

Commonalities Within Ottumwa Planning Documents

Upon review of various planning and development studies performed over the past 20 years, it has become apparent that regardless of when the analysis occurred, or who performed or requested its facilitation, there remains obvious commonalities in those expert recommendations made for the City of Ottumwa. The following report represents those yielded commonalities and additional samples of supporting text pulled from the documents themselves.

Initiative → Included as a Recommendation	1992	1996	2001	2008	2011
*Eliminate one-way streets downtown ¹	X	X	X	X	X
*Embrace the parks on the south side of the river ²	X	X	X		X
*Help facilitate the rehabilitation of downtown buildings ³	X	X	X	X	X
*Establish significant streetscape standards ⁴	X	X	X	X	X
*Encourage downtown housing (or mixed use) ⁵	X	X	X	X	X
*Establish a civic "center" (Central Park expansion) ⁶	X	X	X		X
*Define focused areas for downtown investment ⁷	X	X	X	X	X
*Reengage the river (riverfront development) ⁸					
1) Downtown focus ^A	X	X	X	X	X
2) Grey Eagle Reserve ^B	X				X
*IHCC downtown presence ⁹					X
#Parking lots ¹⁰	X	X	X	X	X
#Downtown entry identification/Improved Signage ¹¹	X	X	X	X	X
#Ballingall Park improvements ¹²	X	X	X		X
#Trail system creation and enhancement ¹³	X	X	X	X	X
#Utilization hydro dam and/or Waterworks building ¹⁴	X	X	X		X
#Church Street District revitalization ¹⁵	X	X	X		X

*Stroud/Christian Report Recommendations

#Additional Common Planning Document Recommendations

1992 - ISU College of Design "Central Business Area Development Guide"

1996 - City of Ottumwa "Downtown Development Guide"

2001 - City of Ottumwa Comprehensive "The Ottumwa Plan"

2008 - City of Ottumwa "Strategic Planning Report"

2011 - Christian Rushing/Stroud Watson Follow-Up Report to Ottumwa Visit (includes tour verbal comment)

Samples Quotes Taken From Various Planning Documents

Purple/2011 Rushing-Watson Report Black/2008 City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Report Red/2001 Ottumwa Comprehensive Plan Blue/1996 Downtown Development Guide Green/1992 Central Business Area Development Plan

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| 1) Eliminate one-way streets downtown | 2008 - Two way traffic identified as a way to improve downtown accessibility during City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "One-way streets are detrimental to the overall health of downtown." "The pattern is intimidating to visitors and frustrating to everyday users." "While residents are used to a one-way pattern, the pattern complicates the use of downtown by visitors." | |
| "The one-way street system currently in use in downtown Ottumwa is no longer needed due to major highway route changes and should be converted back to a two-way system." "The obsolete one-way street system should be abandoned." | |
| 2) Embrace the parks on south side of river | |
| "Ottumwa is incredibly blessed to have such a large publicly accessible place in the middle of the city." "Open spaces following the Des Moines River will provide greenspace opportunities within the city." "Open spaces following the south side of the Des Moines river create a river corridor of trails and recreational opportunities." "The Ottumwa Park and DM River represent strong, albeit underutilized assets." | |
| 3) Help facilitate the rehabilitation of downtown buildings | 2008 - Façade improvements identified as a preferred strategy during 2009 City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "Consistency of renovation of original/historic facades including entry treatments, decorative detailing, paint scheme and signage should be encouraged." "Ottumwa is blessed to have a large number of handsome and historic buildings." "The historic value of downtown and its role as a symbol of the character of Ottumwa requires measures to preserve and rehabilitate downtown's buildings." "A low interest loan pool for façade treatment should be formed by the local lending institutions." | |
| 4) Establish significant streetscape standards | 2008 - Design standards identified as a preferred strategy during 2008 City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "Major streets in Ottumwa should have multiple uses, becoming well-landscaped, attractive corridors that link the "rooms" of the city." "Streetscape improvements should be used to create a "softer" urban environment by adding vegetation, color and varying textures to an otherwise static and hard landscape." "The quality of the public realm expresses a sense of community pride and conveys the aspirations of the city." "Streetscape feels harsh and is generally void of natural elements." | |
| 5) Encourage downtown housing (or mixed use) | 2008 - Utilize existing downtown buildings for housing identified as opportunity during City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "Downtown housing is an effective mechanism for the revitalization of traditional business districts." "The easiest way to encourage activity and provide potential customers for merchants is to have a residential population anchored in downtown." "Feasibility of developing upper levels of downtown buildings for riverfront housing should be explored." "Housing can make downtown Ottumwa a neighborhood as well as a business and civic district." "Ottumwa's downtown building stock encourages adaptive reuse." | |
| 6) Establish a civic "center" (Central Park expansion) | |
| "With the central area of Ottumwa, the core is the area around Central Park. With important public buildings on its sides, this space is the center of Ottumwa's order." "Transforming Court Street into a linear park and plaza will provide a visual and physical connection between the park, the Main Street corridor, 2nd Street corridor and the river." "One of the most important vistas in Ottumwa is looking down Court Street toward the Des Moines River." "Many of the recommendations of this study are designed to re-emphasize the strong Court Avenue to Des Moines river axis." "This superb cluster of buildings, worthy collectively of National Register district designation, commands superb views of the DM River and forms a monumental terminus to N. Court St." | |
| 7) Define focused areas for downtown investment | 2008 - Downtown revitalization identified as a goal during City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "Downtown Ottumwa remains the central focus and image center for the whole city and literally unites the north and south sides of the river." "Downtown should capitalize on becoming a source of pride and vitality, a center that people in the city and around the region like to visit for enjoyment, commerce and cultural enrichment." "People using downtown will seek a <i>place to go</i> - meaning a place with definition and identity." "Downtown can serve as the rallying point for all citizens." | |
| 8A) Reengage the river (riverfront development) - downtown focus | 2008 - Riverfront development defined as a goal during City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "Downtown Ottumwa needs to again embrace the river to capture the benefits of this rich corridor and help lend a stronger identity to the downtown area." "The Des Moines River is clearly Ottumwa's defining feature and should be used effectively as the central community space and amenity for the city." "Riverfront development can be especially critical to restoring vitality downtown." "Ottumwa should utilize the historic and scenic views along the DM River to create a unique and attractive destination." | |
| "Focus needs to be placed in specific areas where Ottumwa can interact with and celebrate the river." "Although downtown Ottumwa has a number of elements from which to draw a central theme none are as strong as the Des Moines River." | |
| 8B) Reengage the river (riverfront development) - Grey Eagle Reserve | |
| "Grey Eagle Wildlife Preserve affords the opportunity for active engagement with the water less than a mile from the heart of downtown." "Between the railroad tracks and river, a trail should be established to connect Ottumwa with the Gray Eagle Wildlife Reserve. The refuge should then develop an interpretive center to allow people to understand the important habitat that the site provides." | |
| 9) IHCC downtown presence | 2008 - Coordinate with IHCC defined as a preferred strategy during City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "Leveraging presence of the school (IHCC) to help revitalize downtown should be a major goal of the process." | |
| 10) Parking lots | 2008 - Parking defined as a goal during City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "Existing parking lots are functional but lack the character that can be provided by various streetscape elements. The harsh environment is suitable for automobiles but is uncomfortable for pedestrians." "Public parking lot improvement and enhancement program should include landscaping that breaks up large paved areas into smaller areas that help users orient themselves." "Large parking lots behind buildings and along riverfront create areas that appear barren and neglected." | |
| 11) Downtown entry identification/improved signage | 2008 - Improved signage defined as a goal and preferred strategy during City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "Entry points to downtown need to be well maintained and contain consistent elements that identify Ottumwa." "Orientation for downtown Ottumwa needs to be addressed from a broader perspective so visitors to Ottumwa are presented a clear definition of where downtown is and what resources are there." "Ottumwa should maintain the design quality of its major community corridors, allowing them to serve as attractive gateways into town and positive business and community environments." | |
| 12) Ballingall Park improvements | |
| "Ballingall Park is in need of improvement. This park is significant because of both its history and because of its current setting. It serves as the front door of the railroad station which houses the historical museum so it has the potential to attract and serve both residents and visitors." "Ballingall Park, adjacent to the architecturally significant Ottumwa Depot should be an enhanced urban square." | |
| 13) Trails | 2008 - Trails identified as an ongoing priority during City of Ottumwa Strategic Planning Session |
| "The Ottumwa Trail concept envisions a unique urban trail network that incorporates the features of the city's natural and built environments." "The banks of the Des Moines River provide opportunities for recreational trails in Downtown Ottumwa." "Continuous pedestrian and bicycle paths should be developed to unify and enhance access to the recreation sites on both sides of the river." | |
| 14) Utilization of dam and/or Waterworks building | |
| "Ottumwa should emphasize and celebrate its hydro dam. The existing walkway along the top should be opened for public trail access. It would provide a unique recreational experience and a great view of the river and the surrounding downtown." "Ottumwa has an opportunity to go against conventional wisdom and actually call attention to an existing utility use that can serve as both a landmark and attraction for the downtown area. The hydro dam and its associated buildings exist as a benign element of downtown Ottumwa's landscape and it has the potential to be much more." "Waterworks art center should be created." "Hydro Dam catwalk should be adapted as a walkway with fence enclosure, open to the public." | |
| 15) Church Street District revitalization | |
| "Church Street has the character of a neighborhood shopping street. Streetscape development here should include improved connections between the street, the parking lot along the rear building facades and the parallel trail along the east bank of the lagoon." "Court Street, the Market Street Bridge, Church Street and Chester Avenue should be components of a continuous promenade street, combining vehicular and pedestrian movement with a distinct urban environment that links many centers of city life." "Linking of the north and southern sections of downtown Ottumwa can be effectively established through physical improvements that visually tie the two areas together, these physical linkages include Church Street." | |