

CITY OF FENVILLE



SYNOPSIS REPORT

Downtown Fennville Strategic Plan



September 2003

W I L L I A M S & W O R K S

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INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

The City has intended to foster economic growth balanced by private investment and public interest.

The City of Fennville has been engaged in the development of a Downtown Plan to steer growth and improvement within the downtown area. Since August 1992, when the City first established a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the City has intended to foster economic growth balanced by private investment and public interest. The City has been a champion of expressive citizen contribution, and the DDA chose to plan for the City's downtown in the context of on-going public involvement.

A Downtown Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan was originally adopted in May 1993. In response to a recommendation from the DDA Board, the City Council adopted a revised plan in February 2003 with the goal of creating a vibrant and attractive downtown area for visitors and residents, which would substantially augment the region's quality of life.

Three months later, the Fennville DDA sponsored a downtown Futuring Workshop. This was a successful public forum intended to give those in attendance an opportunity to learn more about the economic market, land use implications, financing opportunities, traffic constraints and benefits and other general trends facing the downtown. Participants acknowledged and prioritized dynamics affecting the City's quality of life and business climate. This process, along with additional meetings and input, facilitated the development of goals and objectives, and ultimately this Strategic Plan.

Implementing these activities will be the ...first step toward the City's goal of a healthier, more robust downtown area.

The purpose of these processes is to implement strategies to overcome past disinvestment and to promote a future of prosperity for downtown Fennville. A Strategic Plan Implementation Matrix (see the Appendix) has been prepared to set forth goals, objectives and specific action strategies along a timeline. Implementing these activities will be the final step in the planning process and the first step toward the City's goal of a healthier, more robust downtown area.

This report summarizes the goals and objectives to be accomplished. In addition, this report describes the goal-setting process and the specific implementation strategies to be carried out.

GOAL-SETTING PROCESS

As a primary component of the goal-setting process, the City desired to incorporate public input to foster an understanding of downtown's needs and desired future. The Futuring Workshop was held on May 1, 2003 at the Fennville Library. The propose of the workshop was to gather and integrated the opinions of residents, community leaders, investors, employers and employees as a first step toward forming a consensus-based strategic plan.

The Futuring Workshop integrated the opinions of residents, community leaders, investors, employers and employees.

Futuring Output. Participants in the Futuring Workshop exercises often cited similar issues and visions associated with downtown Fennville. The following list is a general grouping of some of the concerns that were introduced at the Workshop. In some instances, the placement of statements in one category as opposed to another is a matter of judgment; and other groupings are possible. Some of the statements and "raw" input received was combined and edited to make clearer the values expressed in some of the observations made by participants. By combining the statements into similar groupings, it was possible to begin to make some generalizations about the opinions of the participants. This set the foundation for the goals and objectives.

Each item was categorized into broad downtown planning and related issues. These issues were recapitulated and condensed from the participant's original suggestions to conform to the National Mainstreet program nomenclature for projects of this type. The National Mainstreet program has demonstrated that successful downtown redevelopment strategies must address four key facets of economic development:

- ◆ Physical Elements
- ◆ Economic Restructuring
- ◆ Organization
- ◆ Promotion

Redevelopment efforts that fail to address all four elements typically are less successful than those that achieve a practical balance between them.

The complete input from the Futuring Workshop was assembled into nine broad categories and, for the purposes of evaluating the overall process, these were further divided among the key elements of the Mainstreet program.

The following listing presents the “raw” Futuring Workshop input within this framework.

A. PHYSICAL ELEMENTS



“On-street parking is a good use of space”

TRAFFIC, PARKING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- ◆ Highway traffic is an asset to businesses
- ◆ On-street parking is a good use of space
- ◆ Rear parking lots are cluttered with telephone poles and wires
- ◆ A stop light or other traffic enhancement at the corner on Main is highly desirable but requires the cooperation of MDOT
- ◆ Conditions for pedestrians should be enhanced with improved street crossings and interesting storefronts/window displays
- ◆ Commercial truck traffic on Main Street is a nuisance

AESTHETICS, DESIGN AND HISTORY

- ◆ Historic buildings are an asset; it would be appropriate to try to preserve the facades and historic character
- ◆ The cost of preservation is a major hurdle to overcome for businesses
- ◆ The lack of architectural standards leads to unattractive storefronts
- ◆ The North side of Main could use a face-lift
- ◆ Expanding and maintaining green spaces in the downtown would make the area more inviting and enjoyable

B. ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

- ◆ The community and downtown atmosphere is business-friendly; could improve by giving a welcome basket to newly opened businesses

- ◆ Promote awareness about business marketing
- ◆ Work to fill vacant spaces
- ◆ Develop a low-interest loan program for start-up businesses, the lack of financing and investment options is a challenge

SUPPORTING AMENITIES AND SERVICES

- ◆ Proximity to Lake Michigan, Hutchins Lake, and other outdoor recreation is an advantage
 - ◆ Utilizing 2nd floors of buildings would offer nice downtown housing
 - ◆ The residential nature of the community is an asset
 - ◆ There is an opportunity to build on relationships with winery, bed and breakfasts and hotels to increase retail traffic
 - ◆ The lack of a local newspaper is a major drawback
 - ◆ More diverse housing options near the downtown would improve access to downtown shopping and increase the local market
 - ◆ The good school system and great athletics are a major asset
 - ◆ Improved recreational facilities could add to the draw of the community
 - ◆ A Fennville museum could be a nice attraction
 - ◆ Fennville is challenged that it is not a central place
 - ◆ There is a good opportunity to connect trades and crafts with schools.
- ◆ The City needs a community center for young and old
- ◆ The railroad is an underutilized asset



“Utilizing 2nd floors of buildings would offer nice downtown housing”

DOWNTOWN SELECTION

- ◆ There is a lack of shopping variety downtown
- ◆ Would like to see a number of new businesses, i.e. nice sit down restaurant that appeals to all, clothing store, dress shop, 2nd hand store
- ◆ There is no main attraction in the downtown: a small theater would be great
- ◆ The moderately-priced and efficient grocer is a wonderful asset to the downtown

ECONOMY

- ◆ Fennville’s downtown should identify ways to capture the growing market
- ◆ There is a concern of losing business and major tax base to other towns
- ◆ The community’s capability of offering industrial growth is limited; and there is a lack of jobs for Fennville residents
- ◆ There is a perception that small towns are a more expensive place to shop because they can’t compete with regional wholesalers like Wal-mart;

C. ORGANIZATION

COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



“Build on the enthusiasm and social gumption of the community”

- ◆ Develop partnerships within the region
 - ◆ Work to address possible Township zoning conflicts
 - ◆ Involve the community on projects; collaborate with other groups to increase involvement
 - ◆ Increase diversity in participation
 - ◆ Uncooperative merchants make it difficult to coordinate downtown improvements
 - ◆ Build on the enthusiasm and social gumption of the community
 - ◆ Coordinate downtown planning efforts and keep larger business community in mind
- ◆ Remember that change can come quickly, and look at negatives as positives
 - ◆ Continue to communicate and connect people

QUALITY OF LIFE

- ◆ The diverse culture of the community is an incredible asset; in designing for the downtown, the community should ensure it is using a multi-ethnic and multi generational process
- ◆ Fennville has a hometown feel; it is safe, and people know their neighbors
- ◆ It will be important to retain and build upon existing community

D. PROMOTION

MARKETING AND EVENTS

- ◆ City and businesses should program more events, i.e. block parties, use of the park, hay rides, farmers market, parades, holiday celebrations
- ◆ Create spaces and entertainment in the downtown that interest and appeal to everyone
- ◆ Store hours should be more consistent and lengthened
- ◆ Develop a theme for the downtown
- ◆ Work to attract more visitors and make Fennville a destination

Vision Statements. As part of the group process of listing perceived threats and opportunities, participants were asked to develop a “vision statement.” These were statements about the future condition or status of the downtown with regard to one or more of the issues, threats or opportunities they discussed. In general, each group focused on the more highly ranked opportunity or threat statements resulting from their contribution.

Vision statements were helpful to the DDA in preparing goal and objective statements and will remain useful as the implementation process advances.

Below are the vision statements generated by the three futuring groups at the Workshop. These were helpful to the DDA in preparing goal and objective statements and will remain useful as the implementation process advances.

Table 1 “In the year 2013, downtown Fennville will be a vibrant, diverse, stable environment that promotes growth within a hometown atmosphere. We will offer a variety of services and shopping opportunities to meet the needs of residents of the City, the surrounding communities and visitors.”

Table 2 “In the year 2013, the City of Fennville will be characterized by providing for the retail needs, entertainment needs, restaurant needs, and safety needs of the community. The City will be an economically stable environment, and an educationally stable environment for its citizens.”

Table 3 “In 2013 downtown Fennville will be characterized by a sense of community, where goods and services can be found, and people from within and outside the community feel welcome.”

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The DDA worked to refine the raw input from the Futuring Workshop into working goals and objectives. A goal statement is generally a broad expression something a group or community strongly desires. Effective goals will meet the following criteria:

- ◆ **Goals should express a desired conclusion, achievement or end state.** A goal should be thought of as a destination as opposed to merely an expression of a value. For example, “to provide the best possible service” is not a goal, it is an expression of the community’s values pertaining to service.
- ◆ **Goals should be expressed in positive terms.** An effective goal must be desirable. If the goal is expressed in terms of the avoidance of a negative outcome, the community might be successful in avoiding one negative result only to achieve another. It is better to express goals as what you want to occur, rather than what you don’t want.
- .. **Goals should be a stretch, but attainable.** For a goal is to be worthy of the attention of the community, it should represent a significant improvement. If a goal is expressed as nothing more than continuing existing trends it will have little power to motivate action. On the other hand, the goal should be realistic in terms of the City’s ability to achieve it. Striving toward a truly unattainable goal will ultimately result in frustration and disillusionment.
- .. **Goals should represent a consensus view of the community.** This is very important, especially if it will be necessary to allocate scarce resources to reaching a goal. A broad segment of the community must agree that the goal is worthy of its investment.

The objectives are milestones to achieving the goals.

As the DDA worked to develop goal statements, it became clear that most of the goals could not be achieved in once bold action; rather they would require a series of steps. This leads to the associated objectives that support the goals. To identify objectives, the central question is, “If we mean for this goal to be realized in the next five to ten years, what must happen between now and then?” The objectives may be thought of as milestones, or steps along the way to achieving the goals.

I. PHYSICAL ELEMENTS GOAL:

- A. Downtown Fennville will be an attractive and inviting place characterized by busy shops with appealing storefronts, dwelling units and offices uses on the upper floors and safe, walkable pedestrian areas. Traffic in the downtown will move freely but slowly with parking readily available but discreetly located.

To realize this goal, the following objectives must be achieved:

1. Hire a full-time Downtown Business Advocate/Coordinator
2. Create a downtown Fennville redevelopment plan, including renovated storefronts, street trees and green areas, wider sidewalks and reduced road widths.
3. Develop design guidelines for new and renovated buildings.
4. Complete in-fill development on vacant lands

II. ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING GOALS

- A. Fennville will be the economic center between Holland, Allegan and Saugatuck. Business will be good in downtown Fennville. Buildings will be fully occupied and stores and restaurants will be busy. Existing businesses will flourish and new businesses will develop to broaden the range of products and services available in the downtown.

To realize this goal, the following objectives must be achieved:

1. Create a consensus among as many as possible of the downtown merchants and business owners to cooperate and invest in the building of a vibrant downtown Fennville.
2. Hire a full-time Downtown Business Advocate/Coordinator¹
3. Develop and implement programs of economic and business assistance to existing businesses to make them more competitive and enable them to expand.
4. Develop and implement programs to provide start-up businesses with assistance in finance, working capital and marketing
5. Attract new businesses that support and strengthen the retail and service mix.

¹ Note that some objectives support more than one goal and are, therefore repeated at various points through the balance of this report.

B. Fennville will be a fun and friendly place to be.



Fennville will be a fun and friendly place to be

To realize this goal, the following objectives must be achieved:

1. Hire a full-time Downtown Business Advocate/Coordinator
2. Program free or low-cost events downtown frequently throughout the year.
3. Develop a “service first” mentality among all merchants and downtown employees.
4. Establish and support a farmer’s market in the downtown
5. Develop cooperative arrangements with businesses in neighboring communities, like Fenn Valley Vineyards, and Cranes Orchards.

III. ORGANIZATION GOAL:

- A. Planning and implementation of downtown improvement activities will be carried out efficiently and effectively in an atmosphere of open communication and cooperation.

To realize this goal, the following objectives must be achieved:

1. Establish a new downtown management structure or work with the Chamber of Commerce to create a division focused on the downtown.
2. Hire a full-time Downtown Business Advocate/Coordinator.
3. Maintain frequent and candid contact between and among all downtown business owners and operators.
4. Establish a 501(c)(3) “Fennville Foundation” dedicated to community-spirited investments and to encourage tax-exempt giving.
5. Strengthen ties with the Allegan Economic Development Alliance and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to maximize the impact of public moneys.
6. Strengthen communication with surrounding Townships to help assure compatible and mutually supportive land uses.
7. Program annual “Town Meetings” to report on progress in plan implementation and to build consensus about next steps.
8. Periodically review and amend the DDA Development and Financing Plan to advance the goals of the downtown.

IV. PROMOTION GOAL:

- A. The reputation of Fennville as a vibrant, fun and friendly place to be will be well established in the marketplace.

To realize this goal, the following objectives must be achieved:

1. Hire a full-time Downtown Business Advocate/Coordinator.
2. Complete a market analysis to establish a realistic sense of the Fennville marketplace.
3. Establish a Fennville “brand” or “identity.”
4. Implement an on-going program of promotion within the marketplace to strengthen the Fennville identity.
5. Implement programs of joint marketing and information sharing among local businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION

While the formation of meaningful goals and clear objectives is a useful ... it is important to identify the actual work tasks that will achieve the desired results.

The Downtown Development Authority is committed to meaningful action. While the formation of meaningful goals and clear objectives is a useful and important element of the planning process, for this plan to have real substance, it is important to identify the actual work tasks that will achieve the desired results. That is the purpose of this section of the report, and the primary purpose of the Strategic Plan.

Presented in the Appendix and summarized here are a series of interrelated work tasks that give this plan its meaning. The strategic planning matrix in the Appendix describes each task to implement an objective. It presents these tasks in a suggested sequential order with desired completion dates and it identifies the agencies, entities or groups of persons that must take action.

It must be recognized that this Strategic Plan assumes that the will to succeed exists in Fennville. Some tasks will require significant effort and investment and each calls for sustained energy. Furthermore, while the tasks are presented in a logical sequence, it is not necessary that they be accomplished in this precise order. If progress is prevented in one area, the community must remain flexible and continue to work in others. Finally, it is likely that the work tasks will imply or even require other tasks not yet contemplated. This is to be expected and the plan needs to adapt as tasks emerge.

Following is a chronological listing of the community's objectives with corresponding designations and activity statements, as found in the Implementation Matrix. They are listed both here and in the Appendix. For purposes of brevity, the following abbreviations are used:

- DDA: City of Fennville Downtown Development Authority
- Chamber: Fennville Chamber of Commerce
- DMB: Downtown Management Board (proposed)
- FFB: Fennville Foundation Board (proposed)
- PC: Fennville Planning Commission

OBJECTIVE: Create a consensus among as many as possible of the downtown merchants and business owners to cooperate and invest in the building of a vibrant downtown Fennville. (October, 2003)

Activities:

- 1 Complete informal survey of downtown businesses to establish baseline on perspectives (DDA)
- 2 Hold open house on proposed DDA Action Plan (DDA)
- 3 Adjust plan as appropriate to business input (DDA)
- 4 Monitor and feedback on implementation (Chamber)

OBJECTIVE: Maintain frequent and candid contact between and among all downtown business owners and operators. (On-going).

Activities:

- 1 Begin quarterly meetings of downtown businesses and land owners (DDA)
- 2 Establish periodic newsletter for downtown businesses and land owners (Chamber)
- 3 Plan and carry out downtown events (DMB Board)

OBJECTIVE: Complete a market analysis to establish a realistic sense of the Fennville marketplace. (December, 2003)

Activities:

- 1 Define work scope for a realistic market study (DDA and Chamber)
- 2 Prepare Request for Proposals (DDA and Chamber)
- 3 Secure funding (DDA)
- 4 Select Consultant (DDA and Chamber)
- 5 Receive report (DDA and Chamber)
- 6 Adjust implementation strategy as needed based on market study (DDA)

OBJECTIVE: Establish a new downtown management structure or work with the Chamber of Commerce to create a division focused on the downtown. (March, 2004)

Activities:

- 1 Define structure, governance, initial funding and mission (DDA and Chamber)
- 2 Secure initial funding (DDA and Chamber)
- 3 Establish nonprofit Downtown Management Bd. (DDA and Chamber)
- 4 Appoint Board of Directors (defined by Articles of Incorporation)

OBJECTIVE: Establish a 501(c)(3) “Fennville Foundation” dedicated to community-spirited investments and to encourage tax-exempt giving. (Winter, 2004)

Activities:

- 1 Define structure, governance, initial funding and mission (DMB)
- 2 Establish Board of Trustees (DMB)
- 3 Begin fund raising (Fennville Foundation Board)

OBJECTIVE: Establish a Fennville “brand” or “identity”. (Spring, 2004)

Activities:

- 1 Define work scope for identity program (DMB)
- 2 Prepare Request for Proposals (DMB and Chamber)
- 3 Secure funding (DMB)
- 4 Select Consultant (DMB)
- 5 Receive report
- 6 Develop implementation strategy to establish Fennville Identity (see IV, A, 4)

OBJECTIVE: Hire a full-time Downtown Business Advocate (or part-time if funding limits salary). (April, 2004)

Activities:

- 1 Resolve realistic funding plan for at least two years (DMB, Chamber & DDA)
- 2 Prepare job description (DMB)
- 3 Recruit candidates (DMB)
- 4 Interview and hire Downtown Business Advocate (DMB)

OBJECTIVE: Program free or low-cost events downtown frequently throughout the year. (May 2004 and on-going)

Activities:

- 1 Prepare plan for at least six events annually, preferably more during the summer (DDA, DMB & Chamber)
- 2 Conduct fund raising, as needed (DMB)
- 3 Conduct events (DMB)

OBJECTIVE: Establish and support a farmer's market in the downtown. (Spring 2004)

Activities:

- 1 Survey area farmers for interest (DMB)
- 2 Secure workable site and dates (DMB)
- 3 Open farmer's market (DMB)

OBJECTIVE: Create a downtown Fennville redevelopment plan, including renovated storefronts, street trees and green areas, wider sidewalks and reduced road widths. (Summer 2004).

Activities:

- 1 Define work scope for redevelopment plan (DMB and DDA)
- 2 Prepare Request for Proposals (DDA)
- 3 Secure funding (DMB and DDA)
- 4 Select Consultant (DDA)
- 5 Complete plan (DDA, DMB and consultant)
- 6 Develop implementation strategy to carry out plan (DMB, DDA and Chamber)

OBJECTIVE: Develop design guidelines for new and renovated buildings. (September 2004).

Activities:

- 1 Define work scope for Zoning Ordinance amendment (DDA and PC)
- 2 Determine effective implementation approach (DDA, PC)
- 3 If consultant is needed, secure funding, prepare RFP and select consultant (DDA and PC)
- 4 Develop draft Zoning Ordinance amendment (DDA and PC)
- 5 Obtain property owner input (PC or consultant)
- 6 Adjust and adopt final Zoning Ordinance amendment (PC and City Council)

OBJECTIVE: Develop a “service first” mentality among all merchants and downtown employees. (Summer 2004, and on-going)

Activities:

- 1 Evaluate training programs for retailers (DMB)
- 2 Canvass retailers to determine level of interest (DMB)
- 3 If interest exists, secure funding (DMB)
- 4 Conduct training or workshop (3rd party)
- 5 Follow-up and reinforce (DMB)

OBJECTIVE: Strengthen ties with the Allegan Economic Development Alliance (AEDA) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to maximize the impact of public moneys. (Summer 2004).

Designation	Objective	Timeframe for Completion	Key Strategies		
			Sequence	Activity	Actor(s)
II, A, 1	Create a consensus among as many as possible of the downtown merchants and business owners to cooperate and invest in the building of a vibrant downtown Fennville.	Oct. 2003	1	Complete informal survey of downtown businesses to establish baseline on perspectives	DDA
			2	Hold open house on proposed DDA Action Plan	DDA
			3	Adjust plan as appropriate to business input	DDA
			4	Monitor and feedback on implementation	Chamber
III, A, 3	Maintain frequent and candid contact between and among all downtown business owners and operators.	On-going	1	Begin quarterly meetings of downtown businesses and land owners	DDA
			2	Establish periodic newsletter for downtown businesses and land owners	Chamber
			3	Plan and carry out downtown events (see II, B, 2)	Downtown Management Bd. (DMB)
IV, A, 2	Complete a market analysis to establish a realistic sense of the Fennville marketplace.	Dec. 2003	1	Define work scope for a realistic market study	DDA and Chamber
			2	Prepare Request for Proposals	DDA and Chamber
			3	Secure funding	DDA
			4	Select Consultant	DDA and Chamber
			5	Receive report	DDA and Chamber
			6	Adjust implementation strategy as needed based on market study	DDA
III, A, 1	Establish a new downtown management structure or work with the Chamber of Commerce to create a division focused on the downtown.	Mar. 2004	1	Define structure, governance, initial funding and mission	DDA and Chamber
			2	Secure initial funding	DDA and Chamber
			3	Establish nonprofit Downtown Management Bd.	DDA and Chamber
			4	Appoint Board of Directors	(defined by Articles of Incorporation)
III, A, 4	Establish a 501(c)(3) "Fennville Foundation" dedicated to community-spirited investments and to encourage tax-exempt giving.	Winter, 2004	1	Define structure, governance, initial funding and mission	DMB
			2	Establish Board of Trustees	DMB
			3	Begin fund raising	Fennville Foundation Board (FFB)
IV, A, 3	Establish a Fennville "brand" or "identity"	Spring 2004	1	Define work scope for identity program	DMB
			2	Prepare Request for Proposals	DMB and Chamber
			3	Secure funding	DMB
			4	Select Consultant	DMB
			5	Receive report	DMB
			6	Develop implementation strategy to establish Fennville Identity (see IV, A, 4)	DMB
I, A, 1 etc.	Hire a full-time Downtown Business Advocate (or part-time if funding limits salary)	April 2004	1	Resolve realistic funding plan for at least two years	DMB, Chamber & DDA
			2	Prepare job description	DMB
			3	Recruit candidates	DMB

			4	Interview and hire Downtown Business Advocate (DBA)	DMB
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Designation	Objective	Timeframe for Completion	Key Strategies		
			Sequence	Activity	Actor(s)
II, B, 2	Program free or low-cost events downtown frequently throughout the year.	May 2004 and on-going	1	Prepare plan for at least six events annually (preferably more during the summer)	DDA, DMB & Chamber
			2	Conduct fund raising, as needed	DMB
			3	Conduct events	DMB
II, B, 4	Establish and support a farmer's market in the downtown	Spring, 2004	1	Survey area farmers for interest	DMB
			2	Secure workable site and dates	DMB
			3	Open farmer's market	DMB
I, A, 2	Create a downtown Fennville redevelopment plan, including renovated storefronts, street trees and green areas, wider sidewalks and reduced road widths.	Summer, 2004	1	Define work scope for redevelopment plan	DMB and DDA
			2	Prepare Request for Proposals	DDA
			3	Secure funding	DMB and DDA
			4	Select Consultant	DDA
			5	Complete plan	DDA, DMB and consultant
			6	Develop implementation strategy to carry out plan	DMB, DDA and Chamber
I, A, 3	Develop design guidelines for new and renovated buildings.	Sept. 2004	1	Define work scope for Zoning Ordinance amendment	DDA & Planning Commission (PC)
			2	Determine effective implementation approach (consultant or in-house)	DDA & PC
			3	If consultant is needed, secure funding, prepare RFP and select consultant	DDA & PC
			4	Develop draft Zoning Ordinance amendment	PC or consultant
			5	Obtain property owner input	PC & consultant
			6	Adjust and adopt final Zoning Ordinance amendment	PC and City Council
II, B, 3	Develop a "service first" mentality among all merchants and downtown employees.	Summer 2004, and on-going	1	Evaluate training programs for retailers	DMB
			2	Canvass retailers to determine level of interest	DMB
			3	If interest exists, secure funding	DMB
			4	Conduct training or workshop	3 rd party trainer
			5	Follow-up and reinforce	DMB
III, A, 5	Strengthen ties with the Allegan Economic Development Alliance (AEDA) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to maximize the impact of public moneys.	Summer 2004	1	Invite AEDA and MEDC review and comment on implementation strategy	DDA
			2	Continually adjust and refine implementation strategy	DDA and eventually DMB
			3	Invite AEDA and MEDC to meet periodically with DMB	DMB

Designation	Objective	Timeframe for Completion	Key Strategies		
			Sequence	Activity	Actor(s)
IV, A, 4	Implement an on-going program of promotion within the marketplace to strengthen the Fennville identity.	Fall 2004	1	Based on identity study (IV, A, 3), define implementation work scope	DMB
			2	Secure funding	DMB & Chamber
			3	If needed, seek marketing specialist	DMB
			4	Implement marketing program	DMB and downtown businesses
			5	Evaluate effectiveness and periodically adjust	DMB and downtown businesses
IV, A, 5	Implement programs of joint marketing and information sharing among local businesses	On-going	1	Foster improved communication among businesses	DMB
			2	Identify mutually supportive marketing approaches	Individual businesses
			3	Report on successes	DMB
II, A, 3	Develop and implement programs of economic and business assistance to existing businesses to make them more competitive and enable them to expand.	Fall 2004	1	Complete second survey of downtown businesses to compare with baseline	DMB
			2	Define needed business support needs	DMB & DDA
			3	Identify service providers	DMB
			4	Work with trainers, lenders and educational sources to build skills	DDA, DMB, individual businesses
III, A, 7	Program annual "Town Meetings" to report on progress in plan implementation and to build consensus about next steps.	Fall 2004 and on-going	1	Establish format and venue for Town Meetings	DDA & DMB
			2	Secure funding, if needed	DMB, DDA and Chamber
			3	Conduct initial Town Meeting	DMB, DDA and Chamber
			4	Evaluate and adjust format for subsequent years	DMB, DDA and Chamber
II, A, 4	Develop and implement programs to provide start-up businesses with assistance in finance, working capital and marketing	Winter 2005	1	Complete second survey of downtown businesses to compare with baseline	DMB
			2	Define needed economic and business support	DMB
			3	Identify service providers	DMB
			4	Work with lenders and FFB to form attractive business and capital finance approaches	DDA, DMB and FFB
II, A, 5	Attract new businesses that support and strengthen the retail and service mix	Winter 2005 and on-going	1	Using market study, identify underrepresented business types in local marketplace	DMB
			2	Identify potential businesses in the region that may serve Fennville	DMB
			3	Work with Realtors and building owners to identify appropriate sites for new businesses	DMB, Realtors and building owners
			4	Conduct outreach to underrepresented businesses	DMB, Realtors and building owners
II, B, 5	Develop cooperative arrangements with businesses in neighboring communities, like Fenn Valley Vineyards, and Cranes Orchards.	Spring 2005 and on-going	1	Meet with area businesses with regional draw to identify joint marketing opportunities	DMB
			2	Match downtown businesses and events with area businesses with regional draw	DMB
			3	Establish demonstration efforts in joint marketing and promotion	Individual businesses
			4	Evaluate and adjust format to be more effective	DMB and individual businesses

Designation	Objective	Timeframe for Completion	Key Strategies		
			Sequence	Activity	Actor(s)
III, A, 6	Strengthen communication with surrounding Townships to help assure compatible and mutually supportive land uses.	Summer 2005 and on-going	1	Review master plans and Zoning Ordinances from surrounding Townships	DDA
			2	Identify consistent and conflicting goals and objectives	DDA
			3	Meet individually with Township Supervisors and Planning Commission Chairs	DDA and Mayor
			4	Work cooperatively to adjust local plans and ordinances as needed	City & Twp. Planning Commissions
I, A, 4	Complete in-fill development on vacant lands	Summer 2005	1	Prepare marketing package to area developers	DMB
			2	Seek development proposals	DDA and DMB
			3	Evaluate development proposals	DDA and DMB
			4	Structure redevelopment deal	DDA, City, Developers
III, A, 8	Periodically review and amend the DDA Development and Financing Plan to advance the goals of the downtown.	Fall 2005 and on-going	1	Update financial projections	DDA
			2	Identify new public investment opportunities as projects are implemented	DDA and DMB
			3	Prepare DDA plan amendments	DDA and City Council

Key: DDA: City of Fennville Downtown Development Authority

Chamber: Fennville Chamber of Commerce

DMB: Downtown Management Board (proposed)

FFB: Fennville Foundation Board (proposed)

PC: Fennville Planning Commission

Activities:

- 1 Invite AEDA and MEDC review and comment on implementation strategy (DDA)
- 2 Continually adjust and refine implementation strategy (DDA and eventually DMB)
- 3 AEDA and MEDC to meet periodically with DMB (DMB)

OBJECTIVE: Implement an on-going program of promotion within the marketplace to strengthen the Fennville identity. (Fall 2004).

Activities:

- 1 Based on identity study, define implementation work scope (DMB)
- 2 Secure funding (DMB & Chamber)
- 3 If needed, seek marketing specialist (DMB)
- 4 Implement marketing program (DMB and downtown businesses)
- 5 Evaluate effectiveness and periodically adjust (DMB and downtown businesses)

OBJECTIVE: Implement programs of joint marketing and information sharing among local businesses. (On-going).

Activities:

- 1 Foster improved communication among businesses (DMB)
- 2 Identify mutually supportive marketing approaches (individual businesses)
- 3 Report on successes (DMB)

OBJECTIVE: Develop and implement programs of economic and business assistance to existing businesses to make them more competitive and enable them to expand. (Fall 2004)

Activities:

- 1 Complete second survey of downtown businesses to compare with baseline (DMB)
- 2 Define needed business support needs (DMB & DDA)

- 3 Identify service providers (DMB)
- 4 Work with trainers, lenders and educational sources to build skills (DDA, DMB, individual businesses)

OBJECTIVE: Program annual “Town Meetings” to report on progress in plan implementation and to build consensus about next steps. (Fall 2004 and On-going).

Activities:

- 1 Establish format and venue for Town Meetings (DDA & DMB)
- 2 Secure funding, if needed (DMB, DDA and Chamber)
- 3 Conduct initial Town Meeting (DMB, DDA and Chamber)
- 4 Evaluate and adjust format for subsequent years (DMB, DDA and Chamber)

OBJECTIVE: Develop and implement programs to provide start-up businesses with assistance in finance, working capital and marketing. (Winter 2005).

Activities:

- 1 Complete second survey of downtown businesses to compare with baseline. (DMB)
- 2 Define needed economic and business support (DMB)
- 3 Identify service providers (DMB)
- 4 Work with lenders and FFB to form attractive business and capital finance approaches (DDA, DMB and FFB)

OBJECTIVE: Attract new businesses that support and strengthen the retail and service mix. (Winter 2005 and On-going).

Activities:

- 1 Using market study, identify underrepresented business types in local marketplace (DMB)
- 2 Identify potential businesses in the region that may serve Fennville (DMB)

- 3 Work with Realtors and building owners to identify appropriate sites for new businesses (DMB, Realtors and building owners)
- 4 Conduct outreach to underrepresented businesses (DMB, Realtors and building owners)

OBJECTIVE: Develop cooperative arrangements with businesses in neighboring communities, like Fenn Valley Vineyards, and Cranes Orchards. (Spring 2005 and On-going).

Activities:

- 1 Meet with area businesses with regional draw to identify joint marketing opportunities (DMB)
- 2 Match downtown businesses and events with area businesses with regional draw (DMB)
- 3 Establish demonstration efforts in joint marketing and promotion (individual businesses)
- 4 Evaluate and adjust format to be more effective (DMB and individual businesses)

OBJECTIVE: Strengthen communication with surrounding Townships to help assure compatible and mutually supportive land uses. (Summer 2005 and On-going).

Activities:

- 1 Review master plans and Zoning Ordinances from surrounding Townships (DDA)
- 2 Identify consistent and conflicting goals and objectives (DDA)
- 3 Meet individually with Township Supervisors and Planning Commission Chairs (DDA and Mayor)
- 4 Work cooperatively to adjust local plans and ordinances as needed (City and Twp. Planning Commissions)

OBJECTIVE: Complete in-fill development on vacant lands. (Summer 2005).

Activities:

- 1 Prepare marketing package to area developers DMB
- 2 Seek development proposals (DDA and DMB)
- 3 Evaluate development proposals (DDA and DMB)
- 4 Structure redevelopment deal (DDA, City, Developers)

OBJECTIVE: Periodically review and amend the DDA Development and Financing Plan to advance the goals of the downtown. (Fall 2005 and On-going).

Activities:

- 1 Update financial projections (DDA)
- 2 Identify new public investment opportunities as projects are implemented (DDA and DMB)
- 3 Prepare DDA plan amendments (DDA and City Council)

TIMEFRAME

Set forth on the following pages is a timeline chart that illustrates the various activities and objectives to be accomplished over the next three years. This timeframe is ambitious and fulfilling this schedule will require persistent attention. However each incremental step taken will bring the City closer to its goals and foster significant momentum for further improvements.

CONCLUSION

Required is an all-inclusive dedication to the downtown area

The series of tasks outlined in this Strategic Plan would constitute a daunting “to do” list for any community. The plan is intended to be implemented incrementally in a series of relatively small, but persistent steps. Nonetheless, with Fennville’s potential and dedication to downtown success, each objective is manageable. Required is an all-inclusive dedication to the downtown area and every group mentioned is vital to Fennville’s success. The Mayor and City Council, the Planning Commission, the DDA, the Chamber of Commerce, and the proposed Downtown Management Board and Fennville Foundation Board all have key functions in downtown Fennville’s rebirth and redesign.

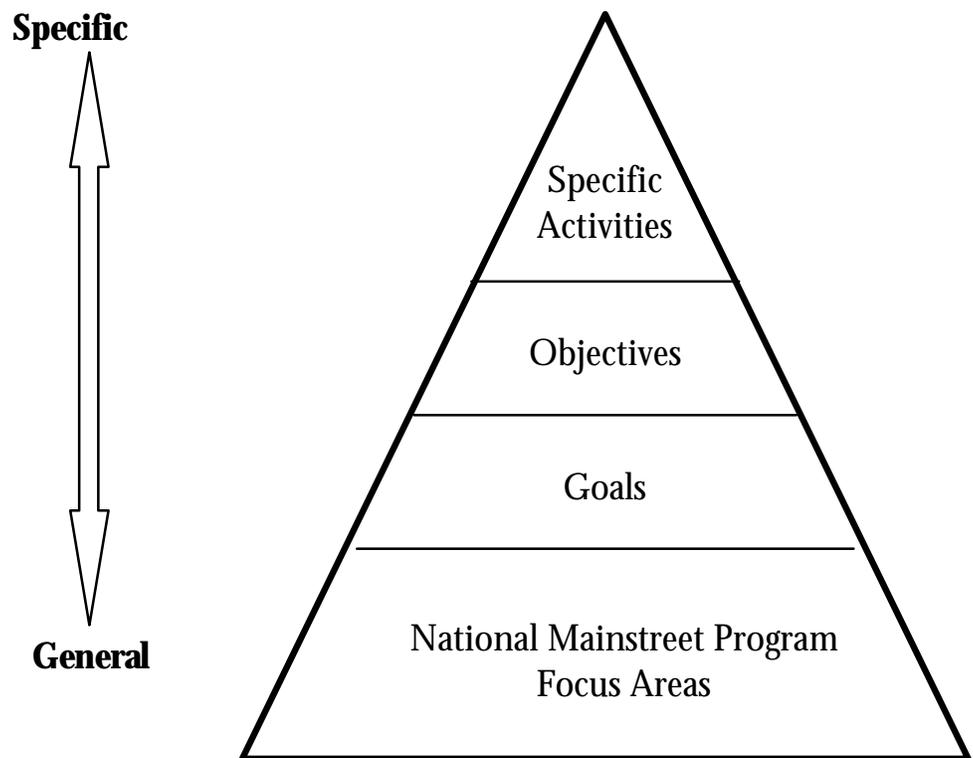
Each objective and connecting activities will need to be constantly evaluated and amended as time proceeds. The comprehensive planning process for a new downtown is finalized. The community must now support the public input received by putting forth the effort required in making downtown a fun, vibrant, and friendly place.

APPENDIX – STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Strategic Plan Implementation Matrix presented on the following pages is intended to connect the various work tasks to the larger objectives, goals and the program focus areas of the National Mainstreet Program. It is merely a summary presentation of the information presented in this report.

By way of explanation, the “Designation” column of the Matrix reflects the Mainstreet Program focus areas in the Roman Numeral. These constitute the most general of the designations. This is followed by goal statements, designated by capital letters. These are more specific, but still long-range in focus. Finally, the Arabic numeral references the even more explicit and measurable objective.

This structure is illustrated by the following pyramidal diagram.



Fennville Downtown Strategic Plan Timetable

	2003		2004				2005				2006					
	Quarters															
	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Create a consensus among as many as possible of the downtown merchants and business owners to cooperate and invest in the building of a vibrant downtown Fennville																
Maintain frequent and candid contact between and among all downtown business owners and operators																
Complete a market analysis to establish a realistic sense of the Fennville marketplace																
Establish a new downtown management structure or work with the Chamber of Commerce to create a division focused on the downtown																
Establish a 501(c)(3) "Fennville Foundation" dedicated to community-spirited investments and to encourage tax-exempt giving																
Establish a Fennville "brand" or "identity"																
Hire a full-time Downtown Business Advocate (or part-time if funding limits salary)																
Program free or low-cost events downtown frequently throughout the year																
Establish and support a farmer's market in the downtown																
Create a downtown Fennville redevelopment plan, including renovated storefronts, street trees and green areas, wider sidewalks and reduced road widths																
Develop design guidelines for new and renovated buildings																
Develop a "service first" mentality among all merchants and downtown employees																

	2003		2004				2005				2006					
	Quarters															
	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Strengthen ties with AEDA and MEDC to maximize the impact of public moneys																
Implement an on-going program of promotion within the marketplace to strengthen the Fennville identity																
Implement programs of joint marketing and information sharing among local businesses																
Develop and implement programs of economic and business assistance to existing businesses to make them more competitive and enable them to expand																
Program annual "Town Meetings" to report on progress in plan implementation and to build consensus about next steps																
Develop and implement programs to provide start-up businesses with assistance in finance, working capital and marketing																
Attract new businesses that support and strengthen the retail and service mix																
Develop cooperative arrangements with businesses in neighboring communities, like Fenn Valley Vineyards, and Cranes Orchards																
Strengthen communication with surrounding Townships to help assure compatible and mutually supportive land uses																
Complete in-fill development on vacant lands																
Periodically review and amend the DDA Development and Financing Plan to advance the goals of the downtown																