
implementation strategy

April 30, 2004

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The vision for Downtown Fayetteville, formulated during the charrette, has been documented in the preceding chapters of this report through plans, illustrations, and text. This chapter identifies the necessary steps for realizing the place depicted in the imagery, transforming the community vision into a built reality. The following steps address policy recommendations, promoting the downtown, organizations and public-private partnerships, neighborhood revitalization, economic goals, and business recruitment and retention strategies.

Funding Mechanisms

To achieve the goals of the Downtown Master Plan, funding will be necessary. Public funding mechanisms for redevelopment include Arkansas Tax Increment Financing, Business Improvement Districts, grants from public and private sources, general obligation bonds approved by the public, donations, and general fund expenditures. Funding assistance for private development and economic development includes New Market Tax Credits, Historic Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Federal Loan Guarantees to financial institutions, federal matching funds for Small Business Investment Corporations, federal funding to assist local Community Development Corporations, revolving loan funds set up by local financing institutions for redevelopment and business creation (to help satisfy Community Reinvestment Act obligations), and, last but by no means least, standard financing for market rate development.

1. Tax Increment Financing

The Arkansas legislature passed a new law governing Tax Increment Financing in 2001 (Act 1197 of 2001 Regular Session, 2001 HOUSE BILL 24153, THE ARKANSAS COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT FINANCING ACT OF 2001.23 24). The law outlines the procedures for the creation of redevelopment districts that are funded through the issuance of revenue bonds supported by the tax increment of new development or redevelopment.

Tax Increment Financing is the use of increased taxes from increases in property value to fund redevelopment district costs. The funds can be used as a revenue stream for issuing and paying bonds. Revenue bonds funded by tax increment do not constitute a portion of the public debt secured by the general fund, and are tax exempt for state and municipal tax purposes. At the creation of a Downtown Redevelopment District the County Assessor compiles the aggregate value of all of the property in the redevelopment district. This assessment acts as the starting value or basis of the district. As property values rise, any tax collected in excess (the increment) of the original tax on the basis is placed into a "special fund", as specified in the legislation. The monies in the special fund can be used to pay revenue bonds that are used to implement the Downtown Redevelopment District Project Plan.

The process for enabling tax increment financing is as follows.

- a. The City government begins the creation of the Redevelopment District through a public process that includes prior notice to all local government and taxing entities, and public hearings.
- b. The District is created by a publicly approved ordinance that contains: a designation of the district boundaries; a starting date for the district, a name and number for the district; findings that the district will benefit the real property of the district by preventing the spread of slums or blighted areas, or discouraging the loss of commerce or employment, or by increasing commerce or employment; and establishment of a special fund for any funds to be used for implementing the district.
- c. Once the District is created the City must prepare a Project Plan for the district that includes:
 - A statement listing the kind, number, and location of all

proposed public works or improvements within the district or, outside the district;

- An economic feasibility study;
- A detailed list of estimated project costs;
- A description of the methods of financing all estimated project costs, including the issuance of tax increment bonds, and the time when the costs or monetary obligations are to be incurred;
- A certification by the county tax assessor of the base value, total ad valorem rate, debt service ad valorem rate, and applicable ad valorem rate for the Redevelopment District;
- The type and amount of any other revenues that are expected to be deposited to the special fund of the Redevelopment District;
- A map showing existing uses and conditions of real property in the District;
- A map of proposed improvements and uses in the District;
- Proposed changes of zoning ordinances;
- Appropriate cross-references to any master plan, map, building codes, and city ordinances affected by the Project Plan;
- A list of estimated non-project costs; and
- A statement of the proposed method for the relocation of any persons to be displaced.

d. The City must hold a public hearing to allow public comment on the proposed project plan and must serve notice prior to the public hearing notice to any taxing entities in the Redevelopment District.

e. The City approves the Project Plan by an ordinance that is adopted within one year of the County Assessor's evaluation of basis, and the ordinance must contain a finding of economic feasibility.

The creation of a Downtown Redevelopment District allows the use of eminent domain to carry out the purposes of the district. The City is allowed to sell, lease or mortgage any property acquired for the purposes of implementing the plan. The funding from the District may be used for organizing and creating the district, property acquisition, capital improvements needed, whether inside or outside the district in order to implement the plan, creation of parks, community centers and other public buildings, relocation of displaced persons, and other uses listed in the legislation. The legislation also allows the City to accept and place in the special fund grants from other government entities and donations and grants from private sources. The life of the Downtown Redevelopment District is limited to 25 years, and no funding from the district special fund can be disbursed after the termination of the district.

The City should create a Downtown Redevelopment District. A Project Plan should be produced based on the findings of the Downtown Master Plan. Under the law governing Tax Increment Financing, the City is empowered to designate a City employee, group of employees, or a board to handle the affairs of the Downtown Redevelopment District. The City should form a Downtown Redevelopment Board that is representative of the area stakeholders and the City. In addition to the Downtown Redevelopment Board, the City should hire a Development Coordinator to implement the approved Downtown Redevelopment District Project Plan.

2. Business Improvement District

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a special taxing district created with the consent of its property owners that allows the City to levy a tax to pay for specific services and improvements agreed upon by the City and property owners. BID's are used to pay for such things as street cleaning and maintenance of special features, programs such as planters and street furnishings, maintenance of parking areas, etc. The City and Downtown Dickson Enhancement Project (DDEP) should reorganize DDEP into a BID and Downtown Redevelopment District Business Organization to work directly with the Downtown Redevelopment Board and the Development Coordinator to implement the Downtown Redevelopment District Project Plan.

3. Grants

There are a number of federal grants available for redevelopment and community service purposes as well as grants for infrastructure. Federal grants require the City to have a Consolidated Plan in order to receive Community Development Block Grants and Community Service Block Grants. Fayetteville does have a Consolidated Plan and is eligible for funding. The Federal Department of Transportation also has grants for infrastructure, including funding for roads and highways and innovative transportation grants for research and implementation of alternative transportation. A list of these programs has been included in the appendix.

Private grants from foundations are available through application by the City, community development corporations and other community oriented non-profit organizations. They are rarely given to private for-profit businesses. Finding grants can be daunting as there are literally thousands of foundations and grant givers; most organizations that rely upon such funding hire what is termed a "development specialist" to research the grants and write proposals. It should be noted that a tax increment special fund can accept grants from foundations and private grantors.

The City has already obtained a lobbyist to expedite the procurement of funding from Federal sources. It is suggested that the City train a staff member in grants research and writing to coordinate with the lobbyist and to research and apply for private foundation opportunities as well.

4. Tax Credits

Tax credits can be very powerful funding incentives for private development. There are three basic credits available now that have application in redevelopment: New Market Tax Credits; Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits; and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. The rules for tax credit investment are laid out in the US Internal Revenue Code. Tax credits allow a dollar for dollar reduction in tax (not income) and thus are of use to anyone with a need for tax reduction. Tax credits are often sold (securitized) to investors, allowing non-profits and project owners unable to use them to gain funding for construction and other allowable project costs.

New Market Tax Credits require the designation of eligible census tracts by the federal government. Fayetteville's downtown area has been so designated, and projects downtown are eligible for these credits. The New Market Credit was authorized by Congressional House Bill 12392, which outlines the availability and terms of use for the tax credit (more information can be found at www.cdfifund.gov/programs/nmtc/index.asp).

Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits require that the project be in a historic district as a contributing structure or that the structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Rehabilitation tax credits can be applied to 20 percent of eligible project costs. If the City's Historic Preservation Commission and the Heritage Committee can agree upon a designation of non-contributing but significant structures that could be upgraded to contributing status, the potential for the use of tax credits would increase and more structures would be preserved.

The City of Chicago, in association with the Chicago Historic Bungalow Association, has instituted a program providing tax credits and low interest financing for the purchase and rehabilitation of historic bungalows. The certification of the structures is based upon a thematic historic designation rather than on a particular district. Such a thematic designation process could work in the neighborhoods surrounding Downtown Fayetteville and allow homeowners to take advantage of tax credits otherwise unavailable to them (for more detail, please see www.chicagobungalow.org).

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC's) can be used for providing housing to households at or below 60 percent of median income and provide either four percent or eight percent credits. Area 60 percent of median household income by household size is calculated every year by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is not necessary for all units in a building to be affordable to receive the tax credit; the credit applies only to those units that are eligible. To receive the credit, the units must be kept affordable for fifteen years to receive ten years of tax credits.

Rehabilitation tax credits and LIHTC's can be applied on the same project. This means that in implementing affordable housing units in downtown Fayetteville, that a credit from 24 to 28 percent could be achieved in redevelopment.

An information program to familiarize developers and property owners with tax credit opportunities should be undertaken by the City. This could be performed effectively as an addition to the City web site, which is already an excellent resource. Elements would include explanations of the credits, links to credit websites, and downloadable information and application forms. Pro forma templates for calculating tax credits would also be useful for those not familiar with credits.

5. Small Business Investment Corporations

Small Business Investment Corporations (SBIC) are business development venture funds for business creation and development that are regulated by the Small Business Administration. The federal government will match local funding at a three to one ratio. What this means is that if local investors, banks and others form a SBIC with \$1 million in start-up funding, it may be possible to get grants of up to \$3 million to match. Since the Downtown Master Plan calls not only for infrastructure, but also new businesses to provide the services that are desired by residents, the formation and operation of a Fayetteville SBIC could be a means for creating and retaining business in the downtown area. SBICs are allowed to use funds for investment in small business and to act as an advisory resource. This means that the SBIC employees could fund and advise businesses on issues such as effective use of information technology, effective retailing practices, financial management, employee management, efficient use of resources, etc.

It is suggested that the City, Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, DDEP, and local businesses collaborate in the formation of a SBIC. Because of the Federal program offering three-to-one leveraging of local funding, SBICs can be more effective in using local funds than business assistance organizations that do not have access to the program. DDEP should institute a committee to research the feasibility of setting up an SBIC and work with local and state financial institutions to fund the program initially.

6. Revolving Funds

A Revolving Fund is a low-interest financing pool set up by local lenders acting together to meet Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) obligations. The funds are not grants; borrowers are expected to pay back the loans to finance future loans. The fund can have its own investment criteria regarding the type of lending that will be underwritten. In addition to meeting CRA obligations, revolving funds also generate customer loyalty to participating institutions and serve to keep

local money from interest payments and administration costs in local circulation. The City should meet with local lenders to assess the potential for a revolving fund within the Downtown Redevelopment District.

Policy Recommendations & Changes

7. Adopt the Fayetteville Downtown Master Plan

The City of Fayetteville should adopt the Fayetteville Downtown Master Plan, giving the plan official standing. Adopting the plan sends an important message to property owners and residents that the political decision makers support the Downtown Master Plan.

8. Zoning and Design Standards

The review of existing zoning regulations and site analysis indicated that in many cases the zoning in Downtown does not match either the existing use or the goals of the community. Appropriate zoning encourages development by providing certainty. A zoning process that requires additional hearings and variances increases the risk of time and money to developers. By establishing clear zoning that supports the City's vision and provides a visual guide to design criteria, investors can be sufficiently certain that their project will be approved. Neighbors can be assured that what will develop will be desirable, not harmful, to the existing Downtown neighborhoods. The formation of a new Downtown District ordinance would allow by-right development of property in congruence with standards set forth in the code. The Downtown District would streamline the process of getting projects approved because of the investment in public process and consensus that the Downtown Master Plan incorporates. The City's Unified Development Code should be amended to include the proposed Downtown District (Appendix H).

9. Amend the Fayetteville General Plan 2020: Master Street Plan

Amend the Master Street Plan to include the proposed Downtown District Thoroughfare Standards (see Appendix H). In addition to the Thoroughfare Standards, the Thoroughfare Atlas should also be included in the Master Street Plan to identify the location of specific thoroughfare types within Downtown.

10. Streamline Development Procedures & Approvals Process

Part of attracting quality development consists of making the process of approvals transparent, responsible, and reasonably expeditious. This is typically done through promoting inter-departmental cooperation on development approvals and appointing a lead person for each application to guide it through the process. Complicated approvals, where the process is akin to opening a series of doors without knowing what will be found, tend to dampen the enthusiasm of prospective developers and businesses hoping to locate in a city.

A variety of mechanisms have been used elsewhere: allowing development by-right for projects that meet specific plan objectives; having a project manager or development coordinator that sees through each development project; one-stop permitting shops that eliminate the need to visit different agencies; development checklists that specify the exact requirements for permit approval; application scorecards rating a development's success in meeting community goals and allowing priority treatment for those that do; fast-track processing for projects that do not change use or occupancy; use of geographic information system or other technology to instantly provide information on permits, zoning and many other regulations. The plan recommends that all of these methods for streamlining development procedures and the approval process be undertaken and that a Development Coordinator be put in place to oversee the process and ensure that reforms are successful.

11. Appoint a Development Coordinator

The Development Coordinator should oversee the streamlining of the permit processes in the Redevelopment District. The development coordinator can be the official placed in charge of implementing the Redevelopment District Project Plan and thus be paid by, and operate for the success of, the Redevelopment District. The City should create a Development Coordinator staff position as part of the Downtown Redevelopment District.

12. Planning

- **Citywide Ongoing Housing Strategy** - In order to address the issues inherent in redevelopment, a citywide housing strategy is necessary. The strategy should evaluate how and where to increase housing and the types of housing needed to accommodate the current and future housing market. Such a strategy should provide market-feasible locations for a mix and range of types that will attract a diverse range of residents and help to stabilize neighborhoods.
- **Neighborhood Specific Plans for Areas Outside of Downtown** - Because all areas of Fayetteville are part of the primary market for sustaining and adding new retail in Downtown, it is critical to create specific plans to preserve and enhance the areas surrounding Downtown. Research planning funding is available through HUD for performing specific plans. The City can begin the process of neighborhood planning through preliminary meetings to identify issues, much as was done for Downtown.
- **Urban and Architectural Standards** - Standards are necessary to reassure the community and developers that their investment in Downtown will be protected and that future development will match or exceed their investment in type and quality. The proposed Downtown District ordinance includes both Urban Standards and Architectural Standards as part of the a zoning

district for Downtown. The City should adopt these standards as part of its Unified Development Code to further insure proper development and redevelopment Downtown.

13. Conduct Annual Inventories of Land Uses

An annual inventory of land use allows prospective developers and businesses to understand the supply and thus the need or demand for various land uses. The inventories should include housing, retail, office, industrial, and warehouse uses, among others. The inventories would show opportunities in the market as well as trends of current redevelopment. The City should conduct annual inventories of its land use using the City's GIS system, and make the results available on the City's website.

14. Confirm Physical and Regulatory Conditions

The Downtown Master Plan was created with limited information regarding rights-of-way, property lines, existing building locations, easements, utility limitations, and covenants tied to individual properties. As site-specific applications come forward and City improvements are undertaken, modifications will be necessary as accurate surveys and site analysis are conducted. As part of the process of carrying out the Downtown Redevelopment District Project Plan, the City's GIS system should be updated with information on the physical conditions of individual properties as development occurs.

Promote Downtown

15. Promote the Downtown Fayetteville Master Plan

Continuing to spread the word about this plan and successful initial projects is vital for implementation. A variety of media should be used: brochures, Internet, or TV are some common methods. Promote the plan so it will start to take on a life of its own and continue to work for Downtown for years to come.

16. Market Research

To identify the most likely prospects for people choosing Downtown for their entertainment/restaurant and shopping needs, annual market research should be conducted. The market research would first serve as a baseline on the public's perceptions of the desirability and attraction of Downtown. The market research would later be used to gauge the success of programs and improvements to Downtown that attract shoppers and visitors.

17. Information is the Image

A sustained, high profile campaign would give prospective residents and businesses the information they need to make a choice in locating or visiting Downtown. The City needs to create a vibrant branding position for Downtown so that people think of Downtown first when they are looking for something exciting to do, see, shop, or experience. Currently the Fayetteville Visitor's Guides use a script type for Fayetteville with the tag line, "Worth Remembering". A fresh approach that speaks to Fayetteville as a leader in cultural entertainment for Northwest Arkansas must be created and used consistently by merchants, the business community, and the cultural/arts community.

18. Growing Synergy: Expand the Product and the Customer Base at the Same Time

If we ask prospects to think of Downtown first as a constant center of activity, Downtown has to be ready to provide what we promise. Downtown has to have an infrastructure of excitement that's evident in a wide array of activities, including entertainment, dining, residential, retail, history, and arts and culture. The Downtown Master Plan recommends changes to the physical form of Downtown that will require everyone pulling together to achieve the desired goals. To date, events and cultural arts activities have brought prospects to Downtown, but these events have not fully achieved the desired effect of bringing people back to Downtown once they have a great experience.

As each part of the Downtown Master Plan is implemented, a detailed list of the businesses and services to target for locating (or relocating) in Downtown Fayetteville is imperative. Fayetteville may want to bring in a national tenant to "anchor" the Downtown. This takes focus and tenacity as well as the right market numbers to get the attention of national retailers. Besides the national tenants, Fayetteville should look for tenants that will open a second location in Downtown. These successful business owners could ride the popular support for their current location into a new venue. As part of attracting both local and national tenants to Downtown, the City should offer opportunities for incubating businesses and allowing them to move to larger locations as they grow.

19. Celebrate

It is important to celebrate Fayetteville's uniqueness and discover ways to promote Downtown's strengths. With a high degree of community input in the charrette process, the message is clear that Fayetteville citizens are proud of their community. The Downtown Master Plan should serve to fit all the pieces together to continue to make Fayetteville a first-rate city. The City, Chamber of Commerce, and other local organizations should promote the high quality of life of living, visiting, and doing business Downtown through various media techniques, both on a regional and national scale.

Organizations and Public-Private Partnerships

20. Historic Preservation Commission

Historic preservation can act as a surprisingly effective economic development force. The City's Historic Preservation Commission establishes historic districts, develops historic preservation and development guidelines and assists with Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Historic buildings eligible for designation to the National Register of Historic Places or those that contribute to a local historic district are eligible for federal tax credits up to 20% of the cost of renovation. To

further encourage preservation of structures Downtown, the City and Historic Preservation Commission should create a category of designation for structures that are not currently contributing, but if restored could contribute. Creating a category for structures that could be contributing if restored can encourage renovation rather than destruction of non-contributing but potentially valuable structures. The Commission should validate and protect the proposed standards to preserve the character of Downtown neighborhoods.

21. Establish a Parcel Assembly Program

The City, through its power of eminent domain, has the ability to consolidate parcels of land for the purposes of redevelopment and economic development. One strategy for creating new development is the identification of opportunity sites and the consolidation of parcels to allow development at a scale that offers feasibility to the type of use desired. Given the historic context of Downtown, however, this strategy will be inappropriate in many cases. Alternatively, the City should establish a land bank through its Downtown Business Improvement District with funding from local business owners. The land bank would then use revolving funds to acquire and assemble key sites and solicit preferred development alternatives. It is suggested that DDEP and the City collaborate on the formation of a land bank to acquire key opportunity parcels Downtown to preserve them for appropriate and supportive development. The City should use its Geographic Information System (GIS) capability to identify opportunity sites.

22. Parking

The parking systems within Downtown Fayetteville can be optimized with a combination of pricing structure and parking duration allowed. Where retail establishments, including restaurants, are desired as part of the mix of Downtown uses, metered parking duration should be less and hourly parking rates should be moderate to high. Off-street structured parking should be correspondingly lower in cost and higher in duration.

Regarding the type of parking to be provided, on-street, parallel parking is the most pedestrian-friendly form of downtown parking. It provides direct access to the adjacent commercial establishments and provides a traffic calming effect on urban streets. Surface parking lots, while they provide low cost vehicle storage, are detrimental to the walkability of Downtown streets. The long-term goal of Downtown development should be to transform all sizable surface lots to structured parking with liner buildings.

Parking management and the provision of structured parking is necessary in order to have businesses without parking lots between them. In addition, employees often consume uses available surface and street parking near businesses, thus precluding use by customers and creating the impression that going downtown is somehow more difficult than a trip to the mall. Many businesses, however, might have difficulty affording the cost of structured parking. One of the projects to be undertaken by the Downtown Redevelopment District, therefore, is the provision of shared structured parking. By the use of shared parking, parking demand management agreements, and Redevelopment District funding, the cost of providing parking Downtown can be substantially reduced for all of the participating parties.

The City and DDEP should identify sites for shared parking and meet with property owners and businesses to set the terms of use. The parking can be managed by the existing parking authorities after it is constructed with Downtown Redevelopment District funding. Demand management agreements can be negotiated to determine the end cost to employers for employee spaces.

Neighborhood Revitalization

23. Develop an Infill Strategy

A strategy should be developed to target vacant, underutilized or "soft" properties that detract from the quality of the historic downtown. Vacant land and derelict buildings offer opportunities for change and redevelopment. In order to seize these opportunities it is necessary to inventory and map the locations of vacant land and derelict buildings and then target new users and promote the inventoried opportunities to new investors. The City can use its extensive GIS system to begin to identify a list of properties that might benefit from infill. This can be done as a part of the annual inventory of land use recommended above.

24. Develop a Rehabilitation/Adaptive Re-use Strategy

The adaptive reuse of buildings that have become functionally or economically obsolete is one of the ways to create housing within Downtown. Infill development Downtown should be less expensive than greenfield development, since infrastructure is already in place, while offering residents the amenities of the urban core. Code requirements should be clarified and arbitrary requirements eliminated to avoid the need of frequent variances and limit the legal obstacles to building improvement or renovation. The City should therefore adopt a "Smart Building Code" (please see Chapter 2: Smart Rules).

The City has an existing building rehabilitation program funded by Community Development Block Grants. As part of the continued efforts to encourage rehabilitation Downtown, the City should partner with the University of Arkansas Community Design Center to incorporate design assistance for rehabilitation and adaptive re-use.

25. Institute Housing Programs

As part of neighborhood revitalization, many communities offer assistance for homeowners. The cities of Elgin, and Waukegan, Illinois offer \$10,000 to \$15,000 per unit to return divided houses to single-

family homes. Other strategies include assistance and education for homeowner maintenance with tax exemptions for the improvement value of renovations. Fargo, North Dakota offers down payment assistance as part of a first time buyers program; other cities commonly assist with securing low interest mortgages for first time buyers. In addition to local initiatives, there are several federal programs available to homeowners.

- First-time homebuyer program - Funding is available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for first time homebuyers.
- Mortgage guarantee programs - The federal government has a series of grants for guaranteeing mortgages on single-family and multi-family housing in order to reduce local lender risk (see the Funding table in the appendix).

The City should evaluate its current housing programs and determine whether the initiatives outlined can aid in providing housing assistance in Fayetteville.

26. Housing Strategies and Inclusionary Zoning

Every neighborhood in the City should bear some responsibility for meeting the social need for affordable housing. Indeed in Downtown, attainably-priced housing is part of the Downtown Master Plan. In order to provide a mix and range of housing opportunities it is essential to insure that low-income units and moderately-priced homes will be included among market rate housing. There are many benefits to having a mix of incomes living Downtown, including providing for housing of the downtown workforce in a location that will not force long commutes on the workers, with all the energy savings, congestion management, and positive family impacts that living close to work implies. A major advantage of mixing variously-priced units is that the quality of the building will not be less than others in the area, eliminating one objection to low-income housing.

The best way to accommodate affordable housing Downtown is to prepare and implement a comprehensive housing strategy. The strategy will include financing and subsidies from private and public sources. As part of the strategy, the City should also add to the Unified Development Code, "inclusionary zoning" rules that:

- mandate a percentage of affordable units in every new development and redevelopment project Downtown,
- provide for payment of a fee in-lieu of units, for the City to fund financial components of the housing strategy,
- insure long-term affordability, and
- provide incentives to the developer that may include a reduction in minimum unit square footages, less interior finish requirements, a reduction in required parking spaces, and height or density bonuses for exceeding the number of affordable units.

Enhancing the Downtown Market & Ensuring Future Economic Vitality

27. Promote Retail, but not Everywhere

While it is anticipated that the revitalization of Downtown will be led by residential development and not retail-led, a destination retail area should ultimately be re-established Downtown. Retail is not a primary generator of local income, but it is an indicator of the performance of the local economy. Because it is a visible indicator, those who come from outside the area looking for opportunities to locate or start a business or establish a home often interpret Downtown retail as a proxy for the vitality of the local economy. The retail core must have enough concentration of use that it is worthwhile for people to visit and to stay. For example, retail isolated between empty office buildings at night loses some of its ability to draw people based upon the liveliness of the district. Retailers move to an area in the expectation of support in the form of nearby shops and the foot traffic they generate. The Downtown Master Plan should be used as a guide for locating retail Downtown.

The Downtown Master Plan identifies the portion of Block Avenue north of the Downtown Square as the retail anchor adjoining Dickson Street and the Downtown Square. As market conditions change, more retail may indeed be possible. If the City tracks market and retail spending, further analysis may indicate that in the future Downtown can accommodate additional retail uses.

28. Consistent Lease Formats for Downtown Retail

One of the main competitive advantages of malls is the consistency of hours and operations. This consistency gives customers the confidence that when they visit, the environment will be clean, safe, and all stores will be open and available to them. One means for achieving the same result in a downtown environment is the creation of a typical lease format that contains provisions for hours of operation and shop window maintenance and display changes. While Downtown is not a mall, some form of agreement is necessary to enable a comparable level of appearance of organization and convenience to that of malls. This is a task that should be considered by the re-organized DDEP. Working with property and business owners and local real estate brokers, DDEP should create a lease format that guarantees uniform conditions for key retail areas Downtown. In particular, the portion of Block Avenue designated as a retail focus area in the Downtown Master Plan should have uniform standards for hours of operation, maintenance, and displays.

29. Adhere to the Architectural Standards for Storefronts

All areas of Downtown should strive to have street-level uses that lend an appearance of vitality and make walking interesting. Buildings at street level, for the sake of safety, should have windows facing the street as opposed to long stretches of blank walls. Shopfront windows should be untinted and transparent to provide clear views of merchandise and to provide natural surveillance of exterior street spaces. The new Downtown District ordinance, appended in draft form to the Downtown Master Plan, which sets forth architectural standards for storefronts and their relation to the street, should be adopted.

Business Recruitment and Retention

30. Technical Assistance for Businesses and Retailers

There are funding sources listed in the appendix for assistance to small businesses and startup businesses. There is also a federal program to help small businesses compete for federal supply contracts. Small startup retail businesses typically need expert assistance in areas such as store layout, lighting design, inventory controls and information systems for understanding consumer preferences. Business assistance is a task to be undertaken through a Small Business Investment Corporation as mentioned above, or through guidance from DDEP, the Chamber of Commerce, or the University of Arkansas.

31. Collect and Organize Data for Business Use

Information on land ownership, property inventories, tenant and customer profiles, and space and rent data should be collected and organized to track commercial and residential markets. This information is available from brokers; larger commercial real estate houses publish quarterly reports by region. Local offices should be encouraged to contribute data for tracking sub-markets around the City. The City should coordinate with DDEP to organize data collection from businesses and real estate brokerages and add this information to the City's GIS database.

32. Economic Development

It is important to understand the relationship of Fayetteville in the regional economic context and for the City to direct investment towards Downtown. Like housing markets, labor markets are regional, extending about an hour's drive. Many of the steps listed above for Downtown are economic development tools, including the full use of the City's GIS capability to allow prospective businesses access to City information regarding opportunities for business locations, markets, and housing.

The Internet offers the opportunity to broadcast City information in an interactive format. The City's web page is a useful place to provide market information for businesses considering relocation. The City should create a webpage for economic development from which prospective businesses can easily obtain information about locating Downtown and available sites. The City currently has an excellent website which provides interactive capabilities within its GIS system. It is suggested that the City's GIS website be amended to allow searches for opportunity sites for development, space availability, and housing. Additional links should include existing infrastructure mapping of roads, utilities, and zoning in Downtown. If the City's GIS Department undertakes the annual inventory of land uses previously suggested, providing this information will not require any substantial additional expenditure of City resources.