

Introduction

This study of the Downtown Temperance area was undertaken to revitalize the downtown, bring in more businesses to serve the surrounding community, and create a vibrant community center.

Economic development means more than just bringing in new businesses. First, the community needs to develop a sense of pride and spirit in Temperance. Temperance should be seen as one large family, with the community as a common base. Economic development takes a large amount of personal work and coordination. This includes coordination in generating activities to get people to Temperance, as well as making sure there are things for people to buy once they arrive.

The Downtown Temperance Economic Development Study consists of three elements:

- A proposed Business Mix
- A Visual Improvements Plan
- And a Marketing Plan

During the planning process, several means of public participation were included. First, downtown business owners were surveyed to find out what their issues and priorities were, and what types of businesses they would like to see more of in the downtown area. Next, a written survey was mailed to all residents within a ½ mile radius of the downtown. This survey included questions on where people shop, and what would like to see in Downtown Temperance. Finally, a community visioning session was held at Carr Park, to give residents a chance to voice their opinions on how the downtown could be improved visually.

Along with the public input, the goal of these elements is to answer the following questions:

- What mix of businesses can be supported by Temperance residents?
- Will residents shop in Temperance? What kinds of businesses would they patronize?

- How can the community attract and keep businesses?
- How can the appearance of the downtown be improved?

Business Mix

Downtown Temperance's Niche

Downtown Temperance should function as a quaint social center for the community. It should also be a more vibrant commercial area that fulfills a range of daily commercial needs for surrounding residents. The first priority for recruiting businesses for the downtown should be to get businesses to serve the local market first. A mix of residential and commercial uses should be allowed within the downtown area; a resident population will add to the market for downtown businesses.

In order for Downtown Temperance to succeed, it must have a mix of businesses that serves two populations. First, the businesses must provide essential services to residents of the surrounding neighborhoods; this is the highest priority. It is these residents that will sustain the downtown area on a daily basis. Second, the downtown area should provide unique shopping and entertainment opportunities for residents of Bedford Township and beyond, including day vacationers to Lake Erie.

To accomplish this, we are recommending a variety of businesses for the downtown area, including retail, eating establishments, entertainment, and recreation.

Retail Businesses and Services

We recommend the following types of retail businesses to better serve the daily/weekly needs of residents within the ½ mile radius of downtown:

- grocery store (the EDC will need to recruit a new one to replace Foodtown)
- drug store (keeping the existing Crary Drug, and possibly expanding it)
- bookstore
- clothing store (small, independently owned)

- general store or country store
- hardware store (renovated Hachman’s or another small hardware store)

Specialty retail establishments, including the following, should be included in the downtown business mix to provide interesting shopping opportunities for residents of the entire township:

- Antiques
- Crafts/yarn shop
- Clothier
- Specialty bookstore
- Music/record shop
- Card store/gift shop
- Video rental

Service and Eating Establishments

Currently, downtown Temperance has a large proportion of professional offices, including a doctor’s office, chiropractor, lawyers, insurance, and others. Conversely, there are very few dining opportunities and basic services that people need. While these businesses do not sell goods, they provide important functions, including places to gather, in a diverse business district. To help strike a better balance, we recommend the following be included in the business mix for Downtown Temperance:

Services	Eating Establishments
Library Branch	Independent restaurants that serve dinner
Post office or mail drop box	Ice cream parlor
Gym/workout facility	Bakery
	Coffee house
	Tea Room
	Deli/Sandwich Shop

Entertainment

To serve the surrounding neighborhoods, we recommend that recreational and entertainment facilities be provided to bring people into the downtown in the evenings and on weekends. Examples include:

- Carr Park
 - Better sidewalks and trails to connect neighborhoods to the park and community center there.
 - Inclusion of baseball/softball fields/soccer fields
 - Creation of a small skate park for skateboarders
 - Creation of a winter ice skating rink
 - Expansion of the existing community center to facilitate club meetings and events
 - Lighting to facilitate evening events
 - A band shell, for school bands and concerts
 - A dog/pet park
- Restaurants that serve dinner, perhaps including a small dinner theatre
- Small movie house
- Comedy club
- Indoor recreation, such as a bowling alley or pool hall
- Use of the Temperance Road Elementary School for community events, movies, plays, and club meetings

Downtown Temperance could be an ideal setting for community events for the Township. These events would serve to introduce people to the downtown area, give them a chance to eat and shop, and to provide a place for friends and family to gather. This would serve to foster the small town feel that many residents indicated was important to them in their surveys. The Carr Park Community Center is currently underutilized, and should be expanded/improved so that it can be used for club meetings and other events. A sample of possible events may include:

- Farmer's Market
- Festivals
- Downtown Clean-Up Days
- Art fairs
- Parades
- Soap-box derbies
- Movie nights (with movies shown outdoors, at a venue such as Temperance Road Elementary School or Carr Park)
- Sidewalk sales/midnight madness sales
- Outdoor concerts

Visual Improvements Plan

After collecting data from the field, from business owners, and from area residents we have come up with a list of actions to revitalize Downtown Temperance. Not all actions are costly, and many don't involve a physical renovation, but rather a new strategy from coordinating business activities to better serving the region. We have placed the actions under a priority classification for both a logical procession of events and importance of immediate action. For example, while the sidewalks need immediate attention infill of new buildings can be an opportunity down the line.

Priority 1: Create a merchants' association. Put together a merchants association of all interested parties. Meet monthly to coordinate how new renovations will take place, and have a unified voice to the Township. Coordination involves parking, easements, and sidewalks first. Later the association may deal with issues such as snow removal, landscaping and signage.

Priority 2: Major Construction – Streetscape

The downtown area should be divided into zones of priority and construction should occur at one zone at a time. The list of repairs follows a logical order of construction; for example you don't want to put sidewalks in before you are done repaving the driveways.

- a) Parking lots & Driveways – add community parking lots, remove additional old driveways and repair specific shared driveways.
- b) Sidewalk – sidewalk should be 5 feet wide, and should run from Carr Park to the former Foodtown, and from the Fire Station to Hackman's. A narrower sidewalk of 3 feet should be provided within a ½ mile radius of the downtown, see priority 3
- c) Repair Street – many portions of the Lewis and Temperance are in bad condition, and should be renovated or re-poured. For widths of the new street and how far back the sidewalk should be placed, see the Streetscape Designs map and the downtown streetscapes.
- d) Add on-street parking with landscaped islands.

- e) Bike lane paving – the bike lane should be 3 feet wide and run on the west side of Lewis. There should be a gradient change between the bike lane and traffic lanes in order to keep drivers out of the bike lane.
- f) Vegetative buffer- the vegetative buffer varies in width from 3 to 6 feet depending on existing setbacks and character
- g) Crosswalks- crosswalk should be placed at the intersection of Lewis and Temperance, across Carr Park and in front of the former Foodtown.

Priority 3:

Sidewalks should be created or repaired to lead into the surrounding residential and mixed development street around the downtown area to encourage walking and convenience shopping.

- a) Create sidewalk connections to surrounding neighborhoods.
- b) Improve connections to parking lots in rear of establishments
- c) Public Signage & Street Lighting

Priority 4:

- a) Carr Park improvements and additional activities
- b) Street Furniture
- c) Gathering areas
- d) Infill, renovations and conversions
- e) Zoning Recommendations:
- f) Annual activities to enhance the identity and community feel of Temperance

Marketing Plan

To recruit and retain the types of businesses described in the Business Mix portion of this plan, the EDC requires an aggressive and specific marketing plan. This document will provide the EDC with a recommended approach to funding downtown improvements, improving the environment for existing businesses and bringing in new businesses.

Township Commitment

While responsibility for the deterioration of Downtown Temperance does not fall solely on any party, we believe

that the Township must make the first step to repairing the damage. The area is in desperate need of some community pride, and an investment by the Township can show Temperance that it is a valuable part of the Bedford community.

Tasks for the Township should include:

- determine what role Temperance will play in the larger Township community
- determine what kind of center for community activities Temperance will be
- establish a working relationship with Downtown Temperance business owners
- work with downtown business owners on code enforcement and the development of new zoning ordinance language
- provide matching funding and technical assistance for grants

Downtown Merchant's Association

One of the keys to the success of this downtown revival is downtown businesses having pride in their community. A Downtown Merchant's association can help, by coordinating clean-up efforts and other projects. Another important function of the Merchant's Association will be to provide a common voice for downtown Temperance when communicating with the Township.

Potential duties for the merchant's association should include:

- Recruiting new businesses
 - Trade shows and other forums and present the vision for Downtown Temperance
 - Recruit investors or new businesses that will complement existing businesses
- Communication with Township Officials
 - Negotiate funding for improvements, like sidewalks and landscaping
 - Work with the Township to apply for grants for downtown improvements
 - Communicate code enforcement needs, and help with monitoring (for example, reporting blight and building code violations)
 - Work with Township officials and attend meetings regarding new ordinances
 - Communicate the needs and priorities of downtown business owners to the Township
- Securing Funding for Downtown Improvements
 - Prepare grant applications, in coordination with Township Officials
 - Work with local banks to provide low interest/no down payment loans or revolving loans for building purchase assistance
 - Maintain relationships with state and federal officials in agencies with grant monies available
 - Research other available funding sources
- Creating a forum for businesses to cooperate
 - Create common advertising, inviting people to shop Downtown Temperance
 - Web page
 - Discount coupon book
 - Ads in local papers

- Sidewalk sales or “Midnight Madness” sales
- Establish clean-up days
 - Offer incentives, like discounts, for community groups to participate
- Provide incentives for businesses to maintain their property or add visual improvements (i.e. - an award program for best landscaping, recognition in local newspapers, etc.)

Funding Sources for Downtown Improvements

Several sources of funding will need to be tapped in order to implement the recommendations in this Plan. The following are sources of funding that are potentially available to Downtown Temperance.

TEA-21:

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) divides the projects into 4 categories, two of which are applicable to Downtown Temperance: Transportation Aesthetics and Non-Motorized Facilities

Façade Grants

A façade grant program could be set up by the Township to help Downtown Temperance businesses improve the exterior appearance of their buildings. The goal of these programs is to provide an incentive for business owners to make exterior improvements within designated business districts.

Eligible activities for this program may include:

- Redesign and construction of exterior facades
- Signage redesign, removal or construction
- Exterior painting and cleaning
- Window treatments
- Doors
- Roof repairs
- Parking lots
- Murals or awnings

State Administered CDBG

The mission of this program is to develop viable communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and by expanding economic opportunities.

Among the list of eligible activities under the state administered CDBG program are construction of streets, neighborhood centers, recreation facilities, and other public works. Funding is also available for planning activities and assistance to non-profit entities.

Rural Business Enterprise Grants

The Rural Business Cooperative Service of the USDA makes grants to public bodies to finance and facilitate development of small private business enterprises.

Grants can be used for the following activities:

- Technical assistance (marketing studies, feasibility studies, business plans, etc.)
- Creating a revolving loan fund to provide loans to small and emerging businesses to purchase equipment, working capital or real estate
- Construction of a building for a business incubator for small and emerging businesses

Rural Housing Service Grants

The Rural Housing Service of the USDA makes grants to public bodies for the provision of community facilities in rural areas. Community facilities should be broad-based and provide long-lasting services and benefits to the entire community.

Grants can be used for:

- Cultural or educational facilities
 - Libraries
 - Museums
 - Schools
 - All-purpose buildings
- Public buildings and improvements
 - Day care centers

- Community centers
- Domestic violence centers
- Public safety facilities

Downtown Development Authority

A Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is established to promote economic development in a designated downtown area. Once a DDA is formed, it may use its bonding capacity and taxes captured through new construction (tax increment financing) to help finance public and public-private developments that encourage the economic vitality of the downtown area.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Description

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has grant funds available from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for development proposals for public outdoor recreation purposes. Possible projects (which may be appropriate for Carr Park) that would be eligible include:

- Picnic areas
- Ball fields
- Tennis courts
- Hiking trails

