



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN



Star, Idaho

2011

Adopted by City of Star
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COMPASS
Idaho Department of Commerce

And to the countless others that completed surveys, provided public input, and attended the planning workshops—*thank you!*



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INTRODUCTION

This Downtown Revitalization Plan presents a multi-faceted program for rejuvenating the central core of Star, Idaho, by identifying physical improvements, beautification efforts, marketing strategies, an implementation plan, and potential funding sources. The vision of this plan is to establish downtown Star as a unique, vibrant and accessible retail center that serves area residents and entices visitors to stop.

Public input shaped the plan through business and community questionnaires, surveys mailed to city water and sewer users, summary newsletters, and by a series of five public meetings.

This plan is intended to serve as a long-range working document for guiding local downtown revitalization efforts that mutually benefit the City of Star, property owners, business operators, residents and visitors. The plan also includes more immediate downtown revitalization ideas and improvements that can be implemented in the near future and provides the project information and preliminary data needed to seek funding for streetscape improvements from funding sources such as the Community Development Block Grant program, administered by the Idaho Department of Commerce.

Like any planning document, the effectiveness of the efforts summarized here will only be realized through dogged implementation of the identified priorities and continued pursuit of details by local elected leaders and community volunteers. This plan is intended to provide a foundation and direction for that pursuit, and to act as a “living” document that can be refined and augmented as implementation progresses.

The commissioning of this plan by the City of Star advances several aspects of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. A summary of the intersection points between the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the Star Downtown Revitalization Plan is provided in the Appendix to this document, but the principle Comprehensive Plan policy fulfilled by this plan is within the Comprehensive Plan’s Economic Development section and is summarized here:

“An excellent opportunity exists to turn downtown Star into a viable and appealing shopping, civic, residential and entertainment area.”

- Star Comprehensive Plan

Policy: Develop a Downtown Revitalization Plan¹

- Strengthen the appearance and commercial development within the City's Central Business District / Main Street area.
- Work with ITD on the development of SH 44, which divides the CBD in order to determine the locations of sidewalks, trees, planters and outdoor seating.

STAR AND ITS DOWNTOWN

Location

The City of Star, Idaho, is located approximately sixteen miles northwest of Boise, Idaho's capitol city, six miles west of the City of Eagle, seven miles east of Middleton, nine miles north of Nampa, and sixteen miles south of Emmett at approximate coordinates 43°41'39"N 116°29'25"W and at 2470' elevation. The city limits of Star straddle two counties, Ada and Canyon, although Star's downtown, its Central Business District, is entirely located within Ada County.

Brief history

Star was originally founded in 1863, one mile east of its current location, but was left unnamed until the early 1870s when a star nailed to the wooden door of the area's first school house became a landmark synonymous with the town.²

In 1905, city limits reaching four miles in all directions were platted and Star was incorporated. The city remained incorporated until 1929 when the residents chose to dissolve the town's incorporation to avoid increased levied taxes to pay for paving a portion of what was to become State Street / State Highway 44, the principal roadway through the heart of Star. The City of Star was re-incorporated in 1997, making it the newest incorporated city in the state.³

¹ Star Comprehensive Plan, pg. 4-11

² *Boise Weekly*, August 25, 2010.

³ City of Star Web site – www.staridaho.org/history.html



1915 Boise City Directory

Key assets

The unique aspects of a community, its history, arts, recreational opportunities, and lifestyle can be a catalyst for attracting visitors and businesses. Travelers are increasingly interested in visiting destinations that can provide unique educational and entertainment opportunities. Business owners often consider these “quality of life” elements when seeking to relocate or establish a business. Although Star does not yet have an organized historical or arts commission to develop and promote its cultural assets, a wealth of unique assets exist in the area. Fostering and visibly celebrating these aspects will attract visitors and promote business.

Planning workshop participants and survey respondents identified several key assets that residents and visitors to Star enjoy. Those attractions most often noted include:

- Rural feel with metropolitan access: Star’s relative small size provides a small-town, rural, feel while its proximity to Boise, Meridian and Nampa allows for easy access to the amenities of larger cities.
- Boise River / Star River Walk: The Boise River flows through Star less than one mile south of its downtown core and offers varied outdoor recreational opportunities such as fishing, floating, swimming, walking, jogging, biking and wildlife viewing. The Star River Walk, a community effort guided by the Land Trust of Treasure Valley to create a recreational pathway system and open space areas along the Boise River accessible near Star Road and South Main Street in Star, is in the process of development and is envisioned to eventually connect with the extensive Eagle/Boise green belt system.
- Heron Rookery: Along the newly established Star River Walk is a cluster of trees used by Great Blue Herons as a nesting area. Efforts to preserve this area yet provide pedestrian access are a component of the Star River Walk Plan and will offer a unique bird watching opportunity.
- Star Parks & Recreation: In 2010, the City of Star established the Star Parks and Recreation Department in an effort to provide varied recreational activities for youth and families. A wide

“Star needs to create a compacted City center that functions well commercially and possesses a strong identity through its numerous historic buildings.”

-Star Comprehensive Plan



Meridian’s Generations Plaza includes outdoor interpretive signage celebrating community history.

variety of activities are offered, from summer soccer and baseball to winter bowling and skiing, and more. Participation in these activities has been remarkably high. The City of Star has also acquired property on the southeast corner of the intersection of Star Road and Floating Feather Road as a new public park.

- Farms and ranches: While development pressure has rapidly decreased the amount of Star area property in agricultural production, the agricultural foundation of Star's history and economy is still evident, even within the city's downtown area. For example, between the downtown core of Star and the Boise River, livestock still grazes on small parcels of pasture, and farm-fresh eggs can be purchased. To preserve the agricultural aspects of Star, the City should consider adopting farmland preservation policies.
- Historic Buildings: In 1991, Planmakers Urban Design and Planning conducted an inventory of Star's historic assets at the request of the Ada County Historic Preservation Council (see appendices). At that time, Planmakers identified thirty-one historic buildings and sites in Star, mostly located near the city's center and illustrating Queen Anne, Craftsman, and National style architecture. Boundaries of a Historic District were also proposed, which, if established, would encompass much of Star's Central Business District. This density of historic buildings within a downtown core area is an asset that the City of Star should carefully consider efforts to preserve and promote by formalizing a historic district and/or establishing a citizen-lead historic preservation organization.
- Oregon Trail: One of the later branches of the Oregon Trail passed through Star, just south of the present-day State Street / State Highway 44.⁴ An opportunity exists to utilize this well-known historic connection to educate residents and visitors about Star's history and present-day attractive qualities.



This 1937 star-patterned quilt by the Star Christian Ladies Aid was on display during Star's 2010 Hometown Celebration and includes names of people who lived in the area at the time.

Study area

The focus of this plan is Star's Central Business District (see figure 1) and the primary streets connecting the Central Business District to the Star River Walk, a recreational area along the Boise river

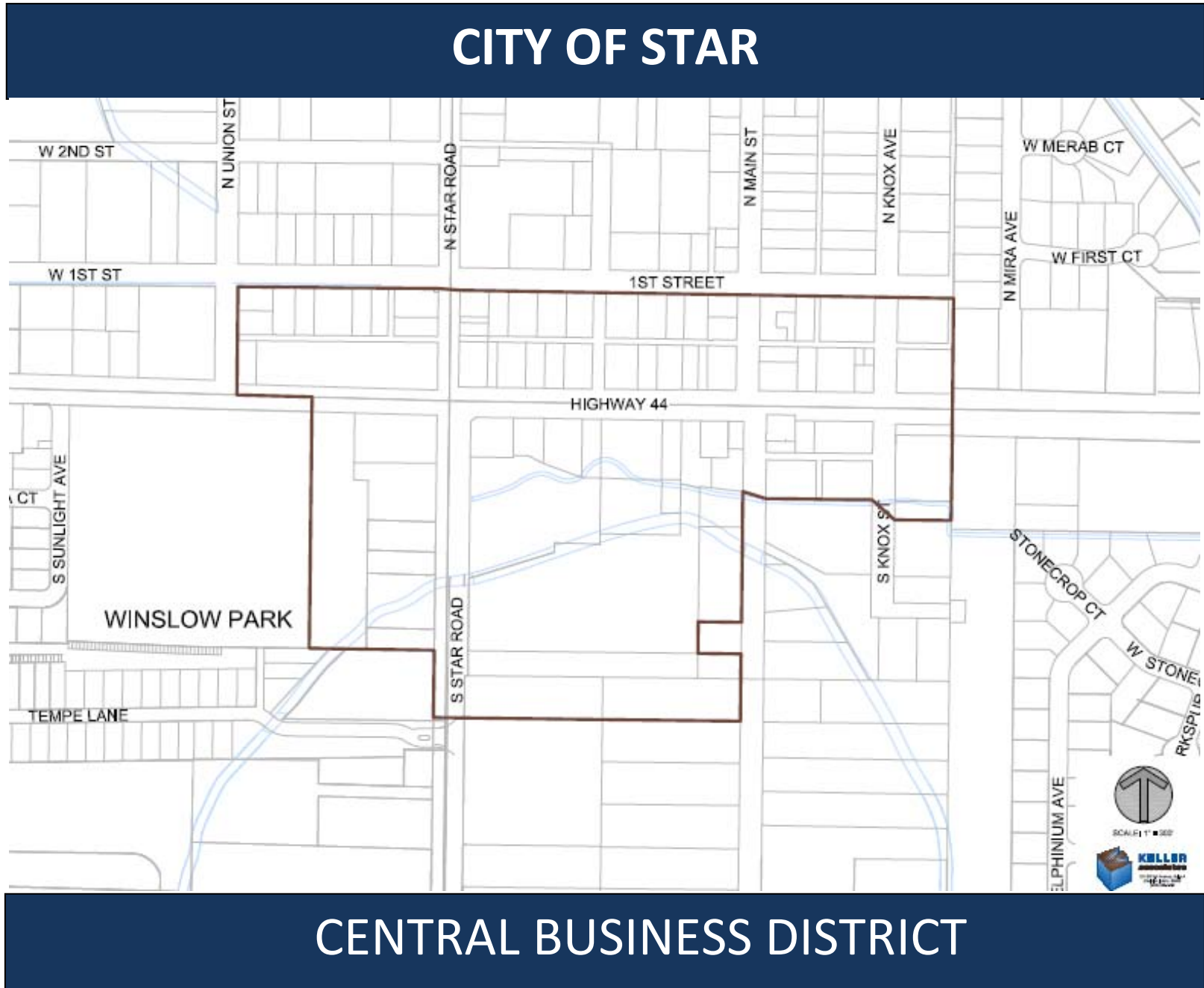
⁴ Star Comprehensive Plan, section 11-2.

that is located approximately one mile to the south of the Central Business District. The City of Star's Comprehensive Plan describes the Central Business District as an area in which "commercial, retail, civic, private offices with housing on the upper floors would be located."⁵

Existing conditions within the study area are described beginning on page 11.

⁵ Star Comprehensive Plan, section 5-5.

Figure 1: Star's Central Business District



Project objectives

The City of Star and the Star Economic Development Committee tasked the consulting team of Sage Community Resources and Keller Associates to:

- Define the vision, goals, action steps, costs and concept designs for streetscape enhancement, beautification projects, and marketing strategies needed to create a vibrant and active downtown core.
- Connect pedestrian and bicycle access between downtown and the Star River Walk along the Boise River.
- Inspire community involvement and commitment to implement revitalization strategies.
- Conduct the documentation and research needed to be eligible and prepared for funding investment.



Participants at one of the five open house meetings were held to collect public input into this downtown revitalization plan.

Planning process / public input

As is common in small communities, Star has a handful of community volunteers that have worked diligently for years on various community efforts. To help broaden the volunteer base and involvement of area residents and business owners in revitalization efforts, the planning process was designed to be as inclusive as possible and encourage public involvement at every step.

Sage Community Resources facilitated a series of five public planning meetings, held every-other-month, January through September, 2010, with local elected officials, business operators, property owners, residents and supporters of downtown Star. This group was tasked to advise the City Council by prioritizing measures to effectuate the goal of revitalization. The planning meetings were open to the public and announced via the local newspaper, postings at City Hall, and emails to contact lists.

Additionally, this revitalization plan was informed by members of the public through:

- Written and online surveys of Star business owners and community members (see Conditions Within the Study Area, page 11)
- A driving tour and field trip to neighboring communities to see the functionality of road configuration and streetscape amenity options in use.
- Volunteers from the community photographing and documenting the existing downtown streetscape and property conditions.
- Area newspapers, *The Independent*, featured articles about Star’s downtown planning process and streetscape design options.
- The Star City Council held two workshops with residents of South Main Street to gain input and support for improvement measures to connect downtown to Star River Walk.



Participants in a driving tour field trip to neighboring communities review sidewalk treatments and streetscape amenities in downtown Boise.

The Star downtown planning team held its final public meeting in September, 2010, after successfully creating and prioritizing strategies to improve the pedestrian safety, attractiveness and business climate in downtown Star. These actions are presented in the Revitalization Plan section of this plan (page 21).

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Economically, the City of Star is challenged by its rapid increase in population. Once supported primarily by an agriculturally-based economy, Star is shifting to a more suburban community with a large number of the workforce commuting to surrounding urban business centers. Farming-related agricultural activity now accounts for less than 1 percent of the City’s labor force, while the largest job category is the educational, social service, and health care industry. Close proximity to the major urban areas of Boise and Nampa not only creates a workforce of commuters, it also challenges local retail and service businesses as much of their consumer base does not shop or conduct its business

locally. Economically, this results in significant dollars flowing out of Star's economy in commuter transportation costs and non-local consumer expenditures.

Population

The population at the time of Star's incorporation in 1998 was 648. The 2000 U.S. Census calculated that City's population had grown to 1795, a growth rate of 277 percent in two years. 2010 Census city-specific data has not yet been released, but a state-wide survey indicates that Idaho grew by 21.1 percent from 2000 to 2010. If that growth percentage is applied to the City of Star, then the estimated 2010 population would be 2174. However, projections indicate that the population of Star has likely increased by much more since urban and sub-urban areas often experience a higher growth rate than the state average.

Population projections provided in the City's Comprehensive Plan illustrate rapid growth rate expectations with an estimated 2010 population ranging from 5229 to 8956.⁶ The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimates Star's 2009 population at 4332.⁷ The Community Planning Organization of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) estimates that Star's population in 2009 was 5980.⁸

Star's largest population groups at the time of the 2000 Census were young children (under 5) and adults ages 25 to 34 with a median age of 28.4.⁹ This indicates a primary population group of families with young children.

Employment

2009 data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey indicate that a civilian workforce of 1954 call Star home. The largest percentage of which work within the educational, social service, and health care industry while agricultural related industry workers now make up less than one percent.



Sully's, a new restaurant in downtown Star, is an example of business scale and building design preferred by downtown planning participants.

⁶ Star Comprehensive Plan, section 2.1

⁷ American FactFinder, U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov.

⁸ COMPASS, www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/demo-current.htm

⁹ 2000 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov.

INDUSTRY		
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,954	1,954
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	12	0.6%
Construction	233	11.9%
Manufacturing	175	9.0%
Wholesale trade	84	4.3%
Retail trade	276	14.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	64	3.3%
Information	23	1.2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	176	9.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	262	13.4%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	333	17.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	96	4.9%
Other services, except public administration	106	5.4%
Public administration	114	5.8%

Figure 2: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey data estimating City of Star number and percentages of workforce by employment sector.

The 2009 estimated unemployment rate among Star's workforce at 6.7 percent¹⁰ was well below the Idaho state average in 2009 of 8.0 percent¹¹. Of those employed, the great majority (83.5 percent) drove to their place of work alone, 8 percent carpoled, and less than 0.5 percent took public transportation. Among those who commuted to work, it took them on average 30.1 minutes to get to work.

COMMUTING TO WORK		
Workers 16 years and over	1,946	1,946
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	1,624	83.5%
Car, truck, or van -- carpoled	160	8.2%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0	0.0%
Walked	25	1.3%
Other means	0	0.0%
Worked at home	137	7.0%

Figure3: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey data estimating City of Star the 2009 number and percentage of commuters by transportation mode.

¹⁰ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

¹¹ Idaho Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

Personal incomes

The median income of households in Star city was \$62,022 in 2009. Eighty-six percent of the households received earnings and 15 percent received retirement income other than Social Security. Twenty-two percent of the households received Social Security. The average income from Social Security was \$17,271. These income sources are not mutually exclusive; that is, some households received income from more than one source.

In 2009, 7 percent of people were in poverty. Ten percent of related children under 18 were below the poverty level, compared with 6 percent of people 65 years old and over. Four percent of all families and 16 percent of families with a female householder and no husband present had incomes below the poverty level.

Housing

In 2009, the City of Star was estimated to have a total of 1,600 housing units, 8 percent of which were vacant. Of the total housing units, 95 percent was in single-unit structures, 3 percent was in multi-unit structures, and 2 percent was mobile homes. Eighty-two percent of the housing units were built since 1990. The median monthly housing costs for mortgaged owners was \$1,448, non-mortgaged owners \$363, and renters \$1,063. Twenty-six percent of owners with mortgages, 3 percent of owners without mortgages, and 63 percent of renters in Star city spent 30 percent or more of household income on housing.¹²

CONDITIONS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

Teams of community volunteers, planning workshop participants, business owners, and community members helped to define the existing conditions of the study area and opportunities for improvement through on-site observation, written hard-copy and online survey responses, and public meetings. Overall, the data collected reflects that the study area:

¹² US Census Bureau, American Communities Survey

- Lacks basic infrastructure necessary for safe pedestrian movement between Star's downtown and the Star River Walk, a principle amenity.
- Sections of the existing sidewalk along State Street / Highway 44 in Star's Central Business District are cracked or crumbling, of minimal width, and lack consistent illumination, therefore failing to provide the safe and inviting downtown pedestrian experience desired by community members.
- Clean up of buildings and lots and landscape screening is needed to make downtown more attractive to visitors and shoppers.
- Entryway signage and distinct streetscape elements are needed to create a sense of arrival to Star's downtown and to distinguish the Central Business District as infill along State Street / Highway 55 between Star and Eagle continues.
- The existing four-lane traffic system along State Street / Highway 44 through downtown Star creates challenges for pedestrians to safely circulate and left-turning or parallel parking vehicles create traffic bottlenecks and congestion.

Business survey

In an effort to better understand Star's business operating climate and downtown improvement needs, a survey of business owners and operators was conducted by Sage Community Resources and the Star Economic Development Committee in the summer of 2010. The surveys, offered online and in hard copy form, were distributed via email to Star Economic Development Committee and Star Chamber of Commerce business contact lists and hand delivered to business locations by community volunteers. It is estimated that 200 business surveys were distributed. Twenty six (26) businesses responded, fifteen (15) via the online survey and eleven (11) returned hard copies of the survey, resulting in an estimated response rate of thirteen percent (13%).

The complete findings of the Star Business Survey can be found in the appendix of this report. A summary is provided here:

- Thirty-one percent (31%) of the respondents operate beauty/health services businesses, 23% are professional or financial services companies, 9% in the automotive industry, 9% operate home improvement or construction companies, and 9% are in the child care or education-related business. The remaining 19% include a variety of food and drink establishments, printing and office supply companies, technical services, and agricultural-related businesses.
- Approximately forty-three percent (43%) of the businesses own the building they occupy, 22% lease, 22% operate businesses from their homes, and 13% rent their business location.
- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the responding businesses have been open less than five years while 23% have been operating for ten years or more.
- Star businesses have felt the impact of the recent global economic downturn, experiencing deepening sales reductions in 2008 and 2009 (see figure 4).
- Business respondents noted that increasing the variety of goods offered by Star businesses (85%) and improving parking (81%) were important to downtown revitalization. Other top needs included improving cleanliness, building appearance and pedestrian access.

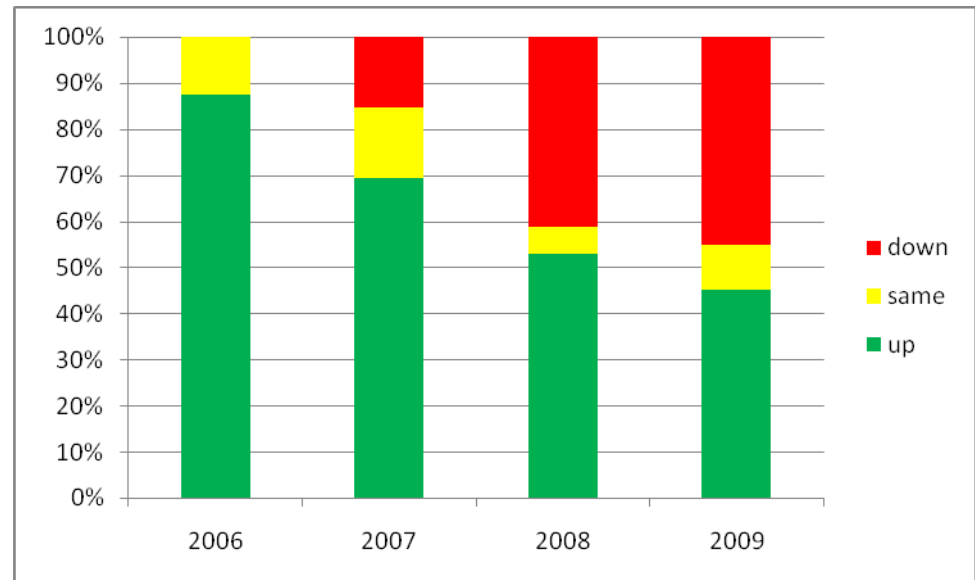


Figure 4: Graph illustrating Star business survey responses regarding business income by year as being up, the same as the previous year, or down.

Community survey

Three hundred and eighteen (318) Star community members made their opinions known in a survey direct-mailed to all residents within the local zip code in July, 2010, by the City of Star. Respondents were able to complete the survey by returning the mailed hard-copy to Star’s City Hall or by completing an identical online survey. Thirty percent (30%) of responses were received via the online survey.

A summary of the survey results is offered below. The complete findings are compiled in the appendix of this plan.

- When asked about their overall shopping experience in downtown Star, the attractiveness of downtown and its buildings was most often rated as “poor.”
- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of those that completed the survey do *most* of their shopping in towns other than Star. Eagle and Nampa were the most popular shopping destinations of Star residents.
- Increasing the variety of goods offered for sale in Star was the top suggestion for how to encourage downtown revitalization. Other leading suggestions included improving the appearance, cleanliness, and pedestrian access of downtown.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of survey participants use a motor vehicle to reach downtown Star, but once downtown, shoppers walked from store to store (45%) as often as they drove (45%).

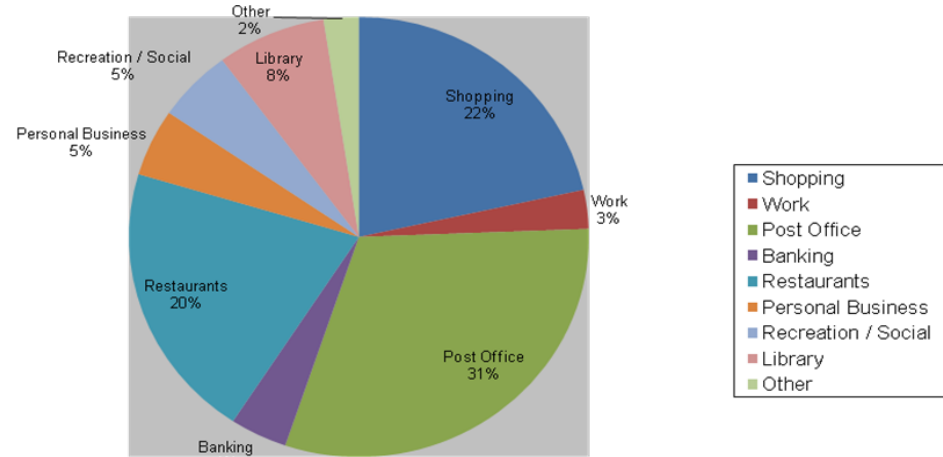


Figure 5: This chart illustrates the top reasons community survey respondents visit downtown Star. Among the top reasons are access to public services like the Post Office and Library, shopping, and eating at local restaurants.

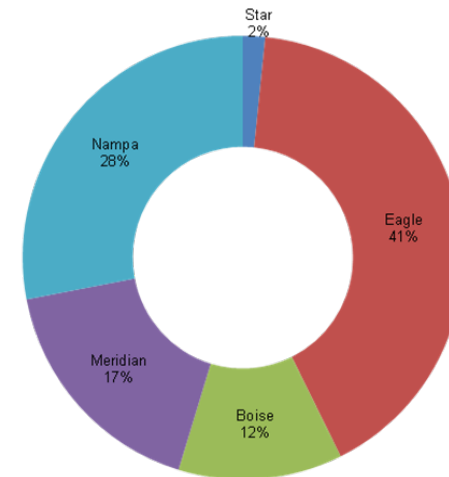


Figure 6: When asked “Where do you do MOST of your shopping?” 98% of Star Community Survey respondents shop in communities other than Star.

Ten percent (10%) bicycle around downtown Star.

- What brings people to downtown Star? Access to public services like the Post Office and Library was the top reason cited by survey respondents (39%) with shopping (22%) and dining (20%) listed as other top reasons.
- *On a positive note, survey responses indicated that there is a strong feeling of security when in downtown Star and that business operating hours in evenings and weekends are convenient.*
- *In response to the question “What do you feel is a visitor’s first impression of downtown Star?,” twenty-four percent (24%) of respondents felt the impression is “excellent” or “good,” while seventy-six percent (76%) stated “fair” or “poor.”*
- *When asked in the survey “What would you like downtown Star to look like?,” the most common response was a single word; “clean.”*

Community survey respondents also voiced their opinions regarding support or opposition to pedestrian improvements on several downtown area streets. Survey respondents indicated the top street improvement priorities are similar to those established by attendees of the Star downtown planning workshops:

- *Sidewalk/pathway improvements to State Street / Highway 44 within Star’s downtown core: Survey results*

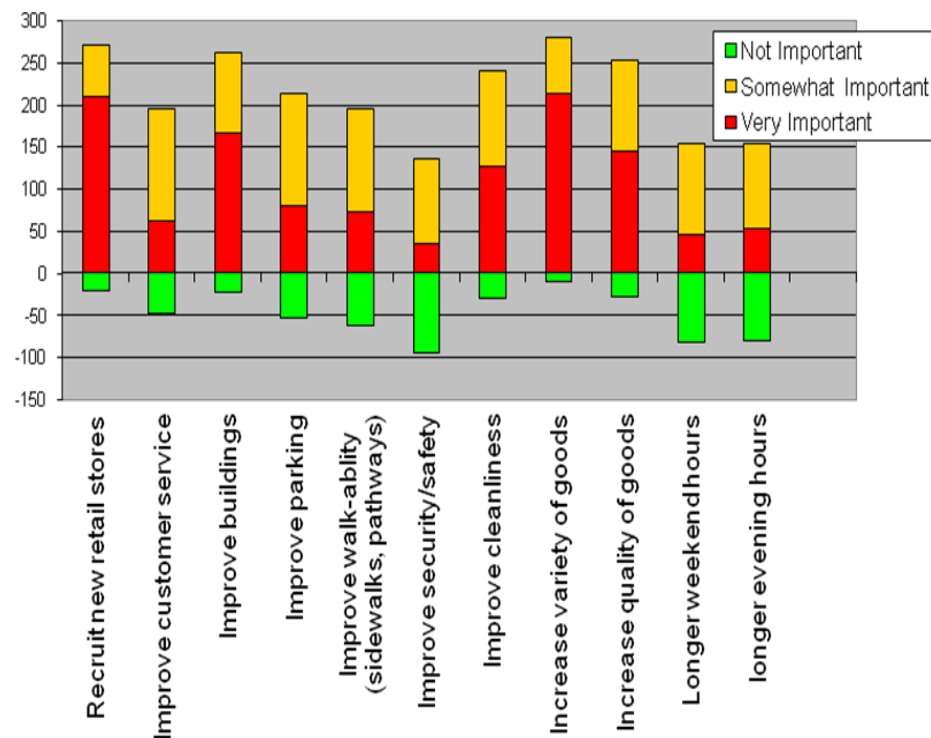


Figure 7: This graph illustrates results of Star Community Survey responses to the question, “What can be done to improve downtown Star?”

show seventy-four percent (74%) of respondents “support” or “strongly support” these improvements, while nineteen percent (19%) were neutral to the idea, and seven percent (7%) “opposed” or “strongly opposed” sidewalk improvements to this street.

- South Main Street sidewalk/pathway improvements from downtown to the Star River Walk along the Boise River: Survey results indicated sixty-seven (67%) of community members “support” or “strongly support” these improvements, while twenty-two percent (22%) were neutral to the idea, and eleven percent (11%) “opposed” or “strongly opposed” pedestrian improvements to this street.
- Sidewalk/pathway improvements to Star Road from the downtown core to the Boise River and Star River Walk: Survey results indicate sixty-three percent (63%) of respondents “support” or “strongly support” these improvements, while twenty-five percent (25%) were neutral to the idea, and twelve percent (12%) “opposed” or “strongly opposed” the idea.

Theme

No identified community design theme exists in Star at this time although the desire to establish a theme was expressed in surveys and community conversations. Communities, however, should strive to be authentic in their display of history and development of themes. Instead of creating a singularly “western” or “agricultural” look to the community as was suggested by some survey respondents, it is recommended that Star aesthetically treat the community like a quilt, a patchwork of interesting aspects that educate and celebrate the many contributions to the community history and design, but that, together, steered by design guidelines that articulate uniform height, setbacks, building proportions, landscaping requirements, etc. create an attractive appearance and rich facets of interest.

Slum and Blight inventory

As described in the Idaho Department of Commerce’s application materials for the Community Development Block Grant program, Slum and Blight or redevelopment areas are “geographic areas which contain a substantial number of deteriorating buildings and/or two or more deteriorated public facilities.” These areas “inhibit community growth and are considered to be an economic and social liability and may even be a health hazard.” In August, 2010, with guidance from Sage Community Resources, community volunteers conducted an inventory of the existing conditions of buildings and

streetscapes along the priority routes within the Star Central Business District and along the South Main Street corridor to the Star River Walk. The volunteers determined if the conditions within the area fit the definition of slum and blight. The volunteers photographed each building and property within the area, determined the condition of the property to be well-maintained, unsightly or dilapidated, and noted locations and conditions of pedestrian accessibility infrastructure such as sidewalks and streetlights. Full documentation of the inventory, with notes and photos for each property, is on file at the City of Star. The findings are summarized below and provided in spreadsheet form in the Appendix of this report.

To be eligible for Community Development Block Grant funding, the City of Star will need to adopt a Redevelopment Area resolution that describes the conditions of the area and defines its geographic boundaries. An example of a Redevelopment Area resolution is provided in the appendices to this document.

Slum & Blight inventory results summary

Buildings

Ninety-three (93) buildings were inventoried within Star's Central Business District and along South Main Street to the Star River Walk. Twenty (20) are commercial buildings, four are public facilities (City Hall, Fire Station, Library and Post Office), and sixty-nine (69) are residences. Of these, 69 buildings (49 residences; 4 public; 16 businesses) were determined to be well-maintained, 22 buildings (17 residences; 5 businesses) were determined to be unsightly, most needing repainting and/or clean up, and two residential buildings were determined to be dilapidated.

Lots

Star has a considerable amount of open lot space within the downtown core that could accommodate in-fill development, parking, civic gather places, and/or green space. While conducting the inventory, the volunteers noted the condition of open lot areas, sometimes cataloging large open areas as a single lot when, if referenced by ownership are actually multiple adjacent properties or individual vacant lots. The volunteers inventoried fifteen (15) large vacant lots within inventory area. Of these, thirteen (13) were noted as "unsightly" and needing removal of junk and/or basic landscaping (i.e. weeding and mowing). Two lots were considered "well-maintained."

Parking

It was difficult to accurately assess the number of existing parking spaces within Star’s inventory area since parking signage or striping was often nonexistent to establish parking patterns. For example, some businesses use vacant lots behind or adjacent to their businesses for parking that lack pavement and striping. Inventory documenters estimated that five hundred and forty-two (542) off-street parking spaces were available to patrons of businesses and public facilities within the inventory area (note that 200 of these accompany the LDS Church).

The City of Star does not currently provide any public parking areas within the downtown core, except for those on City Hall property. With the existing configuration of State Street / Highway 44, on-street parallel parking is permitted in most section of each street side. However, in order to accommodate enhanced pedestrian and bicycle accessibility within the existing right-of-way, the proposed streetscape reconfiguration of State Street / Highway 44 within the Central Business District would eliminate on-street parking, making the acquisition and construction of public parking areas essential to downtown revitalization.

Pedestrian accessibility

Pedestrian accessibility within the downtown core and connectivity to the Star River Walk is a primary concern for the City of Star. Currently, sidewalk exists along State Street / Highway 44 within the Central Business District. However, sidewalk width does not allow room for couples to walk abreast, street furniture, or additional landscaping. Small sections of sidewalk exist along South Star Road and South Main Street, however these sections have been installed as development has occurred and, in most cases, are non-contiguous. Of the estimated existing 3740 linear feet of sidewalk within the inventoried area, inventory volunteers determined that 810 linear feet (22%) to be cracked and/or crumbling.

Illumination

The City of Star has installed sixteen (16) decorative streetlights along State Street / Highway 44 and requires that new development along State Street / Highway 44 and Star Road include matching luminaries. However, the spacing and density of the existing lighting fails to provide adequate

“Sidewalks along highways, arterials and collectors should have wider widths to accommodate two couples abreast.”

-Star Comprehensive Plan, section 6.6.2

illumination for pedestrian safety along both sides of State Street / Highway 44 and the South Star Road and South Main Street connecting corridors to the Star River Walk are without street side illumination.



One of Star's sixteen existing decorative streetlights along State Street / Highway 44.

REVITALIZATION PLAN

Informed by extensive public input, a vision and strategies for revitalization of Star's downtown have been indentified and prioritized. These strategies represent a multi-faced approach to rejuvenate the downtown business climate by increasing pedestrian access and safety, creating connectivity between downtown and the Star River Walk, a nearby key recreational amenity, improving cleanliness and appearance, developing public gathering spaces, and marketing the community. Road cross sections for West State Street / Highway 44 within the Central Business District, and for South Star Road and South Main Street between the downtown core and Star River Walk are provided (see pages 27-30). Prioritized action steps for implementation of the elements described are also detailed (see page 40).

Vision

Participants in Star's first downtown planning public workshop were asked to envision what Star would look like when their downtown revitalization efforts were successful, thereby articulating a vision for revitalization. The envisioned elements include:

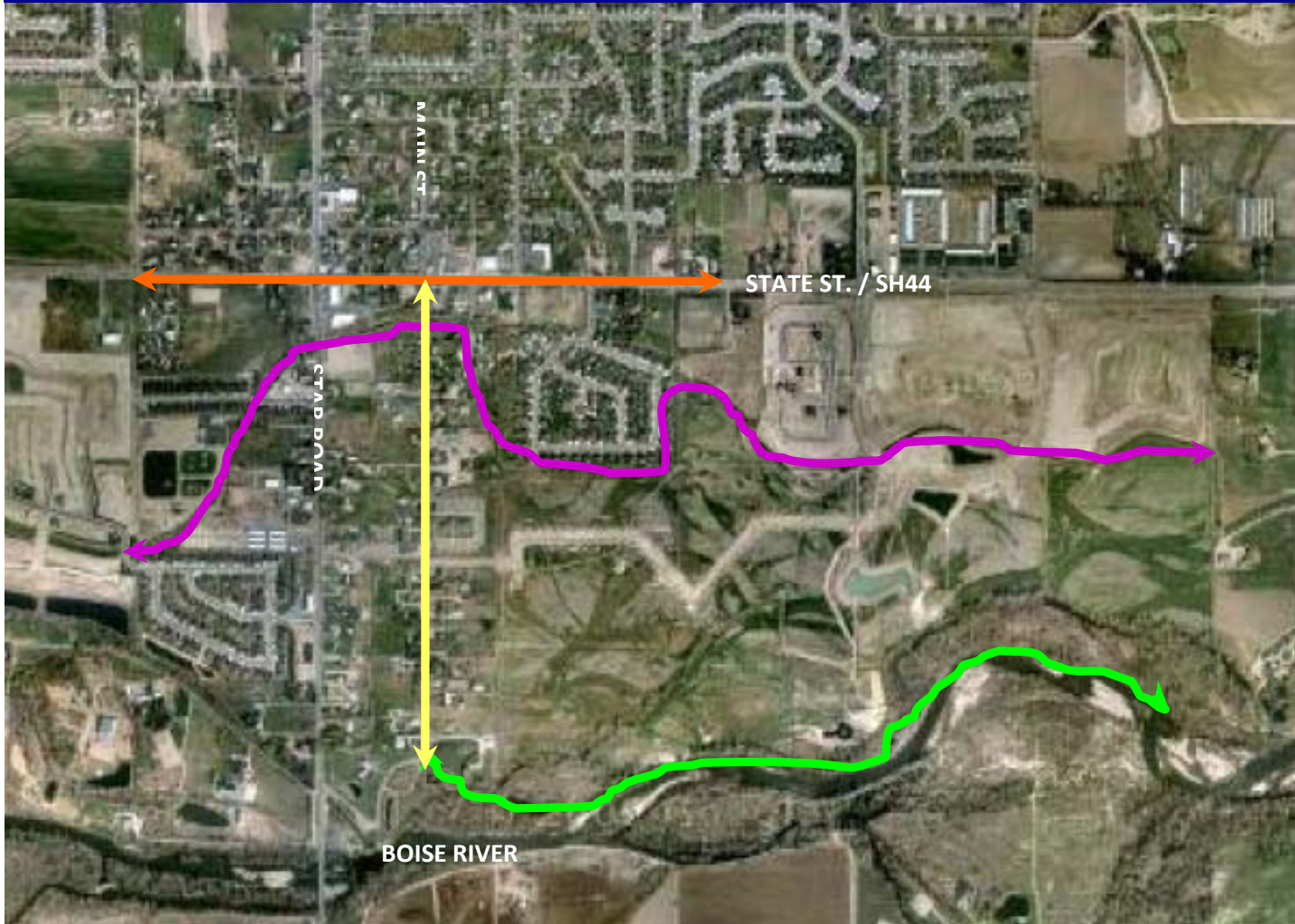
- Bike and pedestrian routes (i.e. sidewalks, bike paths)
- Public plaza (i.e. benches, public restrooms, water feature, events space)
- History preserved and celebrated
- Parks and green spaces (i.e. skateboard and dog parks)
- Off-street public parking
- Consistent lighting and trees along streets
- Attractive store fronts
- Landscaping (i.e. hanging flower baskets, planters, screened parking lots)
- Mixed use new development that provides business and residential spaces





- Welcome signage at key entryways
- River access for pedestrians and recreationalists
- Regularly offered events and attractions
- Appropriate business signage
- Public art

Figure 9

Star Downtown Master Plan—walking route priorities

The graphic below captures the *ideas and vision* of participants in the March 9, 2010 Star downtown planning public workshop. After review of large scale pedestrian loop and route opportunities, participants ranked which pedestrian route sections were of the highest priority for development. The top four priorities are represented below. Locations of items on the map are *approximate* and are not intended to represent final placement or length.



-  1st Priority Walking Route: Star River Walk
-  2nd Priority Walking Route: Main Street, connecting Star River Walk to downtown
-  3rd Priority Walking Route: State Street (SH 44) pedestrian improvements within downtown core
-  4th Priority Walking Route: Canal Walk, walking/bike path along irrigation canal extending east/west from downtown

Streetscape enhancement projects

Three street sections were identified by public workshop attendees and survey respondents for priorities for improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity (see figure XX). These are:

1. South Main Street from the State Street intersection south to the Star River Walk / Boise River.
This road section currently has two paved traffic lanes with unimproved shoulders and without pedestrian or bicycle pathways within a right-of-way of 60 feet and is maintained by the Ada County Highway District (ACHD). Historically, this road section has primarily experienced localized traffic serving the adjacent residential properties. However, with the development of the Star River Walk along the Boise River at the south end of this road section, vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle traffic is expected to increase as Star community members and visitors utilize the newly accessible recreational opportunities of the Star River Walk. Therefore, pedestrian and bicycle improvements to this road section that connects the Star River Walk to the downtown core were identified as Star's top priority streetscape improvement project. Multiple alternative cross-sections and streetscape configurations were developed for this roadway and presented at open houses. The preferred alternative is presented on page 28. These improvements are envisioned to retain a "rural" feel yet improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by constructing curb, gutter and sidewalk along one side of the roadway, allowing the sidewalk to meander around large existing trees and striping a designated lane for bicycles.

Prior to this master planning process, the City in concert with the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) had established preliminary plans to begin the process of enhancing the pedestrian pathway along Main Street. To that end, ACHD had commissioned funding to complete preliminary and final design plans and specifications for a pedestrian pathway along Main Street. Initial plans reflected a sidewalk along both sides of the street along the corridor. When ACHD became aware that this downtown planning effort included a similar evaluation along Main Street to connect the downtown area with the Star River Walk, ACHD solicited input from the public through the workshops and open houses that were conducted. It is hoped that ACHD will utilize the configuration of the preferred alternative in figure 11 to guide the final design of improvements along Main Street.

It should be noted that future right-of-way for a collector road from the Heron River (Parkstone) development will discharge onto Main Street immediately south of the LDS church (approximately midway between the Boise River and Hwy 44) which will alter the traffic flows and patterns significantly in the area.

2. State Street / Highway 44 as it passes through Star’s downtown core. This section is a state highway, managed by Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and is Star’s primary arterial collector, serving the largest traffic volume of Star’s roadway system. The partnership arrangement for elements of the operation and maintenance of this corridor are outlined in a state-local agreement between the City of Star and ITD. The bulk of Star’s commercial sector lines the roadway, extending east and west from the downtown center and it represents two of three primary entrances into the community of Star from the East and the West. Currently, within the right-of-way of approximately 80 feet, there are sidewalks approximately 5 feet in width on each roadway side, parallel parking in each direction, and four travel lanes. Discussions and feasibility investigations with ITD regarding possible bypass routes have determined that, for the foreseeable future, this roadway will continue to be the primary route for State Highway 44 which is outlined in the *SH 44 Corridor Preservation Study*.

The vision of Star’s downtown revitalization plan is to improve pedestrian safety and create an attractive and distinct sense of arrival within Star’s downtown core while continuing to serve the needs of the travelers along State Highway 44. Multiple alternative cross-sections and streetscape configurations were developed for this roadway and presented at open houses. The preferred alternative is presented in figure 12. To accomplish the desired objectives, the preferred alternative proposed that travel lanes be reduced to three lanes – one lane of traffic in each direction (12 feet in width each) and a center turn lane (12 feet in width), bicycle lanes (5 feet in width) will be added to each side of the roadway, and the sidewalk areas will be widened to 11 feet to allow ample room for pedestrians and streetscape amenities. Because the center turn lane will remove left turning traffic from the primary travel lanes, ITD has indicated that the three-lane configuration will allow for a comparable traffic volume flow as the current configuration (see page 29). Portions of these roadway changes could be implemented with very little cost by simply restriping the existing road section from a four-lane roadway with parallel parking to a three-lane roadway with a bike lane on each side of the road (Phase 2 in figure 10). No structural changes to



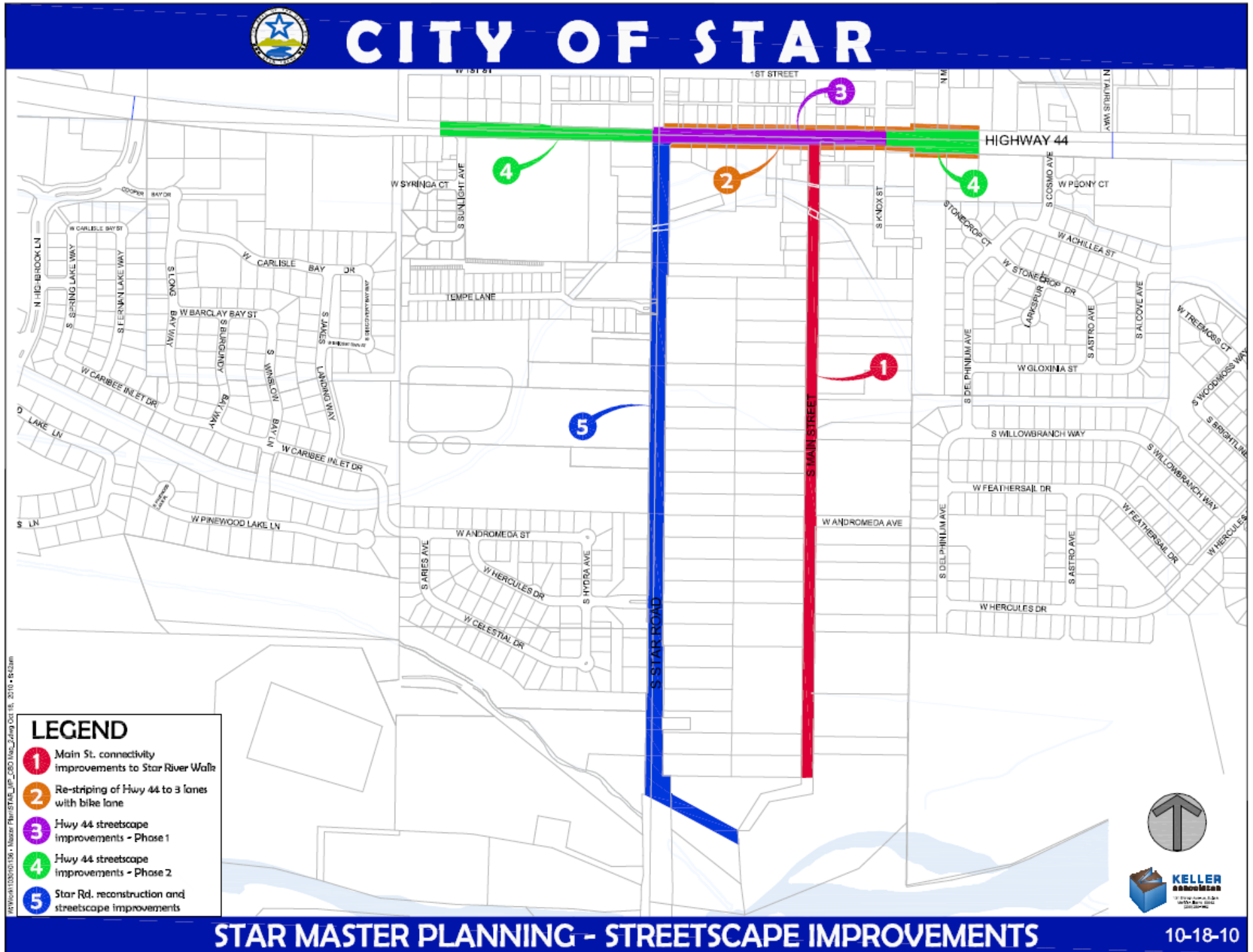
Star’s Hometown Celebration attendees line State Street.

the roadway would be required, but simply restriping the existing roadway could accomplish many of the desired objectives to make Hwy 44 more pedestrian friendly.

3. South Star Road from the State Street intersection south to the Boise River. South Star Road connects Star with communities to the south, is one of three primary entrances into the community of Star, and has a secondary concentration of commercial properties (second to State Street / Highway 44). Within its approximate right-of-way of 70 feet, South Star Road currently accommodates two travel lanes, a borrow area, and does not have pedestrian or bicycle pathways along the majority of the route. The Star River Walk / Boise River can be accessed via South Star Road at approximately 0.67 miles south of the State Street / South Star Road intersection. Just prior to this intersection, travel lanes on South Star Road expand to four travel lanes and offer a non-contiguous bike lane for approximately 138 feet. Approximately 308 feet of sidewalk in good conditions currently exists on both sides of South Star Road extending from the intersection with State Street / Highway 44 to the south. Sidewalk also exists on North Star Road, linking downtown to a church, elementary school and a newly-purchased property that will become Star's newest public park.

Once again, multiple alternative cross-sections and streetscape configurations were developed for this roadway and presented at open houses. The preferred alternative for South Star Road would create a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly loop from Star's downtown to the Star River Walk. Pedestrian and bicyclists would be able to access the Star River Walk by traveling south on Main Street or South Star Road. Proposed improvements to Star Road would include two traffic lanes, a center turn lane, wide sidewalks and bike lanes without on-street parking (see page 30). Possible phasing of this project could include construction of sidewalk on the east side of the roadway only to accommodate connectivity between downtown and the Star River Walk.

Figure 10



Star Master Planning Options Main Street

◆ Main Street – Option D (60’ Right-Of-Way)

- ◆ 2-lane road with sidewalk and bike path



Typical Section – Cross Section



Typical Section – 3D Rendering



Field Application

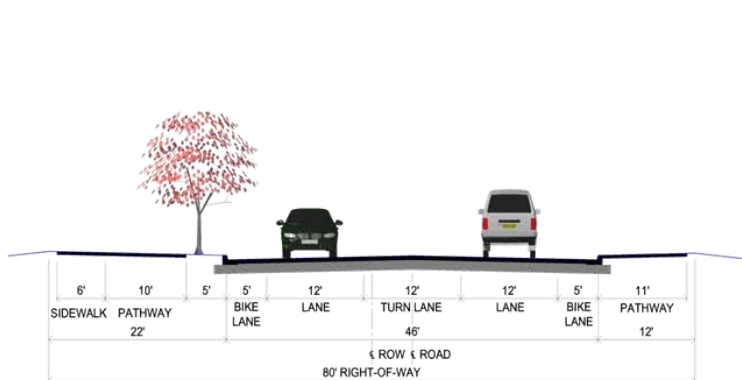


Field Application

Star Master Planning Options Highway 44

◆ Highway 44 - Option A (80' Right-Of-Way)

- ◆ 3-lane road (no parking) with bike lane, streetscape, drivable median



Typical Section – Cross Section



Typical Section – 3D Rendering



Streetscape Options

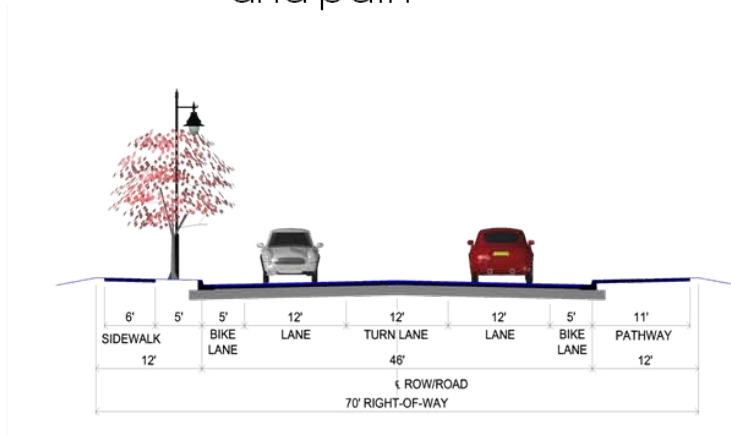


Field Application – Meridian Road, Meridian

Star Master Planning Options Star Road

◆ Star Road - Option A (70' Right-Of-Way)

- ◆ 3-lane road with bike lanes, drivable median, streetscape, sidewalk and path



Typical Section – Cross Section



Typical Section – 3D Rendering



Streetscape Options



Field Application – Eagle Road, Eagle

Parking

The proposed streetscape improvements to State Street / Highway 44 and South Star Road will eliminate on-street parking to accommodate improved traffic flow and provide room within the existing right-of-way for bike lanes, wide sidewalks, landscaping and street furniture. Star's Comprehensive Plan includes the economic development objective, "Provide on street parking in the CBD."¹³ Ample off-street parking is currently offered to serve most of downtown Star's existing businesses. However, as Star's business density increases, off-street public parking areas will become increasingly important.

Crosswalks

Visible and frequent pedestrian crossing opportunities are a key aspect of creating a walk-able downtown core, especially when the primary commercial area is transected by a state highway. The City of Star is aware of this challenge and has recently worked with the Ada County Highway District to install a pedestrian-activated overhead flashing yellow light at Main Street and Highway 44. The primary objective of the project was to improve safety for pedestrians crossing State Street / Highway 44 in route to the Star River Walk and is a key element in creating pedestrian connectivity for areas north of State Street / Highway 44 to the Star River Walk.

Entryways

Star lacks entryway signage or unique landscaping to provide visitors and residents with a sense of arrival and give them the impression that they are entering a community with a lot to offer. Increasing commercial development along State Street / Highway 44 to the west and east is reducing the rural aesthetic buffer between Star and its neighboring communities and making it more difficult to determine where Star's "heart" or core begins and ends. Establishment of entryway signage, public art and/or landscaping will complement the proposed streetscape improvements to help define Star's central core. Entryway elements do not need to be placed at city limits. Instead, locations should be chosen to maximize visibility and create a sense of arrival to the central core or downtown of a community.



An eye-catching monument that defines a place can be as simple as this clock located in Meridian.

¹³ Star Comprehensive Plan, pg. 4-10.

Gathering place

Civic plazas and parks within a downtown area provide visitors and community members with a place to gather, recreate, enjoy events, and / or shop at outdoor market places. These central gathering places are important to downtown revitalization because they encourage prospective customers to stay longer in downtown and provide venues for events that can attract local and visiting customers.

Several locations were identified as potentials for development of a civic plaza gathering place (see figure 14). Perhaps the best option for Star to develop a civic plaza would be to partner with a private business development to help finance, provide available property, and create compatible surrounding businesses. Generations Plaza in Meridian is a good example of a small-scale civic plaza development and was toured by Star residents during the downtown revitalization planning process.

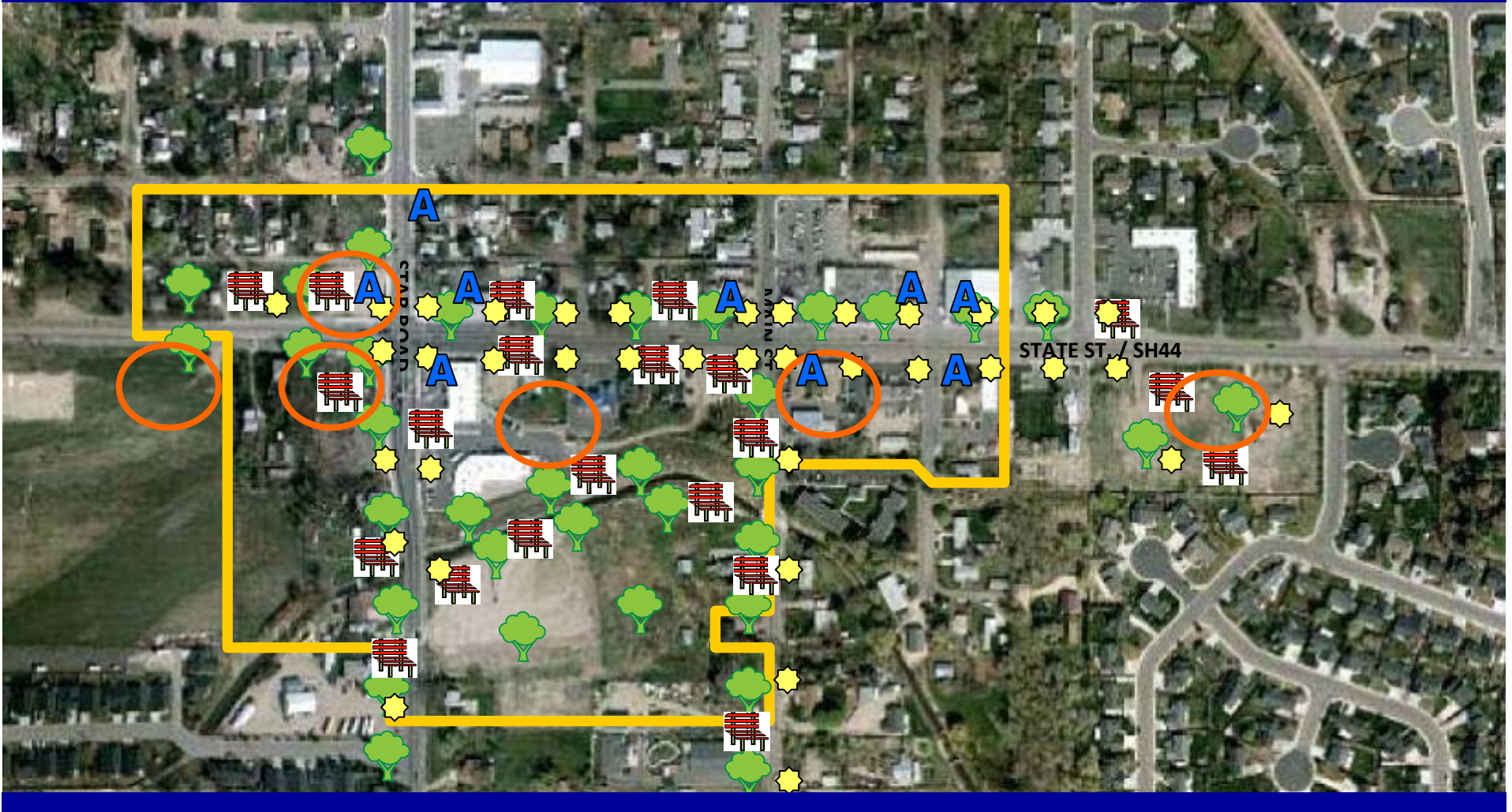


This picnic shelter at an Eagle park is an example of a flexible community gathering spot.

Figure 14

Star Downtown Master Plan—*ideas* from January 2010 public workshop

Please note: the graphic below captures the *brainstormed ideas* and vision of public workshop participants. Locations of items on the map are approximate and are not intended to represent final placement.



- Star Central Business District
- Tree / Landscaping
- Bench / Seating area

- Public Art
- Plaza / Gathering Place location suggestion
- Street light



Signage

The signage displayed by businesses within a downtown core can either distract or enhance the appearance of the area. Star's businesses currently display a wide variety of signage, both permanent and temporary. A suggested standard for sign design should be provided to existing and new businesses. Interpretive signage design has recently been developed for the Star River Walk and would be a good foundation for broader community and business signage to reinforce a unified aesthetic and Star's connection to the Star River Walk. Funding help for signage upgrades can be incorporated into a business façade improvement grant program to encourage existing businesses to replace outdated or unsightly signs.

Temporary signage such as sandwich boards and yard signs can add to signage clutter and distract from the ability of a downtown core to attract customers, yet businesses need to be given the opportunity to visually announce short-term specials and sales. Education about temporary signage options and resources for business owners can help raise the professional appearance and reduce the frequency of usage of temporary signs.

Beautification

Beautification is “the act of making something more beautiful” or “the act of changing something into something different in essential characteristics.”¹⁴ In downtown revitalization efforts, beautification projects are generally small budget efforts implemented by community groups or volunteers in partnership with municipal leadership to improve the visual aspects of downtown. Star downtown planning participants identified the need for clean up, business façade improvements, and landscaping as top beautification priorities.

Clean up

The level of basic cleanliness in a downtown reflects the extent of pride residents and business owners have in their community. Cleanliness includes weeding and mowing, junk removal, and reduction of clutter from public and private property and lots. Priority cleaning projects are identified in the project priority lists beginning on page 40.



Public workshop attendees often used this sign for Sully's Pub & Grill as an example of an attractive business sign.

¹⁴ Online dictionary by Farflex, accessed January 3, 2011.

Façade improvements

Perhaps the best way to quickly improve the attractiveness of Star's downtown is to help property and business owners repaint and refurbish business fronts. With a little effort and minimal funds, big improvements can be made.

Tim Reinders, of Main Street Iowa, in his Webinar presentation entitled "Design on a Dime...or The Power of Paint" provided these benefits of a façade improvement program:

Build Momentum for Revitalization: People can easily relate to a completed façade improvement. In most communities, there is not the immediate capacity to undertake large extensive (and costly) building rehabs. By getting some lower cost, highly visual projects completed, the program can begin to show results and create excitement and momentum for the revitalization efforts.

Show Possibilities to the Community: Early in the life of a program, people have misperceptions about what is meant by using historic preservation as a development tool. Successfully implementing some high quality low cost highly visual projects helps show people that preservation does not have to be costly to be effective.

Build Capacity in Community: People learn most by example. People also mimic or copy successful strategies they see others use. Successful projects build investor confidence, and also improve the skills and experience of contractors, bankers and investors.

Expand pool of participants in improvements: For a variety of reasons, not every owner/business can implement a full scale total rehab. However, even some paint or some other low cost improvements can provide an opportunity for almost every building owner to participate in property improvements.¹⁵

¹⁵ Main Street Innovation Lab Series, National Trust Main Street Center. www.mainstreet.org

Businesses providing paint and paint supplies can often provide color consulting and design assistance at no cost to downtown business owners and offer discount prices on paint for downtown business façade improvement efforts.

Landscaping

Planter boxes and pots are an excellent way to quickly improve a downtown’s appearance. Since they are not permanent fixtures, planting vessels can be added as a short-term fix to beautify an area while long-term streetscape infrastructure improvement projects are planned and funded.

The construction, planting and maintenance of downtown planters, is also an excellent opportunity to involve the community in downtown revitalization efforts. Here are two examples:

1. The Ward 7 Arts Collective in Chicago offers an “Adopt-a-box” program where business owners “adopt” a planter box for the front of their business, then a mosaic artist works with area youth to make each box unique.

2. The all-volunteer Beautification Committee of Geneva, Illinois, involves the community in their downtown landscaping and planting box efforts by:
 - Throughout the year, local businesses help support the Beautification Committee by either adopting a planting area or donating supplies, plants and refreshments on group planting/clean-up days.
 - Volunteers or community groups can “Adopt” and maintain a planting bed.
 - Volunteers help with preparation, planting and clean-up of beds on designated days.
 - Other volunteers assist with various jobs, such as building flower boxes, delivering flowers and clean up plant debris or share their talents in areas, such as fundraising, promotion, taking photos and in the coordination of committee activities.
 - The community at large assists by participating in fundraisers to support the purchase of planters and plants. Fundraising efforts include sale of firewood bundles and a “Pasta for Posies” spaghetti dinner.¹⁶

“Landscaping...is, in fact, a critical component of any successful development project and should be considered an essential part of the design process.”

- Star Comprehensive Plan, pg. 8-2



Youth arts project example: “Adopt-a-box” project, Ward7 Arts Collaborative, Chicago. www.w7aconline.org

¹⁶ Geneva Beautification Committee, Geneva, Illinois. <http://www.genevaspac.org/beautification/aboutus.html>

- Pheasant Hunters' Breakfast (October)
- Tree Lighting Ceremony (December)
- Christmas Bazaar (December)

Implementation groups

Marcia Elkins, Growth Management Director, Rapid City, South Dakota, offered these tips for success in implementation of downtown revitalization projects:

- *Paid staff, even if very part time, can make all the difference.*
- *Revitalization has to be a partnership – the City can't do it all.*
- *Start with forming project-specific committees, perhaps under the Chamber or other downtown-supportive group.*¹⁷

As funding becomes available, the City of Star should strive to hire a coordinator of downtown revitalization strategies. But, revitalization efforts can move forward as a volunteer-led effort, it is just more difficult, because volunteers often come and go, often resulting in more of a start-stop-start approach.

Star is fortunate to have several existing community groups whose mission aligns with downtown revitalization. These include:

- City of Star's Economic Development Committee (Star EDC)
- City of Star's Parks and Recreation Department
- Star Chamber of Commerce
- Star community groups such as church, youth, and social organizations

Estimated costs, priorities and responsibilities

The following tables (pages 40-42) list and prioritize the downtown revitalization recommendations developed by citizens of Star through public open house meetings and community surveys for streetscape improvements and other large budget projects, beautification strategies and other smaller budget project, and local marketing efforts. It also includes estimated costs, primary groups to lead implementation efforts, and a prioritization of high, medium, or low. Note that the costs are general

¹⁷ Phone call with Marcia Elkins, Growth Management Director, City of Rapid City, South Dakota. (4-2-10)

estimates and should be refined as variables such as materials costs, locations, and implementation timing changes.

REVITALIZATION STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	PRIORITY STATUS	LEADING AGENCY
Streetscape & large construction projects				
Civic Plaza	Work with private developers to incorporate public gathering place / civic plaza into State Street property re-use	\$1 million +	Medium	
Public parking lot	Create off-street public parking areas downtown - could be accomplished as part of Civic Plaza construction or in partnership with private business owners and developers	\$250,000-\$500,000	Medium	
Gateway art	Design and install visible public art pieces referencing Star at city entrances	\$25,000-\$100,000 each (donated sites)	High	Star EDC with City of Star
State Street / SH 44 Restriping	Restripe existing pavement section to include 3 lanes, a bike lane in both directions, and parking within Central Business District	\$25,000	High	City of Star with Star EDC
South Main Street improvements	Construct curb, gutter, bike path, and sidewalk on one side of the road; bike path on the other side from downtown (SH44) to Star River Walk (Boise River access)	\$500,000-\$1,310,000 (depending on grading and drainage complexities)	High	City of Star with Star EDC
State Street / SH 44 Phase One	Convert pavement to streetscape from Star Rd. to Knox St. (both sides of road), including wider sidewalks, street trees, and street lights.	\$780,000	High	City of Star with Star EDC
State Street / SH 44 Phase Two	Convert pavement to streetscape from Knox St. to east of the library and from Star Rd. west to the Moxi-Java. Streetscape includes wider sidewalks, street trees, and street lights and could include colored concrete, benches and/or bike racks.	\$1,170,000	Medium	
Star Road	Reconstruct Star Rd. from SH 44 to the Star River Walk to include 3 lanes and streetscape amenities like sidewalk, street trees, and illumination.	\$4,010,000	Low	

REVITALIZATION STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	PRIORITY STATUS	LEADING AGENCY
Beautification & small construction projects				
Parking signage	Create clearly-signed public parking areas - perhaps work with private property owners for temporary / shared public parking	\$50-\$200 / sign + installation	Low	
Clean up - State St. sidewalk strip	Weed and uniformly treat (brick) "decorative" sidewalk strip along State St.	Weeding: none Treatment: \$8-\$10 / sq. ft. + installation	High	Star EDC with Boy Scouts, Lions Club
Container plantings	Install planter boxes or barrels (six/block (three each side of street)) on State St. in CBD.	Planter: \$100-\$200 ea. Plants: \$50-\$100 ea. Soil: \$50-\$100 ea.	Medium	
Tree planting	Identify opportunities to plant trees on public and private property in downtown core and plant new trees where able.	\$350-\$400 / tree (includes excavation, soil and mulch) \$2000 / tree grate	Medium	
Façade improvement - "Paint the Town"	Work with business operators and property owners to paint the façade of one downtown business annually.	Primer & paint: \$200-\$300 (1500 sq. ft.) Design consultation: free	High	Chamber with Lions, Star EDC
Façade improvement - Matching grant program	Encourage downtown businesses to improve signage, awnings, paint, and landscaping by offering funding assistance through an annual matching grant program	\$1,000 - \$40,000 / per business Match: 25-50%	High	City of Star with Star EDC, Chamber
Street Furniture: Seating/ benches	Place benches at key locations downtown (on public and/or private property) to encourage pedestrian circulation - at least two/block	\$1,000-\$3,000 ea.	Medium	

Street Furniture: Trash & recycling receptacles	Provide trash / recycling receptacles for public use downtown - at least one / block (each side of street)	\$750-\$2500 ea.	Low	
Facade improvement - Mural Project	Work with regional artists (and, perhaps, local youth) to create a mural on a prominent downtown business (i.e. Merc.)	\$10,000-\$25,000	Medium	
Landscape screening	Use landscaping to screen parking and unsightly lots from view (use drought-tolerant plants where irrigation is not provided)	\$250-\$350 / sq. yd.	High	Star Parks & Rec., with Chamber, Lions
Street Furniture: Bicycle racks	Provide racks for bicycle security and parking in CBD at key business locations (1-2 / block)	\$500-\$2500 each	Low	

REVITALIZATION STRATEGY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	PRIORITY STATUS	LEADING AGENCY
Marketing				
Events - Family Fun Night	Family-fun activities offered one evening each month and hosted by different downtown businesses (i.e. talent night, ice cream social, etc.)	\$250 - \$500 / month	High	Chamber
Business-to-business cross promotion	Encourage customers shopping at one downtown location to patron another via Coupon Exchange at key holiday times.	Participating business expense (\$25-\$100 ea.)	Medium	
Tourist in Your Town Tours	Increase knowledge of residents of what there is "to-do" in Star via an annual walking or bus-tour that highlights local history, activities, sites, food, (i.e. Historic building tour, tasting tour of local restaurants, etc.)	In-kind support only	Low	
Info Kiosk	Design and install a map-board of downtown Star that highlights business services and locations	\$2000 - \$3500	Low	
Shop Local Campaign	Conduct a price comparison to demonstrate that Star has competitive goods and services then promote by implementing a "shop local" marketing campaign	\$5,000 +	Medium	
Events - Farmers' Market	Offer weekly opportunity for food and craft producers to set up booths and sell to the public in downtown Star.	\$15,000-\$20,000 per year (includes part-time coordinator)	High	Chamber with Star Outreach, City of Star

RESOURCES

The process of identifying available funding is an ever-shifting landscape and requires persistent monitoring and inquiry. Even the most established and long-available funding sources frequently undergo eligibility and availability changes. Given Star's small population, limited tax base and few established businesses, to accomplish the more substantial aspects of this downtown revitalization plan (i.e. streetscape improvements) will likely require grant funding be leveraged with other sources such as local dollars and/or development fees. At this time, the Idaho Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) program for Slum and Blight abatement administered by the Idaho Department of Commerce is the most likely source for funding of downtown improvements, including sidewalk and streetscape elements. But, these funds are best pursued in partnership with other local or grant dollars.

The City of Star should utilize this downtown revitalization plan as a foundation from which to evaluate funding opportunities as they arise and to pursue partnerships with potential funding sources. A partial list of possible funding opportunities is provided below.

Funding opportunities

Business Improvement District: A business improvement district (BID) is a public-private partnership in which businesses in a defined area elect to pay an additional tax in order to fund improvements to the district's public realm and trading environment. BIDs are often a geographically defined district in which commercial property owners vote to impose a self-tax. To enact a BID, a simple majority (50 percent plus 1) of affected property owners holding at least 75 percent of the assessed property value of the area must vote affirmatively. Funds are then collected by the taxing authority and provided to a board of directors elected by the property owners. BIDs require legislative authorization by the government in which it resides, in order to be established. BIDs typically provide services such as street and sidewalk maintenance, public safety officers, park and open space maintenance, marketing, capital improvements, and various development projects. For more information, visit <http://www3.state.id.us/cgi-bin/newidst?sctid=500260001.K>.

Urban Renewal District: The basic idea behind urban renewal is that urban renewal taxes fund revitalization efforts. Urban renewal taxes are generated by the increase in total assessed values within a defined urban renewal district from the time the district is first established. The governing body, acting on the recommendation of a community-based advisory committee, creates an urban renewal district with specific boundaries and identifies improvements to be funded within the district. Bonds may then be issued to fund improvements. As property values increase in the district, the increase in taxes is used to pay off the bonds. When the bonds are paid off the entire valuation is returned to the general property tax rolls. Visit <http://www3.state.id.us/cgi-bin/newidst?sctid=500290004.K> for details.

Local Improvement District: A Local Improvement District (LID) is a specific geographical district formed by a group of property owners working together to bring needed capital improvements such as sidewalks, streetlights, street pavement or water or sewer lines. An LID is a financing method available to property owners for design and construction of those improvements. The City undertakes all aspects of design, financing and construction of improvements and sells bonds to provide cash for the project. Property owners within the benefit LID repay the money through special assessments, usually over 15 to 20 years. The City of Star currently has an LID in place to provide funding for the recently completed storm water drainage project. Construction cost savings of that project, however, may make the LID unnecessary in which case, an LID may be a good choice for partial funding of streetscape improvements. [Http://www3.state.id.us/cgi-bin/newidst?sctid=500170003A.K](http://www3.state.id.us/cgi-bin/newidst?sctid=500170003A.K) provides details about LIDs in Idaho.

Revolving loan funds for economic diversity and development: Available through Sage Community Resources, the regional economic development district, revolving loan funds are available to support the start-up or expansion of businesses that sustain and diversify local economies. Usually made in conjunction with conventional lenders, these funds can be used to acquire land for commercial development, rehabilitate or renovate usable, empty buildings for re-use or for equipment.

Development / impact fees: Impact fees, or development fees, are expenditures that developers are required to make as a precondition to approval of their project. Impact fees are generally used to

finance roads, schools, affordable housing, transit systems and other projects and services in municipalities. The City of Star is currently reviewing its impact and development fee structure.

Business loan pool: A tool to attract new businesses and assist existing businesses that want to expand, business loan pools provide low-interest loans for business and property development. Private foundations and banks are means to initiate these programs and local banks that participate are eligible for Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) credits.

Façade and sign improvement program: This program would utilize municipal or other funding to provide matching grants or loans to downtown property owners to make improvements to storefronts. This program should include design guidelines in keeping with the historic character of the community.

In-kind goods and services: Tangible goods such as lumber, pavers, benches or other items and services such as landscaping design, excavation, project management, etc. can often be contributed directly by area businesses or individuals. These contributed goods or services are called “in-kind” contributions and can often be utilized to match grant funds.

State, federal, foundation, and private grant opportunities: Several sources for grant funding for downtown revitalization may be available from state and federal agencies, corporations and/or private foundations. Below find a partial list of these grant programs. For a full list of available grant programs, visit the Funding Information Center on the third floor of the Boise Public Library. This regional resource allows researchers to access a national database of granting agencies searchable by keyword and geographic area.

- Idaho Community Development Block Grant Program (ICDBG) – this program administered by the Idaho Department of Commerce provides funding to cities and counties for infrastructure improvements, housing for low income families, economic development and slum and blight abatement. The latter category is the City of Star’s most likely source for assistance to compete downtown streetscape enhancements. Eligibility for ICDBG funding requires that 51% or more of community households be designated as low-and-moderate income (LMI) by Housing and Urban Development. Currently, Star’s LMI percentage is 54%, but this may change rapidly as

new residential development is build and annexed into the city. Visit www.idahoworks.com for more information.

- Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) – until recently, streetscape improvements like those articulated in this plan were often funded by the Transportation Enhancement Grant program through ITD. However, ITD has suspended that program indefinitely due to state budget shortfalls. Should it be reinstated, it is likely that this Enhancement Grant program will undergo significant changes and be incorporated into ITD’s Mobility Program. If such a reinstatement does occur, it will be important for the City of Star to work to advocate regionally for funding. Safe Routes to Schools, another granting program administered via ITD can provide funding for infrastructure improvements that increase the safety of school children as they travel to and from school. Since the Star Elementary School is within the city core, this grant program may be a viable opportunity and should be pursued in partnership with the local school district and parent/teacher organization (see www.itd.idaho.gov).
- Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC): LHTAC administers grant programs for rural road improvements including the Local Rural Highway Investment Program that provides funding for road paving, drainage structure replacement, signage upgrades, transportation planning, reconstructing roadways, and most other types of construction on any public road and the Surface Transportation Program / Local Rural that provides support for road improvements in communities less than 5,000 population. See www.lhtac.org for more information. The City of Star currently has a grant pending with LHTAC for funding assistance to pave several side streets in downtown and to complete an area specific transportation plan for the Star area through the Local Rural Highway Investment Program (LHRIP).
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation: Grants are provided to acquire, develop and then preserve property for outdoor recreation.
- Idaho Community Foundation: Small funding awards (up to \$5000) are available through regional competitive grants and can support a wide range of project types, including arts, culture, recreation and public projects.

Idaho Power local franchise fees: A small percentage that can, by city ordinance, be collected from Idaho Power customers within City limits and dedicated toward utility improvements. For example, the

City of McCall recently voted to increase the franchise fee from 1% to 3% and dedicated the money to undergrounding utilities in the downtown area.¹⁸

¹⁸ *The Star News*, "McCall council hikes Idaho Power fee to 3%," issue date: January 15, 2009