



Downtown Elkhart Master Plan



Elkhart in the Early 20th Century



Elkhart in the Early 20th Century



BIRD'S EYE VIEW,
LOOKING NORTH,
ELKHART, IND.
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Elkhart in Early the 20th Century



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ELKHART'S CIVIC CENTER

HIGH SCHOOL
CITY HALL

The Charrette Process

January 2023

Five-day charrette process included architects, consultant team, community members and City of Elkhart staff.

- Work collaboratively
- Design across all disciplines
- Use design to identify a shared vision and holistic solutions
- Work in detail
- Constrain work schedules
- Communicate in short feedback loops
- Work over consecutive days
- Work on-site
- Produce concrete plans
- Evaluate the plan with objective measures



The Plan: Downtown Elkhart

Geographic Boundaries:

North: Jefferson Street

East: Waterfall Drive

South: Railroad Tracks

West: 3rd Street Alleyway

The Master Plan is a blueprint for the incremental transformation of Downtown Elkhart into a national model of urban regeneration and local vibrancy.



The Plan: Priority Areas



STREETS



PARKING



PUBLIC REALM
AND LANDSCAPE



ZONING AND
LAND USE



INFILL HOUSING
AND RETAIL



HISTORIC
PRESERVATION

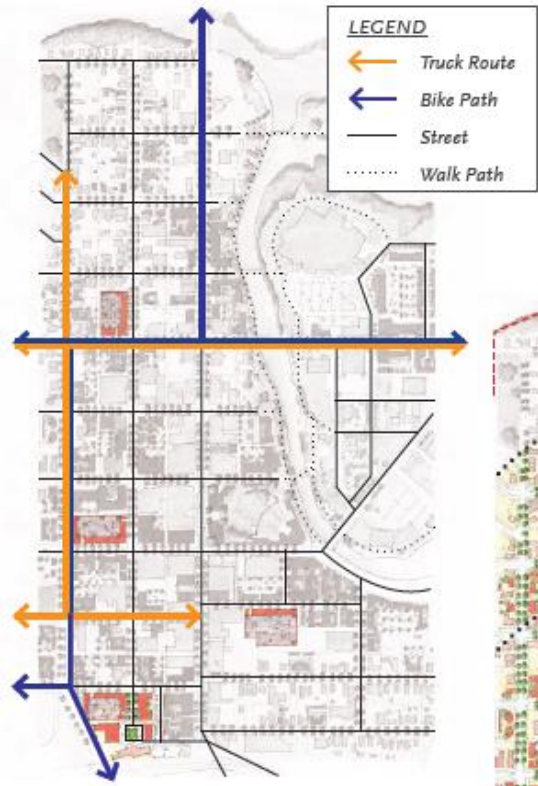


TRANSPORTATION

The Plan: Key Layers



A ROBUST OPEN SPACE NETWORK



A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION & PARKING STRATEGY



ONE DOWNTOWN, TWO DISTRICTS



GREAT CIVIC AMENITIES



PRESERVATION & CONTEXT-SENSITIVE MIXED-USE INFILL

Open Space Strategy



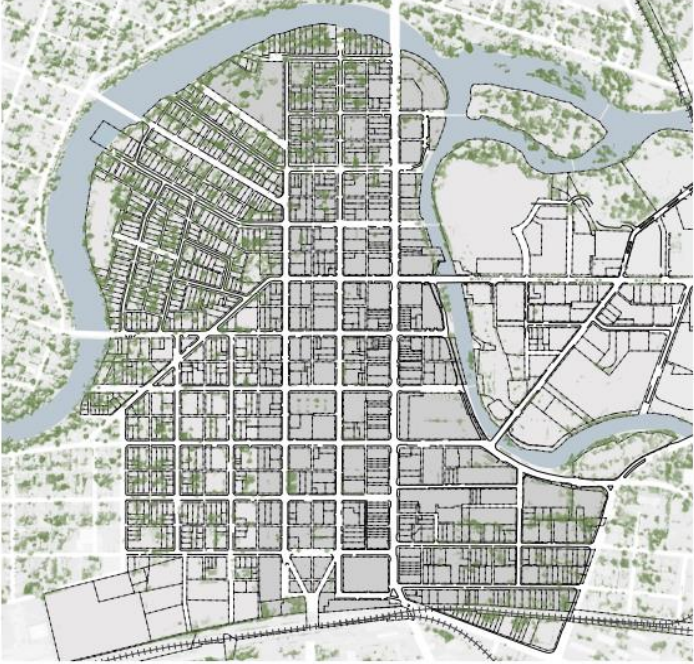
OPEN SPACE NETWORK

This diagram shows the existing open space network of Downtown Elkhart organized around the confluence of the St. Joseph and Elkhart Rivers. Trails and parks provide Downtown Elkhart access to nature and recreational opportunities such as walking, biking, fishing, and kayaking. The riverfront also promotes biodiversity and functions as habitat for native and migratory bird species.

However, the current open space network lacks the coherence of a continuous outdoor experience. A robust landscape strategy and reprogramming of this open space network can both greatly augment the urban experience, identify opportunities for private development around these spaces, and also expand this network from the perimeter into the Downtown core with a street tree planting program.

LEGEND

■ Public Parks & Open Space



TREE COVERAGE

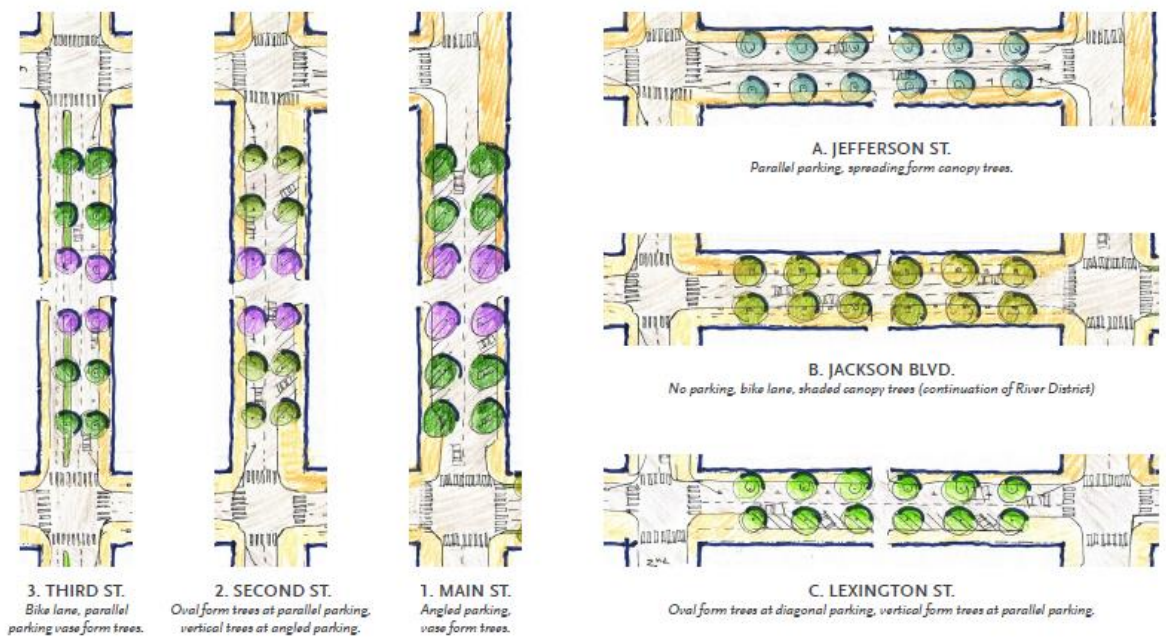
In contrast with adjacent neighborhoods, Downtown Elkhart is almost entirely devoid of street trees. A lack of shade canopy can make urban streets feel hot, barren, and inhospitable, discouraging people from visiting the area.

It is imperative to reduce the Urban Heat Island Effect within the Downtown through the introduction of street trees, which will also improve air quality, reduce noise pollution, and provide habitat. They also create a sense of enclosure along streets, which reduces driver speeds, and provide an extra buffer between people and cars. Recent upgrades to the River District with pedestrian-friendly streets lined with a pattern of streetlamps and trees is a precedent worth emulating within the Downtown.

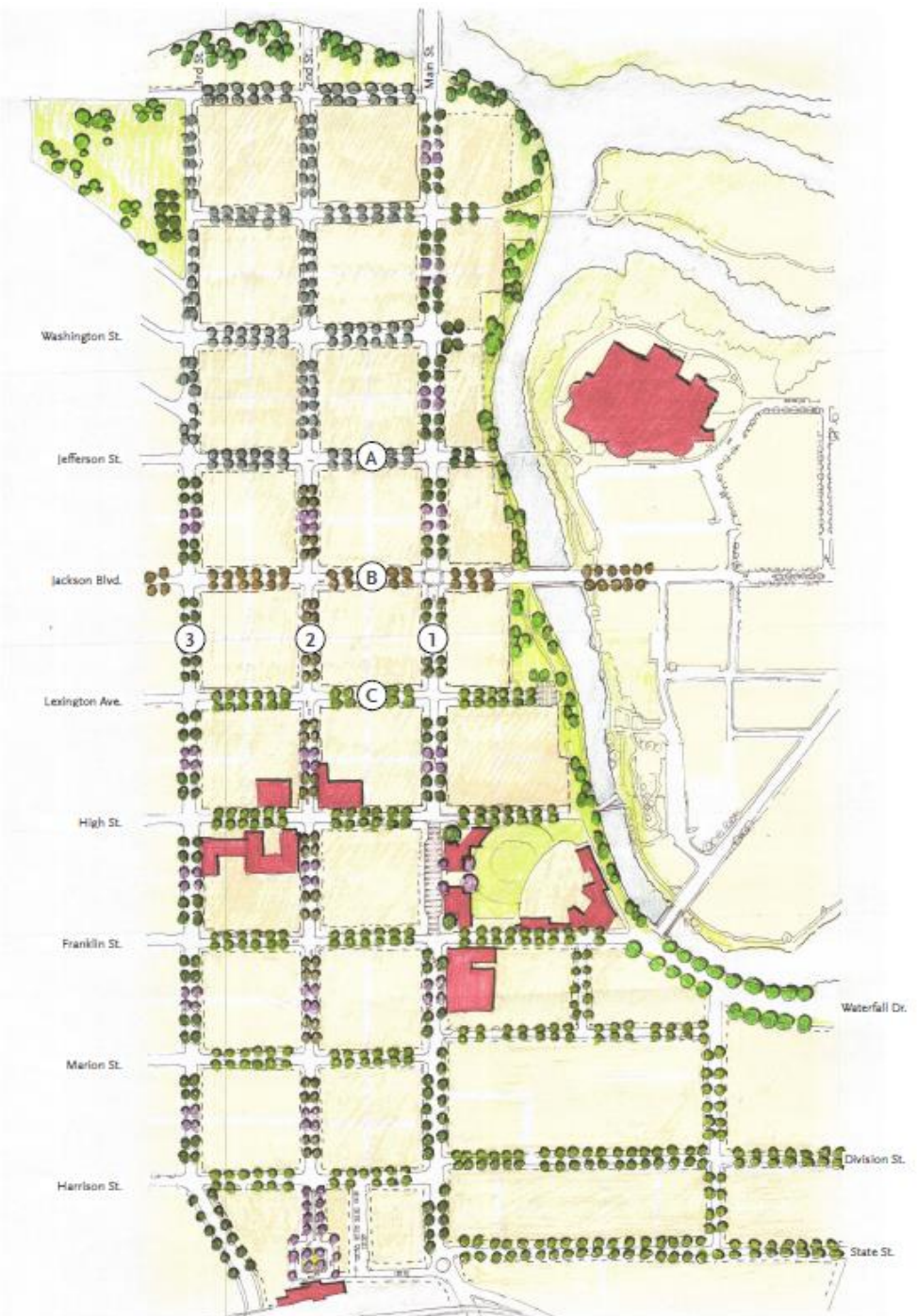
LEGEND

● Tree Canopies

Open Space Strategy



- **Riverwalk** – This is the most prized, yet ecologically sensitive open space associated with this project, particularly offering a unique recreational amenity for residents and visitors.
- **Main Street** – The principle commercial heart of the development
- **Central Green** – A Large verdant green with a new Amphitheater
- **Other Streets** – A verdant network of streets that connects all the parks and the river into a cohesive open space network.



Elkhart Riverwalk

By parking the streets, alleys and structures, this area of land along the Elkhart River has the potential to become one of the most cherished and unique public spaces within the City.

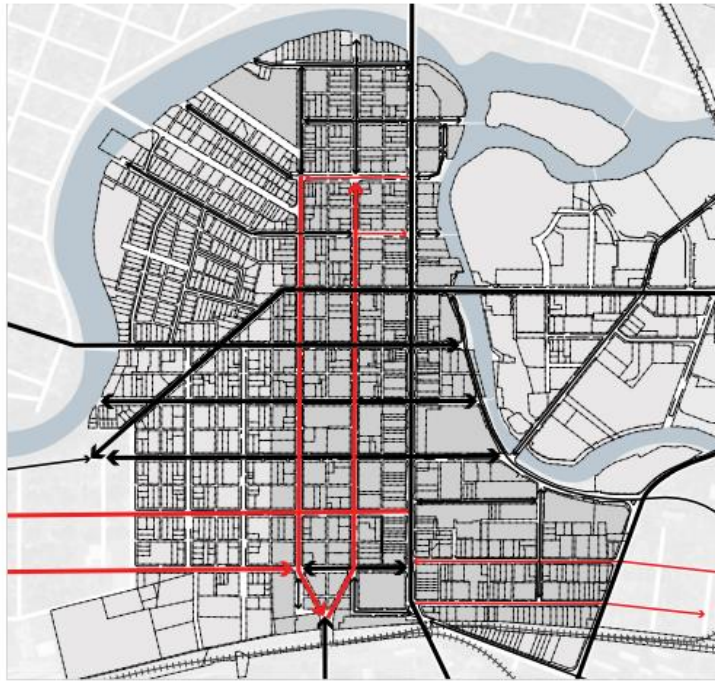
Riverwalk - Before



Riverwalk - After



Transportation Strategy



STREET NETWORK

Downtown Elkhart is defined by a continuous and regular street grid. The square blocks are generally +/-350 ft. long and subdivided by a minor grid of alleys. Some streets were converted to one-ways in the 20th century. One-way streets west of Main Street are 2nd St., 3rd St., Marion St., Harrison St., and the portion of Jefferson St. between Main Street and 2nd St., and that of Washington St. between Main Street and 3rd St. One-way streets east of Main Street are Division St. and State St. Studies have shown that one-way streets hurt commercial activity by making navigating and parking harder, and increasing driver speeds, traffic collisions, and pedestrian casualties.

Returning all Downtown streets to a two-way configuration, is an important step towards ensuring pedestrian safety, helping to manage driver speeds, and enhancing commercial vitality.

LEGEND

- ↔ Two-Way Streets
- One-Way Streets



PROPOSED STREET NETWORK

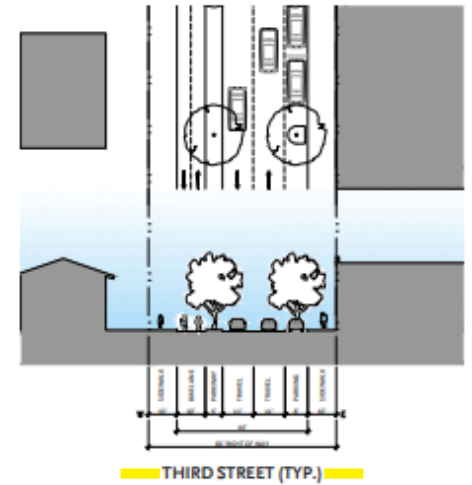
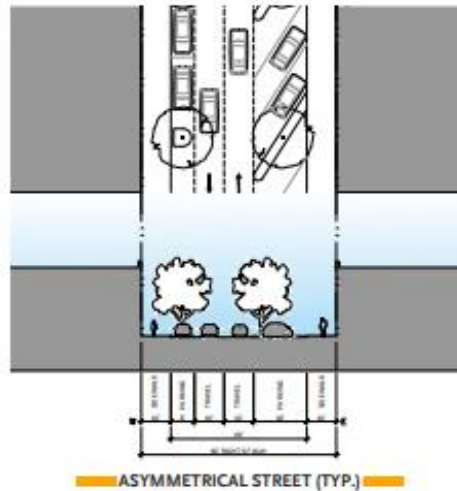
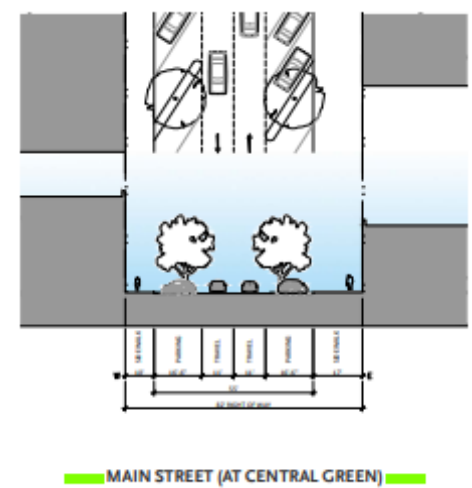
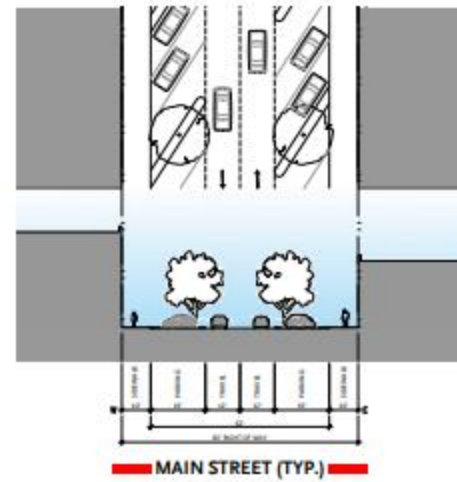
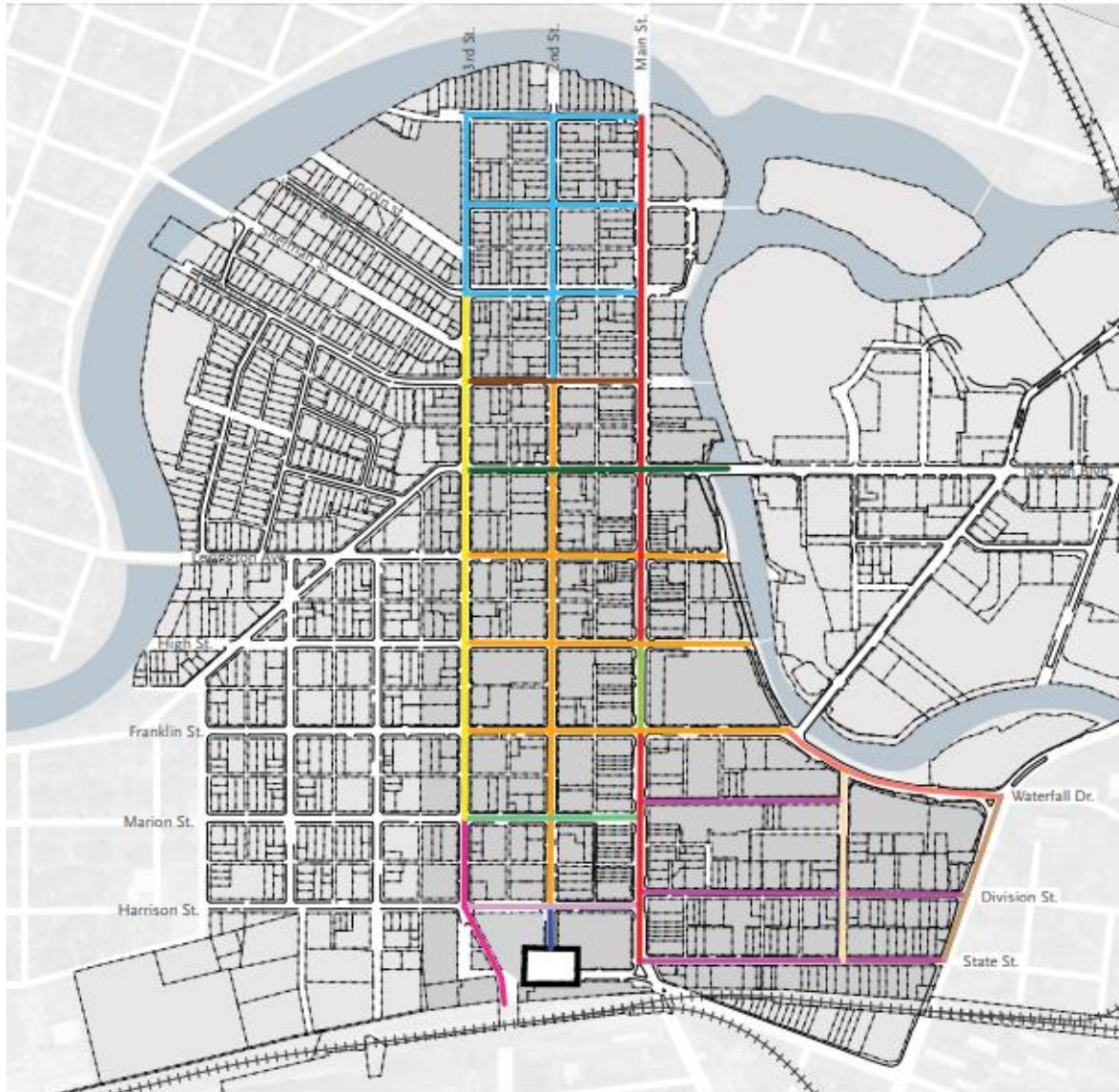
LEGEND

- ↔ Two-Way Streets
- One-Way Drop-Off Loop

The "Wishbone" was an expensive and effective way to begin the one-way network conversion of 2nd and 3rd Streets over thirty years ago. However, since the two-way network is recommended for restoration, it is important to fix the connection underneath the railway bridge. The most reasonable reconnection calls for two-way travel on the western leg of the Wishbone. Two-way Benham Avenue should be reconstructed under the Railway Bridge to have four lanes of capacity. After 4-lane Benham Avenue rises to 3rd Street the lanes should gradually taper into the network with east and west lane drops at Marion Street. 2nd Street extends northward as a 2-lane street.

This strategy could be realized at once or in phases. At a minimum, 2nd and 3rd Streets are the priority, with other streets changing over time.

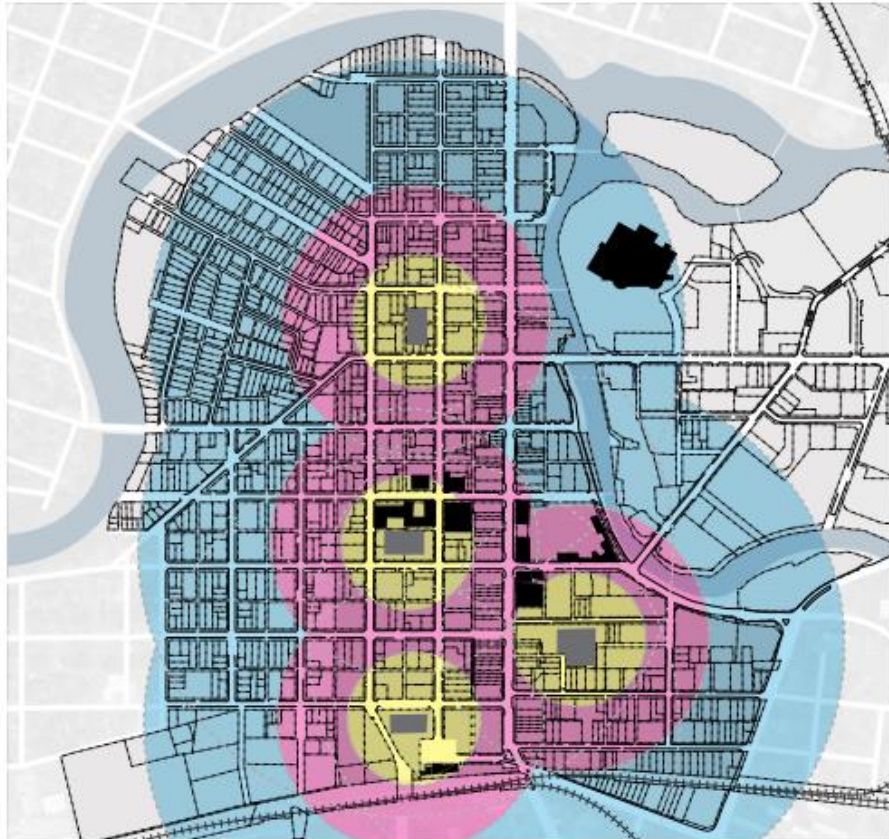
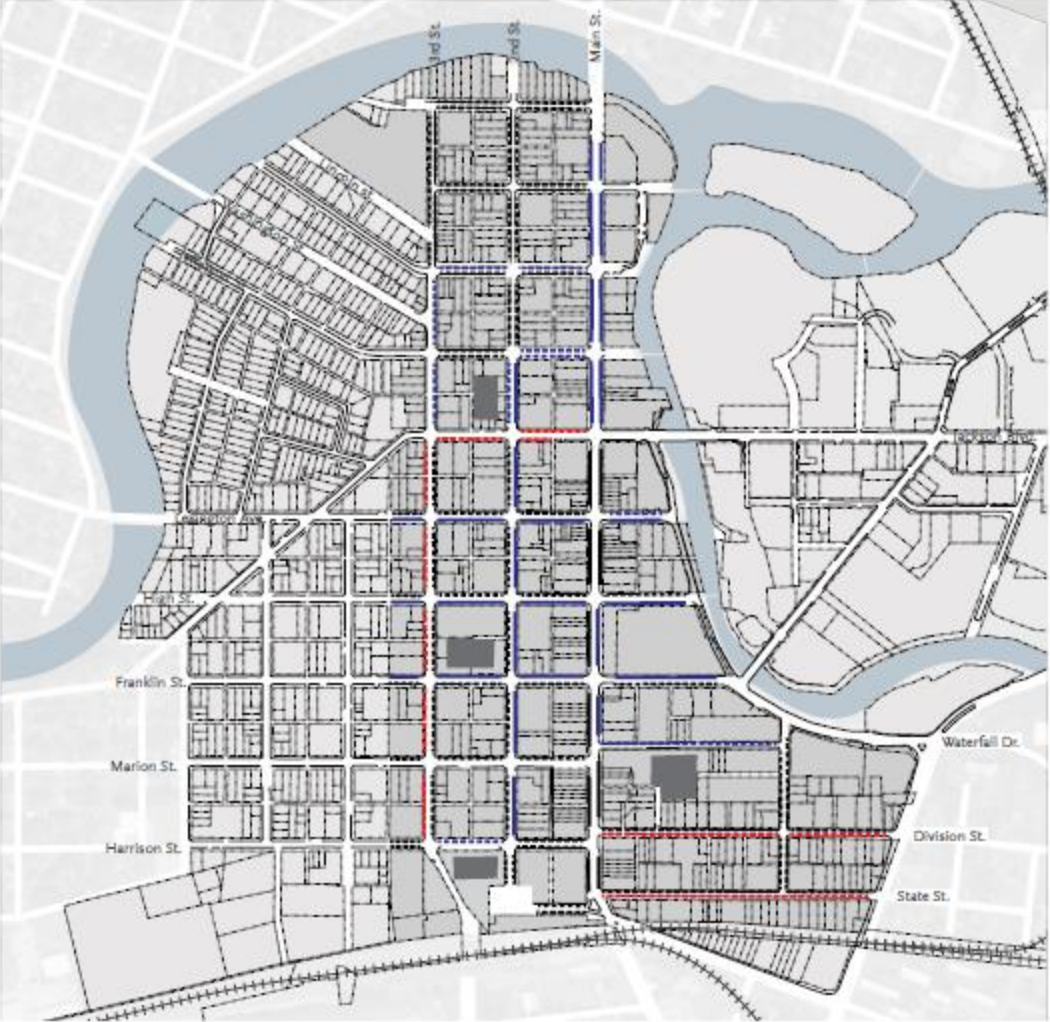
Transportation Strategy



Elkhart in 1951

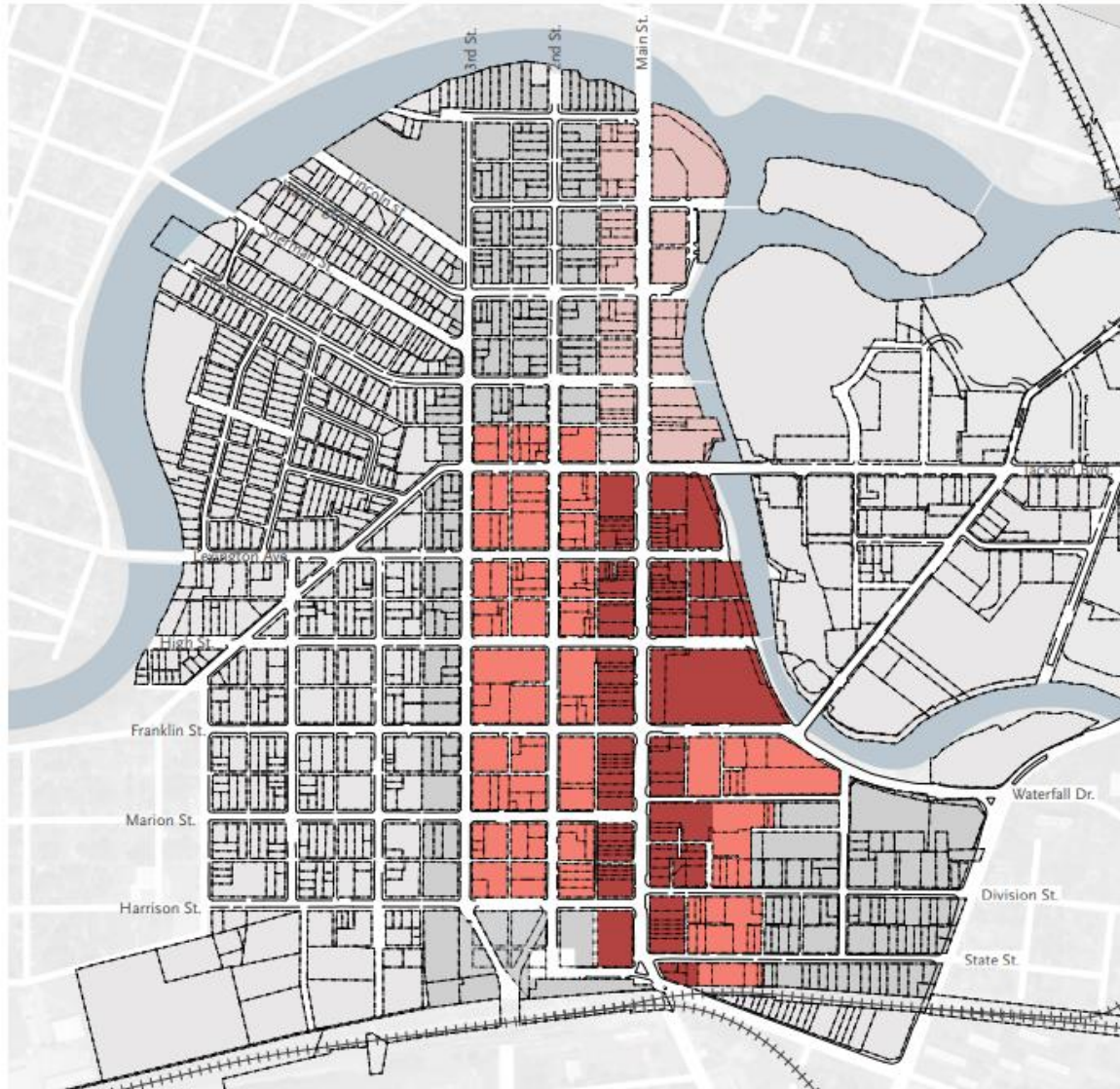


Parking Strategy



- LEGEND**
- 400 ft. Pedestrian Shed (Residential)
 - 800 ft. Pedestrian Shed (Retail)
 - 1,600 ft. Pedestrian Shed (Event)
 - Parking Structure
 - Civic Building

Downtown Districts



RETAIL / ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

A destination shopping and entertainment district will offer specialty goods and services for the greater Elkhart-South Bend region.

- Located between Jackson Boulevard and State Street
- 150,000 sf total overall size of new and existing businesses
- 50,000–60,000 sf of new or expanded stores and restaurants
- 25–30 new or expanded Businesses
- Retail: Apparel (children, mens, womens), art, bath & body, books, children's, cosmetics, department store goods. Electronics, gifts, home furnishings, kitchen, jewelry, leather, shoes
- Entertainment: Brewpubs, global cuisine, full-service restaurants, quick casual food/beverage, specialty foods, baked goods, delicatessen, coffee, etc.

MAKER / DESIGN DISTRICT

A special district promoting local craftsman, design, and service businesses will support the greater Elkhart community and reinforce the Main Street and Riverwalk commercial districts.

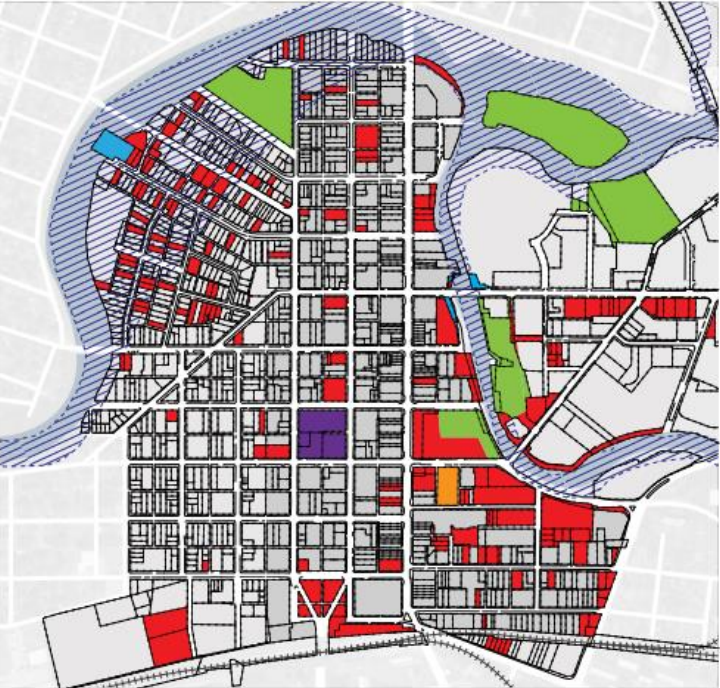
- Located on the east-west side streets along Main Street: Pottawattomi, Sycamore, Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lexington, High, Franklin, Marion, Harrison Streets.
- 30,000 – 50,000 sf of new / expanded businesses
- Architects, artists, chefs, interior designers-fashion designers, leather makers, furniture craftsman, graphic designers, kitchen designers, etc.

LOCAL SERVING DISTRICT

A district for local commerce will reinforce and expand the River District's Health & Aquatics Center, supermarkets, and the area's local specialty stores, restaurants, and businesses.

- Located along the north edge of Main Street between Pottawattomi Drive to Jackson Boulevard-Bridge
- 100,000 sf total of existing and new businesses
- 15,000–20,000 sf of new / expanded businesses
- 10-15 new or expanded businesses
- Bakery, barber, carry-out foods, cleaners, coffee, financial services, fitness, framing, florists, hair-nail salons, mail center, medical, small pharmacy, real estate, quick casual restaurants, specialty foods, etc.

Civic Amenities

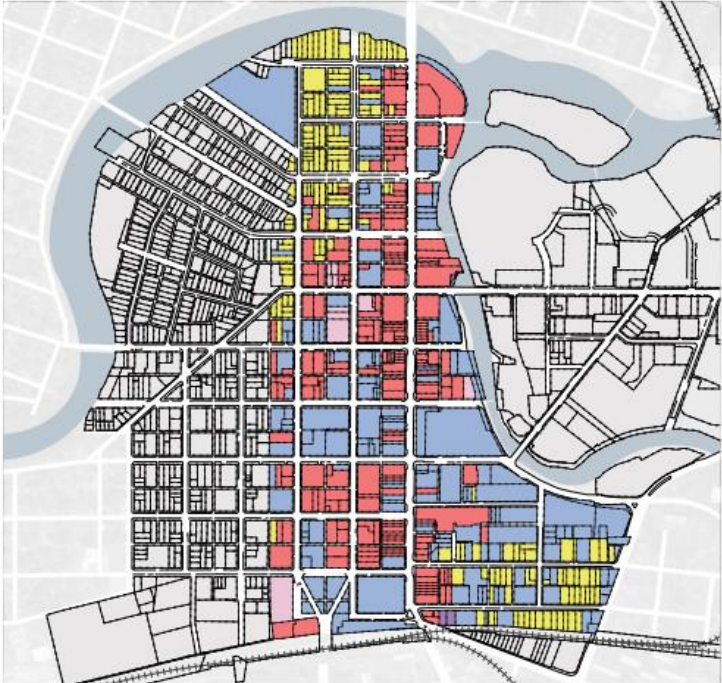


PUBLICLY OWNED LAND

An abundance of publicly owned land within and around the Downtown presents great opportunities for redevelopment. Examples include the concentration of city-owned land near the Central Green, the riverfront, and the train station, as well as the Elkhart County Courts Building, where an entire block is being vacated by the county government.

Publicly owned land empowers the local government to leverage their potential as key catalytic sites. They could be reimagined and repurposed to serve the greater good. Possible new uses include a new amphitheater and park, structured garages to create a park-once district, a new transit hub, and a new and improved civic buildings.

- LEGEND**
- Floodway
 - Park
 - City
 - County
 - State
 - Indiana Univ.



EXISTING LAND USES

Land Uses within the Downtown are approximately one-third commercial, one-third residential, and one-third tax-exempt. These latter properties, which include government buildings and non-profit organizations, do not generate property tax revenue for the city. The concentration of non-revenue generating property is a symptom of depressed land prices in downtown caused in part by disinvestment and suburban sprawl.

A long-term goal of the city should be to increase the proportion of taxable land within the Downtown district. The low cost of the land will be attractive to developers once the city has a Master Plan in place.

- LEGEND**
- Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Residential
 - Exempt
 - Taxable Public Owned

Civic Amenities – Catalyst Project



The Site Plan shows publicly accessible hardscapes and landscapes rendered in vivid color as an extension of the overall Open Space Network.

1. AMPHITHEATER & CENTRAL GREEN

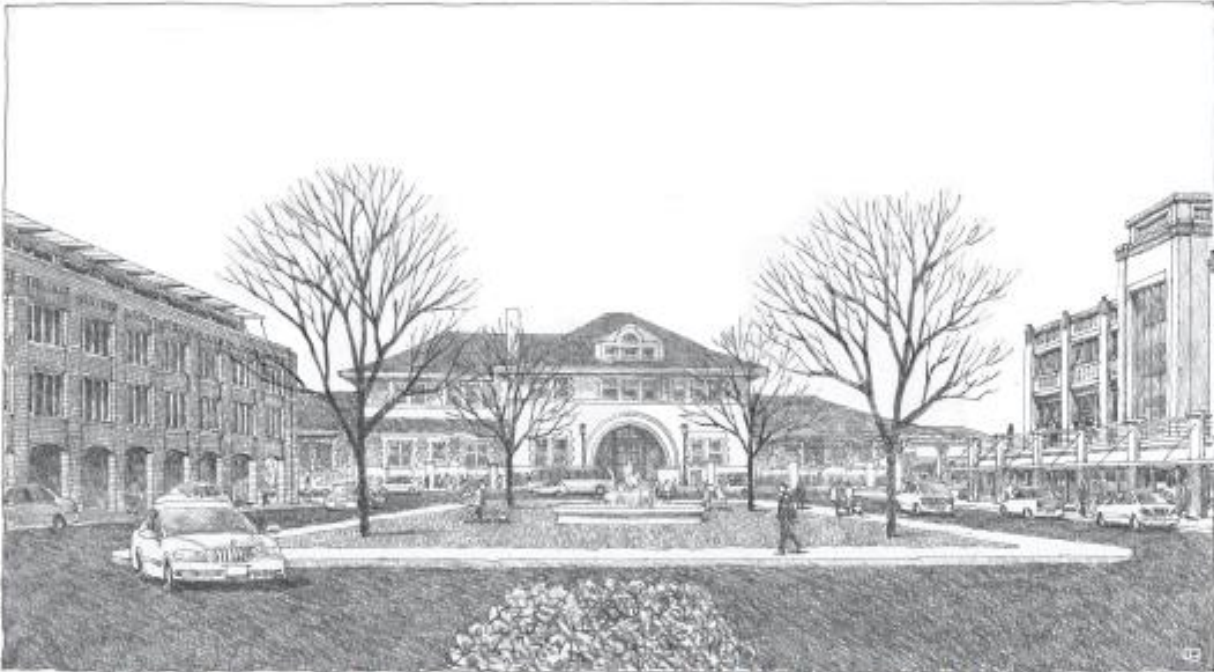
The Amphitheater builds on the impact generated by previous catalysts such as the Lerner and the Aquatic Center. Building on their success, it will reignite interest and development in downtown Elkhart. A state-of-the-art event facility, sensitively designed public gardens, and new buildings along Main Street will activate the core of Downtown and spur urban activity for years to come.

Great Civic Amenities

Civic Center



This street view shows a new Public Safety Building facing the historic City Hall, creating a public discourse between two important civic institutions. A new post office can be seen at the left edge of the frame, which with the existing library completes the Civic Center. Coordinated infill of public buildings can restore this area to its original prominence as the civic heart of Elkhart.



The proposed Station Square, in which the existing Train Station is elevated in civic importance as the focal point of a transit hub and TOD neighborhood of office, retail, and housing.

Depot Square



Legend identifies Station Square (3), Civic Center (4), and Neighborhood Edge (5).



Great Civic Amenities

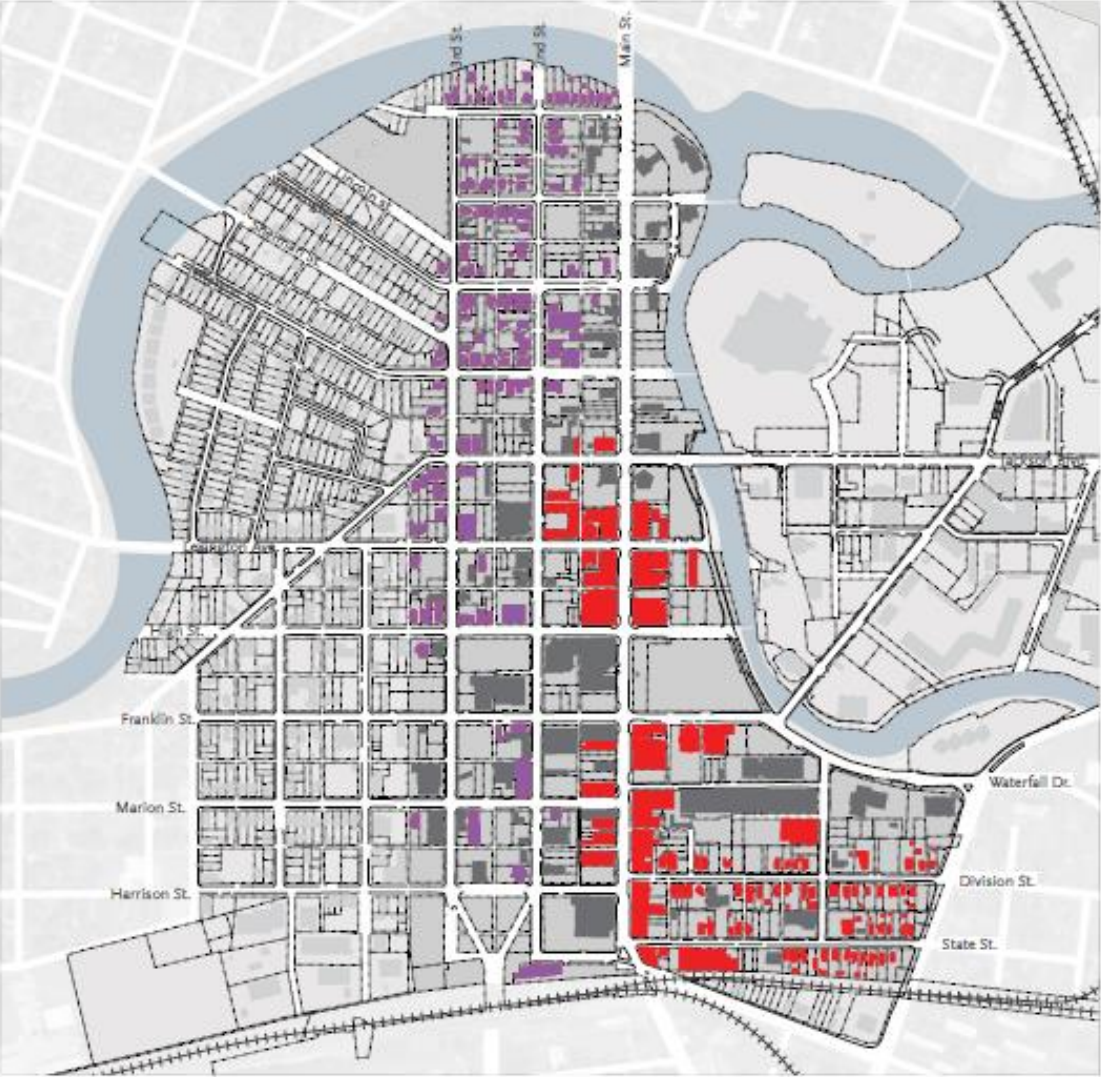


ONE DOWNTOWN, TWO DISTRICTS



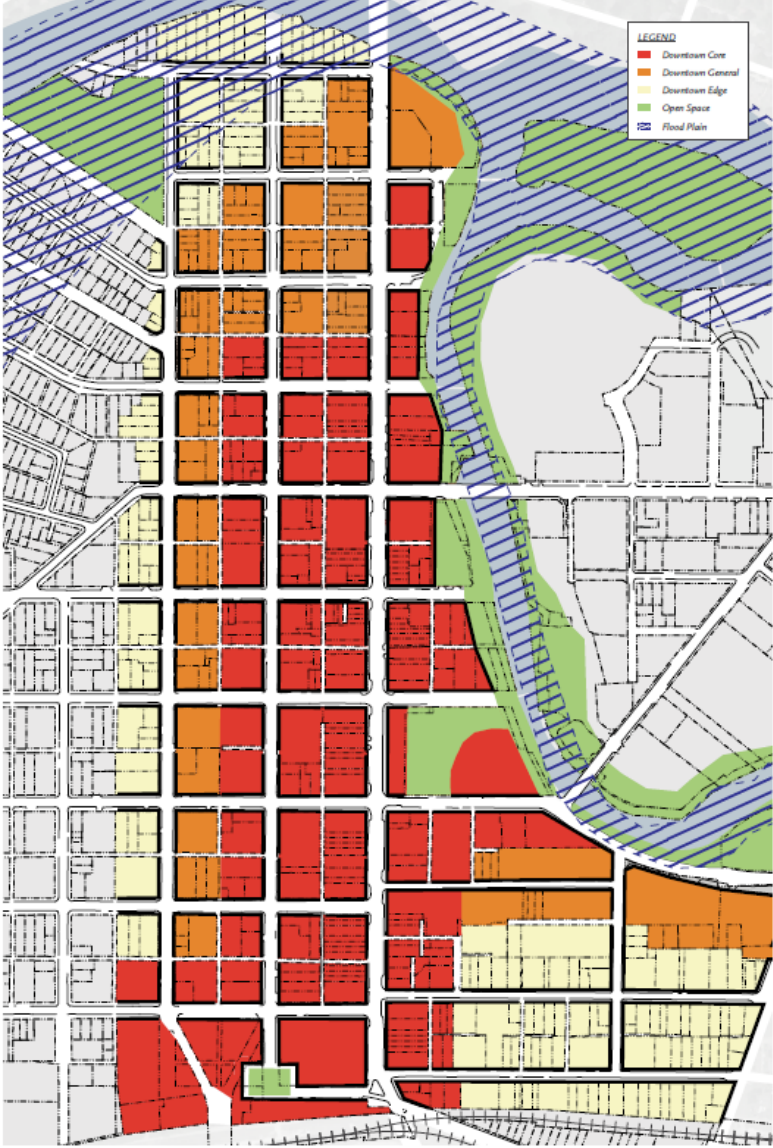
Preservation Strategy and Zoning Code

Historic Preservation Strategy



LEGEND
■ Designated Historic
■ Worthy of Preservation
■ Not Protected

Recommended Code



REGULATING PLAN

Preservation Strategy and Zoning Code

DOWNTOWN CORE

The Downtown Core zone applies to parcels facing Main Street, Second Street south of Jefferson St., and the cross streets connecting them. New buildings up to eight stories in height accommodate a mix of uses with commercial ground floors and residential or commercial upper floors. New buildings are located at the back of sidewalk, and accessed via shopfronts or lobbies. Parking is located behind buildings, subterranean, or in park-once lots or structures.



DOWNTOWN GENERAL

The Downtown General zone applies to parcels located on the east side of Third Street, cross streets north of Jefferson Street, Hug Street, and Waterfall Drive. This zone enables multi-family and mixed-use buildings with an average height of three stories. Retail ground floors, accessed via shopfronts, are located at the back of sidewalk, while residential ground floors, accessed via stoops, terraces, or lobbies, are located behind small front yards. Parking is located behind buildings or subterranean.



DOWNTOWN EDGE

The Downtown Edge zone enables house-form buildings that accommodate residential and office uses. New buildings are up to two stories in height and are set back from the sidewalk behind front yards. Parking is located behind buildings. New buildings match or complement prevalent building setbacks along the length of the block and complement building heights and massing of adjacent buildings or buildings across the street.



7.2 Downtown Core

E. On-Site Open Space

1. **Common On-Site Open Space.** One (1) or more of the On-Site Open Space Types listed below shall be provided on each lot that accommodates residential uses. The required On-Site Open Space shall be generally rectangular in form, per the below-listed minimum size requirements, and must be accommodated behind the Primary Street setback line.

Open Space Type	Minimum Area	Minimum Dimensions
(a) Courtyard	10% of total lot area	20 ft. x 20 ft.
(b) Roof Deck	10% of total lot area	20 ft. x 20 ft.

2. **Private On-Site Open Space.** Where private open space in the form of a yard, balcony, or roof deck is provided for a residential unit, it shall have a minimum area of 40 square feet with a minimum width of 5 feet.

3. **Exceptions.** Permitted exceptions, subject to payment of parks and open space in-lieu fees: on-site open space (common or private) not required for buildings that line "black box" buildings

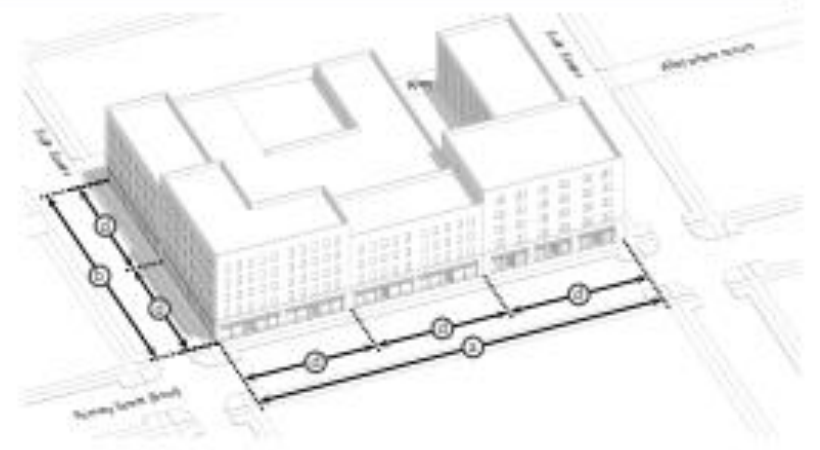


such as parking garages and theaters, and/or if building is located within 1/4-mile walking distance of a park or plaza that is at least 0.5 acres in size.

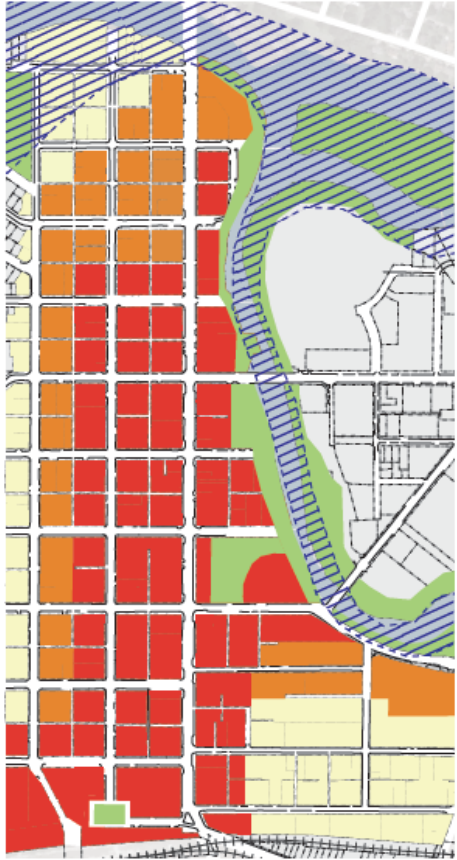
F. Building Size and Separation.

1. Buildings shall be designed per the following building length and facade increment standards:

(a) Building length along Primary Street (max.)	330 ft.
(b) Building length along Side Street (max.)	160 ft.
(c) Building separation along Primary Street (min.)	0 ft.
(d) Facade increment (max.)	150 ft.
(e) Facade break length (min.)	0 ft.
(f) Facade break depth (min.)	0 ft.

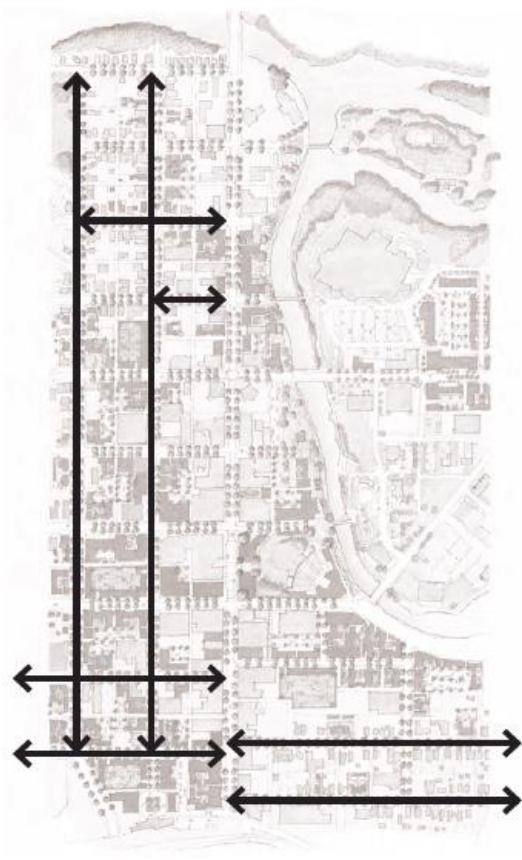


Phasing: Years 1-3



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CODE

A Development Code is critical to help guide the development that will follow as a result of the amphitheater's economic success. It is important to regulate the design, construction, and operation of new buildings within Downtown Elkhart to achieve a high standard of quality, livability, and compatibility with Elkhart's historic context.



STREET CONVERSIONS

Converting one-way streets to two-way streets will improve traffic flow in the downtown and mitigate the effects of the amphitheater on neighborhood congestion. The street conversion will also make Downtown Elkhart more pedestrian-friendly through a reduction in driver speeds. The increase foot traffic will further support the area's economic viability.



NEW GARAGES AND STREET PARKING

In the very short term, Downtown Elkhart's east-west streets can be restriped to accommodate angled parking on one side, increasing the available parking within the district. With the Amphitheater's opening, new parking structures (at least two in the three year horizon) will be necessary to cater to this increased visitor count. This will also begin Downtown Elkhart's transition into a Park-Once district.



RIVERWALK PLANNING

The Riverwalk is the natural extension of the redesigned Amphitheater at the Central Green. Pedestrianizing this section of Waterfall Drive will provide a recreational amenity for locals and visitors. This revamped esplanade will be a recreational magnet in the form of a unique waterfront retail and dining experience.

Phasing: Years 4-10



STREET INFRASTRUCTURE AND STREETScape



WISHBONE STREET REDESIGN



STATION SQUARE



CIVIC CENTER COMPLEX



INFILL HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL

