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Building Blocks : Redevelopment Concept Plan for Downtown Davenport Industrial Site

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Building Blocks

Redevelopment Concept Plan for Downtown Davenport Industrial Site

Report prepared for the Davenport Design Center

Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning

Field Problems in Planning II 102:210

Field Problems Spring 2008

The University of Iowa

Property of Urban and Regional Planning University of Iowa
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Part I. Executive Summary

The largest of the Quad Cities, Davenport is approximately 170 miles east of Des Moines, IA and 175 miles west of Chicago. Located along the Mississippi River, the City of Davenport has an increasingly diverse population of various cultures. The residents of this community are employed in a large variety of industries, the largest being manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and health and social services. Office and commercial space dominates downtown rental markets, but the number of residential units is increasing.

Vacancy rates in commercial, office, and residential rental markets downtown are higher than desirable. This and other factors have influenced the proposal presented in this report. The purpose of this concept plan is to provide downtown developers, city officials, residents and interested parties a vision of a unique regional destination and vibrant living environment in downtown Davenport. We propose an entertainment, wellness, and entertainment district concept plan for the redevelopment parcels. Included in this district will be the W.G. Block site and the two parcels along the Mississippi River.

In addition to the new wealth added to the downtown economy as a result of the proposal, the additional foot traffic would generate revenue for the existing retailers, and put upward pressure on demand for retail space in downtown, and lower vacancy rates in the retail and office rental markets. In turn, a vibrant downtown would make the area more attractive for commercial firms and potential residents, while also creating an active nightlife.

Components of the concept recommendations include the construction of a recreation center, sports apparel retail store, community outdoor recreation equipment rental, movie theater, residential units and parking lot on the W.G. Block site. In addition, the two sites along the river will be home to a multi-season park including an ice-skating rink, along with park landscaping and outdoor theatre area.

Case studies completed for this report suggest that the creation of a redevelopment authority, the creation of public-private partnerships, and control over the project through city acquisition of the parcels are all necessary characteristics for the completion of a successful project. A number of opportunities for public-private partnerships could be explored to finance and market this project. Palmer Chiropractic College, St. Ambrose University, Scott County Community College and the local school district are potential partners. Specifics on implementation, partnerships, and recommendations are included in the report.
Part II. Background Information

Description of Study Area and Surrounding Area

The City of Davenport, Iowa is located in the east-central portion of the state along the Mississippi River. Davenport has an estimated population of 97,558 and is part of a larger metropolitan area known as the Quad Cities, an area that spans both sides of the river.

The study area for this project includes three underutilized parcels located in the eastern end of downtown Davenport. Two of the properties are located adjacent to the Mississippi River in a flood plain which greatly restricts their potential use. The third and largest site is located approximately 300 yards north of the river. This site has been occupied by the W.G. Block concrete company for many years.

Purpose and Scope of Study

This study proposes a concept plan appropriate for the three under-utilized sites. The concept was developed based on an economic and qualitative analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the redevelopment sites. The City of Davenport’s redevelopment goals include increasing the number of people in the downtown area, especially during evening and weekend hours, and tying the three sites together and integrating them into the surrounding area.

The report begins with a profile of the study area and surrounding properties, and the general development climate. The next section of the report reviews case studies that share similarities to the study area and draws useful lessons from them. The final section provides specific recommendations for the study area in the form of overall strategies. This section includes a rationale for the strategies, action steps for implementation, and outcomes that might be expected with each strategy. However, we do not study the feasibility of the proposal in any detail.

What is the Development Climate in Downtown Davenport?

Workforce and Local Economic Analysis

To understand the development climate in downtown Davenport we discuss the Quad City region laborshed as a whole. We also focus on trends in demand for commercial, residential, and office space markets in downtown Davenport. In addition to this information, vacancy rates for commercial, office, and residential space are analyzed.
An important consideration in economic development is the skills of the local workforce. Concentrating economic development efforts on targeting industries that match an areas labor force could increase the short and long run positive effects of new employers and the benefits of being employed. Table 1 (pictured left) shows the percentage of all workers in the laborshed employed by the major industries in the Quad Cities area and the number of employees in each industry listed. In addition, Table 2 (see below) lists the major employers by number of employees in the Davenport laborshed, and provides confirmation of the information in table 1.

Manufacturing is the main basic industry in the Davenport MSA and provides the largest job base. Wholesale and retail trade in addition to health care and social services constitute another large proportion of the job base. A shift-share analysis focusing on manufacturing in the Davenport MSA concludes that the area has a comparative advantage in the industry compared to the rest of the nation. However, these strengths can also be interpreted as a collective weakness. A diversity index was calculated to be .91 for the Davenport MSA, indicating that the economy is focused on very few industries. This presents a need to diversify the economy to provide resilience in the face of economic downturn in these industries.

Location quotients were calculated to identify industries in which it would be appropriate for the Davenport MSA to focus economic growth efforts. The analysis focused on identifying industries in which Davenport does not specialize currently, but where there is a high enough level of concentration to grow. Targeting efforts in these industries accomplishes the objectives of growth and diversification of the Davenport economy. These analyses provided guidance for our proposed concept plan. Detailed discussions and tables of the economic analysis calculations can be viewed in the appendix.
Vacancy Rates

Table 3 (see below) was taken from the Ruhl & Ruhl Commercial Quad Cities Commercial Real Estate Market Report for 2007. The table compares Class A downtown office space to its suburban counterpart. Suburban rental rates are 50 cents cheaper per square foot on average. Vacancy rates are also lower in the suburbs when comparing the two locations. Class B office space is considerably less expensive in downtown Davenport compared to suburban locations. This can be explained in part by the weak, yet slowly recovering office space market in the central business district due to an oversupply of office space in the market throughout the last decade.

The majority of Davenport’s new office space is being constructed outside of the central business district, thus following the majority of new housing starts. This includes the $19.3 million Cingular Wireless Call Center in the northeastern quadrant of the city and the Carriage House at Coventry Place mixed-use office park on Utica Ridge.

A survey conducted by Ruhl & Ruhl in 2007 indicates that most brokers in the Quad Cities anticipate the office space rental market to remain weak and oversupplied in 2008. Demand for old office space has increased in downtown Davenport in recent years, mostly for loft conversions. If homeownership rates decline in the short term, this may increase demand for residential rental units and encourage further conversion of office space to lofts. More attractive rental units could increase the downtown population. A larger downtown population will raise retail demand and increase rates for office and retail space.

If this trend materializes, it could have a positive effect on retail vacancy and rental rates in the central business district when compared to rental rates in regional malls as a result of more residents in the area.

These conclusions assisted in formulating the recommendations and redevelopment proposal for the W.G. Block site and the properties along the river in two ways. First, based on the slumping downtown office markets, this report did not propose additional office space.

Second, we speculated that increasing amenities attractive to potential residents in downtown Davenport could attract more residents. In turn, this may strengthen the markets for retail and office space in the area. More downtown residents will increase demand for daily retail items and provide a larger customer base for current businesses. As shown in new suburban neighborhoods in the area, demand for office space follows growing residential areas.
### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Low Rental Rates</th>
<th>High Rental Rates</th>
<th>Average Rental Rates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown Office</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class A (Prime)</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
<td>$17.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class B (Secondary)</td>
<td>$ 6.00</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>$ 8.00</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class A (Prime)</td>
<td>$13.50</td>
<td>$18.50</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class B (Secondary)</td>
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<td>$12.00</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulk Warehouse</td>
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<td>$ 6.00</td>
<td>$ 3.75</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>$ 1.50</td>
<td>$ 4.50</td>
<td>$ 3.00</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Tech / R &amp; D</td>
<td>$ 6.00</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>$ 8.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>$ 8.00</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Service Centers</td>
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<td>Power Centers (Big Box)</td>
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<td>Regional Malls</td>
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*Base rental rates do not include CAM or taxes.

### Part III: Case Studies: Overall Lessons Learned

Three case studies were completed by selecting projects undertaken recently by communities of similar population size and sharing similar characteristics with Davenport. Examples of the criteria used to select comparison projects included projects that were in close proximity to a river, located in the Midwest, were of similar size in scope and scale, and those which included the formation of public-private partnerships.

The three projects chosen were; The Iowa River Landing in Coralville, IA; Upper River Falls in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and America’s River at the Port of Dubuque in Dubuque, IA. These projects shared two important characteristics which helped guide our recommendations.

**Creation of a Redevelopment Authority (RDA)**

The creation of RDA would contribute to the success of the project in several ways. First, the RDA would streamline the development process. Day to day project decisions can be made by the RDA. This would speed up the project time line because decisions would not have to wait until the next City Council meeting. Second, the RDA would manage the project finances streamlining the development process. Third, the RDA will provide a public point of contact for the project, organizing community involvement activities and addressing concerns from community members. Finally, RDA's provide opportunities for the success of the project to spill over into the surrounding community through RDA grants or revolving loan funds.
City Acquisition of Parcels

The acquisition of these parcels by the city, ensures would allow the city to do a number of things. First, after acquiring the parcels the city would be able to complete any necessary steps to prepare the sites for development. Examples include completing any infrastructure improvements, environmental site assessments, or site remediation, and necessary zoning code changes. City ownership of the parcels also presents the opportunity to develop public-private partnerships important for project success.

More Lessons Learned

Other characteristics of these projects that guided our recommendations include creating community advisory committees and drafting a community involvement plan. As mentioned earlier public private partnerships increase project support by increasing the level of financial support for the project. Including mixed-use development and reincorporating the river back into the community through views from the new developments would increase the projects’ long-term sustainability. Completion of the project through phased development would make the project more financial and overall project management more feasible.

Finally, some feasible financing mechanisms were utilized by the projects examined in the case studies which are described in further detail in the recommendations section of this report. These financing options include a turn-key agreement with the developer and the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

Part IV. Strengths and Weaknesses for W.G. Block and River Site Development

The following is a qualitative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each redevelopment site.

Location and Size

The location of the sites allows for great access off of a main arterial road and is close to a bridge which gives Illinois residents quick access. The site possesses excellent views of the river from an elevated position in relation to the river. In addition, the sites are also in close proximity to other entertainment amenities in downtown Davenport.

Another strength of these sites is their close proximity to each another, allowing for uses that complement one another. An advantage possessed by these properties is their individual and collective size. The W.G. Block site is large enough to accommodate multiple buildings and uses, including large-scale parking.

Collectively, one of the weaknesses of these sites is the two riverfront properties are separated from the W.G. Block property by East River Drive, a major road, and railroad tracks. In addition, the connectivity of the site to the neighborhood to the north is compromised by the large cut bank and the fence that constitutes the northern border of the property. Street connectivity is limited due to the large size of the W.G. Block property. Increased connectivity could become an important issue to look at for this property. However, placement of streets through the property would significantly limit the area available for development on the site.
A second weakness of the riverfront sites is their location in the river's floodway. The City of Davenport has no formal flood protection. This limits the possible uses for the sites adjacent to the river. If left unabated, seasonal flooding could potentially obstruct access to the sites along the river, and even impact road access to the W.G. Block property.

**Demographics and Vacancy Rates**

The sites are adjacent to a residential neighborhood to the north and near an increasing number of converted office and warehouse lofts in downtown. However, downtown population is not large enough to support essential commercial services, also affecting office and retail vacancy rates that are higher than in surrounding suburban developments.

These sites present an opportunity to diversify the economy of downtown Davenport and the surrounding region. The sites are large enough to accommodate a project that could be a regional attraction strengthening the commercial sector in downtown.

**Part V: Concept Plan**

**Introduction:**

How can Davenport become a unique location in the Midwest? The W.G. Block property and the two properties along the river offer large and well-located areas that could transform downtown Davenport. The proposed concept plan for this site is designed to create possibilities for what may be possible, and what could make the greatest impact on the area. The explanations of the following four points provide justification for the proposed concept plan and provide a good introduction to the proposed concept plan.

*Why should Davenport provide more than just work?*

Starting in the 1960s, thousands of Americans left downtowns across the country to start new suburban neighborhoods. Families sought to fulfill the dream of a single-family home with a white picket fence. The resulting migration resulted in countless examples of decline in downtown living environments. Cities urban cores struggled to finance services with declining populations and increasing needs for assistance. Blight, crime, and lack of investment plagued many cities including Davenport for several decades. As individuals began to commute to downtown jobs in cars and return to suburbs at night, downtown areas would often become uninhabited after 5:00 pm. Retail markets suffered in addition to housing construction, and cities were crippled by the lack of growth. However, many of those trends are beginning to reverse nationally. With increasing gasoline prices, affinities for downtown living and historic housing redevelopment, numerous cities have witnessed rebirth and growth throughout the last decades. However, as individuals look to return to downtowns to enjoy unique housing and reduce their commute times to work, they often find that the amenities provided by suburbs may not be offered in downtowns. Providing nearby services that allow residents to remain downtown beyond 5:00 pm is essential to convince residents to relocate back to urban cores. This proposal seeks to provide recreational and entertainment options near downtown workplaces, resulting in an increase in the usage of the downtown area for more hours of the day. Having active streets through more hours each day.
increases public safety by having more eyes on the street. It also increases retail profitability by having more potential customers. Providing significant amenities to downtown residents is therefore the key ingredient to continued housing development, increased security, and more money invested in urban cores.

Why is redevelopment of downtown important?

In the overall economic development plan for Davenport, it is essential to establish the city's central business district as the primary downtown for the Quad Cities area. Davenport must provide a vision for potential projects and realize the importance of downtown for the health of the entire city.

Strengthening Davenport as the downtown for the Quad Cities is important because of the competition for retail customers, housing projects, and general development projects by neighboring cities. Being part of a larger metropolitan area of roughly 300,000 people provides many benefits including a strong regional airport, numerous potential retail customers, and a regional destination classification. However, Moline, Rock Island, Bettendorf, and Davenport also compete because each has their own downtown. Residents must choose where to spend their money and will be drawn to the most attractive and unique location that serves their needs.

Redevelopment in downtown Davenport also helps provide a vision for the entire downtown area. People regularly think of Bourbon Street when New Orleans is mentioned, as is similar with San Francisco’s Fishermen’s Warf, Memphis Blues Music on Beale Street, the Magnificent Mile in Chicago, and The Strip in Las Vegas. All aforesaid places are examples of downtown corridors with unique identities. Creating a vision for a unique downtown locale is essential to brand Davenport as a distinctive place to work, live and play.

Why Davenport could have a recreational and entertainment district

Davenport already offers some regionally unique entertainment locations and events for residents and tourists. John O'Donnell stadium, seating capacity of 5,200, offers a renovated historic minor league baseball stadium with picturesque views of the Mississippi River that attracts thousands of people to downtown Davenport during the summer. Also located in downtown is the crossroads of two cross-country bike trails; The American Discovery Trail extending from California to Delaware and the Mississippi River Trail extending from Minnesota to New Orleans. Pictured below, the BIX 7mile road race is the regional destination for approximately 15,000 participants every July. The Figge Art Museum that opened in 2005, also offers the opportunity to attract people to spend entertainment dollars in downtown Davenport. These projects have started the momentum to bring visitors from both inside and outside the region, and have encouraged new residents to use downtown. However, additional projects are needed to further build off the success of these projects.
Creating an entertainment and wellness district in addition to existing recently completed projects would not only attract additional visitors, but also different demographics. In order to create a mixed use 24 hour, 365 day downtown, people of all ages and income levels must have reasons to come downtown. Providing options beyond the existing museum, casino and stadium may cater to more potential customers and also may convince people to stay downtown longer.

Across the United States, we were unable to find examples of other redevelopment downtown projects that envisioned recreational and wellness opportunities. In Cleveland, the city has undertaken an extensive project to build sports stadiums to revitalize their lake front area. However, these stadiums were for major sports franchises (Cleveland Browns, Indians, Cavaliers) and required billions of dollars of investment and construction. Cleveland focused on attracting spectators to downtown rather than active recreation for residents and workers. As a result, Davenport has the opportunity to create a unique development concept that does not have a direct comparison in the United States.

Finally, success of a recreational and entertainment district in Davenport is likely because it follows the principle that many universities and colleges have been following across the country during the past decade. In order to attract students to attend their school, universities have been building recreation buildings for students. Pictured below is the University of Iowa Campus Recreation and Wellness Center that is currently under construction and set to open in the fall of 2009.

The structure contains 24,000 square feet of fitness space, and is being developed by the University of Iowa in order to compete with other schools in the Midwest and across the United States that have built similar structures. One group of people that Davenport is likely to seek through redevelopment are
young professionals. Attracting young professionals is similar to attracting college students in that they share similar values for fitness, activity and social opportunities at fitness centers.

**Creating a Healthy City**

Exercise is a necessary ingredient in the creation of healthy cities. Providing recreational opportunities allows individuals to get the physical activity necessary for a healthy lifestyle. Obesity, heart attacks, and diabetes are growing problems in the United States and result in a significant economic burden to localities. With few opportunities to receive exercise working in an office setting, commuting to work in a car, and having limited access to exercise facilities, people are unable to stay fit and healthy. Providing opportunities for recreation in the form of parks, trails, gyms, and playing fields can help make city populations healthier. The savings in healthcare costs and missed workdays justifies the building of recreational facilities for all Davenport residents.

Businesses may also to be able to use the benefit of an entertainment and wellness district as a means to recruit employees. By providing non-traditional benefits, such as passes or memberships to use various services within the district, downtown businesses may be able to encourage potential employees to join their organization. Firms may be willing to offer these benefits because healthier employees reduce health insurance premiums and increase workers’ efficiency.

**The Downtown Entertainment and Wellness District**

Our proposal envisions a conversion of the existing uses on the W.G. Block site and riverfront properties into an entertainment and recreation district that will attract residents and businesses to downtown, creating a destination for people from around the region. The Davenport Entertainment and Wellness district will enable Davenport to market itself as a vibrant place to visit, live or shop, building on the advantages the downtown area already has in place. Creating linked year-round entertainment and recreational opportunities will ensure that streets, sidewalks and neighborhoods are active throughout the day. Easy access to entertainment and recreation would make the downtown area a more attractive place to live and work. With successful redevelopment of these properties, developers may be more likely to build other projects in nearby areas. The housing component would increase the customer base for commercial, entertainment, and further recreational development in the area. A housing component would also diversify the property, providing necessary customers, and create other opportunities for funding, financing and design.

The redevelopment of the W.G. Block and riverfront properties could serve a variety of neighborhood residents, sports clubs and athletics teams, families, and students. Developing a project which serves such a large population increases its likelihood for success and its impact on the community as a whole.

Located within a few miles of the St. Ambrose University, Scott County Community College, and Palmer College of Chiropractic campuses, the W.G. Block and river properties provide opportunities to serve the recreational and entertainment needs of almost 5,000 students. Partnerships with the universities could provide funding while meeting the needs of the schools to expand their extracurricular activities.

As illustrated in Map 3 in the Appendix, the area north of the W.G. Block parcel contains a large number of single family dwellings. Rehabilitation of the housing stock could attract more families to
neighborhoods near the recreational and entertainment district. Providing a meeting area, exercise opportunities, and community building space would increase the livability of the area for families and children. The neighborhood surrounding the W.G. Block property would benefit tremendously with the development of the district. This amenity would allow residents access to a variety of services currently only within driving distance.

Sports clubs and competitive athletes also benefit from the development of a state-of-the-art recreational and training facility. A climate such as Iowa’s with harsh winters requires indoor recreational space. Training facilities and competition venues can improve the success of teams and individuals while also increasing the overall health of residents.

**Land Use Plan**

![Land Use Plan Diagram]

**Potential Uses by Site**

**W.G. BLOCK SITE**

1. **Active Recreation**
   
   a. **Swimming Pool.** Provide summer destination spot for recreation during hot months of the year.
b. Climbing Wall. Attracts outdoor recreation enthusiasts and provides the opportunity to increase shoes, gear, and rope rental for wall usage.

c. Elevated Track. Provides running space during winter when the demand for treadmills grows.

d. Weights/Exercise Equipment. Provides public space for fitness equipment that may be more affordable than a private gym membership.

e. Indoor Fields. Currently unavailable in the Quad City area, indoor soccer fields are generally in high-demand by youth groups and adult players.
2. **Retail**
   a. Equipment Rental. Allows more individuals to use skating rink, climbing wall and other features.
   b. Sporting Equipment Retailer. With existing recreational patrons nearby, a sports store would be highly motivated to locate here to capture the people already visiting the site, and would improve the profitability of the site.

3. **Supporting Services**
   a. Parking (Garage). Necessary to save space on the site and increase overall density.
   b. Outdoor Landscaping and Lighting improvements. Provides a visually attractive vista for the area. Will help link the site with bike paths and sidewalks toward downtown and nearby neighborhoods.
   c. Community Meeting Spaces for residents. The site can act as a unifying development by providing meeting spaces. It allows residents the opportunity to communicate with one another or as a whole organization concerning the development project.
   d. Redevelopment Development Authority offices in visible location to aid in the marketing, sales, and design of the site construction. Having a visual sales office shows people it is easy to purchase property in the area or find out information about upcoming projects.

4. **Residential**
   Residential use is another important element included in the redevelopment proposal, and is consistent with the City’s vision for downtown. Increasing the number of residents within walking distance of the recreational and entertainment district also adds to the number of people patronizing retail businesses both inside, and outside, the district. The amenities included in the concept plan make residential development more attractive for potential home buyers considering living downtown. Mixed-use development with ground floor retail maintains a pedestrian friendly streetscape and helps create a 24-hour downtown, while still offering a range of housing options.

5. **Entertainment**
   Providing extra entertainment options to physical recreational opportunities provides for a more well-rounded district. It also keeps the area busy for more hours of the day. Adding a movie theater as part of a larger entertainment complex on the W.G. Block site adds another option to the growing list of amenities in Davenport’s urban core.
a. Movie Theater. The theater may be able to show Chicago Cubs games or international sports competition otherwise not able to be seen in the area (World Cup, Ironman, Six Nations Rugby Tournament, Tour de France, Cricket). A second movie theater option for downtown Davenport includes one offering art/foreign/independent films, similar to what universities across the nation offer. Additionally, the movie theater has the potential to forge partnerships with existing institutions such as the Figge Art Museum or the Adler Theater.

b. Table Games. Table Tennis, Billiards, Foosball, Air Hockey, Shuffleboard. These games would provide children and adults with entertainment options inside in a vibrant environment.

Overall, the W.G. Block site could become a compact walkable, dense development offering a wide variety of entertainment and recreational opportunities similar to the Power and Light District in Kansas City (pictured below). A large scale development could create a vibrant downtown destination.
Riverfront Site

The properties along the Mississippi River are a better location for passive recreational space due to flooding and access issues. The concept plan for the parcels includes development of outdoor fields, an outdoor skating rink or curling courts. Landscaping would include benches, trees and general beautification projects. Passive recreational opportunities available during the winter would provide Davenport with a unique destination opportunity currently lacking in the region.

1. Outdoor Recreation

   a. Outdoor Curling Court: Curling is a game that is tremendously popular in Canada and many northern American states. The game is similar to shuffleboard but requires players to push “rocks” toward a target in an attempt to leave their pieces closer to the center than their opponent. The court requires ice and line painting, but otherwise minimal maintenance.

   b. Ice Skating Rink: Rockefeller Center in New York City and Frog Pond in Boston represent historically significant outdoor skating rinks that have been used for decades by thousands of visitors and residents alike. Outdoor rinks could be active in Davenport for multiple months during the year.
2. **Outdoor Movie Theatre**

   During the summer months, the ice skating rink could become an outdoor viewing area for movies, community plays or concerts. The area would require minimal infrastructure improvements and therefore would not be susceptible to flooding problems.

3. **Park and Landscaping**

   Creating an attractive park space on the river site with benches, trees, flower plantings and walkways would require minimal physical investment and would be able to withstand possible flooding. The landscaping would also encourage people to walk, picnic or enjoy the river views available at this site. Cities such as Louisville (picture below), Des Moines, and Boston have undertaken projects to landscape their riverfronts to encourage residents and visitors to return to these locales.

4. **Link with W.G. Block Property**

   In order to bring the two properties together, a pedestrian bridge connecting the sites would allow for access between the sites without having to cross the busy River Drive. People could use parking, equipment rental, and stores located on the W.G. Block property and then walk to the river site by way of this connection. In addition, the bridge could act as an inviting visual queue for motorists coming into Davenport and aid in welcoming them to the district.
Why should Davenport have a recreation and entertainment center?

The amenities in the proposed concept plan will add to the housing stock in downtown, could strengthen the existing office and retail sectors, add to the current entertainment options in downtown, and offer services in downtown not currently offered in the surrounding area.

**Fitness Space**

As Map 7 (see appendix) indicates, the eastern edge of downtown Davenport does not have any private sports clubs available for residents. Downtown Davenport is currently underserviced as many of the private gyms are located on the periphery of town. As indicated in the recommendation section of this paper, proposed uses on the W.G. Block site include indoor field space, a climbing wall, an outdoor skating rink, and an indoor track. All aforementioned facilities are currently limited in the Quad Cities area. St. Ambrose University’s Lee Lohman Fieldhouse provides some similar opportunities including the indoor track, but other activities are lacking in the area. Although the specific demand for these services is not quantified here, these amenities are generally located in similar-sized cities across the country. In addition, the plan is to create a unique destination-location for the area, and the congregation of multiple entertainment and wellness opportunities would provide a plethora of mixed-use options currently non-existent in the Davenport MSA.

**Entertainment Opportunities**

Davenport has two movie theaters located outside of downtown. The businesses are situated northeast and west of the urban core respectively as indicated in Map 8. As signified in the recommendations section of this report, the city lacks certain niche theaters that could serve as potential regional destinations for residents in the Quad Cities. Showcase Cinema has 18 screens with stadium-style seating and presents current box-office films. Davenport’s second theater is an IMAX in the Putnam Museum. The IMAX offers two movie choices where the focus is the entire experience.

Downtown Davenport is currently under-served by movie theaters; therefore a theater offering discounted films is likely to be successful. This could include showing movies no longer in other local theaters. The less-costly prices would face little competition from existing theaters and the theater would create a livelier neighborhood after business hours. This aligns with the city’s goal of keeping downtown alive after dark.

Finally, creating a recreation, entertainment, and wellness district downtown will add more unique regional attractions to the area. These new uses along with the current attractions downtown will create stronger marketing campaigns and the overall attractiveness of the area. The new vision for the area will provide downtown Davenport with the label of “The Downtown” for the Quad Cities.

**Recommendations for Implementation**

Each of our three recommendations for implementing the proposed concept plan are organized into Strategies, Action Steps, and Expected Outcomes. This framework provides a clear idea of what the key objectives are, the steps necessary to achieve them, and what the expected benefits will be for downtown Davenport.
Implementation of the Concept Plan Components

Strategy I: Create A Downtown Redevelopment Authority - Building Block Redevelopment Authority (BBRA)

Rationale

Creating a redevelopment authority for the property would allow the project to obtain loans beyond the city’s capacity. Iowa code mandates the city can only tax certain amounts in order to raise money for debt service and for the general fund. Establishing the BBRA allows for increased financing capacity. The creation of the BBRA would also draw attention to redevelopment needs as it provides a public front for the projects. It also consolidates the effort among the projects.

A redevelopment authority would serve as an intermediary organization for the public/private partnership to coordinate agreements, contracts, and settle disputes. The BBRA would act as the financing mechanism for the project by administering community grants and disbursing funds for construction and design.

Action Steps

- Identify key stakeholders including: business owners, college administrators, public officials, developers, planners, citizens and Davenport Parks and Recreation Department in order to create a board of directors.
- Hire staff or coordinate volunteers to provide expertise in the day-to-day operations of the project.
- Establish an organizational constitution to define their boundaries of authority.
- Apply for state recognition and receive legal authorization for action.
- Create system of services with Davenport Parks and Recreation Department for the area.
- Address concerns of owners of existing recreational businesses who may fear the project may put them out of business. Relocate those businesses into the area if they are interested.

Expected Outcomes

The BBRA is an element to this project that would coordinate development projects to ensure the overall vision is achieved. The redevelopment authority could increase the amount of money the project is able to get. It could handle the day-to-day operations for the property including applications for zoning, approval, site design, and creating an RFP for the project.

Strategy II: Create Davenport Entertainment and Wellness District (DEWD) Planned Development District

Rationale

To market a unified concept generating a brand name for the planned development district would be very helpful. Focusing on entertainment and wellness creates a theme for the project to make it
attractive to targeted businesses. In a similar fashion to an outlet mall or shopping district, DEWD brings together multiple recreational opportunities to provide a single location for activities that is more attractive than scattered locations. The planned district would attract people to downtown by creating a unique destination location. Additionally, the DEWD encourages neighborhood business development looking to capture the increasing foot-traffic in the area. Overall, DEWD provides all-day entertainment options to a wide range of individuals which can help unify the area. Creating a niche market for a movie theater and recreational opportunities would make a comprehensive entertainment district for the larger population as a whole. Establishing a planned development district meets existing zoning code regulations, which allows for the adoption of PDD for areas to coordinate activity and development.

In order to develop the site as envisioned, zoning and regulatory changes are necessary. Establishing a planned development district (PDD), as outlined in section 17.32 of the Davenport City Code, is necessary for the construction of a mixed-use development. Creating a PDD also requires a land use plan which prevents un-wanted uses in the area and ensures targeted business types are incorporated into the development. In addition, the W.G. Block site needs to be incorporated into the downtown design criteria area to ensure that design review standards are followed.

**Action Steps**

- Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to local and national developers to carry out the components of the project. Marketing the idea to developers with a positive track record would increase competition among developers to provide a quality project.
- Create a logo, development design, and branding for DEWD to encourage people to become interested in visiting, living or working in the area.
- Aggressively market and advertise the area to the region.
- Coordinate with existing events in the area to work with the site to increase the usage of the area. Events such as the BIX race, July 4th Festival and sporting tournaments could use the DEWD facilities to provide regular usage of the site in its earliest years to increase profits for the area.
- Create the new DEWD zone and follow the PDD planned development district guidelines in city code section 17.32.
- The PDD guidelines are meant to accomplish the following:
  - This district is intended to provide for development of modern commercial and mixed use planned developments designed as a unit and constructed in one or more phases. The development shall relate to abutting traffic facilities and be compatible with surrounding areas

**Expected Outcomes**

Creating the DEWD would provide a regionally unique destination. While many mixed-use developments mix housing and shopping, we found no examples of mixed use projects combining active recreation, entertainment and housing on this scale. In addition, the DEWD would attract people downtown during the day, on nights and weekends and for events. A diverse range of people such as students, families, young adults and sports teams would be able to use the site and promote an overall healthier city.
Increasing the recreational opportunities would also increase the community development opportunities by mixing different populations in one location. A development of this type on the W.G. Block property could encourage development of nearby parcels and therefore increase the tax base of the city.

Creating a unique development opportunity could attract nationally and regionally recognized developers who may be interested in doing other projects in the city as well. Having more developers working in the city increases the architectural and innovative design possibilities.

The redevelopment authority and staff member, along with the developer, would apply for a zoning change. The city would then alter the current zoning map from C-4 to PDD for the area.

![Zoning Map of Davenport, Iowa](image)

**Strategy III: City or BBRA Acquires Parcels**

**Rationale**

As evidenced by case studies presented earlier in this report, having the city own the land at the beginning of the development process allows the city to require developers to produce land use plans, financing strategies, and market analysis for the site in their RFP applications. Land acquisition can be accomplished by the city in a variety of ways. The following represents three common methods to acquiring property and offer varying degrees of risk to the City of Davenport.
Action Steps

- Purchase an option for the right to purchase the property
- Purchase the property through use of tax increment financing
- Purchase the property outright

Expected Outcomes

Purchasing an option for the right to purchase the property would allow the City time to work out many details, such as identifying developers and other funding details, without having to purchase the land immediately. Purchasing an option for the right to purchase the property represents the purchasing option with the lowest level of risk to the City. The risk is low because the purchase option can be allowed to expire with no further obligations to the City, should the development climate become less appealing during the course of the option’s life or if no developers can be identified. If the option is not exercised, the property would remain under the ownership of the W.G. Block Company.

Outright purchase of the property represents the option with the highest risk to the city. City ownership of the property allows for increased oversight of the development. Setting up a turn-key agreement with the developer for construction presents a feasible option for financing the project (an example of this is discussed in the case study of Coralville in the Appendix section of this report).

A tax increment financing (TIF) bond issued by a redevelopment authority represents a level of risk somewhere between the other two options. In this case, a bond would be issued to purchase the property while TIF funds would be used to cover the cost of the bond.

In each case study, the project utilized a TIF district for project financing. These have traditionally been highly successful in Davenport. An Economic Analyst for the City of Davenport indicated that a typical TIF district in Davenport generates approximately $1 million dollars in new property value and 30 new jobs over the life of the district, which is approximately 10 to 15 years.

Considering that the W.G. Block site is located in an existing TIF district and the high level of political acceptance of TIF districts in downtown Davenport, it may be appropriate to fund the purchase of the site by the City through the use of a rebate TIF.

However, it needs to be mentioned that there are negative externalities associated with the use of TIF. Other taxing authorities, like the school district, have no say in the establishment of the district even though they will lose tax revenue. Also, rapidly increasing property values can price out some area residents and cause gentrification in surrounding neighborhoods. Some of these negative externalities can be alleviated by the structure of the TIF Districts in Davenport. Most important is the ability to set up pass-through agreements for other area taxing authorities in the area, and setting up a reasonable time frame for the TIF as well as setting an appropriate base year for each portion of the phased development.
Part VI: Appendix

Maps, Graphs, Charts, and Visuals

Map 1

Davenport Block Site Redevelopment Area
2000 Census Data
Block Population

Legend

- BLOCK SITE
- Streets
- Water

City of Davenport Blocks
2000 Population

- 0 - 30
- 31 - 67
- 68 - 231
- 232 - 445
- 446 - 1412

Created by Ulowa Urban and Regional Planning
Map 2

Downtown Davenport
Existing Conditions

Legend
- Streets
- Mississippi River
- Building Footprints
- Flood Line
- Parks

Created by UIC Urban and Regional Planning
Map 5

Downtown Davenport
Properties Sold Since 2000

Legend
- Mississippi River
- Properties Sold Since 2000

Created by Iowa Urban and Regional Planning

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Demographic Data

The purpose of this demographic data section is to provide background information and historical trends which guide the recommendations in our concept plan.

Who Lives Downtown?

Population

The downtown Davenport housing market is experiencing a revival after a dramatic decrease of 32% of its population between 1980 and 1990. According to the 2000 Census, 1,048 individuals live in the city’s urban core (defined by the 52801 zip code). This figure represents an increase of 19.5% from the previous decade. Additionally, the population of downtown as a percentage of the city’s total inhabitants rose from .91% in 1990 to 1.07% in 2000. This increasingly desirable area of Davenport likely has more residents now based on its growing number of housing units.
Downtown Davenport Population

Median Household Income

Downtown Davenport residents had a median household income of $10,503 in 2000, compared to $7,122 in 1990. The median income figure for households in the urban core has increased at a higher rate (47.5%) than the City of Davenport (42%), Scott County (42.4%), and the United States (39.7%) over the past decade. Graph 2 displays the various income trends. However, the actual dollar amount is still substantially lower than the City of Davenport ($37,432), Scott County ($42,701), the State of Iowa ($39,469), and the United States ($41,994). Davenport’s downtown median household income figure is likely to rise with the redevelopment of the W.G. Block and riverfront properties. Because the project’s potential market includes the entire Quad Cities region, the surrounding neighborhood will draw an influx of new residents. This could diversify existing socio-economic conditions and create a mixed-income district.
Downtown Housing Characteristics

Housing Units

The number of housing units in downtown Davenport continues to increase as evidenced in Graph 3. Developers converting former warehouses into residential space account for much of the construction. The quantity of units rose from 635 to 668 between 1990 and 2000, representing a growth of 5.3%. According to Davenport’s Downtown Living Strategy report, the number of structures with over fifty units increased dramatically during the 1990s. The boost was due largely to the Lend-A-Hand Building, first occupied in 1990. Since 2000, the Crescent Lofts and the Mississippi Hotel have added to the downtown housing stock, which raises the number of large residential developments. Table 1 shows the major housing projects recently completed or currently underway. As the urban core continues to become a more desirable place to re-locate, a combination of new construction and the continued conversion process is likely to persist.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recent Downtown Davenport Construction</th>
<th>Number of Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Lofts</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Hotel</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Street Lofts</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrest Block (Under Construction)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucktown Lofts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 3
According to the 2000 Census, only 16, or 2.4% of the housing stock in the urban core were owner-occupied. Of the remaining 668 units, 571 or 85.4% were rentals and 12.2% were vacant. In the 1990 Census, owners occupied 1.6% of the total housing units, while 79.0% were rentals and 19.4% were vacant. Table 3 provides a comparison between the two decades. Demographics of individuals living in downtown likely attribute for the high percentage of rental units in the area. Residents are often in stages of their lives where renting is the most attractive housing option. This situation is beginning to change as recent conversions of warehouses are geared for more permanent living.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Davenport Housing Units</th>
<th>Owner-Occupied</th>
<th>Renter-Occupied</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The usefulness of the 2000 Census tract-level data in the report is somewhat limited because it is outdated.

Local Economic Analysis

The report uses two economic tools to identify the strengths of the local economy and opportunities to further strengthen the economy which provided justification for our proposed concept plan. Two quantitative measures were useful in determining the focus of the concept plan and our recommendations for the three sites. First we calculated location quotients that made it possible to identify industries which the region does not currently specialize in, but could be areas where the MSA may have a comparative advantage making them appropriate targets for growth. In addition, we calculated a diversity index to provide justification for directing growth efforts towards industries that would create a more diverse and resilient economy.
Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL MSA</th>
<th>Scott County, Iowa</th>
<th>Iowa -- Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 42 Wholesale trade</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 44-45 Retail trade</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 448 Clothing and clothing accessories stores</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 451 Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 713 Amusements, gambling, and recreation</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 53 Real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 517 Telecommunications</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICS 522 Credit intermediation and related activities</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Location Quotients

Location quotients are calculated for all industries to determine whether or not the local economy has a greater share of each industry than expected when compared to a reference economy. If an area has a larger portion of a given industry than expected, then the area specializes in that industry.

Specialization in an industry identifies opportunities for further growth. It also indicates potential threats in the event of an economic downturn. Specializing in an industry implies that the area might have a comparative advantage in a particular industry when compared to other areas. Examples could include a workforce with special skills important to a given industry, or a nearby input to production such as a particular natural resource. A specialization in supporting industries increases agglomeration economies in an area and improves the ability to compete in the national and global market place.

A location quotient is essentially a proportion. Values equal to or larger than 1.1 in a particular industry indicate an area’s specialization in comparison to the reference economy. Table 7 includes a sample of the industries relevant to our proposal (for some 2 and 3 digit North American Industry Classification System NAICS codes). For example, the Davenport MSA and Scott County are specialized in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and health and social services. However, the Davenport MSA and Scott County lack specialization in credit intermediation and related activities, as well as telecommunications. The entire table can be viewed in the appendix where the Davenport MSA and Scott County are compared to the State of Iowa, and the state is compared to the United States economy.

Table 2 in the report, Quad Cities Selected Major Employers supports these results. The largest major employers in town are manufacturing plants and other industries that the location quotients identified as specializations of the area.
Diversity Index

A diverse economic base is considered an advantage. Diversity will make the local economy, as a whole, more resilient to down-turns in the national or local economy. While attempting to diversify, it seems appropriate to target industries that are already stable parts of the local economy, but that are not currently major employers. A diversity index, when associated with other economic analysis tools, provides some indication of which industries are appropriate to target for growth.

A diversity index demonstrates the opposite measure of the location quotient. Whereas a location quotient measures what industries a locality specializes in, a diversity index considers how diverse the industry mix of a particular area is by assigning shares of total local employment to each industry. The value of a diversity index varies from 1 to 0, with a value of 1 indicating that all the shares of local employment are assigned to one industry, indicating no diversity in the economy, and a value of 0 indicates that employment shares are evenly spread among industries.

A diversity index was calculated for the Davenport MSA and Scott County, in 2005. For both, the index was 0.91, indicating the majority of employment in the study areas is concentrated in a small number of industries. The raw data for these calculations were taken from the Bureau of Labor Statistics website.

The Davenport MSA and Scott County do not have very diverse economies. It is easy to identify weak areas of the economy based on the comprehensive table of location quotients. The Davenport MSA has a well-established set of specializations in its economic base. Diversifying the economic base of Davenport will make all of the study areas less dependent on a small number of industries and less susceptible to down-turns in these industries. Our recommendation builds on two opportunities identified for expanding the local economy and increasing its resistance to decline in the industries it specializes in recreation and retail trade.
Case Studies

Iowa River Landing, Coralville, Iowa

Tens of thousands of cars pass Exit 242 each week on transcontinental Interstate 80. North of the exit the grassed slope of a large hill pleasantly rises to overlook the Iowa River. Looking south in the mid-1990s was an entirely different matter. In crossing the river from the East, potential visitors were greeted with a classic view of the “backsides” of historically unplanned development and properties in various states of housekeeping. From the west, the area was eclipsed by the white bulk of huge tanks storing a million gallons of petroleum fuels. Coming closer, the commercial businesses crowding around the off-ramp were indistinguishable from other off-ramps across Iowa and the Midwest. Perhaps travelers did note the sign of the adult dance establishment. Hardly the first impression a small Iowa city wants to make on travelers deciding where to pause in their journeys. The City of Coralville knew it had to change that first impression. From the simplest early vision of “a decent hotel out by the interstate to get people to stop” to the final reality of a multi-million dollar hotel and conference center, the story of the Iowa River Landing Brownfield revitalization is a benchmark example that “population does not measure success” in Brownfields restoration.

That uninviting gateway to Coralville was yesterday. Today Coralville’s Iowa River Landing is an exciting, community-driven project of more than 160 acres and featuring a mix of unique and diverse land uses reclaimed from industrial and commercial use or blighted vacant property. Key elements of the project include:

- Restoration of environmentally impaired industrial property for residential, commercial, and recreational reuse in close proximity to the scenic Iowa River.
- Leadership in the use of Brownfields grants—to date, seven EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants have been competitively won and used by the City to evaluate environmental issues associated with Brownfields sites.
- Use of state and local funding to implement corrective measures on sites impacted by petroleum and other hazardous waste.
• Use of innovative environmental and financing techniques, as well as creative program management, to clean up and redevelop the site.
• Cooperation between the City of Coralville and multiple public and private partners.
• Sustainability for decades to come.

The Iowa River Landing is a mixed-use redevelopment located along the Iowa River, immediately off Interstate 80 and is the new gateway to the community, surrounding areas, and the University of Iowa campus, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, and University of Iowa athletics. The Iowa River Landing now features attractions, shopping, restaurants, the Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, and residential areas. Bricked streets and roundabouts, clock towers, extensive landscaping, water features, trail connections, pedestrian bridge, and green space create a sense of place that will continue to develop following a master development concept created by the Desco Group of St. Louis.

The cornerstone of the Iowa River Landing is the Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. Until its completion in 2006, the Iowa City/Coralville area was the only Big Ten university home without sufficient conference space. With the athletics, professional organizations, student groups, and hospital affiliated with the University of Iowa, over 200 conferences are booked in the area each year. The Coralville City Council felt a hotel and conference center could meet the need for conference space and serve as an economic development engine for the community. The Coralville Marriott features 286 guest rooms and 60,000 square feet of group meeting space. The Coralville Marriott is more than a standard chain hotel; planning of the facility was a community-led effort that resulted in artwork created exclusively by Iowans, a library featuring works written by authors associated with the University of Iowa Writers Workshop, a smoke-free facility, free wireless Internet access inside and out, and beautifully landscaped grounds.

The Iowa River Landing also features the recently completed River Bend, a mixed use commercial and residential development located next to the Coralville Marriott. River Bend features three- and four-story buildings with 26,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor and fifty condominium units in a range of sizes in the upper stories. Both the Johnson County Historical Society and Antique Car Museum of Iowa are located in the Iowa River Landing. The Historical Society's collection features over 10,000 items and the Car Museum houses a unique collection of over 65 automobiles ranging from 1899 to 1990 in a 28,000 square foot showroom.

Prior to redevelopment, this area encompassed more than 110 mostly underutilized or abandoned parcels owned by 74 separate individuals. Due to inadequate site planning, poor building maintenance, environmental contamination from past and present uses, and rumors of illegal tanker dumping in the area, reinvestment in many of the properties was severely lacking. Public input during the City’s land use planning process confirmed that the area had potential to become a “riverfront district” and could
accommodate the community’s accelerating demand for commercial, retail, and residential space. To promote greater sustainability within the area, removing distressed property impairments that impeded development and encouraging redevelopment uses that built upon, rather than distracted from, existing community businesses was set as a goal for the district.

Redevelopment of this area became a primary focus for the City of Coralville in the mid-1980s. Recognizing the need for professional creativity and planning, the City of Coralville prepared a master plan based on public input gathered through a planning committee comprised of representatives from the City Council, business and community leaders, University of Iowa employees, citizens, and others. With a U.S. EPA Pilot Grant received in 1998, Coralville began to make this vision a reality.

The Iowa River Landing has had a significant positive economic impact locally and regionally. Investment in the area to date totals more than $140,000,000 with hundreds of millions of additional capital investment projected. Returns on the investment in this project include the creation of 256 jobs and $14.5 million added into the local economy since the grand opening of the Coralville Marriott in August 2006. This includes $4.5 million from group room revenue at the hotel from 46,631 group room nights. Over $5 million has been spent on group catering in addition to over $5 million in direct spending generated as a result of the 19 city-wide conferences held at the conference center to date.

The Coralville Marriott and Conference Center is owned by the Coralville Hospitality Corporation (CHC) who leases the space to the Marriott Corporation who operates the Hotel and Conference Center. The CHC was formed in 2004, and is made up of a board of directors including the Mayor, City Administrator, two City Council member, and two members at large. The CHC is designated as a 503-C non-profit organization. Eventually, the CHC will dissolve and the hotel and conference center will be officially held by the City of Coralville.

One of the main functions of the CHC is to make asset management decisions associated with the Marriot Hotel and Conference Center, City parking ramp, and the parking lot, so that the City Council does not have to deal with every issue in a public setting. The CHC also handles the finances of the assets and acts as the liaison between the City of Coralville and the Marriot Corporation.

The construction was funded with a number of financing mechanisms. These included grants from various state and federal agencies, a turn-key agreement with the developer of the Marriot and conference center, general obligation bonds, and revenue from a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district. The general obligation bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the City of Coralville and are paid
by hotel revenue. The City of Coralville also receives approximately $1,000,000 annually in Hotel Occupancy Taxes (HOT Tax). The parking ramp is owned by the City of Coralville and the construction was funded with revenue from the TIF district and revenue bonds issued and backed by the parking ramp revenues.

Through the use of EPA Brownfields assessment and cleanup grants in combination with Iowa Department of Economic Development money, transportation grants from the IDOT, the Army Corps of Engineers, Brownfields grants from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and public capital, the area has been redeveloped and reintroduced back into the community, and is an essential part of the community. This project addresses threats that are important to the region’s ground water resources and the greater Iowa River watershed. The area is also connected to the regional trail system and Iowa City with the pedestrian bridge across the Iowa River.

The Iowa River Landing is an exceptional effort achieved through inter-agency cooperation and public engagement clearly seen in the pre- and post-project area. The project continues to inject jobs and money to the local and regional economy, has revived blighted and vital land in the community, and was awarded the EPA Region VII Phoenix Award for excellence in Brownfields redevelopment in 2008.

**Uptown at Falls Park Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

Sioux Falls, South Dakota was selected as a comparable Midwest City to provide insights into riverside redevelopment in a mid-size metropolitan area. Sioux Falls has a 2006 estimated population of 142,396 and is located along the Big Sioux River, and has many similar characteristics as Davenport. In the early 1990s the city of Sioux Falls began a process of cleaning up the river and picturesque waterfalls that had become blighted as part of an abandoned industrial complex. The city continues to develop the area through a project called Uptown at Falls Park. The 5 acre site was identified at first as a Brownfield that was cleaned up by EPA and city funds. Beyond cleaning up the site, the city identified the land as potential development land that could reconnect downtown with the waterfalls and provide increased development opportunities for the city. As a result, the city bought the land from the railroad company that owned the property for $1 million. The money for purchase of the property was approved by the city council as part of a fund that the city has for land purchasing and transactions. The five year capital land investment fund allows Sioux Falls to invest in projects and appropriate money for land purchasing and investment.

After purchase of the property, the City of Sioux Falls issued a request for proposal (RFP) from developers to convert the land into a mixed-use and public parking development. The land was also in part of a state urban renewal district which allowed for an increased flexibility and authority for the city. The city selected a developer from the area from a list of mostly South Dakota developers. The city did not feel the need to seek proposals from larger national firms because of the quality of work from local developers. In order to be selected the
developer was required to submit a land use plan, feasibility study, and financing plan for the project. A city selection committee made up of planning staff and elected officials chose a developer based on a project that met with the cities goals for the area and what was envisioned for the area.

The city of Sioux Falls also had in place design review standards, and various financing programs that the Uptown at Falls Park project was eligible for. City code had already established guidelines for mixed-use projects in the area so RFP's from developers already understood the expectations of the city for what the city was expecting design wise. The project also used historic façade improvements for $100,000 as part of a downtown easement program with the city to renovate any exterior part of buildings that would be saved. The $160 million dollar project is to be completed in three phases (phase 1, was recently completed) and relies on using a TIF district as part of the financing plan. In addition, the financing and loan allocation plan that the developer submitted with their RFP is currently being monitored by city staff. Because the developer is required to follow the terms of the RFP, city staff has oversight of the development and has the ability to demand standards from the developer. The 1st phase of the project constructed 1st floor commercial above residential that was suitable as part of the housing survey and feasibility study.

Erica Beck of the planning staff at Sioux Falls who was interviewed for this information commented that “It is okay for cities to think outside the box. Even though an idea might not work inside the current rules of the game, see if a new idea fits and fix things to see if it works.” Overall, the Sioux Falls planning project exhibits to Davenport the importance of requesting a RFP for development so the city can demand construction requirements from a developer. It also shows the importance of already establishing façade improvement, and design standards for an area in preparation for construction and development of a significant project near downtown and the rehabbed riverfront.

**Case Study:** America's River Redevelopment Project - Dubuque, Iowa

A great deal can be learned from a major redevelopment project in Dubuque, Iowa, known as the America's River project, as it shares many similarities with the study area. Similarities and issues that can be useful include financing, partnerships, renovation of existing structures, and project selection. This project shows many ideas that could prove useful to redevelopment in downtown Davenport.

Overall, the City of Dubuque feels that the America's River project has been very successful drawing thousands of visitors to the area annually and creating over one-thousand new jobs. The project includes a conference center, museum, aquarium, hotel, water park, casino, bowling facility, theater, amphitheater, as well as retail and residential space.
Financing is generally the single greatest obstacle in redevelopment. In the case of the Dubuque project, the City of Dubuque owned some key pieces of the land initially, but had to acquire other parcels in order to create a large enough area to accommodate a major redevelopment. Land acquisition was done through both typical arms-length purchases as well as eminent domain. Although the City of Davenport already owns the two riverfront parcels, the W.G. Block property would need to be obtained in order to have control over the development. Dubuque provided relocation costs to some tenants. This could become an issue if the City of Davenport decided to extend the scope of the redevelopment to include existing structures near the study area.

One of the major funding sources used for the America's River project came by way of the Vision Iowa program. Roughly $40 million in Vision Iowa funding was received for this project. Similar funding would likely be instrumental in a large-scale project in downtown Davenport. A financial tool that has shown to be successful across the state is tax increment financing (TIF). TIF is a tool that uses future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements used to create those gains. Dubuque used this to finance a parking structure associated with its casino. This is a tool that could work very well in downtown Davenport.

Another way Dubuque was able to raise large amounts of money was through the sale of naming rights to various portions of their project. As this is a simple way to raise money, Davenport should strongly consider following this example. Another example of raising funds is through public events that are held as fund-raisers. Although this only raises relatively small amounts of money, it also offers the potential of raising the public's interest in the project. This excitement is important as a local population will make up a large part of any project's patrons and also assists in increasing public acceptance of a project.

A partnership has proven useful for the America's River project, and could do so for Davenport as well. The City of Dubuque partnered with the museum aspect of the project. This partnership proved beneficial as the two entities were able to better able to compete for Vision Iowa funds than had the partnership not occurred.

Renovation of existing structures is an issue that was involved in the Dubuque project. While not immediately applicable in the Davenport project, it is worth noting that if the Davenport redevelopment project is successful, the City of Davenport would likely find itself in a position where the redevelopment would expand to areas beyond the study area itself. This would almost certainly involve the reuse of existing structures. The America's River project provides an outstanding example of a project involving the reuse of existing structures that has proven successful.

Project selection was important to the City of Dubuque. As is the case with Davenport, Dubuque wanted projects that would draw people into the area. To do so, it chose dramatic, flashy projects that
would generate enthusiasm in the eyes of potential tourists as well as locals. Also, the land for the Dubuque project cost roughly twelve dollars per square foot. This played a part in project selection because at this price, low-quality projects were not feasible. This left only major, high-quality projects to choose from. It was then left up to the City Council to choose between projects. An important lesson to be learned from Dubuque is that the city made a conscious effort to hold onto land until a project came along that was appropriate for the overall redevelopment. It did not make the mistake of selling land to the first developer to come along in order keep development progressing. Due to the location of the property in Davenport, low-quality projects would likely be priced out of this market as well.
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