



TOUR DOWNTOWN NELIGH

REVITALIZATION PLAN 2016

and the development of

"The Old Mill District"

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Acknowledgments

The City of Neligh would like to thank all of the residents, property owners, and business owners who participated in the development of Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan. The City would also like to acknowledge the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) for partially funding this project. Without the support from NDED, the community, and its residents, this plan would not have become a reality.

A major driving factor for the development of the Downtown Revitalization Plan was the public input provided by community stakeholders. The goals and design concepts presented in this Plan were a result of examination and analysis of the Downtown District's needs identified through the public input process.

The Consulting Team is truly grateful for community members' participation throughout this process and encouraged by the community's vested interest in the creation of Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan.

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CHAPTER 1



INTRODUCTION

Project Overview • DTR Plan Objectives • Process • Study Area • Community Overview

Project Overview

Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan is the first part of a two-phase process funded by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Phase I, planning, establishes short- and long-term goals and objectives for future downtown improvements and development. These goals are prioritized and placed into feasible action steps, assisting City leaders with implementation. Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan will be used to provide recommendations for the use of Phase II grant funds and guide development and revitalization efforts for years to come.

Phase II, implementation, will provide Neligh with funding through the State to pursue the goals and recommendations of this Plan. These funds, which are to be matched by the community, can be used in a number of applications. More detailed information regarding Phase II funding through NDED's Downtown Revitalization Grant Program, as well as other funding sources, is listed in **Chapter 4 – Implementation** of this Plan under the funding sources section.

DTR Plan Objectives

Analyze the existing downtown area with regard to population, infrastructure, traffic, housing, parking, aesthetics, and barriers to potential development and improvements.

Review previous studies and planning documents.

Identify opportunities for growth and improvements based on public input and desired goals.

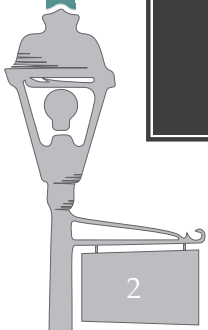
Determine strategies for branding, marketing, and increasing the draw to Neligh's Downtown.

Identify strategies to increase pedestrian and vehicular accessibility to and through the Downtown District.

Discover cultural, tourism, and entertainment opportunities.

Target additional funding strategies for public and private improvements.

Create realistic recommendations that will facilitate future development.



Process

The Downtown Revitalization Plan was developed as a collaborative effort between Miller & Associates Consulting Engineers, P.C., the Neligh Economic Development Office, and the City of Neligh, including downtown business and property owners, City stakeholders, and residents.

Several public input sessions, site reconnaissance and walking tours, surveys for residents and business/property owners, and individual conversations with stakeholders led to the development of Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan. Key input was received during the steering committee/public input sessions in order to gauge the public's opinion on goals and priorities.



Several opportunities were available for public input throughout the planning process. The input from these public input opportunities helped shape the vision and goals for Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan. Input opportunities included multiple surveys and town hall meetings as well as an event catered to business/property owners in the Downtown District.

The Facade Event, held in June, showcased the impact of facade improvements on seventeen different buildings in Downtown Neligh using computer renderings. The Economic Development Office, Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Neligh hosted the event. This unique evening included two foot by three foot boards, designed by the planning consultant and printed by Blackburn Manufacturing, set up as if visitors were walking down Main Street. The event lasted two hours, the first hour was open to Downtown business/property owners and the second hour was open to the general public. Visitors were able to view all of the storefront improvement options and discuss what they liked and how they could implement the vision. Representatives from the Nebraska State Historical Preservation Office were also there to help answer questions about rehabilitating buildings with historical importance.



The Downtown Revitalization Plan is a culmination of all the information gathered and the concerns expressed during the public input sessions. The consulting team is truly grateful for community members' participation and encouraged by the community's vested interest in the continued development of Neligh's Downtown District.

Study Area

The Study Area for Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan is defined below in **Figure 1.1 - Project Boundary Map**. Neligh's designated Downtown District includes the Central Business District (CBD) as well as parts of the highway commercial district, along a portion of the Highway 275 corridor in Neligh. This area serves as the commercial hub for the community, providing service, retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses.

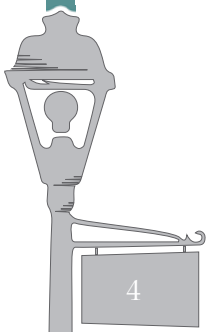


Prepared by:



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Figure 1.1 - Project Boundary Map
Downtown Revitalization Plan
Neligh, Nebraska



Community Overview

Neligh, Nebraska is situated in the northeastern side of the state. Neligh is located in central Antelope County and serves as the county seat. U.S. Highway 275 curves through the center of the City, while Nebraska Highway 14 runs north and south on the west side. The Elkhorn River runs along the south side of the community. Neligh is home to several different industries, a wonderful school district, great healthcare options, senior housing and services, restaurants, retail stores, museums, enjoyable recreational facilities, multiple annual Festivals, and has one of two remaining drive-in theaters in the State of Nebraska. The City has had many new additions in the community including downtown businesses, an Economic Development Director, a new residential subdivision, and several other notable projects completed in recent years.



The City is continually working on improving the quality of life for residents and creating increased opportunities for entrepreneurship as well as business retention and expansion. These efforts also lead City leaders to the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's Downtown Revitalization grant program, which helps revitalize the heart of the communities.

Neligh (pronounced Nee'Lee), is the only community in the United States by this name. In 1872, John Neligh, impressed by the advantage of water power offered by the Elkhorn River, purchased land to create the Neligh Mill. This town then developed around the Mill and the River. The Mill continued to make flour until the end of World War II. By 1959, the Mill no longer made flour but was used as a feed mill, during this time none of the flour milling machinery had been removed. In 1969, the Mill was obtained by the Nebraska State Historical Society with the assistance of local contributions; it was then converted to its current use as a historical landmark and museum.

The 2010 Census reported Neigh's population to be around 1,599. At this time there are approximately 1,359 people employed by the 155 businesses in the City. Neigh is home also to a 6 megawatt biodiesel generation facility which insures the city against brown and black outs. Neigh has seen significant growth since 2013, and has welcomed 24 new businesses, along with transitioning an additional 11 businesses to new ownership. Since 2012, Neigh has seen over \$33.8 million in capital investments in Neigh and over \$500 throughout Antelope County.

24 *new businesses* & **11** *businesses transitioned* *to new ownership since 2013*

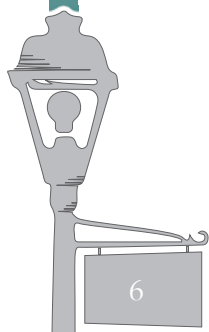
Retail Trade comprises about 18.7 percent of the total businesses and employs nearly 18.9 percent of Neigh's population. However, the residents in Neigh fill the majority of their consumer needs in neighboring markets, such as Norfolk, which is only 35 miles away.

With growth in population and commerce, Neigh's land use patterns grew outward from the small community along the Elkhorn River. The City later benefited from becoming the crossroads of two highways, Highway 275 and Highway 14. The early community has a much closer relationship to its downtown, while today development focuses along the highway corridors. Residential and commercial development is constantly growing around the City. Although land use patterns have been sprawling away from the Downtown District, residents and City leaders want to maintain the Downtown District as the focal point of the community.



*a majority of
consumer needs
are served by
surrounding
communities*

The map shows a grid of land parcels. A blue star labeled 'Neigh' is on the left, and a black star labeled 'Norfolk' is on the right. A double-headed arrow between them is labeled '35 miles'.



CHAPTER 2



NEIGH DOWNTOWN - TODAY

Demographics • Housing • Market Analysis • Existing Conditions

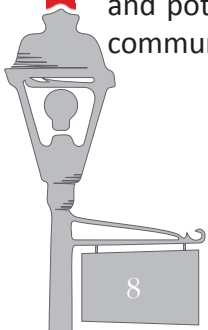
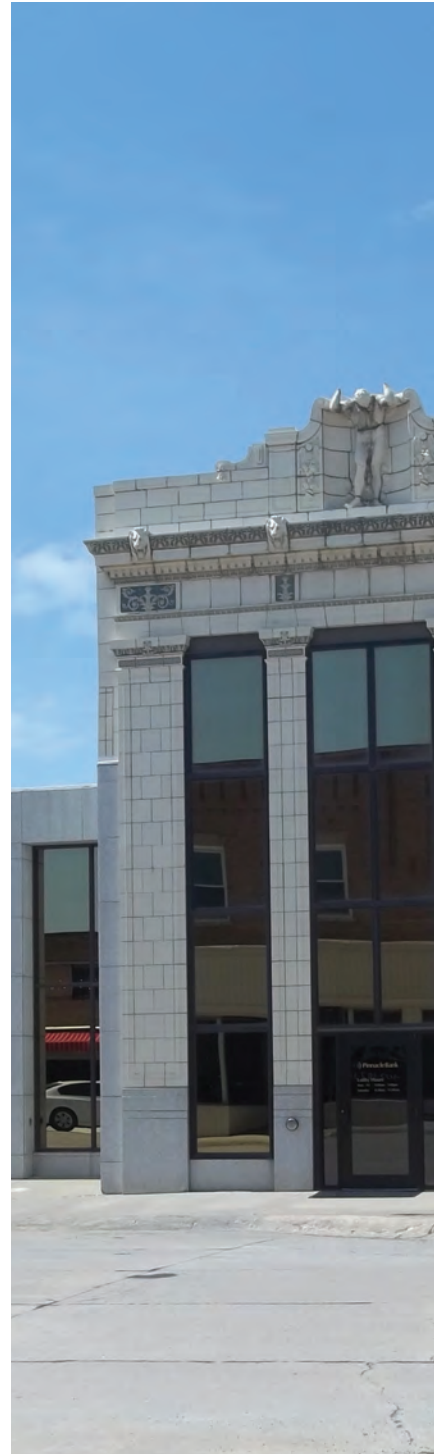
Demographics

POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS

This section of the Downtown Revitalization Plan describes changes in the characteristics of Neligh's population. In 1960, Neligh's population was 1,776 and by 1980 the population had grown to 1,893. Since 1980 the City's population has been decreasing; however, a desired growth rate of 0.5% was determined through public input. Significant statistics and conclusions regarding Neligh's demographics include:

- Neligh's population from the 2010 decennial census was 1,599, which was a slight decline from the 2000 population of 1,651.
- Neligh has experienced growth and declines in total population from decade to decade.
- Growth rate scenario of 0.50 percent shows potential increase of population to 1,725 by 2025.
- The City's median age was 44.4, based on the ACS 2010-2014 estimates, which is slightly higher than the 2000 Census median age of 43.7. Nebraska's ACS 2010-2014 median age was 36.2, this is significantly lower than Neligh's median age.
- There was a decrease in school-aged children between the 2000 and 2010 decennial census reports; however, there was a substantial increase in residents between the ages of 55 and 64.

Quality of life, amenities, and services are all relevant and should be developed according to the population age and gender breakdown of a community. Therefore, it is essential the City provides amenities and services to increase the quality of life for existing residents and also includes improvements for potential residents. The community, including what services and amenities are offered in the City, is vital to residents; quality of life is an important area to improve in any community because it will help attract new residents. Neligh has many wonderful amenities and services to offer residents and potential residents. By improving the Downtown District, the community will gain an additional area to entice potential residents.



Housing

NELIGH HOUSING PROFILE

Neligh's housing market is not centered on the Downtown District; however, there are rental units located on the second story of a small percentage of buildings within the District. There is potential for additional downtown housing development in Downtown Neligh. Additional housing development in the Downtown District would help relieve pressure from the tight housing market and could help attract/provide ideal housing options for younger residents. The following are significant statistics and conclusions regarding the housing market in Neligh:

- Based on the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Neligh has 782 (± 58) housing units which was an increase of 29 units since 2010.
- In 2014, there were 96 (± 36) vacant housing units, 12.3 percent, in Neligh. The City continually works to clear the market of vacant, dilapidated structures that are beyond repair but it is an on-going issue for the community.
- Approximately 71.6 (± 5.7) percent of housing units are owner-occupied and 28.4 (± 5.7) percent are renter-occupied. The number of renter-occupied units has decreased in Neligh by 2.3 percent from 2010 to 2014.
- The median home value in Neligh, based on the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, is \$74,800 ($\pm \$6,973$). The median gross rent is \$515 ($\pm \124).
- Over the past four years, the number of new single-family building permits has fluctuated from a high of 18 permits valued at \$2.9 million in 2013, to a low of eight permits valued at \$1.7 million in 2015. Since 2012, there have been no building permits issued for multi-family development.

There are multiple rental units existing in the Downtown District, on the second level. During the public input sessions, residents discussed the positives of having rental units in the Downtown District, and many residents also shared their thoughts on the potential for renovating other Downtown buildings to offer additional Downtown housing options. Although developing more Downtown rental units is not unreasonable, this scenario should be monitored to determine any future need.

Market Analysis

BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT

Based on 2016 ESRI data, Neligh has approximately 155 business establishments employing 1,359 people. There is a total of 31 retail trade businesses; 17 finance, insurance, and real estate businesses; and 49 service businesses located in Neligh, with a majority of these establishments located in the Downtown District. Other business industries in Neligh include construction (7), agriculture and mining (2), manufacturing (3), transportation (7), communication (0), utility (1), wholesale trade (6), government (31), and unclassified establishments (1). This data is based on business industry classifications relating to the National Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes. The Downtown District is primarily comprised of retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and service businesses. **Table 2.1** shows the number of businesses and employees for all of retail trade businesses; finance, insurance, and real estate businesses; and service businesses in Neligh.

Approximately 72.4 percent of employees in Neligh are employed in the retail trade and service industries, with 17.0 percent in the retail trade and 55.4 percent in service industries. Of the service oriented jobs, education institutions and libraries, along with health services comprise the largest two employment sectors. Of the retail jobs, about 5.2 percent (12.1 percent of the overall employment) are related to auto dealers, gas stations, and auto market establishments. On average, auto dealers, gas stations, and auto market establishments employ six people per business in Neligh.

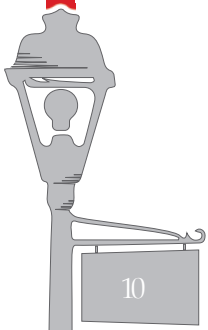


Table 2.1 - Work Place and Employment Summary
Neligh, 2016

| | Total Establishments | % of Establishments | Total Employees | % of Employees |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Total Businesses | 155 | 100 | 1,359 | 100 |
| <i>Retail Trade Summary</i> | 31 | 20 | 231 | 17 |
| <i>Home Improvement</i> | 2 | 1.3 | 7 | 0.5 |
| <i>Food Stores</i> | 3 | 1.9 | 61 | 4.5 |
| <i>Auto Dealers, Gas Stations, Auto Aftermarket</i> | 8 | 5.2 | 46 | 3.4 |
| <i>Apparel & Accessory Stores</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Eating & Drinking Places</i> | 7 | 4.5 | 77 | 5.7 |
| <i>Miscellaneous Retail</i> | 7 | 4.5 | 23 | 1.7 |
| <i>Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Summary</i> | 17 | 11.0 | 63 | 4.6 |
| <i>Banks, Savings & Lending Institutions</i> | 2 | 1.3 | 9 | 0.7 |
| <i>Securities Brokers</i> | 4 | 2.6 | 11 | 0.8 |
| <i>Insurance Carriers & Agents</i> | 6 | 3.9 | 32 | 2.4 |
| <i>Real Estate, Holding, Other Investment Offices</i> | 5 | 3.2 | 11 | 0.8 |
| <i>Services Summary</i> | 49 | 31.6 | 753 | 55.4 |
| <i>Hotels & Lodging</i> | 1 | 0.6 | 1 | 0.1 |
| <i>Automotive Services</i> | 2 | 1.3 | 2 | 0.1 |
| <i>Motion Pictures & Amusements</i> | 2 | 1.3 | 3 | 0.2 |
| <i>Health Services</i> | 9 | 5.8 | 331 | 24.4 |
| <i>Legal Services</i> | 4 | 2.6 | 12 | 0.9 |
| <i>Education Institutions & Libraries</i> | 6 | 3.9 | 332 | 24.4 |
| <i>Other Services</i> | 25 | 16.1 | 72 | 5.3 |

Source: ESRI 2016

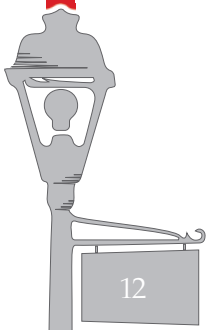
CONSUMER SPENDING PATTERNS

Table 2.2 shows the Market Potential Index (MPI) for consumer behavior patterns in Neligh in comparison to national averages. This data and analysis was reported by ESRI. The MPI comparison is shown for retail and service/entertainment businesses that would likely be found in a Downtown District. An MPI measures the relative likelihood of the adults or households in a specified trade area (Neligh) to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the United States. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average. A value of more than 100 represents higher demand, and a value of less than 100 represents lower demand. For example, Neligh's 103 MPI for Women's Apparel implies the demand for that product in Neligh is three percent higher than the national average.

**Table 2.2 - Consumer Spending Patterns, MPI Index
Neligh, 2016**

| Product/Consumer Behavior | MPI |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Men's Apparel</i> | 100 |
| <i>Women's Apparel</i> | 103 |
| <i>Children's Apparel</i> | 98 |
| <i>Footwear</i> | 98 |
| <i>Fine Jewelry</i> | 83 |
| <i>Convenience Stores</i> | 86 |
| <i>Exercise at Club (more than 2x per week)</i> | 63 |
| <i>Movie Theater</i> | 83 |
| <i>Live Theater</i> | 83 |
| <i>Bar/Night Club</i> | 100 |
| <i>Dine-Out</i> | 99 |

Source: ESRI 2016



Purchasing men's, women's, and children's apparel; purchasing footwear; going to a bar/night club; and dining out are the highest MPI ratings for Neligh's consumer behavior patterns; although several of those market profiles are still below the national average. Purchasing fine jewelry, exercising at a club more than two times per week, and going to a movie theater or a live theater fall well below the national average for consumer behavior.



Other product/consumer behaviors more likely exhibited by Neligh households than the national average, but not included in **Table 2.2** is purchasing a small kitchen appliance (111), purchasing a large kitchen appliance (113), buying American-made products (119), reading a daily newspaper (112), gambling at a casino (105).

RETAIL MARKETPLACE PROFILE

Retail Market Power (RMP) – Opportunity Gap Analysis is both interesting and beneficial for communities to review. This analysis compares supply and demand to determine potential sources of revenue growth. An opportunity gap appears when household spending levels for a specific geography are higher than the corresponding retail sales estimates; this difference signifies that households are exceeding the available supply and supplementing their additional demand potential by traveling and spending outside of their own community. The opposite is true in the event of an opportunity surplus. That is, when the levels of household expenditures are lower than the retail sales estimates. In this case, local retailers are attracting residents from other areas to buy from their stores.



Table 2.3 shows the RMP – Opportunity Gap Analysis summary for Neligh. The first column shows a list of retail store categories; most of which are larger categories that are then broken down into more specific retail establishments in ESRI’s full report. These categories and business establishments are reported by the federal government to classify retail establishments, through the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The second column shows what consumers in Neligh were estimated to spend on each category in 2016. The third column shows the total retail sales, by each retail category found within Neligh. The fourth, and last column, shows an opportunity gap or surplus that exists for each retail sector. In the fourth column, the green numbers show a gap and the black numbers show a surplus. A surplus implies the local stores for that associated sector are meeting the needs of consumers in Neligh, and they are also selling goods/services to citizens from outside of Neligh. The sectors showing a gap imply opportunities for growth. These numbers show there is a demand for the associated economic sectors in Neligh; however, there may not be stores to fulfill the consumers’ needs. Therefore, residents are shopping in other communities to find the products/services they need. These green numbers should be viewed as an opportunity; they are areas where the City can improve.

This analysis estimates over 24 million dollars were spent at retail trade stores and eating and drinking establishments in Neligh in 2016. ESRI reported Neligh's consumer demand was more than 23 million dollars showing a surplus of 1.5 million dollars in retail sales in Neligh. There are several retail sectors with a gap between consumer demand and actual retail sales based on this analysis. These sectors include motor vehicle and parts dealers, food and beverage stores, health and personal care stores, gas stations, and food service and drinking establishments. Based on the NAICS classifications, there are three retail sectors not shown for Neligh, electronics and appliance stores, clothing and clothing accessories, and non-store retailers. The retail sectors reporting some retail sales, but still showing gaps, or opportunities, include furniture and home furnishings, building material and garden equipment, sporting goods, hobby, book, and music, and miscellaneous store retailers.

Table 2.3 - Retail Market Power: Opportunity Gap Analysis
Neligh, 2016

| Category | Consumer Demand | Retail Sales | (Gap)/Surplus |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Total Retail Sales | \$23,204,420 | \$24,728,639 | \$1,524,219 |
| <i>Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealer</i> | \$5,040,348 | \$8,401,334 | \$3,360,986 |
| <i>Furniture and Home Furnishings</i> | \$410,779 | \$123,867 | \$(286,912) |
| <i>Electronics and Appliance</i> | \$1,141,221 | - | \$(1,141,221) |
| <i>Building Material and Garden Equipment</i> | \$1,080,939 | \$155,551 | \$(925,388) |
| <i>Food and Beverage</i> | \$3,808,583 | \$6,558,494 | \$2,749,911 |
| <i>Health and Personal Care</i> | \$1,542,077 | \$1,844,891 | \$302,814 |
| <i>Gasoline Stations</i> | \$1,677,478 | \$4,759,650 | \$3,082,172 |
| <i>Clothing and Clothing Accessories</i> | \$582,962 | - | \$(582,962) |
| <i>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music</i> | \$677,576 | \$76,933 | \$(600,643) |
| <i>General Merchandise</i> | \$3,875,696 | \$247,856 | \$(3,627,840) |
| <i>Miscellaneous Store Retailers</i> | \$1,044,312 | \$146,641 | \$(897,671) |
| <i>Non-Store Retailers</i> | \$491,153 | - | \$(491,153) |
| <i>Food Service and Drinking Places</i> | \$1,831,296 | \$2,413,422 | \$582,126 |

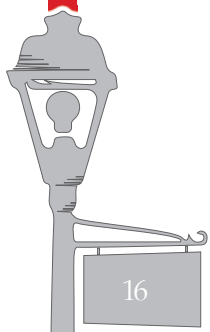
Source: ESRI 2016

The specified opportunity gaps show areas of potential growth for the community. However, there are some retail businesses that Neligh would not be able to viably support for a few reasons including the City's close proximity to larger markets like Norfolk.

STANDARD PROFILE

Using this Gap/Surplus information, we further drilled into the types of businesses that could potentially be successful in a town the size of Neligh. The mix of retail businesses in Neligh was compared to a standard profile of retail establishments normally found in small, Midwestern towns. To develop this standard profile, a group of 65 small Midwest communities were analyzed using the same ESRI database previously discussed. The group's average of both sales revenue per adult and number of adults per business location were calculated to identify an average mix of businesses relative to the size of each community. These averages were then compared to the retail mix of Neligh, and the business segments that most deviate from the standard profile are identified. As mentioned above, the General Merchandise areas are ignored due to the inability to compete with the nearby "big box" stores. The key findings from this analysis for the other business segments are as follows and largely support the Gap/Surplus analysis above.

- The amount spent per adult at automotive dealerships is well above the average of the standard profile of communities. A small town with a new car dealership, like Neligh, will typically pull in customers from the surrounding communities.
- Although there is one location in Neligh designated as a building material and supplies retailer, the sales per adult is well under the average of the standard profile of communities. This is likely due to the close proximity to Norfolk which has large building material and supplies retailers such as Menards.
- Neligh has no stores identified as clothing or shoe retailers. The standard profile shows that, on average, a town will have one clothing store per 1,180 adults and see sales of \$241 per adult citizen. Moyers, in Downtown Neligh, does sell women's clothing and accessories; however, the store may be classified as another retail sector. Neligh may be large enough to support another clothing or shoe retailer, especially with a different target population (i.e. children's or men's clothing).
- Neligh has no stores identified as office supply/stationery/gift. The standard profile shows that, on average, a town will have one such store per 1,256 adults and see sales of \$157 per adult citizen. This may be a retail opportunity.
- As suggested in the previous Gap/Surplus analysis, Neligh is well above the standard profile average for dining establishments. The average community sees one establishment per 471 adult citizens with an average spend of \$1,511 per adult citizen. Neligh has one establishment per 176 adults, a total of seven reported establishments, with an average of \$1,959 spent per adult. Clearly the dining establishments in Neligh draw people in from surrounding communities.



Existing Conditions – Downtown District

This section analyzes the existing conditions of Neligh’s Downtown District from traffic and parking to building use and conditions. Existing conditions are the foundation on which this Downtown Revitalization Plan rests. There are many positive attributes of Neligh’s Downtown District; however, there are also constraints that can hinder development for the community.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Traditional, linear “main street”.
- Central location for the community.
- Located one block west of the Highway.
- Mixed uses ranging from retail and services to residential.
- Several apartments within the Downtown District.
- Many buildings with historical significance.
- Several quasi-public buildings located within the District.
- Museums and points of historic interest serve as anchors for the District.

ISSUES

- No directional/wayfinding signage to announce the approach of downtown.
- Uninviting pedestrian zone.
- Minimal color and improved aesthetics.
- Building vacancies.
- No continuity between façade designs throughout Downtown District.
- Non-existent branding/marketing for the Downtown District.

CIRCULATION

Transportation is vital to the framework of any Downtown District, and Neligh is no exception. Much of the traffic through Neligh is for regional access with minimal downtown circulation traffic in comparison to the large numbers of vehicles traveling on both Highway 275 and Highway 14 each day. Based on the Nebraska Department of Road’s (NDOR) 2014 traffic counts, Highway 275 has an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count of 3,270, of which 370 vehicles are classified as “heavy commercial vehicles” or semi-truck traffic. Highway 14 has an ADT count of 2,060 with 255 vehicles classified as “heavy commercial vehicles”. Since Highway 275 runs adjacent to Neligh’s Downtown District, it becomes important for the City to draw traffic off of the highway into the Downtown District. Wayfinding signage along the highway corridors will act as marketing and will direct highway traffic to Main Street.

The majority of non-local traffic entering Neligh’s Downtown District comes from Highway 275 on 2nd Street or 5th Street, while a smaller portion of traffic comes from Highway 14 on Wylie Drive/2nd Street. These are ideal locations for wayfinding signs, because they are logical locations for directing traffic to Main Street.

PARKING

Vehicular access and parking go hand-in-hand to ensure easy and attractive access within Neligh's Downtown District. Quantity and quality of parking are two key components affecting a customer's experience in a Downtown District. Visitors want clearly defined, accessible parking to enhance their overall view of a downtown area. Parking is important for shoppers, citizens utilizing services located Downtown, and employees of Downtown businesses; it must be available, visible, and convenient for the Downtown District without dominating the area or compromising pedestrian quality.

Figure 2.1 - Parking Supply/Demand Map shows the parking supply and demand for each block within the Downtown District. Parking supply figures are based on actual, delineated parking spaces, only evaluating on-street parking. There are several businesses and services within Neligh's Downtown District that provide off-street parking, which creates additional supply to meet the demands of the particular business or service. The blocks highlighted in green show a parking surplus, implying there are more parking spaces than what is demanded for the block. Blocks highlighted in red show a deficit of parking, indicating a higher demand for parking spaces than what is available. Blocks highlighted in yellow show a deficit of parking spaces for on-street parking; however, these blocks also have options for off-street parking, which helps alleviate the demand for on-street parking.

Parking demand figures are based on rule-of-thumb parking standards by each building's use (i.e. retail, restaurant, office, etc.) per 1,000 square feet. A summary of the parking demand standards for each specific building use is shown in **Table 2.4**.

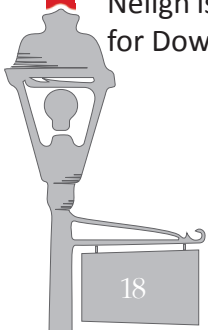
Calculations are based on demand generated by each 1,000 square feet of use, except for residential uses where demand is based on the number of residential units. For example, every 1,000 square feet of retail space generates a demand of 2.5 parking spaces. There are a total of 358 delineated on-street parking spaces with a demand of 505, creating a deficit of 147 parking spaces. However, there are four blocks within Neligh's Downtown District that have off-street parking available to supplement the demand.

It is important to note these are parking standards; however, demand can vary greatly from community to community, district to district, and even the time of day. Time of day parking demand is the most relevant variable for Neligh. Where a law office or bank would require day-time parking, bars, restaurants, and other entertainment businesses have a higher demand for parking in the evenings. This pattern allows for shared parking opportunities within the Downtown District. The overall goal for parking in Neligh is to improve the existing parking areas providing safe, clearly delineated/marked parking spaces for Downtown visitors, residents, and employees.

Table 2.4 - Parking Supply Standards
Neligh, 2016

| Building Use | Parking Demand per 1,000 Square Feet |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Service</i> | 2.0 |
| <i>Civic</i> | 2.5 |
| <i>Office</i> | 2.5 |
| <i>Retail</i> | 2.5 |
| <i>Restaurant/Entertainment</i> | 3 |
| <i>Light Industrial</i> | 1 |
| <i>Residential</i> | 2 per unit |

Source: Miller & Associates 2016



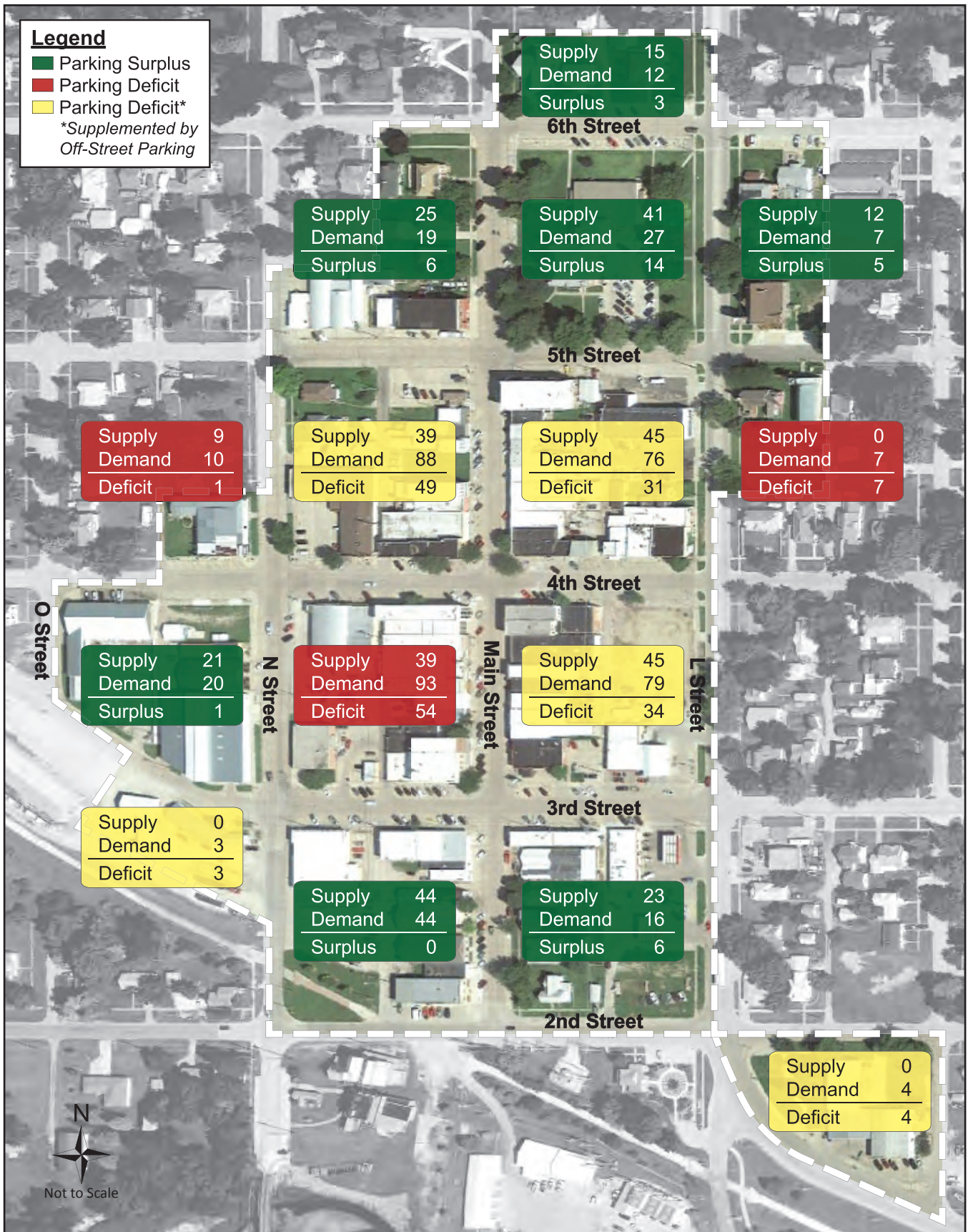


Figure 2.1 - Parking Supply/Demand Map
 Downtown Revitalization Plan
 Neligh, Nebraska



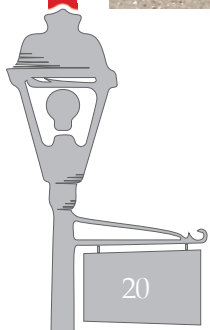
SIDEWALKS

Pedestrian accessibility is crucial for employees and visitors in the Downtown District. Downtown Neligh serves as a place of employment, shopping, tourism, housing, government services, dining, entertainment, and cultural attractions. Ease of access for pedestrians encourages visitors to utilize more than one business or service while Downtown. Downtown Districts have a unique “sense of place” in comparison to other areas or neighborhoods within a community. A sense of place is best felt on foot; appreciation for the amenities offered is best understood and enjoyed in person rather than through a windshield.

Pedestrian accessibility has been a high priority for Neligh; the Downtown District sidewalks are in good or average shape with minimal areas in need of repair or replacement. **Figure 2.2 - Sidewalk Condition Map** shows the rating of sidewalk conditions within the delineated Downtown District. Sidewalks rated in good condition, shown in green, have no signs of settling, cracking, or buckling. Sidewalks rated average, shown in yellow, indicate some signs of typical wear and tear, including cracking and minimal unevenness. Sidewalks shown in red, are rated in poor condition with severe cracking, buckling, and/or unevenness. Each pedestrian crossing is also evaluated to determine if the ramps, or lack thereof, meet 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design guidelines. Ramps that are in compliance with 2010 guidelines are shown in green; ramps that do not meet 2010 guidelines are shown in red.

With a safe and inviting pedestrian zone, visitors are more likely to park their cars and stroll down Main Street to window shop or utilize other services and public uses located within the District. Wide sidewalks, wayfinding signage, lighting, and crosswalks all enhance the pedestrian zone. Currently Neligh’s pedestrian zone has been sufficiently kept, with only a few areas of concern. The areas in need of improvement include bringing ramps into compliance with the 2010 ADA design guidelines, improved pedestrian crosswalks along Highway 275 and within the Downtown District, and additional pedestrian wayfinding signage. These improvements would enhance the sense of place which in turn invites people to spend additional time Downtown.

People are tempted to linger in places that are comfortable, safe, attractive, and interesting. Lingering naturally increases the level of human activity, which enhances the image of the Downtown District. The longer people choose to stay Downtown, the more establishments they will visit, thereby providing an economic benefit as well. Improving the pedestrian zone is a priority and will greatly enhance the usability and appeal of the Downtown District.



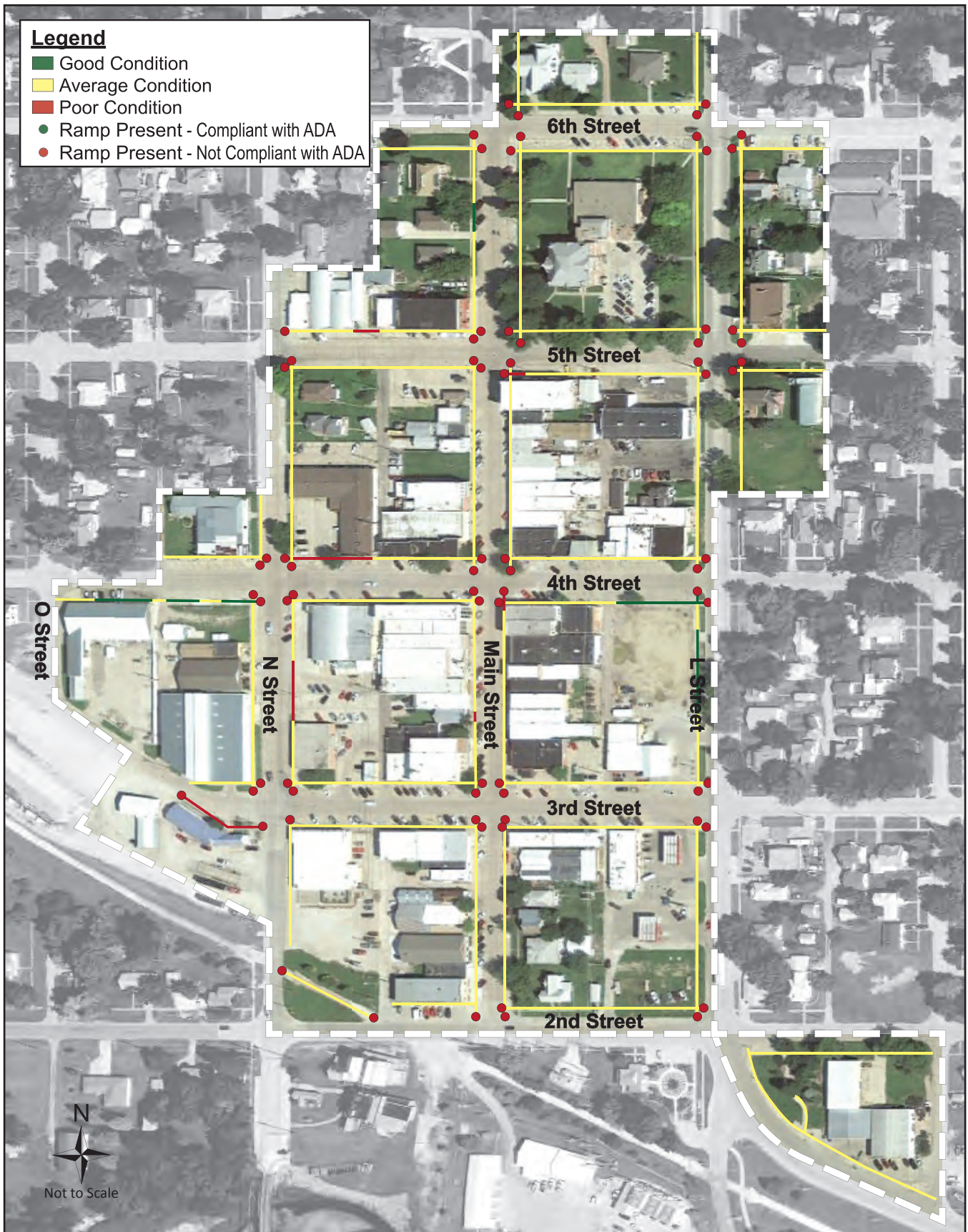


Figure 2.2 - Sidewalk Condition Map
 Downtown Revitalization Plan
 Neligh, Nebraska

BUILDING USE

There are a variety of uses in Neligh's Downtown District including retail, offices and banks, personal services, quasi-public buildings, residential restaurants/entertainment, light industrial, and buildings with mixed uses of commercial and residential. **Figure 2.3 - Building Use Map** identifies the building uses within the Downtown District. Buildings that are currently vacant, available for rent/sale, or utilized for storage purposes only are marked as vacant/storage on the map. Only four percent of the buildings in Neligh's Downtown District are vacant, which is a very low vacancy rate. However, buildings without proper signage, lighting, aesthetics, and general cleanliness can also appear vacant or unapproachable.

Neligh's Downtown District, which serves as a distinctive place in the community, embodies a character, look, flavor, and heritage not found in other locations in the community or even the surrounding region. By having a distinct sense of place, Neligh's Downtown District can stand out against its competition. Improving the buildings themselves, especially the facades and other portions that involve the public realm will increase the distinct appeal and unique draw for the Downtown District.

Neligh's Downtown is home to a wide array of stores and services making it a unique atmosphere and essential to the community. There are several residential land uses within the Downtown District as well, including multiple mixed-use buildings housing both commercial businesses and residential apartments. It is exceptional for Neligh to have multiple mixed-use buildings in the Downtown District, especially in comparison to other communities of the same size.

The post office, senior center, city offices, county courthouse, and several museums are all located in the Downtown District. There are also multiple banks, grocery stores, restaurants, real estate offices, graphic design studios, news and media sources, and other personal/family-needs services like salons and insurance offices located in the Downtown District. Retail services include boutiques, antique stores, second hand stores, and gift and flower shops to name a few. The Downtown District is also home to a 24-hour fitness center, dance studio, and a studio strictly focused on fitness classes, these businesses add diversity to the community. The variety of business establishments ranging from tourism to personal services attracts a wide array of residents and visitors to Neligh's Downtown District.



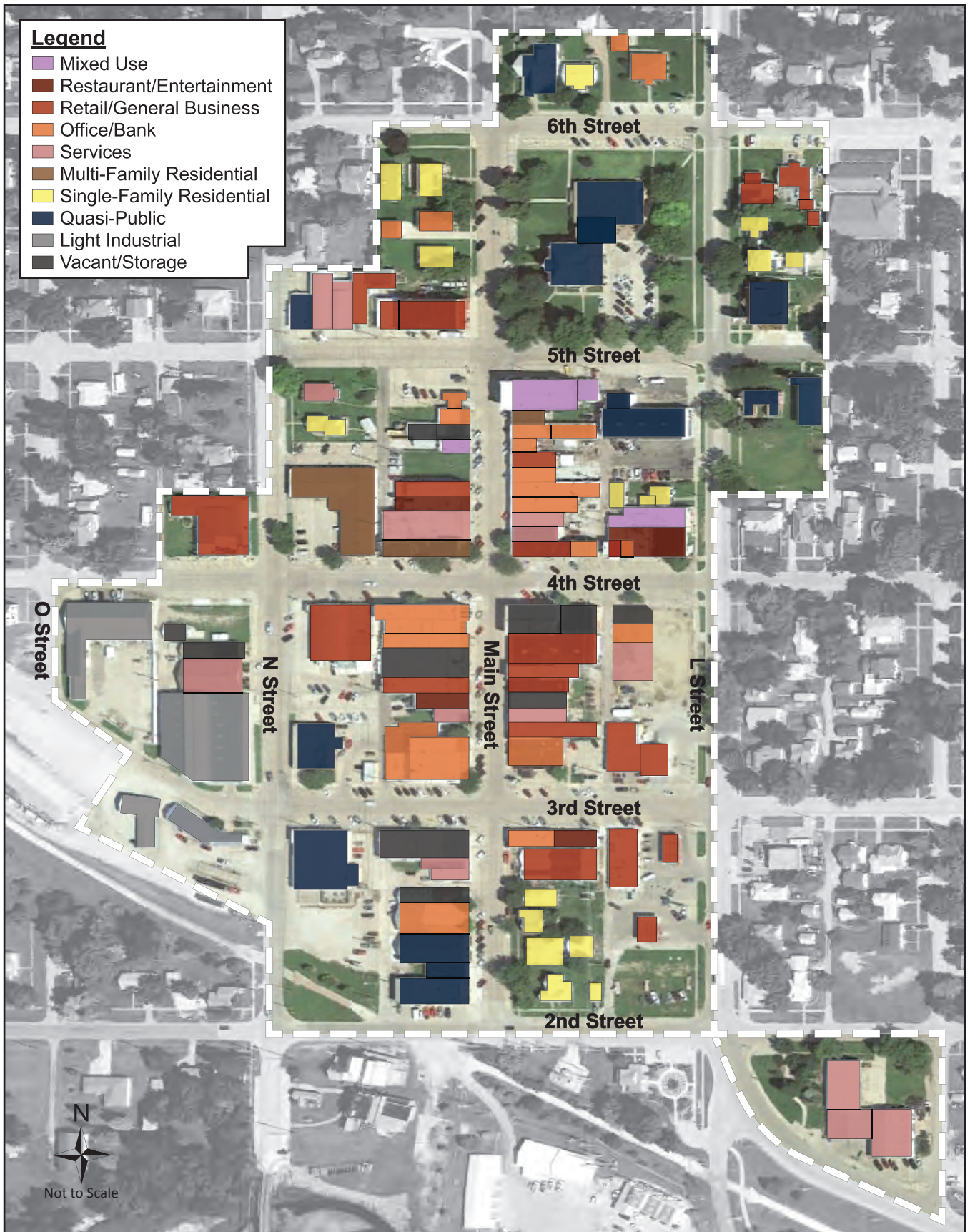


Figure 2.3 - Building Use Map
 Downtown Revitalization Plan
 Neligh, Nebraska



BUILDING STOCK CONDITION

The condition of existing buildings in the Downtown District is not only important to the aesthetics and safety of the District, but also to the potential for growth and improvements of the area. Unkempt, dilapidated structures become safety and fire hazards while also lowering the value of surrounding structures. In the spring of 2016, a site reconnaissance and building condition inventory was conducted. The exterior of each building in the Downtown District was evaluated using the same criteria the State dictates for blighted and substandard studies.

Structures were graded on a three-part scale, good, average, and poor; **Figure 2.4 - Building Condition Map** also shows each building's rating. Structures in poor condition are in need of substantial repair and after a full inspection, some of these buildings may require extensive repairs, which may be determined beyond feasible. Structures rated in average condition show significant wear and tear and are in need of moderate repairs. Structures in good condition show normal signs of wear and tear, but have been well-maintained, especially considering the age of the structures. Based on the physical assessment of the building exteriors, approximately 16 percent are in poor condition, 40 percent are in average condition, and 44 percent are in good condition. The majority of the buildings in Downtown Neligh were constructed in the early 1900s with a couple of the buildings dating back to the 1800s.

Overall, the quality of the building stock in the Downtown District is well above average – the majority of buildings are in average or good condition. However, there are several buildings requiring moderate or substantial repairs; it is important for all property owners to continue maintenance and upkeep, as needed, to ensure structures are appropriately maintained.

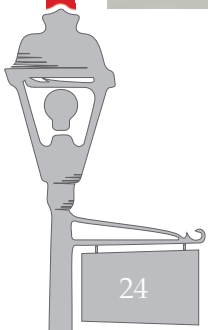




Figure 2.4 - Building Condition Map
 Downtown Revitalization Plan
 Neligh, Nebraska

DOWNTOWN VITALITY SURVEY

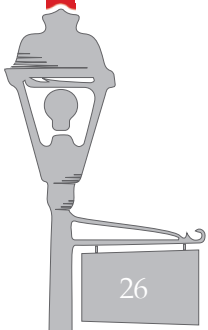
The Downtown Vitality Survey conducted in May provides valuable information on the preferences and recommendations of the community. Thirty-three people completed the survey; 5 men, 17 women and 11 who did not specify their gender. There was a good mix of ages and income levels of those who participated.

Of those responding, the primary non-work reasons people currently visit Downtown Neligh are groceries (16), banking (7), hardware store (17), restaurants/bars/coffee (6), drug store (5), fitness center (5), hair salon (4), senior center (2) and post office (2). The respondents were then asked a series of questions regarding the types of retail locations, services, restaurants, and activities they felt would be successful additions to Downtown Neligh. The following tables summarize the information.

What additional type(s) of retail stores do you think would be successful Downtown, if any?

| Responses | # Responses (Only those receiving > 1 response) |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Clothing/Shoe Store</i> | 13 |
| <i>Small Discount Store (Shopko, etc)</i> | 4 |
| <i>Hardware Store</i> | 3 |
| <i>Cell Phone Store</i> | 3 |
| <i>Liquor/Wine Shop</i> | 2 |
| <i>Sporting Goods Store</i> | 2 |
| <i>Hobby/Craft/Fabric Store</i> | 2 |
| <i>Variety Store</i> | 2 |

These results are not surprising given the Gap/Surplus analysis results and the Standard Profile study, previously discussed. The Gap/Surplus analysis and Standard Profile analysis both showed a large gap in the Building Material and Garden Equipment sector. Although there is one business in town that is classified in this sector, clearly the citizens spend their money at these establishments in other communities. The survey showed that there is some desire for an additional store in this category. Additional clothing stores for men's or children's clothing as well as other options for women's clothing are also desired in Downtown Neligh.



As displayed in the question to the right, residents spend quality time at restaurants and bars in Neligh. The responses to this question hint at the types of restaurants currently missing from the community. While an additional restaurant may not generate substantial revenue because there is already a significant surplus of sales in this sector in comparison to the estimated demand for Neligh's residents, additional restaurants will help Neligh continually attract citizens from communities within the region.

Residents expressed the desire for a cell phone provider in both the retail section of the survey and this service section. Survey respondents were also asked to write in other service providers that would be successful in Downtown Neligh.

Unfortunately, very few specific suggestions were made in response to the question on the right. During public input sessions, stakeholders wanted to focus on existing tourist draws like the museums, annual community events, and drive-in theater to gain for traction for the Downtown District.

What additional type of restaurant/tavern/café do you think would be successful Downtown, if any?

| Responses | # Responses (Only those receiving > 1 response) |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Sports Bar</i> | 8 |
| <i>Steak House</i> | 7 |
| <i>Coffee Shop</i> | 3 |
| <i>Burger Joint</i> | 2 |
| <i>Micro Brewery</i> | 2 |
| <i>Bakery/Desert</i> | 2 |
| <i>Mexican Restaurant</i> | 2 |
| <i>Runza</i> | 2 |

What additional type of service provider do you think would be successful Downtown, if any?

| Responses | # Responses (Only those receiving > 1 response) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Boot/Shoe Repair</i> | 2 |
| <i>Cell Phone Service/Store</i> | 2 |
| <i>Veterinarian/Groomer</i> | 2 |

What new events would you like to see Downtown, if any?

| Responses | # Responses (Only those receiving > 1 response) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Movie Theater</i> | 5 |
| <i>Live Music</i> | 4 |

The respondents were also asked what stores regularly draw them to other communities. The answers were not surprising. Norfolk, with Walmart, Menards, and Hy-Vee, is the main reason Neligh residents spend their retail dollars out of town.

What THREE specific store(s) draw you to OTHER communities on a regular basis?

| Responses | # Responses (Only those receiving > 1 response) |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Big Box / Discount Stores</i> | 21 |
| <i>Groceries (HyVee commonly mentioned)</i> | 10 |
| <i>Menards</i> | 8 |
| <i>Clothing, Shoes & Accessories</i> | 5 |
| <i>Restaurants/Bars</i> | 4 |
| <i>Mall Shopping</i> | 3 |
| <i>Liquor/Wine Shop</i> | 3 |
| <i>Department Store</i> | 2 |
| <i>Craft/Hobby Store</i> | 2 |
| <i>Home Store (Appliance/Décor)</i> | 2 |
| <i>Sporting Goods Store</i> | 2 |

Finally, respondents were asked to name a small town they had visited with a vibrant Downtown District; they were then asked to list what characteristics made these Downtowns and communities unique. Seward and Ord were both mentioned twice, while Nebraska City, York, Aurora, O’Neill, Norfolk, Hartington, Wisner, Woodbine, Iowa, and Butzbach, Germany were each mentioned once.

Regardless of the town specified, below are the top characteristics mentioned for a successful downtown:

| Responses | # Responses (Only those receiving > 1 response) |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Attractive / Charming / Nice Landscaping</i> | 5 |
| <i>Many Dining Options</i> | 4 |
| <i>Good/Unique/Many Shops</i> | 3 |
| <i>Clean</i> | 2 |

Clearly, both an attractive downtown as well as one with many shopping and dining options are necessary for a Downtown to thrive, be successful, and create the unique sense of place that will keep people coming back to the area.



CHAPTER 3



NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Vision • Concepts • Goals

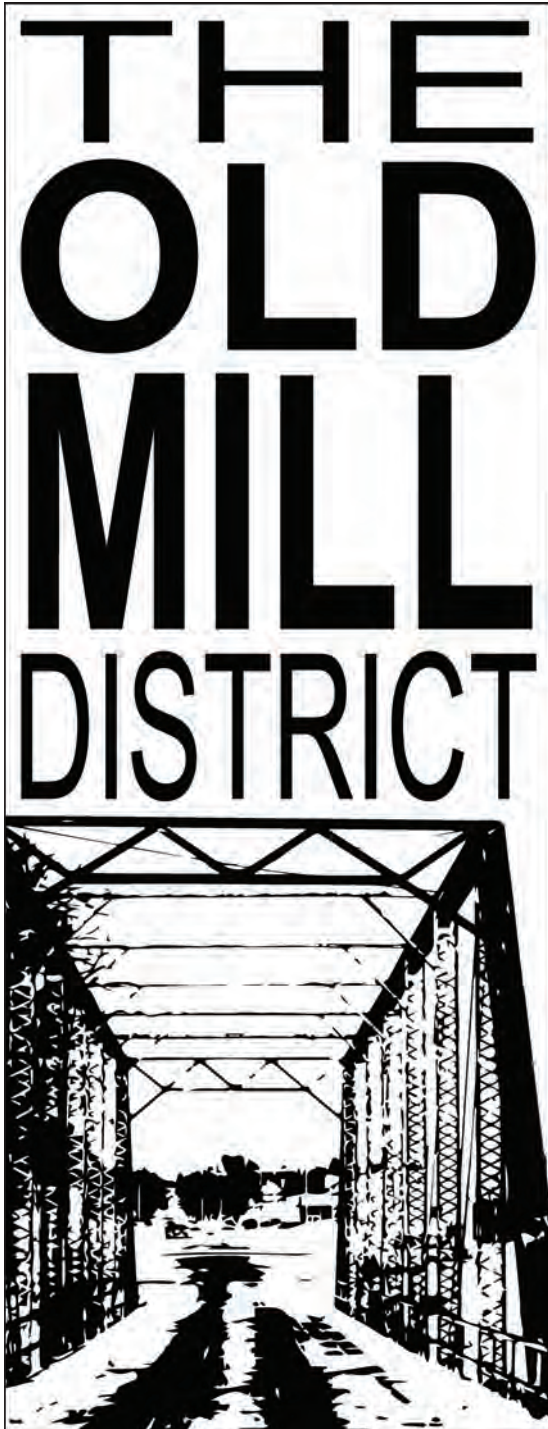
Vision

The vision for Neligh's Downtown District is to create a sense of place tied to the amenities and services already located in the District. Neligh's Downtown District, hereinafter referred to as The Old Mill District, will be a unique neighborhood in Neligh pulling from the key historic places, including the Old Mill, Antelope County Historical Museum, and Pierson Wildlife Museum, located within and adjacent to The Old Mill District. These historic spaces provide cultural and historic importance to a space that will develop a creative appeal to residents and visitors alike. This sense of place will be an inviting environment that is easily accessible for vehicles and pedestrians. The Old Mill District will provide spaces for entrepreneurship and expand opportunities for distinctive residential options. Tying the importance of mixed land uses and building upon the solid foundation of Neligh's Downtown District will truly make The Old Mill District attractive, viable, and unique.



Concepts

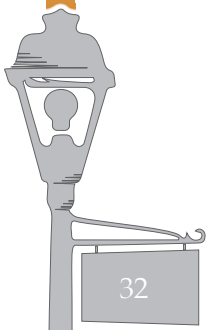
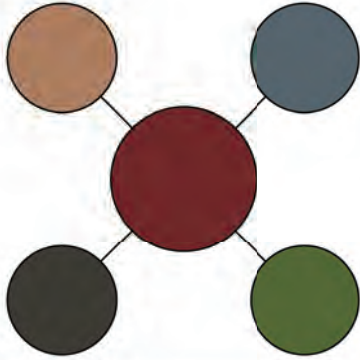
There were many concepts envisioned, desired, and discussed during the public input sessions and community surveys for the City's Downtown Revitalization Plan. Residents were able to share their wants and needs and design concepts were formed around these ideas to brand and market the community and what the downtown area has to offer. These design concepts should be applied to both functional zones: pedestrian and vehicular. Both functional zones should work hand-in-hand with the overall theme and branding for The Old Mill District. Neligh's concepts are broken down as follows:



BRAND

The Old Mill District brand was created for Neligh's Downtown District. The logo, as shown to the left, represents the historic heritage of the area. The logo and the brand helps connect the mill on the south side of the district, which already serves as a tourist draw to the community, to the district itself which includes Antelope County Historical Museum and Pierson Wildlife Museum. Residents of Neligh have a strong desire to maintain and improve the historical integrity of the downtown area; therefore, tying the overall theme or brand to that goal only emphasizes the level the of importance history plays in the community.

The Old Mill District theme will go beyond a logo and a brand. The overall look and appeal of Neligh's Downtown District will represent the expression of the Mill. The Old Mill District brand started as an idea which turned into a theme; from the theme, a specific design approach was developed to provide a plan for Neligh to follow.



MARKETING

The City of Neligh, the Neligh Economic Development, and the Chamber of Commerce will all work diligently to market The Old Mill District and raising awareness for the brand, drawing attention to the area, and encouraging visitors to check out what The Old Mill District has to offer. Different marketing ideas include:

Billboards

Billboards located on the edge of Neligh or in surrounding communities could help draw attention to the District and inform visitors who may otherwise not know about Neligh's Downtown area.

Brochures

Brochures distinguishing The Old Mill District and identifying local businesses could be used in many different fashions. Brochures could be left at the different museums within The Old Mill District as well as gas stations and rest stops within the region. These brochures could also be made available at the City Office and Economic Development Office for residents and visitors alike.

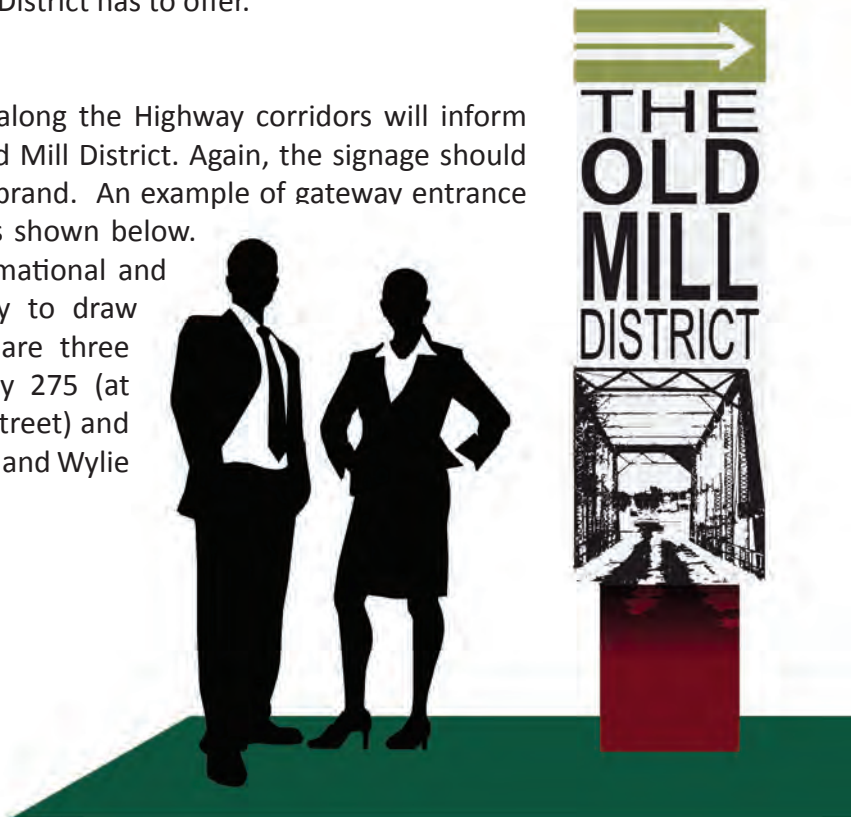
Digital Marketing

Online marketing should be the simplest marketing form to implement; however, it is crucial that online marketing sources are regularly updated to ensure up-to-date/accurate information is provided. Marketing sources should include social media outlets as well as a separate page on the City's website to showcase everything The Old Mill District has to offer.

Wayfinding Signage

The addition of directional signage along the Highway corridors will inform and direct traffic traveling to The Old Mill District. Again, the signage should be a representation of the district's brand. An example of gateway entrance signage, completed by Love Signs, is shown below.

Wayfinding signage should be informational and attractive, and location will be key to draw traffic off of the highways. There are three prime locations, two along Highway 275 (at intersections of 2nd Street and 5th Street) and one at the intersection of Highway 14 and Wylie Drive/2nd Street.



LOVE Signs
Manufacturers of Ideas

NOTICE: ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PART OF THIS DRAWING MAY BE DISTRIBUTED TO OTHERS OR REPRODUCED IN ANY FORM WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM LOVE SIGNS OF NORFOLK.

Localized Marketing:

Localized marketing refers to the steps taken within the District boundaries to strengthen the overall cohesiveness of The Old Mill District. These will amplify the importance of the theme and brand while helping visitors identify their location. Ideas like painting the existing concrete benches with the logo, conceptualized in the images below, will provide a creative pedestrian space; the benches will act as both art and a marketing piece, in addition to serving the original function of providing a resting place for pedestrians. The City will also add banners to the existing street lights showing The Old Mill District logo. Murals and other design concepts should also be used to create a sense of place within The Old Mill District.



Existing Bench

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Through the conceptual design process, Downtown stakeholders desired assistance with carrying the look and theme of Downtown beyond the logo and marketing pieces. A design guideline document provides visual and creative assistance to property owners and the City itself. The Design Guidelines for The Old Mill District are attached to this Plan as **Appendix 1**. The document will serve as a guide showing options for façade improvements that fit within The Old Mill District theme. The Old Mill District should possess diverse, yet cohesive physical attributes tying the new theme with the historic integrity of each individual building. The overall revitalized look should collectively serve to illuminate The Old Mill District theme, while ensuring each building maintains its unique character and relates to the specific business inside.

In March 2015, the Center for Community & Economic Development with the University of Wisconsin-Extension, studied the impact of downtown storefront improvements. The full summary of the study's conclusions can be found in **Appendix 2** of this Plan. The authors of the case study found the following ten conclusions:

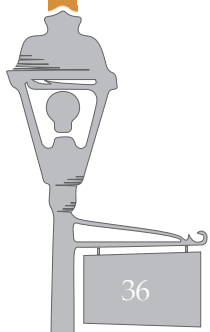
1. Business operators generally experience an increase in number of first-time customers.
2. Many but not all business operators experience an increase in sales.
3. Property landlords generally generate increased rental revenues.
4. Properties are often converted to a perceived better use.
5. Other building improvements, including interior redesign, are often performed simultaneously.
6. Even small investments can generate significant results.
7. Multiple funding sources are often assembled to cover project costs.
8. Property owners generally believe that their building value has increased.
9. Nearby businesses often enjoy increased sales and may initiate their own storefront improvements.
10. Community pride, historic appreciation, and civic legacy are celebrated.

Beyond the importance of improving the downtown facades, residents and community stakeholders believe it is a priority to improve the look and feel of The Old Mill District. Through downtown committee meetings and surveys, the number one goal through the Downtown Revitalization process is to improve downtown storefronts. These improvements should tie-in to the overall theme to ensure property owners are given appropriate ways to address improvements with the determined conceptual design in mind.

The design guidelines should be used as a tool or a guide. The guidelines represent options for building improvements. The selection of materials, colors, and products represents items that blend with The Old Mill District theme. The design guidelines will ensure that development in The Old Mill District enhances the unique character and helps define the sense of place.

Other standards that will go hand-in-hand with the City’s design guidelines for The Old Mill District include historic preservation standards. The outlined standards below are the Secretary of State’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Rehabilitation projects must meet the following Standards, as interpreted by the National Park Service, to qualify as “certified rehabilitations” eligible for the 20 percent rehabilitation tax credit (see funding outline in Chapter 4):

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.



GOALS

Through site reconnaissance, meetings with downtown stakeholders, and multiple surveys regarding Neligh's Downtown, several goals have been determined for improving The Old Mill District. The overall goals are listed below:



The overall goals listed above speak to the vision of The Old Mill District. One goal, Theme and Brand Development, is already being implemented by community members. Citizens truly engage with The Old Mill District and want to see this theme and branding implemented and magnified to help tie the vision and concepts together. Some of the goals are further explained on the following pages.

Historic Preservation

Residents expressed their desire to ensure the historic integrity of Neligh's downtown buildings through public input and survey responses. One of the goals, beyond safeguarding the history and unique character of each building, is to become a designated Historic District registered through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The steps to become a registered Historic District include an assessment of the downtown area, research and analysis, and an application submittal to the National Parks Service which oversees the National Register for Historic Places.

Historic preservation guidelines are essential to the process of protecting the historic buildings within the Downtown area. The City has began working with representatives from Nebraska SHPO to begin coordination and better understand the requirements of submitting an application to become a National Historic District. There are funding benefits for property owners once the district or specific buildings are listed on the historic registry; although, this is beneficial for property owners, the City's main objective is to promote historic preservation and protect the history of the downtown area and the community as a whole.

Another way to recognize the history of each building in The Old Mill District is to place a plaque on the buildings displaying a historic picture and listing the relevant information about the property and its former businesses/uses. Many of Neligh's downtown buildings have a unique and important story; as residents and visitors walk through The Old Mill District they could read about each building. Promoting this unique heritage through images and historic information will becomes educational and attractive attribute, while distinguishing The Old Mill District from the downtown areas in surrounding towns.



Examples of plaques marking historic buildings

Facades

As previously discussed, Neligh's downtown stakeholders have a strong desire to improve the facades in The Old Mill District. There are design guidelines and historic preservation guidelines to follow and many computer renderings have been completed to show possible improvements to buildings within the District. A full selection of the conceptual computer renderings can be found in **Appendix 1**. Updating a building's storefront benefits both the business owner and the District as a whole. The improvements should relate to the unique character of the building, focus on historic preservation, and tie to The Old Mill District theme. Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan outlines key reasons to update storefronts, helps provide design guidance/assistance, and outlines possible funding sources to help property owners make the updates.



Existing building



Proposed facade improvement options for building (middle, right, and above)

Green Space

Enhancing green space also adds to the sense of place in the Downtown District. Open spaces encourage people to linger by providing a place to gather, sit, read, relax, and engage in conversation. Besides supplying the District with much-needed vegetation and shade, open spaces can also accommodate community gatherings. Green space also helps improve the pedestrian zone by softening the hard surfaces normally experienced in a downtown space like pavement, brick, and stone. Green Space additions could include planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, and improved landscaping along the Highway corridors (where there is additional space in the building setbacks and public right-of-way).

Theater

Maintaining and preserving landmark buildings, including the New Moon Theater, is important to building the sense of place in The Old Mill District. The theater is easily identifiable by the general public, closely associated with the downtown area, and is personally meaningful to a majority of the community. Repairing and renovating the theater should include façade and structural improvements as well as updates to modernize the building. Many residents have different ideas about the future use of the New Moon Theater, including a community building, brewery, donating to the school, or keeping the building as a theater.

During the planning process, an architect toured the building to provide feedback about needed repairs including ways to maintain the original marquee and New Moon Theater tower. Currently, the community is working to meet with contractors and gather estimates to repair the building to a manageable state. Once the repairs have been made, the community will need to determine their desired use for the space. There are grant opportunities available to help with repairs and building updates; the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's Tourism grant, would be an ideal funding source to help repair and update this landmark building in The Old Mill District.



Downtown Housing

There are currently 8 residential units with potential for at least 15 more in The Old Mill District. Downtown stakeholders have desire to encourage even more downtown housing options. Currently, Neligh has a shortage of housing units, Downtown housing options, although they can be costly, could help resolve the rental housing shortage within already existing buildings. The information below outlines the possibilities and benefits of housing in a Downtown District.

There is ample evidence that “loft”-style living, within walking distance of restaurants and shopping, is becoming more popular. Although this is mostly thought of to be an urban phenomenon, there are many examples of successful small-town upper story living developments.

Across the board, Americans value space between them and their neighbors, but they also increasingly value proximity to employment, facilities, and destinations.

In evaluating the viability of second story housing in a non-metropolitan setting, the following must be evaluated:

- Population demographics in determining the potential demand for upper story housing,
- Property in the context of identifying the supply of buildings that may be converted to upper story housing,
- Place in the context of the physical attributes that make non-metropolitan area city downtowns either more or less attractive as a place to live, and
- Resources in the context of the organizations and incentives that are necessary in creating an environment that supports new upper story residential development.

The Strategic Economics Group, in their Iowa Upper Story Housing Feasibility Study, 2014, developed a statistical profile of the communities that have or could have successful downtown upper story developments based on the considerations listed above. Using the relevant parts of this study’s methodology, we have analyzed the first three points listed above. The Resources are addressed later in this Downtown Revitalization Plan.



Demand

The prime demographics of residents who would be most likely to consider downtown apartments are single adults between the ages of 20 and 64, young couples, and households earning less than \$35,000. Due to accessibility, it is not normally unattractive to people over 64 and families with young children. **Table 3.1-3.6** found on the following pages showcase housing data for Neligh.

According to the 2010 Census, Neligh had 1,672 residents and an average household size of 2.2 people. The percent of households with just one or two people increased from 72.7% in 2010 to 75.1% in 2014. There have not been, nor is there expected to be, significant shifts in population in total or by these key demographics in Neligh.

| Table 3.1 - Population 20-64 Years Old Neligh, 2010 | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Number of Residents | Percentage of Total Population |
| Total Single Residents 20-64 | 348 | 20.8% |
| <i>Single Males 20-64</i> | 150 | 9.0% |
| <i>Single Females 20-64</i> | 198 | 11.8% |

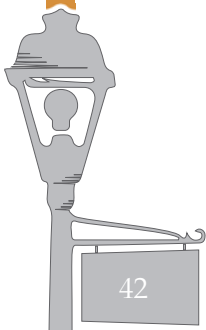
Source: 2010 US Census

The median household income in Neligh is \$32,946, and there are 344 households who earn less than \$34,999. This puts 51% of the population in the income brackets most likely to find downtown apartments attractive.

The Iowa study also identified that downtown apartments are popular among small-town residents if there is a courthouse nearby, a hospital in town, grade schools and high school, a nearby college, local manufacturing, and proximity to other major employers. Neligh does not have a large manufacturer, but has a good mix of smaller industry and commercial, retail, service, and food service employers including the County government, schools, and the hospital.

Although it varies by community, the Iowa study found through extensive surveys and interviews, that most residents in the demographics listed above viewed downtown living very favorably.

In summary, it does appear that Neligh has the demographics to suggest sufficient demand for downtown housing.



Supply

According to the US Census, in 2010 there were 781 housing units in Neligh with 74 vacancies.

Table 3.2 - Occupied/Vacant Households
Neligh, 2010

| | Number of Units | Percentage of Housing Units |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Total Housing Units | 781 | 100% |
| <i>Occupied Housing Units</i> | 707 | 90.5% |
| <i>Vacant Housing Units</i> | 74 | 9.5% |

Source: 2010 US Census

Details on the 74 vacancies are as follows:

Table 3.3 - Types of Vacant Housing Units
Neligh, 2010

| | Number of Units | Percentage of Vacant Units |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Total Vacancies | 74 | 100% |
| <i>For Rent</i> | 16 | 21.6% |
| <i>Rented, Not Occupied</i> | 1 | 1.4% |
| <i>For Sale Only</i> | 7 | 9.4% |
| <i>Sold, Not Occupied</i> | 2 | 2.7% |
| <i>Seasonal, Recreational, Occasional Use</i> | 12 | 16.2% |
| <i>For Migratory Workers</i> | 0 | 0% |
| <i>Other Vacant</i> | 36 | 48.6 |

Source: 2010 US Census

Of the 707 housing units, 211 are rentals.

Table 3.4 - Types of Occupied Housing Units
Neligh, 2010

| | Number of Units | Percentage of Occupied Units |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Total Occupied Housing Units | 707 | 100% |
| <i>Owner-Occupied</i> | 496 | 70.2% |
| <i>Renter-Occupied</i> | 211 | 29.8% |

Source: 2010 US Census

The vacancy rate for rentals was 7 percent, which is a bit higher than the desirable rate of 5 percent.



The latest census information showed the following breakdown of gross rent:

| Table 3.5 - Gross Rent | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Neligh, 2014 | |
| | Occupied Units |
| Median per Month in Gross Rent | \$515 |
| <i>Less than \$200</i> | 0 |
| <i>\$200 to \$299</i> | 10 |
| <i>\$300 to \$499</i> | 74 |
| <i>\$500 to \$749</i> | 63 |
| <i>\$750 to \$999</i> | 18 |
| <i>\$1,000 to \$1,499</i> | 6 |
| <i>\$1,500 or more</i> | 0 |

Source: 2010-2014 ACS Estimates

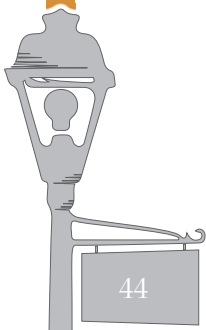
Not surprisingly, this is well below the State median monthly gross rent of \$934.

Closely related to the rent levels is the affordability of rental housing. The common rule of thumb is that rent should not exceed 30 percent of household income.

| Table 3.6 - Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Neligh, 2014 | |
| | Occupied Units |
| <i>Less than 15% of Household Income</i> | 51 |
| <i>15% to 19.9% of Household Income</i> | 19 |
| <i>20% to 24.9% of Household Income</i> | 3 |
| <i>25% to 29.9% of Household Income</i> | 20 |
| <i>30% to 34.9% of Household Income</i> | 9 |
| <i>35% or more of Household Income</i> | 65 |

Source: 2010-2014 ACS Estimates

The cost of rehabilitation is also important to consider when determining the feasibility of downtown housing development. There is often significant expense in bringing older buildings up to code. Grants and tax credits are available to help defray some of the expense, and are often necessary for this type of development to show an acceptable return.



Per the Iowa Upper Story Housing Feasibility Study, 2014, most projects cost between \$97,934 and \$121,198, or anywhere from \$34 to \$50 per building square foot. It depends on whether cosmetic changes are needed, or if extensive rehabilitation must be done. Elevators and sprinkler systems, if necessary, can each add thousands of dollars to a project. Requirements of complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Davis Bacon Act can add up to 7 percent in additional costs for the project. Without tax credits or grants, many owners find that they are unable to earn an acceptable return from their investment. There are many return on investment calculators available, but a thorough understanding of the expenses unique to this type of project is very important in making a wise decision.

Business owners who have any interest in developing their property will greatly benefit from information on the expected cost of such work, funding sources, contact information for design professionals and contractors, and how to evaluate the financial feasibility of a proposed project. Having this information assembled and available is critical.

Downtown Attractiveness

According to the Iowa study, there are several factors that determine how attractive a small-town downtown is to potential renters. These factors are:

- Large downtown (optimally at least 20 block faces)
- Square rather than linear configuration
- Existence of a courthouse within walking distance
- Close to major highway
- Existence of a movie theater
- Large number of commercial, retail, and dining/bar/coffee house locations

Neligh's downtown contains less than 12 block faces, and is linear rather than square. The Antelope County Courthouse is located on the edge of downtown which is beneficial, as is its proximity to a major highway.

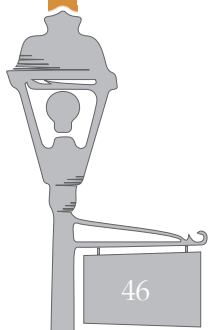
The mix of businesses downtown is very important to the success of second-story housing. To the prospective downtown resident, retail locations are of higher value than general commercial locations and service providers, and bars and restaurants are valued highest of all. People want to live in a vibrant area with places to go and things to see. Although the evaluation is subjective, the Gap/Surplus analysis indicates that the bar and restaurant scene in Neligh is very active, and many retail sectors are meeting the demands of the Neligh residents.

The Downtown Revitalization project that is currently underway will undoubtedly help make the downtown a more attractive place to live through cosmetic improvements and improved pedestrian accessibility.

Summary

The following summary notes which characteristics possessed by Neligh indicate success for downtown housing development, and those which may be a hindrance to the project’s success. Green measurements are considered positive characteristics, red indicates negative characteristics, and black signifies mixed or unknown results.

| Characteristics | Neligh's Measurement |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Demand</i> | |
| <i>High % of population single, age 20-64</i> | 348 (20.8% of total population) |
| <i>Income below \$34,999</i> | 344 Households (51% of total households) |
| <i>Hospital</i> | Yes |
| <i>Schools</i> | Yes |
| <i>Courthouse</i> | Yes |
| <i>Nearby college</i> | No |
| <i>Close to other places of employment</i> | No large manufacturer, but many smaller employers |
| <i>Supply</i> | |
| <i>Vacancy rate below 5%</i> | 7% |
| <i>Cost/condition of existing buildings</i> | Unknown |
| <i>City codes/ADA regulations</i> | Unknown |
| <i>Grants available</i> | Yes, especially if designated historic area |
| <i>Downtown Vitality</i> | |
| <i>Size (block faces)</i> | Less than 12 |
| <i>Square vs Linear</i> | Linear |
| <i>Distance to nearest highway</i> | Very close |
| <i>Movie theater</i> | Yes |
| <i>Number of retail locations</i> | Mixed, there are some gaps in retail coverage |
| <i>Number of bars & restaurants</i> | Vibrant food service sales |



Barriers to Success

The primary barriers to success that were identified during the Iowa study were:

- People living downtown want nearby off-street, and preferably covered, parking, which many cities do not have currently.
- Before beginning any interior renovation, problems with roofs, common walls, and other structural issues must be resolved.
- Antiquated sewer and water systems can impede development projects because sometimes these require multiple property owners to agree to make improvements.
- Access to upper stories of downtown buildings often requires new stairways and sometimes elevators, which can be very expensive.
- Absentee and aging property owners often do not see the benefit of renovating their buildings.
- Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act and Davis-Bacon Act requirements may add to the cost of larger renovation projects.
- There can be a stigma associated with downtown living in smaller cities as it is often viewed as low-income housing.
- Existing housing assistance programs are not well coordinated and require too much paperwork.

Sources for "Neligh Second Story Downtown Living Development" Analysis:
 Housing Strategic Economics Group - Iowa Upper Story Housing Feasibility Study, 2014

US Census – factfinder.census.gov

University of Wisconsin-Extension – Downtown and Business District Market Analysis

Multifamily Executive - http://www.multifamilyexecutive.com/design-development/retail-as-multifamily-development-opportunity_o

Art and Entertainment

Entertainment, in the form of live music and theater will bring people to The Old Mill District to experience the entertainment scene. Providing entertainment opportunities adds to the multi-functional uses of a downtown area. Several community events also take place in The Old Mill District which helps increase the entertainment aspect. Finding ways to encourage entertainment within local businesses and services will help draw people to the District.

Public art, in the form of murals and sculptures, is a way to express the local heritage and history of the District and the community. The use of murals can liven a blank wall and convey, through art and images, the history of the community or the current uses of the space.

Many residents discussed their desire for additional murals within the District that would paint the image of The Old Mill District and the unique history that is tied to the District. There is currently a cow mural on the back of one of the buildings that is visible to people when they pass by on Highway 275. The cow, although quirky and unexpected, relates to the agricultural heritage of the rural community. There are other buildings throughout The Old Mill District that are an open canvas and would be ideal locations for additional murals. Murals that can be viewed from Highway 275 will also help to draw attention to The Old Mill District and serve as marketing and wayfinding for the District.



Other ways to include art and improve the aesthetics is to include artwork, sculptures, and landscaping throughout the Downtown District. The Old Mill District theme could be tied into other works of art. One resident had the idea of procuring a sculpture of wheat made from metal. This sculpture could be located along 2nd Street on the south end of Main Street; although the sculpture would serve as artwork it would also tie The Old Mill District to the Neligh Mill.

Exploring ways to add artwork will increase the appeal and delineate The Old Mill District as a unique location to visit, shop, and dine. The increased sense of place will continually bring people back to Neligh to explore The Old Mill District.

Goals

There are many additional goals, some that have been discussed previously in this Plan and some that are self-explainable. All of these goals have been broken into a short- and long-term implementation plan. The short-term plan includes goals that will be written into the City's Phase II application and a few other goals that will be completed by the City during the Phase II process. The long-term goals will carry the City past the Phase II process and will outline options for continued improvements to further enhance The Old Mill District.

SHORT-TERM GOALS

Theme and Brand Development

Historic Preservation

Façade Improvements

Energy Efficiency Assistance

Design Guidelines

Wayfinding Signage

Upper Level Apartments

LONG -TERM GOALS

Nebraska Main Street Community

Parking - convert east side of Main Street into diagonal parking

Additional Green Space

Arts and Entertainment - create stronger presence

Sidewalks - replace pavement on east side of N Street

ADA Ramps - Install at all intersections

Crosswalks - paint on L Street/Highway 275 at 5th and 6th Street

Alleys - repair alleys running between L Street/ Highway 275 and Main Street from 2nd to 5th Street

New Moon Theater - repair/update and find successful community use

Over the long-term span, there may be other needs including additional sidewalk repair or replacement, curb and gutter repair, stormwater drainage improvements, assessment and evaluation of water and sewer mains, and continued maintenance and updates to buildings and facades. **Figure 3.1 - Master Plan**, located on the following page, records many of the suggested changes and goals discussed in Neligh's Downtown Revitalization Plan. This map and the goals from this Plan should be continually evaluated to determine relevancy; projects also need to be included on improvement lists and capital improvement plan budgets.

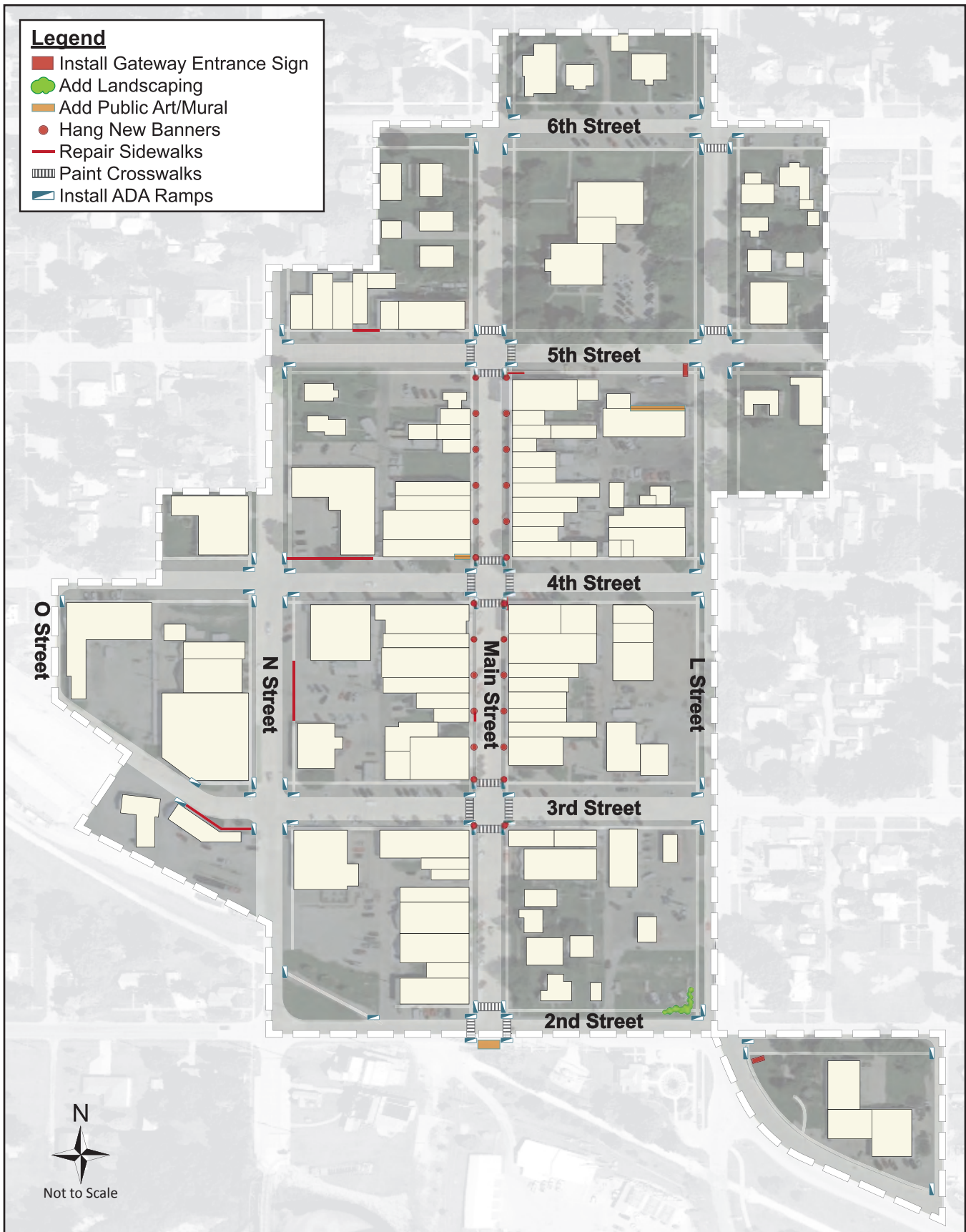


Figure 3.1 - Master Plan
 Downtown Revitalization Plan
 Neligh, Nebraska

CHAPTER 4



IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation • Funding Options

Implementation

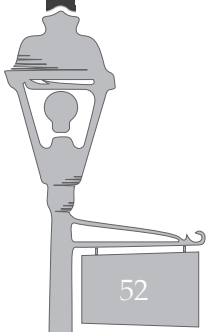
To implement the goals listed previously will require many public-private partnerships and continued efforts from the City, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Office, and business and property owners. The Old Mill District, like any Downtown District, is the heart of the community; residents buy groceries, pay utility bills, purchase flowers and gifts, go out to eat, send mail, and more.

The Old Mill District should also serve as a means to attract visitors to shop, dine, and visit the many museums and other unique amenities Neligh has to offer. Improving facades, signage, artwork, entertainment, branding/marketing, as well as increasing opportunities for new businesses, business retention, and residential opportunities will enrich The Old Mill District and help develop and sustain a Downtown that will attract residents and visitors for years to come.

Implementation of the short-term goals will include a City-State partnership in the form of a grant. The City is currently preparing an application for Downtown Revitalization Phase II funds which would provide the City with \$350,000 in grant funds, along with a minimum 25 percent match from the City, to implement many of the short-term goals. The Downtown Steering Committee and Economic Development Director have been outlining possible funding programs and projects to best utilize the Phase II funds. A summary of the desired programs and projects can be found below. These programs could change, depending on City and business owner needs; however, these programs and projects have been reviewed by the Downtown Steering Committee to ensure they are meeting the goals outlined in the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

City-Funded Programs

- Micro-Façade Program:
 - \$50,000 – LB840 Funds
 - 75% of project costs
 - Maximum amount - \$1,500 per project
 - Façade improvements
 - Brick, stucco, paint, signage, windows and sidewalk
- Design Planning:
 - \$5,000 – LB840 Funds
 - No match required
 - Maximum \$250 per project
 - Design consultation with designer, intern-architect and/or architect



CDBG-Funded Programs

- Façade Improvement Program:
 - \$100,000 – CDBG Funds
 - 50% of project cost
 - Maximum amount - \$25,000
 - Façade improvements
 - Brick, stucco, paint, signage and windows
- Walk-able Housing Improvement Fund:
 - \$100,000 – CDBG Funds
 - 50% of the project cost
 - Maximum amount - \$15,000 per housing unit
 - Encourage the development/rehabilitation of downtown housing units
- Fix the Bones Building Improvement Fund:
 - \$100,000 – CDBG Funds
 - 50% of project cost
 - Maximum amount - \$25,000
 - Structural Improvements and Code Remediation
 - Roof, electrical, HVAC, plumbing and carpentry
 - Must participate in Main Street Charrette Program prior to notice of award

City-Funded Projects

- Main Street Charrette Process:
 - \$5,000 – LB840 Funds
 - No match required
 - Up to 5 participating businesses
 - Prerequisite for “Fix the Bones” Application
- Old Mill District Signage and Branding:
 - Old Mill District – banners and brackets for downtown
 - Old Mill District Mural/s
 - Paint electrical boxes on light poles
 - Re-paint light poles

CDBG-Funded Projects

- Signage and District Branding:
 - Three “Old Mill District” signs directing traffic off HWY 275 & 14 (\$7,000)
 - Old Mill District Mural/s
 - Old Mill District Billboard Signage on East side of Norfolk on HWY 275

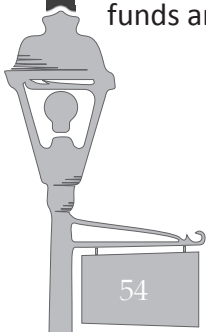


Below are the rudimentary first steps for embarking on a successful implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan:

- **Establish an implementation committee.** A relatively standard procedure is used to convert the planning project’s steering committee, into the implementation committee; the City should create an implementation committee that has several “movers and shakers” to ensure action is taken. The committee should meet regularly, and City staff should be closely involved.
- **Get all of the implementers on board.** It should be a primary objective of the planning process to achieve buy-in from all key players who will be critical to the plan’s implementation. This goal was reached during the creation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Although that goal was met, it may be necessary to reconfirm these individuals’ commitment to the plan and the implementation of its goals.
- **Start with the plan’s “low-hanging fruit.”** The “low-hanging fruit” includes projects that are ‘simple’ and can be implemented quickly. Showing completion of these goals will help attract more buy-in and support because residents and stakeholders will see efforts being made towards completing the long list of goals.

Implementation for the long-term goals will also require many partnerships and some of the long-term goals may require the City to begin completing steps in the short-term in order to make implementation in the long-term a possibility. Historic preservation is one particular goal that will require efforts in the short- and long-term. Becoming a registered Historic District will take several months, if not years, to complete; therefore, the City will need to work on some of the steps in the short-term.

The list of long-term goals may also need to be amended as needs change and other project goals become priorities. The long-term implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan is not as clear-cut as the short-term goals. However, flexibility is essential to be able to provide real-time needs to business owners and the community. Implementation of the long-term goals will also depend on City funds and other potential funding sources.



Funding Options

The following is a list of specialized funding sources that can assist with redevelopment of The Old Mill District. Many of these funding sources have applicability requirements as well as guidelines for types of projects the funds can assist. Each project should be individually analyzed to determine the best funding scenario. In some cases, grant funds may not be available for a certain project; therefore, the City and its residents will have to develop a plan to fund the desired improvements. The funding source options and techniques found on the following pages are different options that the City and/or private property owners could utilize to make improvements and implement goals. Not all of these options may be right for the community; therefore, options/sources should be analyzed to determine feasibility for the projects and for the City.

LOCAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Building Façade Grant Program:

Buildings in the Downtown District are eligible to apply for façade improvement funds from the City. The City annually provides grant loans to businesses that apply for funds to pay for aesthetic and energy efficiency improvements including façade, window, and awning improvements.

Building Façade Easements:

An option for the City's Buildings within the Downtown District could be establishing a building façade easement. Façade easements could be dedicated to the City, protecting the façade from unsympathetic modifications and providing a tax benefit to the donor. In addition, various forms of public financing, including TIF, may be available as a result of permanent public easements. Typically, these easements last for 7 to 15 years, and then return to the owner of the property.

Business Improvement District (BID)

Business Improvement Districts (BID) are special assessment districts that permit businesses to finance public capital improvement projects and district management, promotion, and maintenance. BIDs are petitioned and approved by property owners and created by the City following a specific process established by Nebraska State Statutes §19-4015 - §19-4038 and administered by a BID Board. While BIDs are a valuable tool, it is important that assessments not be so large that they create a burden to the property owners.

City General Revenue

General revenues, appropriated through the City's annual budget, can finance services, improvements, facilities, and development/improvement projects. These appropriations are separate from general revenues devoted to debt service on bonds. Common uses of general revenues in downtown development programs include funding staff and organizational expenses, or projects that can be divided into smaller phases, such as streetscape improvements.

Downtown Bond Issues

General obligation bond issues are appropriate to finance major public projects or improvements, and are secured by general City revenues. These revenues typically include property taxes or, potentially, local option sales taxes. General obligation bonds require majority voter approval. In the scale of downtown improvements, including the City's goals, bonds are most appropriate to finance all or part of the streetscape project.

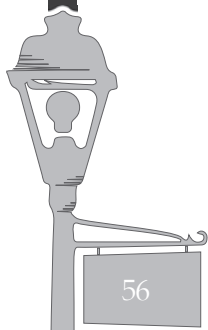
The goals outlined in this Downtown Revitalization Plan include multiple public infrastructure improvements that are very costly. In order to minimize the impact to the businesses during construction, it is recommended that these improvements be completed simultaneously which may require a bond issue in order to have the funds to pay for the project.

Local Option Sales Tax (LB 840)

The City's voters have approved the local option sales tax for economic development which was allowed through Nebraska's LB 840. Under LB 840, funds can be used to finance public and private projects that support local economic development objectives. The City could use a portion of these funds to sustain the Downtown District as a major asset to the community. LB 840 proceeds may be used to help qualifying businesses make improvements to their property.

Private and Foundation Philanthropy

There are a few opportunities, through the outlined goals, for individual or foundation contributions. Private philanthropy, with appropriate recognition and commemoration, is a critical part of the downtown implementation program, and is especially appropriate for park and pavilion type projects.



Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds are debt instruments that are repaid all or in part from revenues generated by the project or by other associated revenue sources. Revenue bonds typically are not secured by credit of the community.

Revolving Loan Program

A downtown revolving loan program could provide low-interest loan funds granted by the City to cover any portion of costs to convert downtown buildings into more marketable assets. Those eligible to receive funds could include for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. Establishing starting capital can be the most challenging part of creating a revolving loan program for the Downtown District.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) permits the use of a portion of local property taxes to assist funding the redevelopment of certain designated areas within the community. Projects pay their entire established tax obligation; however, taxes produced by the added value of the property caused by redevelopment/improvements may be used to finance project-related improvements or other public improvements in the district. TIF may be used to pay certain costs incurred with a redevelopment project. Such costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Professional services such as studies, surveys, plans, financial management, and legal counsel;
- Land acquisition and demolition of structures; or
- Building necessary new infrastructure in the project area such as streets, parking, and decorative lighting.

TIF uses the additional tax revenue created by a development within the redevelopment district to finance additional improvements in the redevelopment district. Up to 100 percent of this additional tax revenue can be used for up to 15 years on public improvements within the redevelopment area. More information can be found at http://www.revenue.nebraska.gov/PAD/research/TIF_Reports/TIF_REPORT_2014.pdf

STATE TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

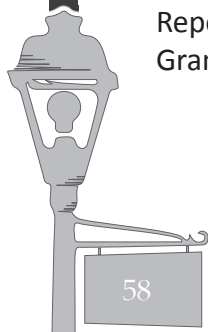
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

DHHS has many opportunities for loans and grants to help communities create a better quality of life for their residents. Some of these loans and grants provide financial assistants to new or existing child care providers, student loans to help keep medical students in small communities, and services to low income and disability residents. More information can be found at http://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/grants_loans.aspx

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ)

NDEQ has many opportunities with loans and grants to help communities create a better quality of life for their residents. The following grants are just some of the financial assistance programs they offer.

- ***Deconstruction Grants:*** Deconstruction grants is administered by NDEQ. It is funded through the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Grant. There is an online application process found on the NDEQ website. The reimbursement is based on the percentage of materials reused or recycled. More information can be found at <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/DGP>
- ***Scrap Tire Management Grant Programs:*** The Scrap Tire Management Grant Program is administered by NDEQ; it encourages private and non-profit entities and organizations and political subdivisions to submit applications for scrap tire program and project grants. More information can be found at <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/ScrapTire>
- ***Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Grants:*** The Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Grant is administered by NDEQ; it provides assistance in financing sound, integrated waste management programs and projects. More information can be found at <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/WRRIGP>
- ***The Litter Reduction and Recycling Grant Program:*** The Litter Reduction and Recycling Grant Program is administered by NDEQ it has been in existence since 1979. Its purpose is to provide funds to support programs to reduce litter, provide education, and promote recycling in Nebraska. More information can be found at <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/LRRGP>
- ***The Illegal Dumpsite Cleanup Program:*** The Illegal Dumpsite Cleanup Program is administered by NDEQ and provides funding assistance to political subdivisions for the cleanup of solid waste disposed of along public roadways or ditches. Items that are accepted include household waste, white goods, construction and demolition waste, and furniture when removed from the illegal site and disposed in a permitted facility or recycled. More information can be found at <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/IDCP>
- ***Wastewater and Drinking Water Financial Assistance Programs:*** The NDEQ, and DHHS, distribute funds from two major revolving loan fund programs. These two programs – the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (for wastewater treatment facilities) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund – also provide funding for some related grants programs, including: Small Community Matching Grants; Planning Grants for Drinking Water Preliminary Engineering Reports; Wastewater Facility Planning Grants; Source Water Protection Grants; and Emergency Grants. More information can be found at <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/CA>



Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED)

NDED has multiple grant programs available to communities in Nebraska. The two most relevant grants for improvements in Neligh's Old Mill District are:

- ***Downtown Revitalization Phase II:*** The Downtown Revitalization Phase II grant program is a follow-up program to the City's application for Phase I funds which assisted in the completion of this Downtown Revitalization Plan. Phase II funds include up to \$350,000 (with 25% minimum match from the community) for physical improvements to help implement goals laid out in the Downtown Revitalization Plan. There are guidelines outlining appropriate uses for Phase II funds.
- ***Tourism Development:*** Tourism Development grant funds from NDED include funds for tourism attraction activities: historic restorations; scientific and educational interpretive education sites and facilities such as museums; participatory sports facilities; convention centers; cultural and heritage recreational sites and facilities; and supporting activities that include removal of material and architectural barriers that restrict mobility and accessibility to sites/facilities. The grant maximum is \$225,000 (with a minimum 25% match from the community) and the minimum application amount is \$50,000.

There are other grant programs offered by NDED; however, the additional programs require the community to qualify based on the percentage of low-to-moderate income households in Neligh. Currently, the City does not qualify for these additional grant programs.

Nebraska Historic Tax Credit (NHTC)

The NHTC, as authorized by the Nebraska Job Creation and Mainstreet Redevelopment Act, offers a total of \$15 million in state historic preservation tax credits for each calendar year from 2015 to 2018. The Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Department of Revenue administer the program. They want to encourage preservation of state historic buildings to help with the following outcomes:

- Incentives for redevelopment of historic properties and districts across the state;
- Private investment in historic buildings, downtowns, and neighborhoods;
- New uses for underutilized and substandard buildings;
- Jobs and economic development in Nebraska communities, both rural and urban;
- Creation of housing units;
- Revitalized communities through preservation of historically significant buildings and districts; and
- More heritage tourism in communities.

More information can be found at <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/histpres/nhtc.htm>

Valuation Incentive Program (VIP)

VIP assists in the preservation of Nebraska's historic places that are already on the National Register of Historic Places list. The program allows a property tax "preference" for a historic property that has been rehabilitated. The preference can be described as a temporary "hold" on increases in property tax assessment that result from improvements made to preserve a historic property. More information can be found at <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/histpres/vip/index.htm>



FEDERAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive

The Historic Tax Credit program offers a 20-percent investment tax credit for certified rehabilitation of National Register or Nation Register-eligible buildings if:

- The building is used for income-producing purposes;
- Rehabilitation work follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation; and
- The project receives preliminary and final approval from the National Park Service.

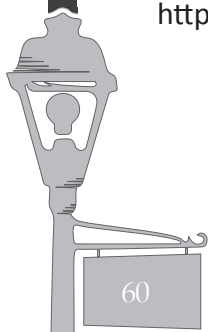
More information can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/taxdocs/about-tax-incentives-2012.pdf>

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- **Single Family Housing:** The Single Family Housing program offered through HUD provides assistance with many different programs from mortgage insurance, mortgage insurance for disaster victims, rehab loans insurance, rehab and energy efficiency programs, housing counseling, property disposition, loss mitigation that has default workout options that allow lenders to effectively work with delinquent FHA borrowers to find solutions to avoid foreclosure, and many more. More information can be found at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing.
- **Multi-Family Housing:** The Multi-Family Housing program offered through HUD provides assistance for the elderly, disabled, rental assistance, and healthcare facilities. The following is a list of all the sections with information for the programs mentioned above:
 - *Section 202-Supportive Housing for the Elderly* provides capital advances coupled with rental subsidies, for the development of rental housing with supportive services for the elderly
 - *Section 811-Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities* provides capital advances coupled with rental subsidies to expand the availability of housing with supportive services for persons with disabilities.
 - *Section 221 (d)(3) and (4)-MF Rental Housing for Moderate Income Families*
 - *Sections 207/223(F)-Provides Mortgage Insurance for Purchase or Refinancing of Existing Multifamily Rental Housing*
 - *Section 232 –Healthcare and Assisted Living Facilities*
 - *Section 242 -Hospitals*

More information can be found at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/mfh

- **The Office of Economic Resilience (OER):** The Office of Economic Resilience (OER) helps communities and regions build diverse, prosperous, resilient economies. The OER offers grants in Sustainable Communities Regional Planning and Community Challenge Planning. They also offer assistance in Lead Based Paint Abatement and Cleanup. More information can be found at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/economic_resilience



- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Programs:** This program offered through HUD provides developer tax credit incentives. At least 20 percent of residential units constructed or renovated must be reserved for persons with incomes at/or below 50 percent below of area median income (AMI) adjusted for family size; or at least 40 percent of units must be made affordable for persons with incomes at/or below 60 percent of AMI adjusted for family size. The project must be retained as low-income housing for at least 30 years with loan terms of up to 40 years. More information can be found at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/lihtc.html>
- **The HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program:** The Home program activities include: affordable housing construction; housing rehabilitation; home purchase financing; and tenant-based rental assistance. More information can be found at <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/home/>.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- **Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program:** The primary objective of the U.S. Department of Agriculture program is to promote rural economic development and job creation projects. Assistance provided to rural areas may include business startup costs, expansion, and incubators; technical assistance feasibility studies; advanced telecommunications services and computer networks for medical, educational, and job training services; and community facilities projects for economic development. This grant must be matched with a minimum of 20 percent of the project costs. More information can be found at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-economic-development-loan-grant-program>
- **USDA Rural Home Repair 504 Loan and Grant Program:** Loan funds can be used to improve or modernize dwellings as well as remove health and safety hazards. The dwelling must be the primary residency of a very low income household. The loan can help with septic systems; utility connection fees; energy conservation; electrical, plumbing, and heating systems; roof repair or replacement; deteriorated siding replacement; and handicap accessibility improvements. The loans are a 1% interest rate for a 20 year term and the maximum amount is \$20,000; however, a deed of trust is required on loans exceeding \$7,500.

The grant program requirement is that the applicants must own their own home and are very low income households (50% of median household adjusted income for the county.). However, the grants are only available to homeowners 62 years of age or older who lack repayment ability for a loan and the grant funds can only be used for health, safety and/or handicap accessibility repairs. The maximum lifetime grant is \$7,500 and comes with a 3 year grant agreement. More information can be found at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/files/3550-1chapter12.pdf>

• **USDA Multi-Family Housing Programs:** USDA provides affordable multi-family rental housing in rural areas by financing projects geared for low-income, elderly and disabled individuals and families as well as domestic farm laborers. They guarantee loans for affordable rental housing designed for low to moderate-income residents in rural areas and towns.

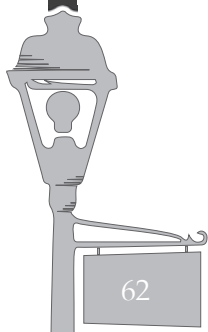
- Direct Rural Rental Housing Loans
- Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Loans
- Preservation and Revitalization Demonstration Loans and Grants
- Direct Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants
- Housing Preservation Grants
- Rental Assistance

More information can be found at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/multi-family-housing-programs>

• **USDA Community Facility Programs:** Public bodies, non-profit organizations and federally recognized American Indian Tribes can use the funds to construct, expand or improve facilities that provide health care, education, public safety, and public services. Projects include fire and rescue stations, village and town halls, health care clinics, hospitals, adult and child care centers, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation centers, public buildings, schools, libraries, and many other community based initiatives. Financing may also cover the costs for land acquisition, professional fees, and purchase of equipment.

- Loans and Grants (Direct and/or Guaranteed)
- Tribal College Grants
- Economic Impact Initiative Grants
- Rural Community Development Initiative Grants

More information can be found at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/community-facilities-programs>



APPENDIX 1

DESIGN GUIDELINES

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Design Guidelines for **THE OLD MILL DISTRICT**

These Design Guidelines are a visual representation of proposed branding for The Old Mill District in Neligh, Nebraska. The Old Mill District was derived from the Public Input process facilitated in conjunction with the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Residents strongly supported the value of the Neligh Mill as a historic landmark and tourist attraction and hoped to extend the Mill's presence throughout the Downtown District. Therefore, the Neligh Mill remained a key point of reference while shaping the brand for The Old Mill District.

During the same Public Input process, key stakeholders in the Downtown District expressed a need for these Design Guidelines to help shape future development in a cohesive manner. This progression toward an overall vision will help create a downtown environment that sets Neligh apart from surrounding towns.

The following pages contain images supporting the brand for the District. Included in the images are examples of a general color palette, signage types, storefront characteristics, beautification methods, and facade improvements. The images in this document are united by a common theme - clean lines and streamlined design. This design theme will help The Old Mill District stay modern while not detracting from historic buildings and detail.

THE OLD MILL DISTRICT BRANDING

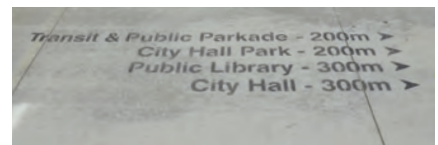
**THE
OLD
MILL
DISTRICT**



Wayfinding



→
**THE
OLD
MILL
DISTRICT**



Love Signs
Manufacturers of Ideas

© 2014 LOVE SIGNS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PART OF THIS DRAWING MAY BE DISTRIBUTED TO OTHERS OR REPRODUCED IN ANY FORM WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM LOVE SIGNS OF NORFOLK.



SIGNAGE

Signage should be easy-to-read and not distract from the building; it should consider both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.



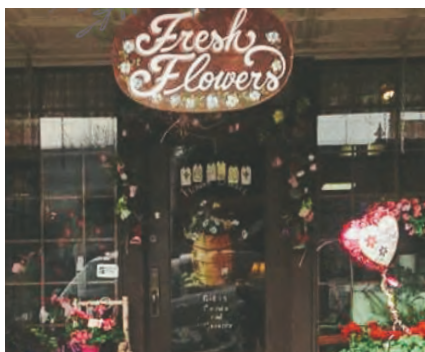
Street Level



Projecting



Pedestrian Level



STOREFRONT



Awnings



Windows



Building Materials



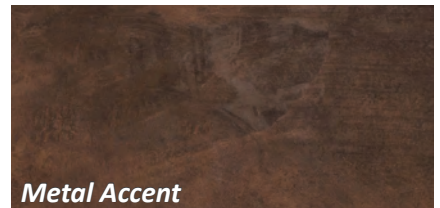
Brick

Painted Brick - Avoid painting original brick in good condition if possible.



Stacked Stone

EIFS - EIFS Facade System should only be used if original facade is beyond repair.



Metal Accent

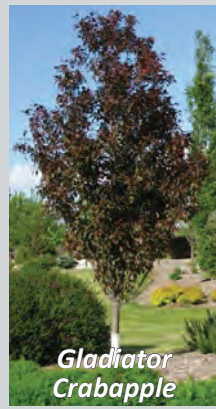
Metal Accent - A mixture of dark metals can be used.

BEAUTIFICATION

Existing Lightpost



Lighting



Gladiator Crabapple



Jack Dwarf Flowering Pear



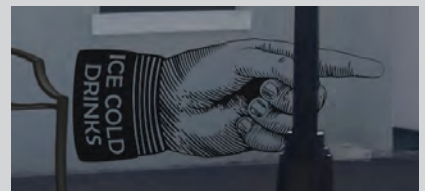
Crimson Spire Columnar Oak

Trees

Planters



Murals





Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Repaint or Replace Trim
- Install New EIFS Facade
- Add Signage
- Install Pedestrian Level Signage
- Repaint All Trim to Match
- Add Potted Plant
- Repaint Parking Lines



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Add Mural
- Install New Awning
- Install Pedestrian Level Signage
- Add Potted Plants
- Repaint Parking Lines



Existing Appearance



Top 5 Reasons to Convert to Natural Gas:

1. *Save Money*
2. *Convenience*
3. *Safe and Reliable*
4. *Clean and Efficient*
5. *American*

Contact 1.800.563.0012 for more information.



Proposed Improvements

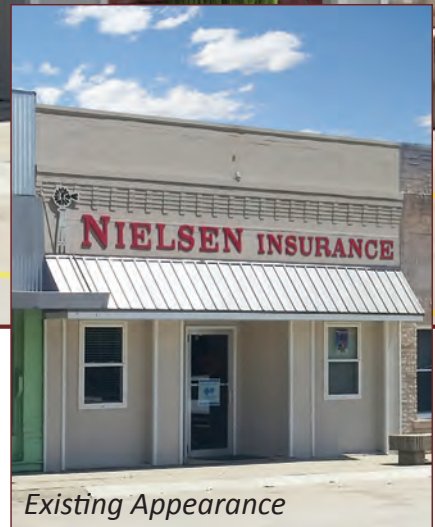
- Replace Trim
- Install Stacked Stone Facade
- Replace Awning
- Install Window Vinyl
- Repaint Parking Lines
- Repaint Door
- Repaint Columns and Trim



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Replace Trim
- Install Brick Veneer
- Repaint Awning
- Add Potted Plants
- Install Brick Wainscoting
- Repaint Parking Lines



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Install New Awning
- Repaint Parking Lines
- Install Columns and Paint to Define Space
- Install Stacked Stone Base



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Repair and Paint Facade
- Install New or Clean/Repair Windows
- Replace or Repair Door
- Add Interesting Window Displays



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Install New Flashing and Trim
- Install New EIFS Facade
- Update Signage
- Install Pedestrian Level Signage
- Install New Awning
- Update Bench/Add Planter
- Repaint Parking Lines
- Repaint Brick



Existing Appearance



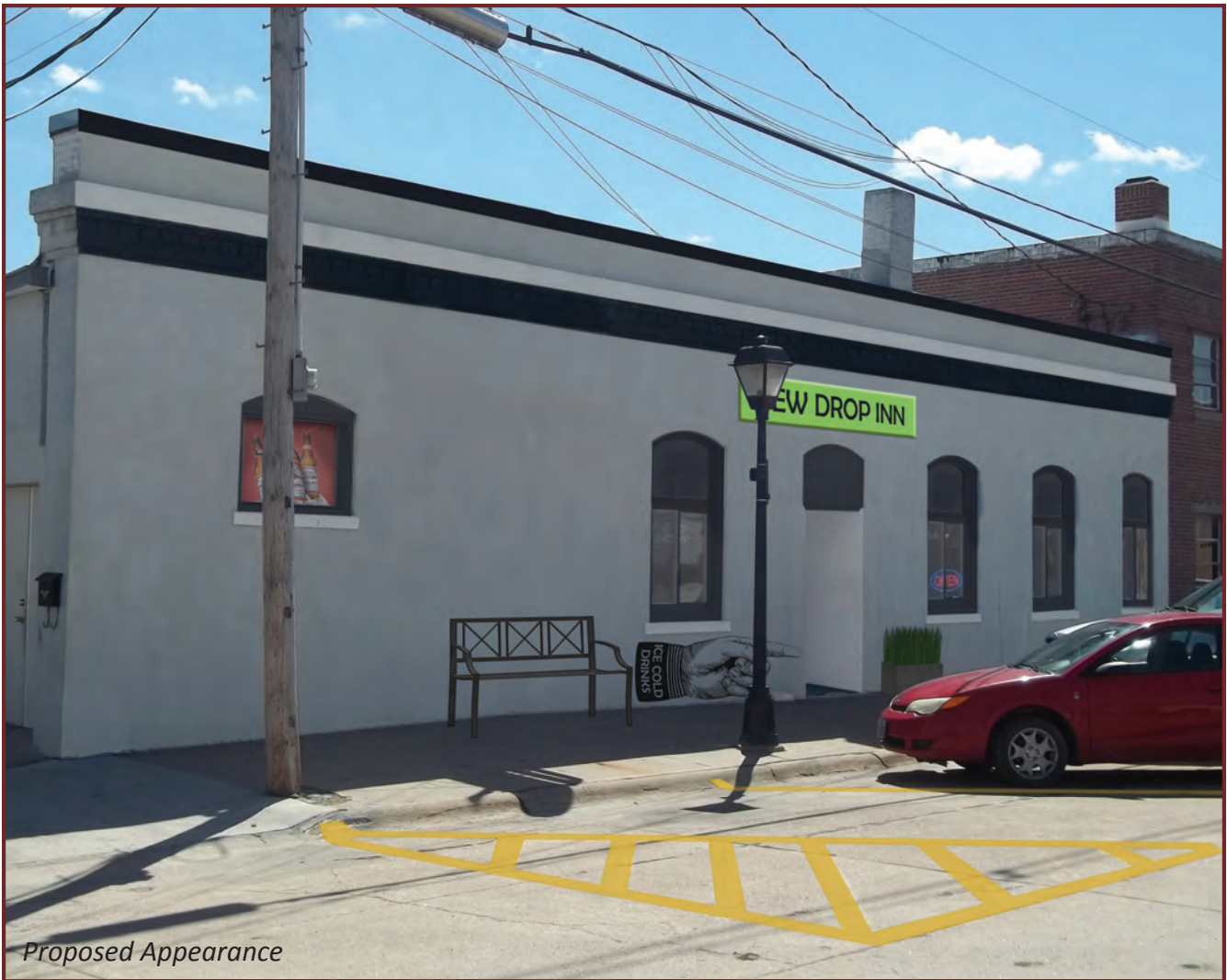
Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Paint Trim
- Replace Glass Block with Brick and Paint
- Add Signage
- Install New Storefront Windows
- Add Planter



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Repaint Trim
- Repair and Repaint Facade
- Install Upper Windows
- Repaint Window Sills and Trim
- Update Signage
- Update Advertisements
- Paint Mural
- Add Bench and Planter
- Repaint Parking Lines



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Update and Reinstall Signage
- Install New EIFS Facade
- Replace Gutters and Downspouts to Match EIFS
- Repaint Fascia
- Repaint Trim
- Install Privacy Fence for Screening



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Install New EIFS System
- Install Correct Window Size
- Add Planters
- Install Commercial Doors
- Update Signage
- Install New Awning
- Repaint Parking Stalls



Existing Appearance



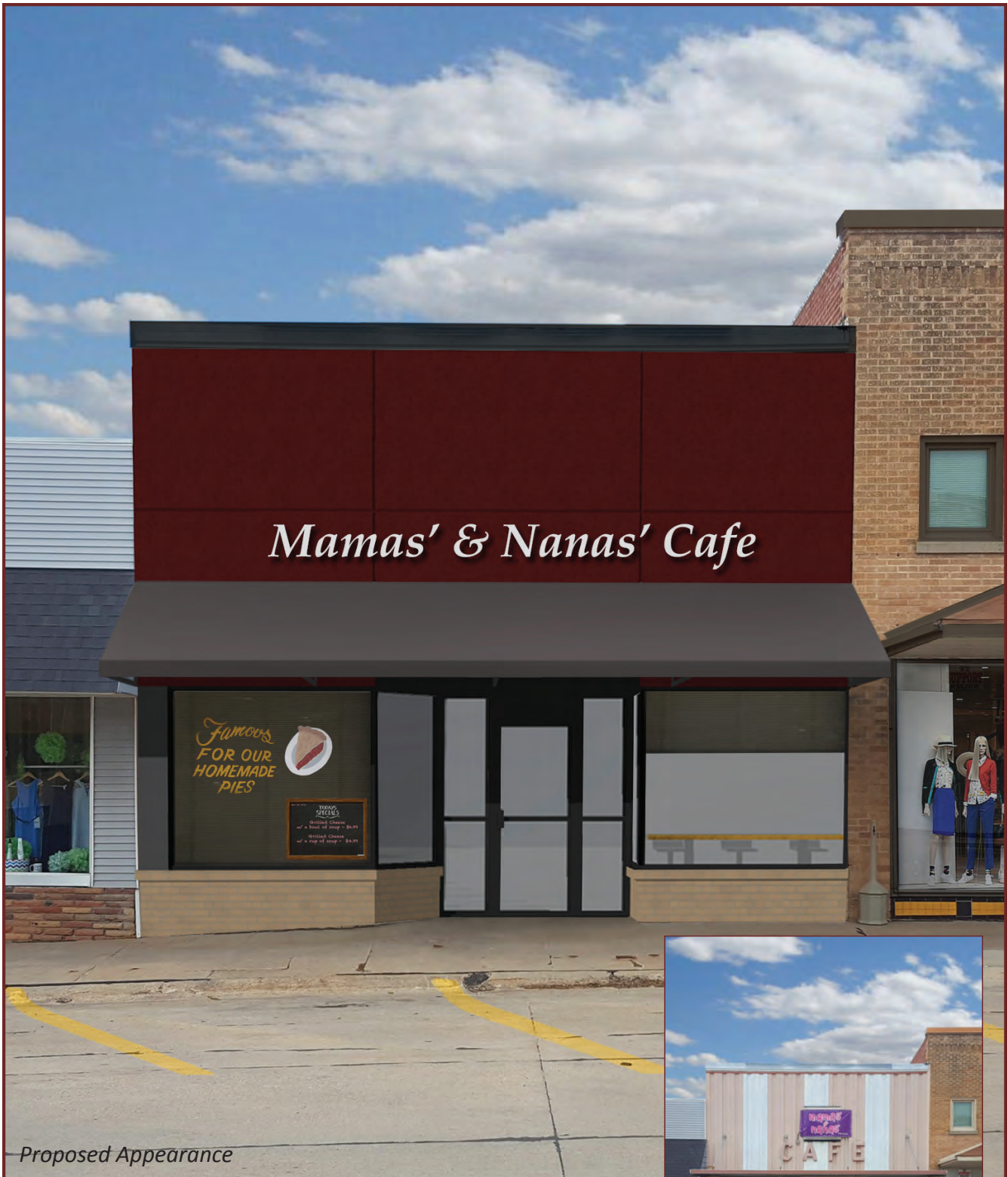
Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Repaint Trim and Siding
- Add Windows
- Frost Windows
- Install Brick Wainscoting
- Repaint or Replace Door
- Install Column



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Install New EIFS System
- Install Permanent Signage
- Install New Awning
- Update Window Treatments
- Repaint Parking Lines
- Add Bar Style Seating



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Repaint Trim
- Install Window Tinting for Displays
- Repaint Parking Lines
- Install Stacked-Stone Base



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Repair or Replace Brick Tower
- Restore Neon Signage
- Restore Marquee
- Install New Awnings
- Remove A/C Unit and Replace with Window and Central Air
- Update Frames and Add Community Events Board
- Replace Damaged Glass
- Install New Windows and Doors where Needed
- Repaint Parking Lines



Existing Appearance



Proposed Appearance

Proposed Improvements

- Add Mural
- Replace or Repaint Windows and Trim
- Repair Exterior where Needed
- Repaint Sills
- Paint Door
- Add Hanging and Potted Plants



Existing Appearance



Proposed Improvements

- Replace Trim
- Repaint/Install Detail Pieces
- Refinish Signage
- Repaint Parking Lines
- Repaint Building
- Install Columns



APPENDIX 2

UW EXTENSION FACADE IMPROVEMENT STUDY

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Downtown Economics

Ideas for Increasing Vitality in Community Business Districts

Illustration
by
SAA

Issue 180
March 2015

Downtown Storefront Improvements *Analyzing Return on Investment*

Do downtown storefront improvement projects provide an adequate return to the property owners, outside investors, or public funding entities? If so, what are the returns in both economic and other terms?

This article summarizes findings from 24 case studies of storefront improvement projects in Wisconsin over the past 15 years. While not a scientific sample, the findings are consistent with an earlier 1986 study and reflect a spectrum of outcomes that may result from storefront investments.

1. Business operators generally experience an increase in number of first-time customers.

As a result of storefront improvements, over 80% of reporting businesses experienced an increase in number of first-time customers. In addition, previously unoccupied space generated new customers as a result of new commercial tenants. Consistent with the 1986 study, most case study respondents reported positive publicity and recognition for the business, which contributed to interest from new first-time customers.

2. Many but not all business operators experience an increase in sales.

Related to the above and consistent with the 1986 study, over 90% of existing businesses reported an increase in sales. For case studies where data was available, sales revenue increased an average of 20%. However, a few business owners who monitored sales

performance before and after storefront improvements reported no change in sales. Restaurant owners experienced the greatest amount of increase, followed by those in the personal and professional service sectors.

3. Property landlords generally generate increased rental revenues.

A few of the case studies represented property owners who reported new rental income. Some of the most significant economic returns were realized by property owners who were able to lease previously unoccupied space as a result of storefront improvements. In a few case studies, apartments were rented as a result of the building's improved appearance.

4. Properties are often converted to a perceived better use.

A few buildings were repurposed to accommodate different type of tenants in response to market needs. These new tenants often helped stabilize the income stream of the property. Consistent with the 1986 study, exterior storefront improvements were often conducted with other changes in the building to accommodate the new use.



717 S. 37th St., Milwaukee, WI (Silver City area)

5. Other building improvements, including interior redesign, are often performed simultaneously.

Consistent with the 1986 study, many of the projects included concurrent interior renovations and building improvements. Many building owners found efficiencies in combining exterior and interior work (although façade improvement expenses were isolated to the extent possible in this analysis).

6. Even small investments can generate significant returns.

The projects examined in this study ranged widely in investment outlay (from less than \$3,000 to more than \$600,000). Consistent with the 1986 study, improvements are often relatively inexpensive. Often very small outlays had significant impact on sales and rent income.

7. Multiple funding sources are often assembled to cover project costs.

Most of the case studies involved numerous sources of funding. In addition to the owner's investment, 50% of the projects used local incentive grant or loan programs (for façade, signage, or business improvements). Traditional bank loans were also used by 50% of the projects. Historic tax credits were used in a few projects. A few of the case studies involved buildings that were improved because of the availability of storefront improvement funding mechanisms.

8. Property owners generally believe that their building value has increased.

While not asked outright in the case study research, a number of respondents indicated that their property value has or is expected to increase as a result of the improvements. This was an important outcome for a few who anticipated selling their property in the near future. However, accordingly to the 1986 study, property tax increases are minimal (if any) for façade improvements.

9. Nearby businesses often enjoy increased sales and may initiate their own storefront improvements.

A number of case studies demonstrated how new customers attracted to an improved building can positively affect other nearby buildings and their businesses. This was especially true in cases where an unoccupied building regained a commercial tenant. The indirect returns to the surrounding business district were amplified when the improved building was occupied by a tenant that generated foot traffic and complemented other nearby businesses. There were also numerous examples of how an improved building inspired other nearby building owners to consider improvements.

10. Community pride, historic appreciation, and civic legacy are celebrated.

Many local property owners' attachment to their community's heritage became a driver in storefront improvement projects. Many property owners expressed a desire to restore their building to its original elegance as a symbol of the community's heritage. These property owners recognize the unique market opportunities available through the improvement of the community's original and authentic business district.

This article was prepared by Bill Ryan, Amy Greil, and Dayna Sarver of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, working in partnership with Joe Lawniczak and Errin Wely of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. This analysis builds upon an earlier University of Wisconsin-Extension study performed by Robert N. Dick, Bruce H. Murray, and Ayse Somersan titled Economic Effects of Storefront Improvement: A Report of a 1986 Study of Wisconsin Retail Businesses Which Had Made Façade Improvements during the Previous Five Years.

Contact: Bill Ryan, Center For Community & Economic Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension
610 Langdon Street, Madison, WI 53703-1104

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