

13.0 IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

In order to bring to fruition the many public improvement projects and private developments envisioned in the Downtown Omaha Master Plan, an implementation strategy must be put into place that identifies opportunities, assigns responsibilities, and facilitates funding for a broad range of activities. A matrix is presented in this section that summarizes key actions, initiatives, and projects in four main areas:

1. Enabling Initiatives
2. Catalytic Projects
3. Emerging Opportunities
4. Opportunity Facilitation

For each of the four areas, specific actions are identified, along with public or private entities to lead or administer the efforts (Who?), descriptions (What?), reasons for their importance or potential viability (Why?), tasks to undertake (How?), and an estimated timeframe for completion (When?).

13.1 ENABLING INITIATIVES

These initiatives are key actions, programs, or downtown-wide projects that will help enable development. They would each be expected to have a broad impact on opportunities in the downtown.

- **Downtown Plan Steering Committee** - Will provide leadership for the implementation of the Downtown Plan and annually review progress toward achieving its goals
- **Streetcar** - Will link districts, provide enhanced mobility throughout downtown without the use of automobiles, and act as a development catalyst
- **Downtown Improvement District (DID) Expansion** - Would create a strong advocacy and management entity for downtown development service provision
- **Federal Funding** - The City of Omaha should identify and track funding opportunities that will arise from the variety of federal economic stimulus programs that have been and will be implemented
- **Transportation Funding** - State and federal funding sources specific to transportation should be explored for the streetcar, as well as for needed roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements
- **Visitor Trolley** - A rubber-wheeled circulator trolley linking the Qwest Center to the Old Market would be an interim mobility solution later replaced (or supplemented) by the streetcar, and would begin the process of more effectively linking key downtown districts



13.2 CATALYTIC PROJECTS

While the Master Plan has identified a great number of potential development projects, several have been selected as key private sector or public-private projects that would catalyze activity and investment. Ideally, these projects would help spur additional development in their respective districts and possibly across an even larger area of the downtown.

- **Joslyn Heights and Joslyn Terrace** - Areas with capacity for large-scale development which are proximate to the Downtown Core, civic institutions, and the Phase 1 streetcar route
- **Douglas Street Connection** - Creates a high-profile, high-value development site and helps re-establish downtown's connection to the river
- **Pinnacle Site** - Prime site for a second convention hotel that would increase the Qwest Center's competitiveness and increase activity in the Events District
- **16th Street Corridor Re-design** - Lays the groundwork for the rebirth of downtown's historic "main street" by relocating the transit center, facilitating artists' use of storefronts, and planning for the eventual development of modern retail/services space
- **Riverview** - Creation of a major riverfront development project on the site of the former OPPD Jones Street power station on the river

13.3 EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

The Master Plan provides a framework for development opportunities in multiple districts throughout the downtown. These opportunities are in various stages of "readiness," and

others may emerge as the plan implementation process continues. These development opportunities, emerging districts, and other initiatives have been identified as key ones to nurture and support.

- **North Downtown** - Build on the success of initial projects and continue the area's emergence as a mixed-use district
- **Near South** - Support the ongoing development projects in Little Italy and nurture future opportunities in that neighborhood and adjacent blocks
- **Park East/Leavenworth** - Create a framework and guidelines to facilitate redevelopment opportunities, such as an arts-based home furnishings/décor corridor
- **Arts and Trades District** - Encourage the development of an arts-related commercial district anchored by the Hot Shops and Omaha Creative Institute
- **Police Headquarters** - Redevelopment of this key City-owned site once the existing facility has reached the end of its useful life, or whenever a new headquarters may be planned
- **New Justice Center** - Development of a new civic facility adjacent to the existing jail that would improve operations at the county courts facility, revitalize the area around the jail, and create a major activity generator at the southern end of the 16th Street corridor
- **Capitol Heights** - Creation of a high-profile, large-scale development site through redevelopment of the existing Civic Auditorium site and adjacent blocks

13.4 OPPORTUNITY FACILITATION

Implementation of the Master Plan will be accomplished through actions and policies as well as development projects and public improvements. The City of Omaha, downtown stakeholders, civic institutions, and other organizations will need to collaborate

in order to achieve all of the Plan's objectives. Key actions which will facilitate the realization of development opportunities include:

- **Interdepartmental Coordination** - The City of Omaha is a critical partner in the implementation effort, and should have a task force in place to coordinate the multiple cross-disciplinary tasks and projects that will arise during the process
- **Developer Relations** - Since private projects need developers to execute them, there should be a comprehensive and focused program of outreach and marketing of Downtown Omaha to developers at the local, regional, and national levels
- **Developer Recruitment** - The City should establish a consistent and transparent process for recruiting developers for publicly owned sites and situations where public-private joint ventures with private landowners are being facilitated
- **Design Competitions** - Downtown Omaha and the Master Plan can gain national visibility and new creative perspectives through the strategic use of design competitions for major projects
- **Capital Improvement Program** - A long-term schedule of public investments in downtown linked to the Master Plan, to fund improvements that cannot be addressed by place-based sources such as TIF or DID funds, or other governmental sources
- **TIF Strategy** - Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) is a key financing tool for redevelopment, and the City should conduct a comprehensive review of its TIF strategy and existing districts to maximize the effective use of this tool. A key element of the strategy should be to explore the potential of legislative action to increase the maximum life of a district, which is relatively short in Nebraska:

MAXIMUM LIFE OF TIF DISTRICTS

Colorado	25 to 50 years [1]
Illinois	23 years [2]
Iowa	20 years
Kansas	20 years
Minnesota	26 years
Missouri	23 years
Nebraska	15 years
Oklahoma	25 years
South Dakota	15 years
Wisconsin	23 to 27 years [3]
Wyoming	25 years

[1] Depends on statute

[2] Individual districts can be extended to 35 years with legislative action

[3] Depends on type of development

Source: Council of Development Finance Agencies

13.5 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The abbreviations used in the following summary tables include:

- **City** - Planning, Parks, Public Works, Police, etc.
- **County** - Douglas County
- **Creighton** - Creighton University
- **Developer** - Private Development Opportunity
- **MAT** - Metro Area Transit
- **MAPA** - Metro Area Planning Agency
- **NDOR** - Nebraska Department of Roads
- **ODIDA** - Omaha Downtown Improvement District Association
- **Org** - Community/nonprofit organizations
- **Private** - Corporate or Philanthropic Donation/Investment



ENABLING INITIATIVES

Key actions, programs or Downtown wide projects that will help enable development

INITIATIVE	WHO?	WHAT?	WHY?	HOW?	WHEN?
Downtown Plan Steering Committee	City, ODIDA, Private, Org	A committee to review progress and set priorities for the implementation of the Downtown Plan recommendations on at least an annual basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides leadership and oversight for Downtown Plan implementation - Sets priorities and reviews progress toward the implementation of the Downtown Plan - Allows for revision or update of the Plan - Serves as advocates for public and private Downtown projects 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mayor's Office and Planning Department select representatives of major Downtown stakeholders 2. Planning Department coordinates annual meetings (or more frequently as needed) 	Immediately
Streetcar	City, MAT, Private	A fixed-route transit system designed to provide circulation into, out of, and around downtown. Focus is on linking districts and key attractions, and stimulating development activity along the routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows people to move around downtown without using a car - Creates corridors and nodes of activity that attract development - Links key destinations and districts such as Qwest Center and Old Market - Provides access to/from destinations outside of downtown such as Midtown Crossing and the medical center 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirm routes and phases 2. Detailed planning of Phase 1 alignment, stop locations, and operational needs 3. Prepare operating plan 4. Funding - TIF generation, other sources 	Planning and conceptual engineering study underway and will follow after master plan
Downtown Improvement District (DID) Expansion	ODIDA, Private	Expansion of the scope, authority, and activities of the existing DID to give it a key strategic and operational role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates a strong advocate for downtown - Provides enhanced services and improvements - Increases the marketing profile of downtown in the region - Ensures comprehensive management and maintenance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate current boundaries and potential need for expansion/revision 2. Determine the menu of services and the benefits to property owners 3. Create an expanded budget 4. Create a fair and equitable assessment formula linked to benefits received 5. Evaluate operational needs and staffing levels 	Next 1 to 3 years
Federal Funding	City	Explore and capitalize upon funding opportunities created by federal stimulus programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential funding source for major infrastructure and other public improvements - Relieves funding burden on local and state sources - Some programs can help finance private sector projects - Number and complexity of new programs requires dedicated staff resources to identify, track, and access the various funding processes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designate key City staffers to identify and track opportunities 2. Coordinate efforts with state and federal legislators 3. Seek to designate downtown as a Recovery Zone in order to access key stimulus programs 	Immediately (some efforts already underway)
Transportation Funding	PW, MAT	Identify outside funding sources specifically targeted for streetcar system and other mobility improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many dedicated transportation funding sources available - Streetcar is a key catalyst for development - Farebox revenue will not be sufficient to cover streetcar operating and capital costs - Improvements to key streets and bike/ped facilities are components of master plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordination with state and federal DOTs 	On-going
Visitor Trolley	MAT, CVB	A rubber-wheeled trolley service connecting the Events District/Qwest Center with the Old Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short-term solution until streetcar implementation complete - Enhances visitor experience and downtown's competitiveness for conventions/meetings - Creates/reinforces links between the two districts - Establishes transit corridor along 10th Street - Relatively simple to implement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine operator and funding source(s) - DID, MECA, etc. 2. Identify route and stops 3. Conduct feasibility analysis 4. Coordinate with relevant City departments 5. Prepare specific implementation and marketing plan 	Next 1 to 2 years
Parks Maintenance Fund	City, Parks, Private	Parks maintenance endowment	Fund on-going maintenance of additional open space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fund raising campaign 	Next 1 to 2 years

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Development opportunities, emerging districts, and other initiatives to nurture and support

OPPORTUNITY	WHO?	WHAT?	WHY?	HOW?	WHEN?
North Downtown	Plan, Creighton, Org, Developer	Build on the successful projects already in place or underway to create a thriving mixed-use district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant anchors and attractions: ballpark, Slowdown, Filmstreams, etc. - Substantial vacant or underutilized land available - Proximity to Creighton campus, Qwest Center, interstate access, riverfront, airport - Development momentum from recent projects 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish development and design guidelines that create a walkable mixed use neighborhood 2. Explore a districtwide TIF district 3. Link TIF investment priorities with guidelines and master plan objectives 4. Coordinate with Creighton campus plan and development initiatives 5. Pursue opportunities that complement existing uses and businesses 	Next 1 to 3 years
Near South	Plan, Parks, Developer	Support ongoing redevelopment in Little Italy and nurture future opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Substantial redevelopment already occurring - Build on neighborhood history and character, dedication of longtime residents and businesses - Proximity to Old Market, south riverfront, streetcar line - Potential for creating development sites with prominent views of downtown skyline 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish infill development guidelines 2. Explore a districtwide TIF district 3. Link TIF investment priorities with guidelines and master plan objectives 4. Explore potential relocation of Post Office 5. Identify/assemble site for grocery store opportunity 6. Guide and facilitate Burlington Station redevelopment 	Next 10 years
Park East/Leavenworth	Plan, PW	Create a framework to nurture infill redevelopment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major arterial corridors into/out of downtown: Leavenworth, St. Mary's, 24th St. - Proximity to Downtown Core, institutional anchors in Joslyn District - Links to adjacent residential neighborhoods - Redevelopment currently in early stages - Potential for arts-based commercial development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish infill development guidelines 2. Explore a districtwide TIF district 3. Link TIF investment priorities with guidelines and master plan objectives 	Next 10 years
Arts and Trades District	Plan, Creighton, Org, Developer	Encourage the development of an arts-related commercial district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Shops and planned Omaha Creative Institute: existing arts presence - Proximity to Creighton - Historic industrial character 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish redevelopment guidelines 2. Explore a districtwide TIF district 3. Link TIF investment priorities with guidelines and master plan objectives 4. Coordinate with OCI plans 5. Facilitate/assist due diligence on industrial properties 	Next 10 years
Police Headquarters	City, Plan, OPD	Redevelopment of site for mixed-use project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site owned by City - New police facility needed in coming years - Located in key "hinge area" between 16th St. and Old Market 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate with police needs and City capital budget 2. Explore potential for TIF district 3. Create development concept and guidelines 4. Market site to national development audience through RFQ/P process 	5 years out
New Criminal Justice Center	City, Plan, OPD, County	Development of new civic facility adjacent to existing jail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New facility improves courthouse operations - Revitalizes area around jail - Creates major civic anchor and activity center at south end of 16th St. corridor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess facility needs and design 2. Explore financing potential from City/County Building Commission 3. Assemble project site 	5 to 10 years out
Capitol Heights	City, MECA, NDOR, Plan, PW	Redevelopment of Civic Auditorium site and adjacent highway ramp blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auditorium approaching point of renovation vs. obsolescence - Potential to create a multi-block, publicly owned land assemblage - Prominent, high-visibility site with capacity for large scale development - Proximity to Downtown Core, Joslyn Museum, Creighton, interstate, 16th St. corridor, streetcar line 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess useful life of Auditorium and operating feasibility 2. Plan for relocation of events/activities to other venues (Qwest Center, Creighton, etc.) 3. Analyze reconfiguration options for interstate ramps 4. Create development concept and guidelines 5. Market site to national development audience through RFQ/P process 	10 to 15 years out



CATALYTIC PROJECTS

Major development projects to focus on which will catalyze activity and investment

PROJECT	WHO?	WHAT?	WHY?	HOW?	WHEN?
Joslyn Heights & Joslyn Terrace	City, Private, Developer	Mixed-use developments in the Joslyn District. Joslyn Heights is bounded by 24th St., Dodge, and the interstate. Joslyn Terrace is bounded by Dodge, 20th St., Farnam, and 24th St.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Underutilized parcels with relatively few owners - Capacity for large-scale redevelopment - Rejuvenation/repositioning of Physicians Mutual campus - Proximity to interstate, Dodge St., Creighton, Joslyn Museum, and Downtown Core - Adjacent to Phase 1 street car route 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate land ownership situation and potential for assemblage 2. Explore potential for TIF district 3. Assess owner's future plans and development potential of Physicians Mutual property 4. Convert 24th Street to two-way traffic 5. Implement open space plan and infill development guidelines 	Next 10 years
Douglas Street Connection	City, NDOR, Developer	Connection to Riverfront Drive creates a high-profile development site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views of river and Heartland of America Park - Access to interstate - Proximity to Downtown Core, Leahy Mall, and riverfront activities - Makes previously inaccessible, City-owned land available for development - Prime site for an upscale condo tower catering to empty-nesters 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feasibility study of Douglas connection 2. Explore potential for TIF district 3. Create development concept and guidelines 4. Market site to national development audience through RFQ/P process 	Next 5 years
Pinnacle Site	City, Developer	Site bounded by 10th St., Capitol, 12th St., and the interstate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently vacant with significant developer interest - City-owned - Prime site for second convention hotel and events-driven mixed-use development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feasibility study of connection to Qwest Center Hilton 2. Explore potential for TIF district 3. Create development concept and guidelines 4. Market site to national development audience through RFQ/P process 	Next 5 years
16th Street Corridor Re-design	City, Private, Org	16th Street between Capitol and Jackson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historic "main street" of downtown - Key streetcar corridor - Proximity to major downtown employers and office buildings - South end: "hinge" connection east to Old Market 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conceptual redesign of corridor 2. Establish artist studio/residency program for rejuvenated storefront spaces 3. Plan for incremental evolution into retail stores 4. Re-design/relocate existing transit center 5. Explore potential for TIF district 	Immediate conceptual redesign; Artists program over next 5 years; Next 10 years.
Riverview	City, OPPD, Developer	Former OPPD power station at Jones St. and the river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently controlled by a developer with planning underway - River views - Proximity to Old Market and Little Italy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate City plans and objectives with developer's 2. Explore potential for TIF district 3. Consider priority of adjacent projects and public improvements to create redevelopment momentum in surrounding area 	Immediately and over next 1 to 3 years, depending on developer's timeline