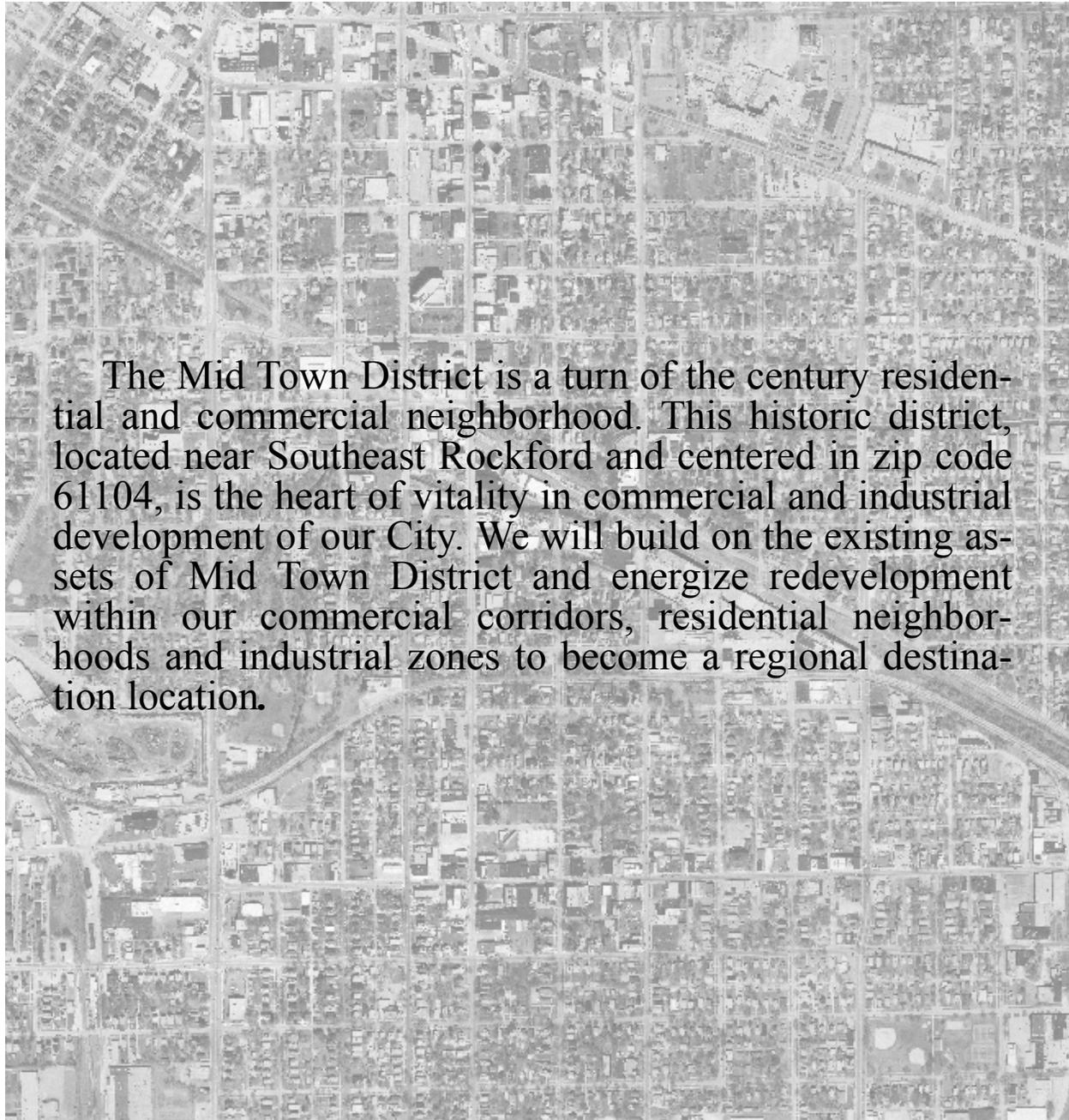


Mid Town District Framework Plan Rockford, Illinois

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>	
VISION	2	
KEY FINDINGS / SUMMARY	3	
BACKGROUND	5	
OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES	5	
PLAN OBJECTIVES	6	
DEVELOPMENT PLAN	8	
Seventh Street Corridor	9	
Broadway	22	
Railroad Avenue Corridor	24	
Seventh Street to Broadway Connection Corridor Zone	25	
Enhancement Mechanisms	26	
Future Land Use, Linkages and Access	29	
CALL TO ACTION	32	
SUMMARY	32	
Board of Directors' Approval	33	
Acknowledgements	33	
<u>APPENDICES</u>		
Appendix A	Detailed Description of Opportunities and Issues	
<u>FIGURES</u>		
Figure 1	Mid Town Aerial View	4
Figure 2	Broadway Corridor Map	22
Figure 3	Railroad Ave. Corridor	24
Figure 4	Seventh Street to Broadway Connection Corridor	25
Figure 5	Transportation and Linkages Map	29



The Mid Town District is a turn of the century residential and commercial neighborhood. This historic district, located near Southeast Rockford and centered in zip code 61104, is the heart of vitality in commercial and industrial development of our City. We will build on the existing assets of Mid Town District and energize redevelopment within our commercial corridors, residential neighborhoods and industrial zones to become a regional destination location.

Our longstanding mission has been to orchestrate development of the Mid Town District as a safe and desirable place to live, work, and operate a business. Thereby creating a vital and vibrant urban environment, a Neighborhood of Choice.

KEY FINDINGS / SUMMARY

This **Framework Plan** outlines short-term and long-term goals. The next phase in the planning process is to create an **Implementation Plan** and making the vision a reality. Some of the catalytic projects identified within this Framework Plan are already underway, but it will take the combined efforts of businesses and residents working together to make them all a reality.

The Mid Town District has seen evidence of investments and positive change. These include an expanded SwedishAmerican Hospital campus, the rerouting of Charles Street, the establishment of Benson Stone's Regional Marketing Center, the expansion of Crusader Clinic, the revitalization of the Seventh Street and Broadway Business Districts, the Longwood Plaza, the Grand Hotel renovation, the Patriots Gateway Center, and the Development of its new Junior Golf Center. Proposed projects that could stimulate major neighborhood housing improvements include such projects as the Keith Creek Greenway Project. There are commitments to upgrade entrances to the area and establish a Historic District.

Our findings indicate there are several opportunities, including:

- Improving accessibility and circulation
- Enhancing the business climate
- Improving the streetscape
- Developing new housing
- Improving public safety
- Improving recreation and greenspace areas

We want to coordinate our efforts with the City of Rockford's 2020 Plan, the Framework Plan developed by the River District and the Strategic Plan of the Rockford Park District. We wish to build on the successes of our neighboring associations. This plan addresses the following Sub-districts within or adjacent to the Mid Town District:

- Seventh Street Corridor
- Haight Village
- River District (East Section)
- Brewington Oaks District (Kishwaukee Street to the Rock River)
- SwedishAmerican Medical Campus/ Charles St. East
- Broadway Corridor
- Railroad Avenue Corridor
- Mid Town North Area (Residential area south of SwedishAmerican Campus)
- Patriots Gateway Center Area
- Seventh Street / Broadway Connection Zone

MIDTOWN DISTRICT AERIAL VIEW



BACKGROUND

The Mid Town District hosted two strategy meetings at the Patriot Gateway Center in the fall of 2002, and then conducted a series of neighborhood meetings in various defined zones. This framework plan was prepared based on comments and findings gathered during those meetings.



OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

The Mid Town District has significant strengths, which can provide the basis for new opportunities. However, it also has issues, which need to be identified so as to understand the challenges and how improvements may be made and opportunities revealed. An expansive list of opportunities and issues is included in Appendix A. The following is a summary of identified opportunities and issues:

Opportunities:

- Strengthen existing not-for-profit, social and health service organizations by collaboration with the medical industry campus and facilities in the general area
- Improve gateways and entrances
- Protect historic buildings and open spaces that have unique architectural features
- Create public and private parking areas behind the buildings with secondary facades
- Establish greenways, recreation, and transportation systems
- Many commercial buildings offering excellent locations for market rate residential and commercial development.
- Economic development enhancement mechanisms such as TIF and Historic Districts
- Established financial institutions and local businesses offering quality services
- Partnering with Government Agencies and other neighborhood associations

Issues:

- Social issues and blighted buildings typical of urban communities
- Negative public perceptions
- Specific types of businesses foster empty adjacent storefronts
- Proliferation of secondary effects by the proliferation of liquor establishments and sexually oriented businesses
- Vacant and deteriorating upper stories of buildings
- Lack of appreciation for architectural characteristics of buildings and landscape
- Absentee landowners

PLAN OBJECTIVES

The Physical Development and Planning Committee, comprised of local residents and stakeholders, identified the following Framework Objectives and Core Revitalization Principals.

CORE PRINCIPALS

OBJECTIVES

CREATE A POSITIVE IMAGE



- Improve the appearance of Gateways into our neighborhoods
- Promote the assets of the District through advertising
- Work closely with local media to market the area
- Promote networking and business relationships within the Mid Town District
- Promote establishment of community-positive and civic minded businesses

ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIPS



- Define roles of public, private and non-profit sectors
- Work with the City of Rockford to improve public safety and quality of life
- Have dedicated project managers from the City involved with Mid Town District improvements
- Partner with Government Agencies to implement plan objectives
- Involve residents and businesses as stakeholders in the District
- Maintain and strengthen neighborhood schools

TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES



- Improve the access and entrances to our commercial districts
- Improve the condition and design of streets, walks, parking and lighting, greenways (linear parks) and connect them with major activity centers and other neighborhoods
- Reduce the number of dead-end streets restricting commercial traffic
- Expand recreational / transportation alternatives including green ways and pedestrian paths

FRAMEWORK PLAN

LOOK AND FEEL OBJECTIVES



- Create impressive Gateways at the north end of Seventh Street, the Charles Street Second Avenue interface, and the east end of the Morgan Street bridge, into the neighborhood
- Enhance unique architectural features of existing structures
- Create architectural and land use objectives
- Establish a Local Historic District and develop design guide lines for architectural and landscape improvements
- Educate landowners on how appropriately designed improvements can enhance values and encourage other improvements

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



- Identify and promote appropriate sites for new residential development
- Strengthen and streamline residential development ordinances, policies and procedures
- Encourage rehabilitation of existing housing stock
- Increase owner occupancy and diversity of income levels
- Provide neighborhood amenities

ECONOMIC DRIVERS



- Use TIF funding to encourage and leverage private financial commitments
- Encourage use of Historic Tax Credit incentives
- Promote and encourage unique stores, ethnic / international restaurants, and downtown loft apartment/ residential living
- Encourage commercial and business development and emphasize fiber-optic communication systems access
- Encourage cultural uniqueness
- Retain historic architectural heritage

GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES



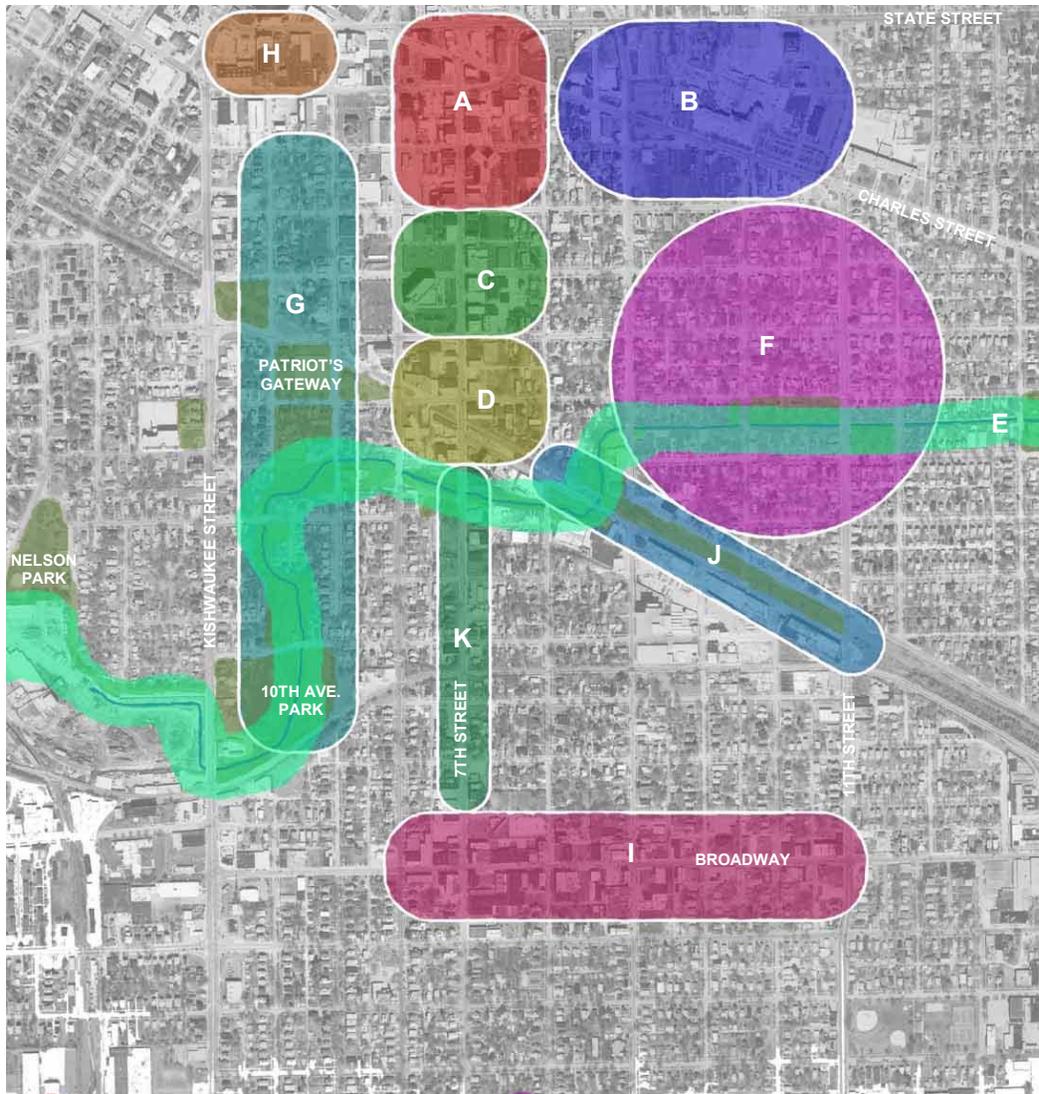
- Work with law enforcement to improve public safety
- Work with the City of Rockford to encourage local owners to improve their properties or face penalties and/or fines
- Work with the Rockford Housing Authority to improve the quality of housing provided through the Section 8 program
- Continue the Community Police Bike Patrol program
- Work with Alderman to pass legislation to make positive change and to enforce existing laws

MID TOWN



DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This Framework Plan outlines short-term and long-term goals. The Plan identifies specific catalytic projects. The next phase in the planning process is to create an **Implementation Plan** and making the vision a reality. Some of the catalyst projects identified within this Framework Plan are already underway. The road to reality requires the dedication of Mid Town District, local government, service organizations and partners. Specific catalytic projects located within Subdistricts that comprise Mid Town District are as follows:



- | | |
|---|---|
| A 7TH ST. GATEWAY AREA | F MIDTOWN NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD |
| B SWEDISH AMERICAN MEDICAL CAMPUS AREA | G PATRIOTS GATEWAY CENTER AREA |
| C AMCORE CAMPUS AREA | H MIDWAY THEATER AREA |
| D THE OLD DEPOT AREA | I BROADWAY CORRIDOR |
| E KEITH CREEK GREENWAY | J RAILROAD AVENUE CORRIDOR |
| | K 7TH ST. / BROADWAY CONNECTION CORRIDOR |

7TH STREET GATEWAY AREA

Existing Site Description: The North terminus of Seventh Street is at the Charles Street curve and East State Street Intersection. It is a visual focal point for west-bound traffic on State Street and Charles Street. The Commercial Mortgage and Finance Co. (CMF) located at 115 Seventh Street provides an interesting and attractive architectural feature. The remaining gateway area is currently a mixture of lingerie shops, taverns, massage parlors, signs, billboard advertising and an unsightly parking area.



7th & State Gateway

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- The Mid Town District should work to attract new businesses that support the business and residential neighborhoods. At the same time, we recognize that some current uses may not compliment the area and we will work with those organizations to improve that image.
- The Mid Town District recognizes that some commercial uses promote and encourage secondary effects on the surrounding area. We will work with those businesses to address those issues in order to improve the image of the area and promote a positive climate.
- The Mid Town District should work with the City to increase enforcement of City codes to clean the area up from certain blighted conditions currently existing. Billboards should be removed. Signage and advertising in store windows should compliment the building and be in character with the neighborhood. The facades of buildings should welcome the visitor to the neighborhood.
- The geometric alignment of the three major streets in the area should be modified to encourage a flow of traffic onto Seventh Street from Charles Street and State Street. A critical part of bringing more traffic onto Seventh Street is creating a more positive visual image in this area of the gateway. To do that, the area adjacent to Charles Street, State Street, and Seventh Street should be made into a greenspace that welcomes people to the Mid Town District.



Unacceptable Storefront & Color

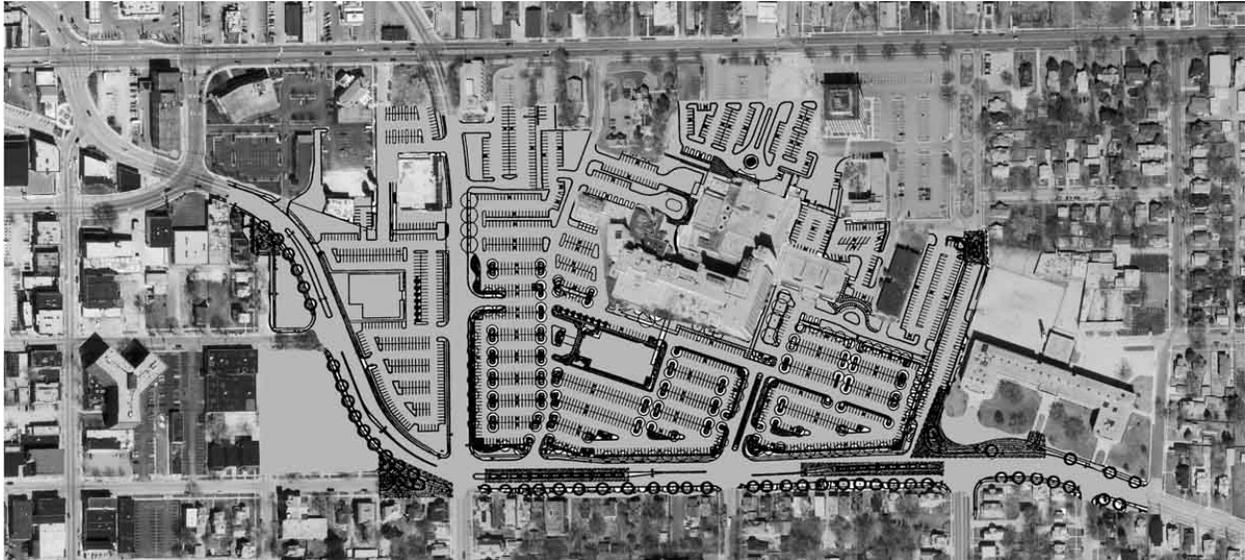


2nd Avenue Entry

MID TOWN



SWEDISH AMERICAN MEDICAL CAMPUS / CHARLES STREET INTERFACE



Existing Site Description: The Swedish American Medical Campus and the new Charles Street create an opportunity for a gateway at Second Avenue leading into the Mid Town District near Nicholson Hardware. Charles Street can embrace the Gateway. The new Charles Street “S” Curve is a well-designed thoroughfare lined with shade and ornamental trees and lighting. The street is attractive and conducts traffic efficiently through the area between the medical campus and Mid-Town District. The flow of traffic between the old downtown area and southeast Rockford is so efficient, that it actually encourages users to bypass the surrounding neighborhoods. That may be good for commuters getting to and from the office but it is contrary to encouraging a healthy and developing neighborhood. The physical presence of the wide Charles Street Boulevard creates a pedestrian barrier between the medical campus and the residential and business properties in the Mid Town District. Special shuttle buses may be needed to solve this issue. The Second Avenue entrance is crucial to the development of a link between Mid Town and the Swedish American Medical Campus via the Charles Street Corridor.



Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- A major entranceway improvement and transportation artery into Mid Town District at Second Avenue and Charles Street would provide access for through traffic from Charles Street. Designed as a gateway it would become the preferred route to and through the Seventh Street Corridor for east/ west bound traffic between Kishwaukee (Highway 251) and Charles Street.



- A major redevelopment goal is to provide access to Mid Town District's existing and new businesses via the Charles Street corridor between the SwedishAmerican campus and Seventh Street.



- The District should encourage redevelopment and expansion of Nicholson Hardware and the surrounding Commercial Blocks, with retention of adequate greenspace.



MID TOWN



DISTRICT

AMCORE CAMPUS AREA

(400 AND 500 BLOCKS AT SEVENTH STREET)

Existing Site Description: Modern Architecture within a historic neighborhood. The AMCORE building is an impressive architectural element along Seventh Street that is a natural hub for development. AMCORE is a major employer in the area.

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- Mid Town District should concentrate efforts to bring businesses into the AMCORE Campus area to cater services to the financial campus. These services can include business and/or entertainment services such as restaurants for the bank and medical campus employees to visit during the day and early evening.
- The area presents an excellent opportunity for mixed and higher income housing. The AMCORE campus area is a prime candidate for rehabilitation of second floor space into market rate loft apartments. Zion Development has proposed a mixed income apartment project in the old Lantow Drug Store Building.



THE OLD DEPOT AREA (600 BLOCK OF SEVENTH STREET)



Existing Site Description: Historical significance and interesting architecture are incorporated into the former depot located on Seventh Street and Sixth Avenue. The building is also the headquarters for the Mid Town District. This unique structure is visible to visitors and represents the positive change occurring in the Mid Town District neighborhood. The buildings in the 600 block are blighted and in need of repair. Many of the buildings have inappropriate color schemes and the owners have covered the facades and boarded up the windows with inappropriate materials that do not compliment the unique architecture of the structures. Four taverns, a religious activist organization, and a needle exchange operation are present in this one block area.



Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- The buildings in the Old Depot area offer unique architecture opportunities although they all will require significant capital for renovation.
- If there are law enforcement issues the Mid Town District and law enforcement agencies will need to coordinate their efforts.
- A comprehensive plan for redevelopment of the 600 Block needs to be formalized.





KEITH CREEK LINEAR PARKWAY/ GREENWAY (CHURCHILL PARK TO THE ROCK RIVER)

Existing Site Description:

Keith Creek is a drainage way and storm water flood control receptor stream located through the east portion of Rockford and discharging into the Rock River. Churchill Park has a positive location but is under used by the residents of the neighborhood. The creek traverses residential neighborhoods, and passes by two parks and industrial complexes such as Behr Metal Recycling and Rockford Auto Parts. A hydrology study is being funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- Work with the Rockford Park District to achieve the development of a linear Green Space Corridor along Keith Creek connects Mid Town District to other neighborhoods and integrates the parks in the Rockford Park District's Strategic Plan.
- Work with the Police Department to address safety issues that may arise in the design of the greenway and, if possible, establish patrols to create a safe environment for activities in the greenway area.
- Improvements to accessibility and the park pedestrian and bike recreational pathways are necessary to improve the vitality of the park. The greenspace would include a pedestrian/ bikeway providing lighting and transportation and recreational route, as well as opportunities to neighborhood users and all residents from other neighborhoods by connecting Churchill Park and Tenth Avenue Park. This project will have a major impact on the residential character and economic diversity in the Mid Town District.
- Redesign a drainage ditch into recreational linear park. Work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City to design a functional and aesthetic drainage way system and linear park.



MID TOWN NORTH RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD (EIGHTH TO THIRTEENTH STREETS & CHARLES TO WOODRUFF)



Existing Site Description: The Mid Town North neighborhood includes the residential area bounded by East State Street on the north, South Prospect Street/ Thirteenth Street on the east, the railroad on the south, and mid-block between Seventh and Eighth Streets. A task force was created in June 2002 to create a neighborhood plan for this area, comprised of representatives from the City, SwedishAmerican Hospital and Foundation, Mid Town District, Zion Development, and Habitat for Humanity. The City has compiled and presented information about the neighborhood and has sought input from the residents by hosting a series of public meetings and through a door-to-door survey. The Task Force is in the final stages of preparing a plan, which identifies the neighborhood's assets and weaknesses, and what can be done to make the neighborhood stronger, and healthier.

The SwedishAmerican Hospital campus, Lincoln Middle School, and two churches are located within this residential neighborhood.

Between 1980 and 2002, the Mid Town North neighborhood population decreased by more than 3 percent. The ethnicity of the neighborhood has shifted from 4 percent minority in 1980 to 22 percent minority in 2002 with the most significant gains by Hispanics. Residents of the Mid Town North neighborhood represent the working poor. Nearly a third of the households earned less than \$20,000 in 2000. At the same time, unemployment in the neighborhood was only 6.3 percent compared to 7.3 percent for Rockford as a whole.

Owner occupied housing represents 36 percent of the households, compared to 61 percent citywide. The median value of owner-occupied homes in this neighborhood was \$57,000, roughly \$20,000 lower than the citywide median. At the same time the rent was \$484, just \$14 below the citywide median.

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- All planners and developers incorporating plans for redevelopment and rehabilitation shall consider the well being of the neighborhood and not just the fringe areas of the neighborhood.
- Special programs such as paint programs should be coordinated with the Mid Town District.
- Integrate the Mayor's Mid Town North Neighborhood Task Force recommendations.
- SwedishAmerican and the Habitat for Humanity are replacing 18 standard houses with 12 new homes built with three unique façade designs by Habitat for Humanity. The City has agreed to build six West Side Alive homes in 2004. House designs are being developed to provide a better fit into the existing neighborhood architecture.



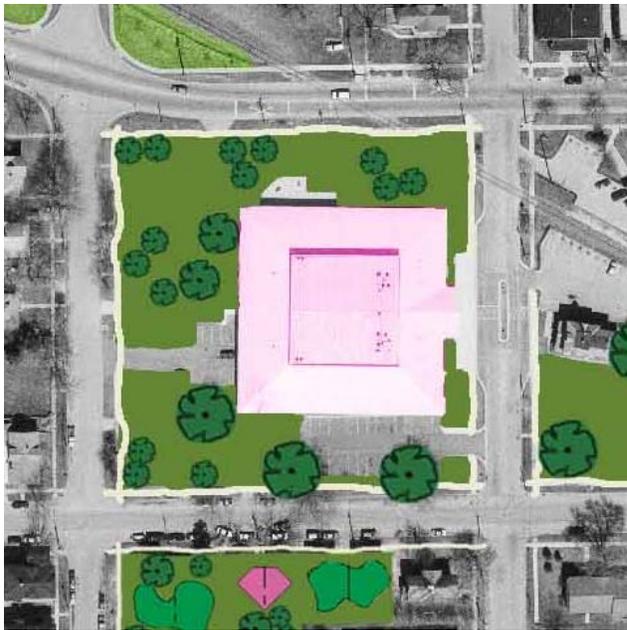
PATRIOTS GATEWAY CENTER AREA (KISHWAUKEE TO SIXTH STREET & SECOND AVENUE TO TENTH AVENUE):



Existing Site Description: The residential neighborhood centered around Patriots' Gateway Center includes the area from behind the Kishwaukee Street commercial properties to the east side of Fifth Street, and from Second Avenue on the north side to the southern boundary of Tenth Avenue Park. The Mid Town District Association has moved three quality homes into vacant properties in the 300 and 500 blocks of the Fourth Street and sold them to owner occupants. The City is considering demolition of three more properties along Fourth Street and has sold a home, rehabilitated during 2002, in the 600 block of Fourth Street to a private party owner occupant. Zion Development has rehabilitated two homes in the zone and sold them to owner occupants in the past three years. Ownership and sustainable improvements are happening.

Patriots' Gateway Center is the most used Community Center in Rockford and is a major asset in the Mid Town District. The new Junior Golf Training Center and connection to Keith Creek Greenway will greatly enhance the youth programming and recreation opportunities in this neighborhood.





Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- Develop a Junior Golf Training Center and stimulate adjacent resident redevelopment with connection to Keith Creek Greenway and Tenth Avenue Park.
- Continue infill of quality owner occupied housing working with public and private agencies and developers to incorporate period architectural designs, and encourage rehabilitation to retain neighborhood character.
- Focus efforts on completing housing revitalization in the 300 block of Fourth Street and continue working south to Fifth Avenue.



MID TOWN



DISTRICT

MIDWAY THEATER AREA



Existing Site Description: The northern portion of the Mid Town District and the eastern portion of the River District share the same geographic area including portions of two blocks bounded by Third Street, State Street and First Avenue. These blocks include a mixture of small retail, service and office uses. This area includes the Midway Theatre, the Inn Town Motel, and the Shumway Market/ Rockford Area Arts Council. The area lacks secure, well-illuminated and well-maintained off-street parking areas. The Inn Town Motel has a history of health and safety violations with the City of Rockford and has had numerous fires.



Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- The Mid Town District endorses the River Districts Framework Plan for a catalytic project including adding a new state of the art motion picture Cineplex to anchor the eastern portion of the East State Street commercial district. The project is referred to as the East Gateway Theater. The Cineplex would offer a low cost entertainment options in the East State Street corridor. The Midway Theater catalytic area seeks to capitalize on the market opportunity for a new state –of-the –art Cineplex. This relatively low cost form of entertainment would draw users from the entire community as well as from the new housing proposed in the revitalized area. It would also encourage additional investment in complementary uses such as restaurants.
- The proposed project would include the demolition and removal of underutilized properties and blighting influences.
- The parking issue could be solved by installing a new parking facility to be shared with the renovated Midway Theatre and revitalized commercial and residential uses.
- Mid Town District and River District will work with the City to propose streetscape improvements to integrate the theater site into the fabric of the existing commercial district.
- Mid Town District and River District will work with the City to propose streetscape improvements along East State to match the historic theme already in place.
- Mid Town District intends to integrate a plan to remove blighted buildings at the corner of First Avenue and Sixth Street to improve the safety of this intersection and make a more inviting entryway to traffic entering Mid Town from the north on Sixth Street.





BROADWAY CORRIDOR

The consensus of the Broadway Corridor business community is to focus on the establishment of a TIF District, which is envisioned to be, keyed by expansions of two major businesses. Street and parking expansion projects will support these projects and enhance access to the Broadway Commercial Corridor. This multi-ethnic business community will build on the strong re-sale and antique store enterprises existing in the corridor. Support by other community anchors like Crusader Clinic, Gray's IGA, National City Bank, B&H Office Furnishing, the Asian Mall and many others will help energize the neighborhood.

Project - Grocery Store: Catalytic Project:

Existing Site Description: The east end of the Broadway Corridor is anchored by Gray's IGA. This neighborhood supermarket provides groceries to the inhabitants of the neighborhood and shoppers. The store is at a good location, but is too small to remain economically viable. The parking area and building site for a new enlarged facility will require substantial land acquisition and site development. This will be accomplished based on the availability of TIF funding.



Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- The Grocery Store is a valuable and critical asset to the neighborhood.
- The lighting of the area should provide comfort to the shoppers and the signage and façade of the building should compliment the theme of the neighborhood.
- Traffic flow and parking area access will be integrated with adjoining projects.



CRUSADER CLINIC, PARKING, AND NATIONAL CITY BANK BRANCH

Existing Site Description: Crusader Clinic has done a marvelous job of investing time and considerable capital to the improvement of the building and parking areas at the northeast corner of Seventh Street and Broadway Avenue. The building has unique architectural features and attractive entrances. The Bank drive-in facility currently is in the parking area.



Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- The businesses around Crusader Clinic could compliment the Medical industry and provide services to neighborhood residents, staff and clients from the clinic.
- The parking areas should be well illuminated.
- National City Bank is encouraged to work closely with Crusader to improve traffic flow, improve their visibility, and provide safer pedestrian access to Crusader's entry areas by relocating their drive-in facility north of its current site.



RAILROAD AVENUE CORRIDOR (11TH STREET TO SEVENTH STREET)



Existing Site Description: Benson Stone Regional Marketing Center anchors the terminus point of the Railroad Avenue Corridor.

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- Benson Stone continues to expand their product lines and merchandise. They are currently renovating 2 floors for a new furniture division that will expand the business into a large-scale regional destination point.
- Railroad Avenue has a combination of developable loft buildings and the beginnings of an artist colony near the Seventh Street terminus.



SEVENTH STREET TO BROADWAY CONNECTION CORRIDOR

Existing Site Description: The mixed residential and commercial neighborhood linking the south terminus of the Seventh Street business corridor with the business area at Broadway is referred to as the Seventh Street to Broadway Connection. The area is characterized as commercial at the north terminus and south terminus with residential occupying the land area within it. The residential area connects with the Keith Creek area. While there are homes in this area that are in good condition, there are also many that have become deteriorated. This section of Seventh Street south of Keith Creek near Railroad Avenue to the south terminus of the Broadway Commercial Corridor is a combination of vacant properties, small businesses, a small strip center and a number of historic residences.

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

The future growth of this area will be greatly enhanced by the Keith Creek Greenway that can stimulate high quality residential growth and the proposed Broadway TIF District. We envision a gradual transition from new housing units near Keith Creek to light commercial development near Broadway. We envision the rehabilitation of residential units adjacent to the Seventh Street to Broadway Connection Corridor Zone.



MID TOWN



DISTRICT

PROPOSED 7TH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICTS

ENHANCEMENT MECHANISMS

Five separate but connected Historic Districts are proposed for the 7th Street Corridor. Separate districts are being proposed due to the potential difficulty in obtaining approval of the property owners. In order to be a local Historic District, 66% of the property owners need to approve such a status. To be listed on the National Register it takes 6 to 9 months to become a district. Listing can be denied if 50% of the property owners object to the listing. The 20% investment tax credit is available to certified local Historic Districts and can provide a very important economic incentive to developers. The quickest and most expeditious way of creating a Historic District would be by creating smaller ones with the local preservation commission.

The Historic Districts have been broken up into blocks based upon their architectural value and the potential leadership by major property owners to help form those Historic Districts.



SEVENTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD

(STATE STREET TO RAILROAD AVENUE)

Existing Site Description: The gateway to Seventh Street from the north is framed by liquor stores and brightly painted commercial frontage. The Commercial Mortgage Finance (CMF) building and the flagpole area provide an attractive visual focal point. The geometric alignment of the Seventh Street/ Charles Street/ State Street area is confusing to the motorist discouraging traffic flow onto Seventh Street and into the Mid Town District. There are opportunities to enhance the Mid Town District's north gateway and provide a positive image to visitors.

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

Mid Town District is pursuing the potential nomination of the Seventh Street Corridor for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The District is significant for commerce and ethnic heritage and architecture. Historic District boundaries are envisioned to frame the area between State Street and Railroad Avenue from Sixth Street to Eighth Street. Listing on the National Register would make most of the buildings in the District



eligible for the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, which provides federal income-tax incentives for the rehabilitation of historic income-producing properties. Under the provisions of the program, a 20 percent tax credit is available for the substantial rehabilitation of commercial, industrial, or rental residential buildings that are certified as historic. The credit may be subtracted directly from federal income taxes owed by the owner and/or investor. The Benefits include:

- Encouraging protection of landmarks through the promotion, recognition, and designation of historic structures;
- Increasing the value of the rehabilitated property and returning underutilized structures to the tax rolls;
- Upgrading downtowns and neighborhoods and often increasing the amount of available housing within the community.

A local historic district, which carries with it mandatory design review by Rockford's Historic Preservation Commission of all exterior changes, should be formed to stimulate redevelopment and regulate and guide the developers.

MID TOWN



BROADWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD

Existing Site Description: The Broadway corridor contains one of Rockford’s most prevalent blend of ethnic and cultural diversity. The visitor will observe a diversity of ethnic restaurants and businesses represented by their signage.

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- Nomination of Broadway for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be investigated. The neighborhood has significant diversity in historic and ethnic architecture, which may qualify it for classification as a Historic District. Please refer to the Redevelopment Program and Considerations of the Seventh Street Corridor described on page 28.



Broadway TIF Districts:

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- Tax increment financing is a financial tool that cities in Illinois can use to spur redevelopment in declining areas. When a city such as Rockford creates a TIF district, it determines what the assessed valuation is of all the properties within the district at the time of its creation. As that valuation increases as a result of redevelopment or new construction, any property taxes attributable to that increase in valuation are “captured” and spent within the district. The increment funds can be spent for physical improvements and related costs, such as street improvements; buying land; demolishing buildings; financing costs and so forth. At present, the City of Rockford has seven such districts.

Mid Town District believes the Broadway area makes an excellent candidate for Rockford’s next TIF district. To that end, it will work with the City to see that it is accomplished. To ensure success, the District will need to find a major redevelopment or development project that will ensure an increment that is large enough to fund needed improvements on Broadway.

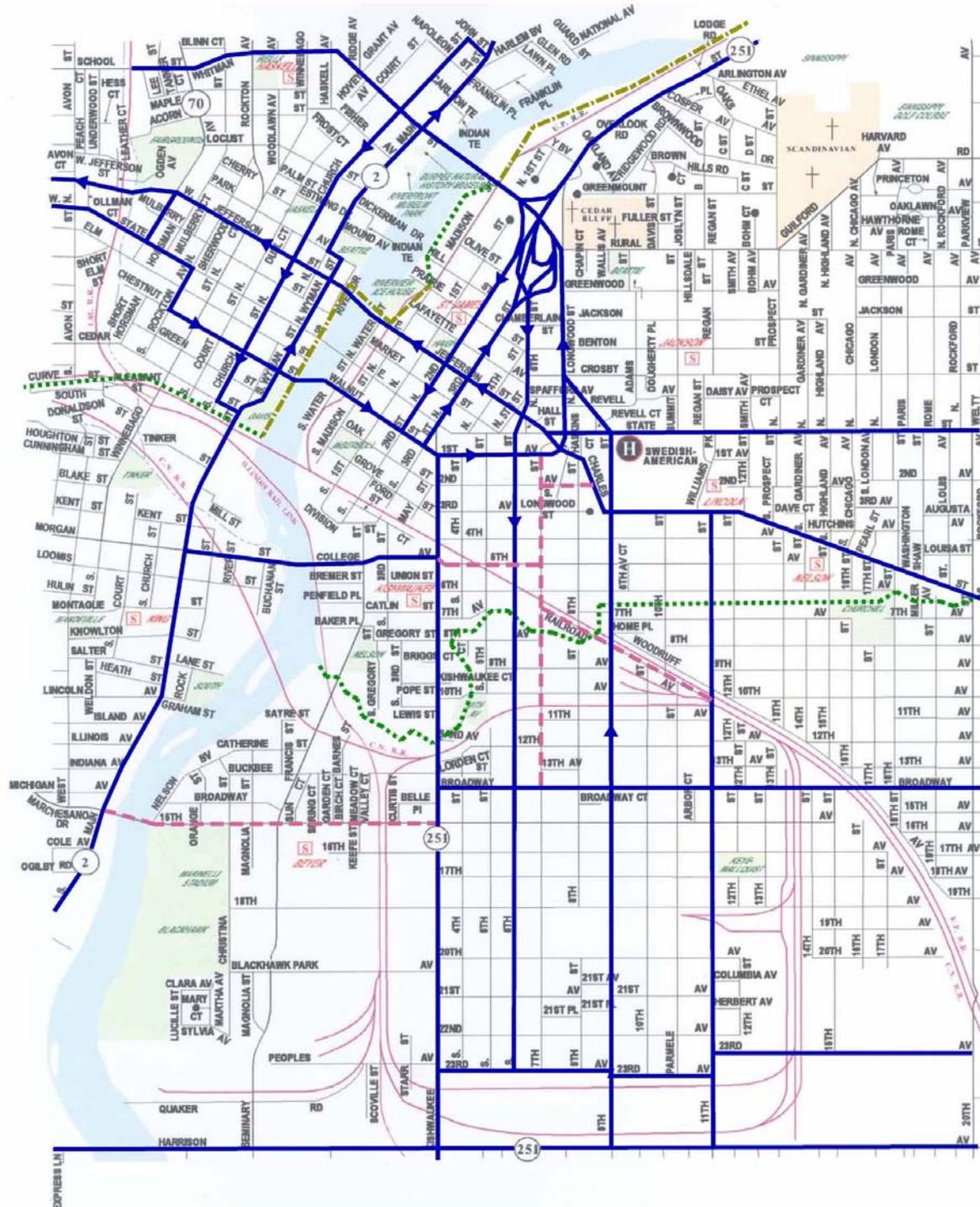
City Government:

Redevelopment Program and Considerations:

- The “Home Rule” status of the City in governing the area and the impact that such governance has to the district will be researched and studied by the Mid Town District.

FRAMEWORK PLAN

TRANSPORTATION & LINKAGES MAP



- PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL ROADWAY
- ONE-WAY TRAVEL
- ROADWAYS TO BE ENHANCED & PROPOSED
- PROPOSED RECREATIONAL PATHS
- EXISTING RECREATIONAL PATHS

MID TOWN



DISTRICT

Future Land Use, Linkages and Access (Transportation, Telecommunications, Utilities and Major Land Use Area)

- The Gateways to our city and neighborhood provides a first impression to the visitor as to the quality of life, neighborhood pride, and safety of the neighborhood. Entryways to Seventh Street and Mid Town District from the south, specifically Eleventh Street and Kishwaukee Street both need major facelifts to provide attractive entryways for visitors to Rockford.
- The City of Rockford is planning to resurface the Streets and walks in the Broadway Corridor. The Mid Town District would like to see the project include resurfacing the streets, repairing the walks, and installing the decorative imprinted concrete cross walks in the central portion of the Corridor.
- The Mid Town District has unique assets. The zones and project areas are linked together by existing as well as developing transportation routes and greenways. The Mid Town District should improve the circulation for automobile, recreation, pedestrian, and bike traffic throughout the District.
- In the Seventh Street area major east/west transportation routes include Second Avenue, which connects the SwedishAmerican Campus and Charles Street with Kishwaukee Street. The Second Avenue Corridor will provide enhanced vehicle access between SwedishAmerican Medical Campus and the Seventh Street Business District.
- The Fifth Avenue corridor will connect the AMCORE Campus and the old Sixth Avenue depot (Mid Town District office) with the Patriots Gateway Golf Course Center, Kishwaukee Street and beyond to the proposed Brewington Oaks planned unit development and the Morgan Street Bridge over the Rock River.
- Keith Creek Linear Park and Greenway connects the Mid Town District to adjacent neighborhoods east and west by means of a recreational and open greenway strip with associated waterways. The Rockford Park District has focused their attention at the center of the City and in the downtown area where they plan to develop recreation and open space greenway corridors. The Park District and many agencies are partnering on the Keith Creek Greenway, a linear recreation strip connecting several neighborhoods from Churchill Park throughout the Mid Town District, and the Patriots Center Golf Center, past the Tenth Avenue Park and to the Rock River. There is a pedestrian/ bikeway proposed from the Morgan



Street Bridge to connect to the Seventh Street neighborhood.

- Seventh Street is the central north/ south link between State Street and Broadway, and the residential and industrial neighborhoods at the southern end of Mid Town District.
- Broadway is a major east west artery across Rockford ending at Kishwaukee Street.
- The Railroad Avenue Corridor connects Seventh Street to Eleventh Street and could become an interconnecting thoroughfare and commercial area in the future.
- The City of Rockford and the State Department of Transportation will be rehabilitating the Kishwaukee Street Corridor, thereby enhancing the western gateway to the Mid Town District from the south (Harrison to Fifteenth Avenue).
- The City plans to install new concrete walks and waterlines along Seventh Street in about 2007. New period type lighting and utilities should be a part of the installation plan, with incorporation of fiber optic conduits and power outlets for decorative purposes.
- The City would like to see continuity in architectural and lighting amenities throughout the downtown area. The police and city planners believe improved lighting in many side areas and behind buildings can provide low cost public safety improvements.
- Conflicting land use issues should be discussed and resolved with the City of Rockford's Community Development Office.
- The Mid Town District will work with the City of Rockford and Rockford Housing Authority to create improved quality housing based upon the availability of funding sources.
- The Rockford Police Department and their Community Policing efforts are critical to the successful redevelopment of Mid Town District. The Police cannot be everywhere at the same time so neighborhoods and businesses have to take some ownership and be responsible for self-policing.
- The Mid Town District will provide input to the City of Rockford Community Development Department for land use planning. The land use planning aspect is important. High density housing uses should be discouraged. . Mixed income and market rate housing stock should be encouraged to stabilize residential and commercial neighborhoods with a truly diverse mixture.
- The Mid Town District, the City of Rockford, and developers will work together to evaluate the feasibility of placement of electrical power lines, telephone lines, cablevision lines and fiber-optic lines below ground on all future development projects.



CALL TO ACTION

This is a **framework** for the future of the Mid Town District, and provides guidelines for orchestrating and fulfilling our Mission Statement. The Plan identifies specific catalytic projects. The next phase in the planning process is to create an **Implementation Plan** and making the vision a reality. Some of the catalytic projects identified within this Framework Plan are already underway. The road to reality requires the dedication to complete the implementation plan and prioritize the steps to success. The involvement and joint efforts of many community organizations and leaders will be critical to the success of this plan. The Mid Town District and the Board of Directors wishes to be involved and assist public and private partners in the implementation of this plan.

Mid Town District Task Force

Co-chairman: Darwyn Guler and Gerry GeRue

Executive Director: Bill Mohr

Consultants: Jeff Larson and Gary Anderson

Aldermen: Jeff Holt, Doug Mark, Pat Curran, and Victory Bell

SUMMARY

The Mid Town District's past and current efforts are responsible for significant advancements during the past four years. Examples of positive accomplishments abound throughout the District and have been extolled by residents, business partners, civic organizations, the media, and City officials. The District's efforts position the neighborhood for significant economic and esoteric improvements by embracing the conceptual possibilities contained in the Framework Plan. The aggregate resources of Mid Town District's committees and the synergy present are the driving force in the development of this Framework Plan and will be essential to the success in implementing the catalytic projects. Re-development efforts require the cooperation of many different interests and schedules. Mid Town District's Framework Plan provides the vision for continued progressive development and the Mid Town District Association is committed to continuing a leadership role in its successful implementation.

Mid Town District Board of Directors' Approval

The Board of Directors has approved this Framework Plan and the projects described herein.

President _____ Date: _____

Vice President _____ Date: _____

Secretary _____ Date: _____

Acknowledgements:

We want to thank all of our residents and businesses that participated in our zone planning meetings for their valuable input. Also, we wish to thank the City of Rockford Department of Public Works, Community Development, and Police, The River District Association, the Rockford Park District; and Gary Anderson of Gary Anderson & Associates for the informational and planning assistance provided. Most of all we wish to thank Jeff Larson of Missman, Stanley & Associates for the critical contributions in assembling and producing the Framework Plan Document.

Mid Town District Board of Directors:

John Mecklenburg, President	SwedishAmerican Medical Foundation
Darwyn Guler, Vice President	Guler Appliance
Don Weir, Secretary	Zion Development
Richard Bergez, Treasurer.	AMCORE Bank
Tony Shun	Asian Mall
Ruth Fairchild	Resident
Jim Flodin	Patriots Gateway Center
Paul Gaziano	Seventh Street Law Offices
Gerry GeRue	Control'd Climate
Jeff Holt	Alderman/ Resident
Judy Johnson	District 205 EC Office
John Kuss	Information Controls, Inc.
Cindy Leib	Crusader Clinic
Howie Lindquist	at Large
Ron Lund	Thrifty Boutique
Steve Benson	Benson Stone
Bruce Olson	Olson Funeral Chapels
Bill Mohr	Executive Director, Mid Town District

Ex-officio and Advisory Members:

Jim Caruso, Community Development, City of Rockford
Gary Anderson, Gary Anderson & Associates
Jeff Larson, Missman Stanley & Associates
Mitch Wittington, Valkommen Plaza
Mike Molander, River District / Haight Village Association
John Groh, Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Ryan Petty, Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce

Planning & Physical Development Committee

Darwyn Guler, Co-Chair	Guler Appliance
Gerry GeRue, Co-Chair	Control'd Climate
Gary Anderson	Gary Anderson & Associates
Richard Bergenz	AMCORE Bank
Tony D'Augustino	CMF Mortgage
Jim Flodin	Patriots' Gateway Center
Jeff/ Cliff Gray	Gray's IGA Food Stores
Ruth Hoyt	Valkommen Plaza
John Kuss	Information Controls Inc.
Jeff Larson	Missman Stanley & Associates
Howie Lindquist.	At Large
Ron Lund	Thrifty Boutique
Ken Moore	Anderson Packaging
Scott Nicholson	Nicholson Hardware
Ryan Petty	Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce
Dustin Pham	Nhu Y Restaurant
Will Rodgers	Crusader Clinic
Tony Shun	Asian Mall
Don Weir	Zion Development
Mitch Wittington	Fridh Corp./ Valkommen Plaza
Andrew Wright	Entre Computer/Churchill Park Area
Bill Mohr	Executive Director: Mid Town District

Appendix A.

Detailed Description of Opportunities and Issues

The Mid Town District has significant strengths, which can provide the basis for new opportunities. The Mid Town District also has issues, which need to be identified so as to understand the roadblocks and how improvements may be made and opportunities revealed.

Opportunities:

- The Mid Town District is blessed with a variety of not-for-profit, economic development, social service and healthcare service organizations. These organizations provide valuable services to individuals and families with medical, emotional and/or financial challenges. We appreciate the efforts of social service organizations and many area churches. They are a tremendous asset to the residents of the Mid Town District.
- Many of the old buildings and open spaces have unique architectural features and offer the potential of a visually stimulating environment. Many owners of businesses are interested in rehabilitation and or improving the appearance of their facades, adding awnings, etc.
- Public and private parking areas behind the buildings can be illuminated to improve visibility and safety.
- Secondary entrances to buildings should be enhanced to offer the public and entrance near parking areas behind buildings.
- Some building owners are interested in reducing the density of upper floor apartments and need economic stimulus.
- Keith Creek offers a unique opportunity to enhance the recreational opportunities and encourage top scale real estate development by creating an associated greenway.
- Many of the commercial buildings offer excellent locations for loft apartments for downtown living, and inside parking and patio areas above the street level.



- Patriot's Gateway Center's expanding programs and collaboration towards an adjacent youth golf-training center will provide added quality of life.
- The core neighborhoods' ethnically diverse and commercial corridors offer unique stores, entertainment, and dining experiences.
- The existing Seventh Street TIF, a proposed TIF along Broadway, and a potential TIF in the Railroad Avenue Corridor can have a major impact on stimulating revitalization and improvement of these key areas.
- The Mid Town District should work to attract businesses that support or compliment existing business and residential neighborhoods. At the same time we recognize that some current uses may not compliment the area and we will work with those to improve that image.

Issues:

- We recognize that the problem of homelessness, poverty, and sexually transmitted diseases in Rockford are serious issues and that they impact the economic viability of the Seventh Street and Broadway Corridors. However, by working with the various social service organizations present in the area, Mid Town District hopes to improve conditions for all involved. We will support each social service organization to address social issues and the effects on the surrounding business and residential neighborhoods.
- The Mid Town District, like many other urban environments, has suffered from a negative image because of joblessness, low income, and undesirable adult use businesses.
- Many of the older buildings in the District are in need of repair and their structural integrity is questionable. Mid Town District must work to show building owners the value of what they have, and how that value can be enhanced through appropriate renovations.
- Many buildings have rear or secondary entrance areas that do not appear safe to the public.
- Many store fronts are vacant and poorly illuminated in the evening. Many poorly maintained building facades and board ups exist.
- Many Buildings are vacant or have out of town absentee landlords and often have non-code conforming issues.
- In spite of the city's best effort in enforcing local ordinances and building codes, a number of areas need improvement. Local city codes and ordinances are often not enforced, not because of lack of interest on the part of the City, but because of the lack of police or inspection resources.
- There is a need for better illuminated public parking areas, and screening of unsightly exposed dumpsters.