

## Middletown DRI

### Revitalization Strategies and Potential Projects

#### A. Support and Strengthen Arts and Cultural Uses.

1. Redevelop 14-16 South Street Parking Lot

The site opposite the Paramount Theatre has been identified as a potential location for municipal parking lot. Plans were previously considered by the City. This project proposes to develop a 2-level 100-150 space parking lot. The garage would have a liner of ground floor retail/restaurant use along South Street, connecting to the TD Bank building to support a more vibrant retail atmosphere at the Paramount Theatre.

2. Incentive Program for Public Art

Explore potential for percent for public art program in which a percentage of bonded City capital programs is allocated for public art (similar to Rockland County program). Coordinate with Orange County Arts Council to publicize opportunities for creation of public art.

Other Projects:

Artist Live/Work Spaces: As part of downtown zoning code revisions, allow artist live/work units (see Project #12).

#### B. Make downtown a more attractive, walkable and functional place for residents, employees and visitors.

1. Facade and Signage Improvement Program

Identify funding opportunities for facade improvements, including partner organizations and possible fund-matching rates. May include low-interest financing through a revolving loan program for businesses to upgrade their storefronts. This program could be partnered with grants to incentive investment. The program should also address enforcement to ensure existing storefronts are in compliance with standards in the City's building code.

2. Downtown Wayfinding Signage Program

Develop a seamless signage system with enhanced pedestrian-scale signage, gateway signs, and signs directing automobile traffic to and from parking and major venues (i.e. the Paramount Theater) and institutions (i.e. SUNY Orange and Touro Medical College). Key elements of the wayfinding signage system include uniform, attractive, geographically oriented maps, signs and kiosks.

3. Streetscape Master Plan

The master plan provides a framework to facilitate capital improvements that will enhance neighborhood identity, pedestrian safety, and economic vitality. The Plan would inventory and analyze streetscape conditions, identify areas of improvement and establish a prioritized program of phased improvements. Identified recommendations would include improvements that address: complete streets, lighting, green infrastructure, signage and wayfinding, gateways and parks. Special treatments should be considered for the Heritage Trail within the downtown area. The plan should also look at improvements to open spaces (e.g. Festival Square, Jerry's Park, Run 4 Downtown Park) and linkages between these and the Heritage Trail and Skate Park

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### 4. Streetscape Improvements

Funds to implement streetscape improvements. This may include sidewalk, landscaping, signage, lighting, and green infrastructure (i.e. at James Street parking lot). Enhanced crosswalk treatments should be considered at priority locations. Enhanced signage and streetscape should also be considered along the Heritage Trail in the downtown area.

### 5. Stage II improvements at Erie Way Park

The City is in the process of transforming a vacant property behind City Hall into a skate park. The skate park will take up 6,000 to 8,000 square feet of the 13,000 square foot parcel. A second phase of the park's development would include space for a green market, potential event space, improved connections to the Heritage Trail, and some public parking.

## C. Support outreach and marketing efforts that promote Downtown Middletown as destination of choice for students, small business owners, shoppers and young professionals.

### 6. Downtown Branding program

Create a comprehensive branding strategy for downtown Middletown. This would include implementing wayfinding and marketing devices such as signage and maps as part of a larger branding strategy for the Downtown. The program will include a new brand (i.e. logo and tagline), with a promotional program to change perceptions of the city from an underperforming area to a vital, exciting and dynamic downtown with unique opportunities to live, work and grow a business.

### 7. Improve Capacity of BID

Expand upon BID capacity by increasing support, supplementing its budget in order to leverage connections between business owners, potential employees and future entrepreneurs. Funds could be used to support enhanced communications, more effective marketing materials and community events, and increased staffing. Increased BID capacity will help to:

- i. Leverage social media to connect downtown businesses with potential customers.
- ii. Develop and regularly update contact lists of all business owners in the BID.
- iii. Support the growth of culture and entertainment offerings to make the Downtown a center for live, work, and play activities.
- iv. Build capacity and outreach to minority communities through institutions and organizations.
- v. Work with the Orange County IDA to recruit small businesses and start-up companies (i.e. through their Accelerator program)
- vi. Support the development of training programs through connections with local institutions (i.e. SUNY Orange)

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- D. Support redevelopment of underutilized properties and the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings with technical and financial resources.**
- 8. Woolworth Building Redevelopment**  
Support redevelopment of site and attract tenants. Consider potential use connected with SUNY Orange (e.g. hospitality training facility) and/or Orange County Accelerator program.
  - 9. Retail Readiness Program**  
Reduce the number of properties with underutilized ground floor spaces. May include a program to assist property owners to get spaces to a “move-in ready” standard or to reduce the initial investment required by small businesses seeking to locate downtown.
  - 10. Support Development of “Shovel-ready” Sites**  
Identify key underutilized sites, and support efforts to make them “shovel-ready” sites in order to lower the barrier to entry for new businesses. May include the adaptive reuse of key historically significant and unique buildings (e.g. Armory, O&W Station, etc.). May also include an area-wide assessment of brownfield sites to identify issues and opportunities with site re-use.
  - 11. Create Downtown Historic District and Support Historic Designation of Buildings**  
Support the listing of buildings eligible for the National Register, which would allow the use of tax credits for revitalization projects. Study the potential for a downtown Middletown National Register district.
  - 12. Downtown Zoning Code Revisions**  
This project will review and update zoning code revisions for the Downtown area. The zoning revisions will include language to more effectively implement the goals and objectives of downtown revitalization as supported by the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the code should be revised to support a broad array of uses in the Downtown and remove potential barriers to redevelopment. The code may include design standards that provide developers and architects with guidance for the design and construction of buildings and pedestrian connections. The zoning code should also look at the provision of work/live and workforce housing, allowance of outdoor dining, and green building regulations. The zoning code revisions may be completed as part of a city-wide Comprehensive Plan update or a standalone downtown zoning study.
- E. Bring residents to Downtown Middletown through improved housing opportunities for existing and new residents.**
- 13. Student Housing**  
Encourage student housing in the Downtown by working with Touro College, SUNY Orange and Fei Tian Academy and College.
  - 14. Homeownership Program**  
Strengthen and support programs that encourage homeownership in and around downtown Middletown.  
  
**Other Projects**  
Housing Incentive Program: Zoning code revisions to incentivize development of upper-floor apartments (See Project #12)

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**F. Build connections to local institutions and regional and neighborhood resources to engage students, faculty and staff as a part of the Downtown's success**

**15. Heritage Trail Connections and Gateway Enhancements**

Funding for design and implementation of gaps in Heritage Trail within downtown area. This may include supplemental streetscape, signage, lighting and landscape treatments. A gateway kiosk should be created at the Woolworth Building to direct people from the trail to downtown attractions.

**16. Middletown Bus Loop**

Create a bus loop to connect institutional uses (Fei Tian, MCC, Touro College and SUNY Orange) to downtown area and to shopping opportunities elsewhere in the area. The bus loop should also connect public schools to community activities and provide programs and amenities that tie in with public schools

**17. Farmers' Market**

Support the development of the farmers' market adjacent to the skateboard park. This could potentially include a small structure to enable the market to operate year-round and to hold other downtown events.

**18. Middletown Community Campus (MCC) Master Plan**

The MCC Master Plan will evaluate the long-term use of the campus, along with a plan for investments that will help redevelop the site. The MCC Master Plan will provide a strategic plan with a capital improvement program building, infrastructure, and open space improvements. The plan should also include an assessment and inventory of brownfield sites.

**19. Connections to Middletown School District Facilities**

Improve connections with school district resources (e.g. community gardens, linkages among school recreational facilities)

**B. Provide infrastructure that supports existing and new business**

**19. Parking Management Plan**

Study that will address the parking facilities in the downtown area, including parking needs and inventory as well as strategies to address key issues such as capacity during events and peak periods. The objective of the study will be to make the existing parking facilities more efficient, promote non-vehicular transportation, and improve the safety and function of vehicular circulation.

**20. Public Wi-Fi**

Provide free wireless Internet access in key public spaces.