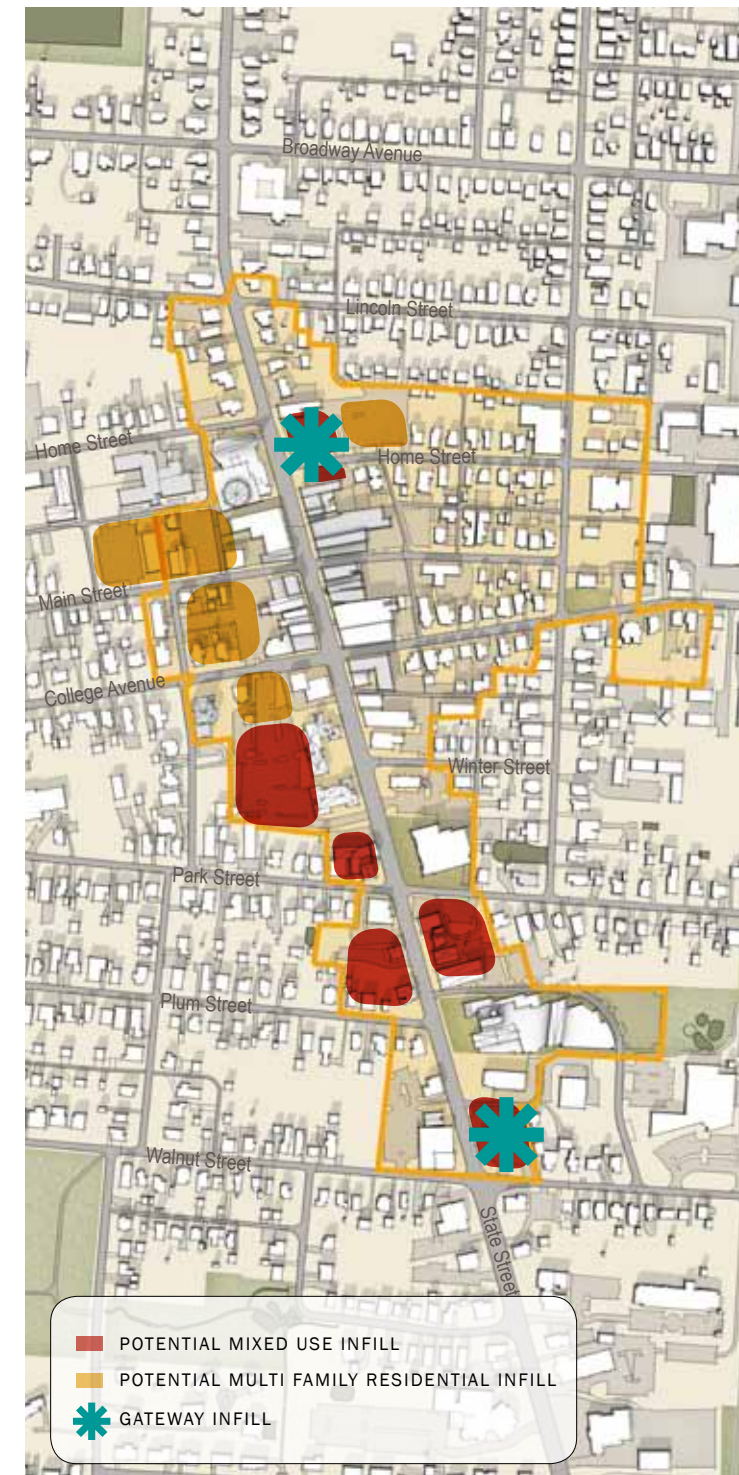
Additional mixed-use developments should be considered where there are currently parking lots, in order to strengthen the street edge presence along State Street. Targeting these sites, such as at State and Home streets, for new mixed-use development will fill in the gaps of the existing streetscape. While new infill may raise some concerns by those worried about a parking shortage in Uptown, this issue could be avoided by introducing a strategically located parking deck. Such a deck could help create easily

accessible parking areas for Uptown patrons, and free up existing surface lots for this mixed-use development.

Additionally, consideration should be given to introducing mixed-use development on sites adjacent to State Street. Doing so will introduce the opportunity of higher-density redevelopment that includes additional buildings and helps transition from State Street to the residential neighborhoods. It will also create attractive housing options for those not interested in purchasing a home, such as young professionals and university students. These groups are typically attracted to areas like Uptown because of the walkable amenities they provide. Attracting these groups will strengthen the economic base for Uptown by providing an increased population within walking distance of its businesses.

It is important to recognize that redevelopment of any of these sites is up to the private property owners. This plan is not suggesting that the City purchase these sites for redevelopment. The goal is to encourage the private market to do what it does best, provided it is within the context of the character and need of Uptown Westerville.

Potential Locations



POTENTIAL INFILL OPPORTUNITIES LOCATIONS IN UPTOWN

Concept Summary

Concerns:

- Are there places in Uptown that are appropriate for infill/redevelopment?
- If so, what are the types of uses and building types that would be appropriate /additive to the success of Uptown?

What We Heard:

- There are several areas that are prime for additional development/redevelopment.
- Higher density residential uses in Uptown would be appealing to empty-nesters and college students alike.
- Mixed-use developments should be considered along State Street.
- All new development should complement the existing Uptown fabric.

Strategies

- The upper floors of buildings have residential & office potential.
- The public street frontage of surface parking lots could be redeveloped.
- Strategic placement of a parking deck(s) could free up sites for infill.
- Some sites could be redeveloped with higher-density, more contributing buildings.

Recommendations:

- Encourage high-quality new infill on key sites in Uptown

Benefits:

- Allows broad array of uses that are desired in today's market place
- Provide greater variety of housing options in Uptown.
- Create greater residential density to support current and expanded businesses in Uptown.
- Stabilization of and increase in tax base.

Action:

- Update Uptown Review District Guidelines to encourage new and compatible infill development.
- Indicate to the private development market that the City and community are interested in quality redevelopment proposals for these sites

Infill Summary:

Potential Infill Summary

- 150 multi-family residential units (requires 225 parking spaces)
- 30,500 sf mixed use (requires 90 parking spaces)
- 55,000 sf commercial (self parked)

Note: Infill will be driven by the private market. Locations, use, and densities will be determined by private developers. The above summary is only to show Uptown's infill potential and help guide future decision making.

Concepts - Commercial Infill ■

Along State Street there are numerous opportunities for denser mixed-use development. While the majority of the street has a strong building facade, the gaps should be considered for two to three story buildings that fit the existing character of Uptown. Development in this area should include:

- Retail on the first floor/corner
- Residential (or office) in the floors above
- Buildings that are built to the sidewalk, with parking behind



EXAMPLES OF MIXED USE INFILL THAT COULD BE APPROPRIATE TO THE STATE STREET CORRIDOR

Concepts - Residential Infill ■

Off State Street, between Uptown and Otterbein University, there are also sites that are primed for new residential development that is more contributing to the Uptown District. Two such sites are located along Main Street and College Avenue. In addition to adding rear access alleys, these locations appear to lend themselves to residential development that caters to students and/or Uptown residents. This type of infill should be higher-density residential that complements existing Uptown buildings.



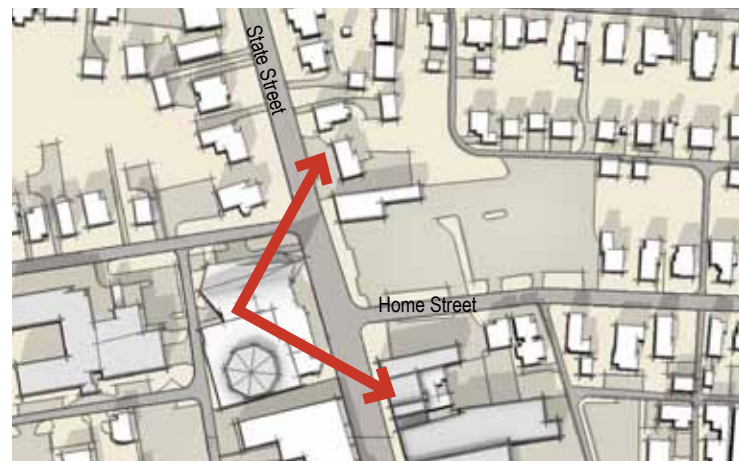
EXAMPLES OF MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL INFILL THAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE BETWEEN STATE STREET AND EXISTING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS



REDEVELOPMENT & INFILL

North Gateway

The existing Church of the Messiah parking lot at the northeast corner of East Home Street and State Street is one of the sites that residents and stakeholders expressed interest in seeing redeveloped. Repurposing the site with mixed-use and residential would fill in the existing gap in the State Street streetscape, and allow the site to serve a more beneficial purpose for Uptown and the City of Westerville. This location at the northern corner of Uptown creates the potential for a strong gateway feature, defining the edge of Uptown and drawing people into the district. The illustration to the right demonstrates how a new mixed-use development could be complemented by residential use along East Home Street. The mixed-use building facing State Street creates continuous edge, while the residential use along East Home Street blends into the existing scale and character of the street. This helps strengthen residential within the Uptown district, while also introducing new commercial opportunities that would be included on the first floor of the new mixed-use building.



EXISTING NORTH GATEWAY

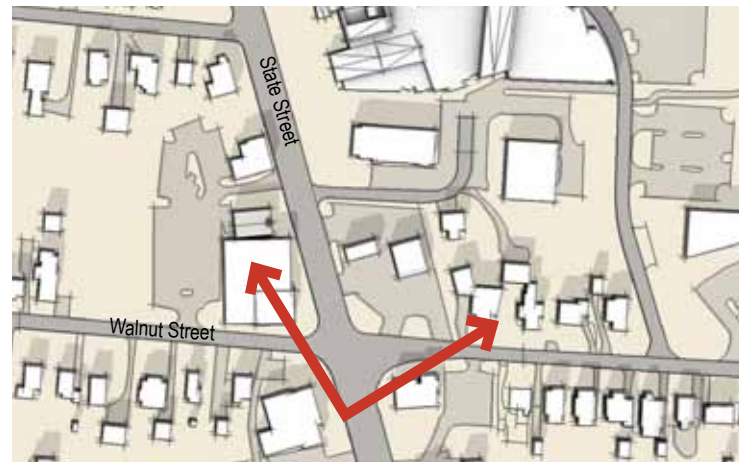


POTENTIAL NORTH GATEWAY INFILL AT STATE AND HOME STREETS

Note: This is a conceptual illustration of how redevelopment might look. Any redevelopment of privately held parcel(s) is the purview of the property owner(s) and the private market.

South Gateway

Another potential redevelopment site is the northeast corner of State Street and East Walnut Street. The large, open parking lot and large setback of the existing building creates the feeling of an empty corner, and does not fit the existing character of Uptown. Redeveloping this site in the future with a mixed-use building that complements the existing CVS on the opposite side of State Street would create for a strong gateway at the southern end of the of the Uptown District. Anchoring the corner with two strong retail buildings of similar architecture, quality, and design will help draw people in to the Uptown district.



EXISTING SOUTH GATEWAY



POTENTIAL SOUTH GATEWAY INFILL AT STATE AND WALNUT STREET

Note: This is a conceptual illustration of how redevelopment might look. Any redevelopment of privately held parcel(s) is the purview of the property owner(s) and the private market.

PARKING DECK

Idea

Throughout the planning process there was much concern voiced about Uptown's existing parking system. Many felt that there is a shortage of parking, which is further compounded by the difficulty of determining what is public parking and what is private parking. The frustration that comes with this experience has, according to personal testimonies, diverted people from Uptown to other shopping centers with easier parking.

When discussing parking, it is first necessary to determine the parking need in Uptown. This can be determined using a proven formula. Typically, urban mixed-use areas require 3 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of commercial space. Within Uptown, there is currently 325,000 square feet of existing mixed-use space. This includes both occupied and vacant spaces. Based on the assumption of 3 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of mixed-use, Uptown needs a total of 977 parking spaces to service the district. Currently there are 1,080 spaces in Uptown, a little over 100 parking spaces more than Uptown needs. The 2011 Uptown Market Analysis also highlighted the existing parking challenges in the area. The study stated the need to ensure the proper quantity of parking spaces as well as improve their visibility and exposure to ensure the parking best serves Uptown businesses. The consensus on the perceived shortage of parking shows that the existing parking system needs to be improved.

There are several ways in which the parking in Uptown can be improved to increase the number of parking without detracting from the character of Uptown with large parking lots. One is by making the existing parking more efficient, something that can be done several different ways. Encouraging shared private parking through master shared use agreements can create parking lots that are able to service multiple businesses. This increases the efficiency of a parking lot. Improving way-finding signage and creating designated employee parking areas can also help to create more clearly defined public parking areas in these lots. Creating a parking authority to help enforce time-sensitive parking spaces and designated parking spaces could help to ensure that more spaces are available for visitors.

Finally, the idea of the Uptown Alley system should be implemented. In addition to creating an intuitive way of finding public parking areas behind State Street, the Uptown Alleys will also help to organize parking by shortening the search loop for available spaces, allowing people to see available parking on other blocks, and providing access to parking off

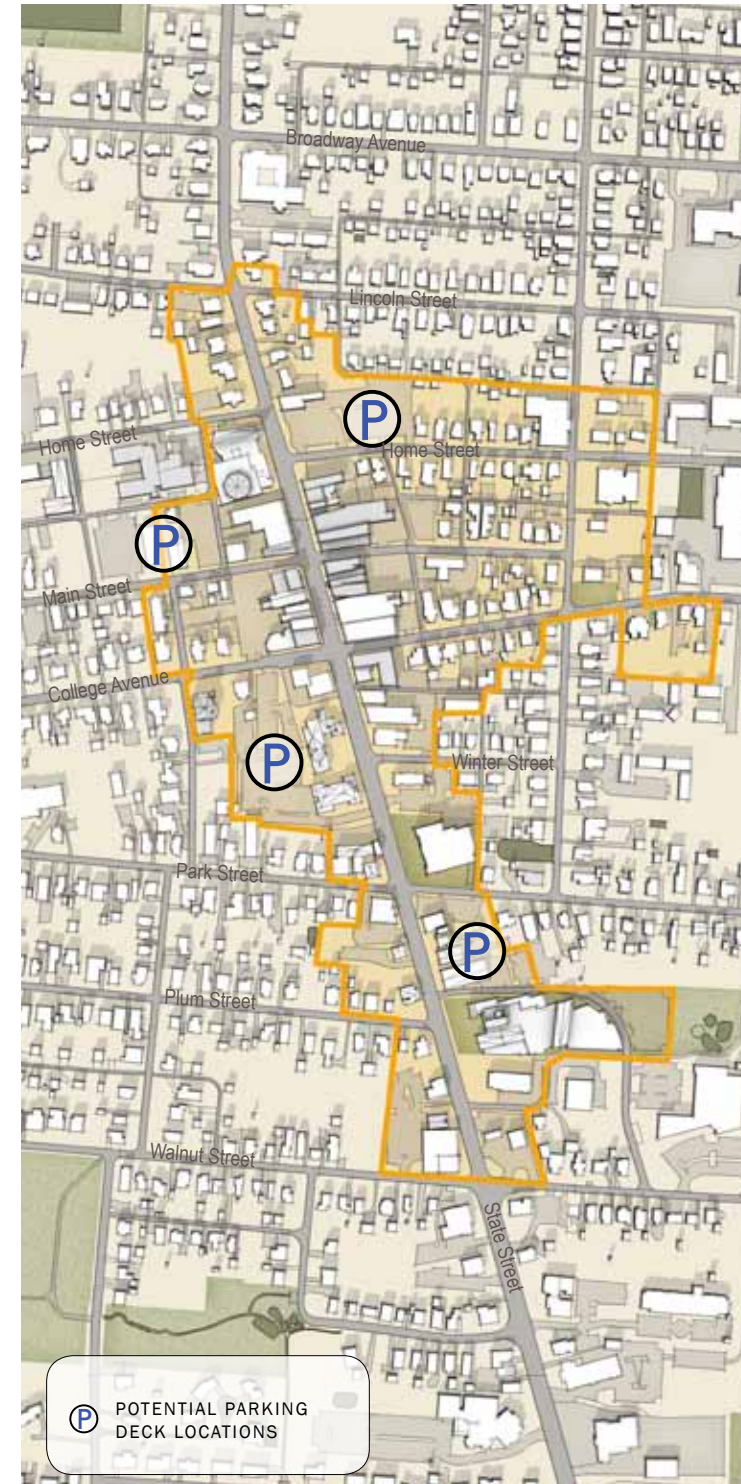
State Street. The proposed alleys, once implemented, will not only help to reorganize parking, but will help to make it less stressful and more intuitive for those who may not be familiar with Uptown.

A more long-range solution to Uptown's parking challenges is a one-story parking deck. A parking deck provides an additional level of parking above a surface parking lot. This enables the lot to host twice as much parking as a surface lot would. The cost for a parking deck averages approximately \$7,000 to \$8,000 per space. In addition to providing twice as much parking as a surface lot, constructing a parking deck could create other benefits for Uptown. The increased amount of parking could address some of the spaces that are lost if catalytic ideas, such as bumpouts along State Street, are implemented. Additionally, parking decks can act as redevelopment catalysts. By helping Uptown meet its parking need, it could help to free up existing parking lots to be redeveloped for purposes that better serve Uptown and the Westerville community.

Where a parking deck should be placed is an important consideration. Several potential sites were identified, and are indicated on the map to the right. These sites were chosen because of the potential benefits a parking garage could serve in that location. The pro's and con's of each site are explored in more detail on page 49. Wherever it is located, a parking deck should be positioned to serve as many purposes as possible, be easily accessible from State Street, and be constructed in the proper scale and style in order to allow it to blend in to the existing Uptown context. To show how a parking deck could fit into Uptown, a site plan was rendered showing a deck within the block between West College Avenue and Main Street. This site was chosen because of its central location in Uptown, and because the property rendered with the parking garage is already owned by the City of Westerville. This diagram is provided on the bottom right of page 49, and is explored in further detail on pages 54 of the Redevelopment Scenario.

Planning for parking in Uptown will become increasingly important as the district continues to develop. Additional businesses will generate more patrons which will increase the need for parking. These solutions should be considered in order to accommodate the needed number of parking spaces to support Uptown businesses, while maintaining the district's walkability.

Potential Locations



POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR PARKING DECK

Concept Summary

Concerns:

- Is there an opportunity to insert structured parking into Uptown?
- If so, where is the most appropriate location?

What We Heard:

- There is a perceived shortage of parking in Uptown.
- Existing parking is difficult to get to and navigate.
- The district could benefit from a strategically located deck.
- The area behind City Hall should be considered as a site for a parking deck.

Recommendation:

- Investigate the potential of building a parking deck in Uptown.

Benefits:

- Eases real and perceived parking issue.
- Provides parking for Uptown visitors and merchants.
- Encourages private redevelopment of nearby infill sites that could share parking.
- Could provide joint/shared use with major users like City Hall and Otterbein University.
- Becomes a central parking sink.

Parking Structure Types

- Surface Lot = +/- \$1,500 per space
- Parking Deck = +/- \$7,000-8,000 per space
- Parking Structure = +/- \$15,000-17,000 per space

There are a number of potential locations, but factors to consider include:

- Proximity to State Street
- Central to Historic Core
- Size to allow for efficient maximization of spaces versus cost
- Ability to leverage funding and use partnerships
- Impact to existing development/uses

Site Location Feasibility

Potential Site 1



Pros

- Vacant land
- Serve Uptown
- Serve Church of the Messiah

Cons

- Privately owned
- Currently the site of the farmer's market

Potential Site 2



Pros

- Partly University owned
- Serve Uptown
- Serve University
- Serve Church of the Messiah

Cons

- Partially privately owned
- Currently occupied by multiple private business

Potential Site 3



Pros

- City owned
- Serve Uptown
- Centrally located
- Screened by other buildings

Cons

- Police Dept/enclosure

Potential Site 4



Pros

- Serves Uptown
- Serve Library

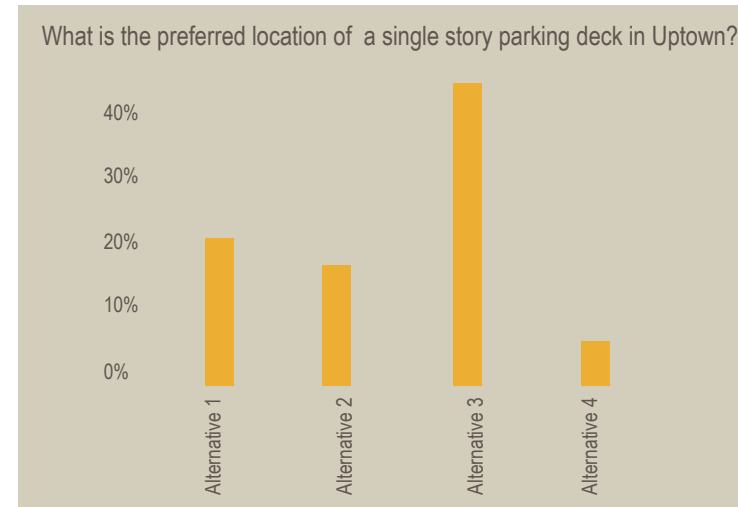
Cons

- Privately Owned
- Currently occupied by multiple private business

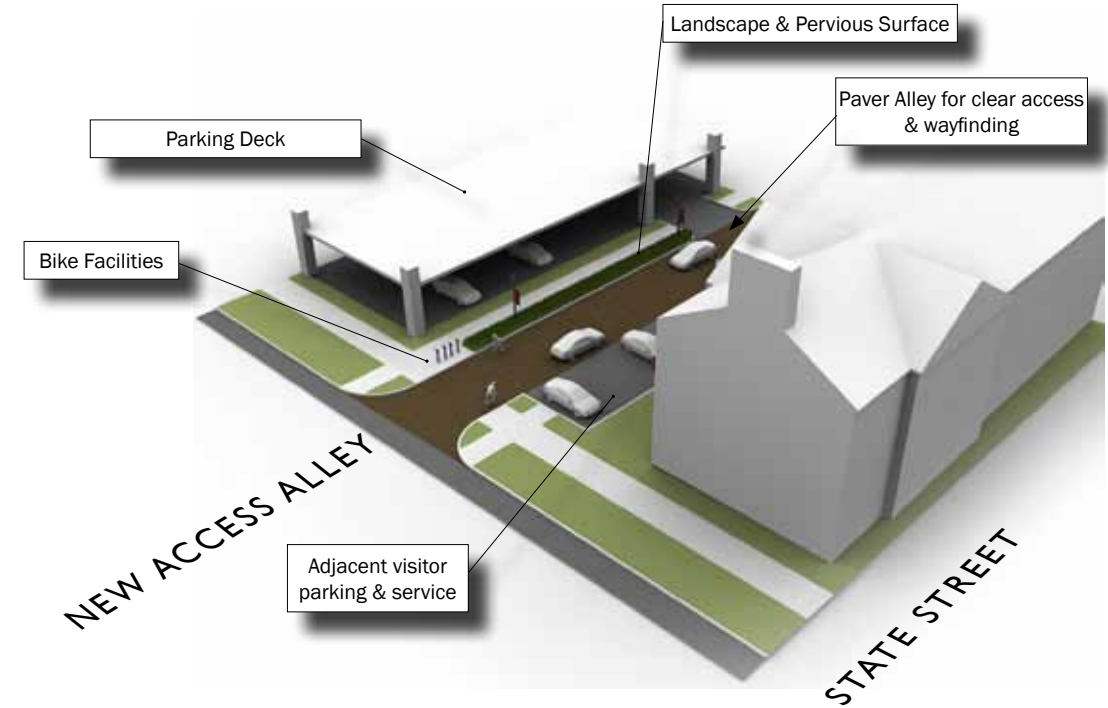
CHARACTER



EXAMPLE OF A PARKING DECK THAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE IN UPTOWN



PUBLIC VOTING RESULTS FROM ONLINE SURVEY.



POTENTIAL PARKING DECK AND ALLEY RELATIONSHIP



POTENTIAL PARKING DECK CONCEPT BEHIND CITY HALL

GATEWAYS AND WAYFINDING

Idea

The City of Westerville has already adopted, and begun to implement, a successful wayfinding plan, as well as an informational kiosk program. The goal of this plan is to continue and expand these programs to create a simple intuitive wayfinding system that brings visitors easily to their destinations. With the new wayfinding in place, visitors will enter Uptown at one of the four major gateways: North State Street, South State Street, West Main Street, and East College Avenue. They would proceed toward their destination, and turn onto the side street to reach the new Uptown Alley, at which point they could turn onto the alley and off the busier cross street. The visitor would then proceed parallel to State Street to a parking lot. After parking, they can walk to their destination, entering either from the rear entrance off the Uptown Alley, or from the front after making their way to State Street through one of the proposed pedestrian vias. If a visitor had multiple destinations they would either walk to their next destination or return to their vehicle and continue along the Uptown Alley to another parking lot without having to go back to State Street.

To help visitors navigate to and from their destinations, wayfinding aids should be employed at various points along their journey. A strong foundation has been established with the existing wayfinding program, and its design should be used as the basis for supplemental signage.

The proposed signs along State Street that identify Uptown and direct visitors to parking would need to be repeated at the new alley entrances. These might again identify Uptown or perhaps Uptown Alley. The directional component should continue to direct to parking.

Once a visitor has turned from the side street onto the Uptown Alley they will be able to see parking and parking lot entrances. For clarity the parking lot entrances should be identified with small signs such as those employed by the current system.

After parking, visitors will want to orient themselves to the area. To help do so, freestanding or wall mounted map/merchant directories as specified

in the original wayfinding program. These should be located close to pedestrian circulation routes.

To access State Street from the Uptown Alley, visitors will either use side streets or the proposed Vias. Though side streets and some Vias are easy to locate, others are not. To ensure that visitors are able to find the Vias for ingress and egress to State Street it is crucial to identify their entrances. The entrances to both sides of these passages should be identified with signage and/or graphics as well as contrasting paving material. Paving materials that contrast with surrounding paving materials and extends past the adjacent buildings' front and rear facades will help call attention to the passages.

Signage and/or graphics should direct to State Street as well as direct to Parking from State Street. Because the Via's are all different and each poses its own unique challenges when it comes to visibility it may be necessary to look at each scenario individually. A small directional sign may work for one location while a large painted graphic on a wall may be the only solution for another. Unique approaches at each location will further help visitors differentiate one Via from another, helping them find the one that gets them back to their parked car.

Uptown Gateways and Wayfinding System



GATEWAYS, DECISION POINTS AND CIRCULATION ROUTES

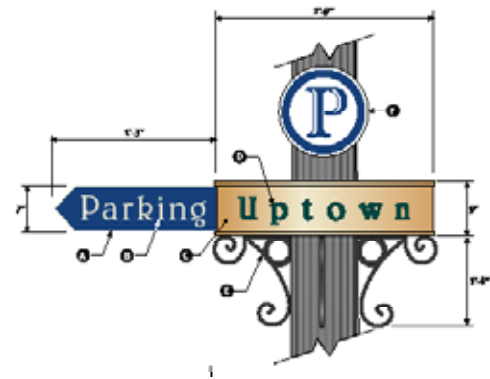


EXISTING UPTOWN GATEWAY



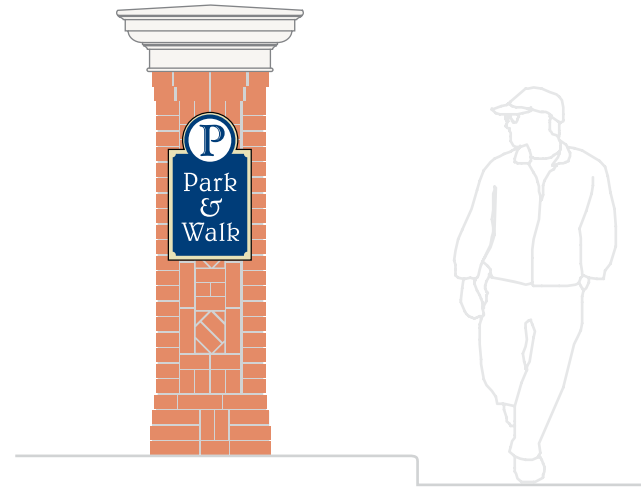
EXISTING UPTOWN CIRCULATOR SIGN

Directional Sign Collar ●



EXISTING STANDARD UPTOWN PARKING IDENTIFICATION COLLAR

Secondary Directional Sign ●



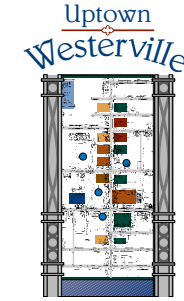
PROPOSED UPTOWN ALLEY IDENTIFICATION COLUMN

Parking Identification ●



EXISTING STANDARD UPTOWN PARKING SIGN

Map/Merchant Directory ⓘ



EXISTING STANDARD UPTOWN MERCHANT MAP

Via Identification ●

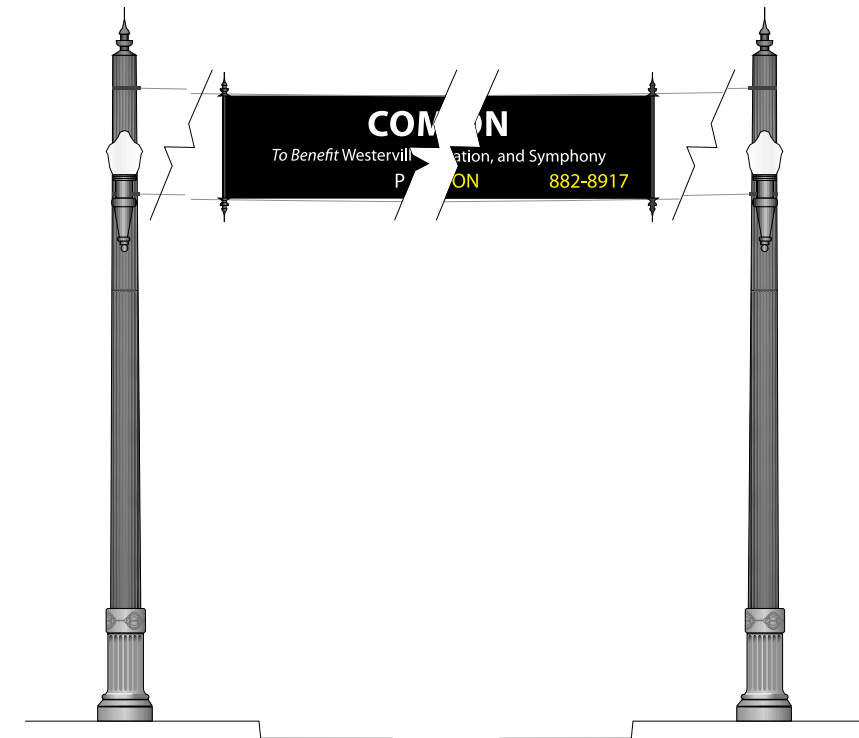


PROPOSED UPTOWN VIA WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE UPTOWN ON BUILDING WAYFINDING BILLBOARD

State Street Banner ■



PROPOSED STATE STREET OVERHEAD BANNER

IV. REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIO



REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIO - CITY HALL BLOCK

Applying Catalytic Projects to a Site

The Westerville City Hall block provides an opportunity to showcase how the recommended Catalytic Projects in this plan can be applied to an area, and how these projects build upon each other in a way that enhances the Uptown environment and experience. Currently, the City has plans to improve and expand the public parking lot behind City Hall. This project could facilitate the creation of the first Uptown Alley segment. This section shows how additional phases could be accomplished over time incorporating other Catalytic Projects on this block. Together these projects could transform the block and address on-going concerns in Uptown such as the desire to provide more parking, beautify the rear of the Uptown commercial areas, enhance the pedestrian experience, and encourage privately-led renovation and infill development. Catalytic Projects that could be achieved in this area include Streetscape Improvements along State Street and College Avenue, a new public Uptown Alley, Bicycle Connections in association with the alley, improved Wayfinding, two mid-block pedestrian vases, revitalized Civic Space around City Hall, new private Infill Development, and the addition of a Parking Deck.

This series of conceptual plans shows these Catalytic Projects in three phases. The reality is that they could be accomplished in various chronologies and phasing, though it is important to plan for each so that they can be accommodated. For example, the new City Hall parking lot design should consider the ultimate preferred alignment of the Uptown Alley and how a future Parking Deck should be sited in terms of location, grading, and maximizing capacity/efficiency.

The first phase focuses on the need for additional parking both for City Hall as well as for Uptown. It shows how the first segment of an Uptown Alley could be realized as part of the planned surface parking lot reconstruction. Its preferred alignment can be achieved in the north half, while the south half connection is made through the city-owned parcel on Park Street. The brick Uptown Alley directly behind the State Street buildings provides a complete street circulation and wayfinding system that complements the historic character of Uptown. Other catalytic projects that could be achieved on the City Hall block include improving the College Avenue streetscape with a new gateway threshold element and wayfinding to the public parking areas via the new Uptown Alley.

Existing



City Hall Block Today

This aerial photograph shows the City Hall Block as it exists today. The City is going to expand and reconfigure the city parking lots at the center of the block as part of its capital improvement program. As a demonstration, this series of diagrams provides one example of how the catalytic improvement projects in this plan could be layered in this area across time to improve Uptown.

Furthermore, a Pedestrian Via could be created between Jimmy V's and the north side of City Hall, connecting the Uptown Alley and parking lots with Founder's Park and State Street businesses. The sidewalk along State Street could be improved to better match the preferred wider dimensions of brick curbwalk and concrete sidewalk found on other sections of the street to better accommodate pedestrians. The area in front of City Hall can be reimagined as a more flexible Civic Space for the community, providing both a place for large events as well as an inviting space for individuals and smaller groups to use day-to-day.

The second phase shows development of a new Parking Deck behind City Hall adjacent to the Uptown Alley. The single-story parking deck (ground level and

Application



Phase 1

This shows the City parking lot improvements and the creation of the north segment of the Uptown Alley that provides improved circulation for vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians as well as access to the centralized parking fields. Other catalytic projects include Streetscape Improvements, Wayfinding signage, an improved Pedestrian Via along the north side of City Hall, and improved Civic Space in front of City Hall.

one story above) would help address the area parking problem, while also helping to spur further development. Depending on the layout, the parking deck could provide between 70-100 additional parking spaces, together with the head-in parking provided along the east side of the alley for high turn-over visits. The parking deck could be designed with the elevator tower and pedestrian entrance aligned with the mid-block Pedestrian Via between City Hall that accesses State Street – providing a great terminating vista.

This phase also involves realigning the alley to its preferred location. This involves relocation of the police lot and the market rate acquisition of a single parcel (outlined in brown) or land swap, to extend the Uptown Alley south to Park Street.



Phase 2

This phase shows utilizing the City-owned surface parking lot to create a public parking deck built along the completed north-south Uptown Alley. With the Parking Deck, an additional 70+/- parking spaces could be provided for the area. The south end of the Uptown Alley is realigned to the preferred location and extended to Park Street as the opportunity arises (requires removal of police lot & market rate acquisition of parcel).

This connection will provide more intuitive public way-finding and circulation for visitors to State Street businesses and City Hall, and minimize intrusion into the Park Street neighborhood. It also extends the sidewalk system and provides a safer bike access and routing alternative to State Street.

The third phase indicates one manner in which private redevelopment and infill could occur over time (shown in yellow & pink). Such a project could take many forms. In all cases, private developer(s) and/or the lot owners would initiate redevelopment plans. At a minimum, one could imagine the corner of State Street and Park Street redeveloping as a mixed use development that adds to the vitality and character of State Street. Such a development could purchase



Phase 3

Phase 3 indicates one path in which private redevelopment could occur over time. This would involve private developer(s)/lot owners initiating redevelopment plans. The corner of State Street and Park Street could redevelop as a contributing mixed-use building, while residential infill could extend along Park Street in appropriate scale and height with the surrounding neighborhood and screen the mid-block parking areas.

parking in the Parking Deck and/or implement rear surface lots with access from the Uptown Alley. Private redevelopment could also include the block frontage along Park Street and create an integrated residential development in appropriate scale and height to allow for a seamless transition from Uptown to the surrounding residential neighborhoods of Olde Westerville. Surface parking could be added to the rear of such a project as shown. A developer could purchase land from the City to extend this project north along Knox Street to further screen the parking and parking deck and provide a desirable residential edge.

The rendering to the right shows how transformative this series of Catalytic Projects could be when applied to just one block in Uptown.



VIEW OF THE CITY HALL BLOCK WITH PARKING DECK AT CENTER

Note: This is a conceptual illustration of how redevelopment might look. Any redevelopment of privately held parcel(s) is the purview of the property owner(s) and the private market.

V. PLANNING & POLICY TOOLS



PLANNING AND POLICY TOOLS

In order to implement the Catalytic Ideas proposed in the Uptown Plan, as well as encourage further development of Uptown, the City of Westerville should capitalize on the following tools. These include tools that provide funding opportunities for historic districts such as Uptown. Some provide grant and funding for new projects that may be applicable for the projects proposed in the Catalytic Ideas portion of this plan. Other planning tools provide funding for existing historic infrastructure. These, such as the 20% Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, provide potential means to renovate and enhance currently under utilized historic buildings and spaces. This can in turn provide infill opportunities in Uptown. Other planning tools are more diplomatic in nature.

Utilizing a combination of these tools as appropriate will enable the City of Westerville to not only implement new Projects, such as the Catalytic Ideas, but it will also facilitate improvement and revitalization of existing historic infrastructure and maintain Uptown's quaint historic charm.

PLANNING / POLICY TOOLBOX

The following planning tools are recommended to leverage and incentivize investments in Uptown Westerville,

1. National Register
2. Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program
3. Federal Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation
4. Certified Local Government
5. Special Improvement District (SID)
6. Ohio Main Street Program
7. District Boundaries
8. Code Revisions
9. Expand Facade Program
10. Expand Abatement Program
11. Land Banking
12. Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)
13. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

1. National Register



The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of properties recognized by the federal government as worthy of preservation for their local, state, or national significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. A program of the National Park Service, it is administered at the state level by each respective state. In Ohio, the Ohio Historical Society's Ohio Historic Preservation Office administers the National Register program

Source: Ohio Historic Society

www.ohiohistory.org/ohio-historic-preservation-office/national-register-of-historic-places

Recommendation:

Pursue National Register Historic District Designation

Benefits:

- Eligibility to apply for federal 20% and state 25% historic tax credits for substantial rehabilitation of income-producing properties.
- Use of tax credit can contribute to greater investment in properties and use of under utilized upper floors.
- Recognition of historic significance of core area of Westerville.
- Marketing/branding as a large residential and commercial mixed use historic district.
- National Register does not require new regulations or design review for properties within its boundaries.

Action

Nominate the Uptown area as a National Register Historic District.

Determine potential properties that apply in Uptown

- To qualify, property must be listed in the National Registry of Historical Places either individually or be a contributing building in a National Register listed historic district
- Property must have an income-producing use
- Rehabilitation must be substantial
- Rehabilitation must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

How could this apply to Westerville?

- Uptown is qualified for listing in the National Register. Utilizing these tax credits could stimulate investment in historic buildings and encourage use of vacant and underutilized upper floors.

Benefits:

- Recognition
- Tourism
- Substantial tax incentive to encourage rehabilitation of income-producing properties
- Applicable to projects of all sizes
- Applicable to all types of income-producing properties
- 20% Federal and 25% Ohio Historical Tax can be combined

Tax credits

Eligibility for federal & state programs

- This allows for Tax Credits
- 20% Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- 25% Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- End use must be income-producing (retail, office, residential rental, industrial)
- Rehabilitation must be substantial
- Rehabilitation must meet Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Federal and state credits can be combined

2. Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program



25% Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit

The Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program provides a 25% tax credit for the rehabilitation expenses to owners and lessees of historically significant buildings. A building is eligible if it is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places; contributes to a National Register Historic District, National Park Service Certified Historic District, or Certified Local Government historic district; or is listed as a local landmark by a Certified Local Government. The program is competitive and receives applications bi-annually in March and September. Over the ten funding

rounds, tax credits have been approved for 174 projects to rehabilitate 246 historic buildings in 40 different communities. The program is projected to leverage more \$2.2 billion in private redevelopment funding and federal tax credits directly through the rehabilitation projects.

*Source: Ohio Department Services Agency
www.development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_ohptc.htm*

Recommendations:

Optimize this program to enable lessees and owners to enhance historic buildings.

Benefits:

- Substantial economic incentive for investment in historic properties
- Can be combined with 20% Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- Small projects (less than substantial rehabilitation) may qualify
- Pipeline funding grants available to nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places

Action:

- To qualify, the building must be a designated historic property
- Competitive application with two annual deadlines
- Small projects (less than substantial rehabilitation) may qualify
- Rehabilitation must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

3. Federal Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation



20% Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Federal tax law offers a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The credits are dollar-for-dollar reductions of taxes owed. The 20% rehabilitation investment tax credit equals 20% of qualified expenditures in a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. Since its inception, the program has spurred over \$66 billion in rehabilitation projects nationally. Since 2008, over 30% of the approved projects have had a cost of less than \$500,000.

*Source: Ohio Department Services Agency
www.development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_ohptc.htm*

Recommendations:

Utilize Federal Historic Tax Credit to revitalize second and third stories of historic Uptown buildings

Benefits:

- Substantial tax incentive to encourage rehabilitation of income-producing properties
- Applicable to projects of all sizes
- Applicable to all types of income-producing properties,
- 20% Federal and 25% Ohio Historic Tax Credits can be combined

Action:

- To qualify, property must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places either individually or be a contributing building in a National Register listed historic district.
- Property must have an income-producing use (can be mixed use)
- Rehabilitation must be substantial
- Rehabilitation must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

How could this apply to Westerville?

- The Uptown area is qualified for listing in the National Register. Utilizing historic tax credits could stimulate investment in the historic buildings, encourage usage of vacant and underutilized upper floors, and improve the appearance, economic viability and safety of important historic resources.

4. Certified Local Government



This federal-state-local partnership enables eligible communities to conduct a wide range of preservation activities in cooperation with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and the U.S. Department of the Interior, including surveys of historic resources and nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Becoming a CLG makes the community eligible to apply for matching grants. Approximately \$100,000 is set aside annually to help CLG communities in Ohio identify their historic, architectural, and archaeological resources, nominate eligible properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places, further community education on historic preservation; and preserve and rehabilitate historic properties.

Recommendations:

Pursue Certified Local Government (CLG) Designation for Westerville

Benefits:

- Partnership with Ohio Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service in recognition of city's commitment to historic preservation.
- Eligibility for matching grants (60% federal/40% local) for a wide variety of historic preservation activities
- Partnership with Ohio Historic Preservation Office that provides CLGs with up-to-date historic preservation information
- Networking opportunities with other CLGs in Ohio

Action:

- Make minor changes to current legislation to qualify for CLG status
- Apply to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office for recognition as a CLG

How could this apply to Westerville?

- Westerville has most of CLG requirements in place
- Access to a source of matching funds for projects that further historic preservation goals in Uptown Westerville plan

PLANNING AND POLICY TOOLS

5. Special Improvement District (SID)



A SID is an area of land within which property owners pay an additional tax or fee designated for specific services or improvements within the district's boundaries. Property owned by government and churches is exempt unless representatives of these properties request in writing to be included. The SID can exist within a township, a municipal corporation, or any combination of contiguous townships and municipal corporations.

Source: *The Ohio State University Extension*

Recommendations:

Explore support for an Uptown Special Improvement District (SID)

Benefits:

- Private sector initiative & tool for property owners to provide self-directed services for Uptown.
- Builds on existing momentum of Uptown and allows it to "take it to the next level"
- Creates unifying bond & purpose - all private property owners pay for services run by board of members
- Pools financial resources to fund common needs, services, and improvements.
- Property assessment can be "right-sized" for desired effort.
- Flexible tool for different size projects

Action

- Canvas property owners to educate and investigate interest in forming an Uptown SID.

Uptown Potential Uses:

What are the types of services or needs in Uptown that a SID could provide?

Examples:

- Full or part-time director
- Web site
- Event coordination
- Snow removal
- Shared parking efforts
- Vias

Details:

- One petition vs. two petitions
- Broad-based support
- 60% of front footage OR
- 75% of land area
- Agreement on details
- Two-year process until first check arrives

6. Ohio Main Street Program



The Ohio Main Street Program, administered by Heritage Ohio, works with communities across the state to revitalize their historic or traditional commercial areas. The Main Street approach was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It is designed to assist communities to improve economic management, strengthen public participation, recruit new businesses, rehabilitated buildings, and expand parking. Building on downtown's inherent assets — rich architecture, personal service, and traditional values and most of all, a sense of place — the Main Street approach has rekindled entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and

civic concern. It has earned national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to a community's local resources and conditions. And because it is a locally driven program, all initiative stems from local issues and concerns.

Source: *Heritage Ohio*

www.heritageohio.org/programs/ohio-main-street-program/

Recommendations:

Consider participation in Ohio Main Street Program

Benefits:

- Proven comprehensive 4-point approach to downtown revitalization that includes, Organization, Design, Marketing, and Economic Restructuring
- Provides on-going networking, support, training, and conferences.
- Participation in Ohio program provides on-going networking, support, training and conferences
- Success for over 35 years in over 2,000 communities nationwide

Note: Program requires there be a paid full-time coordinator for membership.

Details

- Proven results for over 35 years in at least 2,000 communities nationwide
- In Ohio, Main Street Program is administered by non-profit Heritage Ohio, Inc.
- Comprehensive four-point approach
 1. Organization
 2. Design

3. Marketing

4. Economic Restructuring

How could this apply to Westerville?

- Uptown Westerville is a perfect fit for the program
- Recognition as a Main Street program can be used as a marketing tool for businesses
- Program increases public awareness of the importance of Uptown and its businesses to the overall health and vitality of the community

7. District Boundaries



The current Uptown Westerville Boundary should be reviewed using the principles of this plan to determine whether modification to the boundary would benefit the District.

8. Code Revisions



The current zoning code for Uptown should be reviewed and amended to facilitate the objectives of this plan.

Recommendations:

Determine if the current Uptown District boundaries are appropriate

Benefits:

- Expanded boundaries will make more resources available for those areas.
- It is a way to help incentivize the conversion of rental properties back to maintained single-family homes.
- To help link incentives and protections with areas that are critical to the character and vitality of Uptown.
- To better match the perceived Uptown area with the actual boundaries.

Action

- Review Uptown District in terms of achieving goals of this plan

Recommendations:

Update the Zoning Code for Uptown

Benefits:

- Consider modifications to the code to:
 - Facilitate desired renovation & redevelopment
 - Reduce common variances
 - Update guidelines (materials, etc.)
 - Streamline/allow staff review & approval
 - Separate boundaries of Uptown Zoning District from Uptown Review District
- Examples:
 - Revise approved list of materials
 - Parking fee-in-lieu of / shared parking credit
 - Review district boundaries
 - Consider form-based code
 - Focus is on form, rather than use

Action:

- Review and amend the zoning code to facilitate the objectives of the Uptown Plan.

PLANNING AND POLICY TOOLS

9. Expand Façade Program



The City's current Façade Improvement Program is designed to stimulate private investment in high-quality building improvements that contribute to the overall character of the Uptown District. The program shares the costs of improving commercial building exteriors and publicly used amenities. The Westerville Industry and Commerce Corporation (WICC), the City's community improvement corporation, provides matching grants to property

owners or tenants of commercial buildings who would otherwise not be able to make these improvements without financial assistance. It is the recommendation of this plan to explore the possibility of expanding this program in both size and to cover residential buildings.

Source: The City of Westerville

10. Expand Abatement Program



A tax abatement program is the temporary reduction or elimination of real estate property tax for incentivizing redevelopment. Currently the City has a tax abatement program for new construction or significant rehabilitation of existing commercial structures.

Recommendation:

Consider expanding the Façade Improvement Program

Benefits:

- Allow for more projects
- Encourage applications for pedestrian walkway improvements
- Encourage applications for back of building enhancements along rear alleys
- Add a program for residential façade improvement in the Uptown area
- Consider partnerships to expand impact

Action:

- Add additional funding to the westerville industry and commerce corporation's façade improvement program annual budget

Recommendation:

Consider expanding the Tax Abatement Program to facilitate residential development in Uptown

Benefits:

- Incentive for the renovation of existing 2nd & 3rd floor spaces.
- Way to encourage conversion of rental housing back to their original owner-occupied use.
- Abatement of substantial renovation cost of existing homes could provide neighborhood boost.
- Could be used to encourage residential infill in identified uptown sites.
- Builds upon existing program.

Action:

Expand the city's tax abatement program for residential conversion/renovation in targeted areas.

Details:

Waive or discount property taxes for a period of time for development in targeted areas that meets established criteria

Common examples:

- 100% for 10 years
- 75% for 15 years

Could be used to encourage:

- Renovations of existing 2nd & 3rd floor spaces
- Redevelopment of identified sites
- Conversion of rental housing (back) to single-family housing

11. Land Banking



Land Banking is the process of strategically aggregating vacant or underutilized parcels of land to be held for future sale and development.

Recommendation:

Consider a Land Bank to advance the redevelopment of Uptown sites

Benefits:

- Facilitates the redevelopment of identified catalyst sites in Uptown.
- Negotiates market purchase of sites with willing seller.
- Promotes desired private redevelopment (through RFP process).
- Builds on Westerville Industry and Commerce Corporation role.

Action

- Add land banking of identified sites (as they become available) to WICC mission.

Details

- City creates a fund or funds group (Westerville Community Improvement Corporation) to purchase identified catalytic properties
- RFP can be submitted on owned land, to attract developers to build desired development
- City can build public improvements on owned land

12. Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)



Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development mechanism available to local governments in Ohio to finance public infrastructure improvements and, in certain circumstances, residential rehabilitation. A TIF works by locking in the taxable worth of real property at the value it holds at the time the authorizing legislation was approved. Payments derived from the increased assessed value of any improvement to real property beyond that amount are directed towards a separate fund to finance the construction of public infrastructure defined within the TIF legislation.

Source: Ohio Development Services Agency: http://development.ohio.gov/bs_tif.htm

Recommendations:

Consider forming a TIF District to advance public Uptown projects

Benefits:

- Method of capturing revenue generated by increased property value within district.
- Does not increase tax rates.
- Creates bonding capacity for public projects related to improving Uptown.
- Improvements attract additional private investment in Uptown.

Action

- Advocate for the City to create a TIF District for the Uptown area.

Details:

- District is created for Uptown
- Property taxes of the value of all new improvements go toward public projects within the District for period of time

13. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)



Capital Improvement Program or CIP, is a short term plan which identifies capital improvement projects within Uptown in the City's annual budget.

Recommendations:

Add Uptown Improvement Projects to the City's CIP

Benefits:

- Investing in public improvements in Uptown is important to:
- Boost and support economic development efforts in Uptown and to a similar level as investments in other parts of the city.
 - Respond to national trends that indicate authentic, walkable, mixed use town centers are the desirable market moving forward.
 - Continue to revitalize a critical part of Westerville's identity, history, and future.
 - Traditional method of funding larger capital projects.
 - Improvements attract additional private investment in Uptown.

Action

- Identify and prioritize potential projects to be considered for the CIP

Details:



- Traditional method of public finance for public projects
- Identify desired projects and encourage City Council to add them to 5-year Capital Improvement Program

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS



CATALYTIC PROJECTS RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

PROJECTS	BENEFITS	ACTION ITEMS	POTENTIAL ACTORS	TIME FRAME	COST	TOOLS
<p>1. STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds curb extensions at intersections to shorten pedestrian crossing distances (safer/more inviting), provide more “amenity zone”, and protect on-street parking lanes. • Highlights crosswalks to signal drivers they are in a pedestrian area. • Improves streetscape and make consistent (sidewalk, street trees, etc.) • Adds additional sidewalk width in strategic areas and pinch points. • Buries overhead utilities. • Creates improved ceremonial connection to Otterbein University. • Screens surface parking lots. • Creates signature gateway elements for Uptown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a streetscape improvement plan for Uptown that includes State Street, Main Street, and College Avenue. • Construct street improvements based upon above plans. • Require new development to build frontage to standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville 	Short to Medium	Low to Moderate (In phases over time. Some components could be achieved separately like unique painted crosswalks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Program • Tax Increment Financing • Special Improvement District • Development Review (i.e. require developers to construct as part of infill projects) • Infrastructure Improvement Grants
<p>2. NEW PUBLIC ALLEYS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New alley system parallel to State Street creates parking search loop. • Provides access to and helps identify way to available parking areas. • Creates safe bike route and bike connectivity to and along Uptown. • Accommodates deliveries, service, and additional short term parking. • Activates the rear of State Street buildings and encourages investment. • Highlights mid-block pedestrian vias (walkways) - see #3 below. • Attractive design and materials complement historic Uptown. • Improves aesthetics and safety of Uptown area and parking lots. • Provides opportunities for permeable pavers and bioswales. • Prevents parking traffic from drifting into neighborhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a conceptual alley design and alignment plan. • Conduct a traffic impact analysis. • Construct alleys one block at a time as opportunity arises or per CIP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville • Property owners • Private developers 	Short to Medium	Moderate (Could be phased per block over a longer period of time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Program • Tax Increment Financing • Require private developers to construct as part of infill projects • Special Improvement District • Infrastructure Improvement Grants
<p>3. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS / VIAS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes advantage of historical element unique to Uptown Westerville. • Provides more inviting and safe connections between rear parking lots and State Street storefronts. • Helps to create new activity nodes & opportunities for retail connections. • Provides opportunities for local art and history. • Offers wonderful occasions for discovery and exploration. • Affords chance to improve aesthetics and storm drainage. • Aids with pedestrian way-finding in Uptown. • Increases property values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a detailed plan for each mid-block Pedestrian Via. • Construct each Pedestrian Via as the opportunity arises or per CIP. • Design Contest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville • Merchants Association • Arts Council • Westerville Industry and Commerce Corp • Property owners 	Short to Medium	Low to Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorships & Fund-Raising • Façade Improvement Program • Capital Improvement Program • Special Improvement District • Tax Increment Financing • Private Property Owners
<p>4. BIKE CONNECTIONS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses new public alleys (#2 above) for bike connections to Uptown. • Links Westerville Bike Hub with bike amenities & services like bike shop. • Attracts bike users as consumers to Uptown. • Provides direct connection between Ohio to Erie Trail (Bike Hub) and Alum Creek Trail (with addition of bike/ped. bridge). • Makes connection(s) between Uptown and the Community Center. • Makes connection(s) between Uptown and Alum Creek Park & Sharon Woods Metro Park. • Integrates “Route 50” with the Uptown bike system. • Provides alternate transportation options for children, students, & adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a detailed plan for each bike connection. • Construct bike connections as the opportunity arises or CIP. • Stripe bike lanes/shared use lanes on Park Street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville Parks & Recreation Department • City of Westerville 	Short to Medium	Low to Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Program • Tax Increment Financing • Grants • Partnerships with other organizations

PROJECTS	BENEFITS	ACTION ITEMS	POTENTIAL ACTORS	TIME FRAME	COST	TOOLS
<p>5. CIVIC SPACE</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses need for signature civic gathering space in Uptown that was desired amenity identified by community in both this plan and Parks Plan. • Provides a focal point and gathering place for the community and families. • Creates flexible space that accommodates many users and events, and remains active through the seasons. • Helps to accomplish the goal of bringing the community to Uptown. • Adds to the economic vitality and value of Uptown and enhances the surrounding retail uses by drawing potential customers to Uptown. • Offers opportunities for many activities including a splash pad, children's activity area, concerts, movie night, child's play, farmer's market, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify preferred site and acquire land, if necessary. • Develop conceptual park plan for selected site. • Identify and develop programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville Parks & Recreation Department • City of Westerville • Westerville Industry and Commerce Corporation 	Medium to Long	Moderate to High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Program • Tax Increment Financing • Special Improvement District • Fund Raising and Sponsorships • Grants
<p>6 STATE THEATER</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserves one of the most identifiable and cherished buildings in Uptown. • Seeks to take advantage of the building as an anchor and strong activity generator for Uptown. • Provides an opportunity site for potential collaboration among City, Uptown, Otterbein, Westerville Schools, and/or other local organizations. • Represents a unique opportunity to secure use that will serve current and future generations of Westerville residents. • Offers opportunity to create model mixed use project (retail anchor with residential above) and attract historic tax credits. • Prioritized as number one initiative by community at Public Open House and on www.PlanUptown.com. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure Option to Purchase for a specific period of time to pursue a feasibility study that would evaluate future uses, potential partners, sources of funding and ongoing operations, and community benefit. • Work with property owner to secure renovation funding and encourage compatible/desired uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville • Property owner • Westerville Industry and Commerce Corporation • Local, regional, and state non-profit organizations (CAPA, Ohio Arts and Sports Facilities Commission, etc.) 	Short to Long	Moderate to High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Program • Federal and State Historic Tax Credits • Partner Organizational Funding • Tax Increment Financing • Special Improvement District
<p>7. INFILL OPPORTUNITY AREAS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages broad array of uses that are desired in today's market place. • Potential to provide greater variety of housing options in Uptown. • Creates greater residential density to support current and expanded businesses in Uptown. • Provides new retail storefront and office opportunities with modern layouts and services to attract new companies to Uptown and Westerville. • Facilitate the redevelopment of surface lots and underutilized properties by the private market, adding new development and activity in their place. • Improves area property values and increases the tax base (property tax, income tax, sales tax, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish targeted incentive packages for key infill areas. • Revise zoning district standards to facilitate desired development types. • Promote opportunities to land owners and development community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville • Property owners • Private developers • a Industry and Commerce Corporation 	Short to Long	Private Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Planning & Economic Development Department efforts • Land Banking • Incentives
<p>8. PARKING DECK</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses real and perceived parking shortage issue. • Provides parking for Uptown visitors and merchants. • Encourages private redevelopment of nearby infill sites . • Can be shared by surrounding mixed use development to maximize parking efficiency (customers/workers during the day, residents/visitors at over night) • Could provide joint/shared use with major users like City Hall, Otterbein University, Church of the Messiah, etc. • Becomes a central parking lot. • Facilitates the growth of Uptown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify preferred site and develop conceptual plan. • Examine cost and benefits. • Investigate potential for shared use and funding partners. • Construct parking deck/garage based upon plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville • Major Uptown parking users • Westerville Industry and Commerce Corporation • Private developers 	Short to Medium	Moderate to High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Program • Tax Increment Financing • Parking Fee In-Lieu-Of • Land Bank
<p>9. GATEWAY AND WAYFINDING</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizes limited parking • Eases visitor experience • Further defines the Uptown character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize Wayfinding Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Westerville • Major Uptown parking users • Westerville Industry and Commerce Corporation 	Short to Medium	Low to Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Program • Tax Increment Financing • Special Improvement District • Parking Fee In-Lieu-Of

POTENTIAL PLANNING TOOLS RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

TOOL	BENEFITS	ACTION
<p>1. HISTORIC DISTRICT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility to apply for federal 20% and state 25% historic tax credits for substantial rehabilitation of income-producing properties. • Use of tax credit can contribute to greater investment in properties and use of underutilized upper floors. • Recognition of historic significance of core area of Westerville. • Marketing/branding as a large residential and commercial mixed use historic district. • National Register does not require new regulations or design review for properties within its boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominate the Uptown area as a National Register Historic District. • Determine potential properties that apply in Uptown • To qualify, property must be listed in the National Registry of Historical Places either individually or be a contributing building in a National Register listed historic district • Property must have an income-producing use • Rehabilitation must be substantial • Rehabilitation must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
<p>2. CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Ohio Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service in recognition of city's commitment to historic preservation. • Eligibility for matching grants (60% federal/40% local) for a wide variety of historic preservation activities • Partnership with Ohio Historic Preservation Office that provides CLGs with up-to-date historic preservation information • Networking opportunities with other CLGs in Ohio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make application to State and use certification to assist with Uptown Historic District nomination.
<p>3. SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (SID)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector initiative & tool for property owners to provide self-directed services for Uptown. • Builds on existing momentum of Uptown and allows it to "take it to the next level" • Creates unifying bond & purpose - all private property owners pay for services run by board of members • Pools financial resources to fund common needs, services, and improvements. • Property assessment can be "right-sized" for desired effort. • Flexible tool for different size projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas property owners to educate and investigate interest in forming an Uptown SID.
<p>4. MAIN STREET PROGRAM</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven comprehensive 4-point approach to downtown revitalization that includes, Organization, Design, Marketing, and Economic Restructuring • Provides on-going networking, support, training, and conferences. • Participation in Ohio program provides on-going networking, support, training and conferences • Success for over 35 years in over 2,000 communities nationwide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider participation in Main Street Program.
<p>5. DISTRICT BOUNDARIES</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded boundaries will make more resources available for those areas. • Help incentivize the conversion of rental properties back to maintained owner-occupied homes. • Help link incentives and protections with areas that are critical to the character and vitality of Uptown. • Better match the perceived uptown area with the actual boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Uptown District in terms of achieving goals of this plan
<p>6. CODE REVISIONS</p> 	<p>Consider modifications to the code to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate desired renovation & redevelopment • Reduce common variances • Update guidelines (materials, etc.) • Streamline/allow staff review & approval • Separate boundaries of Uptown Zoning District from Uptown Review District <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise approved list of materials • Parking fee-in-lieu of / shared parking credit • Review district boundaries • Consider form-based code • Focus is on form, rather than use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and amend the zoning code to facilitate the objectives of the Uptown Comprehensive Plan.

TOOL

7. EXPANDED FACADE PROGRAM



BENEFITS

- Allow for more projects
- Encourage applications for pedestrian walkway improvements
- Encourage back of building enhancements along rear alleys
- Add a program for residential façade improvement in the Uptown area
- Consider partnerships to expand impact

ACTION

- Add additional funding to the Westerville Industry and Commerce Corporation's Façade Improvement Program annual budget

8. EXPANDED TAX ABATEMENT PROGRAM



- Incentive for the renovation of existing 2nd & 3rd floor spaces.
- Way to encourage conversion of rental housing back to their original owner-occupied use.
- Abatement of substantial renovation cost of existing homes could provide neighborhood boost.
- Could be used to encourage residential infill in identified Uptown sites.
- Builds upon existing program.

- Expand the City's Tax Abatement Program for residential conversion/renovation in targeted areas.

9. LAND BANKING



- Facilitates the redevelopment of identified catalyst sites in Uptown.
- Negotiates market purchase of sites with willing seller.
- Promotes desired private redevelopment (through RFP process).
- Builds on Westerville Industry and Commerce Corporation role.

- Add land banking of identified sites (as they become available) to WICC mission.

10. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT (TIF)



- Method of capturing revenue generated by increased property value within district.
- Does not increase tax rates.
- Creates bonding capacity for public projects related to improving Uptown.
- Improvements attract additional private investment in Uptown.

- Advocate for the City to create a TIF district for the Uptown area.

11. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)



Investing in public improvements in Uptown is important to:

- Boost and support economic development efforts in Uptown and to a similar level as investments in other parts of the city.
- Respond to national trends that indicate authentic, walkable, mixed use town centers are the desirable market moving forward.
- Continue to revitalize a critical part of Westerville's identity, history, and future.
- Traditional method of funding larger capital projects.
- Improvements attract additional private investment in Uptown.

- Identify and prioritize potential projects to be considered for the CIP

ESTIMATES OF POTENTIAL COST

Catalytic Projects



1. STREET IMPROVEMENTS

- State Street: \$1.5 - 2.0 million
 - Curb extensions
 - Pavers
 - Crosswalks
 - Gateway structure (north & south ends)
- Main Street: \$1.5 - 2.0 million
 - Gateway features
 - Utility burial
 - Street light, sidewalk, & street trees infill
- College Avenue: \$1.7 - 2.2 million
 - Similar to Main St. above

\$4.7 - 6.2 million total for all three streets *
(can be accomplished in phases by street)

2. PUBLIC ALLEYS

- Estimate Includes:
 - Demolition
 - Permeable pavers alley
 - Drainage
 - Sidewalk
 - Lighting
 - Trees
 - Bike/pedestrian lane & bollards
 - Note: Does *not* include any land acquisition

\$3.8 - 5.0 million total for all alleys *
or roughly \$1,200-1,800 per lineal foot *
(can be accomplished in phases by block)

3. MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS / VIAS

- Estimate Includes:
 - Demolition
 - Specialty pavement
 - Portal gateway elements
 - Site furnishings
 - Art elements
 - Drainage
 - Note: Does *not* include any land acquisition

\$1.2 - 2.7 million for all pedestrian walkways *
or roughly \$150,000-300,000 per walk *
(assumes nine total walkways/vias)
(can be accomplished in phases by alley)

4. BIKE CONNECTIONS

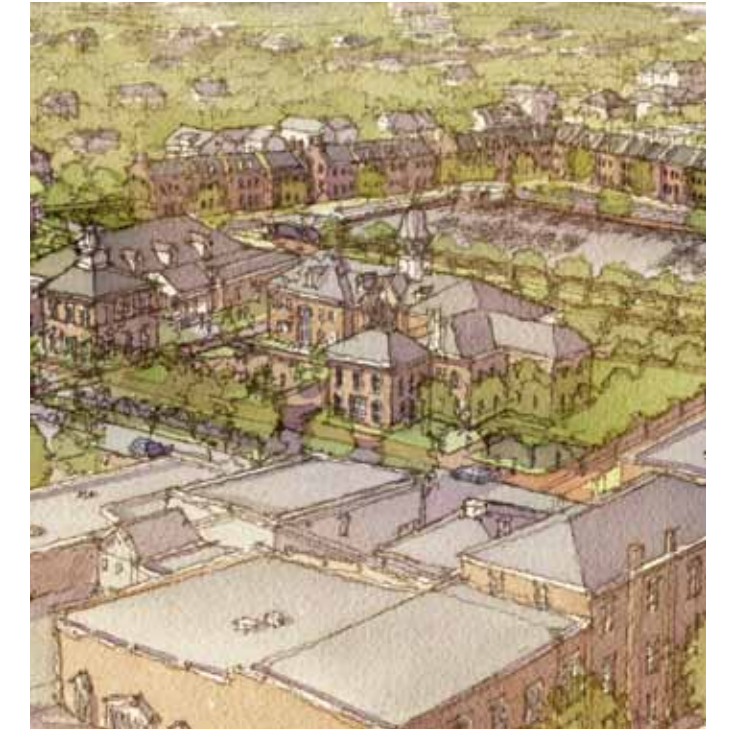
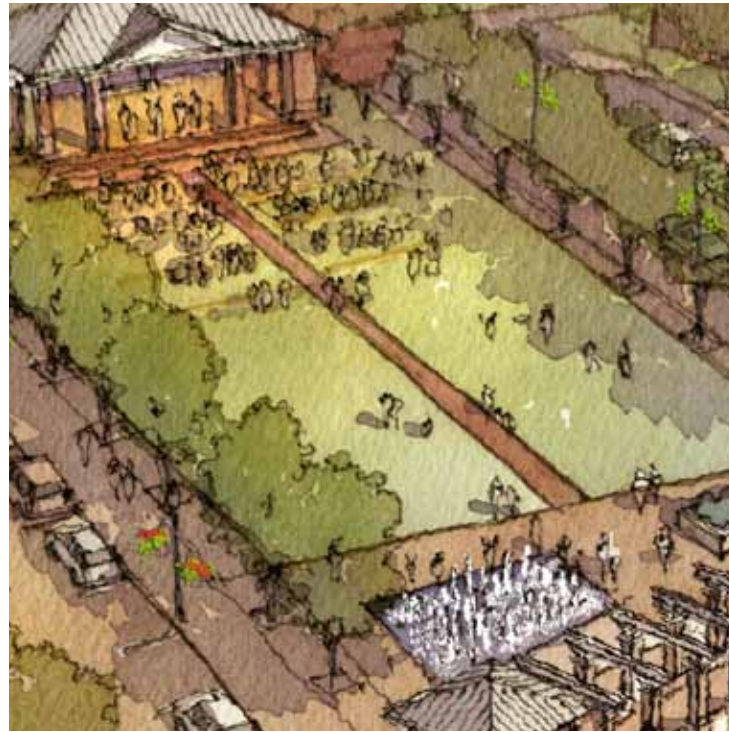
- Estimate Includes:
 - Bikeway connecting the Ohio to Erie Trail to the Alum Creek Trail along existing Park Street
 - Sharrow (shared use) paint markings
 - Wayfinding signage

\$25,000 - \$35,000 for the connection markings *

* Note: Estimates provided are for budgeting purposes only. As projects are advanced to conceptual design, more accurate cost estimates can be developed.

ESTIMATES OF POTENTIAL COST

Catalytic Projects



5. CIVIC PARK

Estimate Includes:

- Demolition
- Sidewalks
- Plaza areas
- Water feature / splash pad
- Architectural elements (trellis)
- Park pavilion structure (w/ restrooms)
- Trees and lawn
- Street Lighting
- Utilities

Note: Does *not* include any land acquisition

\$2.0 - 3.0 million for park *

(can be accomplished in component phases: ex. State Street frontage, event lawn, parking, etc.)

6. STATE THEATER

Program to be determined by land owner / tenants:

Project cost will be determined by:

- Use(s)
- Level of renovation/restoration
- Additional funding sources/partners

To Be Determined

7. OPPORTUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

Program to be determined by land owners / developers.

Project cost will be determined by:

- Land cost
- Massing/density
- Architecture
- Materials
- Program
- Parking provision

Privately Funded

8. PARKING DECK

Estimate Includes:

- Demolition/site preparation
- One story parking deck (over surface parking)
- Brick facade
- Utilities

Note: Does *not* include any land acquisition

\$2.6 - 4.2 million for parking deck *

(cost dependent on efficiency of parking garage layout; higher range includes adjacent alley)

* Note: Estimates provided are for budgeting purposes only. As projects are advanced to conceptual design, more accurate cost estimates can be developed.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Public Catalytic Projects



This survey question asked respondents to vote on up to three of the above public catalytic projects that they would like to see the City implement first in Uptown. These are the voting results of 82 respondents with

the corresponding percentage of respondents who prioritized that project. From the responses, one can see that preserving the State Theater as an iconic building and vital Uptown use is a critical priority of the

community. Beyond that, all of the potential public catalytic projects resonated with the respondents as the votes were relatively evenly split between the remaining projects. (This indicates the community did indeed

generate popular projects as part of this process.)

Note that this is provided for informational purposes and is not a formal ranking by the City or community.

Public Voting Results From Online Survey.

