



# DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN

City of Momence  
Main Street Momence

Adopted by City Council  
May 21, 2012

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### Project Consultants

The Lakota Group, Chicago, Illinois



## INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## PLANNING MISSION

In August 2011, the City of Momence and Main Street Momence, a non-profit downtown revitalization organization, initiated a planning process with the local community to undertake the development of a Downtown Master Plan. The Lakota Group, a planning, urban design and historic preservation firm based in Chicago, Illinois, was engaged by Main Street Momence to help prepare the Master Plan and facilitate a public engagement process. A Master Plan Steering Committee, representing a broad-based coalition of City officials, downtown property owners, merchants, local residents, Main Street Momence board members and volunteers, civic organizations, and City leaders and officials, was formed to assist in Master Plan development. Funding for the Master Plan was made possible by generous grants from the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley and the Earl D. Schoeffner Charitable Trust.

The primary purpose of the Downtown Master Plan is to create a long-term vision and a set of practical, achievable strategies and initiatives for improving Downtown's physical appearance, land use and overall economic environment. The

Master Plan also seeks to build on past and current revitalization efforts undertaken by Main Street Momence, which follows the Main Street Four Point Approach®, the comprehensive historic preservation-based methodology for revitalizing traditional commercial districts developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Main Street Momence is also a participating community in the Illinois Main Street Program, operated in partnership between the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

The Downtown Momence Master Plan is an important opportunity to address the following:

- Maintain and preserve the architectural integrity of the Downtown's National Register Historic District by encouraging sensitive improvements to buildings and storefronts and quality infill development design.
- Identify other buildings and areas in and around Downtown Momence that should be preserved due to their environmental,



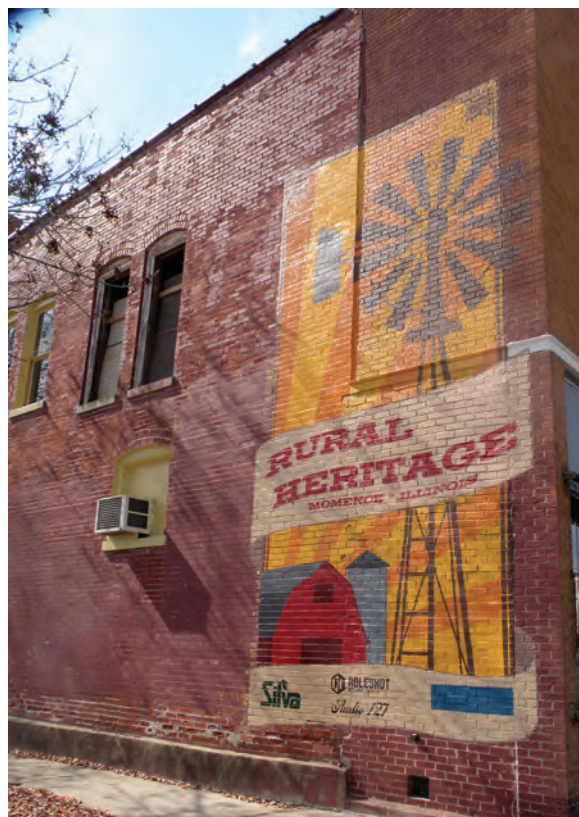
East Washington Street, Downtown Momence.

*“The primary purpose of the Downtown Master Plan is to create a long-term vision and a set of practical, achievable strategies and initiatives for improving downtown’s physical appearance, land use and overall economic environment.”*



historical and cultural significance, as well as their overall contribution to Downtown's visual character.

- Enhance utilization of the Downtown riverfront as a catalyst for economic development, increased recreational tourism, and improved pedestrian linkages to the Downtown core and Island Park.
- Recommend improvements to Downtown Momence's urban design and physical environment through streetscape enhancements, landscape treatments and wayfinding signage.
- Develop a sustainable long-range land use strategy that stresses the reuse of existing buildings while diversifying Downtown's economic base with an appropriate mix of commercial, institutional and residential uses.
- Identify adaptive use opportunities that can serve as critical "catalytic" projects that add new commercial and residential uses and spur additional Downtown economic development.
- Assess transportation and parking issues with an aim to balance pedestrian and vehicular traffic needs within the Downtown.
- Suggest a framework for changes to Downtown zoning and development regulations that promote an appropriate land use mix, high quality building improvements and sustainable site and building design.



"Rural Heritage" wall mural at East Washington and North Locust Streets.



Kankakee River waterfront, Downtown Momence.

- Encourage Downtown sustainability by exploring methods and means for promoting energy efficiency in new and existing buildings, sustainable design features in streetscapes and public spaces, and Downtown wide energy generating systems.
- Develop an implementation strategy that prioritizes specific planning actions, outlines roles and responsibilities between the City of Momence, existing organizations and agencies, and identifies other stakeholders groups that should participate in the implementation process.
- Identify new funding and financing sources to implement elements of the Master Plan and promote increased use of existing incentive programs such as the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program.
- Undertake an effective and efficient planning process that engages a broad and diverse section of community stakeholders in order to secure consensus for the Downtown Master Plan's long-term revitalization vision and implementation strategies and planning recommendations.
- Create a Downtown Master Plan that becomes the official guidebook and policy for the City of Momence and the community for how Downtown Momence revitalizes and develops over time.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The process for creating the Downtown Master Plan involved three distinct phases: an assessment of current conditions, a visioning phase where preliminary planning and revitalization strategies were developed and tested, and a final plan-making phase in which planning goals, strategies

and implementation steps were drafted and adopted by both the City of Momence and Main Street Momence.

### Phase One: State of the Downtown

The first phase, initiated in August 2011, was a comprehensive assessment and inventory of Downtown Momence's physical conditions and revitalization issues including land use, historic preservation, streetscape, open space and riverfront, traffic and parking, infrastructure, and existing community facilities. The phase included a project start meeting and tour (August 24, 2011) with the Master Plan Steering Committee, field and documentation work conducted by the Lakota Group, and stakeholder and focus group interview sessions (September 29, 2011). Stakeholders participating in the interview sessions included elected officials and staff from the City of Momence and Momence Park District, downtown property owners and merchants, Main Street Momence board members and committee volunteers, local churches, foundations and civic institutions, residents, major industries, and Kankakee County economic development and tourism staff. Transportation planners and engineers from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) were also interviewed. Lakota also reviewed prior plans and studies, including the 2010 Momence Comprehensive Plan, local zoning ordinance, National Register District nomination, building assessment reports, the Market Niche Identification and Business Recruitment Study, among others.

### Phase Two: Visioning Phase

The second phase involved generating planning concepts and revitalization strategies that enhance Downtown Momence's physical appearance, preserves and reuses historic commercial buildings, connects the riverfront to the Downtown core, and explores possible development opportunity sites. Planning concepts were presented during a Community Workshop (November 16, 2011) for discussion and consideration by local stakeholders.



### Phase Three: Downtown Master Plan and Implementation Strategy

Based on the analysis and input from the first two phases of the planning process, Phase Three involved the final development of the Downtown Master Plan, including the creation of specific revitalization and implementation strategies. A second community workshop to review and discuss planning and implementation strategies on February 8, 2012.

The Final Draft of the Downtown Master Plan was delivered to the Steering Committee on March 7, 2012 for review and comment. The Plan was then submitted for review and adoption by the Momence Plan Commission on May 2, 2012. The City Council adopted the Final Downtown Master Plan on May 21, 2012.

### STUDY AREA

The Downtown Momence Study Area comprises nine blocks in central Momence between Third Street and the Kankakee River, and Pine and Maple Streets from west to east (see *Figure 1: Study Area, on following page*). Downtown Momence's built environment consists mainly of traditional commercial buildings constructed primarily from the 1880s to the 1920s along with other more auto-oriented buildings dating from later decades. The core Downtown blocks between Pine and Locust Streets and 2nd and River Streets are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a district.

### REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Momence is located in east central Kankakee County fifty-five miles from Downtown Chicago, six miles from the Illinois-Indiana state line and fifteen miles from Kankakee, the county seat, and other communities along the Interstate 57 corridor (see *Figure 2: Regional Context, on page 11*). Dixie Highway (State Routes 1 and 17) is the major north-south transportation route that connects Momence and the Downtown with

*“Stakeholders participating in the interview sessions included downtown property owners and merchants, Main Street Momence board members and committee volunteers, elected officials and staff from the City of Momence and Momence Park District, local churches, foundations and civic institutions, residents, major industries, and economic development and tourism staff from Kankakee County.”*



Dixie Highway (Range Street), circa 1900 above, circa 1920s below.

State Route 394 and Interstates 80/294 to the north. Second Street, which serves as City and County Highway 13, is the Downtown's principal east-west transportation route connecting it with Industrial Drive/East 3500 Road to the

northeast and Momence High School to the west. Momence is also located within the Kankakee River Valley just west of the Kankakee River Marshes, a significant environmental and recreational resource in the region.

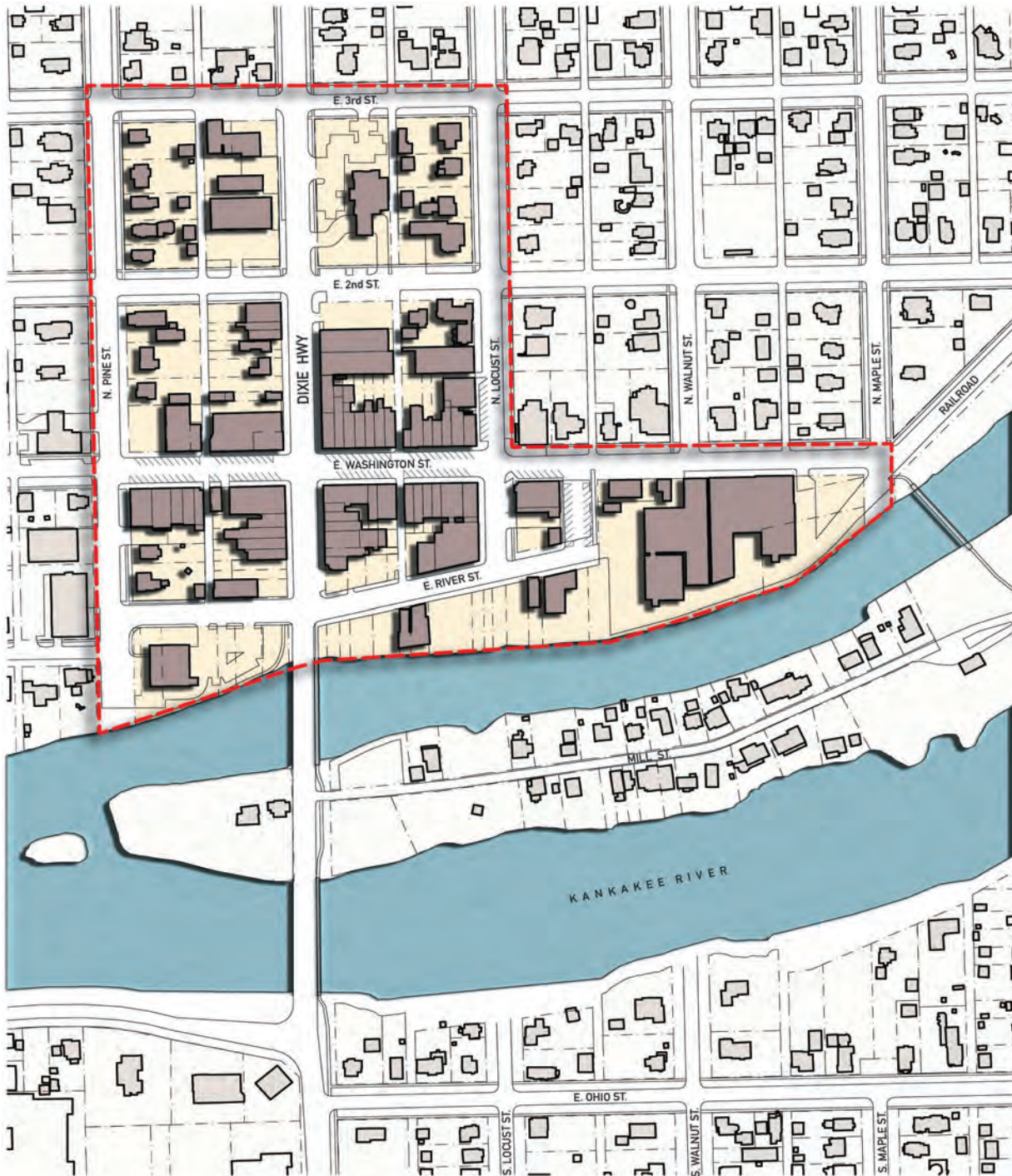
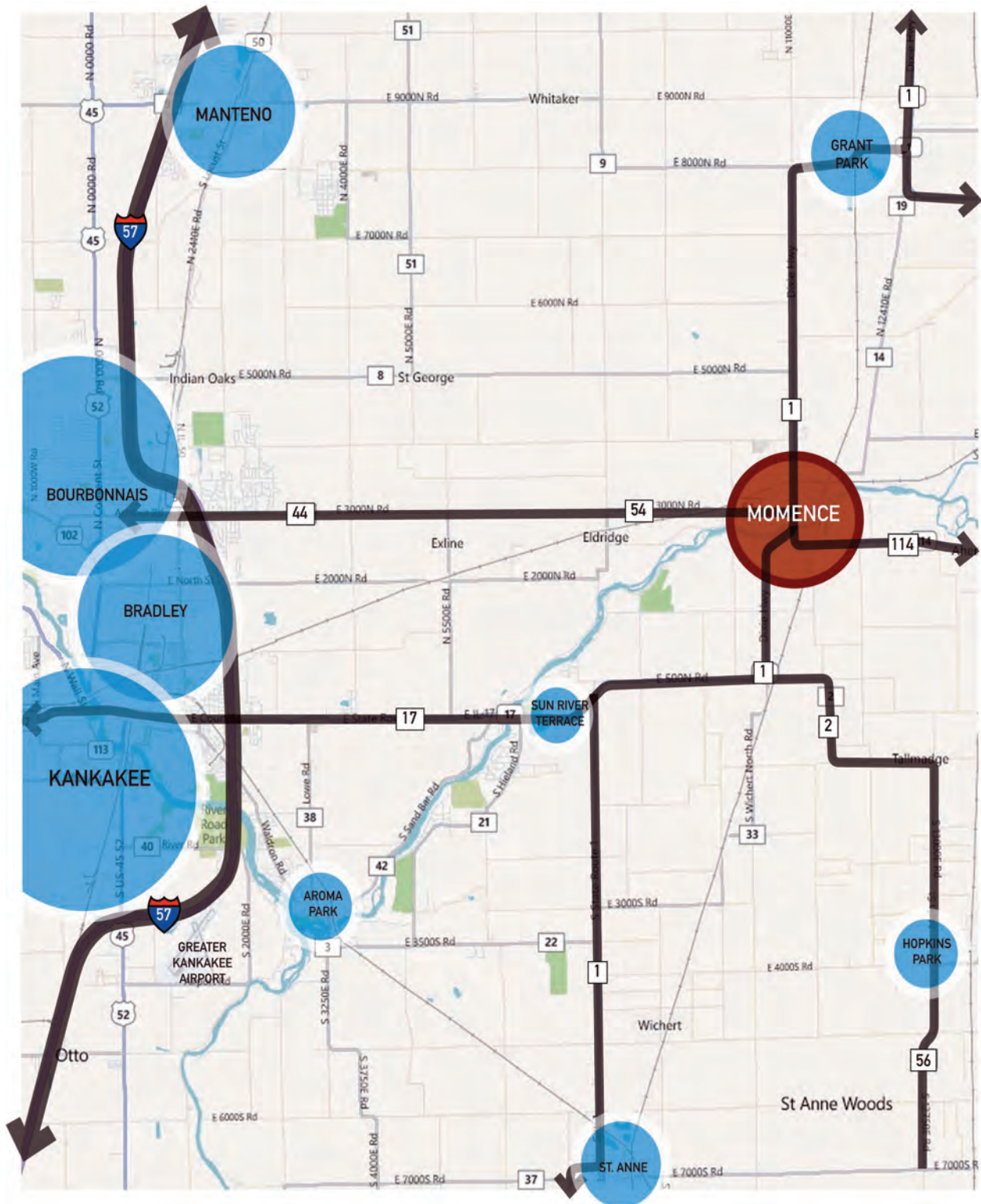


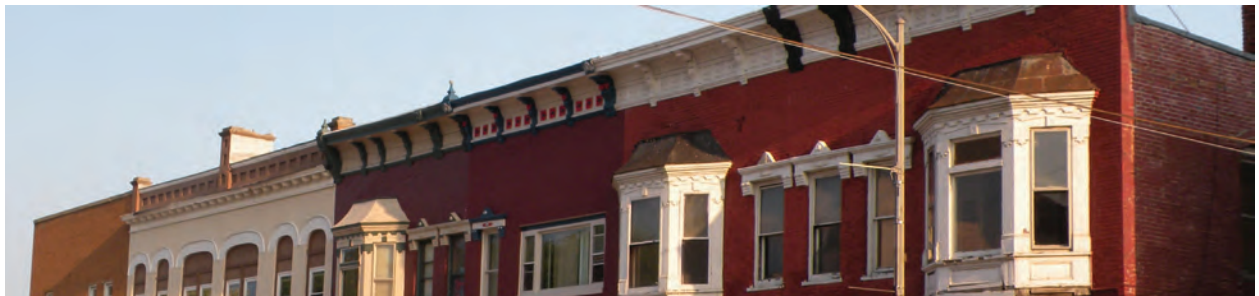
FIGURE 1: DOWNTOWN STUDY AREA  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN





**FIGURE 2: REGIONAL CONTEXT  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN**

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## STATE OF THE DOWNTOWN



# STATE OF THE DOWNTOWN

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

Before its settlement in the mid-1800s, Momence was first known as “Lower Crossing”, a place where travelers could “ford” or cross the Kankakee River and take on fresh food and water. It was also located on the Hubbard and Vincennes trails, which allowed fur traders and hunters traveling from the south to Chicago avoid the expansive Illinois-Indiana wetlands and marshes to the east along the Kankakee River. Lower Crossing’s first settlers occupied land that was once granted to the local Potawatomies whose chief, Momenza, became the community’s namesake. After 1846 when Momence was first platted by Robert Boylan, the community began to grow and develop as traders, hunters, and German and Irish immigrants settled and built the first frame structures in and around the Downtown area. Momence became an important commercial

destination when, in 1852, the first large flour mill was built, which shortened the distance for grain and wheat growers to ground and refine their products<sup>1</sup>. Commerce flourished to such an extent that a toll bridge was finally constructed over the Kankakee River.

During the late 1800s, Momence’s continued growth was largely facilitated by the coming of the railroads, which transformed the community into a regional rail hub for the transport of manufactured goods and food products. There were more than four major railroads that served Momence by 1900. The railroads also made Momence an ideal location for new industries, including the Tiffany Brick Company, which was

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<sup>1</sup> Downtown Momence National Register District Nomination



East Washington Street, circa 1910.

once the nation's largest manufacturer of glazed enameled bricks. Several buildings, including the Momence State and Savings Bank at 128 East Washington Street, the two commercial buildings flanking the Momence Theater, and the Jensen Drug Store storefront, were all faced with colored enameled brick. Downtown Momence grew to its largest extent by the 1920s with commercial development centered primarily at the Washington Street and Dixie Highway intersection and along River Street just north of the Kankakee River. Development consisted largely of two-story masonry buildings housing a range of businesses from dry goods, drugs, and clothing stores to bakeries, barbershops, liverys and jewelry stores. Tanneries, commercial laundries, warehouses, and printing and bottling plants were mostly located along River Street. Downtown Momence also boasted three full service banks and the Momence Theater, which operated as a first-run movie house until the early 1950s when it closed. During the 1920s and 30s, Downtown Momence became a popular destination for tourists seeking respite and relaxation in nearby Island Park.

Like many small rural communities across the Midwest, Downtown Momence began a slow economic decline due to population shifts and increased retail competition from nearby malls and commercial centers. However, Downtown's intact urban form and historic building stock provides a rich legacy of the community's original visionaries: the developers, merchants and investors who built Downtown on the faith and belief of its long-term prosperity.

### National Register Historic District

In 2006, Main Street Momence staff and volunteers nominated Downtown Momence to the National Register of Historic Places, this nation's official list of architectural, historical and cultural resources worthy of preservation (see *Figure 3: National Register Historic District, on following page*). The National Register is managed in Illinois by the National Park Service, U.S.



Former Madsen Hotel, circa 1920s.



Momence Theater, circa 1920.



Dixie Highway looking south, circa 1920s.



Kankakee River Bridge, circa 1930s.



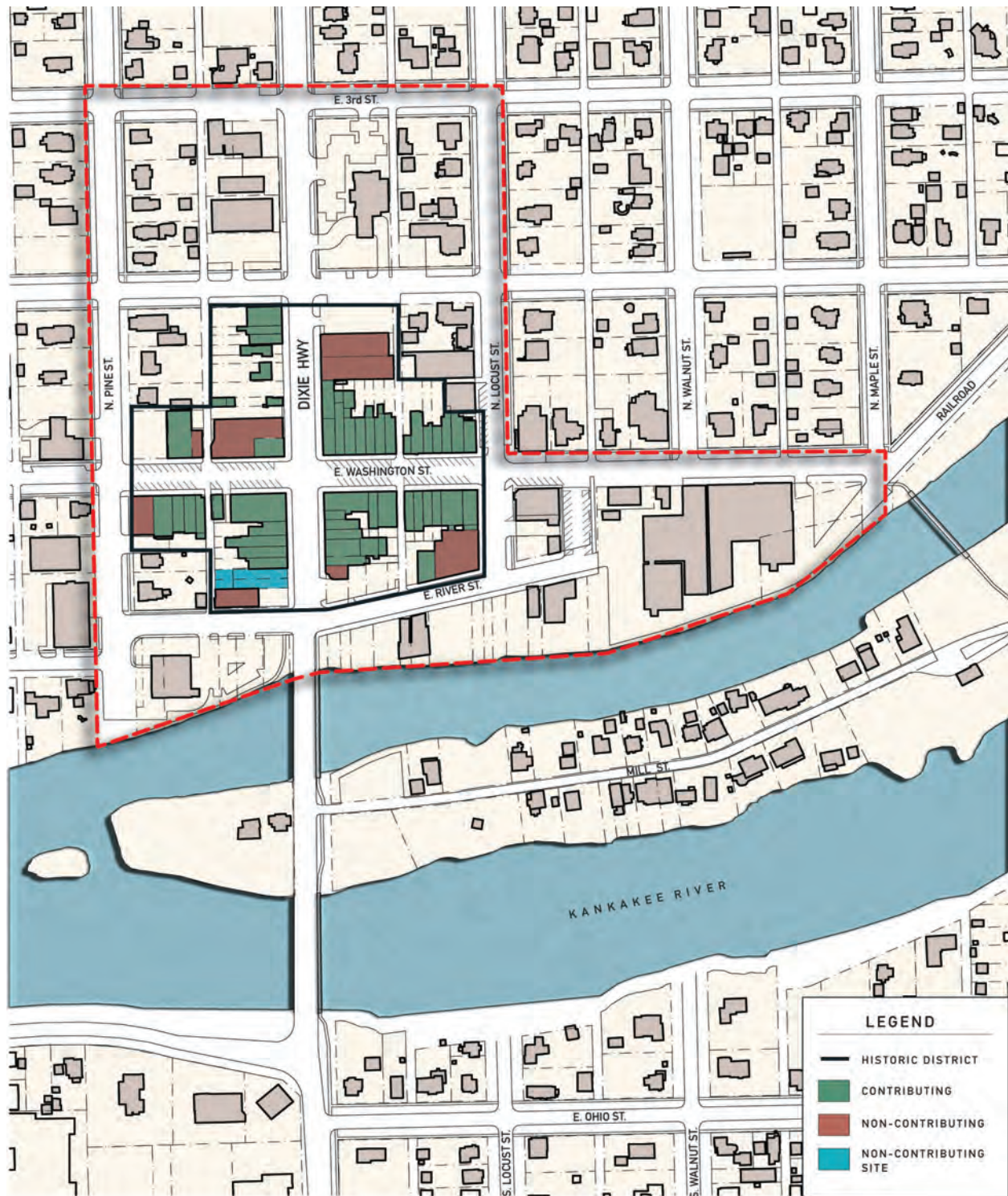


FIGURE 3: NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN

Department of the Interior, in partnership with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) based in Springfield. The boundaries of the National Register District include the Downtown commercial properties along East Washington Street and Dixie Highway, roughly, from Third to River Streets and from Locust to Pine Streets. Listing in the National Register is mainly honorary and there are no restrictions on use or for exterior and interior changes and alterations. However, contributing income producing properties within the National Register District are eligible for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HPTC) Program, which can be a significant incentive for encouraging Downtown building rehabilitation and reuse. Property owners and developers seeking to participate in the HPTC program must first plan their rehabilitation work according to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The Secretary's Standards provides the framework for acceptable and appropriate preservation treatments, emphasizing the repair and retention of historic architectural features rather than replacement. Since 2006, one Downtown property owner has taken advantage of the HPTC Program.

Approximately fifty-seven (57) buildings comprise the Downtown National Register District of which fifty (50) are considered "contributing" and seven (7) "non-contributing". A contributing resource indicates that a building contributes sufficiently to the broader architectural character and historic context of Downtown Mokena's development. These buildings may have high integrity in which its façade appearance has changed little since its first construction, based on observation and documentation, or may have some level of alterations to the façade and storefront that is considered reversible. Non-contributing buildings may have no notable architectural character, are less than 50 years old, or have undergone significant change or alterations that are deemed irreversible. Three of the seven non-contributing buildings have front façade slipcovers, which if removed, could reveal the original façade underneath, making them



Former First National Bank Building, Classical Revival style.

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Former Jensen Drug Store Building, commercial Queen Anne style.





“Two-Part Commercial” building form.



A modified commercial storefront from the 1920s.



Luxfer prism glass transom above altered storefront.



Stone carving entrance detail.

potentially contributing buildings to the National Register District. These buildings include the former Wennerholm Livery, A&P Grocery Store and Car Dealer buildings. Further investigation is needed to determine if the original building façades and materials are extant. The National Register District also has one non-contributing site where two commercial buildings were recently demolished near the southwest corner of Dixie Highway and East River Street, and one non-contributing structure, the gazebo that now occupies that site.

Properties within the National Register District exhibit a range of architectural styles and vernacular building forms. The predominate building form was the “two-part commercial” with two distinct horizontal divisions between the lower part, where commercial activities took place, and the upper part, which was reserved for more private functions such as residential apartments and office space. Two-part commercial buildings were often designed in the Italianate, Romanesque and Queen Anne architectural styles with features such as elaborate wood and sheet metal cornices and trimwork, projecting second story window bays, and storefronts made of expansive glass panels and recessed entranceways. Over the years into the 1920s, 30s and 40s, several original storefronts were altered and modified to “update” their appearance with newer materials and to accommodate the need for larger display space. For example, wood constructed storefronts gave way to copper storefront framing, Luxfer prism glass in transom windows, and bulkheads refaced with porcelain enamel panels and glazed brick made by the Tiffany Brick Company, which was once in operation in Muncie during the early decades of the 20th Century. These alterations have retained a level of significance and importance in their own right and should be retained as part of any building rehabilitation project.

Apart from the vernacular commercial buildings, several high style, architect-designed buildings exist within the National Register District,



including Downtown's three of the four major bank buildings. The Classical Revival Parish Bank, built in 1914, and now serving as Momence City Hall, was constructed by William Parish Jr., whose family owned and operated the bank for 82 years until 2002. The building's lobby contains an ornate stained glass dome. North across Washington Street is the First National Bank building, designed again in the Classical Revival style with a pedimented "temple front", red brick walls and engaged pilasters with Corinthian capitals. The third bank, the Momence State and Savings Bank building at 128 East Washington Street, constructed in 1905, is the only high style Romanesque Revival building in Downtown Momence, made even more distinctive with its tan and brown-colored Tiffany enameled brick. All three bank buildings have a high level of integrity, and with their rich level of ornamentation and craftsmanship, tell the story of Downtown Momence's importance as a commercial center during the turn of the last century.

It should be noted that three other historic properties in Downtown Momence were not included within the boundaries of the National Register District. The Momence Police Department building at 123 West River Street and the U.S. Post Office on 202 East Washington Street are excellent examples of Mid-Century Modern architecture, and document Downtown's continued growth and evolution into the 1950s and 60s.

In addition, the Edward Chipman Library, located at 126 North Locust Street, but designed in the Classical Revival style, was also excluded. These properties were omitted from the District, perhaps, due to the fact that they are not directly contiguous to a contributing property or that they were constructed outside the District's period of significance. According the National Register nomination, the period of significance was defined as between 1849 and 1956. In addition, both the Post Office and Police Department buildings are less than 50 years old and may not be eligible at

<sup>2</sup> Downtown Momence National Register District Nomination



Former Momence State and Savings Bank, Romanesque Revival with colored Tiffany glazed brick.



U.S. Post Office, Mid-Century Modern architectural style.



Police Station (Old Village Hall), Mid-Century Modern.



Edward Chipman Library, Classical Revival style.

this time for inclusion in the District. However, at some point, both properties merit consideration for inclusion given their distinctive architectural styles.

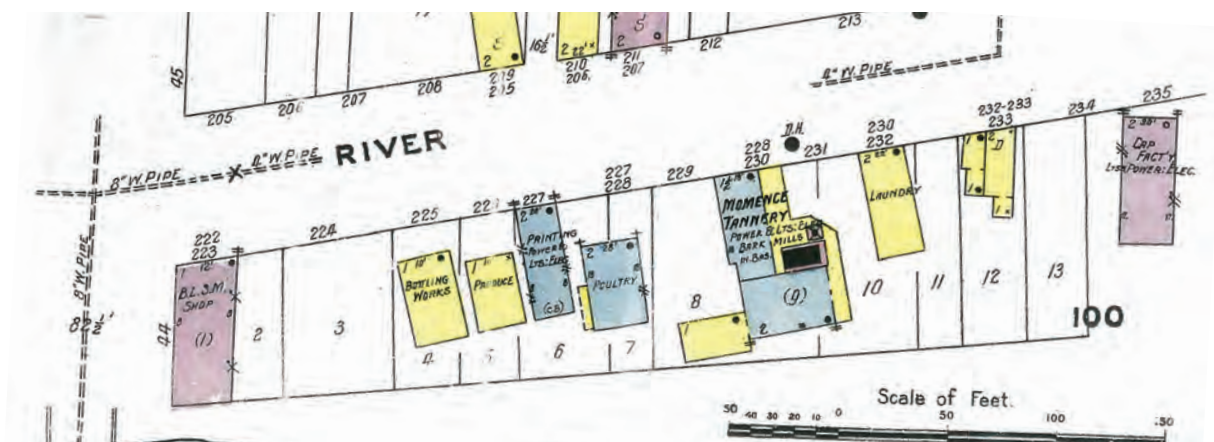
## LAND USE AND BUILDING CONDITIONS

Downtown Momence can be characterized as a traditional commercial district, largely developed during the late 1800s and early 1900s and still functioning today as the community's economic, social and governmental center. Downtown commercial buildings are mostly two to three stories in height and constructed to the sidewalk allowing storefronts to line up next to each other so shoppers and pedestrians can view store products and merchandise. In addition, the majority of Downtown buildings have upper story apartments, which, according to local stakeholders, are mostly occupied. Several government offices are also located Downtown, both in existing buildings and in relatively newer ones located just west of the Downtown core and adjacent to the single-family residential neighborhood (see Figure 4: Land Use, on following page).

Immediately south of the Downtown core is the riverfront zone, which extends along River Street from Pine Street east to Maple Street. Historically, industries such as laundries, bottling works and printing plants were once located along the riverfront. Today, the Gilster-Mary Lee cocoa plant remains the lone industrial use. The few vacant lots along the riverfront were historically

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Historically, the riverfront was the location of several industries, Sanborn Map, 1924.





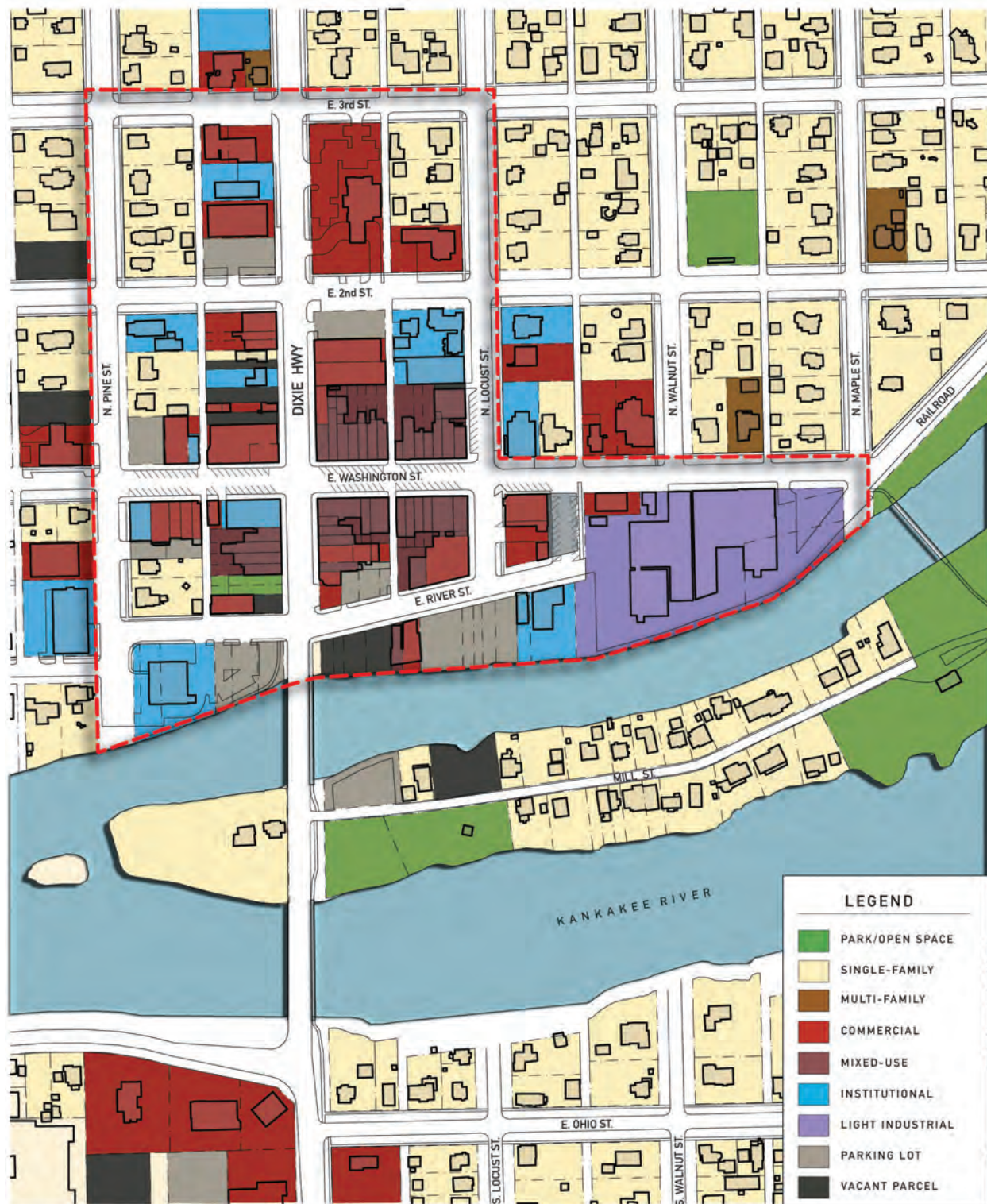


FIGURE 4: EXISTING LAND USE  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN

*“Washington Street and Dixie Highway are downtown Momence’s main commercial thoroughfares.*

*Retail and service businesses along these streets include restaurants, banks, groceries, general merchandise, auto part and antique stores, specialty retailers, salons, cleaners and laundries, offices, and civic and fraternal associations.”*



Original storefront in need of rehabilitation.



Commercial building in need of storefront reconstruction and rehabilitation.

never developed or were once the location of lost wood-framed industrial buildings along the riverfront, several of which were demolished during the 1960s and 70s. The majority of these lots are used currently for municipal parking.

## Commercial

Washington Street and Dixie Highway are Downtown Momence’s main commercial thoroughfares. Retail and service businesses along these streets include restaurants, banks, groceries, general merchandise, auto part and antique stores, specialty retailers, salons, cleaners and laundries, offices, and civic and fraternal associations. Downtown’s major commercial anchors include the Dollar General Store at the northwest corner of East 2nd Street and Dixie Highway and two financial institutions, the Municipal Bank at 228 North Dixie Highway and Centru Bank at 200 West Washington Street. Downtown’s restaurants and bars, including Johnny Angels, the Firehouse No. 28 Café, and Yanni’s on Washington Street also serve as important anchors for both day and nighttime dining and entertainment venues. A majority of the buildings along Washington Street and Dixie Highway are two part or mixed use commercial where retail and service-retail occupies the first floor and office or housing the upper floors. There are two commercial buildings remaining along River Street, one currently used to house production machines for a nearby plant and the other housing a coin laundry.

The majority of buildings along Dixie Highway and Washington Street are in relatively good condition with many retaining their original facades and storefront materials. They retain a high level of architectural and historical integrity and may only need ongoing maintenance to building materials and some improvements to storefronts and signage. Some buildings, however, have been significantly modified with materials that have covered original storefront bulkheads, transoms and glass display areas, which obscure views into the storefront spaces. Other buildings have had significant façade alterations including



the application of EIFS (Dryvit) and other artificial siding materials. Some facades have been painted, which also obscures the original brick colors and other ornamental masonry features. Less than a handful of Downtown buildings warrant immediate attention due to significant building façade maintenance and rehabilitation issues. It has also been reported by several stakeholder groups that the lack of building code enforcement over the last several decades has contributed to the lack of needed maintenance for several buildings.

Business signage varies in materials, placement and design quality although Downtown Momence does not suffer from signage clutter that many Main Street commercial districts often grapple with early in the revitalization process. Most business signage is often placed flat in the storefront portion where transom windows were once located. There are also a number of internally lit plastic signs, which are not suitable to a historic downtown environment. Newer signage have trended toward higher quality, perpendicular or “blade” signs suspended over the sidewalks or signage incorporated as part new awning installations. These improvements have been funded in part by the Main Street Momence Façade Grant Program.

A total of 18 of 70 buildings in the Study Area were inventoried as vacant or unoccupied (*see Figure 5: Vacant/Underutilized Buildings and Storefronts on following page*). Upon observation, Downtown Momence does not have a significant vacancy rate, although a number of building and storefront vacancies are concentrated along Washington Street east of Dixie Highway. The historic Wennerholm Livery building and the A&P Store at 116 - 120 North Dixie Highway are the only other significant Downtown vacancies, although there are plans by Momence Township to either reuse the buildings or to demolish them for a new township office development. The perception of increasing vacancies in the Downtown may be attributed to the number of underutilized or “functional” storefronts, ones



Existing perpendicular/blade signage.



Vacant former restaurant and A&P grocery store.



Vacant/functional storefronts along Washington Street.



A “functional” storefront vacancy - lack of storefront merchandising negatively impacts Downtown’s appearance.





FIGURE 5: VACANT BUILDINGS AND STOREFRONTS  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN

that are occupied by businesses and churches but are not utilizing the storefront window spaces for product or service merchandising. During evening hours especially, the lack of proper storefront lighting and merchandising contributes significantly to the image of a vacant commercial street. Several of these storefronts are also occupied by service-retail businesses and offices, establishments that are not accustomed to maintaining an appropriate, visually attractive storefront appearance. These businesses may be candidates for technical assistance in better storefront merchandising. Washington Street and Dixie Highway form Downtown Mومence's pedestrian-oriented historic core, and along with the close proximity of the nearby residential areas, has the potential to become a vibrant walking shopping district for residents and visitors alike. With its low-rise historic commercial buildings built to the sidewalk, and abutting one another, should be maintained in any new infill development that may take place in the future. The development pattern does change north of Pine Street as more auto-oriented commercial developments with front driveways and parking lots dominate the landscape to East Third Street.

### Institutional | Governmental Facilities

Downtown Mومence is the location for several governmental agencies and institutions (*see Figure 6: Community Facilities, on following page*). Mومence City Hall occupies a former bank building on Dixie Highway while the Police and Fire Protection District are located in separate facilities along River and Pine Streets respectively. The Fire Protection District also leases auxiliary office space in a commercial building on Washington Street to Riverside Ambulance.

Two township governmental units are also present Downtown with Mومence Township Hall located on East River Street in a building that was once Mومence's original City Hall, and Ganeer Township offices on West Washington Street adjacent to the Napa Auto Parts Store. Along Locust Street are the Edward Chipman Public

Library and the U.S. Post Office. In addition to the governmental facilities, Downtown Mومence has three active religious institutions, the Our Savior Lutheran Church on North Pine, and the Episcopal Church of Good Shepard and New Life Christian Fellowship on Locust Street. With the exception of Mومence City Hall and Ganeer Township Hall, Downtown's governmental facilities and institutions are located on the periphery of the Downtown, which is appropriate given the need to reserve and maintain the Downtown core for commercial uses. The Mومence Historical House at 117 North Dixie Highway, owned by the City, is the only museum, nonprofit cultural institution in the Downtown.

### Residential

Downtown residential uses are largely limited to upper-story apartments in several commercial buildings along Washington Street and Dixie



The historic Madsen Hotel building represents a key adaptive use opportunity.



Adjacent older residential neighborhoods compliment Downtown's historic character.



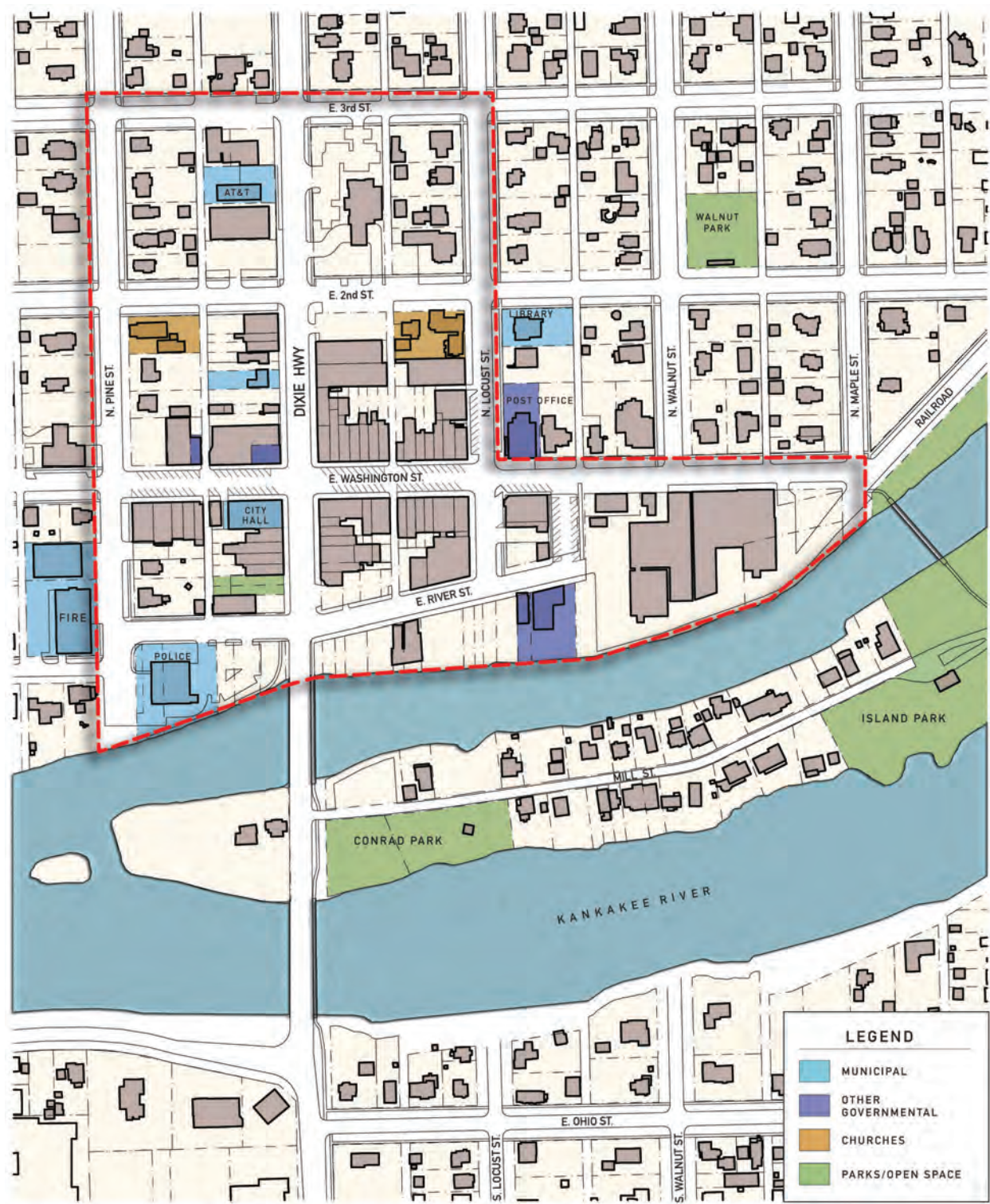


FIGURE 6: INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN

Highway and the single-family homes fronting North Pine, Locust and Walnut Street. According to stakeholder interviews, Downtown apartments are fully occupied and support a rent level of \$300 to \$600 a month. Opportunities for converting and improving additional upper story spaces as new residential units may exist, especially with the former Madsen Hotel building and others along Dixie Highway and Washington Street. The single family homes in the adjacent neighborhoods are generally in good condition with many having been restored and rehabilitated over the years. The neighborhoods also have mature street canopies and ample-sized lawns and landscaping providing a pleasing and distinctive visual environment apart from the Downtown core.

### Industrial

As mentioned previously, the Gilster-Mary Lee cocoa plant is the only remaining Downtown industrial use occupying approximately 40,000 square feet of land between the riverfront and East Washington Street. The plant manufactures a variety of chocolate-based products, including chocolate syrup and hot cocoa mixes, and employs approximately 150 workers.

### Open Space

Although not located in the Downtown Study Area, three public park facilities are located within walking and driving distance of the Downtown core (see Figure 6, on preceding page). These facilities include Island Park, Island View Park and Walnut Street Park, which are all owned and managed by the Momence Park District. Island Park, once developed and owned by the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad during the turn of the 20th Century, and considered the “crown jewel” of the Momence park system, contains several amenities, including a picnic pavilion, tennis courts, a bandstand shelter and a well-designed pedestrian bridge linking it to Downtown. It is also home to the Parks District’s headquarters and field house as well as several special events such as the community’s signature Gladiolus Festival. The Park’s mature trees and



The Gilster-Mary Lee cocoa plant.

*“Island Park, once developed and owned by the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad during the turn of the 20th Century, and considered the “crown jewel” of the Momence park system, contains several amenities, including a picnic pavilion, tennis courts, a bandstand shelter and a well-designed pedestrian bridge linking it to downtown.”*



Island View Park.



verdant, well-maintained landscape are significant features that attract both residents and visitors to the facility. Island View Park is located across the Kankakee River from Island Park along Railroad Avenue and provides space for a children's playground and basketball court. Due to its open lawn along the Kankakee River, the Park has become the preferred community gathering spot for viewing July Fourth fireworks. Walnut Street Park, nestled within the residential neighborhoods just east of Downtown, functions more as a local neighborhood park with a children's playground and picnic shelter. Along with Island Park, it is also one of the first parks to be developed in Momence.

Apart from the park facilities operated by the Park District, Conrad Park, at Mill Street and Dixie Highway, is owned and managed by the City. The Park contains several amenities, including benches



Admiral Boorda Memorial in Conrad Park.



Downtown pocket park.

and seating areas, the Pioneer Cabin constructed for Momence's sesquicentennial, and a memorial sculpture dedicated to Admiral Michael Boorda, a local hometown resident and hero. Its mature trees and well-maintained physical setting complement the landscape characteristics found in Island Park. However, the parking lot just north of Conrad Park detracts visually from the park setting as one enters from Dixie Highway. A pocket park with a pedestrian path and gazebo, located where a commercial building once stood at the southwest corner of Dixie Highway, is currently owned by the City but is maintained by Main Street Momence. Main Street Momence uses the pocket park for its annual Downtown Beautification Day. It is unclear how the pocket park is used during the rest of the year.

## ZONING

The following is an overview of the existing and current zoning classifications within the Downtown Study Area (*see Figure 7: Existing Zoning, on following page*):

- B-1 Business District — Limited Retail
- B-2 Business District — General Retail
- M-1 Manufacturing District
- R-1 Single-Family
- R-2 Multi-Family

### B-1 Business District — Limited Retail

The B-1 Business District — Limited Retail zone encompasses the historic Downtown core bounded by Locust, 2nd, Pine and River Streets, and is intended to accommodate a variety of retail, office and services uses that are appropriate to traditional commercial districts. These uses include, among others, bakeries, banks and financial institutions, appliance and hardware stores, pharmacies, candy and ice cream shops, clothing and jewelry stores, florists, professional offices, currency exchanges, furniture stores and gift shops, photography studios, restaurants, and auto accessory stores. Drive-through restaurants



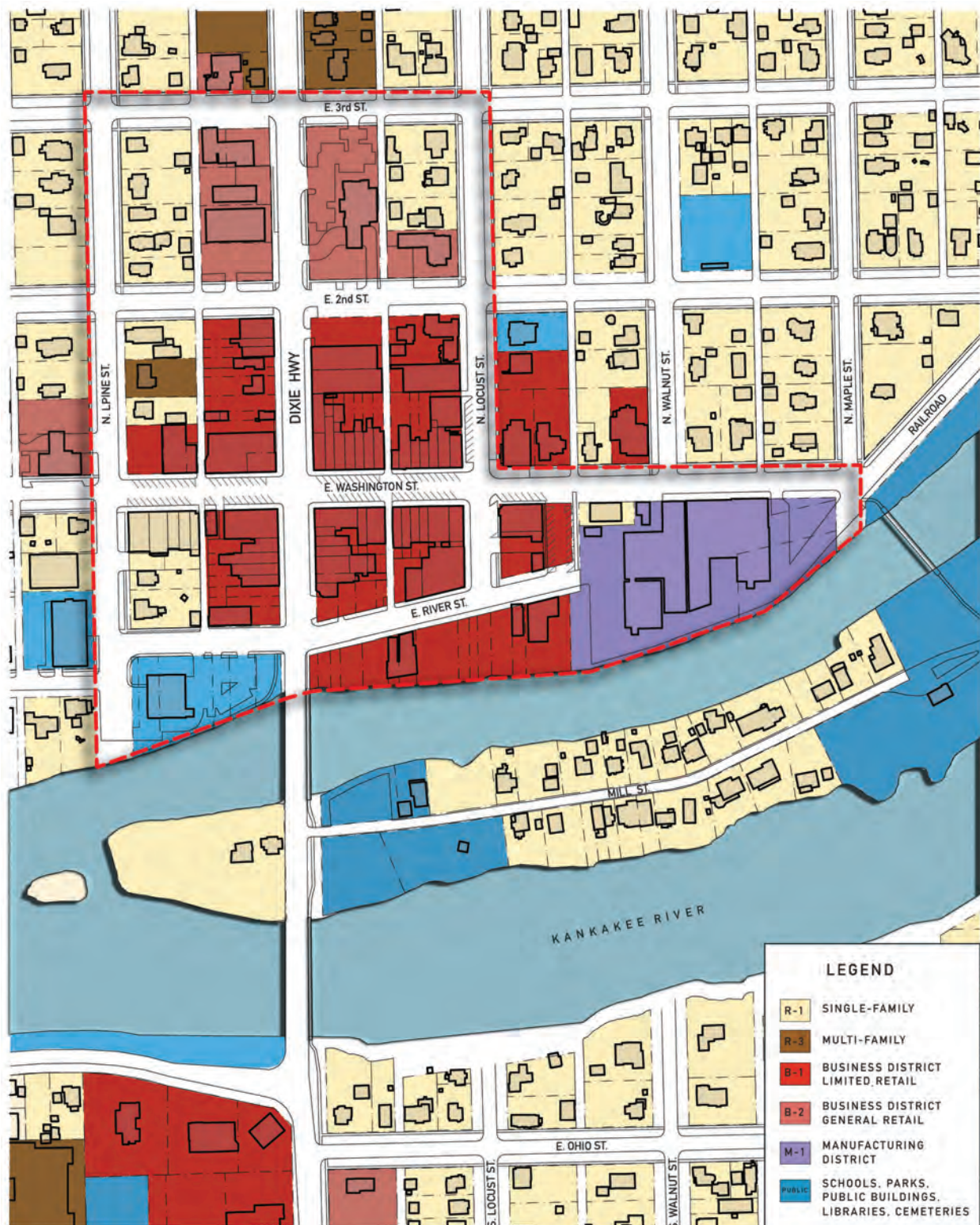


FIGURE 7: EXISTING ZONING  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN

and other auto-oriented uses are restricted from this zone. Dwelling units are allowed above the first floor of a permitted use.

The allowable bulk, scale and height requirements of this zone are also appropriate to Downtown's traditional, pedestrian-oriented character.

Buildings may be constructed up to three (3) stories in height with a thirty-five foot (35') maximum. Building setbacks are not required except in cases where new commercial buildings are constructed adjacent to a residential district where a minimum setback of ten feet (10') may be required. Retail stores and service establishments are required to provide one (1) parking space for every 300 square feet of retail floor area that is over and above a base exemption of 2,000 square feet in retail space. Mixed uses must also provide parking equal to the sum of all the parking requirements for each individual use. These parking requirements are suitable for the retail spaces that currently exist in Downtown but may discourage larger infill development in other areas of the zoning district. More appropriate parking requirements may be needed.

Despite stated height limits in this zoning district, Section 9-5-2-2 does allow an exception to the 35 foot for an area that comprises a majority of the Downtown core. The exception allows for new buildings of up to 170 feet (12 stories) not including parapet walls, cooling towers and elevator bulkheads. It is unclear within this section why the exception is needed. Buildings of this height can substantially alter the visual character of Downtown Momence.

### **B-2 Business District — General Retail**

The B-2 Business District — General Retail, allows for a broader range of retail and commercial uses that are more intensive and auto-oriented in nature than the traditional small retail and service businesses restricted to the B-1 District. These uses include, among others, automobile sales and service establishments, feed and seed stores, restaurants and banks with drive-through

lanes, wholesale businesses, small assembly plants, motels, bowling alleys, pet shops, lumber yards and greenhouses. All commercial uses that are permitted in the B-1 District are also allowed in the B-2 zone. Dwelling units and apartments are also allowed above the first floor of a permitted use. The types of uses located in B-2 are destination-oriented businesses that service the needs of both residents within Momence itself and the outlying townships, businesses that may not be suitable due to space and parking needs in the Downtown historic core. Front and side yard setbacks and parking requirements are the same for those specified in the B-1 District. However, buildings of six (6) stories in height are allowed rather than three as permitted in B-1. Given the low-rise nature of development adjacent to the B-1 District and the lack of any six story buildings in the zone currently, buildings of this height may impact the visual qualities and appearance of Dixie Highway leading to the Downtown core.

### **M-1 Manufacturing District**

The M-1 Manufacturing District is located in the southeast quadrant of the Downtown Study Area along the Kankakee River and largely encompasses the Gilster-Mary Lee cocoa plant complex. The M-1 district is intended to accommodate a range of light and moderate impact manufacturing and processing. It should be noted that B district uses are allowed in the M-1 District with exception of dwellings units and apartments.

### **R-1 Single-Family District**

The R-1 Single Family District is primarily located within the Downtown Study Area on the east side of North Pine Street from River Street north to West 3rd Street, and on the west side of North Locust Street from East 2nd Street north to East Third. Single-family detached residences are permitted along with "transitional" uses such as doctor, lawyer and other professional offices that are adjacent to a B or M zoning district. Religious institutions and home occupations defined other than certain professional services are also permitted within the district.



## R-2 Multi-Family

The R-2 Multi-Family District is located just outside the Downtown Study Area boundaries north of 3rd Street, although one lot on the east side of North Pine Street between 2nd and Washington Streets is classified as R-2. Two-family attached dwellings, schools, parks and municipal buildings are permitted within R-2 along with single family residential.

In general, the zoning classifications found within the Downtown Study Area are appropriate for permitting the types of land uses suitable for a traditional Main Street commercial district. However, some zoning provisions may need to be adjusted, such as height and parking requirements, to encourage appropriate and well-scaled new development in and around the Downtown core. With the exception of the R-1 Single-Family District, the zoning classifications also lack design standards for appropriate building materials, site design and façade articulation.

- Street furniture placement, type and condition
- Parkway width and condition
- On-street parking placement
- Off-street parking facilities, layout, access and screening
- Crosswalk placement and condition
- Public signage placement, size and condition
- Riverfront conditions, constraints and opportunities



## STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC SPACES

Together with the collection of historic commercial buildings, the design and physical characteristics of sidewalks, parkways, parking lots and other public spaces, including the riverfront, are critical elements to developing a compelling, attractive physical environment in Downtown Muncie. The analysis of streetscape and public space conditions was undertaken during two field work sessions, and along with input provided by property and business owners, residents, Steering Committee and Main Street board members, and other Downtown stakeholders, have served to provide a foundation and direction for preliminary streetscape and public improvement concepts.

Key streetscape elements observed and assessed include:

- Sidewalk width, material and condition
- Lighting placement, type and condition



Existing Downtown sidewalk and parkway conditions at different locations. Parkway treatments vary at certain locations (bottom photo).





Existing sidewalk conditions



Alley and rear lot conditions.



Rear lot conditions.



Existing downtown entry point at East Third Street.

## Sidewalks and Streetscape

Sidewalk widths and conditions are fairly uniform throughout the historic Downtown core, bounded by River, Locust, 2nd and North Pine Streets. Sidewalk widths along Dixie Highway and Washington and River Streets are twelve (12) feet providing ample space for new streetscape improvements, including, trees, landscaping and new street furniture. However, sidewalk widths narrow to five (5) feet north of 2nd Street where a twenty foot (20) parkway is introduced, and along North Locust and North Pine Streets, where the land use and development character is single family residential. In some areas, sidewalks are also “vaulted” over basement storage units for the adjacent commercial buildings, presenting somewhat of a constraint for installing new trees and other streetscape enhancements.

Sidewalks and curbs throughout the Downtown Study Area are generally in good condition, although the streetscape, generally, has a spare appearance with no trees, landscape treatments and street furniture. Some peripheral streets, such as Locust Street, do have some mature parkway trees. Flower planters along East Washington Street and Dixie Highway, which are well-maintained by the City and Main Street Momence, are the only streetscape treatments within the Downtown. Downtown lighting is also dominated by dated, older “cobra” style lighting fixtures along the principal thoroughfares and overhead utility wires in the alleys and along River Street.

## Alleys

The alleys and service areas for commercial buildings are in varying states of condition throughout the Downtown Study Area. The alley streets are in good to fair condition with the alley between East 2nd and West River Streets recently repaved. However, most rear service and parking areas are not paved and consist of dirt or gravel. The alley between 2nd and West River Street also lacks appropriate screening and landscaping to the adjacent single family residential zone. Trash

dumpsters are also not corralled or screened. Opportunities exist to pave and strip some of the rear service areas for additional parking. Perhaps, permeable paving materials could be used in these areas to minimize stormwater runoff.

### Signage and Gateways

Downtown Momence lacks gateway, identity and directional signage at key entry points along Dixie Highway, north at 3rd Street and south at Mill Street, although the Main Street Momence street banners do provide visual interest and color in the overall streetscape. Washington Street at North Maple and Pine Streets could also be considered important entry points from the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Directional signage to public buildings and parking areas as well as Island View and Island Park are also lacking.

## RIVERFRONT

Generally, the area that comprises the Downtown Momence riverfront begins at the western end of Island View Park at Maple Street and ends at Pine Street and the Momence Police Station. Direct access to the riverfront along this area is only available at the municipal parking lots just east of the Police Station and in between the Momence Township Hall building and the two remaining commercial buildings to the west along River Street. The Gilster-Mary Lee cocoa



The municipal parking lot at East River Street provides access to the riverfront and functions as a destination stop for fishermen. The parking lot has the potential to be transformed as a more attractive gathering spot along the riverfront.

plant occupies the rest of the land between the Momence Township Hall and Island View Park. Behind the Police Station and adjoining parking lot, a four (4) foot wide sidewalk extends from North Pine Street to the Dixie Highway Bridge with a ten (10) foot landscape berm between the sidewalk and the parking lot. No pedestrian path, however, exists on the east side of the Dixie Highway Bridge. The municipal parking lot next to the Momence Township Hall functions somewhat as destination stop for fishermen since there are no adequate fishing nooks or overlooks along the north side of the Kankakee River other than perhaps the Dixie Highway Bridge. An opportunity to develop a well designed and scaled riverwalk is possible along most of the riverfront area with the exception of the Gilster-Mary Lee plant where truck loading lanes occupy a narrow space between the Kankakee River and the factory.

## TRANSPORTATION

Dixie Highway (Illinois Routes 1 and 17) and Washington Street are the principal north-south, east-west thoroughfares in Downtown Momence (*see Figure 8: Transportation, on following page*). Dixie Highway has a five-lane cross-section with north-south travel lanes, two parallel parking lanes and one center turn lane. Washington Street has a four-lane cross section with east-west travel lanes and two diagonal parking lanes. North of Washington Street, Dixie Highway has a moderate Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume of approximately 9,600 vehicles per day with truck traffic at 1,125 ADT; south of Washington Street, ADT is somewhat higher at approximately 11,000 vehicles per day with truck traffic at 2,800 ADT. The relative shorter distance to Interstate 57 via Illinois Route 17 south of Momence may account for the slightly higher traffic volumes south of the Washington Street – Dixie Highway intersection. Dixie Highway is also an Illinois Class II Truck Route, which allows for 20,000 pound single axle and 34,000 pound tandem axle trucks. Due to tight corners at Washington Street and Dixie Highway, trucks and other large vehicles have significant turning challenges at this intersection.



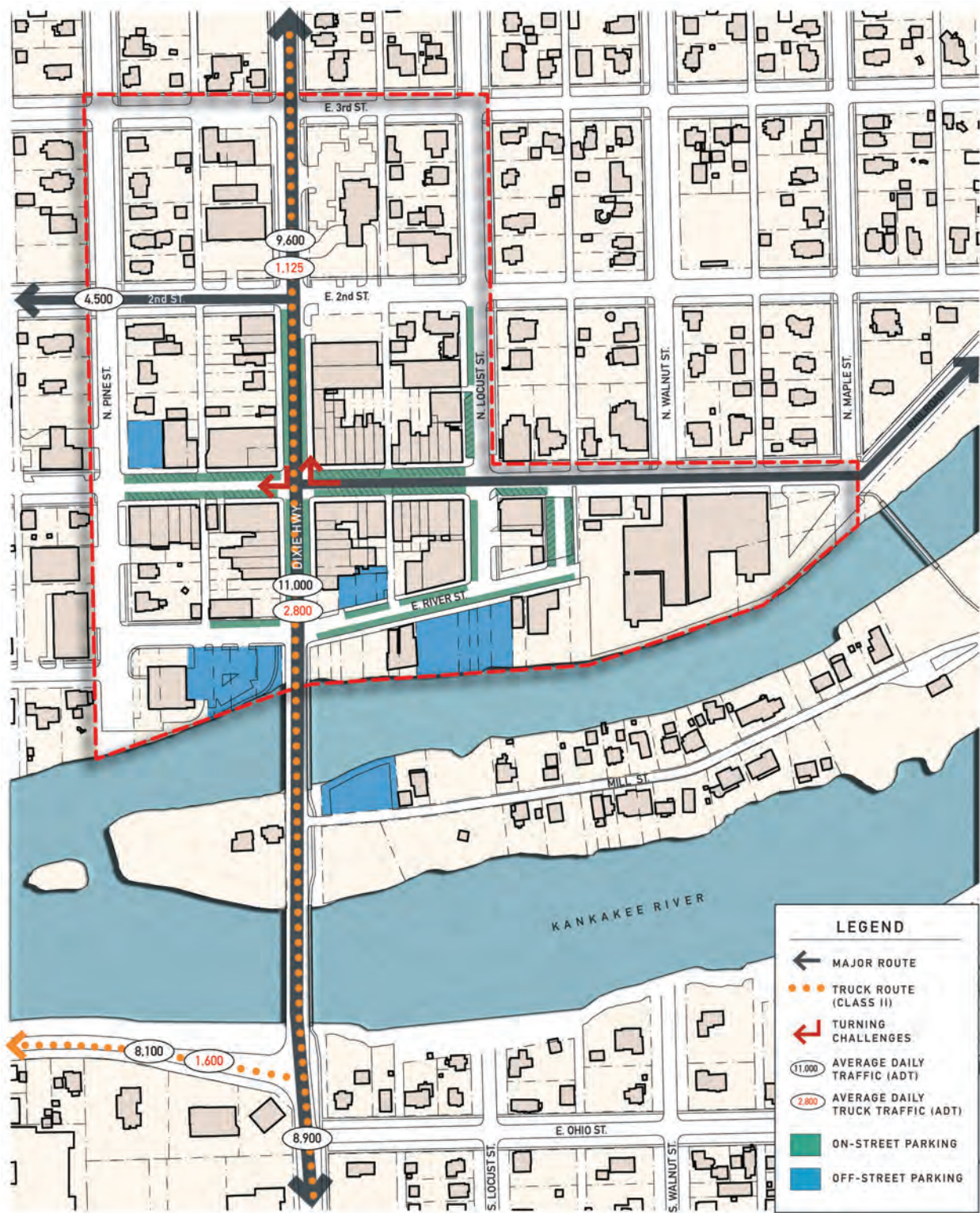


FIGURE 8: TRANSPORTATION  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN



The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has developed plans to redesign Dixie Highway with new turning radii at several intersections, including Washington Street and Dixie Highway. The new radii are wider to accommodate heavy truck turning movements but would also result in the loss of some parking spaces and trucks traveling to within six feet of the corner commercial buildings. In July 2011, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) issued an adverse impact letter to IDOT, stating the new turning radii would significantly impact the building resources located within the National Register of Historic Places. Any federal or state-funded project that adversely impacts resources within a National Register District must be reviewed under a formal consultation process between IHPA and the funding agency or department under requirements specified in both Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4 of the Illinois State Agency Historic Resources Preservation Act. However, the Dixie Highway road project is currently not scheduled to be funded by IDOT. A separate streetscape and road project for Washington Street is funded by the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) and is scheduled to be designed in 2012. Using ITEP funds, an opportunity exists to design a new Washington Street streetscape environment that reflects streetscape enhancement concepts presented in this Master Plan.



City parking lots lack landscaping and screening.

## Parking

Parking Downtown is provided in both on-street spaces along Dixie Highway and Washington, River and Locust Streets, and in four off-street lots owned by the City of Momence. There are other off-street spaces located in a lot north of Conrad Park at Mill Street and in interior block areas behind the commercial buildings. In total, there are 195 on-street and 136 off-street parking spaces. On-street spaces along East Washington and Chocolate Way are placed diagonally, which provides a high number of parking spaces along these streets. Parallel parking is placed along Dixie Highway, although a stripped parking lane is missing in some locations. Stripping for parallel parking spots in other areas and in crosswalks is also faded or missing. Municipal parking lots are generally in good condition and have recently been repaved by the City. However, most parking lots lack appropriate screening and landscape treatments to buffer them from pedestrians on the adjacent sidewalk. Signage to identify the lots as public parking exist but their overall design and small dimensions make them difficult to read when driving by car.

## PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

The following is a brief overview of current plans and studies that support planning and revitalization activities within Downtown Momence.

### City of Momence Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2010

Adopted by the Momence City Council in 2010, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan provides a policy framework for future land use decisions with a long-term goal of enhancing the quality of life for all community residents. The Land Use Plan outlines specific planning goals for land use, transportation, economic development, utilities, public facilities, municipal services and community design. Downtown revitalization is listed as a specific planning goal by *“Promoting redevelopment and rehabilitation in the traditional*

*downtown area and (to) identify opportunities to attract new business.” Other planning goals include the “Use (of) the Main Street Momence Program and other available funding programs to facilitate the enhancement of the traditional downtown,” and to ensure that new construction and building rehabilitation are “done in a manner sensitive to the character of the existing structures” within Downtown and the riverfront zone. The Plan also recognizes the riverfront as an underutilized asset and that efforts should be undertaken to reclaim the area for recreational use, including the possible relocation of Gilster-Mary Lee factory complex.*

***“Downtown revitalization is listed as a specific planning goal by ‘Promoting redevelopment and rehabilitation in the traditional downtown area and (to) identify opportunities to attract new business.’ ”***

Establishing a tax-increment financing district to underwrite Downtown infrastructure improvements, re-routing heavy truck traffic outside of the Downtown core, developing heritage tourism initiatives, and increasing building code enforcement activities are other key planning recommendations. Interestingly, with the community’s location near the Kankakee Marshes, the Land Use Plan suggests the positioning of Momence as the “*gateway community*” to the Marshes as a way to benefit from growing eco-tourism in the region.

### **Market Niche Identification and Business Recruitment Study, 2007**

In October 2007, Main Street Momence engaged Greenberg Development Services of Charlotte, North Carolina to conduct a study

on Downtown Momence’s market potential and opportunities as well as business development strategies. The Study concludes that Downtown Momence can “...sustain a stronger mix of local and regional serving businesses...,” and serve smaller niche markets through unique products and services. Businesses that could be supported Downtown include restaurants, apparel stores and other home furnishing related retail establishments. However, the Study recognizes several constraints to attracting new retailers, including, among others, increasing retail competition in other areas of Kankakee County, flat population growth in the region, aging Downtown infrastructure, weak municipal participation in the revitalization process, and deferred building maintenance and lack of code enforcement. Study recommendations stress the importance of establishing a formal program for nurturing entrepreneurship and small business start-ups, undertaking targeted retail attraction efforts as well as developing new incentives for investment in both buildings and businesses. It also recommends exploring scenarios for riverfront development and the formation of investor-led limited liability corporations (LLC’s) where feasible to purchase and redevelop key Downtown properties.

### **Momence Park District Master Plan, 2007**

In 2007, the Park District drafted and adopted a new master plan to guide future improvements and enhancements to all parks within its system, including both Island Park and Island View Park. These recommendations include new park signage and playground equipment, shoreline protection measures, habitat restoration areas, stone landings for fishing access, bio-swales where feasible, and new pedestrian paths and trails.

### **2030 Kankakee County Comprehensive Plan**

Kankakee County’s Comprehensive Plan incorporates three key planning policies as it relates to encouraging development and revitalization efforts within its municipalities. First, the County will actively support and encourage the start-up

and operation of local Main Street revitalization programs by providing various planning and consensus building assistance services. It will also look to establish “*urban infill incentive programs*” to help local communities address vacant and underutilized properties, principally by providing technical assistance and support for the creation of tax-increment financing districts. Third, the County will support ways in which to reduce the over-supply of unincorporated commercially zoned land that may pose a threat to the economic viability of the County’s traditional downtowns. The Plan specifically mentions 220 vacant commercial acres just east of Momence, and also near important wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas that should be rezoned.

### 2009 Kankakee County Greenways and Trails Plan

The Kankakee County Greenways and Trails Plan was updated in 2009 to guide the creation of a county-wide network of trails and greenways that serve as an alternative to motorized transportation, support additional recreational opportunities, and protect important natural areas and wildlife habitats. The Plan outlines the development and enhancement of several new and existing trails through the Momence community, including the North Momence, the Momence Cross Town, the South Momence and the Ganeer and Grand Marsh Trails. The trails have the potential to link Momence to the Indiana state line and other points east and west within Kankakee County.

### 2009 IHPA Downtown Building Assessments

In 2009, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, based in Springfield, in collaboration with Landmarks Illinois, the statewide historic preservation advocacy organization, conducted detailed assessments of twenty-five buildings within and adjacent to the National Register Historic District. The assessments documented existing conditions for building facades and storefronts, including significant structural issues, and provided basic recommendations for building maintenance and rehabilitation. The assessments provide valuable guidance for property

and business owners planning future building improvement projects.

## CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a summary of existing issues, constraints and opportunities that may or may not affect the potential to revitalize Downtown Momence (see *Figure 9, Constraints and Opportunities, on following page*)

### Strengths | Assets

- Downtown riverfront area is a significant asset and key to its long-term revitalization.
- There is much “curb appeal” and “quaintness” to Downtown Momence with its traditional commercial buildings and small businesses — additional Downtown improvements and enhancements can help build on that curb appeal and Downtown’s unique image.
- Downtown has wide sidewalks, which makes it pedestrian-friendly. There’s also an opportunity to add trees and landscaping to “green up” Downtown’s visual appearance.
- Momence has a relatively low tax base — an advantage for encouraging small business start-ups and attracting office and other commercial related uses in the Downtown.
- The City of Momence has a successful Main Street program, which leverages significant volunteer hours in offering community events, business assistance, facade grants and a low-interest revolving loan fund.





FIGURE 9: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN

- Island Park is a significant recreational and environmental asset that should be capitalized on to attract visitors and tourists to the Downtown area.
- Momence has a diverse population that has the potential to support a variety of businesses and markets in the Downtown.
- Off the Vine — a new, high quality business has opened Downtown that could set the stage for new retail business growth.
- Civic pride — the community supports the revitalization of its historic Downtown district.
- City parking lots along Downtown riverfront could be locations for additional open space or for infill development.
- Momence Theater building is currently used for retail spaces but bringing it back as a theater use could be feasible.
- Downtown Momence is just 55 miles south of Chicago and not more than 15 miles from Kankakee — the community needs to capitalize on its location.
- Many Downtown properties are for sale, which are opportunities to reduce the number of out-of-town property owners if new local owners can be recruited.
- There's potential to add new walking and bike paths within the Downtown and along the riverfront, which could provide connections to existing bike paths within Momence and the surrounding Townships.
- Underutilized upper floors are opportunities for new office and residential uses as well as “location-neutral businesses,” businesses that could adapt to any kind of available space in Downtown Momence.
- Wayfinding signage is needed to help guide visitors and shoppers to Downtown and available parking and amenities.
- Opportunities exist to implement sustainable design and energy generating systems in Downtown, such as permeable pavers in rear parking areas, solar panels on buildings, and geothermal in some locations.
- Need for public restrooms somewhere in Downtown Momence.
- Older homes in the adjacent neighborhoods are well maintained and provide a unique back drop to the Downtown.
- “The bare bones are here” to make Downtown a special destination.

### Challenges | Threats

- Too much underutilized space Downtown — including the riverfront, parking lots, vacant storefronts and upper floors.
- Truck traffic is heavy Downtown during most times of the day, from 8:00 a.m. to 10 p.m. — an alternative truck route around Downtown is needed. Traffic also travels too fast on Dixie Highway, making crossing it unsafe. Train traffic to the east of Downtown also hinders traffic circulation in and out of Downtown.
- Lack of building maintenance, especially in the interior where there may be significant structural issues.

- Too many Downtown buildings are up for sale.
- Momence residents do not support Downtown and go elsewhere in the region to do their shopping for groceries and other consumer goods. Momence also needs a diverse range of family incomes to help support new Downtown businesses that meet local consumer needs.
- Lack of other significant financial incentives such as tax-increment financing district or a special service area. The Current Main Street Momence Facade Grant Program does not offer enough to encourage more substantial building rehabilitation projects.
- Perception that Downtown is not safe, especially at night where there is a lack of lighting along East Washington Street and other areas.
- Lack of coordinated, consistent Downtown business hours — there are too many stores closed at night and over the weekend.
- Sewer system and other Downtown infrastructure systems need to be replaced or upgraded.
- Low community tax base does not provide enough resources and revenues to underwrite needed Downtown infrastructure improvements and development initiatives.
- Lack of building code enforcement and ordinances for landscaping requirements and historic building protection. Property and business owners also need assistance on proper methods and procedures for maintaining their properties.
- A deeper commitment on part of many Downtown stakeholders, including the City of Momence, to carry out code enforcement and the development of new incentive programs are needed.
- Existing sidewalk vaults may pose a significant hurdle to undertaking a comprehensive streetscape program, especially if new trees are to be installed. A program to help Downtown property owners address sidewalk vault issues should be developed.





## DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

# DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan provides a vision and framework for the preservation, enhancement and revitalization of Downtown Momence, one of the more historically and architectural important commercial districts in Kankakee County. This vision and framework is based on local stakeholder desires and preferences and on strategies that have the potential to achieve specific revitalization goals and objectives as well as enhance the quality of life for all community residents. The Master Plan also seeks to build on the Downtown's existing assets and strengths, including its location along the Kankakee River, its stock of historic commercial buildings, collection of businesses and institutions, and active organizations and leadership dedicated to Downtown's revitalization.

## VISION STATEMENT

In the next 5 to 20 years, Downtown Momence will be revitalized as a thriving traditional commercial district with rehabilitated historic buildings, adaptive use projects and new infill development that house a mix of uses from retail, office, institutional and upper-story residential. Downtown Momence will capitalize on its strategic location along the Kankakee River by developing its riverfront for new recreational and economic uses. Other public spaces, including streetscapes and gateways, will be enhanced with new signage, lighting and other landscape treatments. Businesses will serve the needs of a diverse market ranging from local and regional residents to day-trip tourists seeking to stroll or recreate along the enhanced riverfront or to experience an "authentic" historic Illinois small town. Downtown's revitalization will have been facilitated by a strong partnership between Momence citizens, the City of Momence and Main Street Momence, as well as through effective partnerships forged with other public and private sector entities.



Capitalizing on Downtown's built heritage and its location along the Kankakee River.

More specifically, a revitalized Downtown Momence will offer the following (*see Figure 10: Illustrative Plan on following page*):

- Downtown will contain a "critical mass" of restored and rehabilitated historic commercial buildings that retain original building materials, features and storefronts so that the story of Downtown Momence's growth and development can be told through its architecture. Design guidelines and a local historic district designation will help to safeguard against the unwanted loss of historic resources and to help encourage building reinvestment and reuse.
- Improved and enhanced infrastructure and streetscape that makes Downtown more appealing, encourages pedestrian activity, attracts new investment, and builds pride of place among property owners, merchants and residents alike. Improved streetscape should include wayfinding, identity and historic interpretive signage, landscape treatments, and new lighting and paving materials.



LEGEND			
	REDEVELOPMENT/ADAPTIVE USE OPPORTUNITY SITE	<b>A</b>	RIVER OVERLOOK AT DAM
	BUILDINGS SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE	<b>B</b>	RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT, EXPANDED RIVERWALK AREA, RAILING/LIGHT PIERS, SEATING AREAS
	PARKS/OPEN SPACE	<b>C</b>	2-3 STORY IN-FILL DEVELOPMENT (12,000-18,000 S.F.)
	OPPORTUNITY SITES	<b>D</b>	GATEWAY OPPORTUNITIES
	BUILDINGS WITHIN STUDY AREA	<b>E</b>	ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITY
	NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT	<b>F</b>	2-3 STORY COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE REDEVELOPMENT (12,000-18,000 S.F.)
		<b>G</b>	PARKING ENHANCEMENT, LANDSCAPE AND SCREENING 8 SPACES
		<b>H</b>	RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT, 2-3 STORY RESTAURANT/ BANQUET OPPORTUNITY (17,000-25,500 S.F.)
		<b>I</b>	2-3 STORY COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE REDEVELOPMENT (17,000-25,500 S.F.)
		<b>J</b>	REORGANIZED PARKING LOT (65 SPACES)
		<b>K</b>	NEW RIVERFRONT WALK, OVERLOOK, RAILING/LIGHT PIERS, SEATING AREAS
		<b>L</b>	INTERPRETIVE HISTORICAL RIVERFRONT GATEWAY
		<b>M</b>	STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS, NEW STREET TREES, LIGHTING, PLANTERS, AND BENCHES
		<b>N</b>	NEW PARKING AREA, (64 SPACES)
		<b>O</b>	PUBLIC RESTROOMS/CONCESSIONS
		<b>P</b>	NEW 2-3 STORY COMMUNITY CENTER (20,000-30,000 S.F.)
		<b>Q</b>	OPEN SPACE/ICE RINK
		<b>R</b>	AMPHITHEATRE
		<b>S</b>	RIVER TRAIL AND OVERLOOK CONNECTS ISLAND PARK TO DOWNTOWN
		<b>T</b>	RECREATIONAL/ACTIVITY FACILITY
		<b>U</b>	NEW PARKING AREA, (43 SPACES)
		<b>V</b>	PLAYGROUND AREA
		<b>W</b>	EXISTING PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE CONNECTING TO ISLAND PARK
		<b>X</b>	REORGANIZED PARKING WITH LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS AND OVERLOOK (13 SPACES)

FIGURE 10: ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN  
DOWNTOWN MOMENCE MASTER PLAN



- The Downtown riverfront is reclaimed and transformed into a new recreational zone that incorporates new landscaped grounds and open space along with other amenities, including a well-designed riverwalk that blends into the natural scenery of Kankakee River. Ultimately, the riverfront zone would include additional development at key locations to accommodate new commercial and institutional uses, and would connect to and complement both Island Park and Island View Park forming a compelling attraction to both residents and visitors.
- Adaptive use opportunities and infill development are identified to serve as key “catalytic” projects for encouraging Downtown reinvestment and economic growth. Such opportunities will take time to bring to fruition and may require active involvement on part of the City and Main Street Momence to facilitate their implementation.
- An effective business development program is established and executed focusing on both entrepreneurial development and business attraction efforts. These efforts would build on Downtown’s potential to offer a wide variety of products, services and experiences in order to attract diverse market segments, including both locals and visitors.
- A combination of public and private financing sources assembled by the City and Main Street Momence, and other partner agencies and organization to facilitate long-term revitalization envisioned in the Downtown Master Plan. These sources may include Tax-Increment Financing, State and Federal grants and contributions from local foundations and corporations.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Façade and storefront rehabilitation activity should continue to be facilitated by Main Street Momence and the City with a goal of building momentum for on-going improvements with different stakeholders, including building and business owners that have not been engaged in the revitalization process thus far. Recent projects have involved simple, straightforward improvements such as façade and storefront repainting and new signage and awnings. Future projects should also focus on storefront reconstruction and rehabilitation, building material maintenance, the preservation of original windows, storefront merchandising, and appropriate signage and awnings (*see building improvement concepts on facing pages*).



Building improvements should focus on maintaining original building materials. Returning storefronts to their approximate original appearance wherever feasible and installing quality signage.



BUILDING REHABILITATION CONCEPT FOR 23 NORTH DIXIE HIGHWAY



BUILDING REHABILITATION CONCEPT FOR 122 EAST WASHINGTON STREET

To accomplish more significant and substantial building rehabilitation projects, ones requiring storefront reconstruction, building stabilization and material repair and replacement, new tools, such as an enhanced façade grant program, will need to be established and implemented, perhaps with funding from a Tax Increment Financing district, among other potential financing sources. The current Main Street Momence Façade Grant Program currently offers a maximum grant of \$2,500 for various façade improvement expenses, which may not be adequate to facilitate more substantial building and storefront rehabilitation projects. Without enhanced financial incentive tools, building improvements may continue to occur at a slow, sporadic pace. Additionally, a set of historic district design guidelines that can serve as an educational tool for Downtown property owners on proper building rehabilitation methods should also be developed in tandem with a newly enhanced incentive program.

## ADAPTIVE USE AND COMMUNITY INITIATED DEVELOPMENT

Over the years, in one way or another, most Downtown buildings have been adapted for new uses, especially in the upper floors as offices were converted to living spaces and apartments. However, buildings such as the historic Madsen Hotel and the Momence Theater, represent more complex challenges to their reuse given their larger building footprints, exterior conditions, floor layouts and the amount of vacant and underutilized space. However, these buildings, and others, represent opportunities for creative adaptive use approaches, and, rather than waiting for the private sector to take the lead on such initiatives, in some instances, a partnership between the City, Main Street Momence and other parties may be necessary to facilitate building reinvestment and reuse. In other words, the community serves as the developer when the private sector fails to act.

Undertaking a community-initiated development projects, the City, Main Street Momence and other entities can play several different roles, from acting as facilitators of the development process, to finding developers and investors, and to taking equity and ownership positions in the project itself. What roles to be played will depend largely on circumstances for each individual project and what tools and resources, such as financial incentives, might be available to make such projects viable. The City and Main Street Momence may play particular roles in conceptual project planning — identifying adaptive use opportunities and forming co-development teams — to conducting feasibility analysis, financial packaging to project implementation. Further discussion on adaptive use and community-initiated development is presented in the Chapter Three: Implementation Strategy.

## INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Opportunities exist for new infill buildings and development to occur over time in three separate sites and locations along East River Street. Infill development serves to add new economic uses in the Downtown, including retail, office and residential, that may not be able to be accommodated in Downtown currently. It also helps to intensify the use of land Downtown by building on vacant lots and in strengthening Downtown's design environment by closing gaps



Infill development should respect the height, scale and design quality of a downtown's existing architecture.



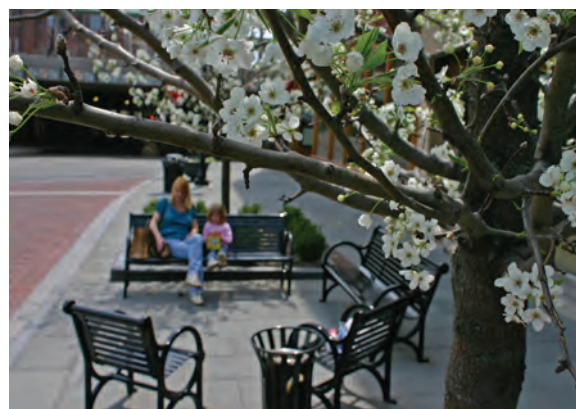
in the streetwall. Locations for new infill include the northwest corner of East River and North Locust Streets, and the northeast and northwest corners of Dixie Highway and East River Street. The current building on the northeast corner of Dixie Highway and East River Street could first be reused as an outdoor restaurant utilizing part of the lot to the corner for outdoor dining space as a mid-term solution until the lot is fully developed with an infill building.

## STREETSCAPE | PUBLIC SPACE | WAYFINDING

Enhancing Downtown Momence's physical environment and streetscape should focus on creating a more pleasant and visually attractive appearance that also complements and unifies downtown public spaces with its historic commercial architecture and setting. Streetscape improvements, such as new crosswalks and tree installation can serve to slow traffic.

The Conceptual Streetscape Plan (*see Figure 11 on following foldout page*) proposes two levels of streetscape enhancements: a primary level of improvements along Washington Street to shape it as Downtown's primary pedestrian-oriented retail and commercial street, and a secondary level along Dixie Highway and side streets to improve the pedestrian experience from peripheral parking lots and the riverfront to destinations along both Washington Street and Dixie Highway. Washington Street improvements would consist of a higher level of streetscape design with brick paving, lighting, trees, landscaping and bump-outs. Secondary streets and parking lots would receive new trees, lighting and landscaping treatments (*See streetscape concepts on following pages 50 and 51*). The following principles in the streetscape design and engineering should be kept in mind when proceeding forward in the next implementation steps:

- Roadway and streetscape system should balance the needs of pedestrians and motorists as well as provide amenities and orientation for shoppers and visitors.
- Downtown roadway, side streets, driveways and parking lots should be more efficient, accessible and safe.
- The alleys behind properties need to be more accessible and useable for local residents and delivery vehicles.
- Parking lots should be more efficient as well as interconnected and shared wherever feasible.
- The amount of asphalt should be reduced and sustainable design features, such as xeriscapes and permeable pavement systems introduced wherever feasible.
- A new Downtown identity/brand/logo and signage system should be part of the overall streetscape design.



Brick streets and tree installations in Downtown Oak Park, Illinois.



Trees in Downtown Oak Park, Illinois.



Tree, landscape, paving treatments.



Crosswalk treatment.



Brick pavement treatment with bollards.

Specific streetscape enhancement elements include:

- Trees.** Trees add shade and visual interest as well as reduce heat, glare and air pollution. Sidewalks along most of the Downtown streets are wide enough to accommodate new trees, although most sidewalk vaults would have to be filled in. Alternatively, trees could be installed in new planters. Trees along 2nd Street from North Locust to North Pine Streets would be part of new parkway treatment that would be similar to the parkway that begins at 2nd Street and Dixie Highway going north. New sidewalk streets can also help to screen and shade public parking lots.
- Enhanced Crosswalks.** Sidewalks can be extended at intersections to reduce the walking distance between curbs. Crosswalks can also be marked with special surfaces and paving to help motorists recognize pedestrians more easily.
- Paving Materials.** Special paving materials can enhance sidewalks, public spaces, crosswalks and the street itself. Brick pavers are suggested along Washington Street to reinforce its historic character as well as to brand and “place make” it as Downtown’s primary commercial street. Brick paving can also be used a traffic-calming method to slow traffic and achieve a proper balance between motorists and pedestrians. Brick paving can also be used in the alley between East Washington and East River Streets to promote the space as a pedestrian walkway from Washington Street to the riverfront. Other such treatments could be installed in Downtown’s other alleys. Paving materials other than brick can be installed for new sidewalks and at bump-out locations.





# LEGEND

- A** NEW PARKWAY TREES
- B** 2-3 STORY INFILL DEVELOPMENT (12,000-18,000 S.F.)
- C** LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS AT THE HISTORIC HOME
- D** STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS ALONG DIXIE HIGHWAY INCLUDING: LIGHTING, STREET TREES IN PLANTERS, BRICK PAVER BANDING, BENCHES, TRASH RECEPTACLES AND MOVEABLE PLANTERS
- E** BRICK PAVING ALONG WASHINGTON STREET
- F** STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS ALONG WASHINGTON INCLUDING: LIGHTING, STREET TREES IN GRATES, BENCHES, BRICK PAVER BANDING, TRASH RECEPTACLES, MOVEABLE PLANTERS, DECORATIVE PAVING AT CORNERS AND BUMP-OUTS
- G** BRICK ALLEY CONNECTING WASHINGTON AND RIVER STREET
- H** BUMP-OUTS AT CORNERS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPING
- I** 2-3 STORY INFILL DEVELOPMENT (12,000-18,000 S.F.)
- J** 2-3 STORY REDEVELOPMENT (12,500-18,500 S.F.)
- K** GATEWAY OPPORTUNITIES AT CORNER
- L** 2-3 STORY COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE REDEVELOPMENT (17,000-25,500 S.F.)

CITY OF MOMENCE, ILLINOIS

## DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Figure 11: Conceptual Streetscape Plan



LAKOTA

FEBRUARY 8, 2012



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- Public Art and Interpretive Signage.** Locations along the streetscape and in open spaces should be considered for public art. Wall signage and murals can also be considered as long as they are of high design quality and installed in areas where their presence can contribute positively to the Downtown streetscape. Interpretive signage and markers highlighting Downtown's history can be placed on buildings and in certain places in the streetscape and riverfront.
- Signage and Wayfinding.** New identity and gateway signage should be considered at key Downtown locations such as Mill Street and Dixie Highway and at Dixie Highway and 3rd Street. Additional gateway signage could be installed along Washington Street at Pine and Maple Streets. Directional signage directing motorists to specific destinations such as the Edward Chipman Library and Downtown parking lots should also be created and installed as part of a family of wayfinding and identity signage that



Street identity signs, Plainfield, Illinois.



Public art.



Downtown Momence wayfinding signage concepts.



DIXIE HIGHWAY STREETScape ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT



WASHINGTON STREET STREETScape ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT





WASHINGTON STREET STREETScape ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT



PARKING LOT ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT

incorporates a specially designed brand logo or image (*see Figure 12 in foldout and below*).

- **Lighting Standards.** Current downtown street light standards are tall cobra heads that do not contribute to Downtown’s historic setting. New street lights should be installed throughout the downtown to promote night safety and serve as a unifying design element. New street light standards should be based on a design and style suitable to downtown’s existing scale and visual characteristics and on any photo documentation of historic lighting standards that may have existed in downtown previously.
- **Green Elements.** Streetscape improvements can incorporate green features such as movable planters, such as ones that Main Street Momence



Lighting standard with district identity markers and street furniture are important elements in a downtown streetscape.

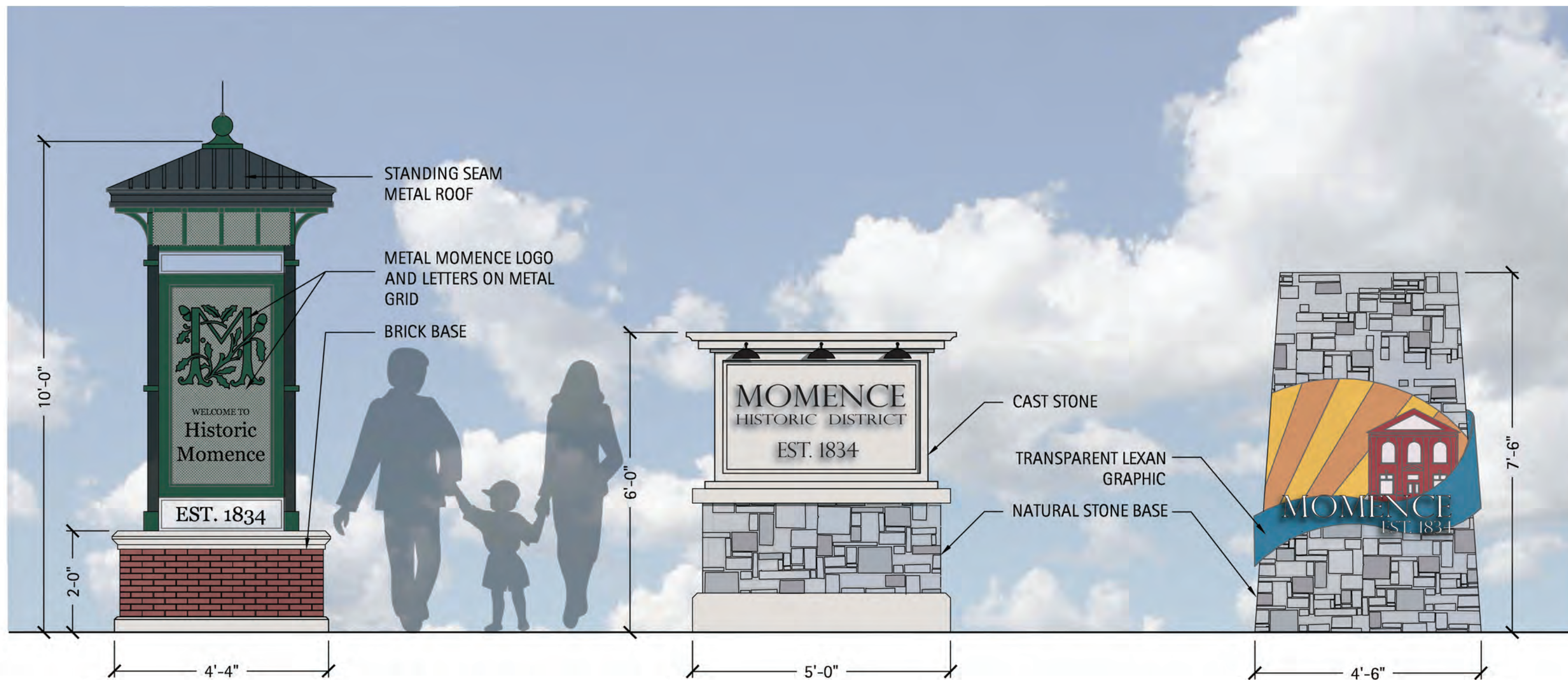
currently maintains, and planter beds in both the sidewalk and street where feasible. Innovative “sustainable features” can also be installed to aid in stormwater management such as rain gardens and permeable pavers in alleys and rear parking areas.

- **Special Areas.** Apart from the riverfront zone, other downtown areas, such as the two historic homes along Dixie Highway, could receive specific treatments to enhance their appearance and to connect them more effectively into downtown’s overall streetscape environment.
- **Street Furnishings.** Street furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, newspaper corrals and bike racks are typical elements considered as part of comprehensive downtown streetscape program. Trash receptacles should be made of durable materials and placed away from seating areas and benches. Newspaper corrals help to organize newspaper and free publication boxes in one or several defined locations within downtown. Bike racks should be designed to be functional for bicyclists and placed in areas that do not interfere with pedestrian movement. Furnishings should be consistent and compatible with each other in terms of materials and design as well as complement other streetscape elements such as lighting standards and paving and landscape treatments.

## RIVERFRONT

The revitalization strategy for downtown Momence envisions the transformation of the riverfront primarily into a recreational zone, with an expanded riverwalk and additional open space that also incorporates new and existing commercial and institutional uses. Enhancement of the riverfront should serve as a critical catalyst





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in spurring investment in new and existing buildings, and in attracting businesses that meet local consumer needs and in growing recreational, heritage and eco-tourism markets. The Master Plan presents two riverfront zone development concepts or phases — a “mid-term” scenario that focuses on the installation of a new riverwalk plus landscape enhancements to existing parking and other developed areas, and a “long-term” scenario that anticipates a dramatic expansion of the riverwalk and open space to Island View Park with the possible relocation of the Gilster-Mary Lee factory complex and the redevelopment of its.

### Riverfront Zone Concept 1

Phase 1 (see Figure 13 in foldout) proposes the design and installation of a riverwalk between Chocolate Way on the east to Pine Street on the west while maintaining all existing buildings and municipal parking areas. The riverwalk would have a unified design respecting the natural setting of the Kankakee River and utilizing a cohesive palette of materials for railings, pavement, furnishings and lighting. Riverwalk overlooks would be incorporated at Pine Street and at the municipal parking lots for sightseers, strollers and fishermen. At the eastern end of the riverwalk at Chocolate Way, a gateway stand or monument could be designed and installed as a starting point for an interpretive trail that could extend into the downtown and across the Dixie Highway Bridge into Island Park.

The Momence Township Hall and the commercial buildings to the west of the municipal parking lot would remain along East River Street. These buildings will be rehabilitated and adapted for new uses. The parking lot would also be redesigned and landscaped for forty-eight (48) parking spaces. Across Dixie Highway, the Police Station and its parking lot would also remain but incorporate new landscape treatments. River Street would receive streetscape treatments such as new lighting standards, trees and paving that would help to tie in and unify the riverfront zone with the downtown core. A



A riverwalk designed to blend and be compatible with its natural surroundings.

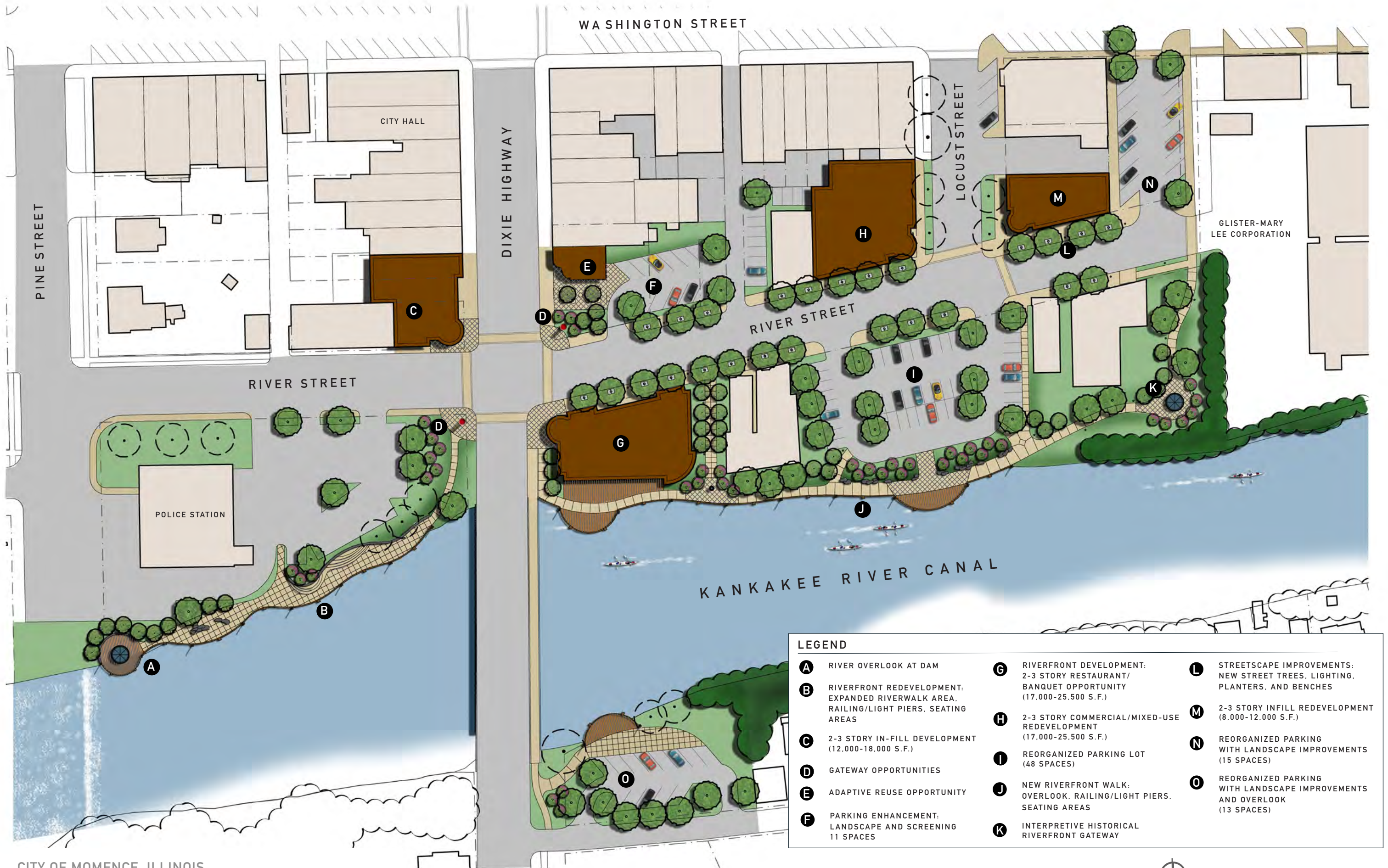
*“Enhancement of the riverfront should serve as a critical catalyst in spurring investment in new and existing buildings and in attracting businesses that meet local consumer needs and in growing recreational, heritage and eco-tourism markets.”*

two-story, 17,000 to 25,000 square foot infill building would be developed at the southeast corner of Dixie Highway and East River Street to house a first floor restaurant and upper story office or residential use. A riverwalk lookout could be added adjacent to the infill development. Additional infill is also proposed on the southern half of the block bounded by North Locust and East River Streets and Chocolate Way. A reorganized, landscaped parking lot of thirteen (13) spaces with a river overlook at Mill Street and Dixie Highway can also be considered.

### Riverfront Zone Concept 2

If the Phase 2 Gilster-Mary Lee factory complex ceases operations or relocates at some point in the future, Concept 2 (see Figure 14 in foldout) proposes additional open space along the Kankakee River and the extension of the





CITY OF MOMENCE, ILLINOIS  
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Figure 13: Riverfront Concept 1



LAKOTA

MAY 21, 2012

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Amphitheater design.



Potential entrance archway to a riverfront walk.

riverwalk to the footbridge linking Island View Park and Island Park. The factory complex's relocation would provide enough space for a grass amphitheater for outdoor concerts and events, a winter ice rink, public restrooms and concessions, and a new parking lot near the intersection of Walnut and Washington Streets. A new two (2) to three (3) story community center and a recreational facility, which could house an indoor gym or swimming pool, would be located both to the west and east of the parking lot respectively. A new children's playground could be added at the far eastern corner of the riverfront zone at Maple Street adjacent to Island View Park.

To accommodate additional parking needs due to the riverfront's space expansion and additional community and recreational facilities, two commercial buildings would be removed on the block bounded by East River and North Locust Streets and Chocolate Way to make way for a consolidated lot containing sixty-four (64) parking spaces. Additional parking would also be added to the municipal lot along East River Street with the removal of the two remaining commercial buildings. All other elements proposed in Concept A, including riverwalk overlooks, streetscaping and infill development, with the exception of infill proposed at Chocolate Way and East River Street, are incorporated in this riverfront development scenario.





## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

## OVERVIEW

A sustained commitment and participation by the City of Momence, Main Street Momence, and other community stakeholders will be required to bring the vision of a revitalized downtown district, as presented in this Downtown Momence Master Plan, to reality. Working together with other partner organizations and agencies, such as the Momence Park District, Ganeer and Momence Townships, the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Alliance of Kankakee County, the Illinois Main Street Program, the City and Main Street Momence will need to accomplish the following:

- **Funding Sources.** Secure a diverse set of funding sources from both the public and private sectors to underwrite and implement various elements of the Downtown Master Plan. Pursuit of funding sources must be consistent in effort and flexible when changes in funding sources and eligibility occur inevitably over time. In addition, multiple funding sources will be required for more complex projects, such as riverfront development and adaptive use projects. Given the time and effort necessary research and secure grants and funding sources, and to package them efficiently for certain revitalization initiatives, a Master Plan implementation timeline of ten to twenty years will be realistic. A list of potential funding sources is provided later in this chapter.
- **Capacity Building.** Priority should be given to enhancing the organizational capacity of Main Street Momence to assist the City various in implementation activities. Main Street Momence has played a critical role in the early stages of the revitalization process thus far, especially in facilitating downtown building improvements and producing

yearly special events and festivals.

Going forward, the organization may be expected to do more in regards to identifying and securing Master Plan funding sources and spearheading riverfront development and larger-scaled building improvement and adaptive use projects. In order to balance implementation activities with its ongoing Main Street revitalization and promotion work, additional part of full-time Main Street staff may be necessary. Hence, the organization will need to increase its operating budget by diversifying its own revenue sources through increased municipal support and private sector fundraising.

*“A sustained commitment and participation by the City of Momence, Main Street Momence, and other downtown stakeholders will be required to bring the vision of a revitalized downtown district, as presented in this Downtown Momence Master Plan, to reality.”*

- **Historic Preservation.** Historic preservation based downtown revitalization is the overall framework and basis for the planning goals and objectives presented in this document. This framework stresses the rehabilitation and reuse of the historic commercial buildings within the National Register Historic District and the sensitive design management of these important historic resources and surrounding physical environment. Therefore, revising existing zoning, preparing design guidelines and



adopting a local historic preservation ordinance that serve to manage the design of downtown's built environment are presented as key implementation tools in this chapter. Adopting these tools will require a dedicated effort on part of the City and Main Street Momenca to educate local stakeholders on the efficacy of such tools and to build strong community consensus for their adoption and implementation.

Master Plan implementation tools presented in this chapter include the following:

- Zoning Changes and Design Standards
- Historic Preservation and Adaptive Use
- Streetscape, Wayfinding and Public Improvements
- Riverfront
- Funding
- Implementation Committees and Stakeholders and Partners

*“Since implementing the Downtown Momenca Master Plan will take time, setting clear priorities at the beginning will be critically important to achieving short term goals and building momentum for undertaking more complex revitalization projects in the long-term.”*

## IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

Since implementing the Downtown Momenca Master Plan will take time, setting clear priorities at the beginning will be critically important to achieving short term goals and building momentum for undertaking more complex revitalization projects in the long-term. Additionally, a well-coordinated effort at

implementation between the public and private sectors will also be needed. An implementation sequence that outlines specific initiatives and a general timeline for their start and completion is presented below. Economic and political conditions at the local, State and Federal levels, along with the availability of outside project funding sources and financing, will largely influence the implementation timeline. The greatest challenge then for Downtown Momenca is to begin Master Plan projects, that when bolstered by ongoing Main Street revitalization activities, such as effective marketing and promotions, façade and storefront improvements, and business and real estate development, are more likely to have the greatest short-term impacts in shaping the Downtown's image and performance.

### First Phase (1 to 2 Years)

The following actions should be taken within the next 1 to 2 years to generate momentum and to set the stage to achieve Master Plan goals in succeeding years.

- Formally approve and adopt the Downtown Master Plan as the official public policy document for Downtown's revitalization and development.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a downtown Tax-Increment Financing District as critical funding mechanism for future downtown improvements and enhancements. A funding source for conducting the feasibility study will need to be identified.
- Identify and secure financing sources, such as City capital improvement funds, County/State/Federal grants, and private sector monies, such as community foundations and local corporations, for infrastructure, riverfront and building improvement initiatives.

- Work with IDOT on developing an initial streetscape design scheme for Washington Street as part of the City's Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) grant. Subsequently, the City should pursue the development of a comprehensive downtown streetscape and signage plan using the Washington Street design as a basis for further public space enhancements throughout the downtown.
- Enhance the current Façade Grant Program with increased grant amounts and the creation of an illustrated set of design guidelines. Property and business owners planning building improvement projects should be targeted with an aim to complete a certain number of projects on an annual basis.
- Begin discussions with property owners regarding potential adaptive use projects and to initiate a community initiated development process if essential.
- Revise City zoning ordinance and develop and adopt new design standards and guidelines. Initial discussion regarding the adoption of a local historic preservation ordinance and district should also take place.
- Where resources are available, the City should purchase property and/or easements along River Street to initiate the riverfront development process. Easement purchases could be accomplished using the standard City/property owner agreement.
- Main Street Momenca and the City should establish several working committees, composed of key downtown and community stakeholders as well as members from the City Council, Plan Commission and the Main Street Momenca board of directors, to

facilitate various aspects of Master Plan implementation, especially in regards to streetscape and riverfront development.

- Explore the potential for developing a downtown Venture Fund that builds on or replaces the existing Revolving Loan Fund for small business development or to create one or two needed businesses in the downtown.
- Initiate Main Street Momenca capacity-building efforts by developing a fundraising plan and operations budget for future staff additions and program expansion.
- Refocus the Main Street Momenca Design Committee's annual work plan to include efforts in improving storefront appearances and merchandising.

### Second Phase (2 to 5 Years)

The following initiatives build on Phase 1 actions and should facilitate various downtown improvements from façade rehabilitations to public space enhancements.

- Monitor the effectiveness of zoning changes and design guidelines and undertake additional modifications if necessary to achieve the desired land use mix and design character as envisioned in the Downtown Master Plan. Discussions among downtown stakeholders regarding the adoption of a local historic district and preservation ordinance should be completed and moved toward adoption.
- Update the City's Capital Improvement Program based on proposed phasing for streetscape and riverfront improvements.
- Continue to secure additional funding sources to finance infrastructure, streetscape, buildings and riverfront improvements.



- Complete development of a comprehensive downtown streetscape plan and initiate a construction document and engineering phase with an aim to implement streetscape and wayfinding improvements by the end of the fifth year.
- Complete purchase of riverfront property and/or easements to begin the design and engineering of the first phase of riverfront development.
- Continue façade, storefront and storefront merchandising improvements and move forward with feasibility studies and the formation of development teams for previously identified adaptive use projects.
- Add Main Street Momence staff to assist in grant writing and fundraising activities related to Master Plan implementation. Main Street Momence should continue its capacity building efforts by diversifying its funding sources, recruiting new board and committee members and forming additional working committees as necessary.
- Formally establish the downtown Venture Fund and conduct other business development efforts that sharpen the competitiveness of existing businesses and attract new ones that meet local consumer needs.
- Update the Downtown Master Plan and the zoning code, design guidelines and historic preservation ordinance, if needed, to account for changing conditions and opportunities.
- Monitor various financing programs secured for various downtown planning and revitalization initiatives and assess the need to acquire additional grants and funding.
- Complete installation of the downtown streetscape and wayfinding program along with the first phase of riverfront development. The design, engineering and completion of the riverfront's second redevelopment phase may also be undertaken.
- Facilitate additional building improvement and adaptive use projects by maintaining or enhancing existing incentive programs and participating in project financing and marketing activities.
- Continue to expand Main Street Momence's organization capacity by adopting a Special Service Area to help maintain the newly constructed streetscape and riverfront as well as underwrite additional services such as snow plowing, garbage collection and property maintenance for businesses.
- Recruit developers and investors to consider infill development opportunities.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Venture Fund and determine funding and resource needs for future downtown business development activities.

### Third Phase (5+ Years)

Downtown Momence should experience significant reinvestment in its streetscape, public spaces, buildings and riverfront during this phase. In particular, the work in securing financial resources in previous years should pay dividends during this phase when downtown streetscape and riverfront development should be completed.

## ZONING CHANGES AND DESIGN STANDARDS

City of Momenca zoning ordinance will need to be adjusted and revised to achieve the desired land use mix, physical form, and site and building design envisioned in the Downtown Master Plan. The following are potential changes to be considered by the City of Momenca. Additional study may be needed to determine what specific revisions and adjustments should be undertaken.

### Land Use

Current downtown zoning classifications (B-1 and B-2 Business Districts) allow for a diverse range of commercial uses that are appropriate for traditional downtown business district. However, as the revitalization process takes place over the long-term and competition for storefront space between retail and service retail uses increases, consideration should be given in the B-1 Business District to reclassifying currency exchanges, and utility collection and loan servicing offices, as “restricted limited retail” uses. This way, storefront space can be reserved for retail uses when the market strengthens and can support additional retail activity. Furthermore, the southern half-block along Washington Street between the alley and North Pine Street is currently zoned Single-Family Residential. This block should be included within the B-1 Business District.

The B-2 Business District — General Retail and Wholesale Services, encompasses the two blocks north of 2nd Street and the traditional historic downtown core. The zoning classification allows for all commercial uses within the B-1 District and slightly more intense ones, such as automobile and agricultural implement sales and repairs, warehouses, boat showrooms, and food processing plants less than 6,000 square feet in area. Since these two blocks abut a Multi-Family District immediately to the north and the historic downtown to the south, and which already contains retail and service retail uses similar to the downtown core, several of the more intensive uses could be become restricted or conditional to

ensure more compatibility and appropriateness to the downtown land use pattern. In the future, when the Gilster-Mary Lee factory closes or is relocated to another site within the City, land south of River Street should receive a new zoning district classification, perhaps titled “Special Riverfront Zone”, which would permit certain recreational and limited commercial uses along with appropriate design development standards.

### Building Height

The B-1 Business District permits a maximum building height of thirty-five (35) feet (3 stories), which is appropriate to maintaining the historic scale and character of downtown Momenca. However, Section 9-5-2-2 of the Momenca Zoning Code provides a one-hundred seventy (170) foot (14 stories) exception to the height limit within certain sections of the downtown core. This exception should be reviewed for necessity and relevancy in regards to Master Plan goals as the City revises the zoning code. In the B-2 Business District, six (6) stories are allowed. This may permit new buildings that are out of scale with buildings in the adjacent historic core as well as block views and vistas into the downtown and riverfront as one travels south along Dixie Highway. This building height requirement should be revised.

### Parking

Generally, parking is addressed in the Momenca zoning code by individual land uses, not by zoning district classifications. As such, parking requirements for certain land uses, whether located in the traditional downtown core or not, must be followed regardless of location. Retail uses in buildings under 2,000 square feet are exempt from supplying off-street parking but for each 300 square feet above the 2,000 square foot threshold, one additional parking is required. Mixed use buildings must also provide the sum of all parking requirements for each individual use. These requirements may discourage downtown infill development as space for new off-street parking is considerably limited in the downtown

core, if nonexistent. Given downtown's tight building fabric and the fact the majority of off-street parking lots are already owned by the City, consideration should be given to exempting parking requirements for all retail uses within the B-1 District. All other requirements for office and residential uses can remain the same.

### Design Standards

Current B-1 Business District zoning provisions lack design standards for new development. New infill development both in and around the downtown core may be years away; however, basic design standards should be put in place to ensure that new buildings compliment the tradition of small lot, low-scale development that already exists in the downtown. Design standards that can be incorporated into the zoning code may include:

- New commercial buildings must be constructed in materials that are similar or compatible with the materials found in adjacent or nearby buildings.
- Retail storefronts should be installed at the ground floor of new buildings and must have maximum window glass transparency that helps to activate the street environment.
- Doors and windows should be utilized to establish scale, variation, and patterns on building facades that should provide visual interest and reflect the uses within the building.
- Arrange building heights and scaling devices to provide appropriate transitions to adjoining neighborhoods and residential areas.

Additionally, design standards may also be incorporated within the B-2 Business District classification so that a more consistent, high quality design for new development in the areas north and south of the downtown core can be achieved. It should be noted that design standards

within the zoning code are different than design guidelines for historic building rehabilitation and the National Register Historic District, which is described in the following Historic Preservation section.



Good infill development, whether contextual (above) or contemporary (below) in interpretation, can be guided with design standards and guidelines.

### Signage

Commercial signage in both B Districts are currently addressed in Chapter 6 of the Momence Zoning Ordinance. While the ordinance regulates exterior signage in the B Districts, it does not, however, mention the types of exterior lighting systems nor interior window signage types that are allowed. Additionally, the types of illuminated signage that are not permitted in the zoning code should be further defined. Neon signage, for example, would not be allowed under the existing definition but could contribute positively to downtown's visual environment if





A “creativity clause” in the sign code can encourage signage that helps business “brand” themselves appropriately while fitting in with a downtown’s overall design character.

designed sensitively and attractively in storefront spaces, both interior and exterior. This chapter should be reviewed and revised to encourage creativity in downtown signage and to regulate storefront window signage and the types of illuminated signage that could be suitable in the core downtown district. Additional standards in terms of permitted sign materials and dimensions could also be incorporated. A separate subsection defining permitted signage within the B-1 — Limited Retail District only could also be considered.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ADAPTIVE USE

The historic preservation element within the Downtown Master Plan encompasses the appropriate rehabilitation and adaptive use of downtown Momence’s historic commercial

buildings. It also deals with the long-term design management and protection of the significant and contributing resources within downtown’s National Register District.

### Building Rehabilitation

Over the years, Main Street Momence and its Design Committee have done quite well in facilitating improvements to downtown building facades and storefronts with its existing Façade Grant Program. Going forward, these efforts should be enhanced with a larger pool of funds to encourage more significant building improvements, especially in regards to building stabilization and maintenance, and storefront reconstruction. An enhanced downtown building rehabilitation program may include the following elements:

- Grant awards should be increased from \$2,500 to a range between \$7,500 or \$20,000 on a 50 percent matching basis. An increased grant amount would be able to underwrite more substantial costs related to exterior maintenance and storefront rehabilitation. Grants could be awarded on a more restricted, competitive basis — perhaps just two or three projects per year on an annual basis. Ideally an operating budget of \$50,000 to \$75,000 supporting two to three projects or more per year is suggested.
- An enhanced incentive program could be financed through Tax Increment Financing revenues and contributions from the municipality, corporate donors, outside grants and community foundations.
- Consider adding a bonus grant amount if a property owner is applying for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program.

- Add energy efficiency improvements as eligible expenses, including cool roof installations, new storm windows and interior insulation projects.
- Revise the Façade Grant Program application in a more user-friendly format that outlines the application and design review procedure and eligible project expenses.
- Follow the maintenance and rehabilitation recommendations provided in each building assessment completed by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency as a guide for determining the appropriateness façade Grant Program applications. Additionally, it should be required that each applicant receive professional design assistance, either through the Illinois Main Street Program or from a qualified preservation architect, in order to be eligible to apply.
- A smaller grant program geared toward signage and awnings only could be established as a separate initiative since this is a particular expense for new businesses. Grant awards could be limited to \$500 on a 50 percent matching basis and funded through Tax Increment Financing and other revenues.

## Design Guidelines

Main Street Momence has recently developed a set of downtown Design Guidelines for use in reviewing applications to its Façade Grant Program. The Guidelines are fairly comprehensive as they define appropriate procedures and methods for building material maintenance and facade and storefront rehabilitation. Infill construction, signage, colors and paint, site improvements and rear facades are also addressed. The Guidelines serve as a good tool in educating downtown property and business owners on proper preservation procedures but, at present,

the document lacks pictures, drawings and images that can more effectively describe and illustrate preservation standards than just the text alone.

A revised and updated version of the Design Guidelines should be created that incorporates additional photos and images describing, among others, the anatomy of a historic commercial building façade and storefront, proper storefront rehabilitation procedures, signage and awnings, rear entries, building material maintenance and infill construction. Information on appropriate energy efficiency improvements and how property owners can apply for and use the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit and other incentive programs should also be added. Ultimately, if a local historic preservation ordinance and commission is established, the Design Guidelines should serve as the principal design review document for design review in the National Register Historic District (see below).



A well-illustrated set of design guidelines helps to explain preservation and design procedures more clearly to property owners and investors.

### Historic Preservation Ordinance and Commission

As documented in the State of the Downtown, the community currently lacks the measures and mechanisms to protect against the demolition and loss of the historic resources located within the downtown National Register Historic District. Further loss of such resources will significantly impact the District's architectural and historical integrity as well as downtown's strong visual character, setting and sense of place. Downtown's historic resources are critical economic assets and the community's primary strategic advantage in leveraging public and private sector investment in creating a unique place and destination unlike any other in Kankakee County and the region. A local historic district, enacted through adoption of a local historic preservation ordinance, should be established with appropriate measures to limit the demolition of significant and contributing historic buildings within the National Register Historic District. The local district boundaries may also extend beyond those of the National Register District to include additional properties, such as the Chipman Memorial Library, the U.S. Post Office and the Police Station (Old Village Hall).

A local historic district has several benefits, including:

- Preserves and protects the distinctive characteristics of buildings that are significant or contribute to the history of Momence.
- Maintains and improves downtown Momence's setting and physical environment.
- Local historic districts encourage new designs and developments that are compatible with existing buildings and historic resources located within or adjacent to the National Register Historic District.
- Stabilizes property values and assures local property owners and developers

that investment in historic building rehabilitation will not be lost to future demolition and inappropriate remodeling.

- Local historic districts provide a visual sense of the past and create pride in the community.

Going forward, Main Street Momence and the City, along with key downtown stakeholders, should form a local study committee to discuss the development, adoption and implementation of a local historic preservation ordinance as the

*“Local historic districts encourage new designs and developments that are compatible with existing buildings and historic resources located within or adjacent to the National Register Historic District.”*

first step in creating a downtown local historic district. A preservation ordinance establishes a local historic preservation commission, composed of different members of the community, which is charged with the interpretation of the ordinance's provisions and powers, including:

- The nomination of individual buildings as local landmarks, and neighborhoods and commercial districts as local historic districts, according to a well defined eligibility criteria within the ordinance.
- Adoption and interpretation of Design Guidelines for both the review of alterations and demolition of local landmarks and buildings within historic districts based on commonly-accepted preservation standards.



- The establishment of a regular program of community historic resource surveys.
- Develop appropriate and effective historic preservation financial incentives with participation and assistance with other municipal departments, economic development group, and Main Street programs.
- Promoting the value of historic preservation and the appreciation of local historic resources through educational initiatives.

The study committee should take time as it drafts the ordinance to forge consensus among downtown property owners and stakeholders on critical questions and issues such as demolition protection measures and the level of design review to be conducted by the historic preservation commission. For example, in regards to demolition, individual landmarks and significant and contributing buildings within a designated local historic district could only be demolished if a property owner can prove that rehabilitating a building would amount to substantial economic hardship. In the terms of the level of design review, the commission, for example, would conduct design review for projects that are that are proposing a significant alteration of the front facade. The commission would also review any projects that receive any municipally sponsored financial incentive or grant.

Building stakeholder consensus for a local historic district is a critical first step in adopting a preservation ordinance. Informal community surveys, fact sheets, public meetings and one-on-one discussions and consultations with downtown property owners can be effective means in which to build consensus. Furthermore, survey and discussion results can be used to design and craft the proposed ordinance, including what should be exempted from design review. If surveys and discussions indicate strong support for the ordinance and local district designation among the

people who would be most affected by it, it would then help to convince the local stakeholders of its benefits in guiding how historic resources should be protected within the community's overall planning and development framework.

Before proceeding with community discussions, the City and Main Street Momence should consult with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency on best practices in community consensus building and in drafting a suitable historic preservation ordinance.

### **Certified Local Government**

Illinois communities that have a historic preservation ordinance and commission in place, along with an active program for surveying and identifying historic resources, are eligible to become Certified Local Governments (CLGs), a program administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Local CLG communities are eligible for IHPA matching grant funds to assist in the implementation of their local preservation projects such as historic resource surveys, National Register nominations, public education initiatives and design guidelines. Certified Local Governments may also be eligible for other state and Federal level grant and incentive programs. There are currently 70 CLG communities in Illinois. The City and Main Street Momence should draft its historic preservation ordinance according to IHPA standards and guidelines so that it can be eligible to participate in the CLG program.

### **Preservation Easements**

An alternative to establishing a local historic district is to require downtown property owners who voluntarily participate in a municipally sponsored façade improvement or financial incentive program to donate a preservation easement. A preservation easement is a private legal interest conveyed by the property owner to a qualified easement holding organization, such as a municipality or non-profit preservation organization that binds the current and future

property owners to protect the building's historic appearance and character. In a downtown context, the easement may only be applied to the front façade and storefront. The easement holding organization monitors any changes to the property over the life of the easement. Landmarks Illinois, the statewide non-profit historic preservation advocacy groups based in Chicago, is one such holding organization. Property owners who donate an easement are eligible for a charitable contribution deduction from their Federal income taxes for the value of the historic preservation easement, provided that the contribution meets the criteria and standards of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).



Facade easements can be an alternative to protecting Downtown's most significant historic buildings.

### Community Initiated Development

The Downtown Master Plan identifies two contributing buildings within the National Register Historic District, the former Madsen Hotel and Momence Theater buildings, as potential adaptive projects — projects that could generate catalytic economic impacts in surrounding businesses and buildings. While both buildings are privately owned, and in various states of occupancy and use, Main Street Momence, the City and other stakeholders and partners can act to facilitate each building's appropriate reuse and rehabilitation if the private sector fails to come forward and act. This approach is often called

“community-initiated development” whereby the community, facilitated by a Main Street program or non-profit development corporation, the municipality or other entities, brings together the human and financial resources necessary to undertake a critically important development project. Community-initiated development, a downtown revitalization strategy developed by the National Trust Main Street Center, can take several different forms depending on the size of the building and the overall complexity of the project. Additionally, the City and Main Street Momence will have to evaluate each potential project thoroughly, in term of the resources that are needed, in order to determine what each entity's respective roles and responsibilities will be in the development process.



Both the Princess Theater in Rushville and the Liberty Theatre in Murphysboro were brought back as operating theaters through a community-initiated development process (photos courtesy of Cinema Treasures).

The different forms and steps in community initiated development include:

### **Co-Development Team**

Conventional development is guided, typically, by a private-sector developer or development entity; community initiated development, however, usually involves several different groups and organizations that must work together to initiate and complete a project in all its different stages. This “co-development” team consists of representatives from the municipality, Main Street program or non-profit economic development organization, other groups and agencies, as well as private investors.

Team roles and responsibilities often include concept planning and feasibility, incentive packaging, and development preparation and implementation. The Team may have different roles depending if it is working with a developer on a specific project or if it is spearheading the project itself. Roles and responsibilities will range from providing technical assistance and incentive packaging to the developer, to purchasing property and financing and developing the building project from start to finish.

### **Concept Planning Stage**

Concept planning determines whether a community initiated development approach is appropriate for a certain project, what specific public and economic benefits can be generated, and what resources are available. At this point, the co-development team also evaluates what data and information, low-cost assistance and seed money may be available to undertake a more thorough analysis of the development project.

### **Project Analysis**

Analysis of the project’s feasibility can take several different levels, some of which can be undertaken by the co-development team and outside assistance with minimum expense while more formal market, design and financial studies conducted by paid professionals may be required to understand overall development costs and use feasibility. Such analysis will help the team determine whether

*“Community-initiated development can take several different forms depending on the size of the building and the overall complexity of the project. Additionally, the City and Main Street Momence will have to evaluate each potential project thoroughly, in term of the resources that are needed, in order to determine what each entity’s respective roles and responsibilities will be in the development process.”*

it should proceed with the project or if other resources and participants are needed to make the project more feasible.

### **Financing/Incentive Packaging**

Developing an overall project budget will help inform what financing or incentives will be needed to close any cost-value gap — the difference between the development costs and buildings’ present value or present worth of future benefits. Incentives may come in the form of historic preservation tax credits, façade grants and low-interest loans, TIF-based grants and loans, or third party-equity financing. The co-development team works to put together the developer financing/incentive package or all levels of financing, including conventional mortgage and lender monies, if the co-development team is undertaking the project without developer participation.

### **Project Implementation**

Project implementation involves acquiring title to the property, building out the project, marketing the space while under construction and preparing for long-term ownership, depending on how has been approached and structured. The role of the co-development team at this stage is gradually phase out as the building rehabilitation and



leasing is undertaken by the project architect and contractor and the leasing and marketing agent.

To undertake community-initiated development, both the City and Main Street Momence will need to be ready with proper incentives and tools in place, such as implementing an enhanced building improvement program and a tax increment financing district, among others. Main Street Momence should seek training in community initiated development from the Illinois Main Street Program so it can be ready for a project when the opportunity arises or when circumstances necessitate such a process.

## STREETSCAPE AND WAYFINDING

Enhancing downtown Momence's physical condition, streetscape and public spaces should become an important priority going forward. Along with improvements to building facades and storefronts, streetscaping and wayfinding will serve to unify downtown's visual appearance and make it a more attractive place for shoppers, visitors and investors. In order to carry out the Master Plan's public improvements concepts, a comprehensive streetscape and wayfinding design master plan, one that incorporates an overall streetscape design scheme and material palette for signage and enhancements to sidewalks, streets, alleys and parking lots, will need to be created. Additionally, the plan must also address the pedestrian and visual connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and riverfront zone. After the streetscape master plan is developed, final construction drawings and engineering can then be undertaken to determine final costs for streetscape construction and installation. Elements of the design and material palette for both the downtown streetscape and wayfinding system can and should be carried over to the riverfront zone so that both areas have a unified, consistent design and appearance.

Going forward, an opportunity exists to develop a partial streetscape master plan with the pending Washington Street project, funded in part by

IDOT's Transportation Enhancement Program. This project has a relatively limited design development and construction budget to fully implement the streetscape concepts presented in this Master Plan, especially in regards to the brick street paving suggested for Washington Street. However, the community can work with IDOT to create the preferred streetscape design and treatment palette that could be used and installed for Washington Street and throughout the rest of Downtown. The brick paver treatment for Washington Street could also be engineered and installed during a later phase of the streetscape program.

The necessary action steps needed to implement the recommended Master Plan streetscape concepts include:

### Streetscape Committee/Task Force

Main Street Momence and the City, including other downtown stakeholders, property and business owners, should establish a "Streetscape Committee" or Task Force to guide the pending Washington Street project as well as the development of an overall downtown Streetscape and Wayfinding Design Plan. Main Street Momence and the City should coordinate staffing needs to the Team or Task Force.

### Design and Engineering

The Streetscape Team or Task Force should seek initial funding for Phase 1 design and engineering that will address streetscape elements, street upgrades, and downtown identity and signage system. Approximate costs for these elements are summarized in the Funding Section of this Implementation Strategy (see below). Ideally, the streetscape and wayfinding signage system should be designed, engineered and installed concurrently; however, the wayfinding signage could conceivably be undertaken first depending on what financial resources are available.

A design consulting team should be engaged to prepare the Streetscape and Wayfinding Design

Plan that offers options for the downtown brand image and streetscape material palette, as well as addresses infrastructure needs such as sidewalk vaults, parking lots, and alleys. In addition, sewer, water supply, utility and storm water management conditions need to be addressed as part of the streetscape project. Burying overhead utility lines and sustainable design alternatives for storm water management should also be explored. After the Design Plan and preliminary engineering is completed, the Committee or Task Force should approve a preliminary budget to secure financing for project construction.

### Streetscape Construction and Engineering

Main Street Mومence should act as a liaison between local businesses and the selected contractor to help minimize the disruptions during construction. The Streetscape Team should host a large “ribbon cutting” event upon completion of the project.



Sustainable design features such as xeriscaping (above) and permeable pavement in the parking lanes (below) should be explored during the design/engineering phase.

## RIVERFRONT

Riverfront redevelopment is presented in this Downtown Master Plan as two successive phases that considers immediate opportunities, given the extant of riverfront land already under ownership and control of the City (Phase 1), and the long term scenarios of how riverfront transformation could take place if the Gilster-Mary Lee factory complex was to close or relocate at some point in the future (Phase 2). Depending on available financing and resources, Phase 1 of riverfront development should be given high priority for implementation. Given the complexity of Phase 2 redevelopment, the City, along with the Park District and other stakeholder groups, should begin planning and discussions for the types of activities and facilities that could be located along the Phase 2 riverfront zone area. Discussions could also begin with Gilster-Mary Lee on possible relocation scenarios. Design and engineering for riverfront development is similar to that of downtown streetscape in that a master design and engineering plan must first be developed to determine overall projects costs. However, there are other factors that must be considered as the community ventures forward in the implementation process, including:

### Riverfront Committee/Task Force

Main Street Mومence and the City, including other downtown stakeholders, property and business owners, should establish a Riverfront Committee or Task Force to guide riverfront redevelopment efforts, including the project’s design, engineering and construction phases. Main Street Mومence and the City should coordinate staffing needs to the Team or Task Force.

### Easement/Property Purchases

Although the City Mومence owns the land south the Police Station between Dixie Highway and Pine Street, and the public parking lot along River Street east of Dixie Highway, easements to access the riverfront along the remaining private

property lots will be required to complete the Phase 1 riverfront scheme. For Phase 2, purchase of the Gilster-Mary Lee factory property and other buildings along River Street will also be required.



Easements may be needed in some areas to make the riverwalk feasible.

### Site Remediation

Since the riverfront was the location historically for the community's industrial uses, costs for possible environmental remediation may need to be factored in to both phases of the redevelopment project. An environmental assessment may have to be conducted to determine if contamination

exists and what are the available clean-options. Depending on available resources, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) can provide on-site environmental assessments on request from the municipality.

### Environmental Permits

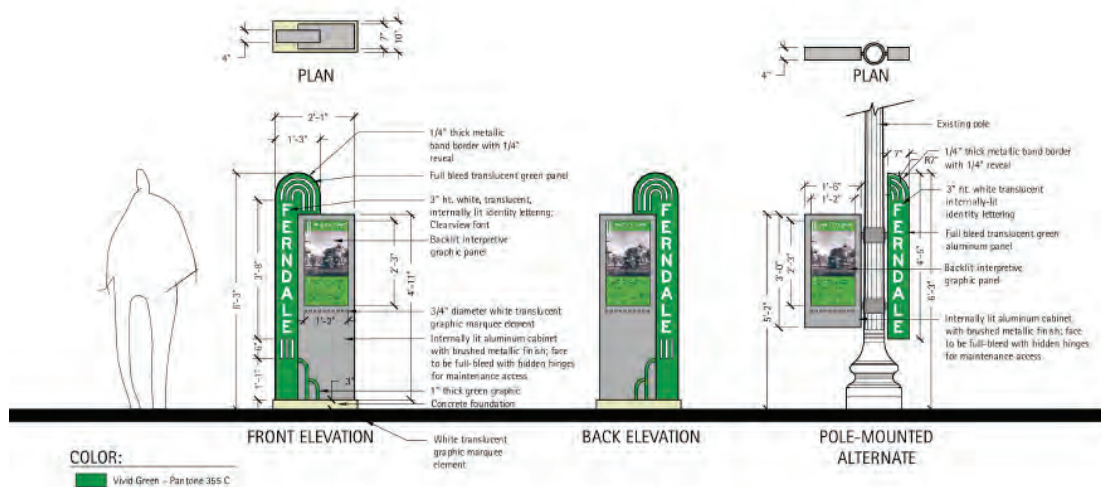
Construction projects in Illinois waterways, floodplains and wetlands often require permits from IEPA, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

### Business Relocation

Other than the Gilster-Mary Lee Factory complex, several businesses along River Street east of Dixie Highway may need to be relocated, preferably, and if feasible, to other buildings and locations within the downtown.

### Interpretive Program

The riverfront zone and its new riverwalk can incorporate an interpretive program or cultural trail, with signage, plaques and markers that describe and interpret both existing and lost historic resources along the riverfront. The trail



A combined wayfinding/interpretive program for Ferndale, Michigan, a 2010 Great American Main Street Award winning community.





Interpretive signage program, Downtown Indianapolis

could extend into Island Park and the downtown core with plaques that could be installed on building facades or storefronts. The program's design could be undertaken concurrently during design planning for the overall riverfront development.

### Design

As mentioned previously, the design and material palette for downtown streetscaping and wayfinding treatments can be extended into the riverfront zone; however, additional elements, including the riverwalk and overlooks, parking lot landscaping, the interpretive program, and amphitheater and concessions areas, will need to be designed and developed. Specific elements to be considered for both riverfront phases include:

#### Phase 1

- Riverwalk and overlook design, paths and landscaping
- Parking lot design and landscaping
- Wayfinding signage
- Interpretive program
- Downtown streetscape connections

#### Phase 2

- Riverwalk and overlook design, paths and landscaping
- Parking lot design and landscaping
- Wayfinding signage
- Interpretive program

- Connections to downtown streetscape
- Amphitheater design
- Site design for concessions areas and infill development sites
- Children's playground

### FUNDING

Funding from municipal, County, State of Illinois and Federal sources as well as local foundations, corporate, and civic and business organizations will be needed to finance various elements of the Downtown Master Plan. Public infrastructure, riverfront and streetscape improvements will be the most significant expenditures and thus should be prioritized according to the strategies and recommendations presented in this Downtown Master Plan.

#### Critical Plan Elements

Listed below are critical Master Plan elements needed to generate momentum and for downtown Mومence's revitalization. The estimates presented are based on costs associated with similar projects undertaken in the Chicago metropolitan area; precise implementation costs can only be determined when projects are initiated.

- **Zoning Code Revisions:** \$5,000 to \$10,000
- **Design Guidelines:** \$3,000 to \$15,000
- **Historic Preservation Ordinance:** \$5,000 to \$7,000
- **Wayfinding Signage System Design:** \$20,000 to \$80,000
- **Riverfront Property Easement Legal Fees:** \$15,000 to \$25,000
- **Road/Streetscape Master Design/Engineering:** \$100,000 to \$250,000

- **Building/Site Improvement Program:** \$100,000 to \$150,000 (assumes \$20,000 grant per property to five properties annually)
- **Riverfront Phase 1 Design/Engineering:** \$100,000 to \$200,000
- **Riverfront Phase 2 Design/Engineering:** \$150,000 to \$300,000
- **Interpretive Program Design/Construction:** \$150,000 to \$250,000

Other Master Plan implementation costs that can only be determined upon completion of additional design and engineering studies:

- Streetscape Construction
- Riverfront Easement/Property Acquisitions
- Phase 1 and 2 Construction/Improvements

### Local Funding Sources

The following are several major sources of funding that may have potential for implementing the revitalization strategies presented in this Master Plan:

#### Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing is a State authorized program administered by a municipality that allocates future increases in property taxes from a designated area for improvements dedicated to that area. Under TIF, the property taxes due to an increased value from new development, increases in new assessment due to rehabilitation or improvement or tax rate changes, are allocated to the municipality in a Tax Increment Allocation Fund to be used for various redevelopment activities within the designated area. Other taxing districts continue to receive property taxes at the same level as before the TIF district was instituted. Eligible Master Plan implementation costs include:

- Code revisions and design guidelines
- Building improvement program
- Wayfinding signage design and installation
- Streetscape design and construction
- Infrastructure improvements
- Riverfront development and easement purchases

#### Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID is a State authorized financing program that municipalities can establish for improving infrastructure and attracting new commercial growth in a designated business improvement district. A BID is adopted by ordinance and is funded by small increments added to local sales or hotel taxes. Sales taxes can be used for several revitalization or redevelopment activities allowed under the BID statute; however, hotel taxes must be used for tourism and convention related activities. A BID remains in place for 23 years and revenues collected within it are placed in a Business District Tax Allocation Fund. One significant advantage of a BID is the flexibility and wider range of activities in which BID monies can be used as opposed to a TIF district or Special Service Area. Eligible Plan implementation costs include:

- Code revisions and design guidelines
- Building improvement program
- Wayfinding signage design and installation
- Streetscape design and construction
- Infrastructure improvements
- Riverfront development and easement purchases
- Business retention/attraction program
- Salaries related to implementation activities

#### Special Service Area (SSA)

A Special Service Area is a State authorized financing program that can be administered by the City or by a designated service provider agency, to deliver a wide range of additional services and physical improvements in a defined

geographic area such as a central business district or commercial corridor. An SSA is funded by a special tax assessment paid by the property owners in the designated SSA district and can finance a variety of district management activities including marketing and special events, trash and snow removal, and sidewalk/public space maintenance. Special Service Areas can also underwrite infrastructure and building improvements. Eligible implementation costs include:

- Building improvement program
- Wayfinding signage design and installation
- Streetscape design and construction
- Business retention/attraction program
- Salaries related to implementation activities
- Branding, marketing and promotion activities
- Special events
- Streetscape maintenance services
- Staff salaries related to implementation activities

Although a municipal government is required to pass an ordinance to adopt the SSA, a separate service provider, such as a Main Street program, chamber of commerce, or separate downtown management organization, to serve as the SSA's operating and governing entity. The process for establishing an SSA requires obtaining support from property owners and taxpayers within the proposed SSA district. An overall strategy for organizing stakeholder support is important, along with determining the SSA's governing structure, level of services to be provided, and annual budget and boundaries. The municipality and service provider agency are required to hold a hearing to discuss the benefits of an SSA with local stakeholders. A 60-day waiting period after the public hearing is required before adoption of the final SSA ordinance. If 51 percent of registered voters and property owners of record within the proposed SSA district boundaries file a petition to oppose adoption, the ordinance cannot be approved. The entire process to establish an SSA can take between six and 12 months.

### **Capital Improvement Plan**

Most communities incorporate some aspects of Master Plan public improvement initiatives within the municipal capital improvements plan, which should be evaluated on an annual basis. Capital improvement funding could be used to support various projects outlined in the Plan, including:

- Street improvements and streetscape implementation
- Public parking improvements
- Signage and wayfinding programs
- Riverfront development
- Public building interior and exterior improvements

Recognizing that public budgets are tight and somewhat limited in the current economy, the City should investigate shared improvements and funding opportunities with other municipal taxing bodies, such as the Park District, or public/private partnerships.

### **General Revenue Bonds**

Depending upon the City's bond rating and current bond/debt load and retirement, the City may investigate the ability of long-term bonds for specific portions of the Downtown Master Plan in order to facilitate redevelopment activities. Bonding for public infrastructure, open space or streetscape improvements, or site acquisition, are some of the key catalytic Master Plan elements that should be considered. The City should seek professional consultation to evaluate these opportunities.

### **State Funding and Financial Resources**

The following are several major sources of funding at the State of Illinois level that may have potential for implementing the revitalization strategies presented in this Master Plan:

#### **Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).**

Administered by IDOT and funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHA), the ITEP provides grant funds to underwrite



projects that expand transportation choices and enhance the overall physical environment and transportation experience. Eligible projects include streetscape improvements, provision of pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, environmental mitigation due to highway run-off and pollution, control and removal of outdoor advertising and rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings and facilities. Projects may receive up to 80 percent reimbursement for project costs with the remaining 20 percent paid by the local government or sponsoring agency. Average grant awards range from \$700,000 to \$900,000. Applications for the ITEP program are taken yearly and are awarded on a competitive basis. Eligible Master Plan implementation costs include:

- Signage design and installation
- Road/streetscape design and construction
- Trail linkages and improvements
- Riverfront development

#### **Kankakee County-Manteno Enterprise Zone**

In February 2012, the State of Illinois certified the expansion of the Kankakee County-Manteno Enterprise Zone to Momence, including the Downtown. The Enterprise Zone provides new incentives to attract and retain businesses, including a 6.25 percent sales tax exemption on all building materials and some equipment purchased in Illinois. Both new construction and existing property rehabilitation are eligible for the exemption. New construction also qualifies for a five-year. Additional tax credits, deductions and exemptions, including a utility tax exemption, are also available for businesses located within the Enterprise Zone. Eligible Master Plan implementation costs include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

#### **Public Water Supply Loan Program**

Administered by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, this Program provides low-interest loans to local governments for replacement

and construction of community facilities such as water mains and stormwater sewer systems. Engineering and construction costs are eligible expenses. Municipalities must provide design plans as well as documentation of adequate sources of revenue and security for loan repayment. Eligible Plan implementation costs include:

- Road/streetscape design and construction
- Infrastructure improvements for development sites

#### **Open Space and Land Acquisition Program (OSLAD) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**

The Open Space and Land Acquisition Program offers grants to municipalities for the acquisition and development of land for open space, parks and bike paths. Funding assistance is awarded on a 50 percent matching basis with grant awards up to \$750,000 for land acquisition and \$400,000 for development and renovation. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources administers this program along with the Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federally funded initiative that also provides 50 percent matching grants for park and open space projects that meet the recreational needs of local communities. Both programs encourage best practices in land management and sustainability. Eligible Master Plan implementation costs include:

- Riverfront development

#### **Park and Recreational Facility Construction Program (PARC)**

Administered by IDNR, the Park and Recreational Facility Construction Program provides grants to eligible local governments for various park and recreation construction projects, including the acquisition of land for open space purposes and the construction and rehabilitation of recreational facilities and buildings. All properties acquired with PARC assistance are required to have a covenant placed on the deed at the time of the recording that stipulates the property must be

used in perpetuity for indoor/outdoor recreational purposes. Eligible Master Plan implementation costs include:

- Riverfront development

#### **DCEO Participation Loan Program**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Participation Loan Program provides funds for small businesses, including working capital, land/equipment purchase and building construction/rehabilitation. The Program works through local banks to provide loans ranging from \$10,000 to \$750,000. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

#### **Illinois Capital Access Program**

Administered by DCEO, the Illinois Capital Access Program encourages banks to provide financing to small or new businesses that would not otherwise qualify. The program is underwritten by a reserve fund established through DCEO and the borrower. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

#### **Illinois Revolving Line of Credit Program**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity administers a revolving line of credit for businesses needing working capital at low-interest rates from \$10,000 to \$750,000. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

#### **IFA Participation Loan Program**

The Illinois Finance Authority Participation Loan Program works through local banks to provide low, fixed rate loans for the purchase of land and equipment as well as building construction and rehabilitation. Proceeds include up to \$500,000

or 50 percent participation in the loan. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvements
- Business development

#### **U.S. Small Business Association (SBA)**

With local banks, the SBA provides a number of guaranteed loan programs for existing and start-up businesses. Its 7(a) Loan Program in particular provides guaranteed financing for working capital, equipment, fixtures/furnishings, land/building improvements and debt refinancing. Short-term smaller loans of up to \$35,000 for working capital, inventory purchase and building improvements are available through the Micro-Loan Program.

#### **Certified Local Government Grants**

Certified Local Government grants are Federally sourced matching grants administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Grant amounts range from \$3,000 to \$30,000 and requires a local 30 percent match.

Eligible project expenses:

- Design guidelines
- Historic resource surveys
- Preservation education initiatives

#### **Federal Funding and Financial Resources**

The following are several major sources of funding at the State of Illinois level that may have potential for implementing the revitalization strategies presented in this Master Plan:

#### **Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program**

Since 1976, the National Park Service, in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), has administered the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program to encourage rehabilitation and reinvestment in historic buildings. A 20 percent tax credit is provided to owners and developers of income-producing historic buildings who undertake a substantial rehabilitation project

in which rehabilitation costs must be equal to or greater than the property's adjusted basis, which is the property's purchase price existing minus the cost of the land, plus improvements already made, minus depreciation already taken. In addition, the project must also be a certified rehabilitation as determined through a three-part application process with IHPA.

All contributing buildings within Downtown Momence's National Register Historic District are eligible for the tax credit. It is highly recommended that IHPA be consulted on project scope and details before beginning the application process. Eligible Plan implementation costs include

- Building Improvements



The Jensen Drug and Jewelry Store building was recently rehabilitated using Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

### **Brownfield Assessment Grants**

Administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Brownfield Assessment Grants provide funding for the inventory and assessment of local brownfield site contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants, including petroleum. Grant awards vary from \$100,000 to \$350,000. Eligible Plan implementation costs include:

- Riverfront development

### **Other Funding Sources**

Grants, contributions and technical assistance from foundations, corporations, institutions, other government agencies, and other businesses and individuals can also be secured to fund Master Plan initiatives. Private sector sources, for example, can help build Main Street Momence's operating budget, through promotion and marketing sponsorships, increased memberships and project specific contributions, as well specific Master elements, such as contributions for construction of the riverwalk or riverfront amphitheater. Additionally, Main Street Momence and other local partners can encourage the use of existing tools and funding sources as well as secure new ones to facilitate business retention and attraction.

### **Equity Fund/Community Supported Financing**

The possibility of forming an equity fund for business capitalization, expansion and stabilization for Boulevard businesses should be explored. This might take the form of small group of investors pooling funds to create one or more needed businesses or a downtown small business venture fund seeded and capitalized by private individuals, local and regional foundations and government grants. Community financed businesses can also be structured as cooperatives or as local stock corporations, which could a realistic solution for reviving the Momence Theater as a functioning theater. Additionally, customer-owned cooperatives and community-owned stores structured as local stock corporations have become increasingly common in starting new grocery stores in underserved markets. An equity fund can also be used in combination with Main Street Momence's current Low-Interest Loan program, which is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

### **Business Plan Competitions**

Annual business plan competitions can be a useful and effective tool for helping existing business owners develop skills and increase sales and/or efficiency. It has been found to be particularly effective when each year's competition focuses on



a specific challenge, such as adding a new product line, developing an online storefront or adding a new distribution channel. The competition could offer a cash prize, coupled with technical assistance to help all interested businesses compete. Main Street Momence could be the primary organizer of the business plan competitions and fund it through grants or contributions.

## IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEES AND STAKEHOLDERS/PARTNERS

Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan will depend on partnerships between several public agencies, Main Street Momence, as well as business and property owners, investors and community residents. “Action committees”, with members representing various stakeholder groups, and staffed jointly between Main Street Momence and the City, should be established to facilitate implementation activities. The joint action committees can include the following:

### Master Plan Finance Team Committee

This team would research public and private sources to underwrite Downtown Master Plan revitalization and redevelopment initiatives. It could also assist the City with grants planning and capital improvement programming.

### Code Changes Committee

This committee would coordinate the process for revising downtown zoning as well as begin consideration of a local historic preservation ordinance.

### Streetscape and Wayfinding Committee

A streetscape and wayfinding committee should be established to manage the process for designing and engineering the downtown wayfinding and streetscape program suggested in the Master Plan. Members of the committee would consist of volunteer participants from the Main Street Momence Design Committee, downtown property owners and merchants and the City’s Planning Commission, and Streets and Alleys Department.

*“Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan will depend on partnerships between several public agencies, Main Street Momence, as well as business and property owners, investors and community residents.”*

### Riverfront Committee

As with streetscape and wayfinding, the riverfront development process should be led by a committee jointly staffed between Main Street Momence and the City, along with other key stakeholder groups.

### Main Street Momence Design Committee

Depending on how an enhanced building improvement is financed and structured, the Main Street Momence Design Committee should continue to facilitate projects by encouraging property and business owner participation as well as conduct design review activities. The Design Committee should also become proactive in encouraging basic storefront and façade maintenance and repair that may not require significant financial assistance and it should become versed in providing technical assistance and advice to building owners on the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program and other incentives.

### Partners

The following is a summary of the potential roles and responsibilities of respective agencies and organizations that could take part in the revitalization effort.

### City of Momence

The City will need to take the key leadership role in moving the Downtown Master Plan forward. City roles and responsibilities include:

- Formally approving the Downtown Master Plan upon its completion and adoption by Main Street Mومence.
- Revising zoning and other relevant development codes to support the downtown’s comprehensive revitalization, with a special focus on revising parking requirements and incorporated basic design standards.
- Preparing more detailed design and engineering documents for recommended infrastructure, streetscape, signage and physical improvements, working closely with IDOT, IDNR and other agencies.
- The City, along with its implementation partners, will need to seek out and secure funding sources for the roadway, alley, streetscape, parking lot and signage improvements recommended in the Downtown Master Plan as well as branding, business development and building improvement initiatives.

*“A strong Main Street organization that involves broad-based participation in its operations and volunteer committees will be critical in its efforts to implement various Master Plan elements.”*

- Assisting with the acquisition, clearance and consolidation of parcels and the relocation of businesses located within the riverfront redevelopment zone.
- Working directly with Main Street Mومence, Chamber of Commerce and the Kankakee County Convention and Visitors Bureau on area marketing activities as well as business and developer recruitment.

### **Main Street Mومence**

Main Street Mومence will need to continue serving as a facilitator in engaging the community, downtown property/business owners and other public agencies in the implementation of the Master Plan. A strong Main Street organization that involves broad-based participation in its operations and volunteer committees will be critical in its efforts to implement various Master Plan elements. It is important to note that to become a strong implementation partner, Main Street Mومence will need to continue developing its organizational capacity, including hiring additional staff and expanding its operational budget and membership. It will also need to continue working in all areas of the Main Street Four-Point Approach and maintaining, and even expanding its efforts in marketing and promoting downtown, and supporting entrepreneurial and business development activities. Main Street Mومence’s responsibilities in Master Plan implementation should include:

- Staffing various Master Plan implementation committees and assist the City in securing financial resources.
- Serving as liaison between the City, other public agencies, and downtown property and business owners.
- Meeting regularly with property and business owners to inform them of downtown revitalization progress as well as to discuss specific business needs, marketing opportunities, and available financial incentive programs.
- Encouraging community residents and downtown stakeholders to become get involved in implementation committees.
- Undertake market analysis efforts every three to four years to understand Downtown’s economic strengths and opportunities, and to recalibrate business development efforts.

- Promoting downtown as a shopping destination as well as keeping the region informed on the progress of revitalization efforts through on-going marketing activities.
- Collaborating with the City and other entities in recruiting new businesses and developers to the area and in facilitate downtown building and site improvements for property owners and merchants.
- Developing a “streetscape survival” initiative when the downtown streetscape design is set and funding is secured. This initiative helps to minimize the impacts of streetscape construction on downtown merchants through marketing activities and ombudsman services provided by the Main Street Design and Promotion Committees.
- Providing maintenance and snow removal services for the completed streetscape if a SSA is established at some point in the future.
- Identifying funding resources for Main Street Momence, the City and other implementation partners.
- Collaborating with the City on revisions to the zoning code and adoption of a historic preservation ordinance.
- Collaborating with IDOT, the City, Main Street Momence, and other entities on facilitating downtown public improvements.
- Providing technical support for the design/engineering needed to more specially address infrastructure and streetscape improvements.
- Provide staff support to the community’s historic preservation efforts and financial incentives for downtown business and real estate development efforts.

### **Momence Park District**

Future changes, enhancements and connections to the Island Park and Island View Park, and connection to a revitalized downtown riverfront should involve the Park District.

### **Chamber of Commerce**

The Chamber promotes the civic and commercial progress in the Momence community. It could assist the City and Main Street Momence in promoting downtown’s revitalization potential along with the redevelopment of the riverfront.

### **Kankakee Planning Department/Economic Alliance of Kankakee County**

Both the Kankakee Planning Department and Economic Alliance of Kankakee County can assist in the Master Plan implementation process by providing the following technical services:

### **Illinois Department of Transportation**

Ongoing coordination with IDOT will be needed to fund, design, engineer and build the recommended public improvements including streetscape enhancements presented in this Master Plan.

### **Illinois Main Street/Illinois Historic Preservation Agency**

The Illinois Main Street Program and the IHPA can provide various training assistance and consultation related to specific organizational development and capacity building issues as well as on important downtown historic preservation projects.

### **Business/Property Owners**

Downtown business and property owners need to get directly involved with the Master Plan implementation. To show immediate action and positive progress in revitalizing downtown, local owners can initiate signage, storefront, building, parking lot and property improvements rather



than wait for state and federal grants. They should also get more involved with Main Street Momence and the implementation committees.

#### **Private Developers**

Professional developers can be recruited to undertake adaptive use projects and infill development opportunity sites.

#### **Financial Institutions**

With involvement from the City, Main Street Momence and other stakeholders, local lenders could facilitate Master Plan implementation by financing projects or participating in new incentive programs that support local business and revitalization initiatives, such as adaptive use and façade and building improvement projects.

#### **Corporations**

Local corporations can become sponsors for a variety of Downtown initiatives, including the Venture Fund, the new riverwalk and other riverfront development elements, among others.

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