



## IMPLEMENTATION



### Implementation Strategy

A sustained commitment will be needed by the City, local and regional organizations/agencies, local leaders, business/property owners and other agencies and entities to implement the Revitalization Strategy Plan and promote Southwest Rockford as a destination. Since not all elements of the Plan can be implemented at once, setting priorities based on budgets and resources according to a capital improvement program should be the first focus of the implementation stage. This will take a major commitment from City leaders and staff, strong public/private sector cooperation and continued coordination with the transit/transportation agencies, as well as continued input and assistance from business and property owners, residents and other impacted stakeholders

An implementation strategy for the South Main Revitalization Strategy Plan should include the following components:

- Redevelopment Timing and Approach
- Communication and Coordination
- Priority Action Tasks and Catalytic Projects
- Funding Sources and Incentive Programs
- Key City Initiatives

### Redevelopment Timing and Approach

Revitalization and redevelopment of the South Main Corridor according the vision, goals and strategies presented in this Revitalization Strategy Plan is anticipated to occur over the next 15 to 20 years. During this time horizon, redevelopment is likely to occur based on one or more of the following approaches:

- Incremental site-specific redevelopment by individual property owners that either redevelop or sell to developers or businesses that then develop the sites.
- Redevelopment initiated by a group of property owners in partnership with a master developer.
- Redevelopment initiated on larger consolidated sites by a master developer that assembles properties.
- Strategic public acquisition of key properties in order to package a land assemblage for solicitation of a master developer to redevelop the properties.
- Ongoing corridor management and revitalization activities conducted by private sector partners and organizations.

The five options noted reflect various levels of public involvement and investment. Complexities inherent in infill Corridor redevelopment typically require higher levels of public involvement, especially associated with land acquisition, bridging of financial gaps and “setting the stage” with public infrastructure and facilities.

The City could initially focus its involvement in the revitalization and redevelopment process to active marketing of the Revitalization Strategy Plan to the business and development communities and create the appropriate and “predictable” regulatory framework necessary to spur investment by revising its development codes. However, in discussions with City staff and administration about current redevelopment trends in communities throughout the region, it is likely the City will have to play a more active role to get redevelopment started and achieve the Plan vision. This may involve strategic property acquisition and forming public-private partnerships for catalytic projects that would generate momentum and have more positive financial and fiscal results.

## **Communication and Coordination**

Key participants in the implementation of the South Main Revitalization Strategy must include the following entities:

### **CITY OF ROCKFORD**

The City will have the key leadership role in implementing the Plan. The City’s continued active participation in promoting, coordinating and facilitating public improvements and redevelopment throughout the South Main Corridor will be critical for successful implementation. The City will also need to provide or identify technical and financial resources. Key roles and responsibilities will include:

- Ensure that ordinances that govern development, including zoning, building codes, infrastructure and design standards support the redevelopment proposed in the Plan.
- Coordinate with other public agencies, property owners and developers to ensure that future development conforms to the Plan.
- Administer technical and other assistance to businesses, property owners and developers.
- Assist with relocation of existing businesses, where appropriate, to other suitable locations within the Corridor or Southwest Rockford to allow for redevelopment of key sites.
- Assemble sites for new development where necessary.
- Initiate more detailed studies and plans for local transportation, public open space and infrastructure improvements.
- Seek out grants and funding sources for public improvements and property consolidations.
- Open regular communication/coordination channels with local businesses and property owners.

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### WINNEBAGO COUNTY

The County will also play a role in implementing and/or coordinating portions of the Plan since some of the study area is outside of Rockford's limits. Although the County's future land use vision is similar to the City's for the properties on the border, continued coordination will be required as more detailed plans and development proposals occur. The County and City should revisit their respective zoning codes and regulations to ensure that a cohesive land use vision and development pattern can be achieved over time. This applies primarily to the target areas focused around the Harrison/South Main intersection and further south at the U.S. Highway 20 interchange. Further engineering coordination will also need to take place to ensure adequate and efficient infrastructure is in place for any planned future development. The City should periodically revisit and weigh the benefits of annexing property from the County, particularly near the airport in the case of a large industrial/business park development.

### TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES

Public agencies that will be involved in implementing the Plan may include:

- *RMAP/Amtrak/RMTD:* The City should continue to coordinate more detailed development plans and Revitalization Strategy Plan initiatives with transit agencies and transportation organizations on the placement, access and configuration of potential transit service amenities and support facilities within the South Main Station Corridor, such as parking and vehicular access points, bus shelters and planned multi-purpose paths/bike trails.
- *Union Pacific Railroad/Canadian National Railroad/Iowa, Chicago and Eastern Railroad/Illinois Railnet:* The City should continue to maintain an on-going dialogue with the various railroads to realize the potential redevelopment opportunities on the rail yard site south of Downtown, as well as to evaluate and maintain safe and efficient track crossings along South Main Street. As railroad and switching yard consolidation occurs, discussions should take place pertaining to the future of respective railroad rights-of-way and parcels.

### PRIVATE SECTOR

Developers, property owners, local businesses, development corporations and revitalization organizations, corporations and financial institutions will play a key role in the phased implementation of the Plan and redevelopment of the South Main Corridor:

- *Private Developers:* The City should take an active role in attracting mixed-use, residential, industrial and commercial developers to Southwest Rockford, particularly for the key larger target sites outlined in the Revitalization Strategy Plan following the goals and objectives of the vision. This can be achieved via in-house or consulting economic development experts targeting development and business recruitment/retention for this area.
- *Local Business and Property Owners:* The City should establish a regular communication forum and outreach program with business and property owners within the South Main Street Corridor to determine their development needs and keep them current on the status of the Plan initiatives. This South Main business development commission can be spearheaded by internal staff and key community business leader/volunteer committee membership.

- *Financial Institutions:* With City support in achieving the Revitalization Strategy Plan vision, local lenders can assist and facilitate redevelopment by providing preferred financing options for projects within Southwest Rockford and particularly within the South Main Corridor. The City should initiate conversations with local bank lenders to evaluate what options are available for financing assistance for new and existing property redevelopment or enhancement.

### **SOUTH MAIN PARTNERSHIP**

The implementation of the South Main Revitalization Strategy will depend on partnerships between several public agencies, as well as business owners, property owners and developers. The City and local leaders should explore options for creating a neighborhood development organization called the South Main Partnership to lead major implementation components of the Plan. The organization would have a formal board of directors representing different stakeholder groups with full-time staffing that directs and manages several action “teams” or committees responsible for different aspects of Plan implementation. Action teams could include the following:

- Design Management and Building Improvement Team
- Business Development Team
- Clean and Safe Team
- Marketing and Promotion Team

An outline of priority actions and catalytic projects must also be put into a time line framework and cost/benefit matrix to serve as an incremental or “stepped” process. Simple actions such as development code/Comprehensive Plan changes and simplification of the development process are extremely valuable, low cost priority actions that can be implemented early in the process and set the stage for redevelopment and reinvestment.

Once this framework has been established, the City and community can focus on strategically implementing catalytic projects. These are projects which include the roadway reconstruction, Village Market and Target Area sites that are expected to create the most vitality, investment and redevelopment in the area because of their high visibility, strategic locations and large sizes. Additionally, the implementation of these projects would begin to address optimal land use and development opportunities as envisioned in the Revitalization Strategy Plan.

# **Priority Actions and Catalytic Projects**

## **Key Priority Action Tasks**

### **FUNDING SOURCES AND FINANCING STRATEGIES**

As described in more detail to follow, the City, RMAP and local community organizations should investigate options for funding South Main Corridor development initiatives, priority tasks and catalytic projects. This includes identifying and pursuing applicable grants and potential funding sources, beginning with the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) program, as administered through HUD. HUD encourages Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs) in its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to encourage coordination of resources and to concentrate those resources in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. NRSAs may be submitted as part of a Consolidated Plan, but require separate approval from HUD. The City Neighborhood Development department has already planned on using the South Main Revitalization Plan as a starting point for the NRSA program application.

In addition to organizing an approach to pursue grants, other financing tools that should be explored may include the creations of Special Service Areas (SSAs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). These financing models provide capital to undertake a variety of redevelopment costs as discussed further in this section.

### **CODE CHANGES**

The City of Rockford recently updated its overall zoning code. As part of the South Main Revitalization Strategy planning process, the team has recommended several key land-use strategy changes, which should be incorporated into the zoning strategy. A high priority next step task for the Corridor should be to ensure that the higher intensity development and land-use mix envisioned in the Revitalization Strategy Plan is articulated in the zoning code. At a minimum, this code amendment should reflect changes to the current rail yard property, Traditional Neighborhood Core Target Area sites and potential industrial/office park development south of the U.S. Highway 20 interchange, as well as reflect the new direction in future planned open spaces throughout the Corridor. In coordination with these suggested land use changes, urban form, design, development standards, uses and parking requirements should be revisited to ensure that the desired outcomes are able to be achieved.

### **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In conjunction with a change in the zoning strategy, the City should develop a detailed set of South Main Street/District design guidelines. Prior to considering development proposals, the City should define key elements of the design of the public realm or streetscape to provide a blueprint that articulates standards for development. While suggested elements of a preliminary design guidelines package are included in this Revitalization Strategy Plan report, the City through the Civic Design Advisory Group (CDAG) should undertake a more thorough, detailed examination of key urban design elements for the guidelines such as street, building, parking, site, landscape, streetscape and signage design. These guidelines would not only encourage higher quality, “context sensitive” projects, but would help facilitate a streamlined, predictable review process for all development and reinvestment within Southwest Rockford, as well as a starting point for comprehensive citywide standards.

### **NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

The National Register of Historic Places is maintained by the National Park Service and is the nation's official list of historic and cultural resources worthy of preservation. Segments of South Main Street's Traditional Neighborhood Core could be eligible to be listed as a district in the National Register. While the National Register does not place obligations or restrictions on properties, building owners may be eligible to apply for certain incentives, including Federal and state historic preservation tax credits. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency administers the National Register of Historic Places in the state. The Agency could work with the City, the South Main Partnership and other entities to determine South Main's eligibility to the National Register.

### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

A business Retention and Attraction Program should be established to retain existing businesses and actively recruit new businesses to the Corridor. These initiatives should be led by the South Main Partnership with working committees that include local bankers, retail brokers, economic development specialists and business owners.

### **SOUTH MAIN CORRIDOR BRANDING, WAYFINDING + SIGNAGE DESIGN PROGRAM**

As part of or a separate task from a South Main Street Streetscape Program, a visually attractive and clear Corridor and district wayfinding and signage system incorporating a recognizable logo, brand or theme should be implemented. This program, aimed at directing motorists, visitors and residents into and around key Corridor destinations, can be easily phased over time and eventually expanded to a more regional level directing motorists and bicyclists from community gateway points to the Downtown. A theme or design direction could build off of the concepts shown within the Revitalization Strategy Plan, with logos and elements inspired by the area's industrial past and ethnic heritage. A strong wayfinding system should address the following signage types:

- Key Area Gateways/Directional Signs
- Key Destinations/Public Parking Directional Signs
- Regulatory Signage
- Multi-use trail or Pedestrian Directional Signs
- Seasonal Banners
- Street Signs
- Other Corridor/District Brand Graphics

<b>SOUTH MAIN REVITALIZATION STRATEGY</b> <b>PRIORITY ACTION TASKS</b>						
		LEGEND	SSA: Special Service Area BID: Business Improvement District TIF: Tax Increment Financing	SRTS: Safe Routes to School ITCP: Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning ITEP: Illinois Transportation Enhancement	OSLAD: Open Space + Land Acquis. Dev. CDBG: Community Develop. Block Grant CLG: Certified Local Government Program	▲ High \$\$\$ > \$500,000 ◆ Medium \$\$ \$100,000 - \$500,000 ▼ Low \$ < \$100,000
INITIATIVE/PROJECT/PROGRAM	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS/ FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS/KEY TASKS	COST LEVEL	GENERAL TIMELINE
Identify and Pursue Grants/ Funding Sources for all priority action plans and initiatives	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>RMAP</li> <li>Local Community Organizations</li> <li>Winnebago County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compile list of potential sources and due dates</li> <li>Identify requirements for each submission</li> <li>Identify responsible groups/parties for preparing the submission</li> </ul>	\$	0-1 year Ongoing
Apply for the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) program	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Neighborhood Development Staff</li> <li>City Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define geographic area to submit for NRSA</li> <li>Collect needed demographic criteria</li> <li>Define goals and opportunities for economic development</li> </ul>	\$	0-1 year
Create South Main Partnership Organization	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>Community/Neighborhood Groups</li> <li>Business/Property Owners/Chamber</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds + Private Sector (start-up)</li> <li>SSA/BID (operations)</li> <li>Private Sector Contributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission organizational and financing plan</li> <li>Incorporate organization + secure initial financing</li> <li>Begin discussions with SWIFTT, RAMBA, Pilgrim's Promise, City Main Street director, other local organizations/groups</li> </ul>	\$	0-1 year
South Main Corridor Zoning Code Amendments & Comprehensive Plan Update	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning + Zoning Staff</li> <li>Zoning Board of Appeals</li> <li>City Council</li> <li>Planning Consultant</li> <li>Winnebago County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>ITEP Grant</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>ITCP Grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redefine zoning district(s) based on preferred plan direction</li> <li>Amend standards for heights, parking, densities, shown in Revitalization Strategy</li> <li>Update South Main Corridor maps and policies within City Comprehensive Plan</li> </ul>	\$	0-1 year
Develop South Main Business Attraction/Retention Program	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Main Partnership</li> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>Business/Property Owners</li> <li>RAEDC      • RLDC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>SSA</li> <li>BID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize approach/inventory/visit businesses</li> <li>Undertake proactive retention and attraction activities</li> <li>Monitor/manage activities</li> </ul>	\$\$	3-5 years Ongoing
Develop South Main District Design Guidelines based on new streetscape and building improvement recommendations	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>Civic Design Advisory Group</li> <li>Design Consultants (if needed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>SSA</li> <li>BID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop detailed building, site, public realm, landscape standards</li> <li>Coordinate with citywide design efforts</li> </ul>	\$\$	0-2 years
Develop South Main Branding and Marketing Program	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>Branding/Marketing Consultants</li> <li>Merchants</li> <li>South Main Partnership</li> <li>Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Merchants/Prop. Owners</li> <li>Corporate Sponsorship</li> <li>SSA      • BID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure funding sources and consultant</li> <li>Define brand, events and promotions</li> <li>Develop phased approach to brand implementation</li> </ul>	\$	0-2 years
Coordinate and Implement Redevelopment Opportunities within Yearly Capital Improvement Program	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish priorities based on Revitalization Strategy Plan</li> <li>Create budget estimates for priority public projects</li> </ul>	\$	0-1 year Ongoing
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy and associated guidelines	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>RMAP</li> <li>RMTD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy, standards and coordinate with transportation agencies</li> <li>Coordinate with citywide transportation and design efforts</li> </ul>	\$	0-1 year

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### Catalytic Projects

The following key target or catalytic projects have the most potential for injecting new vitality into the South Main Corridor and jump starting revitalization. As noted previously in the Master Plan section, these target redevelopment sites and projects hold the most promise for positive change within Southwest Rockford. Additionally, community support voiced during workshops and interviews, as well as the upcoming roadway reconstruction and future Amtrak station further support these as important areas on which to focus.

While the Revitalization Strategy Plan is a long-term vision for growth with a 15 to 20 year time horizon, these projects have been evaluated in a matrix at the end of this section. The matrix allows other factors, such as cost level, responsible parties, expected timelines and potential funding sources to be evaluated against each task.

Many other variables affect the ability and timing of these projects to move forward. These include, at a minimum, the ability to acquire parcels, public-private partnerships and financing and change in City policy and leadership. This Revitalization Strategy Plan, like all good plans must be evaluated regularly and updated as necessary to meet the ever-changing dynamics of community character and sentiment, leadership changes and market forces.

### EXISTING IN PROGRESS PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

A number of projects and initiatives are already underway and, in essence, are the first implementation steps from which to build momentum. These include the reconstruction of South Main Street by IDOT, the Morgan Street Bridge replacement project, South Main streetscape enhancements and the Barber-Colman Adaptive Use Master Plan.

### South Main Street and Morgan Street Bridge Reconstruction

The South Main Street reconstruction and Morgan Street Bridge replacement projects have long been the hot topics of discussion at the City and community levels. As these construction projects unfold over the next few years, a much needed physical overhaul will take place in Southwest Rockford. Not only will the new infrastructure improvements have an effect on the appearance and function of the area, but these projects will also signify the culmination of years of planning, negotiating and speculating and erase the doubts of many that these projects would not actually happen. The hope is that these projects represent a new day for Southwest Rockford and that once the road and bridge are rebuilt, redevelopment and revitalization will follow.

While the Morgan Street Bridge reconstruction project was recently kicked off in late Summer 2011, planning and design coordination is still on going with the South Main Street roadway project. The primary responsible parties for this will include City Engineering/CIP, Planning and Economic Development staff working with IDOT and engineering consultants. For this process to remain positive, it is imperative that the community and property/business owners are kept up to date on the latest plans and time lines through constant outreach via public meetings, mailings and email blasts.

### **South Main Street Streetscape Enhancements + District Corridor Branding/Banners**

The City recently hired a landscape architect/engineering consultant team to develop detailed streetscape plans for South Main Street to be built as part of the IDOT roadway project. Although this process is still in the early stages, the ultimate design direction for the streetscape will be instrumental in establishing a high-quality community character along one of Rockford's most important roadways. Conceptual plans for various road and street conditions were developed as part of this Revitalization planning process, including ideas for walkways, lighting, street furniture, paving and landscape planting. Additionally, banner and logo concepts were developed and shared in community workshops. Both the streetscape and banner/logo concepts were generally well received by the community and were intended to be a starting point for the next phase of design.

As more detailed streetscape plans are developed, City Engineering/CIP and Planning staff, Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) and the Civic Design Advisory Group (CDAG) should coordinate efforts with the design consultants to ensure that desired community character is achieved.

### **Barber-Colman Adaptive Use Plan**

Another initiative that is currently in the early stages is the Barber-Colman adaptive use plan. Currently, the City is working with a developer and design team to develop a plan for rehabilitating and re-using the remaining Barber-Colman buildings. During the Revitalization Strategy planning process, a number of potential user groups were discussed as tenants for this campus, including colleges, institutions, school districts and corporations. Ultimately, this large site represents a major key that, if developed and rehabilitated properly, would instantly change the complexion of the neighborhood and community. This initiative is viewed as a major investment for the City and should involve the efforts of City Planning, Engineering, Economic Development staff, the developer team and design consultants.

The Revitalization Strategy Plan and recommendations should be viewed as a guide to other potential improvements that will occur around the Barber-Colman site and, therefore, be integrated with the final Barber-Colman master plan.

### **VILLAGE MARKET**

The most widely discussed and popular idea throughout the planning process was the creation of a "Village Market." Residents and Corridor stakeholders felt an important revitalization strategy would be to designate a location that would be a gathering place and hub of activity and events for the community; provide opportunities for small businesses and start-ups to sell and test their products; and attract both residents and visitors to explore Southwest Rockford. The Revitalization Strategy Plan envisions the location of this market within the core vacant blocks between South Main Street and the Barber-Colman site. As with many initiatives, it is also envisioned that the market would grow organically over time, using as much or as little space as needed. The initial market would not necessarily encompass the entire block or have a "park-like" appearance as shown in the Plan images. It may be a series of tents or a temporary structure that improves and grows as new investment and development is made in the neighborhood.

The creation of the Village Market would ideally be lead by the South Main Partnership that is developed out of this process. In addition, local leaders, businesses, residents and the City would all be partners in helping establish, promote and coordinate its creation.

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### **TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CORE VACANT FRONTAGE REDEVELOPMENT**

Redevelopment of the commercial frontage of the vacant blocks between Loomis and Lane Streets provides a significant key opportunity to impact the “heart” of the neighborhood. The Plan envisions multiple two to four story buildings that would “fill in” the missing shopping street wall along South Main Street. Each building could be developed incrementally starting north and moving south, establishing opportunities for new commercial and retail to be brought into the neighborhood, potentially helping achieve the “critical mass” for an active, vibrant urban shopping district.

Ideally, planning, design and implementation of this frontage would correspond with that of both the Barber-Colman redevelopment and the Village Market concept. The proximity and potential compatible uses of these three initiatives provides multiple synergies from which to create positive momentum for the community.

### **FACADE IMPROVEMENTS IN TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CORE**

As part of improving the image and character of Southwest Rockford and the South Main Street Corridor, the Plan recommends that building owners improve existing building facades. Currently, the City has a facade improvement program for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) areas, which applies to this commercial district. The City should market this program to property/building owners to help educate them on the benefits of participation and potentially begin making physical improvements in the area. Facade and building improvements will complement the upcoming streetscape enhancements and future signage/wayfinding elements, while also engaging the community in the revitalization process. While the City currently administers this program, a community-based organization such as the South Main Partnership could assist with marketing and administering the program in the future.

### **INTERCHANGE TARGET AREA**

The Revitalization Strategy Plan envisions the expansion of industrial/business uses to locate around the U.S. Highway 20 interchange as an extension of Southrock Industrial Park and as a larger, defined business park campus south of the interchange. The Plan also depicts compatible commercial and retail uses along the South Main Street frontages as part of creating a more cohesive campus. The Interchange Target Area is an important development opportunity because it could potentially bring employment centers to the area, increase the daily population using the Corridor and also make the airport sub-area a more desirable location to conduct business for many larger companies.

The City and Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC) should focus on marketing this plan to attract larger businesses and industries that would benefit from locating near the interchange and airport.

### **DOWNTOWN|RIVERFRONT TRANSITION TARGET AREA**

The Revitalization Strategy Plan depicts the long-term vision for the Downtown/Riverfront Transition Target Area as a transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhood that “closes the physical gap” between Downtown and the residential areas to the south. As previously described in the Plan section, a number of actions need to take place in order for this plan to become reality, including the railroad consolidation plan; environmental assessments and brownfield remediation; construction of the Amtrak station and facilities; and private-sector development of commercial and residential building products. Generally, the

time frame for completion of a “full build-out” plan for this Target Area will take longer than many of the other key sites and projects.

However, coordination and planning should start now, especially with property acquisitions, environmental assessments and site remediation. Key responsible parties and participants in moving this project forward include the City, the railroads (property owners), Amtrak and private developers.

### **MAIN AND MARCHESANO TARGET AREA**

The Revitalization Strategy depicts a mixture of existing building and site improvements, as well as new retail and service uses to rejuvenate the Main and Marchesano Target Area. A newly-established organization such as the South Main Partnership should be involved in helping to move revitalization efforts forward and assist the City with promotion and marketing efforts for the Plan.

The City should also market the facade improvement program to the property owners in this area. While improvements and new uses to this area would be welcome to immediate residents, the impact of redeveloping this Target Area would not be as great as focusing efforts on the Traditional Neighborhood Target Area would be. Therefore, this Target Area is seen as a lower priority item in the implementation matrix.

### **HARRISON|SOUTH MAIN INTERSECTION TARGET AREA**

As discussed and illustrated earlier, the Harrison/South Main Target Area is a largely undeveloped corner that consists of land that is located within Winnebago County. The long-term vision for the area from a future land use standpoint is that of a commercial corner with predominantly medium density residential land uses to the south.

## **Key Catalytic Project Ranking**

### **Order of Importance or Impact to South Main Revitalization**

1. South Main Roadway Reconstruction
2. Morgan Street Bridge Reconstruction
3. South Main Streetscape Enhancements/Branding
4. Barber-Colman Adaptive Use Plan
5. Village Market
6. Traditional Neighborhood Core Vacant Frontage Redevelopment
7. Facade Improvements
8. Downtown|Riverfront Transition Target Area
9. Interchange Target Area
10. Main and Marchesano Target Area
11. Harrison|South Main Intersection Target Area

<b>SOUTH MAIN REVITALIZATION STRATEGY</b> <b>CATALYTIC PROJECTS - CHART 1</b>						
		LEGEND	SSA: Special Service Area BID: Business Improvement District TIF: Tax Increment Financing	SRTS: Safe Routes to School ITCP: Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning ITEP: Illinois Transportation Enhancement	OSLAD: Open Space + Land Acquis. Dev. CDBG: Community Develop. Block Grant CLG: Certified Local Government Program	▲ High \$\$\$ > \$500,000 ◆ Medium \$\$ \$100,000 - \$500,000 ▼ Low \$ < \$100,000
INITIATIVE/PROJECT/PROGRAM	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS/ FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS/KEY TASKS	COST LEVEL	GENERAL TIMELINE
SOUTH MAIN ROADWAY PLANNING AND RECONSTRUCTION	▲ IN PROGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>IDOT</li> <li>City Economic Develop. Staff</li> <li>Engineering Consultants</li> <li>RMTD</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue coordination with IDOT/engineers</li> <li>Work with existing businesses to ease relocation</li> <li>Develop streetscape construction mitigation program with merchants</li> <li>Continue community outreach and updates</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-1 year Ongoing until construction is complete
MORGAN STREET BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION	▲ IN PROGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>IDOT</li> <li>City Economic Develop. Staff</li> <li>Engineering Consultants</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue coordination with IDOT/engineers</li> <li>Work with existing businesses to ease relocation</li> <li>Maintain relationships with businesses during construction</li> <li>Continue community outreach and updates</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-1 year Ongoing until construction is complete
SOUTH MAIN STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS	▲ IN PROGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>CDAG</li> <li>Design/Engineering Consultants</li> <li>RMAP</li> <li>RMTD</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and detail new plan</li> <li>Budget estimates and permitting</li> <li>Bid solicitation and construction coordination</li> </ul>	\$\$	0-2 years
BARBER-COLMAN ADAPTIVE USE MASTER PLAN	▲ IN PROGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>Developer Team</li> <li>City Economic Develop. Staff</li> <li>City Council</li> <li>Design Consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>Historic Preservation Tax Credits</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>CDBG/CDBG-R</li> <li>Private Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct adaptive use feasibility study</li> <li>Identify/secure project financing</li> <li>Design and detail master plan</li> <li>Market/recruit potential master developer/tenants</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-2 years
VILLAGE MARKET	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Main Partnership</li> <li>Local Leaders</li> <li>Business owners</li> <li>Community Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Sponsor</li> <li>General Revenue Bonds</li> <li>Private Financing</li> <li>Community-based Financing</li> <li>SSA • BID • TIF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish short-term location</li> <li>Create marketing and promotion strategy</li> <li>Acquire City approvals and permits</li> <li>Create a long-term plan</li> </ul>	\$\$	0-2 years Ongoing
BIKE PATH LINKAGES	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>Riverfront Property Owners</li> <li>Engineering/Design Consultant</li> <li>RMAP</li> <li>Winnebago Co. Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds • County Funds</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>OSLAD/LWCF</li> <li>General Revenue Bonds</li> <li>ITEP • SRTS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiate property/easement agreements</li> <li>Determine revenue sharing scenarios/agreements</li> <li>Finalize building plans/permits</li> <li>Construction management</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-2 years Ongoing
TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CORE VACANT FRONTAGE REDEVELOPMENT	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning/Engineering Staff</li> <li>City Economic Develop. Staff</li> <li>Developer</li> <li>Design Consultants</li> <li>Rockford Local Develop. Corp.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>General Revenue Bonds</li> <li>Private Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market conceptual plan to developers</li> <li>Negotiate property/development agreements</li> <li>Develop and market new retail</li> <li>Secure building permits</li> <li>Construction design and management coordination</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-2 years
FACADE IMPROVEMENTS IN TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CORE	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property/Building Owners</li> <li>City Staff</li> <li>South Main Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Facade Improvement Funds</li> <li>SSA</li> <li>BID</li> <li>TIF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market facade improvement program</li> <li>Identify local building candidates and interested property owners</li> <li>Monitor/manage facade improvement program</li> </ul>	\$	0-2 years
DISTRICT/CORRIDOR WAYFINDING/ SIGNAGE + BANNER PROGRAM	▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>South Main Partnership</li> <li>CDAG</li> <li>Community Stakeholders</li> <li>Design Consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>ITEP</li> <li>General Revenue Bonds</li> <li>SSA • BID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize conceptual designs and district wayfinding plan</li> <li>Determine phased approach to implementing signage program</li> <li>Coordinate with South Main streetscape enhancements</li> </ul>	\$\$	0-2 years Ongoing

# SOUTH MAIN REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

## CATALYTIC PROJECTS - CHART 2

### LEGEND

SSA: Special Service Area  
 BID: Business Improvement District  
 TIF: Tax Increment Financing

SRTS: Safe Routes to School  
 ITCP: Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning  
 ITEP: Illinois Transportation Enhancement

OSLAD: Open Space + Land Acquis. Dev.  
 CDBG: Community Develop. Block Grant  
 CLG: Certified Local Government Program

▲ High  
 ◆ Medium  
 ▼ Low

\$\$\$ > \$500,000  
 \$\$ \$100,000 - \$500,000  
 \$ < \$100,000

INITIATIVE/PROJECT/PROGRAM	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS/FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS/KEY TASKS	COST LEVEL	GENERAL TIMELINE
EVALUATE NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>Planning/Arch. Consultant</li> <li>South Main Partnership</li> <li>Illinois Historic Pres. Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>SSA</li> <li>BID</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>CLG Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft letter of determination + forward to IHPA</li> <li>Perform updated historic resources inventory</li> <li>Prepare National Register nomination</li> </ul>	\$	0-2 years
EXPLORE EXISTING BUILDINGS FOR AVAILABLE SPACE FOR POTENTIAL ADAPTIVE USE AND BUSINESS LOCATION/RELOCATION	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Economic Development Staff</li> <li>City Planning/Land Use Staff</li> <li>South Main Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>CDBG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a business/commercial inventory/survey</li> <li>Assess available building space condition and size</li> <li>Map available spaces</li> <li>Promote and coordinate with existing or start-up businesses</li> </ul>	\$	0-2 years Ongoing
DAVIS PARK EXPANSION	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Park District</li> <li>RAVE</li> <li>RRDP</li> <li>Design Consultant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>ITEP Grant</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>OSLAD/LWCF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demolish Tapco/realign Wyman St. + clear site</li> <li>Develop updated Davis Park Master Plan</li> <li>Create a timeline for improvements</li> <li>Construction design and management coordination</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	3-5 years
RIVERFRONT PARK (BETWEEN ISLAND AND ILLINOIS)	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>IDOT</li> <li>Design/Engineering Consultant</li> <li>RMAP</li> <li>Winnebago County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ITEP Grant</li> <li>IDOT</li> <li>OSLAD/LWCF</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>City Funds</li> <li>County Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and detail park master plan</li> <li>Budget estimates and permitting</li> <li>Bid solicitation and construction coordination</li> <li>Coordinate with bike path linkages and Morgan St. bridge reconstruction</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-2 years (demo) 3-5 years (planning + implementation)
DEMOLITION OF SUBSTANDARD BUILDINGS/STRUCTURES	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Neighborhood Devel. Staff</li> <li>City Econ. Development Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDBG</li> <li>TIF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine list of potential properties</li> <li>Budget appropriately on an annual basis</li> <li>Acquire or put in process fast track demos</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-3 years Ongoing
HARRISON AVENUE BRIDGE DECK REPLACEMENT	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Engineering/CIP Staff</li> <li>Design/Engineering Consultant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>TIF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and detail bridge structure</li> <li>Budget estimates and permitting</li> <li>Bid solicitation and construction coordination</li> <li>Construction management coordination</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-5 years
DEVELOP FUTURE AMTRAK STATION AREA AS REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Engineering/Planning Staff</li> <li>Amtrak</li> <li>RMAP</li> <li>Winnebago County</li> <li>Engineering/Design Consultant</li> <li>RMTD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>Private Funding</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>TIGER III Grant</li> <li>County Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate train, bus and park-and-ride needs</li> <li>Finalize station layout and site design</li> <li>Create a timeline for improvements</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	3-5 years
DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT TRANSITION TARGET AREA DEVELOPMENT	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning/Econ. Development Staff</li> <li>Railroad Property Owners</li> <li>Private Developers</li> <li>RMAP</li> <li>Amtrak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>Private Funding</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>TIGER III Grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete railroad consolidation</li> <li>Conduct Environmental Assessment</li> <li>Clear site/undergo environmental cleanup</li> <li>Negotiate offers and/or public/private partnership</li> <li>Create RFP/developer recruitment strategy</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	5-15 years
INTERCHANGE TARGET AREA DEVELOPMENT	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning/Econ. Development Staff</li> <li>Winnebago County</li> <li>RAEDC</li> <li>Private Developer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>Private Funding</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>County Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market conceptual plan to developers</li> <li>Negotiate property/development agreements</li> <li>Develop and market new commercial development</li> <li>Secure building permits</li> <li>Construction design and management coordination</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	5-15 years

**SOUTH MAIN REVITALIZATION STRATEGY**  
**CATALYTIC PROJECTS - CHART 3**

LEGEND SSA: Special Service Area SRTS: Safe Routes to School OSLAD: Open Space + Land Acquis. Dev. ▲ High \$\$\$ > \$500,000  
 BID: Business Improvement District ITCP: Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning CDBG: Community Develop. Block Grant ◆ Medium \$\$ \$100,000 - \$500,000  
 TIF: Tax Increment Financing ITEP: Illinois Transportation Enhancement CLG: Certified Local Government Program ▼ Low \$ < \$100,000

INITIATIVE/PROJECT/PROGRAM	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS/FUNDING SOURCES	ACTIONS/KEY TASKS	COST LEVEL	GENERAL TIMELINE
MAIN AND MARCHESANO TARGET AREA IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning/Econ. Development Staff</li> <li>South Main Partnership</li> <li>Private Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>Private Funding</li> <li>Facade Improvement Funds</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>SSA</li> <li>BID</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market conceptual plan to developers</li> <li>Negotiate property/development agreements</li> <li>Develop and market new commercial development</li> <li>Secure building permits</li> <li>Construction design and management coordination</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	2-15 years
RIVERFRONT PARK (SOUTH OF MORGAN STREET BRIDGE)	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Park District</li> <li>Local Leaders</li> <li>Design Consultants</li> <li>RMAP</li> <li>Winnebago County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>ITEP</li> <li>OSLAD/LWCF</li> <li>County Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and detail park master plan</li> <li>Budget estimates and permitting</li> <li>Bid solicitation and construction coordination</li> <li>Coordinate with bike path linkages and Morgan St. bridge reconstruction</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	5-10 years
TRANSITION SCATTERED COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES WITHIN URBAN TRANSITION SUB-AREA TO RESIDENTIAL LAND USE ALONG SOUTH MAIN STREET	◆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning Staff</li> <li>Local Leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>Illinois EPA Grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inventory/map scattered commercial properties along South Main Street</li> <li>Develop an acquisition strategy for properties</li> <li>Conduct Environmental Assessment of properties</li> <li>Rezone land use/transition to residential</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	0-20 years
HARRISON SOUTH MAIN INTERSECTION DEVELOPMENT	▼	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning/Econ. Development Staff</li> <li>South Main Partnership</li> <li>Private Developers</li> <li>Winnebago County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>Private Funding</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>County Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market conceptual plan to developers</li> <li>Negotiate property/development agreements</li> <li>Develop and market new commercial development</li> <li>Secure building permits</li> <li>Construction design and management coordination</li> </ul>	\$\$\$	2-20 years
SOUTH MAIN CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN UPDATE & EVALUATION	▼	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Planning/Zoning Staff</li> <li>Planning Consultant</li> <li>RMAP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>ITEP Grant</li> <li>TIF</li> <li>SSA</li> <li>BID</li> <li>ITCP Grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate/update goals</li> <li>Revisit Plan in context of market conditions and new development that has occurred</li> </ul>	\$	5-10-15-20 years (5 year increments)

### **Funding Sources and Incentive Programs**

Many of the recommended projects and improvements outlined in the South Main Revitalization Strategy will require financial assistance in order to be implemented. Where possible, local, state and federal funding sources should be used to leverage private sector dollars.

Each of these funding sources, individually or in tandem with each other, offer many opportunities to jump start and move redevelopment initiatives of the Revitalization Strategy Plan forward. Any and/or all should be evaluated and used as in conjunction with community participation in public/private partnerships. Each of the financial tools available should be more thoroughly evaluated and studied to determine their feasibility and applicability in the context of any Plan initiative.

As noted below, the City or other community groups/organizations may also engage in grant writing and partial lobbying to secure appropriate funding for many other public initiatives directly or indirectly identified in the Revitalization Strategy Plan.

The following are key financing tools, programs and potential funding sources to be considered by the City and local community organizations:

#### **Local Funding Sources and Incentive Programs**

##### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Probably the most common means the City can use to tackle public improvements is to fold these projects into the regular Capital Improvement Planning and Programming. Capital improvement funding could be used to support various projects outlined in the Plan, including:

- Road and Street Improvements
- Pedestrian Safety Enhancements
- Streetscape Implementation
- Parks and Plazas
- Public Parking Improvements
- Signage and Wayfinding Programs
- Public Building Interior and Exterior Improvements

Recognizing that public budgets are shrinking, and therefore limited in the current economy, the City should investigate shared improvements and funding opportunities with other municipal taxing bodies 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 Plan in order to jumpstart redevelopment activities. Bonding for public infrastructure, open space or streetscape improvements, site acquisition and clearing or remediation of brownfield sites are some of the key catalytic components of the Plan that should be considered. The City should consult their financial experts to evaluate these opportunities.

### PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

Another option for the City to consider to spur redevelopment, particularly for the privately held target area redevelopment sites, is the use of property tax abatement. In order to entice new retail, commercial, or office/industrial development or redevelopment, the City could structure a reasonable property tax abatement program tied to those development opportunities within the Corridor.

The tax advantage may be justified in the additional redevelopment costs necessary to undertake infill development within the Corridor as opposed to other “more greenfield” development locations elsewhere in the City or region. This structure may provide a competitive advantage to the City and Southwest Rockford from competing interests in neighboring cities and surrounding regional malls and retail centers.

### TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a municipal incentive that provides financial assistance to stimulate private investment in a deteriorating and/or blighted area that would not otherwise be developed. TIFs allow the local taxing bodies to make a joint investment in the development or redevelopment of a targeted area, with the goal that any short-term gains will be reinvested and leveraged for larger financial gains in the future.

To establish a TIF district, an eligibility study must be completed by the City. The targeted area must possess a minimum number of factors outlined by Illinois law that classify it as either blighted, vacant or as a conservation area. Once it has been determined that the area meets the qualifying criteria, a redevelopment plan must be completed and reviewed.

At the beginning of the process, the equalized assessed value (EAV) within the TIF district is measured and frozen. Incremental revenues from growth in property tax revenues over the life of the TIF can be leveraged to pay for eligible redevelopment costs. Once the development project is completed and has been paid for, the TIF district is dissolved and the tax base is returned to full use by all eligible taxing bodies. This strategy is authorized for a 23-year period, with the possibility of renewal for an additional 12 years.

Typical TIF projects and eligible costs for the Corridor include:

- Land acquisition and site preparation
- Environmental remediation measures
- Building rehabilitation
- Streets and public infrastructure improvements
- Marketing of sites in the TIF district
- Professional fees related to the redevelopment projects

The array of eligible projects and costs make TIF an appealing economic development incentive and is often used in conjunction with other mechanisms, such as SSAs.

# South Main Revitalization Strategy

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## Section 7: Implementation

### **SPECIAL SERVICE AREA**

A Special Service Area (SSA) is a mechanism that provides increased funding for expanded services, programs and/or physical improvements in a defined geographical area. Through a localized and defined increase in the property tax agreed to by property owners, additional services can be delivered. Throughout Illinois, SSAs are growing in popularity due to their flexibility.

The establishment of an SSA can be initiated by the community or at the request of some or all of the property owners in a particular area. An application must be filed with the chief elected official of the municipality or county explaining, at the minimum the:

- Special services to be provided
- Boundaries of the designated area
- Estimated amount of funding required
- Stated need and local support for the proposed Special Service Area

Once submitted, the proposed ordinance must go through at least one public hearing followed by a 60-day waiting period to allow for opposition. Once enacted, the local governing body must approve the SSA's annual budget and levy on an annual basis.

The additional services in an SSA extend beyond basic municipal services, such as snow plowing and trash removal and can include:

- Support services, including additional South Main Corridor promotion marketing management and advertising expenses, special events and leasing support
- Infrastructure improvements such as streetscape and landscaping, sidewalk and street paving and improvements and parking lots
- Physical improvements to storefronts and building interiors
- Special events, such as supporting the Village Market concept, and seasonal decorations
- Security and parking enforcement improvements
- Program administration and membership services
- Store window display
- Retailer training
- Land and building improvements including storefront enhancements, grants or loans and interior rehabilitation/build-out assistance

Whether or not an SSA is established, the key commercial core within the Traditional Neighborhood District needs to focus on a number of activities to help retain their existing businesses, recruit new ones and attract more shoppers and visitors to Southwest Rockford. These activities can be the responsibility of City staff, the Rockford Chamber of Commerce, a newly formed South Main Partnership or some

combination of the above. *It is recommended that the City develop a comprehensive strategy for business retention, marketing and recruitment as identified in the Priority Action Tasks portion of this section.*

### **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)**

A Business Improvement District (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. A 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
- Streetscape easement establishment
- Site/building improvement program
- Signage design and installation
- Road/streetscape design and construction
- Infrastructure improvements for development sites
- Acquisition, conveyance or disposition of property
- Business retention/attraction program
- Staff salaries related to implementation activities

### **State Funding Sources and Incentive Programs**

#### **ILLINOIS TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (ITEP)**

Administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and funded through the Federal Highway Administration, the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) provides grant funds to underwrite a variety of projects that expand transportation choices and enhance the overall physical environment and transportation experience. Eligible projects under the ITEP program include streetscape improvements, the provision of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, environmental mitigation due to highway run-off or pollution, the control and removal of outdoor advertising and the rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings and facilities. Proposed projects may receive up to 80 percent reimbursement for project engineering and design costs with the remaining 20 percent to be paid for 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.

Streetscape improvements in the South Main Corridor study area, as well as design and implementation of the overall multi-purpose bike/pedestrian linkages would be eligible for ITEP funding.

# South Main Revitalization Strategy

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## Section 7: Implementation

### **ILLINOIS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM (SRTS)**

The Illinois Safe Routes to School Program provides financial support for various initiatives that encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk or bicycle to school. Eligible initiatives include the planning, development and implementation of projects that will improve safety and reduce traffic such as sidewalk and pedestrian crossing improvements, traffic calming and diversion mechanisms, as well as the installation of new bicycle amenities. The program will also underwrite educational activities to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety. Projects are funded at a 100 percent level with no local match required, although a School Travel Plan developed by the local school community is required to receive funding. The program is administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation with funding through the Federal Highway Administration. The next round of SRTS funding will open in 2012. Eligible Revitalization Strategy implementation costs include:

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

### **ILLINOIS TOMORROW CORRIDOR PLANNING GRANT**

IDOT administers this program to support planning activities that promote the integration of land use with transportation and infrastructure facilities in transportation corridors. The types of projects funded include TOD plans, intergovernmental land use agreements, zoning amendments and multi-municipal corridor plans, economic plans and congestion reduction plans. Rockford is one of 14 municipalities or counties eligible to receive funding from the Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning Grant program and applications should be coordinated through RMAP.

### **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 AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (OSLAD) AND LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF)**

The Open Space and Land Acquisition and Development Program (OSLAD) provides grants to local 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 initiatives. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources administers the program.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federally funded program which also supports a 50% matching basis. Both grants look at park and open space initiatives that provide for a variety of community open space and recreation needs with an eye towards Best Management Practices and sustainability.

A number of key park and open space projects targeted within the Revitalization Strategy Plan would be eligible for these grants, including the expansion of Davis Park, Village Market open space, creation of new riverfront parks in the Traditional Neighborhood District and Harrison/South Main Target Area and new bike connections throughout the Corridor study area.

### **CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM**

Administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the Certified Local Government Program (CLG) provides certified local municipalities and counties the opportunity to participate as partners in state and Federal preservation activities, including available grant programs and technical assistance. To become certified, a local government must have a historic preservation ordinance, establish a preservation review commission, have an active local survey program to identify historic resources, and provide for public participation. Rockford has been a CLG since 1985. The CLG grant program provides matching funds for a variety of historic preservation activities including surveys, preservation plans, educational initiatives and preparation of National Register nominations. Illinois CLG grant awards are offered on an annual basis through a competitive application process.

### **RIVER EDGE REDEVELOPMENT ZONE AND STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS**

The Illinois River Edge Redevelopment Zone Act of 2006, administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, provides specific incentives to revive and redevelop environmentally-challenged properties that will stimulate economic revitalization and create jobs. Incentives include tax credits for new job creation, business investment, and environmental remediation as well as grants for brownfield development. A 25 percent state tax credit for the rehabilitation of eligible historic buildings in Redevelopment Zones is also available. Portions of the South Main Corridor are included Rockford's River Edge Redevelopment Zone.

## **Federal Funding Sources and Incentive Programs**

### **FEDERAL 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 in Illinois to encourage rehabilitation and reinvestment in historic buildings. Through this program, a 20 percent tax credit is provided to owners and developers of income-producing historic buildings who undertake a substantial rehabilitation of a historic building in which rehabilitation costs must be equal to or greater than the adjusted basis of the property minus the cost of the land, plus improvements already made, minus depreciation already taken. In addition, the project must also be a certified rehabilitation by following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and receiving design work approval by IHPA and the National Park Service. Property owners and developers must follow a three-part application process with IHPA and determine if the building is a certified historic structure if it is located within a National Register Historic District or is not individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is highly recommended that IHPA be consulted on project scope

# South Main Revitalization Strategy

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## Section 7: Implementation

and details before beginning the application process. Redevelopment of key historic buildings, particularly old industrial buildings such as the Barber-Colman complex or other remaining structures in the northern portion of the Corridor, may be eligible to take advantage of this program.

### **NEW MARKET TAX CREDIT PROGRAM**

A Community Development Entity (CDE) within the South Main Corridor could be eligible to receive awards under the New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) Program. The NMTC Program attracts investment capital to eligible communities and neighborhoods by permitting individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their Federal income tax return in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial institutions called Community Development Entities. A CDE is established through the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The tax credits could be used for both business and real estate development projects and in tandem with the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

### **TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNITY AND SYSTEM PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

This federal pilot program has the goal of developing strategies that use transportation investments to build livable communities. The program provides funding for a comprehensive initiative including planning grants, implementation grants and research to investigate and address the relationships between transportation, community and system preservation and to identify private sector based initiatives. States, metropolitan planning organizations and local governments are eligible for TCSP Program discretionary grants to plan and implement strategies which: improve the efficiency of the transportation system; reduce environmental impacts; reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investments; ensure efficient access to jobs, services and centers of trade; examine development patterns; and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns which achieve these goals.

### **TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY GRANTS (TIGER III)**

In June 2011, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced the availability of \$525 million in funding for the TIGER III Discretionary Grants Program, which can underwrite innovative transportation projects sponsored by local and regional governments and transit agencies. Grant funds can be used to underwrite specific planning initiatives, as well as for detailed engineering and architectural specifications for capital facilities and transportation projects. Grants require a 20 percent match by the sponsoring agency or entity with a maximum grant award of \$3 million.

The TIGER III program has only been funded for Federal Fiscal Year 2010-2011. If funded beyond 2011, the TIGER III program can be a significant source of financing for South Main Corridor improvements.

### **COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANT**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's \$28 million Community Challenge Planning Grant Program fosters reform and reduces barriers to achieving affordable, economically vital and sustainable communities. Such efforts may include amending or replacing local master plans, zoning codes, and building codes, either on a jurisdiction-wide basis or in a specific neighborhood, district, corridor or sector to promote mixed-use development, affordable housing, the reuse of older buildings and structures for new purposes and similar activities with the goal of promoting sustainability at the local or neighborhood level. This Program also supports the development of affordable housing through the development and adoption of inclusionary zoning ordinances and other activities to support planning implementation.

### **Key South Main Corridor Initiatives**

Once the Master Plan is approved, key implementation strategies and actions have been outlined in the following chart, including:

- Priority
- Initial Lead/Responsible Group
- Implementation Tools/Funding Sources
- Actions/Key Steps
- Cost Level
- General Timeline