

Mansfield

Downtown & The Miracle Mile

Strategic Redevelopment Plan
March, 2003

Mansfield Alliance with:



Mansfield

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Introduction

National Economic Development Trends

For the past fifty years, Americans have been moving further and further away from our city centers in search of 'The American Dream' - a bigger house with a bigger yard, better schools and more privacy. In place of front porches, we have built back decks. Retailers and employers have followed, often with significant financial incentives for their relocation provided by state and local governments.



Suburban Sprawl in Columbus Metro Area

In pursuit of this dream, we have paved millions of acres of farmland with highways and parking lots. We no longer know our neighbors, and we are unable to walk to the grocery or to school. Thanks to minimum lot size zoning our communities are once again becoming more segregated based upon income. As William Hudnut, former mayor of Indianapolis and currently a Fellow with the Urban Land Institute said in a recent speech in Columbus, "There is something wrong with a society where a couple have strived for all of their adult lives to achieve a certain level of success and are finally able to buy the home of their dreams, yet neither their children nor their parents, nor the janitor at the school can afford to live in the same community with them."

Today, civic groups and governmental bodies in Ohio and other states are beginning to question the rationale and the value of the dream we have pursued for so long. They are awakening to the fallacy of providing incentives for sprawl while, at the same time, spending millions of dollars in an effort to revitalize the very city centers that past policies have helped to decimate. They are increasingly recognizing that a metropolitan region's image, livability and economic health are directly tied to the image and health of its central city.

In a recent study of sixteen inland, mid-sized metropolitan areas that looked at how downtown population growth and job growth related to area-wide home values, population, job growth, and economic growth, *The Kansas City Star* found:

- Those cities with the fastest rising downtown populations enjoyed, on average, more rapidly rising home values across the entire metropolitan area.
- Those with stronger job growth downtown showed, in most cases, stronger area-wide job and population growth.
- Those with better downtown job growth tended to have better metropolitan economic growth as well.
- Conclusion - A healthier downtown makes for a healthier metropolitan area.

While freedom of choice is a strongly held American value, policies that encourage destructive sprawl are increasingly being replaced with those that create a more level playing field. New and old communities alike are establishing development standards to encourage efficient use of land, strengthen the local economy and assure equal opportunity for all citizens. The following concepts are central to this 'New Urbanism':

- Higher density residential development with more open space.
- Grid street networks to dissipate congestion typical in arterial designs.
- Mixed-income/mixed-use developments linked with pedestrian access.



Mixed Income Development in Gaithersburg, Maryland

Developers also are recognizing the growing demand for more 'people-friendly' communities and are increasingly applying these standards to their projects. More and more developers are investing in central cities and older, core area neighborhoods with creative new infill and adaptive reuse projects that combine retail, housing and office uses in a pedestrian-friendly environment.



A mixed-use urban infill project in Columbus, Ohio

Project Background

Mansfield is the central city in a metropolitan area that includes Ontario, Shelby and Galion among other smaller communities. The city and its suburbs serve as an economic hub for the larger region that includes Richland County and the surrounding six counties.

Mansfield's downtown, as with many other downtowns across the country, has suffered from the competitive pressures of today's retail environment. Many retailers have departed or closed their doors for good, and the majority of those who remain struggle to generate enough sales to ensure their long-term viability. The upper floors of many downtown buildings have been vacant for years. Parking, traffic and security are contentious issues. Sidewalks and many older buildings suffer from a lack of maintenance and upkeep.

On the other hand, the district remains the center of government and cultural activity in Mansfield and Richland County. Much of its historic building stock has survived, the city's traditional town square is one of the most attractive in the state, and the Carrousel District redevelopment effort has received national acclaim.

With the spread of a disease that began in downtown, the Miracle Mile commercial district has increasingly suffered the same economic and physical distress. The auto dealers and a few other successful retailers remain, but the majority of the 'mile' sits empty or under-utilized, and in a deteriorating physical state.

In April of 2002, the Mansfield Alliance, a steering committee made up of representatives from the City of Mansfield, Richland County, and key stakeholders in downtown Mansfield and the Miracle Mile commercial districts, requested a proposal from First Avenues, LLC and Kinzelman Kline Gossman (KKG) to assist with fund raising and development of comprehensive strategies for the revitalization of these two areas. (Wherever First Avenues is referred to in this report, it is assumed to mean the team of First Avenues and KKG).

Planning activities designed to unlock the full economic potential of downtown and the Miracle Mile included the following goals:

- Revitalization of the economic base in downtown Mansfield and at the Miracle Mile.
- Revitalization of the downtown as a center of social activity.
- Redevelopment of the 27-acre site formerly considered for a proposed civic center.
- Examination of adjacent residential/commercial areas.

In support of the above stated goals, the following objectives were established for this project:

- Involve close cooperation with the City of Mansfield, Richland County, the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Mansfield, constituents and pertinent civic organizations throughout the planning process.
- Provide information that details market trends, pertinent demographics of downtown and the Miracle Mile and their surrounding areas, traffic patterns and parking availability in the central business district and at the Miracle Mile.
- Identify the needs of existing and potential businesses located within the districts.
- Provide realistic, market-driven revitalization strategies for enhancing economic development of the districts and establishing the downtown as a center for social activities.

- Include recommended management and implementation strategies.
- Establish detailed action plans for each district's revitalization.
- Build a consensus of support among appropriate constituencies for the implementation of the proposed directions.
- Provide strategic and organizational assistance during the early stages of the implementation phase.

The target areas that have been addressed are identified below:

- Mansfield's Central Business District as bounded roughly by Diamond Street on the East, Bowman Street on the West, Longview Avenue on the North and First Street on the South.
- The Miracle Mile, that stretch of Park Avenue West in Mansfield located between Trimble and Home Roads.
- Analysis and planning will also consider edge/transition neighborhoods and corridor linkages.

Philosophy and Approach

The approach to downtown revitalization used by First Avenues and KKG is grounded in a combination of real-world experience in retailing and commercial property development and based on an understanding of and sensitivity to the importance of local conditions, attitudes and relationships. Over many years of working with retailers, property owners, and communities, the firms' principals have gained a thorough understanding of consumer behavior, physical environments, and what works and does not work in today's complex and rapidly changing world.

While most downtowns have suffered long, slow declines and continue to struggle, a few such as Marietta, Findlay, Cleveland and portions of downtown Columbus are experiencing renewed vitality and economic success. Culturally, economically, and politically, there has never been a better opportunity for the revitalization of the urban cores of America's cities.

The biggest challenges faced by most communities today regarding their downtown are how to change attitudes that are based upon yesterday's realities and how to build confidence that things can get better. This is the reason why our team spends time getting to know the community, and our recommendations are based on local conditions, genuine market opportunities, and the proven experience of other urban commercial districts.

Successful revitalization can only be achieved when there is a local consensus for action. The planning process includes significant input from community representatives, and the resulting vision is comprehensive, detailed, and based on the particular characteristics and strengths of the community. Through our firms' abilities to recognize and capitalize on the best assets that each city has to offer, the clients of First Avenues and KKG are achieving success under widely differing circumstances.

Mansfield

Current Situation

Stakeholder Views

One-on-one interviews with over 50 Mansfield and Richland County stakeholders (see Appendix 3) provided critical input to the downtown and Miracle Mile revitalization strategies. Government officials, business owners, developers and other stakeholders were interviewed on a variety of topics relating to the current situation in the Mansfield area. In addition, small focus group sessions were also conducted with downtown and Miracle Mile merchants and property owners, as well as a session with members of the city's minority community. The following is a brief summary of the results of these interactions.

Critical Economic Development Issues

When questioned about which economic development issues are most critical to Mansfield's future, the majority of stakeholders cited the region's ability to attract and retain people, jobs and businesses. Groups involved in economic development efforts include REDC, the City of Mansfield and the Chamber of Commerce. The city has made a significant investment in improvements to the Mansfield-Lahm Airport and the adjacent industrial park in an effort to draw new and more diverse businesses to the region.

Image of Various Aspects of Downtown

Community leaders and focus group participants were asked to describe their image of downtown in relation to the following:

Retail – Downtown retail is invariably described in negative terms: “poor”, “nothing there”, “none”, “no draw”. There is a recognition that more retailers are needed to make downtown a destination, but far less consensus about how to achieve this goal.

Office – Most stakeholders recognize that downtown continues to be a major employment center, and generally characterized it as having ‘Class B’ space with limited aesthetic appeal. Parking is often cited as a problem for downtown office workers.

Hotels – Stakeholders rated the Holiday Inn, which has undergone a recent renovation, as generally satisfactory. Other downtown hotels were described in extremely negative terms.

Housing – Housing images are divided between those that relate to downtown proper, and those that pertain to the surrounding neighborhoods. Stakeholders commenting on downtown itself characterized the housing stock as old and extremely limited. Those focused on the surrounding neighborhoods characterized these areas as “low income”, blighted, and unsafe. Notably, the area’s historic building stock received only limited recognition.

Parking – Parking downtown is almost universally considered to be inadequate and confusing.

Traffic – Stakeholders evidenced little consensus on the subject of downtown traffic. Many respondents do not recognize traffic as a major revitalization issue. An equal number however find the traffic pattern confusing, feel that there are too many one-way streets, and believe that signalization is an ongoing problem.

Access – There is equally little consensus on the subject of access to downtown. Stakeholders rate access across the spectrum from “no problem” to “difficult”. There is some recognition however that, while the road system may function satisfactorily, it does little to promote a welcoming image of downtown.

Safety – Most stakeholders feel that some area residents, especially those that do not work or live in or near downtown, have a negative *perception* of safety downtown. There is a general recognition that such perceptions can be a major impediment to revitalization by delaying the return of consumers, and therefore new merchants, to downtown. Some stakeholders did distinguish between the incidence of actual crime downtown and that occurring in the adjacent neighborhoods.

Downtown’s Strengths and Weaknesses

Stakeholders viewed the following as strengths:

The Carrousel – There is almost universal recognition of the positive role that this development has played in shaping the public image of downtown Mansfield.

Government Offices – Most stakeholders recognize that, despite its challenges, downtown remains a focal point of community life because of the presence of the city and county offices and court facilities. Stakeholders also understand that government employees represent an untapped economic resource. Several stakeholders expressed concerns about the county’s recent relocation of approximately 100 employees to an office facility on Longview at the County Fairgrounds.

Arts – There is an emerging belief that the arts, and performing arts in particular, can be a catalyst for downtown revitalization. Several stakeholders noted that for many area residents, the Renaissance Theater represents downtown’s only true evening destination.

Stakeholders viewed the following as weaknesses:

A Limited Number of Retail Attractions – Most stakeholders pointed out that downtown is not a destination. More quality restaurants are desired.

The Square – The Square is currently the focal point for much of the pessimism surrounding downtown: safety perceptions driven by localized vagrancy and panhandling, inadequate on-street parking, and shuttered buildings, most notably Reed's.

Other – Other less frequently noted weaknesses included office vacancies, the absence of design review, and traffic and access issues.

What Needs to Happen Downtown – Stakeholder Views

There is near unanimity amongst stakeholders that efforts should be made to restore downtown to its former prominence. Most stakeholders understand that a strong downtown is key to a strong community. However, as may be surmised from the interview summaries, there is little current consensus regarding the best way to achieve a vibrant downtown Mansfield. Suggestions vary, but center on the following:

Be a Destination – Stakeholders believe that, to become a destination, downtown needs a focal point, anchor stores, more restaurants, and a grocery store or a meat market.

Be More Attractive – Stakeholders believe that for downtown to be more attractive, the Square needs to be “fixed”, the Reed's building must be developed, that downtown should become a historic district, and that the city should implement a design review process.

Improve Safety Perception – Stakeholders believe that downtown will feel safer with the addition of more policing, bike patrols and lighting, with stronger enforcement against panhandlers and vagrants, and by addressing crime in the adjacent neighborhoods.

Image of Various Aspects of the Miracle Mile

Community leaders and focus group participants were asked to describe their image of the Miracle Mile in relation to the following:

Retail – Miracle Mile retail is usually described in terms that actually reflect the condition of its principal shopping destination, Kingsgate Mall: “vacancies”, “has been”, “limited”, “fatalistic”. There is a recognition that Ontario has become the ‘big box’/mall destination of choice, and that the area’s principal thrust must be reconceived.

Office - Stakeholders generally do not think of the Miracle Mile in terms of its limited office space.

Housing – Stakeholders described the residential neighborhoods bordering the Miracle Mile as follows: “decent”, “middle income”, and “modest”.

Parking – Parking at the Miracle Mile is universally considered to be more than adequate, with some stakeholders recognizing however that ample parking comes at an aesthetic cost.

Traffic – Traffic flow on the Miracle Mile is not regarded as problematic; a majority of respondents characterize it as “moderate”. However, most stakeholders do consider the speed limit on this section of Park Avenue West (25 miles per hour) to be unreasonably low, and several participants termed the area a “speed trap”. Stakeholders voiced concerns that these conditions adversely affect shopping traffic.

Access – Stakeholders almost universally rated access to the area as satisfactory.

Safety – Most stakeholders view cruising as the area’s major safety issue. A few also expressed concern that some Miracle Mile entertainment businesses create disturbance issues for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Miracle Mile's Strengths and Weaknesses

Stakeholders viewed the following as strengths:

The Auto Dealers – There is general consensus that the three successful auto dealers on the Miracle Mile give the area a needed stability, and form an anchor for the western end of the zone.

Location – Stakeholders believe that, while Ontario has captured a significant portion of area retail sales, the Miracle Mile still enjoys a strategic location: ease of access from most Mansfield neighborhoods, adequate space and proximity to the Kingwood Center.

Identity – Stakeholders also believe that the Miracle Mile can benefit from its familiarity and name recognition among area residents.

Stakeholders viewed the following as weaknesses:

Evidence of Retail Distress – Empty parking lots exacerbate an image of declining retail with no remaining quality anchors.

Visual Blight – Empty parking lots and other evidence of retail distress also call attention to the visual blight created by a proliferation of overhead wires and an evident lack of zoning and signage control.

Other – The other most frequently noted weaknesses included cruising and the speed limit as noted above.

What Needs to Happen at the Miracle Mile – Stakeholder Views

There is near unanimity amongst stakeholders that Miracle Mile must be reinvented. They understand that a revitalized Miracle Mile will require something more than just new retail. Suggestions for a successful revitalization vary, but center on the following:

Mix Uses – Stakeholders believe that the Miracle Mile can succeed by mixing commercial and residential activities, and by adding retail that meets neighborhood shopping needs, a grocery, a pharmacy, restaurants and/or family entertainment.

Improve the Image – Stakeholders believe that more people will want to visit the Miracle Mile if it becomes greener, if facades are renovated, and if other elements of visual blight are removed.

Connect – Stakeholders believe that Miracle Mile can become a destination again by offering entertainment and outdoor recreation opportunities that include a link to the nearby bike path.

Implementation Issues

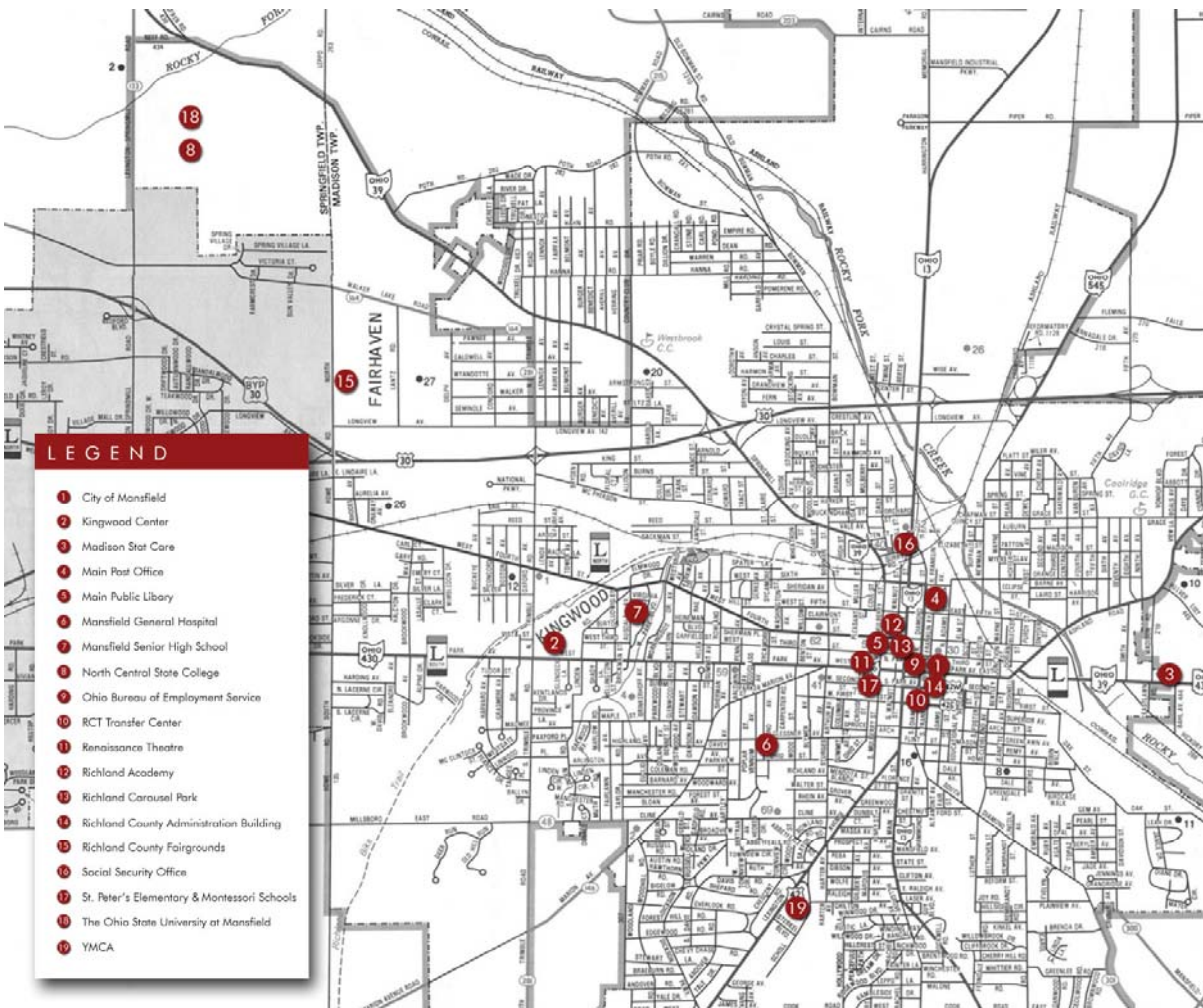
Many of those interviewed voiced concerns about a proliferation of organizations, with potentially conflicting missions, vying for limited community development resources and attention. These respondents share a belief that the effectiveness of overall revitalization efforts may potentially be diluted as a result of proprietary activities. For example, most respondents were unable to make a clear distinction between the proper roles for Main Street Mansfield, the Mansfield/Richland Chamber of Commerce and the Mansfield & Richland County Convention & Visitors Bureau. Most stakeholders were also unable to distinguish between the planning and economic development responsibilities of the city, the county, and the Richland Economic Development Corporation (REDC), nor were they able to clearly describe the vision that currently informs the city's development plans. Perhaps as a result, some stakeholders cite attitudes of confusion, malaise and skepticism as significant obstacles to economic development. Respondents also pointed to an evident failure to sustain earlier planning efforts as a possible explanation for perceptions of apathy.

The minority community, which represents 23% of Mansfield's population, has generally not been engaged in past revitalization efforts and initiatives. This represents both a challenge that needs to be addressed and a tremendous untapped resource.

Community Serving Facilities

In downtowns and successful urban commercial districts, the presence of public serving facilities such as libraries, post offices, and government offices, often encourages additional private economic activity, while reinforcing the district’s role as the heart of the area it serves. Studies have also shown that facilities such as schools and community centers can play important roles in sustaining neighborhoods, by both promoting a sense of community and by bridging racial divides.

As is evident from the following diagram, Mansfield is fortunate to have a majority of its principal community serving facilities located in or near downtown, and any successful revitalization plan should leverage the presence of these facilities to promote additional economic development.



Source: Kinzelman Kline Gossman

Area Attractions and Annual Visitors

Mansfield is located in the Appalachian foothills of North Central Ohio, an area of considerable natural beauty, where peak elevations top 1,400 feet. Nearby state parks attract visitors from all over the state, and eight major highways pass through Mansfield/Richland County, making the city and other local attractions easily accessible to tourists and visitors.

Visitors to local attractions represent a valuable economic resource whose magnitude can be appreciated by noting that there are five venues situated within 20 miles of Mansfield whose individual annual attendance tops 250,000 persons¹:

- Mid-Ohio Race Course - 1,000,000
- Mohican State Park - 500,000
- Malabar State Farm - 250,000
- Richland Carrousel - 250,000
- Kingwood Center - 250,000

Other major area attractions include the Ohio State Reformatory, the Mansfield Memorial Museum, the Miss Ohio Pageant, the Renaissance Theater, and the Living Bible Museum in Mansfield itself, and the Snow Trails and Clear Fork Ski areas, Lincoln Highway National Museum and Archives, Great Mohican Indian Pow-Wow, Mohican Blues Festival and Amish country in the surrounding counties. Further evidence of the area's tourist draw is indicated by the fact that motor coach tours bring approximately 50,000 visitors to Mansfield/Richland County each year. In all, tourists were estimated to have spent some \$271 million in Richland County alone in 2000².

¹ Source: Mansfield Richland County Convention and Visitors Bureau

² The Economic Impact, Performance and Profile of the Richland County, Ohio, Travel and Tourism Industry 1999-2000, Rovelstad & Associates and Longwoods, International, October 2001

Downtown Housing

In late 2001, the City of Mansfield hired the Danter Company, a nationally recognized real estate research firm, to evaluate the market potential for residential development in the downtown area. The study was a result of the recognition by city housing and planning officials that downtown housing is often a key to urban revitalization, bringing people who need services - restaurants, shops and entertainment opportunities - back to a city's core. The company conducted its analysis using a combination of field surveys, interviews with local human resources personnel, a telephone survey and case studies of comparable communities, and projected an overall support for some 30 to 50 new downtown market rate and subsidized rental units per year. The Danter Company's key conclusions were:

Positives

- Mansfield enjoys a stable employment base.
- Area apartment vacancy rates are low.
- One-third of survey respondents identified downtown first with the Carrousel and the Square.
- Public transportation is provided throughout the downtown area.
- All important community services are proximate to downtown.
- Similarly sized communities (Lima, Findlay, and Marion) have supported market rate rentals downtown.
- Nearly one-third of the residents surveyed would consider living downtown if the housing they preferred were made available.

Negatives

- There is a very low owner-occupied ratio downtown.
- Market rate developments comprise less than 15% of the rental units built in Mansfield in the last five years.
- Median rents are low throughout the 'effective market area'.
- The median value of a home in or near downtown is one-third that of the city as a whole.
- 22% of survey respondents identified downtown first with a need for revitalization.

The Danter Company arrived at the 30-50 unit support level by applying conservative turnover and retention rates to the relevant renter household base. Based upon median household income levels, the resulting unit demand was then stratified by affordable gross rent to arrive at potential annual demand in each of six income categories. Approximately half of the projected demand was forecast to be for subsidized units. Note should be made however, that in arriving at a final support level for units renting for \$627 per month or more, the company projected that downtown would capture only ten percent of projected demand. This conservatism may be attributable in part to the fact that no significant downtown market rate developments have been undertaken as yet in Mansfield.

Crime

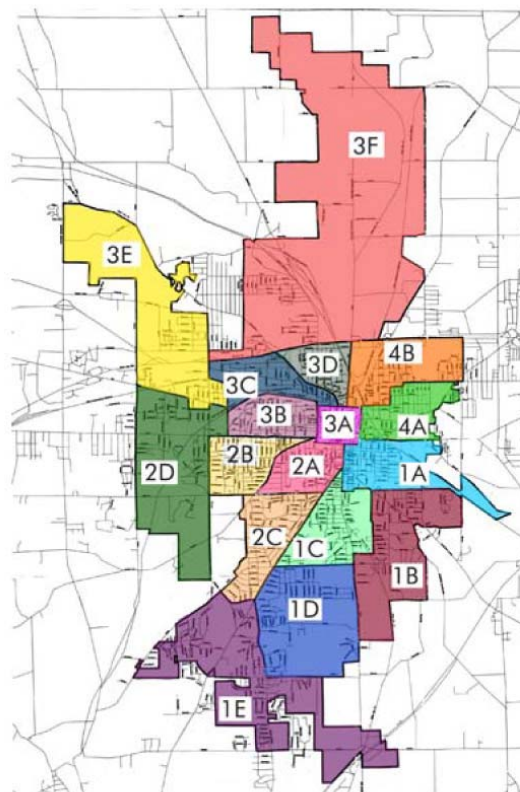
Crime and perceptions of crime are key issues that must be addressed at an early stage in any revitalization process. Most Mansfield stakeholders view negative perceptions of safety among some area residents as an impediment to revitalization in their downtown and recognize that, until such concerns are alleviated, a vibrant downtown will be slow to materialize. Stakeholders themselves generally believe that downtown is safe.

NOTE: The city has recently enacted an ordinance that severely restricts aggressive panhandling on private and public property, at ATMs and in vehicles on the street.

Some stakeholders distinguished between the incidence of actual crime downtown, and that occurring in the adjacent neighborhoods, and year-to-date crime statistics indicate that four adjacent policing districts, 3B, 1A, 2A and 1B have a higher incidence of violent crime than downtown³. Such data suggest that efforts to reduce crime in these areas could alter public safety perceptions, and serve as an important component of a downtown revitalization strategy.

³ Source: City of Mansfield Police Department

Zone	Area/Crime	Total
3B	South Central	433
1A	North	412
2A	North East	380
1B	East Central	303
3A	downtown	291
4A	South	258
1C	West Central	250
2D	2 & 3 West	242
3D	East	198
2B	North Central	185
3C	North Central	176
3E	West	176
4B	North	164
3F	North	156
1E	1 & 2 South	116
2C	Central	99
1D	South Central	80



Source: City of Mansfield Police Department

Comparative crime statistics also indicate that Mansfield's reputation for having a "crime problem" may be misleading:

Mansfield		
Population	Violent Crime	Property Crime
51,766	195	3,333
Per Capita	0.0037	0.064

Newark		
Population	Violent Crime	Property Crime
48,020	106	2,121
Per Capita	0.0022	0.044

Lima		
Population	Violent Crime	Property Crime
43,000	360	2,973
Per Capita	0.0084	0.069

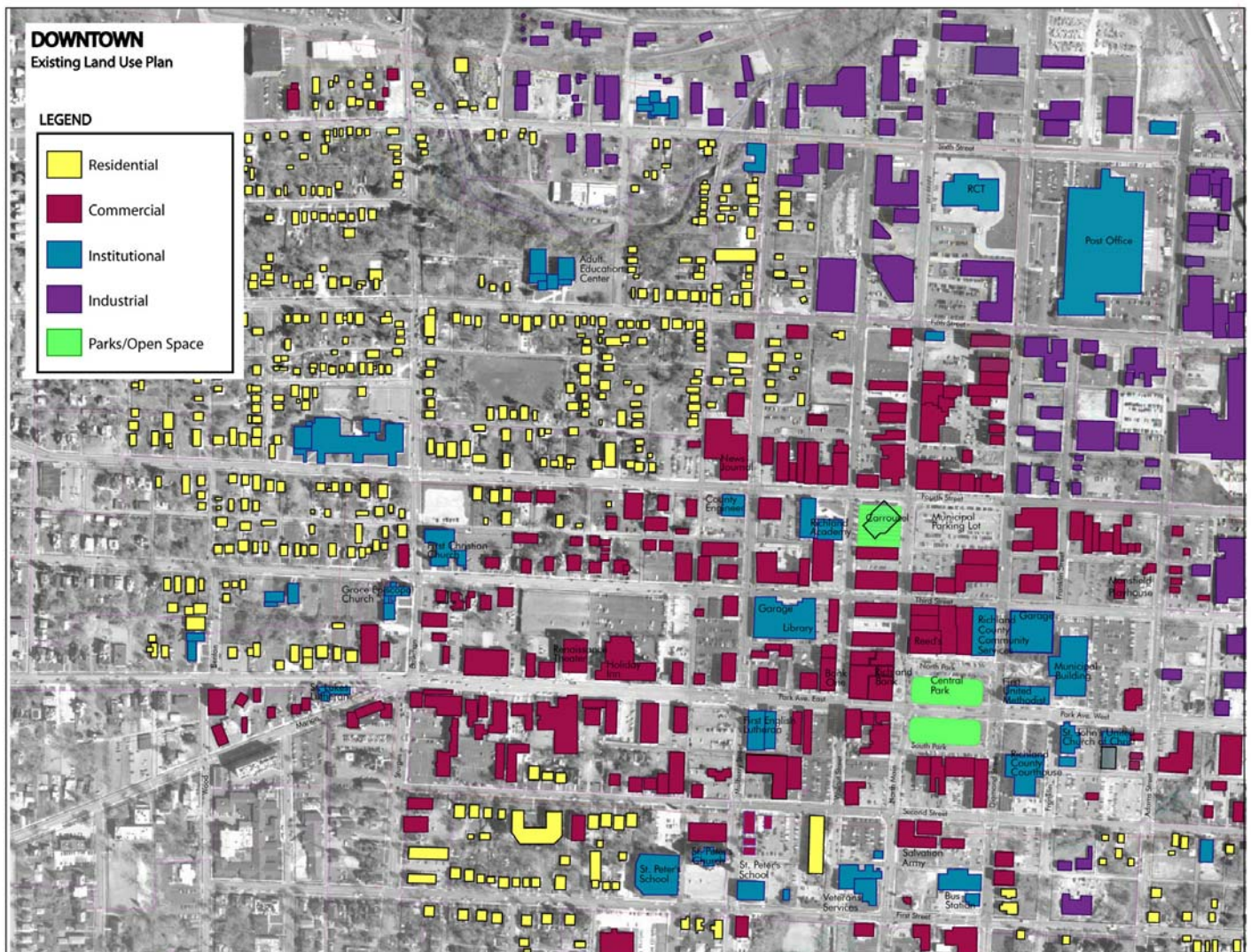
Crime in the United States 2000, U.S. Department of Justice,
Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2001

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Existing Physical Conditions - Downtown Mansfield

An assessment of existing physical conditions in downtown Mansfield and at the Miracle Mile was conducted through a combination of field observations, data collection and interviews with residents, property owners, and public agencies. The subsequent analysis was intended to identify significant constraints to and reveal meaningful opportunities for revitalization of the area. Recommendations for improving physical conditions are presented as part of the revitalization strategy in the Recommendations Section of this document. (Source: KKG, all photos and graphics)

Land Use



- A mix of commercial uses are clustered at downtown's historic core and along Park Avenue West, the major east-west arterial. A variety of building types exist including free standing retail buildings, traditional office buildings with lower level retail space, and converted residential homes.



- Important institutional uses, such as city and county government offices, churches, the main library, the main post office, and elementary and secondary schools are located throughout the area. As noted above under Community Serving Facilities, such uses typically serve as key community destinations, and can be expected to generate significant vehicular and pedestrian traffic.



- Light industry, warehouse operations and builders supply uses are found immediately north of the area's historic commercial core. Larger buildings, some with significant amounts of vacant space, are remnants of the city's industrial past. Much of the city's remaining industrial base is located to the north and east of downtown.



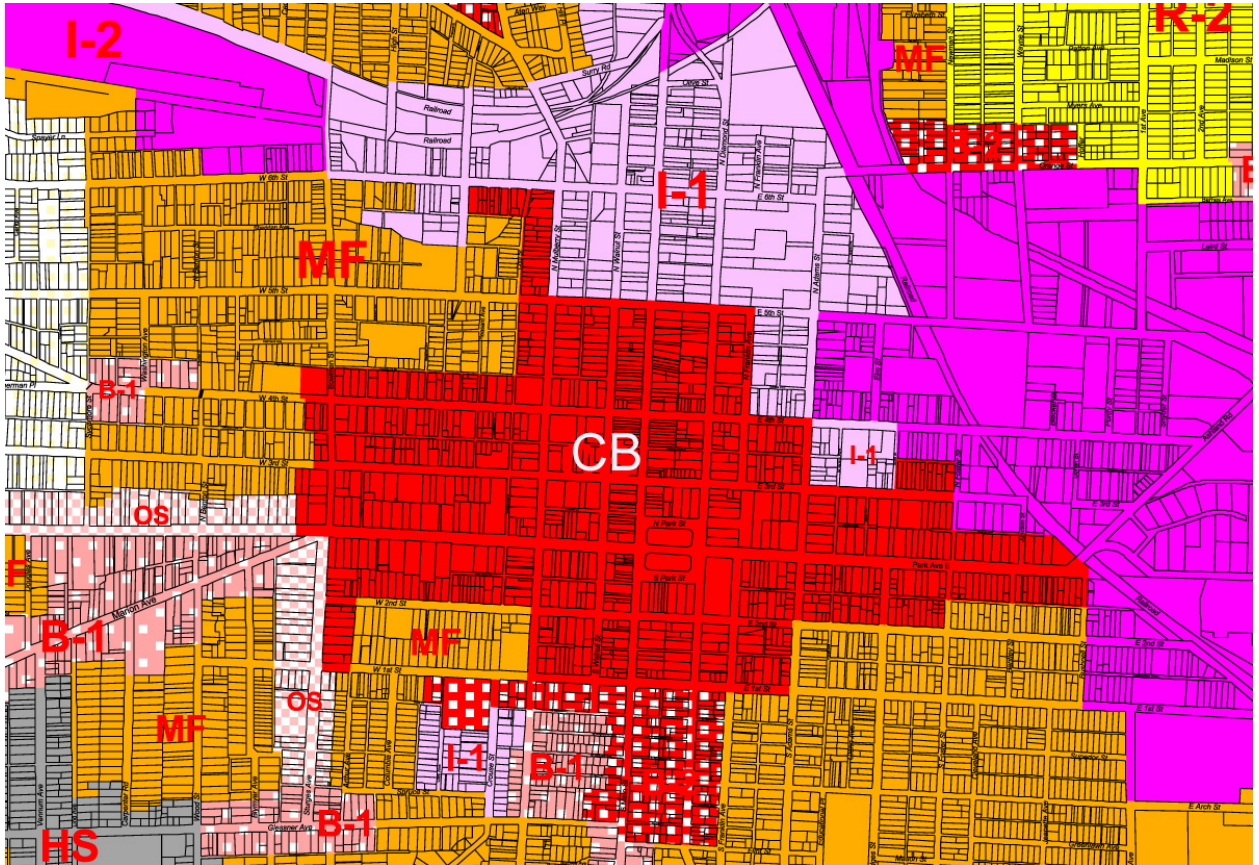
- Residential uses are found predominantly in downtown's northwest quadrant. This area is bordered by Bowman Street on the west, Sixth Street on the north, Mulberry Street on the east and Fourth Street on the south. Much of the area's single-family detached housing stock is in poor condition. A second group of single-family detached homes exists in the southwest corner of the study area, along First and Second Streets. A very limited amount of housing also exists on the upper floors of downtown commercial buildings.



- The only public open space in the downtown district is Central Park or the 'Square'. Richland Carrousel Park may also be considered a public amenity.



Existing Zoning

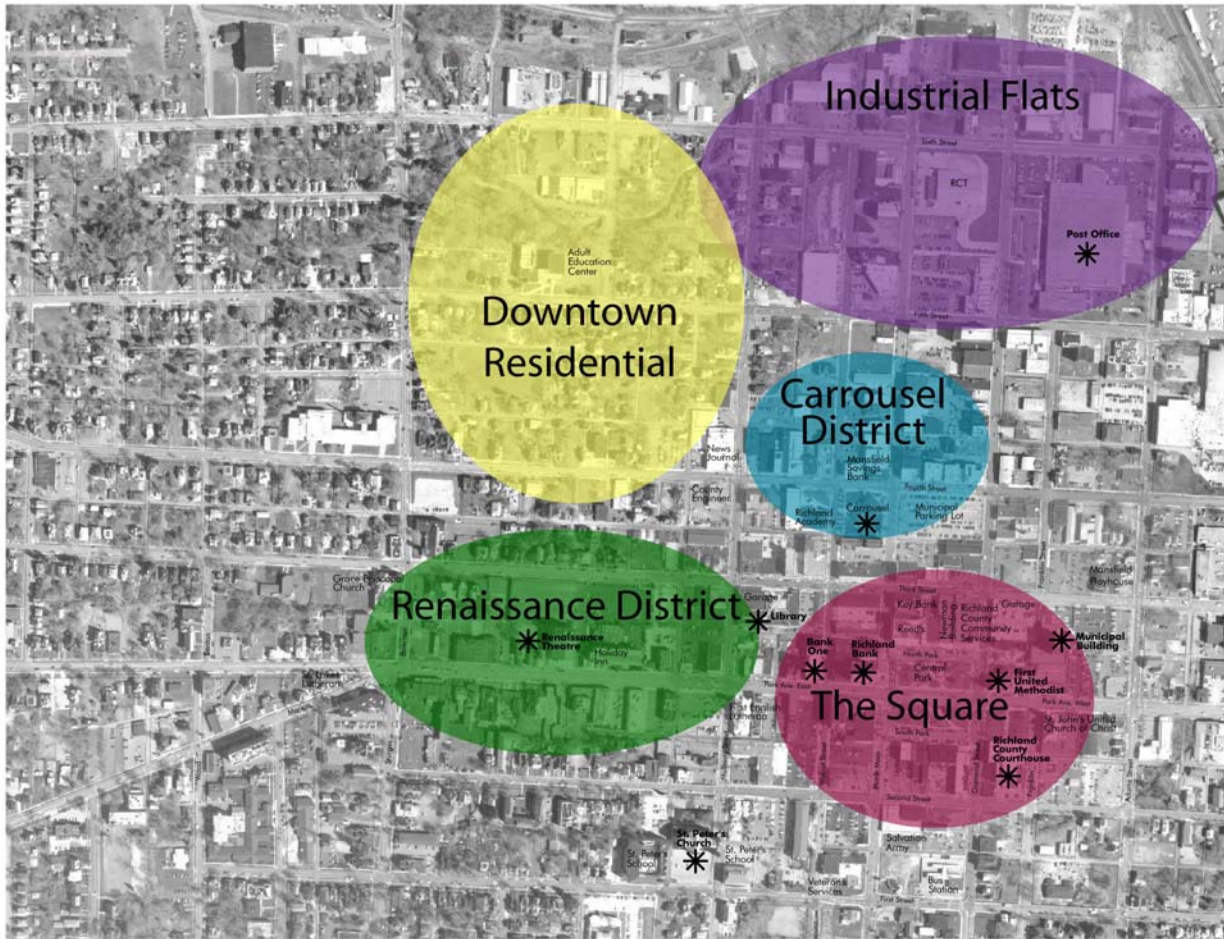


- Zoning classifications in the downtown area may generally be thought of as following existing land uses. The Central Business District (CB) designation covers the mixed commercial areas, while the Multi-Family Residential District (MF) and the Limited Impact Industrial (L-1) District make up the rest of the study area. As is typical of many zoning codes, Mansfield's planning and zoning code regulations attempt to address all uses and conditions throughout the city. This comprehensive approach fails to provide the necessary guidance and protection for areas of distinct character such as downtown. While zoning codes often provide for a range of possible solutions, special districts may require more controlled standards. This is evident throughout the downtown, where inconsistent building and parking setbacks, lack of parking lot screening and landscaping standards, and inconsistent building signage are common aesthetic issues.



Districts and Landmarks

Five separate districts exist within the downtown study area. While the Carrousel District and the Square are generally recognized as distinct districts, other areas have the potential to be enhanced and consequently recognized as identifiable districts within downtown.



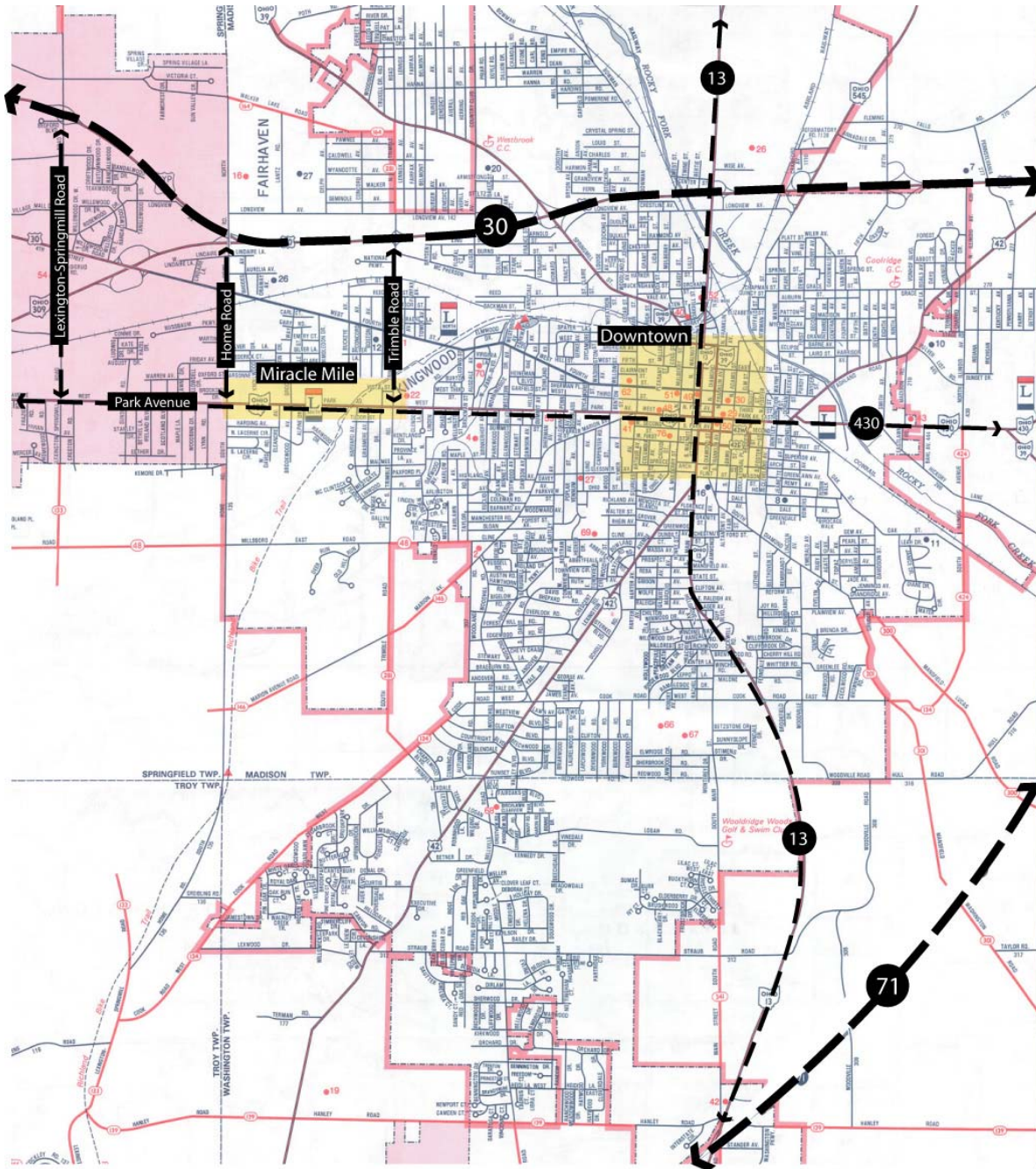
- The Central Park Historic District, or 'the Square', has historically been identified as a district within downtown. The park is the unifying element around which a number of landmark buildings are positioned including the Richland Bank, First United Methodist Church, City Hall, the County Courthouse, and the former Reed's department store. The location of the park at a relatively high elevation adds to its prominence in downtown.

- The Carrousel District is the result of a recent public-private partnership urban revitalization effort. Several buildings along Fourth Street and North Main Street have been restored and house a series of shops and restaurants. The focal point of the district is the carrousel at the southwest corner of the intersection of Fourth and Main Street.
- The Renaissance Theater is a landmark building and one of the few true entertainment destinations in downtown Mansfield. This building is centrally located along a segment of Park Avenue West that has a distinctly different character than the Square or the Carrousel District. The street section in this corridor is wider and the building stock is an eclectic mix of a few historic buildings and a number of more contemporary structures. The two primary downtown hotels, the Holiday Inn and the Park Place Hotel, are also located along this corridor.
- The Industrial Flats consists of the light industrial and warehouse zone north of the commercial core. The relatively low elevation of this area also contributes to its recognition as a distinct district.
- A downtown Residential District located north and west of the Square is identifiable as a district because its use and building stock stand in clear contrast to the other uses and building types downtown. This area was formerly proposed as the site of a new convention center. This project was not realized, but Richland County controls several parcels in this district.



Vehicular Circulation and Access

- Downtown Mansfield is conveniently located near major vehicular routes. U.S. Route 30 and Interstate 71 are connected directly to downtown via State Route 13. Route 30 is currently being upgraded to a four-lane, limited access, divided highway across the entire state which should, over the long term, increase traffic counts through Mansfield and in the vicinity of downtown. In addition, State Route 39 and U.S. Route 42 also provide connections into the center of downtown.



- Vehicular circulation in downtown Mansfield is arranged along a regular grid of streets. The order of these streets and the ability to orient oneself in downtown is complicated by a series of one-way couplets:

North South Streets

- Main Street and Diamond Street operate as a one-way couplet from First Street to Sixth Street. Main Street carries southbound traffic, while northbound traffic is funneled to Diamond Street northbound from three arterials – Lexington Avenue (US 42), Main Street (SR 13), and the portion of Diamond Street below the couplet.
- Mulberry Street and Walnut Street operate as a one-way couplet between Fourth Street and Second Street. Mulberry Street is a designated State Route connecting Springmill Road (SR 39) north of the CBD to Lexington Avenue (US 42) south of the CBD.

East West Streets

- First Street and Second Street operate as an east-west one-way couplet from Hedges Street to Main Street.
- South Park operates one-way eastbound and North Park operates one-way westbound with metered parking between Diamond Street and Main Street.
- These one-way couplets have successfully increased vehicular capacity and reduced congestion in the central business district. At the same time, one-way traffic reduces the visibility from vehicles to retail storefronts by half, creating a potentially adverse impact on retail sales. In addition, the added confusion and inconvenience caused by one-way streets may also impact retail sales.
- A one-way street study, completed by Richland County Regional Planning in 2001, addresses several possible negative impacts of modifying the one-way couplets to two-way circulation. The potential for high costs associated with new signalization and signage, and possible reimbursement to the Ohio Department of

Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration for past investments in the safety of the road system, were cited as primary negative factors. Average daily traffic counts and accident data were collected in the study, but an attempt to model possible traffic alternatives proved unsuccessful, as regional planning staff “did not feel that the model reasonably demonstrated anticipated traffic changes.”⁴

⁴ City of Mansfield, CBD One-way Street Study. Richland County Regional Planning Commission, 2001



Main Street carries one-way southbound traffic through downtown.

- The mass transit system provides quality service throughout the community and to the downtown. A new station is conveniently located within the study area at the corner of First Street and Diamond Street.
- Significant investment has been made by the city to upgrade traffic signals within the downtown area. Successfully timing the large number of closely-spaced signals has proven to be an ongoing challenge.



Parking

- Assuring adequate, convenient and economical parking will be a significant issue in any successful revitalization effort. A parking inventory plan updated regularly by Richland County Regional Planning identifies 5,810 parking spaces (5,380 private spaces and 430 public spaces) within the downtown study area. Based on the estimated number of downtown workers (approximately 5,100) and the total square footage of retail, office, and government office space and churches, the existing supply of parking spaces appears to be adequate. However, the apparent parity is misleading as major issues associated with



Parking Inventory Plan. Source: Richland County Regional Planning

parking do exist. Many private lots are under-utilized. Public parking is limited and there is a lack of signage directing visitors to its locations. Parking meters are old and generally not in good condition. The one-hour limit in the vicinity of the Square creates inconvenience for visitors that might choose to stay longer in downtown. Although rates and fines are very low, any cost for public parking creates a competitive disadvantage versus suburban shopping centers. Most importantly, the amount of available public parking is inadequate to support any increase in economic activity.

- The conversion of many former downtown building sites into small parking lots has resulted in the deterioration of the downtown’s urban fabric. The loss of each building creates another “missing tooth” in the urban street wall.
- Most of downtown surface lots have no visual screening from the street or sidewalk.



- Most public parking is provided at on-street metered spaces, and although there are approximately 400 meters in the downtown area, 85% of all parking violations are written at the 200 meters south of West Third Street. The location of metered spaces appears to have been a legacy of the time when Mansfield had some 1,200 downtown meters, or as a reaction to a previously existing land use, rather than as part of a comprehensive parking system. The wide variety of permitted durations and costs, as well as the absence of any signage or coding explaining the system also contribute to confusion.



- Several opportunities exist for more on-street parking. The late 1970’s streetscape project created several large pedestrian areas at the expense of on-street parking spaces.

- The large municipal parking lot along Fourth Street provides 143 private spaces and 41 free public spaces.



- Two parking structures exist within the downtown study area. The garage at the municipal building is unattractive and intimidating to visitors as a result of the low ceiling height and narrow access lanes, lack of quality lighting and a deteriorated physical condition. 296 private employee spaces and 18 free visitor spaces are provided. Structured parking is also provided in a facility adjacent to the library at the corner of Third Street and Mulberry. This garage consists of 49 special permit spaces.



Pedestrian Environment

- An ideal urban environment offers the pedestrian a strong sense of enclosure and safety. This condition is created when buildings and on-street parking effectively serve as a buffer for the sidewalk, and the pedestrian is comfortable walking from storefront to storefront without the fear of a conflict with motorists. The pedestrian environment around the Square and in portions of the Carrousel District represent this ideal physical condition. Many other streets in the downtown area used to have a similar condition, but building demolitions and the introduction of parking lots have compromised much of the former environment.



- The pedestrian experience is also enhanced by traditional storefronts with large windows that offer visual interest and surveillance from the sidewalk. Many buildings throughout the downtown with blank façades or highly reflective glass also diminish the pedestrian experience.



Traditional Storefronts



Reflective Glass



Blank Façade



- The extension of curbs at intersections in the commercial core helps minimize the street crossing distance for pedestrians, and contributes to a sense of safety.
- Painted crosswalks exist throughout downtown. Some crosswalks around the Square have recently been enhanced with a special paint pattern and colors.

- Decorative street lights in the commercial core are appropriately scaled for the district. Historic photos reveal an acorn-type fixture as opposed to the lantern like design that exists today. Streets throughout the rest of the downtown are typically lit with cobra head fixtures mounted high on wood or metal utility poles. These fixtures adequately light the street, but do not contribute to the aesthetics of the pedestrian environment.



Historic Acorn-type Fixtures
Source: Mick Tridico



Existing Lantern-type Fixtures



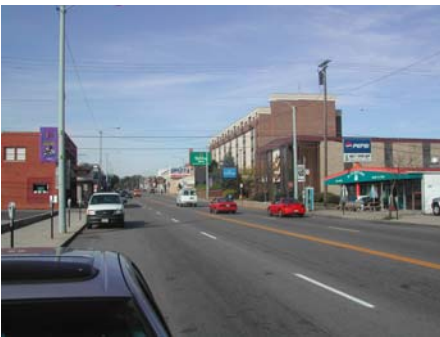
Cobra-head Style Light Fixtures



- Street trees must be carefully selected and located in urban environments. Street trees are often planted in a manner that blocks views to retail storefronts or to historic architectural detailing on upper floors. Both good and bad applications exist in downtown Mansfield. The trees planted along the west side of Main Street on the Square block the view to the adjacent retail stores, and the density of the tree canopy in this area significantly diminishes the amount of illumination available after dark.



- Light canopy Honey Locust trees have been successfully used along other streets in front of less historically significant architecture. Unfortunately, the root systems of these trees have begun to heave pavement in some locations.



- Along Park Avenue West, where fewer architecturally significant buildings exist, the absence of street trees means that the opportunity to visually unify the corridor and create a more comfortable pedestrian environment has been missed.
- No accommodations currently exist in the downtown for bicycles, such as designated lanes, bike racks, or signage.



- Public art, historic features, and monuments all contribute to a quality urban environment. Historic markers, monuments and a historic water fountain are all located at Central Park. In addition, a Martin Luther King memorial and a war memorial are currently being planned. A John Sherman Memorial is also being planned on the County Courthouse lawn.

- Recently, several murals have been completed on downtown buildings. These murals enrich the downtown environment and should be encouraged on more blank façades.



- A general lack of consistent site development standards is evident throughout downtown. For example, parking lots are screened in a variety of ways throughout downtown.



- Consistent site elements, such as lighting, benches, and pavement materials, are found within the commercial core, but many of these elements show significant deterioration.





Architecture/Building Stock

- There is an excellent supply of older structures remaining in downtown Mansfield. Seventeen downtown buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings.



- The Historic Preservation Commission and Main Street Mansfield are in the process of establishing the Central Park Historic District as a Local Landmark District. This will create an Architectural Design Review mechanism to help insure quality building renovations and additions in the future.



Source:
Richland County
Regional Planning

- The past loss of building stock has created gaps or “missing teeth”, and given downtown a fragmented appearance. These gaps contribute to the lack of physical connection between the Carrousel District and the Square and between the Square and the Renaissance District.
- The placement and orientation of the County Courthouse and the Municipal building do not reinforce the eastern edge of the Square. The proposed Justice Center represents an opportunity to more strongly address the northeast corner of the Square.



1 North Main Street



Historic Photo
Source: Mick Tridico



Today

2 Park Avenue

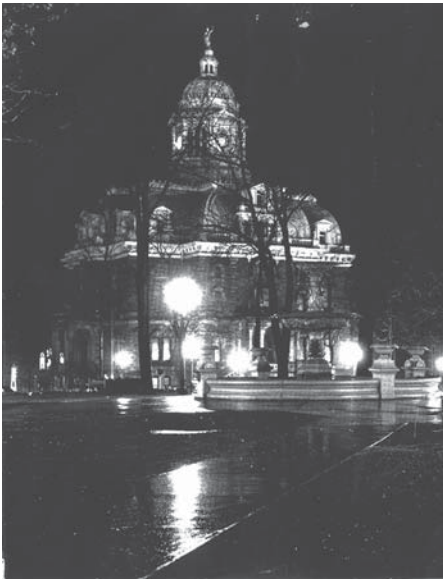


Historic Photo
of the Leland Hotel
Source: Mick Tridico



Today

3 Courthouse Site



Historic Courthouse
Source: Mick Tridico



Today

4 City Hall Site



City Hall



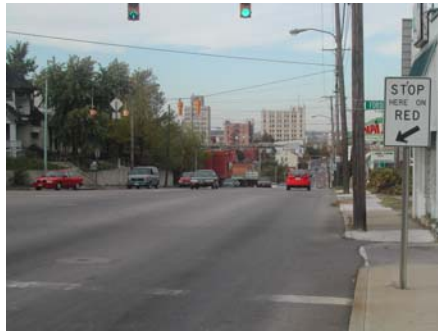
Proposed Justice Center

Signage/Wayfinding

- There is no recognition of the downtown as a special historic place or attraction along major nearby transportation routes.
- The approach from U.S. 30 to the north along Route 13 progresses through a visually unattractive industrial zone. With the exception of the grain elevator that is painted with a “Welcome to Mansfield” greeting, this corridor does not provide a sense of gateway or arrival to downtown.



- From the south, Route 13 offers a vista of the downtown’s landmark buildings, but the beginning of the north/south one-way couplet at the bottom of First Street redirects the visitor away from the Main Street corridor.



- Once a motorist arrives in the downtown area, the lack of consistently placed street signs adds confusion to the wayfinding experience. Many signs are undersized and difficult for motorists to read.

- Some district identification exists in the Carrousel District and The Central Park Historic District. Developing a stronger identity for these and other districts would require a coordinated graphic system.

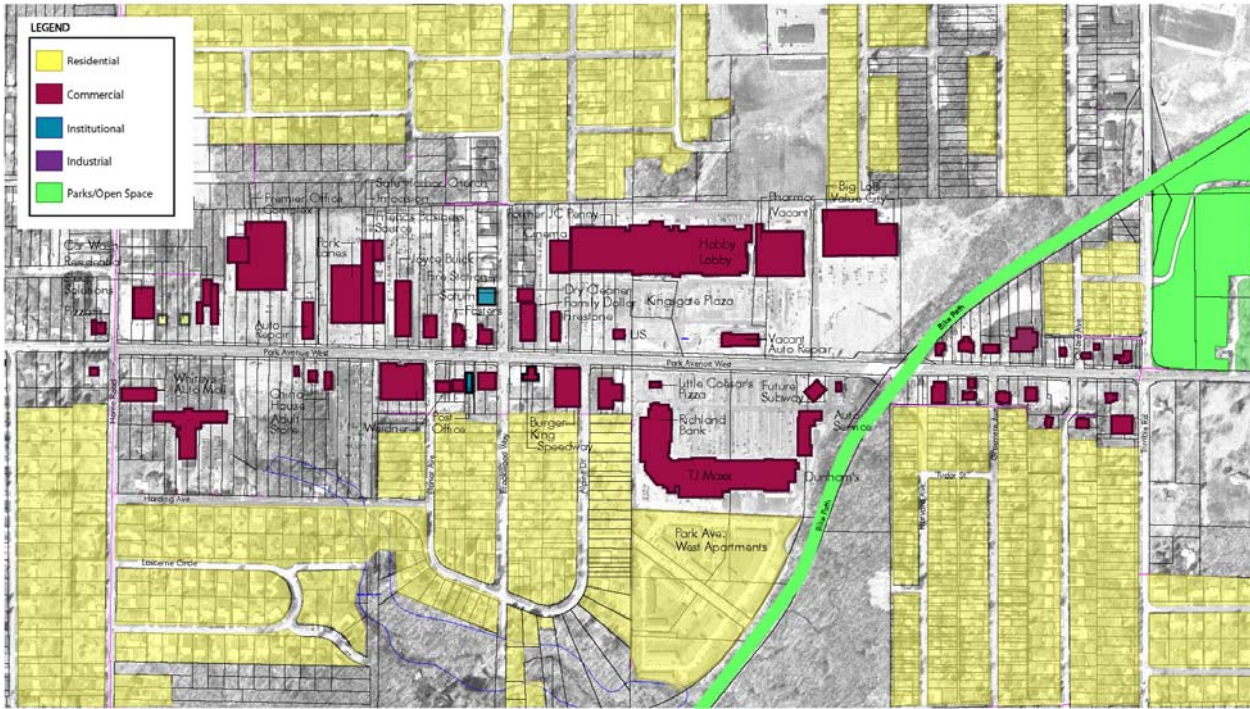


- Several examples of high quality business signage exist in downtown, particularly in the Carrousel District. The greater range of sign types and sizes that exist along Park Avenue West indicates the need for special graphic standards for downtown districts.



- Regulatory signage related to traffic movement and parking is a critical element of wayfinding, and one-way street systems typically require more signage to direct traffic. This adds to the visual clutter at intersections in the downtown.

Existing Physical Conditions - Miracle Mile Land Use



- A mix of commercial uses exists along the Miracle Mile corridor. With the exception of the large retail centers, most uses are housed in free-standing retail buildings.
- Three distinct zones of commercial use exist along the corridor. The eastern zone consists of a mix of relatively small lot commercial uses that front Park Avenue with single family housing to their rear. These uses include a drug store, a nightclub, a full service restaurant, and two auto service shops.



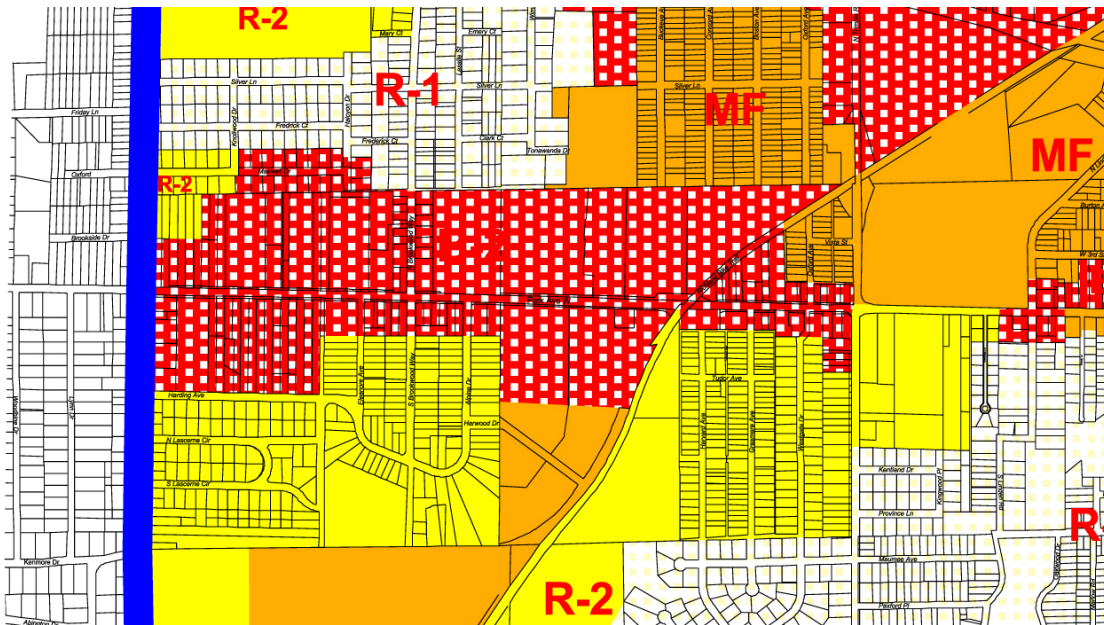
- The central zone is dominated by two large retail centers. The Kingsgate Mall along the north side of Park Avenue is an enclosed mall with high vacancies including at the two anchor stores. A four-screen theatre is attached to the west end of the mall. A “big box” retail facility to the east of the Kingsgate Mall is occupied by Value City Furniture and Big Lots. The West Park Shopping Center is located on the south side of Park Avenue and has fewer vacancies than Kingsgate.



- Three automobile dealerships dominate Miracle Mile’s western zone. These dealers, together with Park Lanes Bowling Alley, have historically been important destinations along the corridor. The Premier Office Complex is a converted retail building that currently has little, if any, vacancy. Generally, free standing retail buildings on smaller lots have filled in between these uses, and include an adult-oriented store.



Existing Zoning

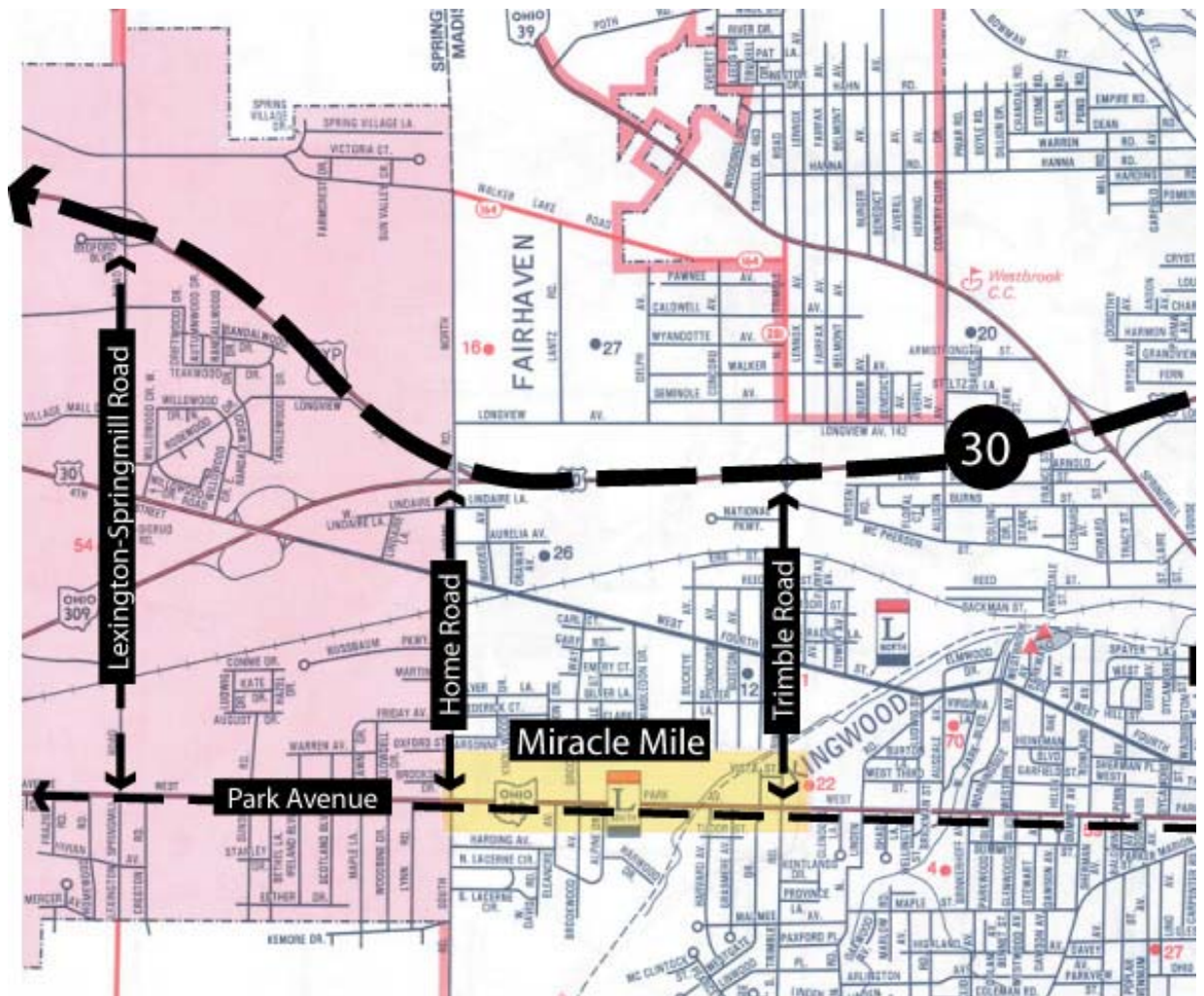


- The entire Miracle Mile corridor is included in the General Business (B-2) zoning classification. While the zoning code attempts to address a wide variety of issues throughout the community, special districts such as the Miracle Mile require more controlled standards. A lack of minimum standards is evident throughout the Miracle Mile, where inconsistent building and parking setbacks, lack of parking lot screening and landscaping standards, and inconsistent building signage are prominent aesthetic issues.



Vehicular Circulation and Access

- The Miracle Mile enjoys a direct connection to U.S. Route 30 at its eastern edge via Trimble Road. Lexington-Springmill Road is located approximately one mile to the west of the Home Road and Park Avenue intersection. Lexington-Springmill provides a direct link to U.S. Route 30 from the western edge of the Miracle Mile, and is the primary retail corridor in the region.



- Park Avenue West from Trimble Road to Home Road consists of five lanes of traffic including two eastbound lanes, two westbound lanes, and a center turning lane. All intersecting roads leading into this segment of Park Avenue are two lanes. The Trimble Road approach is the most problematic in that it represents the shortest route to U.S. Route 30. Currently, congestion at the Trimble Road and Fourth Street intersection impacts the ease of access to the Miracle Mile.



- The 25 mph speed limit throughout the Miracle Mile is inconsistent with the street width. In addition, the posted speed limits along the approaching two lane roads are generally 35 mph. The 25 mph speed limit, and its enforcement by local police, is reported to be a deterrent to potential customers. The City of Mansfield is currently reviewing the speed limit in this area.



- Some areas along the corridor have an excessive number of curb cuts (driveways). Typically, the largest contributors to this potential safety concern are smaller parcels with more than one curb cut. The distance from parcel curb cuts to public street intersections constitutes an additional safety concern.



- Historically, the Miracle Mile has been recognized locally as a primary 'cruising' route. Weekend nights are a particularly popular time for this type of activity, as young people come from throughout the county to combine a leisurely drive or two down Park Avenue with an evening of socializing and spectating in the adjacent parking lots. In general, property owners have had negative experiences as a result of this activity, and common problems include underage drinking, curfew violations and vandalism of private property as well as loitering.



Source: Mansfield News Journal

Parking

- Parking along the Miracle Mile is sufficiently provided and consists of privately owned surface lots on individual parcels. One isolated issue exists at the Scores nightclub at the east end of the corridor. Large crowds and a significant deficiency of on-site parking have created parking problems, as a building with a reported capacity of 600 is zoned for 60 parking spaces. The current operator has “addressed” this problem by running a shuttle to the nightclub from the nearby Premier Office complex.
- The existing surface parking lots have a significant impact on the aesthetics of the corridor. The large expanses of pavement associated with the major retail centers generally lack sufficient landscaping to mitigate their visual and environmental impacts. Parking or pavement setbacks are inconsistent, and in some locations non-existent, as the parking areas meet the public sidewalk.



Pedestrian Environment and Streetscape

While pedestrian activity along this vehicular corridor is not as critical to revitalization as it is downtown, several issues affect the safety of the pedestrian environment and the visual qualities of the public streetscape.

- Unnecessary curb cuts create avoidable conflicts between pedestrians and motorists.
- Pedestrian crosswalks are not clearly delineated. In some cases, paint striping has not been maintained.
- Lighting along the Miracle Mile is currently accomplished with 'cobra' head style fixtures mounted to wood utility poles. These fixtures provide for basic lighting of the road surface.
- There is no unified planting of street trees along Park Avenue to help visually unify the corridor and provide relief for pedestrians. Any tree plantings along this corridor should carefully consider the preservation of views to retailers.
- The B&O bike trail crosses under Park Avenue between the east zone and the central zone. This recreational amenity is extremely popular south of the Miracle Mile. It currently extends from Butler, through Lexington, and terminates just north of the Miracle Mile at North Lake Park. The path location below Park Avenue and the amount of tree cover limit the visibility to the path and may contribute to a lack of a sense of security in this specific location. The existing access from the bike path to the Park Avenue street level is steep and not visible from street level. No accommodations currently exist along Park Avenue for bicycles, such as designated lanes, bike racks, or signage.



Architecture/Building Stock

- There are no historic structures along the corridor. The majority of buildings appear to be structurally sound as a result of their relatively young age.
- With the exception of the retail centers, there is no consistency of building materials, colors, or setbacks as a result of the parcel-by-parcel development of the corridor and a lack of any unified design standards.

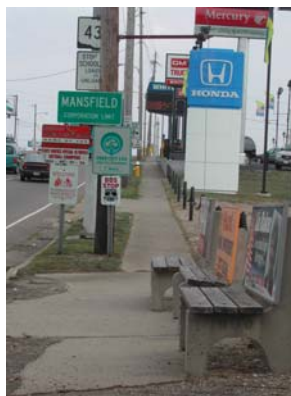


Signage/Wayfinding

- There is little recognition of the Miracle Mile as a special place or attraction along the major interstates.
- No directional signage exists along Trimble Road, Fourth Street or Lexington-Springmill Road to encourage potential customers to visit the Miracle Mile.
- No gateway elements exist at the east end or the west end to announce this corridor to visitors. In addition, no district identification exists such as standard street signs or banners.



- The extremely wide range of business identification signs along the corridor is indicative of a lack of control over sign sizes, types, setbacks, and sign information. Billboards, temporary changeable copy signs, and large multi-tenant signs add significantly to the visual clutter of the corridor. However, some signs could be considered landmarks along the corridor because of their unique design and age. The Park Lanes bowling pin sign is one such example.



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Market Analysis

The City of Mansfield is strategically located along I-71, the main transportation corridor connecting Columbus and Cleveland. Originally founded in 1813, the city is situated in the Appalachian Foothills of North Central Ohio, some 79 miles southwest of Cleveland and 65 miles northeast of Columbus. In addition to I-71, seven other major highways pass through the Mansfield/Richland County area, and in 1998, eight percent of the U.S. population lived within 150 miles of Richland County⁵. The area's transportation network and proximity to other metropolitan centers has allowed an increasing number of residents to enjoy the benefits of 'small town' living, while working outside of the county. In 1990 approximately 6,000 people worked somewhere other than in Richland County. By 2000, that number had increased by over 40% to 10,400⁶.

⁵ Source: Richland Economic Development Corporation

⁶ Source: Richland Economic Development Corporation; Census 2000

⁷ Source: Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services

⁸ Source: U.S. Department of Labor

⁹ Source all except as noted: Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, 1990

In 1813, Mansfield was located very much on the edge of the new frontier, and its true growth began only in the 1850's with the arrival of the railroad. After the Civil War, Mansfield became an industrial city and manufacturing remains the predominant economic engine in Richland County. In 2001, manufacturing accounted for 26% of the county's employment base⁷ in comparison with 19% for the country as a whole⁸.

Key Demographic Characteristics⁹

Key demographic characteristics are described below for Mansfield, and in some cases for four Ohio cities of comparable size, Findlay, Lima, Marion and Newark:

Population	Mansfield	Findlay	Lima	Marion	Newark
	51,600	38,967	40,081	35,318	46,279

Market Size - Mansfield's Census 2000 population was 51,600, an increase of 1.9% from 1990's total of 50,627. During this same period, Richland County grew by 2% to slightly less than 129,000 persons.

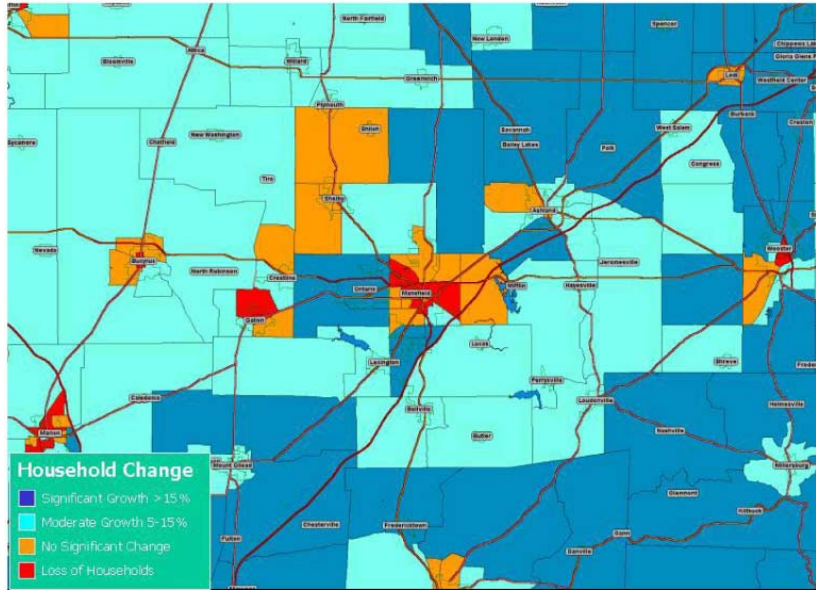
Age Characteristics – Mansfield’s population is aging, and this trend has occurred at a rate that exceeds a similar national pattern. In 1990, 36% of the population was under 25 years of age. By 2000, those under 25 represented just 33% of the total, while the comparable U.S. figure declined to slightly more than 35%. The city’s elderly population, those 65 and over, now accounts for approximately 15.5% of the total, compared with 12.4% in the U.S. as a whole, meaning that there are some 1,500 more ‘senior citizens’ than would be typical for a population of this size.

Percent of Population	Mansfield	Findlay	Lima	Marion	Newark
Under 25	33%	36%	39%	35%	35%
Over 65	15%	14%	13%	13%	15%

Household Characteristics – Mansfield had 20,182 households according to the most recent census, and this figure was essentially unchanged from that recorded in 1990. During the same period, the number of households increased in Richland County by almost 4%. The composition of these households, which particularly reflect significant declines in family households, can be summarized as follows:

	2000 Census	1990 Census
Households	20,182	20,197
Family Households	60%	64%
Married Couples	41%	47%
Non-Family Households	40%	36%
Householders Living Alone	35%	32%

The ongoing effect of suburbanization on the area’s urban centers over the past ten years is depicted below, with the areas in red Mansfield, Galion, Marion and Wooster, showing an actual loss of households.



Finally, it is also important to note that, in part because of an aging demographic and in part because of the nature of those who tend to choose urban living, Mansfield has a significant population living in households without children:

Number of Households w/o Children	Mansfield
Family Households	6,520
Married Couples	5,057
Householder Living Alone	7,018
Householder 65 and Over	2,776

% Households w/o Children	Mansfield	Findlay	Lima	Marion	Newark
Family Households	32%	34%	32%	33%	32%
Married Couples	25%	19%	15%	17%	26%
Householder Living Alone	35%	30%	34%	29%	32%
Householder 65 and Over	14%	10%	14%	12%	13%

Income Characteristics – In 2000, the median household income in Mansfield was \$30,176, an increase from \$22,591 in 1990. Nevertheless, this 34% increase fell well short of the 43% experienced on a statewide basis. The average 2000 income of the 14,891 Mansfield households with earnings was \$40,655, compared with \$53,000 in the state. 16% of the city residents reported income below the poverty level, and 4.7% of all Mansfield households received some form of public assistance. Comparable figures for Ohio are 11% and 3% respectively. Conversely, only 11% of households reported income over \$75,000 compared to 16% in Richland County and 20% across Ohio.

Households	Mansfield	Findlay	Lima	Marion	Newark
Median Income	\$30,176	\$40,883	\$27,067	\$33,124	\$34,791
Average income	\$40,655	\$49,867	\$36,175	\$40,794	\$42,405
% Receiving Assistance	4.7%	2.4%	6.1%	4.0%	3.8%

Individuals	Mansfield	Findlay	Lima	Marion	Newark
% In Poverty	16.3%	9.1%	22.7%	13.8%	13.0%

Housing Characteristics – Mansfield’s housing market, as is the case with other older urban areas, is characterized by a significant proportion of renter-occupied housing units. In 2000, over 42% of all housing units were occupied by renters, an increase from 39% in 1990. During this period, the rental vacancy rate increased from 8.2% to 10.6%, although in its recently completed downtown housing study, the Danter Company computed the overall Mansfield area vacancy rate to be 4.5%, and characterized the market as being limited by supply rather than demand.

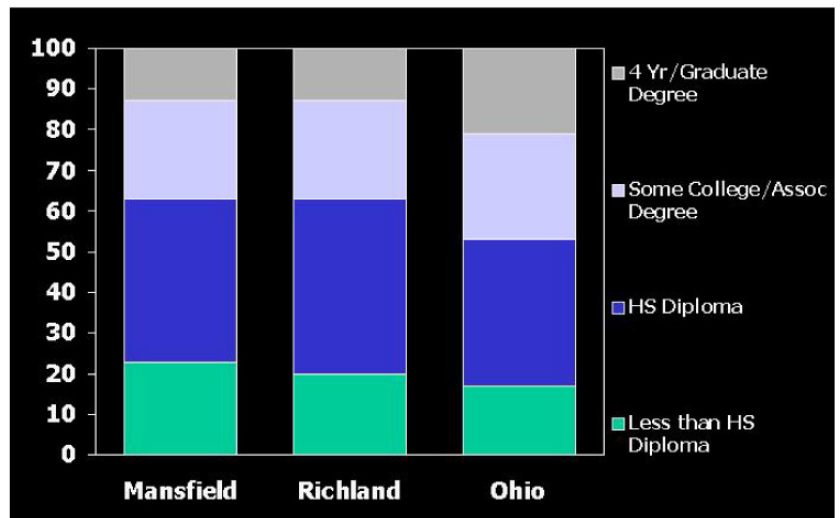
As indicated above, the 4% growth in number of Richland County households has taken place outside of the area’s urban centers, with available land contributing to both suburbanization and affordable homes. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) First Quarter 2002 Housing Opportunity Index ranked the Mansfield MSA 19th regionally and 25th nationally, with 84% of its homes considered to be ‘affordable’ based on median family income, and in its survey the Danter Company estimated that homes valued at less than \$100,000 comprise over 85% of the single family market in Mansfield itself.

Like many other older urban cities, Mansfield has also had to deal with increasing housing vacancies and its attendant blighting effect. 556 units were identified in the 2000 census as being neither for rent nor for sale. Significantly, the Danter Company estimated that over three-fourths of all downtown homes are investor-owned, usually an indication that properties are subject to neglect and eventually abandonment.

	Mansfield	Findlay	Lima	Marion	Newark
% Renting	42%	35%	43%	37%	42%
Units Neither For Sale Nor For Rent	556	212	577	241	326

Education Characteristics -

Educational attainment in Mansfield and Richland County are comparable, but lower than that of Ohio as a whole:



Ethnic Characteristics – Mansfield is more ethnically diverse than either Richland County or the State of Ohio, and diversity has increased over the past ten years:

Mansfield	2000 Census	1990 Census
Non-White	23%	19%
White	77%	81%

	Mansfield	Findlay	Lima	Marion	Newark
Non-White	23%	7%	31%	10%	6%
White	77%	93%	69%	90%	94%

Employment Characteristics – As noted above, manufacturing accounts for approximately 26% of Richland County employment, and the absolute number of manufacturing jobs has remained essentially unchanged over the past decade at approximately 22,000. A detailed breakdown of county employment by industry indicates the following:

Manufacturing	26%
State & local Government	15%
Retail trade	13%
Health care and social assistance	12%
Accommodation and food services	8%
Administrative and waste services	6%
Other services, except public administration	4%
Construction	3%
Information	2%
Finance and insurance	2%
Wholesale trade	2%
Transportation and warehousing	2%
Professional and technical services	2%
All other	3%

The following comparison indicates that Mansfield itself is led by its manufacturing sector, but like the rest of the country has moved noticeably closer over the past decade to being a service and information based economy.

Mansfield	2000	%	1990	%
Total employed persons 16 years and over	20,811	100%	20,519	100%
Manufacturing	5,019	24%	5,887	29%
Education, health, and social services	3,756	18%	3,316	16%
Retail trade	2,494	12%	3,746	18%
All other	9,542	46%	7,570	37%

Percent employed In	Ohio	Mansfield	Findlay	Lima	Marion	Newark
Manufacturing	20%	24%	26%	25%	28%	19%
Education, health and social services	20%	18%	19%	18%	17%	18%
Retail trade	12%	12%	12%	13%	12%	13%
All other	48%	46%	43%	44%	43%	50%

Psychographic Characteristics - The Claritas PRIZM

Psychographic Segmentation summarizes broad demographic patterns in a market. These descriptors (see Appendix 4) provide additional insight into data obtained from an analysis based upon standard census information, and are particularly helpful in this instance given that just seven categories account for 93% of all Mansfield households.

In the context of downtown revitalization, particular note should be paid to the following (number of households in parentheses; average Mansfield household size - 2.28):

Sunset City Blues (3,749) – Claritas characterizes these households as being older and on the cusp of retiring from blue collar and service occupations. In retirement, most Sunset City Blues remain in their original communities rather than moving

Segment Name	Mansfield City		Richland County	
	Households	Percent	Households	Percent
Family Scramble	4,288	20%	5,878	12%
Sunset City Blues	3,749	18%	6,279	13%
Middleburg Managers	3,091	15%	3,545	7%
Southside City	3,022	14%	3,022	6%
Smalltown Downtown	2,189	10%	2,189	4%
Hometown Retired	1,879	9%	1,879	4%
Starter Families	1,609	8%	1,796	4%
Gray Power	790	4%	790	2%
Second City Elite	550	3%	1,014	2%
Towns & Gowns	20	0%	20	0%
Shotguns & Pickups	13	0%	2,916	6%
Middle America	2	0%	5,553	11%
Total Segmented	21,202		49,938	

to warmer climates. Home ownership predominates in this group, but 29% are renters. This group enjoys moderate income levels.

Middleburg Managers (3,091) – These households represent the mid-level white-collar citizens of America’s smaller cities. Half of this group is older and married with grown children, while the other half

is young and single with no children. 66% of Middleburg Managers own their own home, but 34% are renters.

Smalltown Downtown (2,189) – The group is characterized by young single individuals, often working in entry-level white-collar sales and technical jobs. They often live near city colleges, enjoy lower middle incomes and are predominantly renters.

Second City Elite (550) – This group is part of a cluster representing the top of the economic scale in America’s “second” and “satellite” cities. Home ownership predominates in this group, meaning that as these well-off individuals age, some would become attractive candidates for upscale condominium living.

Consumer Expenditures - According to REDC, the Richland County Influence Area covers a 757 square mile area with a total population of over 375,000 people. The following table

County	1999 Effective Buying Income (000)	1999 Total Retail Sales (000)	Retail Sales as a % of Effective Buying Income
Ashland	\$731,489	\$385,955	53%
Crawford	665,460	288,899	43%
Huron	851,845	501,359	59%
Knox	763,737	390,448	51%
Morrow	401,749	150,052	37%
Richland	1,823,949	1,548,248	85%

illustrates the buying power of this seven-county region and the percent of buying income spent by residents in their county: Because retail sales as a % of effective buying income are low except in Richland County, it suggests that Richland’s central location and retail concentration allow it to capture retail trade from the surrounding counties.

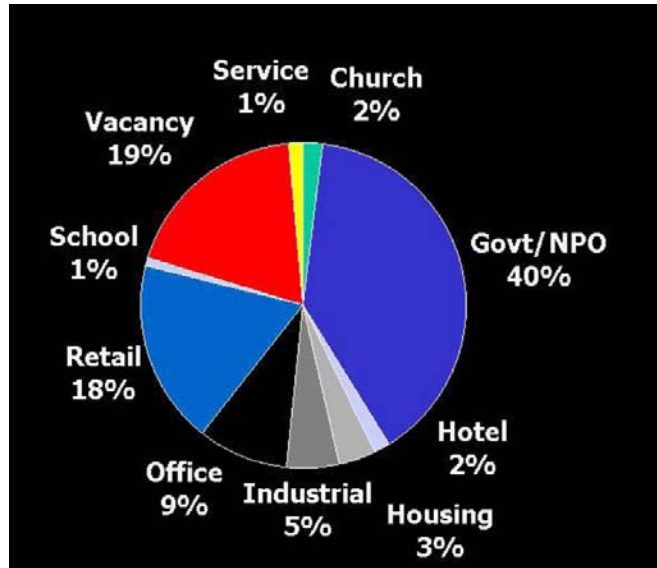
In 2002, residents of Mansfield and Richland County spent their effective buying income in the following store types:

Category	Mansfield City		Richland County	
	\$(000s)	Percent	\$(000s)	Percent
Grocery Stores	\$82,821	12%	\$226,076	12%
General Merchandise Stores	55,882	8%	156,085	8%
Total Accommodation and Food Services	54,682	8%	151,567	8%
Auto Dealers	52,883	8%	176,768	9%
Eating Places	43,992	7%	121,433	6%
Department Stores (Excluding Leased)	36,706	5%	103,051	5%
Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	24,268	4%	67,933	4%
Drug and Proprietary Stores	24,152	4%	63,877	3%
Full-service Restaurants	22,694	3%	64,460	3%
Apparel Stores	22,652	3%	65,198	3%
Limited Service Eating Places	21,298	3%	56,974	3%
Warehouse Clubs and Superstores	14,883	2%	40,862	2%
Electronic Shopping & Mail Order	9,747	1%	27,342	1%
Gasoline Stations w/o Convenience Stores	9,159	1%	26,495	1%
Building Material and Supply	8,748	1%	26,520	1%
Furniture Stores	6,656	1%	19,764	1%
Home Furnishing Stores	5,275	1%	15,732	1%
Convenience Stores	4,981	1%	13,507	1%
Radio/TV/Computer/Music Stores	4,542	1%	12,843	1%
Automotive Part, Accessories & Tire Stores	3,572	1%	10,592	1%
Book Stores	3,124	0%	8,589	0%
Drinking Places	3,030	0%	8,314	0%
Hobby, Toy, and Game Shops	3,007	0%	8,397	0%
Shoe Stores	2,934	0%	8,317	0%
Jewelry Stores	2,820	0%	8,140	0%
Sporting Goods/Bicycle Shops	2,495	0%	7,230	0%
Household Appliance Stores	2,490	0%	7,086	0%
Gift, Novelty, and Souvenir Stores	2,225	0%	6,321	0%
Home Centers	2,178	0%	6,512	0%
Retail Nursery/Lawn/Garden Supply	1,365	0%	4,376	0%
Computer & Software Stores	1,333	0%	3,973	0%
Nursery and Garden Centers	1,142	0%	3,496	0%
Hardware Stores	955	0%	2,851	0%
Sew/Needlework/Piece Goods Stores	943	0%	2,753	0%
Florists	563	0%	1,783	0%
Camera/Photographic Supply Stores	468	0%	1,372	0%
Clothing Accessory Stores	335	0%	963	0%
Luggage and Leather Goods Stores	205	0%	609	0%

Downtown Property

The following incorporates results of a field survey conducted by First Avenues and reflects both the prominent current role of the city and county offices as well as the large number of currently vacant properties in the downtown area.

Approximately 65% of this vacant square footage was designed to be used for retailing operations, either as store fronts, or on upper floors.



Data from the survey reflected the following current downtown retail mix by square footage, notable particularly for the relative lack of those operations typically associated with city and government centers, particularly full- and limited-service restaurants and convenience retailers such as dry cleaners:

Financial Services	44,900	Grocery	5,200
Theater	21,000	Office Supply	5,000
Home	17,700	Resale	4,400
Auto	15,900	Art	4,100
Bar	11,900	Jewelry	4,100
Gift	10,700	Medical	4,000
Hobby	10,200	Shoes	4,000
Beauty	9,800	Apparel	3,000
Books	9,000	Travel	3,000
Florist	8,500	Service	1,600
Drug	8,000	Luggage	1,000
Restaurant	6,700	Photography	900
Funeral	6,500	Realty	800
Laundry	6,500	Tobacco	800

For businesses seeking a downtown location, and exposure to its visitors and approximately 5,100 daytime workers¹⁰, downtown space is affordable. Survey work by First Avenues indicates that commercial rental rates vary from \$5 to \$9 per square foot on a “triple net” basis, with rates in the newly rehabilitated Carrousel District buildings falling in the same range. Commercial lease rates in comparable communities tend to be slightly higher, on the average of \$7 to \$10 per square foot, and this difference is undoubtedly reflective of the current vacancy situation as noted above.

Downtown Merchant Characteristics

Downtown merchants were asked to respond to a written survey distributed by First Avenues. Selected results are as follows:

- Average tenure - 20 years
- Local shoppers - 50%
- Female/male - 66%/34%
- 2002 better or worse? - 56% indicated worse
- DT merchant strengths - Service, quality selection
- DT weakness - Parking

Hotels Serving Downtown Mansfield

Seventeen hotels and bed and breakfast establishments, with an aggregate of some 1,500 rooms, are located in close proximity to downtown Mansfield. These hotels, most of which benefit from sites near key transportation routes, are currently operating at a 65% occupancy rate¹¹, well in excess of Ohio’s current rate of 55.4%¹². Significantly, 65% of all visitors to these establishments are from outside Ohio, indicating that there is a regular presence in the area of visitors who may represent a partially untapped market for Mansfield’s retailers.

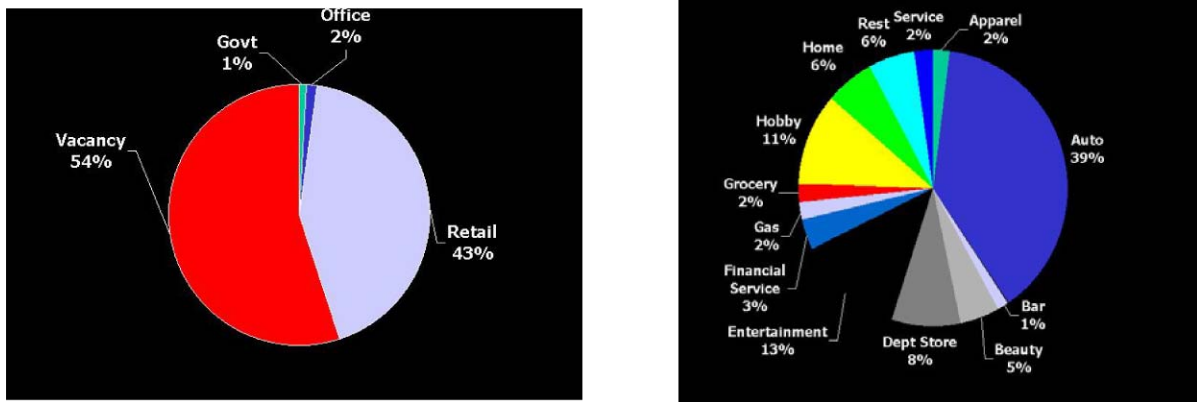
¹⁰ Source: Richland County Regional Planning

¹¹ Source: Mansfield & Richland County Convention and Visitors Bureau

¹² Source: Dayton/Montgomery County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Miracle Mile Property

The results of First Avenues’ field work at the Miracle Mile indicates the relative size of the retailing uses in the zone as well as the magnitude of current vacancies. The mix of existing retail establishments is separately depicted:



Limited responses (16) to a survey conducted by First Avenues indicates that commercial rental rates vary widely, from as little as \$1.50 per square foot to as much as \$15. Five of the respondents indicated that their rental rates were less than \$5 per square foot, an indication of an area in distress.

Miracle Mile Merchant Characteristics

Miracle Mile merchants were also asked to respond to a written survey distributed by First Avenues. Selected results for these merchants are as follows:

- Average tenure - 20 years
- Local shoppers - 66%
- Female/male - 66%/34%
- 2002 better or worse? - 71% indicated worse
- MM merchant strengths - Service, quality selection
- MM weakness - Vacancies

Competitive Retail

Like cities throughout the country, Mansfield has felt the impact of suburban retailing over the past four decades. According to research by Main Street Mansfield, there were 107 retail stores in downtown Mansfield alone in 1967, and these establishments accounted for 15% of all retail sales in the county. Just ten years later, with the advent of Richland Mall, these figures had declined to 74 stores doing just 5% of countywide sales. Today, in part as a result of private investment around the Carrousel, downtown has approximately 90 retailers, but the ‘hollowing-out’ effect of suburban and ‘big box’ retailing has now taken its toll in the Miracle Mile retail zone, where as noted above, 54% of all space is vacant.

Competitive retail in the Mansfield area continues to be dominated by shopping opportunities clustered near Ontario: Westfield (formerly Richland) Mall, with its Lazarus, Penney’s, Sears and Kaufmann’s stores, and a wide variety of adjacent ‘big box’ merchants and franchise restaurants. This area benefits most directly from being the established shopping location in a relatively slow growth market, and from its excellent exposure to US 30.

There are other strip centers, such as the Johnny Appleseed Shopping Center, which is owned by the same company that controls Kingsgate Mall, located throughout the Mansfield area. Some, like Johnny Appleseed, which is anchored by a Kroger Super Center and offers a variety of specialty retail stores and fast food restaurants, are relatively successful. However, even Johnny Appleseed and Ontario have empty retail spaces, reflecting the tendency to over-development seen in many areas of the country.

The following table is suggestive of how retailers have gravitated to Ontario and the impact this clustering has had on Lexington, Miracle Mile and downtown Mansfield.

Mansfield Retail Competitive Snapshot															
L' indicates major presence (large number or big box), 's' indicates small retailer															
	Restaurant / Bar	Entertainment	Grocery	Home	Electronics	Apparel	Automotive	Sporting/Hobbies	Jewelry	Department	Books	Personal/Professional Services	Health & Personal Care	Hardware	Nursery & Garden
Ontario	L	L	L	L	L	L	s	L	L	L	L	s	L	L	
Lexington	s		s			s	s		s			s	s		s
Miracle Mile	s	L		s		s	L	L	s	s		L	s		
Downtown	L	s		s		s	s	s	s		s	s	s		

Market Analysis – Key Findings

- There has been little recent growth in Mansfield’s population. Richland County’s population is also growing slowly.
- Mansfield’s population is aging, and psychographic profiles suggest that members of many older households will remain in the area during their retirement. Providing a satisfactory quality of life for these residents will be an increasingly important issue.
- There are an increasing number of non-traditional households in Mansfield, including those with persons living alone. The city also has a significant population living in households without children.
- Median and average income levels in Mansfield are measurably below statewide norms, but comparable to cities like Marion and Newark.
- Mansfield has a relatively large number of modestly priced rental units. Market rate developments have comprised a small proportion of recent construction.
- Single family housing in the Mansfield area is highly affordable, and has undoubtedly contributed to the growth of households living outside the area’s urban centers.
- Levels of educational attainment in Mansfield and Richland County are comparable, but somewhat lower than those in Ohio as a whole.
- Mansfield’s minority population has increase measurably over the past decade.

- Manufacturing continues to dominate Mansfield's employment base, but the absolute number of manufacturing jobs has decreased by five percent since 1990. With this decreased reliance on manufacturing Mansfield, like Findlay, Lima, Marion and Newark, continues to move closer to being a service and information-based economy
- Mansfield households are dominated by a relatively small number of psychographic segments. Two of these groups, 'Sunset City Blues' and 'Middleburg Managers' can be characterized as 'middle income', with approximately one-third of each renting their place of residence.
- Consumer expenditure data indicate that the majority of Richland County's effective buying income continues to be spent in the area, but regional shopping opportunities can be expected to erode this somewhat over time.
- Mansfield's proximity to key transportation routes, the multitude of tourist attractions in the area, and the large number of out-of-state guests staying in local hotels suggest that there may be an untapped market for Mansfield's retailers.

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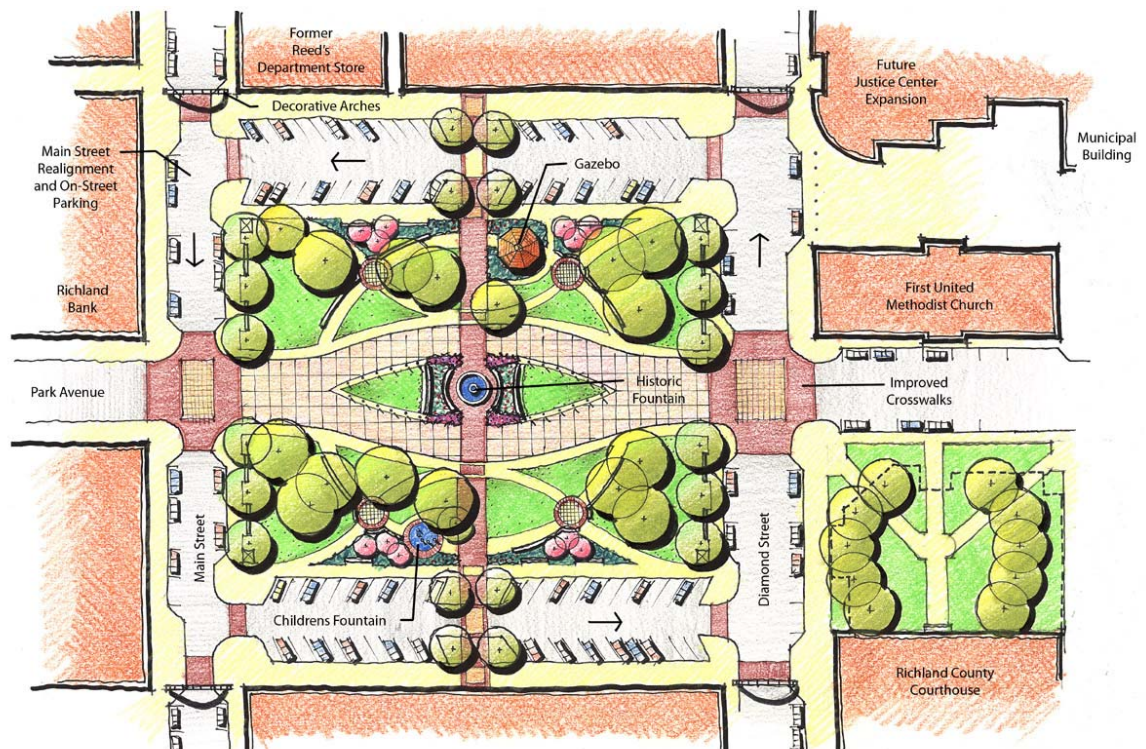
Mansfield

Goals & Vision - Downtown

Goal 1: Reestablish the Square as the heart and economic center of Mansfield.

Tactic 1: Create a unified pedestrian-friendly space that defines the image of downtown Mansfield.

In order to celebrate the Square as the symbolic center of the downtown and of Mansfield, several physical enhancements should be considered. It is important to recognize that the boundaries of the Square are not simply the remaining lawn areas or 'park space' around which people drive, but rather the actual building façades that enclose the space. As such, the following recommendations address physical enhancements to architecture, vehicular roadways, and pedestrian spaces. The overriding goal of all enhancements is to activate the Square and create a unique sense of place that defines the image of Mansfield and its downtown.



- Realign Main Street on the western edge of the Square. Straighten the road alignment and provide parallel parking along each side. This new alignment will eliminate the existing trees that currently block views to potential retailers and screen significant architecture. Additional on-street parking will help activate retail storefronts along this edge.
- In the near term, maintain the one-way vehicular circulation pattern around the Square. See *Circulation Pattern Recommendations* under **Goal 3** for long-term improvements.
- Maximize the number of on-street parking spaces to provide convenient customer parking. Add new spaces along Main Street while preserving the existing spaces on North Park, South Park, and Diamond Street. See *Parking Recommendations* under **Goal 3** for improvements to parking operations and enforcement.
- Continue to encourage façade restoration around the Square through an enhanced version of Main Street Mansfield’s Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program. The program currently offers matching grants of up to \$1,000 per building and owner per year. A total of \$10,000 was available for matching grants in 2002. Individual grant amounts and the total available are insufficient to encourage meaningful investment in façade enhancements. Over time and with consideration for other funding recommendations contained in this plan, an effort should be made to increase the total amount of funding available on an annual basis. In the meantime, consideration should be given to offering fewer grants in larger amounts, either four at \$2,500 each or two at \$5,000 each so that the loans will act as real incentives to property owners who might otherwise not consider or be able to afford to improve their façades. Assistance should be designed to encourage additional investment and act as a catalyst to dramatic improvement in downtown’s appearance and image. In the short term, grants should be prioritized for buildings located on the Square.

The City of Mansfield also offers a matching façade program, with \$25,000 currently provided annually from CDBG funds. Grants are based on a one-to-one match with the owner’s investment, and are subject to the annual allocation amount approved by the Mansfield City Council. The City should be

encouraged to consider expanding this program, and to ensure that grants are of sufficient size to properly incent property owners.

- The Local Landmark Historic District status that is currently being pursued for the area designated as the Central Park Historic District will establish an architectural design review process to ensure preservation of and appropriate renovations to the existing building stock as well as any future additions. A critical first step following the establishment of the Local Landmark District will be the creation of a comprehensive set of preservation guidelines to underlie the design review process. These guidelines also serve as a helpful resource document for developers, as they explore rehabilitation and preservation alternatives. See *Provide property owners with the tools and incentives to renovate their historic buildings* under **Goal 2**, Tactic 9, for more detailed information on this proposed district and other tools and incentives to preserve the character of downtown.
- Illuminate the façades of the buildings that face the Square at night in order to emphasize the importance of the buildings as the primary destinations and as elements that define the Square.
- Clearly delineate each threshold into the Square with specialty pavement or painting at the crosswalks and decorative arches. Replicas of the arches that once lined Main Street could be used to reinforce the edges of the Square and to visually link the Square to the Carrousel District.



This historic photo shows a decorative arch at the Southeast threshold to the Square.
Source: Mick Tridico



Illuminated arches once lined Main Street.
Source: Mick Tridico

- Clearly define all pedestrian crosswalks with specialty pavement or painting. The minimum width for crosswalks should be 12 feet.
- Encourage outdoor dining around the Square. The city should grant easements within the public right-of-way where necessary to promote outdoor dining. Easements should only be granted where sufficient distance exists between buildings and the curb to accommodate both pedestrian flow and tables with chairs for dining.
- Maintain a minimum 12 foot canopy height on all existing trees within the Square to preserve visibility across the Square to retail storefronts. Only large deciduous shade trees should be planted in the Square. Evergreens and small ornamental trees not only impede views across the Square, but can aggravate crime risk by creating places of concealment. Prune all trees regularly to maintain the canopy height and to allow filtered sunlight to reach the ground plane for good turf establishment.

Tactic 2: Use the Square to celebrate Mansfield and its history.

The existing water fountain was originally located at the center of the Square.
Source: Mick Tridico



FOUNTAIN IN PUBLIC SQUARE, MANSFIELD, OHIO.

- Return the historic water fountain to its original location in the center of the Square. Allow vehicular traffic to circulate around the landmark. Establish a mid-block pedestrian crossing signal that can be activated by pedestrians when required. Utilize specialty pavement along the Park Avenue segment that divides the Square to minimize the roadway's visual impact and reinforce the pedestrian qualities of the space. Test the concept of temporarily blocking vehicular traffic through the Square for special

events when full pedestrian use of the Square is required. This technique has been used successfully in a number of communities.

On Friday nights in Monrovia, California, four blocks of Myrtle Avenue are closed off for a festival that includes a farmer's market, music, arts and crafts booths, food vendors and entertainment for children. In Portland, the Pioneer Courthouse Square has come to be known as 'the city's living room' in reference to its enhanced civic role as a place for the public to gather. Its modern design includes public art, amenities, flowers, trees, walls and stairs designed for sitting.



Pioneer Market, Portland, Oregon,
<http://www.pps.org>

See *Circulation Pattern Recommendations* under **Goal 3** for future considerations. (Note: Complete elimination of the Park Avenue 'cut through' may be impractical based upon the current vehicular patterns through downtown.)

- While the water fountain should be given a place of prominence at the center of the Square, a second interactive water feature could be added along South Park Street. This feature should be more pedestrian in scale and serve as an attraction for children. The gazebo should be preserved as an attraction on the north side of the park.



This waterfeature in downtown Oxford, Ohio is a popular attraction.

- Prioritize and organize existing and proposed monuments, memorials and artwork throughout the Square. Lack of standards for these important elements can lead to a landscape that is cluttered with random pieces at differing scales. The four quadrants should be reserved for four major pieces. These elements may honor war veterans, historic artifacts, or individuals who have made significant contributions to the city. The scale of these elements should be appropriate with the quadrant and not compete with or overwhelm the gazebo or the fountain. The lawn should also be maintained in these quadrants as the primary ground plane material.
- Develop a system for organizing all of the minor monuments and memorials throughout the rest of the Square. Utilize a standard plaque that can be mounted within low retaining walls around the perimeter of the lawn area and/or integrated into the sidewalks. These elements may include interpretive historical facts as well as commemorating significant groups and individuals that have contributed to the community.
- The Design Committee of Main Street Mansfield or the Historic Preservation Commission should establish selection criteria for major and minor memorials and monuments with input from organizations representing Mansfield's various constituencies. An additional war memorial, a Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial and a memorial to John Sherman are being discussed at the present time. A memorial to Mansfield's role in the Underground Railroad was also mentioned as a possibility in focus group interviews.
- Locate information kiosks at the four corners of the Square. These kiosks should provide a directory to businesses and institutions on the Square as well as to other destinations in downtown and greater Mansfield. Directories can also provide a calendar for upcoming events.

Tactic 3: Reorient city and county facilities located on the east side of the Square so that they address the Square and frame its eastern edge.

- Strengthen the physical connections to the municipal building and the county building on the east side of the Square. These two important institutional buildings have very little presence on the Square as a result of their orientation, setback and landscaping.
- Provide a diagonal sidewalk from the county building entrance to the corner of Diamond Street and Park Avenue. Improvements to crosswalks throughout the Square will also strengthen the pedestrian connections to both of these buildings.
- Any future additions to the municipal building, including a possible Justice Center, should attempt to address the Square in a significant way. This building should engage the existing pedestrian plaza and become a landmark as viewed from the Square. Strong consideration should be given to incorporating structured parking into this expansion. See *Parking Recommendations* under **Goal 3**.
- Any future additions to the county building should also attempt to engage the Square and thereby establish a greater presence as a landmark building. The original courthouse once occupied the lawn area to the north of the existing building and served as a landmark on the Square. The elevation change from Diamond Street to Franklin Street may also be conducive to creating structured parking at the lower levels of any future addition. See *Parking Recommendations* under **Goal 3**.

Goal 2: Dramatically improve the appearance and safety perception of downtown.

The most successful retailers, restaurants and shopping centers pay close and careful attention to the appearance of their spaces – and with good reason. Consumers demand cleanliness, orderliness and an attractive and safe environment in which to shop and dine. Most workers and residents value the same types of environments.

Downtown’s appearance could be improved dramatically and quickly by, as one interviewee put it, “focusing on the little things that make all the difference”.

Appearance of Public Spaces:

Tactic 1: Establish a higher standard.

Downtown is, in a sense, the community’s ‘living room.’ To be an appealing place to visit and linger, it needs to be clean, attractive, well maintained and safe. Although downtown Mansfield has a historic Square and the Carrousel District has won national awards, its overall appearance suffers greatly from inconsistent maintenance of buildings, sidewalks, streets and streetscape elements. To become the attraction it has the potential to be and the source of pride its citizens desire, a higher standard of maintenance, cleanliness, safety and design must be established.

Tactic 2 : Create a program to address sidewalks and streets.

Studies have shown that one of the first things visitors to downtowns or shopping centers notice is what is under their feet. While some property owners conscientiously clean and maintain the sidewalks in front of their properties, others do little or nothing. With disparate and often absentee ownership, voluntary cooperation is unlikely to succeed. The city is not legally responsible for most of the sidewalks and, furthermore, officials indicate they lack the funds that would be required.

- **Temporarily fund downtown sidewalk and gutter cleaning with voluntary assessments and donations.**
Consideration should be given to temporarily funding the staff and equipment necessary to keep downtown sidewalks and gutters clean with voluntary contributions from property owners and businesses and supplement contributions from other sources if required. Keeping downtown sidewalks and streets as clean as they ought to be would require an investment in the proper equipment, uniforms and one or two full-time staff positions. In winter months, staff could be responsible for removal of snow and ice from sidewalks. Some communities train staff to be goodwill ambassadors as well, greeting and guiding visitors. Staffing could be subcontracted from a non-profit organization such as Goodwill Industries. Temporary clean up activities could also be organized with the help of local children's groups or mandated as community participation for individuals in programs like MANCI.

- **Based on the success of these efforts, pursue establishment of a Special Improvement District.**
Ultimately, sidewalk maintenance would be an ideal task for a SID funded by an assessment on downtown property owners. See *Funding Recommendations* under **Goal 7**.

- **Establish a program of sidewalk replacement.** While selective replacement has been accomplished as funds allowed, the city should consider establishing a program of sidewalk replacement in all areas of the CBD focusing first on the core area in the immediate vicinity of the Square. Property owners could be assessed the cost of repairing or replacing the sidewalks in front of their properties. The same priorities should be established for street repair and repaving in the CBD.

Tactic 3: Enhance the existing streetscape.

- **Implement alternatives to the current street tree approach.** The existing streetscape seriously restricts the visibility of downtown businesses and historic architecture to passing traffic, especially on the Square. Since retailers depend absolutely upon traffic and visibility, alternative approaches should be developed that address the needs and goals of both downtown merchants and the community. For example, as trees die or otherwise need to be replaced, reposition them at building edges so that they frame the storefront instead of blocking it. Mix in other types of plants such as hanging and flowering baskets to provide diversity and color during summer months. Consider using awnings as alternative shade providers.



- **Establish new streetscape design standards for the future.** Ultimately, new streetscape design standards should be established incorporating trees, planters, and street furniture. The standards should be designed to strengthen the unique character of the existing architecture in downtown Mansfield and secure a higher level of quality and distinctiveness throughout the district.



- **Upgrade amenities.** Although the city does have a number of durable trash receptacles and benches, consideration should be given to eventually replacing them with a design that would be more reflective of the historic character of downtown. A program of public art could also be instituted. Many communities have successfully employed public art competitions to beautify areas of their downtowns. Grants are frequently available for such programs.

- **Increase storefront activity.**
Encouraging sidewalk signs and merchandise displays during business hours would add interest and activity to downtown environment. Outside dining could also be encouraged in select locations where it would not interfere with pedestrian movement.



- **Consider creating a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to fund public improvements and perhaps additional parking.**
See Funding Recommendations under Goal 7.

Safety Perception:

Due to the presence of a limited number of panhandlers and loitering in downtown, some of the stakeholders interviewed for this project perceive areas in the district to be unsafe, especially at night. Most of Mansfield has experienced a decline in crime over the past several years. However, downtown continues to have its share of both violent and petty crime, and as previously noted, downtown's image has undoubtedly been tarnished by crime in the surrounding neighborhoods. Whether the issue is reality or perception, safety is a serious issue that must be addressed if downtown is to attract new businesses, residents and visitors.

Many communities, including Chicago, St. Paul and Toronto, have published extensive design guidelines for safer neighborhoods. These guidelines utilize the three basic principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): target hardening, surveillance and territorial enforcement. Implementation of CPTED strategies has often yielded dramatic results. Gainesville, Florida reported a 65% decrease in convenience store robberies within eight months of adopting an ordinance based on CPTED principles¹.

¹ *Protecting our Community, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, A Proactive Strategy*, Bureau of Crime Prevention and Training, Office of the Florida Attorney General



This pedestrian alley represents an important connection to the Square and should be well lit.

Tactic 4: Address environmental elements of negative security and safety perception and utilize CPTED strategies

- Increase lighting in all areas adjacent to the district including side streets, alleys and rear parking areas but avoid creating areas of excessive brightness which can affect the ability of a person to see into other spaces and may make adjacent spaces seem dark in contrast.
- Secure stairwells and shared hallways behind and between buildings.
- Include CPTED techniques in design guidelines.
- Light building façades on the Square at night.

Tactic 5: Encourage the support of community policing efforts.

Community policing uses a proactive, problem-solving approach to identify and address potential problems before they become crime statistics. Like CPTED, successful community policing relies on partnerships with community, governmental, educational and social agencies. The existing community policing program is a good beginning and should be expanded.

Tactic 6: Increase foot and bike patrols.

- Foot patrols have been shown to lessen a community's fear of crime². As a start, foot patrols should be assigned to take a prominent role in downtown during special events and peak hours.
- Subject to funding, the Mansfield Police Department should be provided with the equipment and allocate the manpower to provide adequate levels of bike patrolling as soon as possible.
- The department could also evaluate the use of horse patrols as a supplement to foot and bike patrolling.



Tactic 7: Create block watch groups in downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Block watch efforts are an important part of a comprehensive crime prevention strategy. Work with area churches, district businesses and nearby residents to establish active block watch groups in downtown and surrounding neighborhoods and ensure that their surveillance efforts have the maximum amount of public exposure.

Tactic 8: Continue to address panhandling in the district.

The city has recently enacted an ordinance that severely restricts aggressive panhandling on private and public property, at ATM's and in vehicles on the street. Strict enforcement of this ordinance will help to improve downtown's image as an area that is safe for pedestrians.

² *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and Community Policing*, Research in Action, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, August, 1996

Appearance of the Built Environment:

Tactic 9: Provide property owners with the tools and incentives to renovate their historic buildings.

More than anything else, what gives downtown its distinctive character and identity is its historic architecture. Unfortunately, there are several buildings in downtown that show serious deterioration and/or obvious vacancy. There also seems to be an impression among many property owners that repairing some of these buildings and bringing them up to code would be cost prohibitive. The reality is that most, if not all, of downtown's historic buildings represent excellent investment opportunities if all of the possible tools are made available and properly applied.

- **Stabilize threatened structures.** An early priority in the revitalization effort must be stabilizing any threatened structures. Property owners of distressed buildings should be approached to determine what assistance they might need to accomplish the necessary repairs. Main Street Mansfield could take the lead in identifying and pursuing the necessary resources to assist them. More detailed recommendations regarding specific tools and incentives that could be assembled will be discussed later in this section. Conversely, when property owners refuse to address dangerous or unsightly conditions in their buildings despite efforts to work with them and assist them, building codes should be strictly enforced.
- **Minimize vacancy appearance.** Vacant storefronts and upper floors serve as constant reminders of the economic distress present in downtown Mansfield today. Taking steps to minimize the appearance of these vacancies would enhance downtown's image and improve the prospects for recruiting new tenants to occupy these empty spaces. Storefront windows should be covered, preferably with artwork, printed images or renderings of downtown plans that encourage pedestrian movement past the spaces. Perhaps the schools could be invited to participate in creating images to occupy these windows.

Property owners should be encouraged to keep upper floor windows clean and free of debris and add blinds or drapes in upper floor windows to dramatically reduce the appearance of vacancy. At night, lights directed onto the faces of the buildings minimize the vacancy appearance, enhance safety perceptions and improve the overall image of downtown.

- **Encourage historic preservation.** Main Street Mansfield and Mansfield’s Historic Preservation Commission are outstanding proponents of historic preservation. In spite of their advocacy and support however, many Mansfield property owners and developers still perceive that preservation and adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings is too cumbersome and too expensive, especially in comparison to new construction, to be worth the effort. In actuality when historic preservation methods and incentives such as tax credits are properly understood and applied, such developments can cost less and earn a higher rate of return than new construction. As stated in Main Street Mansfield’s materials as taken from Downtown Ohio, Inc.’s Downtown Revitalization Training Manual, “The foundation of the ‘Four Point’ or ‘Main Street Approach’ to downtown revitalization is preservation: using those elements of quality that have survived as assets upon which we can build a lasting, positive physical and emotional image for everyone who uses downtown. Historic preservation is used as an economic development tool. It capitalizes on over-looked and underutilized assets, encourages imagination, sharpening of entrepreneurial skills, and strong participation by the private sector.”

Mansfield is blessed with an abundance of beautiful and distinctive historic buildings, many of which are located in downtown. It also has the benefit of knowledgeable local preservation advocates who can be of immeasurable value in implementing the following recommendations. What appears to be needed among property owners is a greater understanding of and support for application of historic tax credits, historic easements and Ohio’s alternative building code for older structures to restore and adaptively reuse existing downtown buildings.

- **Educate property owners and, as appropriate, fire, health and building officials regarding historic preservation methods and incentives and Ohio's Alternative Building Code.** Some downtown property owners shy away from rehabilitating their buildings because they perceive building code requirements as being too costly and difficult to meet. Fortunately, Article 3407 of the Ohio Basic Building Code provides an alternative code for older buildings that often results in a significantly lower cost than the modern code would otherwise require. This code uses a point system to establish an acceptable level of safety in the building and awards points for life safety features not common in modern buildings but inherent in many older structures. Fire safety measures such as extra emergency lighting and more exit signs, for example, might be sufficient to offset what otherwise would be a requirement to add a second staircase. Obviously, adding a second staircase would be much more expensive than adding some extra lights and signage.

A series of seminars could be arranged and conducted by professional consultants and developers with experience in the rehabilitation of similar properties using Article 3407, historic tax credits, historic easements (see below) and other tools available for cost effective renovation and reuse of older buildings. These consultants should be encouraged to work with local architectural, planning and zoning, and construction resources to expand the local knowledge of these valuable tools.

NOTE: The State legislature is currently considering a bill that would make this section of the code even more supportive of the restoration and adaptive reuse of older buildings. Main Street Mansfield and the community should register their strong support for this bill with their elected representatives.

- **Continue pursuit of Local Landmark Historic District designation for the Central Park Historic District.**

Main Street Mansfield is working with the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in pursuit of Local Landmark District for the Square and environs. This effort should be strongly pursued. Use of federal historic tax credits, which can amount to as much as twenty percent of the construction cost, along with the Alternative Building Code, should make building redevelopment economically appealing for owners and investors. Obtaining a district designation sets up the domain for a unified architectural strategy, makes the process of applying for and receiving historic tax credits much easier for the individual property owner and makes buildings located within the district that might not otherwise qualify eligible to use the credits. This is one of the primary economic tools that will make redevelopment of downtown properties possible.

With a landmark district, historic buildings could not be removed or replaced without a careful and complete building survey by a qualified historic reuse professional. Codes and Permits would not issue a building permit without a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC. Some alterations not requiring a building permit, such as window replacement, would also have to receive the HPC's approval. HPC would also administer a design review process under preservation guidelines contained in the city's planning and zoning ordinances.

Indiscriminate destruction may overlook adaptive reuse possibilities, harm the historic character of downtown, and add to the empty feeling present in much of downtown today. The focus should be on rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing buildings rather than new construction. Any new structures should complement and enforce the historic architectural character of the Square and downtown.

- **Establish a Historic Easement Program for downtown Mansfield.** A historic easement program should be developed that would enable Mansfield to protect its historically and architecturally significant buildings, settings, and scenic and natural resources and enable owners of historic property to obtain a tax deduction on their easement contribution. An easement program enables a tax-exempt, charitable organization or public agency to protect buildings or land against potential adverse development or changes by acquiring partial interests in such properties.

An easement is a legal agreement between a property owner and the holder of the easement that governs the current and future owners' treatment of the property. The easement must protect a structure or land area listed on the National Register of Historic Places or be located in a National Register District certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance. The types of easements that currently exist include scenic/open space easements, exterior/façade easements, and interior easements. Property owners within the city of Mansfield would benefit most from exterior and interior easements. Exterior or façade easements protect the outside appearance of a building by typically controlling exterior alterations and possibly requiring property maintenance of the property. Interior easements protect a portion or all of a building's interior.

Those property owners who donate an easement may deduct the value of the easement, in an amount up to thirty percent of the donor's adjusted gross income from federal taxes. Any excess may be deducted over five additional years or until the value of the donation is used up, whichever comes first. The value of the easement is based on the difference between the appraised fair market value of the property prior to conveying an easement and its value with the easement restrictions in place. Under most circumstances the value of an easement depends upon the property's development potential and operates under the assumption that an easement limits development, thereby reducing the value of the property. IRS guidelines suggest that in many cases a façade easement can be appraised at approximately 10-15 percent

of the value of the property. A property that is assessed based upon its easement-restricted use rather than at its potential, fully developed use could result in a lower appraisal for property tax purposes as well.

- **Issues that should be addressed in the design guidelines for the proposed Central Park Historic District include the following:**

History of the District

Architectural Styles and Property Types

Rehabilitation Guidelines

- Roofs
- Masonry
- Windows and Doors
- Storefronts
- Awnings

Demolition Considerations

New Construction Guidelines

- Building Placement
- Building Height
- Building Rhythm and Proportions
- Roof Form and Materials
- Materials, Textures and Colors
- Building Additions

Site Elements

- Parking
- Walls and Fences
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Access for the Disabled

Signage

- Types
- Sizes
- Colors
- Sign Lighting

- **Create and implement a Historic Overlay District.**
In addition to establishing design guidelines and a design review board, creation of a Historic Overlay District will enable city officials to negotiate and promote complementary and beneficial development and redevelopment in the downtown. The Overlay District would typically charge the Design Review Board with reviewing applications for improvements in the district and in issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the issuance of a building/zoning permit by the Building Inspector. The Overlay District could encompass not only the Central Park Historic District, but all or part of the remainder downtown as well. It would require new structures to complement existing ones with such guidelines as no setback from sidewalk, at least 60% of the first floor façade in windows, and use of appropriate materials. It should also permit mixing of uses in a single structure or site. Consideration could be given to establishing separate, complementary zoning in nearby neighborhoods, including residential neighborhoods to the south and the west.

- **Create a package of financial assistance and incentives programs.** Programs supplementing those already in place should be considered to provide incentives and assistance for implementation of the above recommendations. These include:
 - **Emergency Building Repair Assistance.** As suggested earlier, a program of assistance for emergency repairs to existing buildings would help to prevent further deterioration. Several downtown buildings suffer from a lack of maintenance and deteriorating conditions. Continued deterioration may make their eventual rehabilitation difficult or prohibitively expensive. These buildings are an important part of what makes downtown special and

are also the economic engine that will drive downtown revitalization. A program needs to be put into place to assure sufficient repair of these existing buildings to prevent further deterioration. A combination of strict code enforcement and financial assistance or incentives should be put in place to address this situation.

- **Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program.**
As stated earlier, this program could benefit from increased funding and the practice of offering fewer, larger grants, and Mansfield, like some other communities, has used Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to fund these programs. To encourage parking and access from the rear of buildings, the rear façades of most downtown buildings should receive the same attention as those in front. Grants and loans could also be made available for interior improvements.
- **Loan Pool.** Working together through Main Street Mansfield, five local financial institutions help fund viable businesses in downtown Mansfield. Over \$1 million has been loaned to new businesses since the program's inception. The minimum recommended loan is \$15,000. These institutions could be approached to jointly create a new loan pool for building stabilization, façade enhancement, and even redevelopment and new construction projects located in the downtown.
- **State of Ohio.** State programs that could be investigated for specific projects, as appropriate, include the Petroleum Recovery Program, Voluntary Action Program, Environmental Remediation Tax Abatement Program, Public Works funds, and Issue 2 Brownfields and Greenfields Funds.
- **Linked Deposit Loan Program.** Cuyahoga County recently instituted a 'linked deposit' loan program for home renovations that has been so successful it is being expanded to include multi-family housing and, perhaps, commercial properties. In return for depositing its funds in specific institutions, the county receives commitments from those institutions to loan out a specific sum of money to worthy borrowers at reduced interest rates.

Goal 3: Improve accessibility in and to downtown for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles alike.

Tactic 1: Make it easy to find downtown.

- Identify downtown exits on I-71 and major state routes in the vicinity of Mansfield. Contact the local ODOT district representative to evaluate the potential of installing brown attraction signs, tourist oriented directional (T.O.D.) signs, or adding attractions to the existing logo signs. An annual charge is associated with T.O.D. and logo signs. Criteria for these signs is dependent on attendance figures and the distance that the attraction is from the highway.
- Where existing billboards on the interstate and state highways promote businesses or attractions located in the vicinity of downtown, encourage sponsors to include a reference to 'Historic Downtown Mansfield'.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive way-finding package that directs people from major highways into the downtown and to its various attractions.



Way-finding programs are increasingly seen as a way to market downtown's resources, alter negative perceptions, evoke a sense of area history and improve the streetscape. Comprehensive way-finding systems have recently been installed in such cities as Cleveland, Bethesda, Maryland and Newark, New Jersey. Effective vehicular and pedestrian way-finding systems are hierarchical in nature, moving from higher level elements like gateway signage, to lower level components such as informational kiosks or directional trees.



Cleveland wayfinding program, Sasaki Associates, Kapp & Associates, Peter Miller Munk Associates.

Downtown's system should be located on major highways leading into and throughout the downtown area, be graphically distinctive, and be informed by some component of downtown's history or contemporary condition. The design of the signs should be developed with an environmental graphic designer who would work with the City and State Departments of Transportation. Main Street Mansfield, tourism officials,

parks and recreation personnel, and the Chamber of Commerce should all be solicited for input to and involvement with the development of this comprehensive signage program.

- Upgrade and sign the major entrances leading into the downtown. A distinctive identifying symbol or logo should be developed for downtown Mansfield as part of its comprehensive way-finding initiative. Adding gateway signage and/or architectural elements on the major highways leading into downtown is the first step in creating a sense of welcome and establishing downtown as a special place to live, work and visit.

A design competition and corporate sponsorship could be used to create gateway pieces including some combination of landscaping, signage, and structural and public art elements. Banners, like gateway elements, are also considered to be an effective identity element, and can be used to promote specific events or the district itself. Banner programs can be funded by, for example, 'Adopt-a-Pole' programs, or t-shirt sales tied to specific events.

Tactic 2: Make it easy and pleasant to get there.

From the north:

- Enhance the existing mural on the grain silos along State Route 13. While this mural is only 1 ½ years old, it could make a much stronger and more appealing statement about the special nature of downtown Mansfield, and reinforce the effect of the murals currently located downtown that have added significantly to the character and charm of the area.
- Seek to increase the width of the public right-of-way on SR 13 from the north in order to permit a wider, more attractive street.

Basic site development standards could significantly improve the aesthetics of the Route 13 corridor.



- Establish basic site development standards for private properties on the northern approach to the downtown along SR 13. These standards should address building and parking setbacks, landscaping and screening, site lighting, and signage and graphics, and could be integrated into the existing zoning code as overlay standards for that specific corridor. The most critical aesthetic consideration should be the visual screening of equipment and vehicular storage areas, loading docks, and parking areas associated with existing industrial activities.
- Provide regular street tree plantings within the public right of way to unify the aesthetics of the corridor. These trees should be appropriately sized and planted at locations that will not interfere with overhead utilities or truck traffic.

From the south:

- The approach to downtown along SR 13 from the south offers a very appealing vista of downtown. Unfortunately, this approach is interrupted with the beginning of the one-way couplets at First Street and Main Street. See *Tactic 3* below.
- The historic Texaco gas station that exists on the northeast corner of the intersection of Main Street could be converted into a visitors center and serve as a gateway element from the south.
- Focus housing rehab dollars and code enforcement on residential structures located along Main Street leading into downtown.



From the west:

- Establish basic site development standards for private properties along the western approach to downtown on Park Avenue West. These standards should address building and parking setbacks, architectural design standards, landscaping and screening, site lighting, and signage and graphics, and could also be integrated into the existing zoning code as overlay standards for that specific area. The most critical aesthetic consideration should be the appropriate treatment and preservation of residential structures that are being converted to commercial uses.

From the east:

- This approach to downtown also passes through industrial land uses. Establish basic site development standards for private properties on the eastern approach to downtown along SR 42. These standards should address building and parking setbacks, landscaping and screening, site lighting, and signage and graphics, and could be integrated into the existing zoning code as overlay standards for that specific corridor. The most critical aesthetic consideration should be the visual screening of equipment and vehicular storage areas, loading docks, and parking areas associated with existing industrial activities.
- Provide regular street tree plantings within the public right of way to unify the aesthetics of the corridor. These trees should be appropriately sized and planted at locations that will not interfere with overhead utilities or truck traffic.

Tactic 3: Reestablish Main Street and Park Avenue as the major cross streets through downtown.

Ensure that Park Avenue and Main Street once again become grand promenades leading into downtown and out to the Miracle Mile. Consistent and appropriate streetscape design will unify these important corridors. Returning the decorative arches to Main Street will visually link the various districts and create a memorable experience for visitors to downtown Mansfield. Development standards for properties along these streets should address building and parking setbacks, signage, lighting, parking lot landscaping and screening.

Tactic 4: Make it easy to get around downtown.

As Yogi Berra is purported to have said, “Nobody goes there any more because it is too crowded!” Most retailers, especially those in the types of specialty stores that are successful downtown, depend on their visibility to automobile and pedestrian traffic to generate sales. Busy streets and sidewalks communicate success and vitality. The key concerns in downtown should be safety, comprehensibility and access. In an urban environment cars, buses, pedestrians and bicycles all need to be taken into consideration.

- **Replace one-way couplets with two-way streets.**
Downtown Mansfield currently has several one-way couplets. See **Current Situation, Existing Physical Conditions - Downtown Mansfield** for a full description of these couplets. These streets were converted from two-way traffic to enable larger commercial trucks to move easily through downtown. Unfortunately, these one-way streets are doing two things: diverting automobiles as well as trucks away from downtown, and speeding the traffic that does go there through and away from stores. Building on the 2001 Central Business District Street

Circulation Study conducted by Richland County Regional Planning, a traffic consultant with experience in balancing the needs of cars, pedestrians and bicycles in busy downtown environments should be hired to study the feasibility of converting as many of one-way couplets back to two way traffic as possible. The study should evaluate the full range of alternatives, from the complete removal of all one-way couplets to the elimination of just the Walnut Street and Mulberry Street couplet. Trucks would still be encouraged to bypass downtown via marked routes. Proposed options should be reviewed with ODOT, and local representatives should develop a comprehensive plan to gain their support and develop a phased implementation plan.

- **Explore a neighborhood circulator.** As the individual districts become more popular as places to work, shop and live, the need for a circulating transit vehicle between the districts may become necessary. While the distance between the three major retail districts (Carrousel, Renaissance and Central Park) is generally considered walkable, elevation changes and cold weather may make a transit circulator a very popular option. Explore the possibility of establishing a neighborhood circulator route through downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods with the Regional Transit Authority. Give consideration to using a trolley or other smaller, more attractive type of commuter vehicle for this purpose.
- **Signalization.** One of the more common complaints about downtown voiced in stakeholder interviews concerned traffic light timing. Explore what can be done to improve the timing and sequencing of lights with the city.
- **Add and improve crosswalks.** Pedestrians should be given priority over the motorized vehicle in the downtown core. Crosswalks should be attractive and clearly marked with signs indicating 'Yield to Pedestrians.' Specialty pavement or painting of these crosswalks will further alert motorists to the presence of pedestrians.

- **Extend street corners into intersections.** Constructing curbs so that they extend into the intersection, also known as curb 'bump outs', shortens the crossing distance for pedestrians and more clearly defines parallel parking areas, vehicular lanes and the pedestrian zone. Such designs also provide greater visibility for drivers when they are turning or proceeding through intersections.

Tactic 5: Improve the availability and convenience of parking for downtown workers, visitors and residents.

While an inventory of parking spaces suggests that there is sufficient parking to meet the current needs of downtown workers, there appears to be a shortage of public parking in locations that are convenient to key downtown destinations. A combination of additional public parking spaces in strategic locations and improved management of existing public parking is recommended.

- **Improve the appearance of existing parking lots.** The appearance of many of downtown's parking lots needs to be improved dramatically. Use decorative perimeter fencing and plantings to improve the image of off-street parking. Without jeopardizing visual security, use low level screening such as masonry walls, wrought iron fences and shrubs to minimize views into the interior of surface lots. Adjacent residential properties should, however, be buffered from parking areas and their lights with tall, attractive fencing and high-quality landscaping. The appearance of the backs of buildings visible from these lots and upgrading the appearance and lighting of passageways that lead from the lots to the street front should also be encouraged. This will encourage additional pedestrian traffic for downtown merchants and serve as part of a reuse strategy for upper levels of downtown buildings.



This parking lot in the Carrousel District has been screened with brick columns and decorative fencing.

- **Establish a parking authority.** The proliferation of privately-owned parking lots represents an inefficient use of valuable land and creates ‘missing teeth’ in the downtown façade line. To address this situation, consideration could be given to establishing a public parking authority. Parking authorities are quasi-governmental entities established by law. They have the power to plan, build and operate parking facilities, as well as create financing mechanisms to assist in parking lot development. The authority could purchase private lots without jeopardizing the city’s financial health by issuing revenue bonds based upon the anticipated income stream from parking space rentals to downtown workers. Parking authorities may also generate funds from the collection of fee and fine revenue, and through the establishment of special parking assessment or taxing districts. The use of a parking authority allows for consistent fees and lot design, and management and maintenance standards. Monthly parking fees established by the authority should be tiered based upon location and proximity to employment centers and the Square.

- **Plan for additional future structured parking.** Major development projects undertaken downtown may represent unique opportunities to add quality structured parking at key strategic locations. Any significant expansion of the municipal building or the courthouse will require additional off-street parking, and convenient structured parking should be considered in conjunction with such plans. Additional structured parking in the Renaissance District and the Carrousel District should also be evaluated as proposed major new developments are initiated. A mixed-use development project incorporating structured parking, located at the site of the current municipal parking lot on Fourth Street, would help fill the gap between the Carrousel District and the Square. See **Goal 5, Tactic 3, *Extend the positive impacts of the Carrousel District and create linkage to the Square*** for more detail. In addition, structured parking associated with a multi-purpose center in the Renaissance District would be a benefit to the Renaissance Theatre and the hotels in this area. See **Goal 5, Tactic 2 *Establish a Renaissance District centered on the Renaissance Theatre and link it to the Square and the Miracle Mile*** for more detail.

- **Add structured parking with the new Justice Center.** The future Justice Center at the municipal complex represents a great opportunity to solve the heavy demand for parking in this part of downtown created by visitors and workers to city and county offices. Recognizing that funding will be an issue, the city should give strong consideration to incorporating structured parking in the final plan for this facility.
- **Plan for future lot locations.** Additional surface lots may also be required as more people come downtown to live, work, and shop. Currently, the greatest need for additional off-street parking is in the area of the city and county office complexes. Parking lot and garage locations should be planned with principal parking areas behind buildings, with attractive access to street fronts from alleyways and side streets. Public parking lots should be

located, wherever possible, at mid-block on cross streets. Avoid or minimize entrances to parking areas from the main thoroughfares, and limit entry and exit points to parking. Coordinate parking layouts with adjacent ownership interests, and match parking access points across access streets.



- **Create additional on-street parking.** Refurbish and selectively remove portions of the late 1970's streetscape project downtown in order to maximize the amount of on-street parking. A preliminary study indicates that 115-130 additional spaces could be added.
- **Improve the management of the existing parking meters system.** Establish consistent time limits and fees throughout downtown, and increase fines significantly.



On-street parking could be added to this segment of Third Street.

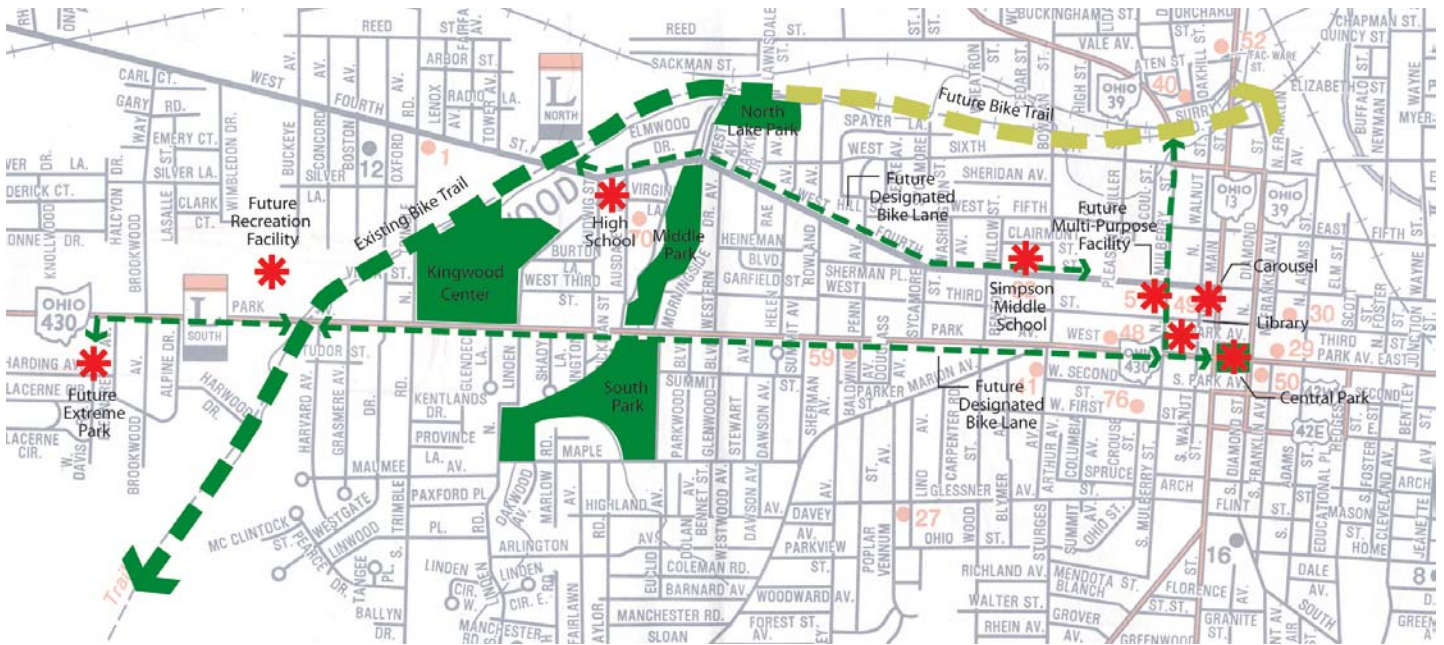
- **As resources permit, evaluate the removal of parking meters and the introduction of zoned parking.** Electronic systems are now available that permit zoned parking: monitoring the time vehicles are parked within a designated zone during any given day, regardless of where within that zone they park or how often they move their vehicle. This system would help to discourage downtown workers who persist in using prime street front spaces and periodically feeding the meter or moving their vehicles to avoid ticketing.
- **Initiate a positive promotional campaign.** Downtown workers should be encouraged to reserve street front and metered parking for shoppers and visitors using a positive promotional campaign with a theme such as “It’s important to you and your community.” In Corinth, Mississippi for example, downtown employees who violate street front parking restrictions receive fake checks indicating that the value to the district of an available parking space equals \$17,000 per annum in gross retail sales.
- **Combine the promotional campaign with strict enforcement.** The promotional campaign should be combined with strict enforcement and an escalating structure of fines of sufficient size to be a real deterrent. Enforcement should be especially stringent in the core shopping blocks on the Square and in the Carrousel District. To prevent alienating visitors who might inadvertently be ticketed, a ‘first ticket forgiven’ policy could be enacted. Aspen, Colorado enacted such a policy when it installed its pay-for-parking system.
- **Install directional signage.** As part of a comprehensive downtown identity and signage program, clear and attractive signage should be installed in appropriate locations to direct visitors to public parking areas. Additional signs located in the public parking areas should clearly explain the zoned parking policy. Use singular logo signage to identify all public-parking areas. Clearly identify private parking lots and service areas to prevent the necessity of towing. The City of Royal Oak, Michigan developed a durable ‘parking map’ post card as part of its signage program. The post card helps customers locate parking, and supports the idea that shoppers can expect a shorter walk in the district than at area malls.

Tactic 6: Make Downtown Accessible and Appealing to Bicyclists.

Bicycling is the fastest growing leisure activity in America. In 2001, for example, Xenia, Ohio attracted 250,000 bicyclists to its downtown because of a strong connection to an outstanding regional network of bike paths. People are walking and bicycling more and want facilities that support this interest.

- Take advantage of the bike path and its future expansion to the north of downtown. The Richland County Park District is currently pursuing the extension of this path along an abandoned rail line. This bike path will provide a critical connection from downtown to neighborhoods and key destinations to the west, including North Lake Park, Mansfield Senior High School, the Kingwood Center and the Miracle Mile commercial district.

Bike Trail Plan



- Locate a trail head near the intersection of Sixth Street and Mulberry Street and establish Mulberry Street as the designated bike route into downtown.
- Provide for bike lanes along Mulberry Street. These lanes should have a minimum width of 4' and be clearly marked with traffic paint.

- Install directory signs on bike paths. Signs should be placed on the bike paths that direct users to downtown and promote its attractions.
- Develop special promotional packages and initiatives for bicyclists. Special promotional packages and events should be created to encourage bicyclists to visit downtown and nearby attractions.
- Locate bike racks at key destinations and on major street corners.
- Consider adding bike racks to the rear of public buses.
- The negotiations between the railroad ownership and The Richland County Park District over the bike path extension may be expedited with additional support from the city and the Ohio Chapter of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Upon acquisition, the parks district should pursue two primary sources of funding:
 - **ODOT TEA-21 funds.** An ODOT administered TEA-21 bicycle and pedestrian project grant could fund up to 80% of the cost of the construction of the extension. To be competitive, design and engineering should be completed and the right-of-way purchased before applying.
 - **ODNR Trail Funds.** The Clean Ohio Trails Fund could fund up to 75% of the project, including acquisition and construction costs. The Recreational Trails Program could fund up to 80% of the project costs. Expenditures for acquisition, construction, maintenance and equipment may be eligible.
- Explore the creation of designated bike lanes on Park Avenue West and Fourth Street as direct connections for avid cyclists.

Goal 4: Bring market-rate and mixed-income housing to downtown.

The most successful downtowns contain an effective mix of destination and convenience retail, restaurants and specialty foods, housing, office and institutional uses. This mix of uses is precisely what sets downtown apart and makes it an exciting place to be, but a viable housing component is key because housing keeps downtown alive after the normal workday is finished.

Experiences in other Ohio communities, including the Short North in Columbus and the Warehouse District in Cleveland, have shown that office and retail development will follow the development of a meaningful housing component in an attractive, historic neighborhood. And downtown Mansfield, with its beautiful square, historic architecture, and cultural amenities, offers a tremendous opportunity to create a unique and appealing living environment.

As the leading edge of the baby boom generation moves towards retirement, new housing options are emerging to serve the generation that has always done things differently than their parents. Many empty nesters no longer in need of four bedroom homes on acre-sized lots are opting for a more urban lifestyle, and seniors looking for a more stimulating and walkable environment are also finding urban commercial districts to be an appealing alternative. The reality is that most seniors lose the ability to drive long before they lose the ability to walk.

Generation Xers are another key target market. Every strong downtown has a vital and energetic arts component, and apartments developed specifically for the urban streetscape attract creative people, who in turn use their talents to bring energy and creativity to the environment. Converted historic buildings that have outlived their original use are ideal for young professionals. *Newsweek* reported that “Young urban pioneers are moving into downtown lofts, lured by the affordable rents and the vague notion that urban living is cool”, in a November 11, 2002 story about downtown Los Angeles.

Market Support:

The Danter study conservatively projects a demand level of 30-50 units per year over the next five years for new downtown housing, and while this number seems small, even 100 new people living in loft apartments and infill housing would begin to drastically alter downtown's image and vitality. However, a number of factors lead First Avenues to believe that there is potentially much stronger support for new types of housing downtown.

- Traditional market research methods are not designed to predict the demand for a product, such as loft housing, which does not currently exist in a given market.
- Demand potential is almost certainly impacted by downtown's current negative 'crime and grime' image.
- During the course of the interview process, First Avenues identified groups of downtown workers that would seem to be candidates for downtown housing, including a number of local artists, cartoonists from the west coast working in downtown and accustomed to loft housing, and several instructors at the Richland Academy.
- Analysis of the demographic and psychographic characteristics of Mansfield residents identified a number of characteristics that would seem to support a higher potential demand for downtown housing, including a significant increase in non-traditional households and households without children. In addition, four of the top seven psychographic household categories – Sunset City Blues, Middleburg Managers, Smalltown Downtown and Second City Elite, contain subgroups of individuals who could be candidates for downtown housing. See *Current Situation – Market Analysis*.

Tactic 1: Target and assess key buildings for an initial catalytic, market-rate, upper floor housing project.

Several downtown buildings offer opportunities for creating unique, appealing upper floor residential units, and it will not take that many units to begin to change downtown's image dramatically. In the case of housing units averaging 1,000 square feet for example, one hundred people living two to a unit would fill 50,000 square feet of upper floor space! And many units are, in fact, significantly larger than 1,000 SF. The Reed's and May buildings are two prominent examples of buildings that are historic, strategically located, highly visible, and of sufficient size to be catalytic, but a thorough assessment of other candidate structures may surface additional catalytic possibilities.



The initial step in studying the feasibility of a building for an adaptive reuse as housing is to conduct an architectural and engineering assessment. A preliminary study of residential floor plan layouts, structural integrity, circulation and access, code issues, and cost data should be completed by a qualified architect and/or engineer. Such a study will allow the owner to better understand the economics of the project. In addition, best practices research into comparable projects should also be conducted. Similar successful projects can be evaluated first hand in nearby communities such as Newark, Zanesville and Findlay. The cost of this initial study is typically paid for by the owner of the property, however assistance for such evaluations is sometimes provided by public or private development organizations.

Tactic 2: Recruit a local investor and/or an experienced urban housing developer to execute the first project.

Ideally, interested and capable local investors would play a significant role in the first project, in order to build credibility and local capacity to carry this strategy forward. A limited partnership or a limited liability company could be established to encourage additional investors and the spread the risk. Outside professionals, including experts in adaptive reuse of historic buildings for housing, historic tax credits, and alternative building codes could work with local professionals to build local consulting capacity as well. This approach has recently been used successfully to develop upper floor housing in downtown Findlay. It will be critically important that this first project respect the historic integrity of the building and take advantage of all available incentives for the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, in order to set a positive example for future projects.

Tactic 3: Promote downtown living.

Work with Main Street Mansfield to promote downtown Mansfield among target population groups including young professionals and aging local residents as an exciting, convenient, intimate place to live. Assemble a marketing package for developers to use that would include information on downtown attractions, maps, and parking information.

Tactic 4: Develop new market rate and mixed-income housing on infill sites.

There appear to be a few sites near downtown that could be developed with new, high density, market-rate and mixed-income housing. Victorian Gate in the Short North in Columbus is one example of the type of project that is envisioned. Row houses and bungalows may also be attractive alternatives for some sites.

Establishing this kind of development in downtown would accomplish several objectives. It would provide a type of housing and urban lifestyle that is becoming increasingly popular today. It would attract a greater share of professionals who are currently relocating to the area, while increasing the activity level and the variety of housing styles in the district. Current zoning may have to be revised to accommodate the mix of uses and density levels that would be necessary to make lofts and row housing permissible as well as financially feasible.

- Establish new urban housing in the northwest quadrant of downtown with a strong relationship to community facilities including John Simpson Middle School, nearby churches, the library, and a possible multi-purpose facility. See also *Establish a Renaissance District centered on the Renaissance Theatre and link it to the Square and the Miracle Mile* under Goal 5.



Downtown Residential Concept Plan

- While the use of the John Simpson Middle School site will be determined by the local school board and the voters in the near future, the site should continue to serve as a public or institutional use. Its central location within the

neighborhood dictates that it continue as a community use, shared by adjacent residents. First Avenues strongly supports the proposal that the new middle school be situated at this centrally located site.

- Provide community open space as a central component of the neighborhood.
- Establish housing products that complement the character and scale of the adjacent neighborhoods. Encourage the preservation of existing single-family homes that are structurally sound and infill with new housing where possible. Row houses and/or bungalows could be an appropriate part of the mix.
- Work with CCEDC, whose mission is to revive blighted areas through the rehabilitation, construction and rental of affordable housing to encourage new scattered-site and multi-unit affordable housing as part of the mix of new downtown housing. Nine hundred Mansfield area families are currently on the waiting list for affordable housing.



Examples of Attached Housing



Examples of Detached Housing

Tactic 5: Put a package of development incentives in place to reduce the up-front costs associated with new housing development in downtown.

The cost to develop downtown housing typically exceeds that of greenfield development due to the relatively higher cost of land and the frequent necessity of clearing, cleaning and/or rehabilitating older properties prior to development. Development incentives and low cost capital, together with other improvements and amenities, will help achieve meaningful housing development in downtown Mansfield, and include:

- Public funding of the cost of street and sidewalk improvements around new residential units (50-100%; \$1,500 per unit).
- Reduction of water and sewer tap fees, and other fees associated with new housing development. The city code may have to be amended to allow for an abatement based on the value of all existing taps on the property. Examine deferral of all other relevant fees, permitting and upfront costs.
- Define and codify a new or expanded Community Reinvestment Area for residential tax abatements downtown and provide that its application be automatic.

Tactic 6: Consider establishing a Downtown Housing Equity and Investment Fund.

The fund would be comprised of limited investment partners, and designed to provide low cost capital for housing development projects in downtown. Investors would serve on a separate Board of Directors. Staffing could be provided by Main Street Mansfield or by another existing non-profit entity. This financing tool provides tremendous flexibility in structuring projects to suit the needs of individual development situations, from short-term 'mezzanine' investments to longer-term partnership arrangements.

The fund could be positioned as a ‘social investor fund.’ Civic-minded institutions and individuals who invest, would be encouraged to view their contributions not as charitable donations, but as adding to their existing investment portfolio through support of local investments with unusual risk-return profiles. The fund would seek to invest its money at a lower or longer-term return than other financing, but these investments are not grants. They are loans from investors willing to be patient in seeking their returns and who are also interested in creating a better environment downtown. The fund would use its investments to become the last piece of financing for a project that is close to fruition. An investment manager would be hired or appointed to work directly with individual developers to determine the specifics of any potential development. Fund investments would be based on the following criteria:

- Is the project located within the core investment area?
- Does the project substantially contribute to the goals established in this plan?
- Does the developer have the capacity to properly execute the plan?
- Has the developer explored and utilized an array of other financing opportunities?
- Does the project present a reasonable likelihood of providing a return to the fund?

Tactic 7: Encourage continued rehabilitation of historic residential housing stock in the vicinity of downtown.

As noted previously, over 75% of the housing near downtown is investor-owned with significant levels of deterioration and disinvestment. A combination of incentives, strong zoning and design standards and rigid enforcement of health and safety codes is needed to address this blight in downtown.

- As discussed earlier, in addition to the creation of a Local Landmarks District for the Central Park Historic District, overlay zoning and design standards should be established for the rest of the downtown districts in order to preserve and enhance the existing urban character. These standards should include design guidelines for unique residential streets including Park Avenue, and First, Second and Fourth Streets.
- Zoning should identify uses that are inappropriate in downtown districts and nearby residential neighborhoods. Nearby residents have complained that too often in the past, inappropriate uses have simply been pushed out of downtown and end up locating nearby, especially in the lower-income neighborhoods to the north of downtown.
- Park Avenue West and First, Second and Fourth Streets contain numerous examples of the types of larger, early 20th century homes that, in many communities, have been lovingly restored and led to revitalization of their neighborhoods. Unfortunately in Mansfield, many of these homes have been converted to commercial use with little regard for design standards (paved over front yards for parking, as an example) or worse yet, torn down as an easy way of eliminating a crime or drug problem. Aggressive efforts are needed to preserve what remains of these homes and establish zoning and design standards to ensure that the structures can ultimately be recaptured as single-family, upscale housing.
- Identify target areas for focused investment of CDBG funds in nearby residential neighborhoods. Major corridors leading into downtown contain numerous examples of distressed housing and/or inappropriate, unattractive alterations. These corridors serve not only as gateways into downtown but as the ‘front doors’ of the neighborhoods in which they are located. Rather than a scattered site, or ‘first-come, first-served’ approach to housing rehabilitation, public housing rehabilitation dollars should be concentrated on these corridors and/or in specific neighborhoods adjacent to downtown to create a different, better image of Mansfield for visitors and for the residents.

- Explore the possibility of a joint application for federal mixed-income housing funds with a similarly sized community such as Newark, Ohio. Some of these programs require a minimum of 120 housing units for eligibility, but will consider such joint applications.

Tactic 8: Encourage the addition of amenities and services that are essential to pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods.

A reflected in **Goal 6**, there is a need and an opportunity for retail and other services near downtown (such as grocery, dry cleaning, laundry, convenience retail) that would better serve present and future residents.

Goal 5: Celebrate downtown's districts and improve the connectivity between them.

Facilitate the creation of mixed-use districts, each with a distinct and identifiable image. Encourage infill opportunities and eliminate pockets of underutilized and underdeveloped land that interrupt the urban experience.

Tactic 1: Create district specific identity elements that reinforce district character and improve downtown wayfinding for pedestrians and motorists.

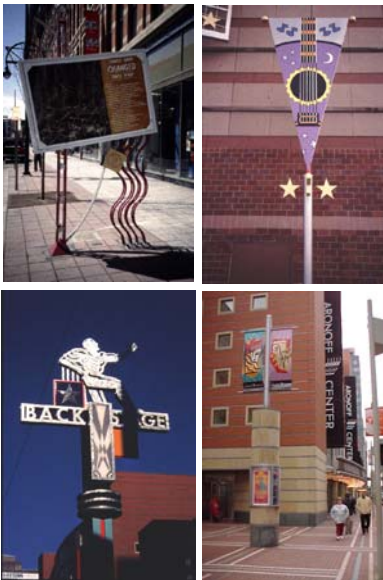
- Establish a system of street signs and banners that identify the individual districts. This can enhance recognition for district tenants and destinations within each district.
- Consistently locate all street signs at all downtown intersections to simplify way-finding for visitors.



- Establish district standards for lighting and furniture. Historically styled fixtures and furniture will be most appropriate for the Central Park Historic District and the Carrousel District, while contemporary fixtures may be more appropriate for the Renaissance District, the Industrial Flats, and the Downtown Residential District.

Tactic 2: Establish a Renaissance District centered on the Renaissance Theatre and link it to the Square and the Miracle Mile.

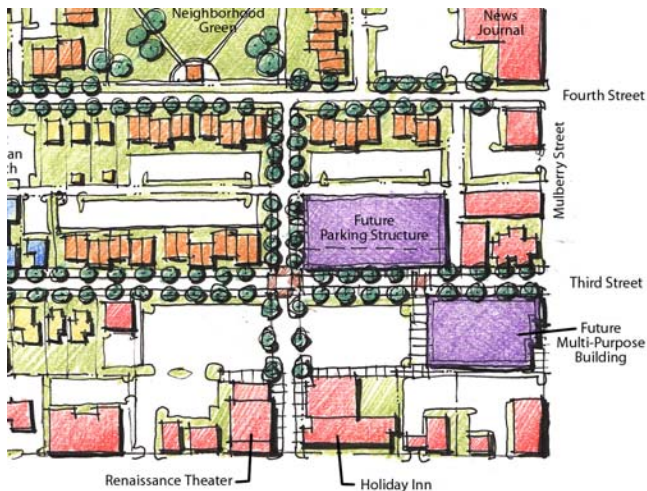
- Establish a Renaissance District along Park Avenue West from Bowman Street to Mulberry Street. Encourage a mix of entertainment uses with an emphasis on culture and the arts. With the Renaissance Theatre serving as the anchor to the district, smaller galleries, art and photography studios, music shops, and supporting café and restaurants would all be appropriate uses. This district should be developed as an entertainment district that is clearly different and will not compete for the types of entertainment uses that will be developed along the Miracle Mile.



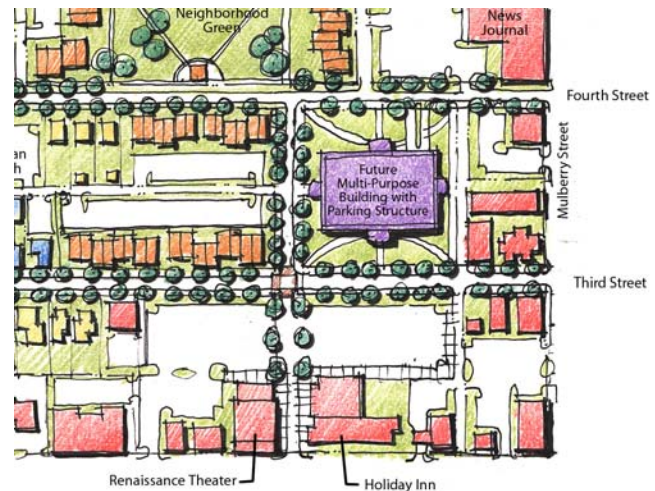
A graphic system could be established in the Renaissance district that celebrates its unique character.

- Establish site development standards for the district that address building and parking setbacks, landscaping and screening, site lighting, and signage and graphics. Establish architectural standards that address building scale and massing, materials and colors. As a result of the very few architecturally significant structures in this district, architectural standards should be considerably more liberal than in the Central Park Historic District.
- Locate a multi-purpose facility along Third Street and take advantage of the relationship of this facility to the Holiday Inn and the Renaissance Theatre. The multi-purpose facility could include a community ice rink, but should have a large amount of flat floor space for small conventions and shows. Smaller meeting room space could also be part of this facility. A strong relationship to the Renaissance Theatre and the Holiday Inn could be beneficial to all of these facilities. This facility will also

serve as a catalyst to the redevelopment of the residential neighborhood to the north. While the recent effort to fund and construct a new convention center in this area of downtown failed for a number of reasons, research conducted as part of that effort indicated that there is a definite need and strong support for a multi-purpose space in downtown to house exhibits, large meetings and special events that at present, cannot be accommodated elsewhere.



Multi-Purpose Building and Garage
Concept 1



Multi-Purpose Building and Garage
Concept 2

- As a result of the convention center effort, the county currently owns a number of parcels in this area. These properties should be retained for possible reuse or at worst, the proceeds from their sale should be set aside for reuse in the downtown area.
- An effort is currently underway in the area to build community and financial support for the construction of an ice rink to serve area residents. Such a facility could serve as an additional anchor for the Renaissance District and downtown. Serious consideration should be given to locating this facility in downtown, or failing that, locating it at the Miracle Mile. The facility could be designed to include a second rink that could be converted to multi-purpose use as described above.
- As previously indicated, the Holiday Inn is downtown's only quality hotel. It receives high marks for its lodging

but many complaints regarding the quality of the food service. Quality food service will be critical to any effort to bring more group meetings and events to downtown. Discussions should be held with hotel management to see what could be done to improve the food service and what, if any, assistance might be appropriate.

- The library recently purchased property near its main branch and is reportedly planning to tear down existing structures on the property for the purpose of creating additional surface parking. If an ice rink and/or multi-purpose facility can be attracted to the district, sufficient demand would exist to support structured parking in this area. Obviously, funding would be a major obstacle but, if enough demand can be generated, such a project would be worth pursuing.
- Consistent site development standards and complementary streetscape treatments will ensure a walkable environment that blends into the Central Park Historic District.

Tactic 3: Extend the positive impacts of the Carrousel District and create linkage to the Square.

The current boundaries of the Carrousel District generally include Main Street from Fourth Street to Fifth Street and Fourth Street from Diamond Street to Walnut Street. This is primarily the result of the ownership group that has developed these properties. The boundaries of this district should be extended over time to include some adjacent street segments that will link this area to other districts.

- Include the block of Fourth Street from Walnut Street to Mulberry Street in the Carrousel District. The north side of the street consists primarily of complementary uses and building stock to that of the Carrousel District. Two institutional uses, the Richland Academy and the Board of Education, are located on the south side of the street.

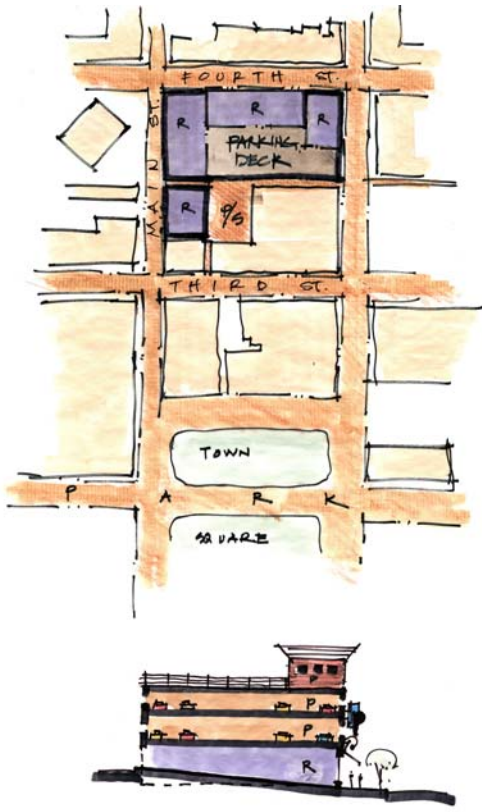


Fourth Street, looking west from Main Street

- Include the block of Main Street from Fourth Street to Third Street in the Carrousel District. This segment is a critical linkage to the Central Park Historic District.
- Provide a strong visual connection between the Carrousel District and the Central Park Historic District by placing decorative arches along North Main Street from North Park Street at the Square to Fourth Street. These arches would be replicas of the arches that once lined Main Street.



Source: Mick Tridico



- Consider the large municipal parking lot between Third Street and Fourth Street as a major redevelopment site. This large void between the two districts could be filled in the future with uses that would complement and connect the two districts. A multi-level parking structure could help provide a centralized public/private parking area that would serve both districts. Retail space should enclose this structure at the ground level along Main Street, Fourth Street, and Diamond Street. Upper floors could also be enclosed with office or residential uses if the demand exists. Locating an entertainment use such as a theater on this site would be an ideal way to energize the void between the Carrousel District and the Square.

The municipal parking lot represents a redevelopment opportunity. This plan, building section and character sketch represent a mixed-use building with a parking garage.



- Explore streetscape design solutions to minimize the impact of the slope along North Main Street from Fourth Street to Third Street. A combination of walkable steps alongside the constant sloping walkway would provide a more comfortable pedestrian environment.

Tactic 4: Improve the interface between downtown and the industrial flats to the north by creating opportunities for a mix of uses.

- Assess the existing building stock in the industrial flats and identify opportunities for different uses. While housing in other districts downtown will be a priority, a small amount of specialty housing in renovated industrial buildings or new in-fill projects could help to energize this industrial zone. Artisans may find large industrial spaces attractive as live/work studio spaces.
- Encourage the continued use of some of these buildings as warehouse, distribution, and builders' supply stores. Address aesthetics in the area with basic design standards for signage, lighting, and screening of parking and service/storage areas.
- New uses may include technology manufacturing and other light manufacturing and distribution uses. Professional design offices including architects, engineers, graphic design, advertising and sign companies may also find this new district desirable.
- The city has been systematically addressing brownfield sites to the north of this area. In the future, brownfield funding opportunities should also be explored for sites in this district.

Tactic 5: Keep city and county facilities in downtown.

Retailers thrive on passing traffic and visibility. In downtowns and successful urban commercial districts, community facilities serve a similar role to that of an anchor department store in an enclosed shopping mall, attracting shoppers who are then exposed to the adjacent retail and restaurant offerings.

A 2001 Urban Land Institute (ULI) forum noted that facilities such as schools and community centers play important roles in sustaining mixed-income communities¹. In Chicago, the construction of the Harold Washington Library in the Loop resulted in the wholesale transformation of a decaying district into a thriving hub, while in Redmond, Washington, the design of the Redmond Town Center adjacent to downtown included a library in addition to the expected mix of retail and entertainment uses. Locating public facilities in the core commercial area of a neighborhood encourages additional economic activity and reinforces the district's role and identity as the heart of the area it serves. A strong heart leads to a strong and proud neighborhood.

Examples of such facilities include community centers, libraries, post offices, continuing and higher education facilities, health care facilities, public arts facilities and sports facilities. The newly opened baseball stadium in downtown Akron is an excellent example of the application of this principal and demonstrates the city's recognition of the importance of community-serving facilities to urban commercial districts.

Higher education institutions are increasingly looking to locate branch facilities closer to the populations they serve. The density of population in the vicinity of downtown Mansfield, as well as its central location, makes it an ideal place to locate such a facility. The community and Main Street Mansfield should work to attract an institution of higher learning to downtown with programs that would support the creation of a skilled work force in job categories where Mansfield is currently under-represented. Discussions should be held with NCSC to determine if they would be interested in working with the community to open such a facility. Alternatives include institutions with expansion plans such as Ashland University and Franklin University.

¹ *Sustaining Urban Mixed-Income Communities*, The ULI/Charles H. Shaw Annual Forum on Urban Community Issues, ULI Catalogue Number 665

Goal 6: Retain and strengthen downtown's existing retail, then gradually add new retail and offices.

As mentioned previously, downtown Mansfield has many assets upon which it can build: the Square, the Carrousel District, historic building stock, city and county facilities, local financial institutions, churches, community-serving facilities and amenities, the Renaissance Theatre, the library and the Richland Academy for the Arts, as well as a limited number of destination retailers.

These anchor institutions and distinctive, independent merchants are part of what makes downtown unique and special. It is important that the community actively works to support and strengthen the institutions and the viable retail concepts that fulfill the needs and desires of neighborhood residents. A few of these businesses have been in the district for generations, and while some are thriving, others are not.

Tactic 1: Retain downtown's existing anchors.

Sound economic development strategy recognizes that it is easier and more efficient to build on an existing foundation than to start from scratch. Downtown Mansfield's destination retailers and other anchors are part of what makes it special and every effort should be made to retain them.

- **Anchor retailers.** Although downtown Mansfield has not had a traditional department store anchor for many years, it does have a number of stores that serve as mini-anchors. Each of these operations has its own appeal, drawing people to downtown specifically to patronize its business. Included among these anchors are long time downtown institutions like Don Nash, Ltd., the Coney Island Inn and Rocky's Pub, and more recent additions such a Carrousel Magic! and Carrousel Antiques Ltd. Each of these retailers has experienced success in the past and could certainly continue to do so. The long-term

viability of these businesses would be strengthened with strategic support, the addition of destination retailers in the restaurant, specialty leisure goods, arts and crafts, and antique and home goods categories, and other downtown improvements as suggested elsewhere in this report.

- **Downtown financial and religious institutions.**
Mansfield is fortunate to have a number of successful financial institutions and beautiful, historic churches still located in downtown and the immediate vicinity. They are traffic generators and further symbols of the strength and importance of downtown. Their continued support will be essential in the revitalization effort and their downtown presence will play a major role in its success.

Tactic 2: Strengthen existing retail.

For retailers, incremental increases in sales generally have a greater than proportional impact on their profits. They typically have a significant percentage of their income committed to fixed expenses such as rent, fixtures and equipment and, to a certain extent, wages and benefits. These expenses remain whether the retailer sells anything or not. Once fixed expenses have been covered though, a greater percentage of sales can be transferred to the bottom line. In other words, higher sales usually mean a higher profit percentage.

For property owners, the impact of higher sales is more stable tenants and the potential for higher rents. Retailers should be more concerned about rents and other occupancy costs as a percentage of their sales, than what the actual dollar amount of their rent is. As a general rule, total occupancy cost (rent, utilities, taxes, and common area maintenance fees) of greater than fifteen percent of sales is an indication of a retailer in trouble. Less than fifteen percent is normally acceptable, with total occupancy cost of around ten percent of sales usually indicating a very healthy retailer. What this means for the property owner is that every dollar of additional sales a retailer can generate translates into at least a ten cent potential in increased rent for the space occupied. Increased

sales are in both the retailer's and the property owner's best interest. The city and the county also benefit directly from increased retail sales through income and sales taxes.

- **Local market penetration can be increased through initiatives such as the following:**
 - **Seminars.** Main Street Mansfield has been offering a series of seminars to downtown merchants to help them compete more effectively. These seminars should be continued and enhanced. If not already planned, additional seminars could be offered to current and prospective retailers dealing with such topics as visual merchandising, window displays, customer service, marketing and promotions. The goal would be to help downtown merchants compete more effectively with chains that have the resources and technology to be more sophisticated and efficient in their approach to marketing. Such programs can be very economical, but merchants must choose to act on suggestions if they are to be effective.
 - **Expand Hours of Operation.** Existing retailers could benefit from an expansion of and consistency in hours of operation to better serve nearby residents, and to take advantage of the traffic generated by the entertainment-oriented businesses. A systematic increase in hours of operation can be achieved through a combination of standardized lease clauses and the gradual introduction of evening hours. Initially, merchants should be encouraged to extend their hours whenever there is a special evening event scheduled in downtown. They could also open one evening a week in conjunction with a strong initial and periodic follow-up promotions. In order for this effort to be successful, the trial must last for as much as a year. It takes time for consumers to recognize service level changes and for new shopping patterns to become ingrained. Once the initial program is successful, stores can begin to add additional evening hours.

- **Joint Promotions/Marketing.** Main Street Mansfield programs such as Pony Express and Christmas Time in the City should be continued and, wherever possible, enhanced.
- **Directory/Map.** Main Street Mansfield has produced an excellent directory and map of downtown businesses. This practice should be continued with regular updates and additions such as a schedule of annual festivals held in downtown, connections to bike trails and additional points of interest located in the vicinity.
- **Marketing Fund Clause.** Downtown property owners should be encouraged to put a standard marketing fund clause into future lease agreements. Shopping mall developers learned a long time ago that it is difficult to organize effective marketing programs when individual merchants can choose whether or not and how to participate in and contribute to each individual event. Mall marketing coordinators used to spend most of their time soliciting retailers and the resulting events were rarely effective. As a result, most have now moved from voluntary merchants associations to marketing funds that are incorporated into leases agreements and controlled by the centralized management group. Downtown property owners could organize a similar marketing fund under Main Street Mansfield's auspices. Marketing funds could also be generated as part of the proposed Special Improvement District. See *Funding Recommendations* under **Goal 7**.
- **Public Relations.** Main Street Mansfield appears to do an excellent job of maintaining a schedule of regular press releases to local and regional media announcing planned activities and promotions. They will want to continue this effort as new initiatives are begun or successfully completed as part of the revitalization plan.

- **Increase customer draw from the wider region.**
 - **Special Events/Festivals.** Consideration should be given to expanding a few existing festivals and special events to appeal to a broader market. Corporate and media sponsorships should be solicited to fund an increase in the size, quality and duration of the events. Merchants may benefit directly on these occasions, but more importantly, they gain indirect benefit every time someone visits downtown and is exposed to the products or services local vendors offer. Examples of ways for individual merchants to take advantage of special events include extended hours, sponsorships, coupons or sales, food carts, banner signs and sidewalk seating or sales. When events are scheduled during non-store hours, stores should keep the lights on in their windows and use signage to promote store offerings.

However, organizations with limited staffing must take care because special events can consume tremendous amounts of time and money. Main Street Mansfield should focus on a limited number of events, strive for a sufficient scale and appeal to attract a regional audience and then seek another group or organization to continue the effort if desired. The one exception might be the farmers' market or similar regular event serving the local market.

- **Art Festival.** An arts festival could be considered as a means of celebrating the strong, diverse arts community that currently exists in Mansfield. At present, appreciation for this tremendous asset seems to be lacking within the community.
- **The Square.** As suggested elsewhere, during special events the Square could be closed to vehicular traffic and converted into public gathering space for special events. Amenities should be enhanced to encourage this use.

- **Joint and Cross-Promotions with Regional Attractions.** The Mansfield area is home to a number of regional attractions that draw thousands of visitors every year. These attractions include Mohican State Park, Mid-Ohio Raceway, and Malabar Farms. Efforts should be made to create and enhance cross-promotional initiatives with these venues.
- **Heritage Tourism.** Heritage/cultural tourism is defined by the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism (1995) as tourism directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage and the special character of place. Heritage tourism is big business, with more and more Americans visiting historical sites or attending cultural events every year. These tourists spend more than the typical tourist and are more likely to stay in hotels or bed & breakfasts.

The Mansfield area is rich in historical and cultural heritage. The challenge is to combine the many area attractions in such a way as to create an attractive destination trip for heritage tourists. Main Street Mansfield should consider holding discussions with counties and attractions in this region regarding the creation of a coordinated heritage tourism initiative.

- **Farmers' Market.** Main Street Mansfield currently sponsors a Farmers Market that has been well-received by the community. The market is open from 9am to noon each Saturday through the end of September or beyond weather permitting. It is currently located in the municipal parking lot at Fourth and Main. Farmers markets are one of the most successful tools for strengthening or regenerating downtown retail in communities of all sizes. They reflect local character the way no collection of chain stores can. Consideration should be given to expanding the market's hours and perhaps locating it on the Square.



North Union Farmers Market,
Cleveland, Ohio www.pps.org

According to a report prepared by the Department of Horticulture at The Ohio State University's Department of Agriculture (May, 1994) Ohioans are interested in buying high quality fresh produce. In a survey, they found that over 88% of Ohio households

believe that they receive higher quality produce directly from the farmer and 90% of the households said they prefer to buy their fresh fruits and vegetables directly from the farmer. Over a 12-month period, 55% of Ohio's households shopped at a roadside market and 29% of all respondents shopped at a farmers' market.

Farmers markets have proven to be particularly effective tools for building pedestrian traffic and promoting a sense of community. San Luis Obispo and Monrovia, California, and Plaquemine, Louisiana have notable farmers markets, and the master plan for the new Redmond Town Center in Redmond, Washington retained an existing farmers market on the site.

- **Downtown Workers.** In conjunction with Main Street Mansfield, the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau, develop special promotions and approaches to reach the people who work in or near downtown Mansfield every day. Such things as payroll inserts, special evening hours and promotions one day a week for nearby workers, Secretary's Day and Boss's Day specials, and delivery of food and products available at downtown merchants could be effective in reaching this group. A multi-restaurant delivery service could be one way of increasing workers' accessibility to downtown merchants.

- **Create a publicity plan.**

Overall, Main Street Mansfield seems to do an excellent job of keeping downtown Mansfield in the public eye through frequent and strategic public relations activities. The following initiatives should be a part of the comprehensive publicity plan, if not already in place:

- Compile a distribution list of all major media the area (newspapers, magazines and radio and television stations) including the names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail addresses of the publishers, editors, general managers and arts, culture and history reporters at each outlet.

- In conjunction with the public presentation of this plan, consideration should be given to hosting a media event in Mansfield to which all of the above-identified individuals would be invited.
- Tour bus operators, travel agents and Chamber of Commerce officials could be invited as well or a separate event could be scheduled for this group. County and state tourism officials should be consulted early in the process.
- A regular schedule of press releases to the above list should be arranged that would feature different activities, amenities or stories each time. The releases might include announcements of upcoming activities, educational information on district attractions or reporting on recent events.
- Efforts could be made to obtain regularly scheduled guest columns or studio appearances by one or more individuals representing particular amenities or the community at large.
- Efforts should be made to coordinate promotional efforts with other nearby attractions.

- **Leverage the Internet.**

Main Street Mansfield recently unveiled its new web site. This is an excellent site and will be an important medium for communicating and promoting the elements of this revitalization plan to the community and other interested parties. The State of Ohio's Office of Tourism has a web site that offers free listings of local attractions. This and other such opportunities to promote the area should also be pursued.

The Internet is already having a profound impact on some categories of shopping. If they are not already doing so, downtown retailers with unique assortments should be encouraged and supported in efforts to offer their products online.

Tactic 3: Gradually add appropriate new retail and restaurants in downtown.

As downtown works to strengthen its existing retail base, Main Street Mansfield should concurrently pursue opportunities to add new retailers and restaurants to the mix. The goal should be to build on existing strengths and create sufficient critical mass in key categories to create a distinctive and destination shopping experience.

- **Cluster district retail and expand it to build critical mass. Certain categories of merchandise seem to present opportunities for expansion into destination clusters.**
 - **Antiques and Home Goods.** The Carrousel District is already home to a number of specialty retailers focused on antiques, leisure goods, home furnishings and accessories. Continuing to add these types of retail uses, especially in the Carrousel District where the majority of them are now located, would add to the critical mass and create a stronger destination draw. Antiques shoppers are attracted to locations that offer multiple vendors in a single location or district, Waynesville and Zanesville are two communities that have become known as destinations for this type of merchandise. Other possibilities include designer accessories, and basket or gift shops. For example, Show of Hands, a store offering the work of a collection of local craftsmen and developed in cooperation with Ohio Designer Craftsmen currently has stores in Columbus and Cleveland and could be approached about opening a store in Mansfield.
 - **Arts and Crafts.** According to stakeholders interviewed during this process, Mansfield is home to a substantial arts community that may offer opportunities for downtown. An arts focused strategy would complement the Renaissance Theatre, the Richland Academy and cultural and entertainment destinations that are proposed for this district. It would also complement the home, crafts and gifts categories mentioned above. Many successful arts districts have started with the creation of inexpensive

artists' lofts and live/work spaces. The Short North in Columbus and Coventry in Cleveland Heights are two examples. Several downtown buildings could be candidates for the development of this type of use. The local arts community and area educators should be engaged in discussions about the possibilities and steps necessary for pursuing such this strategy.

- **Leisure Goods and Apparel.** Downtown Mansfield may offer an opportunity for establishing a cluster of retailers specializing in leisure goods and apparel. Richland County and the surrounding area boast a number of exceptional natural settings that encourage outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, camping, skiing, gardening and bicycling. The market remains virtually untapped by area retailers for these leisure goods. Stores that cater to such interests and other popular lifestyle activities should be encouraged to locate in downtown or at the Miracle Mile. A bike shop and stores focused on team sports equipment and/or apparel are additional examples of the types of stores that could be recruited to fill this category.



Bleeker Street: a lively combination of specialty shopping, restaurants and nightclubs in New York's Greenwich Village, www.pps.org.



- **Restaurants and specialty foods.** Food is a critical element of any successful downtown retail strategy. When asked what businesses they would like to see added in downtown, community leaders and merchants interviewed for this project most frequently mentioned more quality family dining establishments. With over 5,000 downtown workers, and many current and proposed destination attractions, downtown offers a tremendous opportunity for new restaurant uses.

Attract operations that combine food and drink in a casual dining atmosphere (Applebee's or a local version, for example) or a fine dining restaurant with a good wine selection. Old-fashioned concepts such as an Italian pizzeria or an ice cream parlor would also fit well with the charming and historic environment downtown. Quality international cuisine such as Mexican, Indian and Spanish are also proving to be quite popular in similar markets. Other possibilities

include an old-style English pub, gourmet hot dogs and an Internet cafe. Specialty foods stores such as a butcher, seafood, yogurt shop, bagel shop, deli or bakery are also possibilities.

- **Convenience retail.** With its central location, large population of daytime workers and the density of residential neighborhoods, downtown offers an excellent location for additional convenience retailers such as a gas station or a gas station/convenience store, or a dry cleaners.
- **To the extent possible, locate retail in the heart of the three proposed shopping districts – the Central Park Historic District, the Renaissance District or the Carrousel District.** Concentrate like retail in each district, complementing it with appropriately themed restaurants, locating it on the first floor and keeping it contiguous. One caution regarding this approach - retail uses scattered throughout downtown will have a diluted impact, and first priority should be given to filling ground floor space in the buildings located on the Square and in the Carrousel District. Where it is necessary to locate office space on the first floor, it should be placed in buildings at the fringes of downtown.
- **Recruitment strategies.**
 - **Active recruitment/niche retailer identification.** Prospect in nearby comparable communities and the Cleveland and Columbus metropolitan areas for successful, small retailers and restaurant chains that might be interested in and capable of additional locations. Visits from successful downtown Mansfield merchants to assist in recruiting merchants from other communities would be an effective strategy.

More and more chain retailers are exploring urban markets and developing new formats to target them. To reach these retailers, attend retailing industry events and conferences such as the Midwest Regional Deal-Making session of the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) held annually in Chicago.



The ICSC also holds a deal-making session and conference in Ohio in the fall of each year.

Subscribe to retailing magazines such as *Shopping Center World*, and *Stores* that frequently report on retailers' expansion plans and often feature articles on outstanding niche retailers that might be candidates.

- **Marketing information.** While they are likely to have the bulk of this information already on file or in a database, Main Street Mansfield should strive to establish and maintain a database of information containing local statistics, available spaces, maps and promotional materials for use in creating a strong leasing package to send or give to potential recruits.
- **Other initiatives.**
 - **Periodic mailings.** Generate mailings on a regular basis to tenant prospects identified through the above efforts. Each mailing could, for example, focus on a different feature or benefit of locating in downtown Mansfield. These mailings could range from postcards to videotapes or incentive gifts.
 - **Franchise fairs.** Conduct franchise fairs to bring potential shop owners and franchisors together. Identify franchise operators who might be desired and ask them to participate. Interested franchisors will typically send representatives and some type of display and promotional materials. The community would be responsible for identifying prospective franchisees among local residents (through advertising, targeted mailings and word of mouth) and providing the facilities and refreshments. Four to six franchisors would be enough for a meaningful fair. Each would be given the opportunity to speak briefly to the group about their operation and then meet prospects individually as appropriate. In addition to the franchisors, speakers could be brought in to address small business topics that might be an interest generator.

- **Encourage local entrepreneurs.** Establish a program of support for local entrepreneurs interested in opening a retail store. Support could include mentoring, business planning and operations assistance, and financial support as outlined in previous sections.

Tactic 4: Enhance and expand office uses in downtown.

- **Where possible, move offices occupying prime retail locations to the edges of the core area or to upper floors.**

In order to induce office users to locate on upper floors of downtown buildings, substantial redevelopment of these spaces will be required and elevator access will be critical. One or more common elevators could perhaps be constructed either inside a building with potential upper floor access to adjoining buildings, or at the rear of an existing building with walkways extending to adjacent buildings and ramps into the second level of each. Architectural surveys would be required to determine the feasibility of these concepts. Upper floor use will also discourage the possibility of fire in uninhabited upper stories and destruction of irreplaceable historic properties in the downtown.

- **Attract additional professionals and other office uses to downtown.**

For fifty years, public policy has encouraged out-migration in most American cities through such initiatives as tax incentives and infrastructure construction. When deciding where to locate public facilities or whether or not to provide assistance to a private enterprise considering locating in the area, public officials should take into account the long-term consequences and costs associated with a continued deterioration of downtown.

Downtown Mansfield is the historical center of government and commerce for the city and the region. For social as well as economic reasons, city and county

offices should commit to remaining downtown. The city of Mansfield and Richland County should be applauded for their commitment to remaining downtown. For the same reasons, public support and incentives for the relocation of private enterprises should be focused on the downtown area.

Downtown Mansfield's significant role as a government and activity center should be promoted to potential office users in addition to its special ambiance, the Square, historic buildings, and proximity to other amenities. Residential development in downtown would also encourage businesses to locate there, especially professional services firms.

A package of incentives could be assembled and offered to small, startup companies as a means of encouraging them to locate on the upper floors of downtown buildings. Some communities, including Columbus, are now offering cash incentives based on a percentage of anticipated future income tax revenues for each new employee brought to downtown.

Goal 7: Establish and/or empower the necessary organizations, regulatory environment and funding to achieve a comprehensive revitalization.

Tactic 1: Strengthen Main Street Mansfield

Main Street Mansfield was one of the first, and has been one of the most successful Main Street programs in the state. In 2001, the organization received the Great American Main Street Award from the National Main Street Center. In spite of its achievements and dedicated staff, it still struggles every year to achieve a sufficient level of funding to maintain ongoing programs. While the organization and its staff received compliments for their work from most stakeholders interviewed for this project, their role in downtown is viewed more narrowly than perhaps it could be. Following are some suggestions to increase its effectiveness and funding:

- **Consider revising the by-laws and restructuring the Board of Trustees.**
 - Membership on the board should be based on such factors as constituency represented (property owners, merchants, city, county, non-profits, and cultural institutions), skills and experiences (accountant, lawyer, marketing professional, or architect), decision-making ability, and commitment as demonstrated by active participation in board meetings and on committees.
 - Current by-laws call for a board of no less than 15 members and no more than 35. From our experience, anything significantly in excess of 20 members limits individual members' ability to participate in and contribute to board meetings, and could harm the effectiveness of the organization. At present time, the Main Street Mansfield board operates with 33 board members.
 - Board members are expected to contribute the comparatively modest sum of at least \$500 annually to the organization, although several board members contribute more. Nevertheless, future additions to or replacements for existing board seats should be carefully evaluated on the basis of likely overall effectiveness – both financial and non-financial.
- **Prepare an expanded and comprehensive resource development plan.**

Significant additional staffing and resources will be required if the goals laid out in this plan are to be achieved. While detailed budgeting will be necessary as an early next step in the process, First Avenues anticipates that the budget will need to be at least doubled from the current level for each of the next three years. This budget would cover, for example, the proposed voluntary cleanup campaign, increased promotions, additional support for local businesses, and a traffic study.

Prepare a comprehensive resource development plan to maximize the opportunities for complete funding of a new three year plan with a combination of public, private and nonprofit financial contributions, in-kind services and incentive programs. Based upon the potential benefits received and the experiences of other Main Street and community development organizations, a goal of receiving 1/3 of the total targeted amount from the public sector, 1/3 from the private sector and 1/3 from area nonprofits is appropriate. Possible sources of funds include:

- **Member contributions.** Owner/stakeholder involvement is the key to private investment. Suggested contribution levels should be tiered. Member contribution levels for downtown property owners should be based on equal financial support from each building and be significant enough to establish an adequate funding base and a feeling of having a clear stake in the organization's success. Many groups have suggested property owner contributions of \$500-\$1,000 per building owned per year. After all, property owners have the most to gain economically from a successful revitalization effort, especially in Mansfield where most upper floors are currently vacant or under-utilized. An effort should be made to identify and communicate with every downtown property owner, seeking his or her input to and support for the program. Organizations with major stakes or interests in the community such as the city, the county, financial institutions, major employers and major benefactors should be encouraged to contribute at higher levels. Community groups, tenants and residents could be involved at a lesser level based upon ability to pay. Seek three-year commitments to give the program sufficient time to be established and realize meaningful, visible results.
- **In-kind contributions.** Solicit additional contributions of in-kind services, equipment, and office space over and above membership contributions, from downtown property owners, merchants and office tenants, community groups, major employers, financial institutions and others with an interest in the downtown.

- **Regional, state and federal programs.** Seek grants and/or low interest loan assistance from federal, state and regional funding authorities for specific aspects of the program. Under certain circumstances, CDBG funds could be applied to building and infrastructure improvements that have been declared as “blighted”. Some communities have been successful in obtaining and using CDBG funds to support the non-profit organization’s operating expenses. Other federal and state programs are available that could be sources for at least a portion of the funding for specific proposed initiatives contained within the plan. Examples include the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ Natureworks Program, the state’s New Market Tax Credit program and Innovation Ohio, and TEA 21 grants through the Ohio Department of Transportation.
- **Naming rights.** Sell naming rights to specific downtown amenities or activities. This could apply to major investments or to something as small as, for example, a bench, planter or other amenity.
- **Financial institutions and utilities.** Banks and other financial institutions are required by the federal Community Reinvestment Act to invest a certain amount of their funds for the benefit of the communities in which they operate. Mansfield’s financial institutions have, for the most part, been long time supporters of Main Street Mansfield. As a means of increasing the organization’s effectiveness and “hitting the ground running” with initiatives proposed in this plan, these institutions should be asked to consider committing to an increased contribution level for each of the next three years. Most utilities also actively support community and economic development programs.
- **City and County.** The city has made a significant commitment to Main Street Mansfield through the monthly distribution of a portion of the bed tax it receives to the organization. Beyond this contribution though, both the city and the county should be asked to consider additional contributions to the downtown

revitalization. these contributions should be viewed as investments in the economic vitality and image of the entire region and, more directly, as investments with the potential to return funds to these public entities in the form of increased income and sales taxes.

- **Board members.** The fund raising campaign should begin with the members of the board of the proposed organization. It is important, when requesting contributions from others, to be able to state that every member of the board has contributed (at whatever level they can afford) and is committed to the effort.
- **Nonprofits.** Seek contributions to the program or specific aspects of it from family and community foundations and civic organizations that are active in the community. Many major corporations, for example, have foundations set up specifically to benefit the communities in which they operate. Even WalMart has a community foundation. Where appropriate, request the opportunity to make formal presentations to these groups about the strategic vision, Main Street Mansfield and anticipated sources and uses of funds. Downtown has more to do with the image and long-term health of the community than just about anything else they could invest in, but this is a fact that many long standing and caring organizations are just coming to realize. It is Main Street Mansfield's responsibility to help these community groups see the value of such a contribution and commit to investing it wisely.
- **Community Development Corporation (CDC) support programs.** Many larger cities have or are currently establishing organizations to help fund and provide technical assistance to CDC's. At least two national organizations are active in this effort, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Enterprise Foundation. While these organizations are not presently active in communities the size of Mansfield, both are expanding their efforts. It would be valuable to explore with them assistance they might be able to offer.

Tactic 2: Temporarily fund sidewalk, gutter and parking lot cleaning with voluntary assessments and donations.

As discussed in Goal 2, a program should be established to temporarily fund sidewalk, gutter and parking lot cleaning with voluntary assessments and donations.

Area cleaning would ideally be undertaken by the proposed Special Improvement District (SID) described herein, which is funded by an assessment on district property owners. Street sweeping and graffiti removal programs have been established by SID's or downtown associations in such communities as Frankford, Pennsylvania and Newark, Ohio. In Frankford, the SID, with funding from the local hospital, also trained staff to be goodwill ambassadors, greeting and guiding visitors and serving as another element in a comprehensive crime prevention strategy. San Jose, Philadelphia and Hartford, Connecticut all have similar programs.

Tactic 3: As the downtown is gradually revitalized, consideration should be given to the creation of a Special Improvement District.

A Special Improvement District (SID) is a quasi-public organization formed by property owners who have agreed to an assessment on their property in order to generate revenue for services and capital improvements provided within a defined district. SID's provide a long-term financial base for marketing, capital improvements and management programs. The services and improvements to be delivered are described in a contract between the property owners and the organization charged with managing the SID. This contractual arrangement increases accountability and keeps the focus of the organization on achieving stated goals of property owners. The SID usually encompasses the entire business district, thereby spreading the cost and benefits of services provided across a broad base of property owners and tenants.

Sixty percent of property owners, or those representing roughly seventy-five percent of the linear front footage, must agree to an assessment determined by property owner representatives. The process of recruiting the property owners, agreeing to an assessment, and determining how it will be spent is a time consuming effort requiring a high level of commitment from leadership at all levels in the community.

A SID is the most reliable way to assure long term funding but, since it involves a tax assessment on downtown properties, it may be desirable to await demonstration of the success of the program before seeking approval for it from private property owners. Trustees elected by property owners would oversee the SID. Once formed and funded, the SID could contract with Main Street Mansfield to oversee the delivery of agreed upon services such streetscape maintenance, litter control, sidewalk snow removal and parking enforcement and lot management.

Tactic 4: Establish a Tax Increment Financing District.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a redevelopment tool authorized by state statute and used by cities and development authorities to finance certain public redevelopment costs. Projects financed with TIF must serve a public purpose such as redeveloping blighted or underutilized properties, rehabilitating publicly owned non-municipal structures, relocating occupants, and constructing public improvements.

When a TIF district is established, the tax capacity of the properties located within the district is “frozen.” For the district’s duration, which varies depending on the type of district, the property taxes resulting from any increase in the tax capacity above the frozen level are available to Mansfield or an organization its designates, such as Main Street Mansfield, to finance public project costs. Property taxes generated from the ‘frozen’ tax capacity continue to be paid to the various tax jurisdictions.

Ultimately, the TIF could provide Mansfield with the ability to proceed with revitalization activities that the private sector is unwilling or unable to undertake. By using a TIF, these entities have tools for: recycling infrastructure, enhancing the tax base, creating and retaining jobs, reclaiming brownfields (polluted land), providing a broad range of housing opportunities, and enhancing district commercial enterprises.

Tactic 5: Consider establishing a new public-private development entity to act as an interim developer in situations where land assembly, acquisition, cost, and/or environmental cleanup create barriers to private development of projects deemed critical or catalytic to downtown's revitalization.

The city should consider delegating some of its powers and responsibilities to an entity such as a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), a Community Urban Renewal Corporation (CURC) or perhaps the existing Port Authority to address situations where barriers exist to redevelopment of a critical site or sites in downtown. Complex legal issues are involved in the selection of the most appropriate type of entity and powers to be delegated. Appropriate legal counsel is strongly advised when considering whether and how to implement this recommendation.

The concept would be to create a new economic development entity that links public sector goals with private sector leadership, expertise and capital to implement those goals. This organization, if properly structured and funded, would have the ability and resources to manage complex, larger-scale transactions designed to achieve the ultimate goal – to renew and restore downtown vitality. Examples of these transactions could include the potential of locating the proposed ice rink in downtown or building structured parking that incorporates retail uses. The board of this organization should be comprised of Mansfield's most accomplished business and community leaders.

Tactic 6: Pursue Community Capital Campaign Gateway Committee funding of a major downtown initiative.

This committee of the United Way was established to review and prioritize major community capital campaigns. The campaign financial threshold is currently one million dollars. Proposals must have a definitive plan, amount and clearly definable purpose. A subcommittee is currently drawing up qualifications and specifications, as well as periodic review standards. Campaigns of up to two years each in length are prioritized over a five-year period. Multiple campaigns may be authorized but are limited to more than one per category. Categories currently include Arts & Sciences, Education, Health & Welfare, Community Public Facilities and Economic Development. Proponents' progress and continued worthiness are reviewed on an annual basis. There are a number of initiatives proposed as part of this plan that could be submitted to the committee for consideration. Among them are locating the ice rink in downtown, a new structured parking facility and proposed improvements to the Square. One of the earliest and most important considerations for the Mansfield Alliance will be choosing an initiative to pursue immediately as the most important and catalytic project worthy of consideration by the committee.

Tactic 7: Support the school facilities levy should it come up again and encourage the location of the new middle school in the vicinity of downtown as originally proposed.

This recommendation is included in this section because it is a community-wide issue with community-wide impact. If downtown is once again to be considered the heart of Mansfield, it must be the priority location for public facilities that serve the entire community. The middle school facility should be located near downtown and, as plans for other Mansfield schools evolve over the next few years, consideration should be given to utilizing them for additional community and educational activities. Participants in a recent Urban Land Institute forum noted that it was important to design community facilities in mixed-income neighborhoods with maximum flexibility. The Tenderloin

Community School in San Francisco is an example of this principle, incorporating a community center, adult education classrooms and other community services in a single building with a common entrance.

Tactic 8: Engage Mansfield's African-American community.

One of the most important issues that arose from our analytical process was that Mansfield's African-American community is not a full participant in the organizations or discussions that are guiding and determining Mansfield's future. This group represents over 20% of Mansfield's population and is critical to the community's future economic and social health. As a result of a focus group conducted by First Avenues with leaders of the African-American community, a new organization, Community First, Inc., has been established to prioritize and encourage African-American participation in the Mansfield Alliance and other organizations. An initial Plan of Action developed by this group includes the following:

- Make an initial investment of \$5,000 to ensure that the minority community becomes a stakeholder in the revitalization plan and the implementation process.
- Research demographic and economic issues related to the minority community, including buying power, housing initiatives, the Main Street corridor and minority business assistance.
- Develop of cultural sensitivity and competence in marketing to minority residents.
- Serve as an information clearinghouse for minority organizations and other disenfranchised residents within the city.
- Ensure the creation of an environment that is conducive to the support, start-up and development of minority and women-owned businesses with the target areas.

This plan of action and the minority community's participation should be given full support by the Mansfield Alliance.

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Mansfield

Goals & Vision - Miracle Mile

Goal 1: Develop more consistency and synergy in the mix of uses for the entire corridor.

Tactic 1: Identify the appropriate long-range land use and occupancy preferences for each zone.

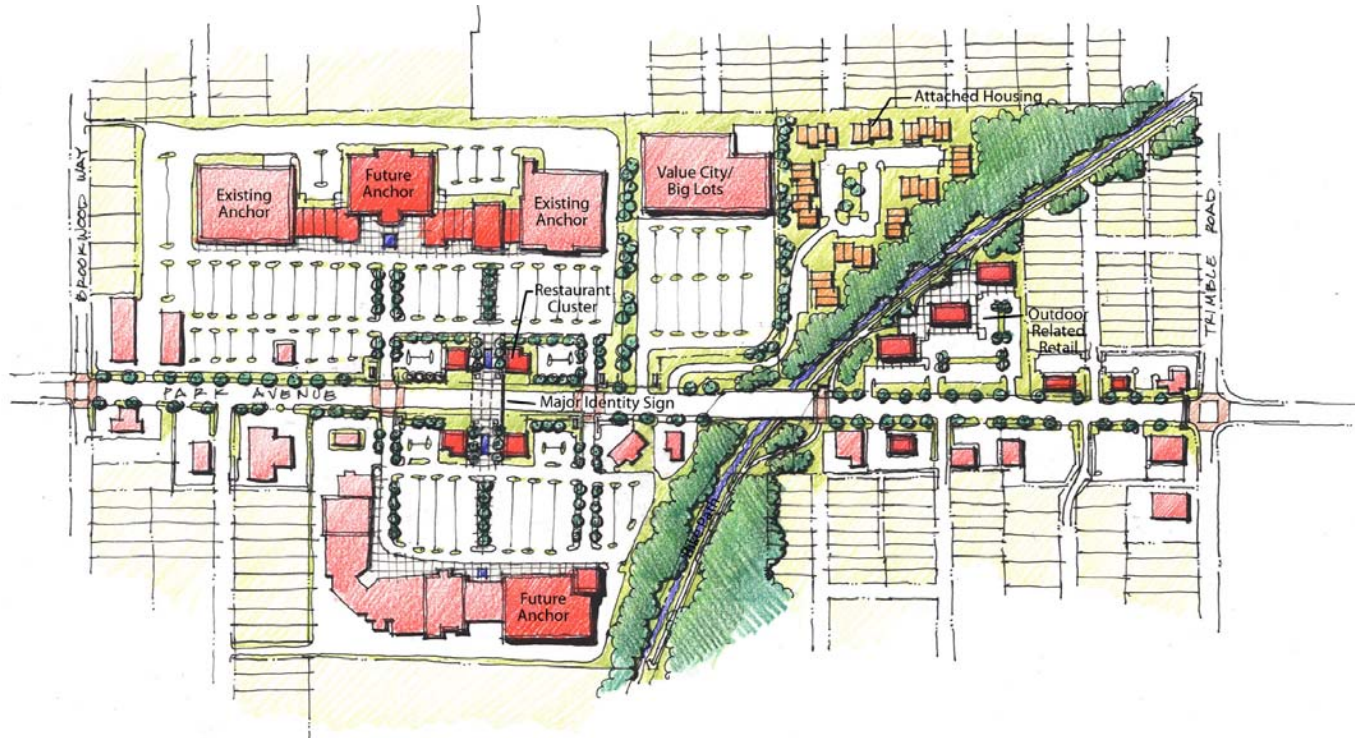
The redevelopment directions for the corridor should be crafted to promote each zone of the Miracle Mile as a destination in itself. The following strategies are proposed for the three distinct zones.

East Zone:



- The eastern zone is the “gateway” to the corridor when approaching from downtown and Trimble Road. This area is separated from commercial concentrations to the east by Kingwood Center and to the west by the bridge on Park Avenue. The zone is too small to act as destination on its own and currently contains a mix of uses with no consistency or focus. Over time, the area should be developed as a transition zone between the residential areas that surround it and the middle and west zones of the Miracle Mile to take better advantage of the adjacency to the bikeway, single-family residential neighborhoods and the Kingwood Center.
- The relatively small retail lot sizes and the adjacency to residential neighborhoods to the north and south suggest that service oriented retail and restaurants continue to be appropriate in this zone.
- At the time of this study, four properties were vacant or for sale in this eastern zone. Declining retail demand may encourage small office uses or multi-family housing to replace these retail uses. Both of these land uses would provide appropriate transitions to the single-family residential neighborhoods to the north and south. Architectural expression for new development in this zone should draw from the residential scale and form of the adjacent neighborhoods, and the high quality standards already set by Kingwood.
- Several uses in this zone are incompatible with adjacent land uses and neighborhoods. Scores nightclub would be more compatible with uses in the central zone of the corridor where parking could be more easily accommodated and the proximity to residential neighborhoods can be minimized. In addition, the auto service uses would be more compatible with the auto dealers in the west zone.
- Larger parcels along the north side of Park Avenue at the bridge may represent a special redevelopment opportunity. Improvements to the bridge, including high quality landscaping and more direct linkages to the bikeway, could provide benefits to restaurants and other specialty retailers along the rim of the bikeway.

Central Zone:

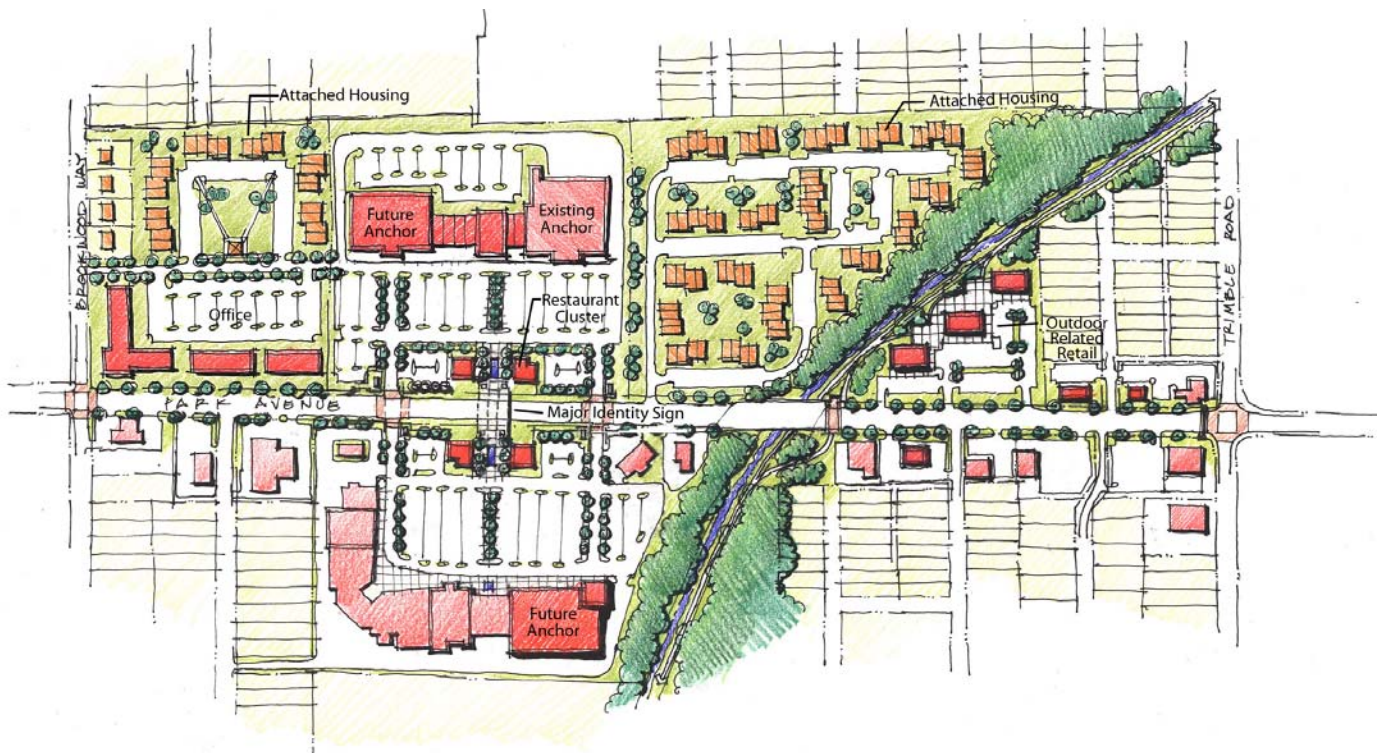


- The central zone is recognized as the retail “heart” of the corridor. The large retail land parcels there represent the greatest opportunity to revitalize the corridor with new uses and a new image. Park Avenue still offers high traffic counts, fairly dense surrounding residential areas and easy access from nearby highways that make it a viable alternative to Ontario for a concentration of retail uses.
- The enclosed mall portion of Kingsgate shopping center is no longer viable as a retail format due to the larger and more compelling retail concentrations in Ontario, and at Polaris Fashion Mall 45 minutes south of Mansfield. Even Westfield Mall in Ontario is suffering from this new competition north of Columbus. Based upon market analysis, this site offers potential to be repositioned as an open-air “lifestyle” center with pedestrian spaces and amenities. Possible new anchors may include lifestyle categories such as furniture, technology, sporting goods, and books or music stores. Other anchors such as a cinema or other family and youth-oriented retail and

entertainment may have the strongest relationship to a potential restaurant cluster as discussed below. In addition to these retail uses, strong consideration should be given to special recreational facilities that could act as anchors. Some of these potential uses would require larger building footprints. Possible examples include an ice rink, indoor skating/skateboard park or a senior center.

- Establish the centerpiece of the corridor through the creation of a special restaurant cluster. This cluster would be an attraction that takes advantage of the high visibility from Park Avenue and significantly minimizes the visual impact of the large parking lots. It would also permit the shopping centers' current owner or a new developer to sell out parcel sites and use the proceeds to finance redevelopment of the parcels located at the rear of the properties. Reducing the size of retail space at the rear would permit new uses at the street without reducing overall parking capacity.
- Establish a special sense of place for the restaurant out parcels through the creation of shared pedestrian spaces, specialty signage, lighting and landscaping. Themed restaurants or auto-oriented franchises may be most appropriate. Announce "The Miracle Mile" with a large signature piece that becomes a landmark along the corridor.
- The West Park Shopping Center currently has a lower vacancy rate than Kingsgate as the result of two medium sized anchor stores that have performed relatively well. The creation of a restaurant cluster and improvements to Kingsgate, will create more traffic and visibility and become a further benefit to this center. Cosmetic improvements to the building facades, pedestrian areas, and parking lots should be coordinated with the development of the restaurant cluster. The addition of one larger anchor store, such as a grocery, should be a goal of this center to further ensure its stability. The loss of parking due to the development of the restaurant cluster and/or the addition of another anchor may suggest the conversion of the east wing of the center to parking.

- Assuming that the recent decline in demand for retail in this corridor is not fully recovered, property owners may ultimately want to consider a transition of some uses from retail to office and residential. The disparity of land costs that often occurs in such transitions may be offset by the relatively high value of the restaurant out parcels that could be created. The following plan illustrates a redevelopment scenario where the Kings Gate retail is diminished, but continues to have a strong relationship to West Park and the restaurant cluster. The western portion of Kingsgate is replaced with housing and office space along the Park Avenue frontage. The large retail facility east of Kings Gate is ultimately replaced with more housing. The housing component does not just replace the existing retail, but also provides more potential consumers to support the retail.



West Zone:



- The west zone is the “gateway” to the corridor when approaching from Ontario and Lexington-Springmill Road. This area should take advantage of the close proximity to the large volume of traffic generated by retail operations on Lexington-Springmill.
- Preserve and enhance the image of the new car dealerships in this zone of the corridor. Encourage future land uses that support this identity, including additional new car dealers, auto parts/repair shops, and car audio and accessories stores.
- Encourage auto-related restaurants. New drive-through restaurant concepts have been developed by McDonalds, Rally’s and others. Franchises such as Sonic and A&W still provide carhop service. Sit-down family restaurant chains such as Quaker Steak ‘n Lube would also be excellent additions to the corridor. Architecture and signage for these restaurants should celebrate the auto-oriented character of this corridor.

Tactic 2: Establish a corridor redevelopment authority with a mission to encourage and manage the redevelopment activities for the property owners along the corridor.

- Implement a strategic leasing/land use plan based on a long-range redevelopment template that allows flexibility but emphasizes an overriding commitment to quality and consistency. Without the benefit of an overall development authority empowered to oversee the redevelopment activities of the area, it becomes the responsibility of each property owner and/or developer to promote their properties and projects in a manner that is consistent with the overall redevelopment goals and objectives of the district.

Goal 2: Develop a consistent streetscape program for the Miracle Mile

Tactic 1: Combine selected design elements and landscape design to tie the mile long corridor together, while differentiating the three different district zones.

The Miracle Mile corridor is linked historically to the automobile's influence on Mansfield's growth and development. Therefore, through an enhanced physical environment and creative marketing and promotions effort, this history can be celebrated in the form of a unique mixed-use district with a retail orientation.

- In an effort to continue the focus on a primarily auto oriented business district, a palette of design components should be selected which provide a visual linking of the whole corridor, while allowing each zone to distinguish itself. The design theme of the streetscape should be contemporary in character and allow for a celebration of the automobile through signing, lighting and promotions.
- The selected "kit of parts" would include all of the following components in an attempt to bring order and consistency to the physical character of the district. The following list is divided into *basic components* and *phase II components* so that short and long term budgets can be coordinated with phased improvements to determine what is most appropriate and feasible at the time.

Basic Components:

High mast utility poles – Replace wood utility poles with metal poles that will raise the wires and minimize visual clutter. In addition, these poles can typically be spaced further apart which minimizes the total number of poles required.



Metal utility poles with decorative light fixtures in Columbus, Ohio

Combination street and accent lighting – Provide street lighting with more efficient and contemporary styled fixtures. Dramatic accent lighting could also be integrated into these fixtures to light banners. This lighting may also be integrated into the high mast utility poles.

Park Avenue street trees – Where possible in the public right-of-way, minimize curb cuts and eliminate unnecessary pavement. Provide street trees with a generous spacing and a minimum canopy height of eight feet in order to preserve views to the retailers along the corridor.

Phase II Components

Bridge renovation and bikeway connection – Improve the bridge area and visibility to the bike path with accent and security lighting, enhanced pedestrian/bicycle access, bike route signage, and maintenance of existing vegetation.

Major sign pylon[s] announcing “The Mile”- Provide a major identity feature along Park Avenue at the restaurant cluster in the center of the corridor. This element should span Park Avenue or have a strong vertical orientation. Secondary elements could be provided at the east and west gateway to the corridor.



Promotion display areas – Provide raised display areas for marketing and promotions opportunities at regular intervals along the corridor. Automobiles could be displayed throughout the year to promote special events.

Unique accent lighting system - Highlight special features such as “The Miracle Mile” sign, the promotion display areas, and gateway elements with specialty lighting such as light canons, fiber optics or neon.

Tactic 2: Establish consistency throughout the corridor through the creation of design and development guidelines.

- Create guidelines to assist property owners and developers when making architectural, signing, site planning and overall character decisions about their projects. These guidelines should include building and parking setbacks, architectural standards, site access standards, interior parking lot landscaping and parking lot screening requirements, building and parking lot lighting standards and signage guidelines. A similar set of standards has recently been established for an auto-oriented corridor in Columbus, Ohio. The standards are administered as a zoning overlay by the zoning department.



View looking east along
Park Avenue West

- The treatment of signs throughout the corridor should contribute to the image of this auto-oriented corridor. Large object signs, such as the Park Lanes bowling pin should be encouraged. Flashing, rotating, animated, and neon signs are all appropriate in this corridor. Smaller “main street” type signs should be discouraged. Some basic limits on height and setbacks should be established in order to achieve unity along the streetscape.



Goal 3: Celebrate the Automobile

The Miracle Mile may be one of the few places left in America that still celebrates the uniquely American pastime of ‘cruising’, which began in the 1950’s with the advent of the Automobile Age. Young people flock to the Miracle Mile on Friday and Saturday nights to cruise the street and socialize in the adjacent lots. While some stakeholders complained about the litter, adverse impact on traffic safety and infrequent vandalism that occurs because of these activities, the reality is that a concentration of the right kinds of restaurants and entertainment offerings could benefit greatly from the traffic.

Serious consideration should be given to celebrating the ‘cruising’ while managing it for the positive benefit of area businesses. Initiatives that could be considered include:

- Property owners pooling resources to conduct joint promotions and to hire private security to monitor activities during peak hours without discouraging the activity or being adversarial.

- Exploring the possibility of promotional tie-ins with Mid-Ohio during their six major yearly race events. Special events, appearances and temporary retail kiosks selling auto- and race-related products could all be used to increase the visibility, draw and sales along the corridor.
- As sites are redeveloped, consider and plan for traffic lanes and retail/restaurant locations that could take advantage of the cruising.

Goal 4: Improve accessibility to the Miracle Mile.

Tactic 1: Identify the Miracle Mile on major state routes.

- Auto dealers, shopping centers and retailers located along the corridor should be encouraged to mention the Miracle Mile in their advertising to reinforce its position as a destination retail corridor. Operations with billboard ads on major highways should consider a brief description of the location to encourage visitors and those who are passing through to find and shop in the corridor.
- Explore the possibility of positioning directional signs at US 30 and Trimble Road and on the west at State Route 309 and Lexington-Springmill Road guiding people to the Miracle Mile.

Tactic 2: Create distinctive gateway elements

- Announce “The Miracle Mile” at the Home and Trimble Road intersections with a major signage and landscape statement. This feature should be part of the “family” of site elements that are established for the corridor.

Tactic 3: Widen Trimble Road

- As the most direct access from State Route 30, Trimble Road should be widened to four lanes from US 30 to Park Avenue.

Tactic 4: Improve circulation along Park Avenue

- Where possible, eliminate unnecessary curb cuts. Smaller sites should only be permitted one full service curb cut. This will minimize conflicts with other automobiles and with pedestrians using the existing sidewalks.
- Raise the speed limit along Park Avenue to 35 mph. The city is currently reviewing the existing 25 mph speed limit. This is a major impediment to people wanting to drive through or visit the corridor. Because of the width of Park Avenue in this area, the lower speed limit is viewed as unreasonable and frustrating by area motorists.
- Provide for 5'-wide designated bike lanes along Park Avenue. Avid cyclists generally prefer a designated lane in the street as opposed to sharing a sidewalk with pedestrians. Curb cuts also create potential conflict points with cyclists when the bike route is set back from the street.

Tactic 5: Improve wayfinding for pedestrians and motorists alike.

- Consistently locate street signs at all intersections. Slightly over-sized signs may be appropriate to aid wayfinding. The wide street and large amount of visual clutter makes it more difficult to find the street signs in this area.



- Provide standard poles and backgrounds for regulatory signage. The color of these should be coordinated with all of the standard streetscape elements. Although subtle, this technique can help to minimize the visual clutter and unify the corridor.



Goal 5: Identify the key techniques and controls necessary to begin revitalization of the Miracle Mile.

Tactic 1: As suggested elsewhere, consideration should be given to establishing a non-profit development corporation that could serve as interim developer where appropriate, but could also represent the interests of district property owners and businesses in overseeing the enhancement of The Miracle Mile.

- Initiatives that could be undertaken by this organization include supplemental security as proposed above, promotion of the Miracle Mile as a shopping, dining and entertainment destination, working with the city on improvement of the public environs and otherwise facilitating the redevelopment of the corridor.
- In the early stages of the redevelopment, voluntary contributions could be solicited from district property owners and businesses, the city, the county, area financial institutions, local nonprofits and others with an interest in seeing the corridor reach its potential as an attractive, economically viable commercial and mixed-use district.
- The corporation should be organized under the Main Street approach and be led by a board of directors representing stakeholder interests.

Tactic 2: Consideration should be given to establishing a Special Improvement District (See Goal 7 in the Downtown Plan) as a means of providing longer term funding for promotions, supplemental security, redevelopment oversight, signage and portions of the proposed enhancements to the public environs.

Tactic 3: Also as discussed in Goal 7 of the Downtown Plan, consideration should be given to establishing a Tax Increment Financing district so that the increased real estate taxes that result from improvement to properties located in the district could be used to fund required public improvements.

Mansfield

Next Steps

Downtown:

- Address “Crime and Grime”.
- Establish overlay zoning, design guidelines and design review process.
- Develop support and detailed plans for traffic and parking.
- Redevelop a historic building on the square with upper-floor housing.
- Pursue theater anchor for new development on municipal lot in Carrousel District.
- Pursue ice rink and/or multi-use facility in Renaissance District.
- Develop detailed plans for Square redevelopment and initiate immediate enhancements.
- Strengthen Main Street Mansfield.
- Target a nearby neighborhood for comprehensive housing rehab and infill development.

First Year Funding Requirements = \$150,000 – 200,000

Miracle Mile:

- Increase speed limit to 35 mph.
- Establish overlay zoning, design guidelines and design review process.
- Establish Tax Increment Financing District and pursue eventual Special Improvement District.
- Pursue grocery store or other anchor for Kingsgate Shopping Center.
- Establish restaurant outparcel cluster on north and south sides of Park Avenue at Kingsgate.
- Enhance public environment and bikeway appearance and access.
- Pursue future expansion of Trimble Road.

First Year Funding Requirements = \$25,000 – 40,000.

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Mansfield

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Downtown & Miracle Mile Revitalization Committee Members (Mansfield Alliance)

- Erskine Braggs Hope Inc.
- Tom Carto Richland Performing Arts Association
- Steve Cobb Weidner Motors
- James A. Courtney Mechanics Savings Bank
- James A. Clark First Merit Bank
- Jennifer (Gerberick) Kime Main Street Mansfield
- Michael Greene REDC
- Dan Hardwick Richland County Commissioners
- Eddie Harris Harris Home Improvement
- Virginia Imhoff President, Mansfield City Council
- Brian Joyce Joyce Buick
- Ronald P. Lantzy Ohio Edison
- Timothy Lehman Richland Bank
- Hal Miksch First Avenues
- Paula Morrison Skilken Properties
- Thomas Murphy Mansfield Black Chamber of Commerce
- Kevin Nestor Mansfield/Richland County Chamber of Commerce
- Cynthia O'Neal NAACP
- Lydia Reid Mayor, City of Mansfield
- Dirk Schluter Whitey's Auto Mall
- Pamela Siegenthaler Richland County Foundation
- Lee Skilken Skilken Properties
- Sallie Sylvester Sallie's Wholesale Supplies
- Rick R. Taylor Jay Industries
- Deanna West-Torrence Chap-Ohio
- Pete Zimmerman Sprint

Appendix 2 - Project Funding

City and County Government

- City of Mansfield
- Richland County

Not-for-Profits

- Richland County Foundation
- REDC
- Mansfield/Richland County Chamber of Commerce
- Main Street Mansfield

Banks

- Richland Bank
- Mechanics Bank
- Bank One
- Key Bank
- First Merit Bank
- Huntington Bank

Downtown Property Owners and Merchants

- Engwiller Properties
- Sprint
- Kamko Enterprises
- Tridico Silk Screening/Signs
- Bissman Company
- Jay Industries, Inc.
- North Main Street, Inc.
- Bill Heichel
- Mansfield News Journal
- Southern Title
- The Owls
- Kokosing
- Lind Outdoor
- Tim Alexander
- K.E. McCartney & Associates
- Richland Engineering
- Dick McCready
- Roby, Foster, Miller & Earick
- General Motors
- MT Business Technologies
- Mansfield/Richland Public Library
- Home Collections
- Columbia Gas
- First Energy
- Mail Corner & More

- Holiday Inn
- Knell, Dorner & Gerhardt Co., LPA
- Mansfield Commerce Center
- Eric Miller
- Miller Jewelry
- Hartman Spreng
- Graber Family Ltd.
- Jones Potato Chip Company
- Alpine Electric
- Mercer Impressions
- Richland Carrousel Park
- MKC Associates
- Marion Zaugg, Architect
- Chicago Title
- John's Hobby Shop
- Noel and Nancy Stevens
- Rocky's Pub
- Sun Graphics
- Tobacco Road
- Universal Digital Communications
- Weiss Industries
- Newman Technology
- Kelly Services
- Girl Scouts of America
- B&A Building Services
- CAP
- Don Mitchell
- Sallie's Wholesale Supplies
- Deanna West-Torrence
- In the Spirit of Ujima
- Erskine Braggs
- Harris Home Improvements
- Haring Jewelry

Miracle Mile Property Owners and Merchants

- Skilken Properties
- Weidner Motors
- Joyce Buick
- Whitey's Auto Mall
- TFS Management
- Park Lanes
- Premier Office
- Dick McCready
- Cannon Management Ltd.
- Headway Realty Company Ltd.
- General Motors

Appendix 3 - Stakeholder Interviews

- Ron Abrams North Central State College
- Dick Adair Richland County
Regional Planning
- Tim Alexander Architect
- Ruth Anderson Merchant
- Tim Bowersock Community Development
Dept., City of Mansfield
- Tom Brennan Mansfield News Journal
- Tom Carto Richland Performing Arts
- Jim Clark First Merit Bank
- Steve Cobb Weidner Motors
- Mike Conley Property Owner
- Marianne Cooper Richland Academy
- Jim Courtney Mechanics Bank
- Pauline Easton Downtown Ohio Inc.
- Gene Deal Miracle Mile Property Owner
- Leonard Dillon CCEDC
- John Fernyak Engwiller Properties;
MT Business Technologies
- Liz Gilson Mansfield/Richland County
Public Library
- Michael Green REDC
- Dan Hardwick Richland County
Commissioner
- Bill Hartnett State Representative
- Mike Higgins Traffic and Parking,
Mansfield Police Dept.
- Virginia Imhoff Mansfield City Council
- Brian Joyce Joyce Buick
- Bill Joyce Joyce Buick
- Glenn Kramer Ohio Edison
- Ron Lantzy Ohio Edison
- Tim Lehman Richland Bank

- Eileen Levison Merchant
- Dave Lutz Property Owner
- Hal Maxfield Realtor
- Chris McKinniss Ohio Department of Development
- Ed Meehan Former Mayor, City of Mansfield
- Phil Messer Mansfield Police Department
- Grant Milliron Milliron Industries
- Don Mitchell Community Development Dept., City of Mansfield
- Paula Morrison Skilken Properties
- Kevin Nestor Mansfield/Richland County Chamber of Commerce
- Ed Olson K.E. McCartney & Associates
Richland County Commissioner, Elect
- Joseph Palmer Mansfield/Richland County Public Library
- Dean Palmer Richland Engineering Ltd.
- Ray Piar Richland Bank
- Lydia Reid Mayor, City of Mansfield
- Dave Remy Law Director, City of Mansfield
- Dirk Schluter Whitey's Auto Mall
- Bob Schwartz Richland County Commissioner
- Pam Siegenthaler Richland Foundation
- Lee Skilken Skilken Properties
- Lee Tasseff Mansfield & Richland County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Geron Tate Mansfield UMADAOP
- Rick Taylor Jay Industries, Inc.
- Jonathan Walbert Richland County Transit
- Jeff Walls Tobacco Road
- Dave Williamson Ohio Department of Development
- Pete Zimmerman Sprint

The following stakeholders participated in the minority focus group session:

- Alma Bragg
- Erskine Braggs HOPE
- Willie Briggs Briggs Improvements
- Brenda Brown CHAP
- Whonetha Browning-Edwards
- Carol Caldwell Community Spot
- Danielle Carter Ocie Hill Community Center
- Eugene Cleamons Community Support
- Rudy Flores USWA
- Eddie Harris Harris Home Improvement
- Robert Horton UMADAOP
- Patti Luckie M-R-M Community
Action Program;
L-A Contractors
- Leoda Melton Melton Rugs
- Thomas Murphy MMCC
- Jaunita Nared CHAP
- Anthony Redic BARTAR Consultants
- Anna Samuel M-R-M Cap
- Sallie Sylvester Sallie’s Wholesale
& Construction, Inc.
- Deanna West-Torrence Chap-Ohio
- James Watkins Ocie Hill Community Center
- Cathy Wellington
- Jeanette Williams CHAP

Appendix 4 - Mansfield's Top Seven PRIZM Segments

Family Scramble - 20% of Mansfield

Blue Collar, Low- to Mid-Income, Grade school or High School Education Working Singles and Families

<p>Lifestyle Believe advertising Attempt to stop smoking Remodel their kitchens Color their hair at home Use call return Be truck racing/pulls fans Order <\$50 items per year Buy science fiction literature</p>	<p>Products and Services Buy Sears tires Buy a VCR Use Post Raisin Bran Shop at Montgomery Ward Buy a car through a finance company Buy vinyl floor tile Buy instantly developed film Buy baby furniture and equipment</p>
<p>Radio/TV Listen to Spanish radio Listen to urban contemporary radio Watch the Cartoon Network Watch Professional Wrestling Watch the NCAA Men's Soccer Championships Watch The MTV Music Video Awards Watch ABC News: Nightline Watch Rescue 911 Watch The Maury Povich Show Watch America's Most Wanted</p>	<p>Print Read Baby Talk Read Family Handyman Read Hunting Read Seventeen Read Parenting Read Hot Rod Read Woman's World Read Star</p>

Sunset City Blues - 18% of Mansfield

Older Middle-Income Blue-Collar Workers, Predominately White, High School Educated, Single Family Home Owners

<p>Lifestyle Order <\$50 from catalog per year Be truck racing/pulls fans Buy things their friends approve of Go snowmobiling Use cigars Go online <5 hours per month Belong to a union Travel by bus</p>	<p>Products and Services Drink Coke/Caffeine-Free Coke Use microwave breakfast entrees Buy a \$250+ sofa bed Own a Nissan truck bought new Have shocks installed at garage Buy a car with a bank loan Install own shocks Own a travel trailer</p>
<p>Radio/TV Listen to classic rock radio Watch f/X Watch Fox Night at the Movies Watch ABC Pro Boxing Watch the U.S. Women's Open (Golf) Watch <i>Faith & Values</i> Watch <i>CBS Sunday Morning</i> Watch <i>Sally Jessy Raphael</i> Watch <i>The Late Late Show w/ Tom Snyder</i> Watch <i>Mystery</i></p>	<p>Print Read <i>Stereo Review</i> Read <i>Woman's World</i> Read <i>Audubon</i> Read motorcycle magazines Read <i>Motor Trend</i> Read <i>4 Wheel & Off Road</i> Read <i>Saturday Evening Post</i> Read <i>Modern Bride</i></p>

Middleburg Managers - 15% of Mansfield

Upper-Middle Income White-Collar business people, city officials and retailers in smaller cities. Single family home dwellers - HS+ education

<p>Lifestyle Travel by railroad Add a bathroom Take adult education courses Do water aerobics Buy contemporary rock music Jog or run Buy mystery literature Do stitch needlework</p>	<p>Products and Services Shop at Sports Authority Buy \$200+ area rugs Own a laptop computer Own a portable CD player Have shocks installed at garage Own a van Own an Oldsmobile bought new Drink Diet Coke/ Caffeine-Free Coke</p>
<p>Radio/TV Listen to easy listening radio Listen to soft contemporary radio Watch College Basketball Watch the U.S. Senior Open (Golf) Watch the British Open Watch QVC Watch Inside Edition Watch Rush Limbaugh Watch The Kennedy Center Presents Watch Wall Street Week</p>	<p>Print Read Saturday Evening Post Read Gourmet Read Golf Magazine Read PC Magazine Read Skiing Read USA Today Read Esquire Read Eating Well</p>

Southside City - 14% of Mansfield

Low-Income, African-American, Working Single Parents and Singles Grade School/HS Education, Renters

<p>Lifestyle Buy gospel music Experiment with brands Use three-way calling Use furniture cleaning services Spend <\$50 grocery shopping weekly Be economy-minded consumers Believe advertising Be pro wrestling fans</p>	<p>Products and Services Use grits Use Sara Lee snack cakes Buy a <\$250 mattress/box spring set Own a Mazda bought new Buy a VCR Drink sparkling water Use spray starch Buy a microwave oven</p>
<p>Radio/TV Listen to urban contemporary radio Listen to Black radio Listen to religious/gospel radio Watch the BET network Watch ABC Pro Boxing Watch the World Track and Field Championships Watch CBS This Morning Watch Showtime at the Apollo Watch The NAACP Image Awards</p>	<p>Print Read Baby Talk Read Ebony Read Soap Opera Weekly Read GQ Read Star Read Entrepreneur Read Stereo Review Read Sports Illustrated</p>

Smalltown Downtown – 10% of Mansfield

Older Renters and Young Families, White-Collar, HS or Some College Education

<p>Lifestyle Use cigars Use call forwarding Practice karate or martial arts Go snowmobiling Order <\$50 from catalogs per year Experiment with brands Buy 1940s-60s pop music Collect stamps</p>	<p>Products and Services Use frozen dinners for kids Buy a VCR Install their own shocks Drink 11+ glasses regular cola per week Buy \$250+ dining room furniture Buy a vacuum cleaner Drink Diet Pepsi Shop at Target</p>
<p>Radio/TV Listen to progressive rock radio Listen to classic rock radio Watch MTV Watch the Sci-Fi Channel Watch The Home Shopping Network Watch the World Swimming and Diving Championships Watch Fox Night at the Movies Watch CBS This Morning Watch Late Night with Conan O'Brien Watch Run Away with the Rich & Famous</p>	<p>Print Read Spin Read Runner's World Read Us Read Hunting Read Byte Read Bicycling Read National Geographic Travel Read Muscle & Fitness</p>

Hometown Retired – 9% of Mansfield

Retired, Lower Income Couples and Singles, Grade-School or High School Education, Predominately White

<p>Lifestyle Work as a political volunteer Buy heavy rock music Bowl 20+ times per year Practice karate or martial arts Attempt to stop smoking Shop online Use lawn maintenance services Belong to a veterans club</p>	<p>Products and Services Own a Plymouth bought new Use Wheaties Buy rechargeable batteries Buy Firestone tires Own a Dodge truck bought new Drink no/low alcohol beer Shop at Woolworth Own a microwave oven</p>
<p>Radio/TV Listen to easy listening radio Listen to nostalgia radio Listen to soft contemporary radio Watch Bowling Watch the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships Watch Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade Watch The NBC Nightly News Watch Faith & Values Watch As the World Turns</p>	<p>Print Read True Story Read Discover Read American Baby Read Soap Opera Weekly Read Field & Stream Read Ladies' Home Journal Read Hunting Read Audubon</p>

Starter Families - 8% of Mansfield

Younger Families and Single Parents, Blue-Collar, HS or College, Renter, Mixed Ethnicity, Middle Income

<p>Lifestyle Buy dance/rap music Belong to a book club Use caller ID Travel by car with camping equipment Use baby foods Be boxing fans Smoke menthol cigarettes Eat at seafood restaurants</p>	<p>Products and Services Buy Sears tires Buy thermal windows Buy Mont Blanc/Waterman pens Use Post Raisin Bran Be a first-time truck buyer Buy \$250+ shades/blinds Own a travel trailer Shop at Montgomery Ward</p>
<p>Radio/TV Listen to variety radio Listen to Spanish radio Watch the Cartoon Network Watch Pay-Per-View Sports Watch Auto Racing Watch the BET Network Watch ABC News: Nightline Watch New York Undercover Watch Sister, Sister Watch Married with Children</p>	<p>Print Read North American Hunter Read Bride's Read Essence Read Sporting News Read Stereo Review Read Health Read photography magazines Read 4 Wheel & Off Road</p>