

Milan MRC Downtown Assessment February 10, 2015 – Community Feedback

GROUP	CHALLENGES	STRENGTHS	VISION	PROJECTS & MAIN STREET COMMITTEE
<p>City Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building owners not wanting to improve the exterior of the building, have one large property that will hopefully be redone in the next year; • Complaints about people not coming downtown, but the property owners are not clearing the snow, making things nice, etc. • Aesthetics. Buildings are all in a different state of disrepair; too many different colors; too many are empty. • Businesses close at 4-5pm and there's nothing open. • So many empty buildings. Majority of the empty buildings are in the block that's being redone. • There aren't businesses that will really pull in people; lack of variety and too many service businesses. • Very safe community, so that's not an issue. • Nothing to do and no 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have great events; the park events should draw people downtown, but they don't. • New businesses haven't yet had an opportunity to integrate into the events yet, but think that they will. • Morning Owl, Hungry Howies and others are now coming down and integrating with the park events. • In the last 8-9 months, more young people are interested in opening new businesses in the downtown. • We need to be walkable; get out of your car and walk from one business to another. We're getting there. • Tolan Street with a dead end has been a draw for events like the coffee brewers events. That little area has great potential for doing new events. • Have a beautification group, DDA, chamber, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate the hardware store and put the theater back into use, which would draw even more business to the other businesses. • Would love a shoe store or more retail clothing. • Relocate the Taekwondo, and fix up that property for a new, exciting business. • Move service industries out of the downtown. • Want a discount shop with different offerings and locally owned and with good stuff. • Want good restaurants. • Want a grocery store. • Antique shops, sports bars, restaurants and old buildings made into different opportunities like in Marine City. • Brewery or winery • Lofts that are nice and upscale, not just cheap rent. Rehab the lofts. • Get the offices out of the downtown and into the Dexter Street area. • Do like what's going on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to take advantage of the lake with a boardwalk or something to connect lake to the downtown. – <i>Design Committee</i> • Buy the homes that back up to the park and separate the park from the downtown. – <i>Economic Restructuring/Design Committee</i> • Will do a farmers market this year downtown and on Friday nights. – <i>Promotions Committee</i> • Consider doing some concerts and other things on Tolan Street and block it off. – <i>Promotions Committee</i> • Already have a wonderful Christmas and Halloween Parade. – <i>Promotions Committee</i> • Have an interesting tone with the downtown businesses. – <i>Economic Restructuring Committee</i>

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	<p>draw to downtown. 30 years ago people would go to these businesses, but not now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now we need bars, pubs, food and entertainment to draw people on the weekends and in the evenings. • Need more people living in the lofts. • Anyone who could pay rent for 4-5 months would be downtown and then evicted, but that's changing. • Some people are sitting on buildings and lots; speculating. • No ordinance to maintain their property. • Can't ride bikes downtown due to an ordinance. NEED TO CHANGE THIS ASAP! 	<p>etc. who are all doing things and have a bit of a resurgence with new people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding is going on. • Starting a WiFi initiative and the new website is moving forward. • Have a bike trail in the downtown, but not a comprehensive system for the city. • 	<p>in Downtown Detroit. Want pubs, high-scale living and where it doesn't cost \$400 to eat. Attract the young people with nice lofts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakery that is a bit more cutting edge like a Panera bread. • Get a veggie market and some kind of food. Not terribly expensive, but a quality product. • Were always an older community because there wasn't a ton of growth, but are now getting younger people. Need to get a younger style business (bakery serves an older crowd); • Need to re-route the truck traffic so it doesn't have to come right through downtown to get to the park. • Need an ice cream shop downtown • Need to look at a Façade Grant program for the downtown through MEDC's signature grant. 	
Downtown Business Owners and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking is an issue. Every spot is filled with an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses work together. All strive to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have people walking around 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build something on the vacant lot –

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	<p>event. Gamer nights fill every parking spot in the entire downtown. Parking is also filled with downtown residents. Don't generally have different resident parking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancies. Up and Down. Abandoned Laundromat building needs to be condemned. • Tolan Street also has several vacancies. • Businesses are not open late. • Have service businesses in spaces that should be filled with retail. • Semis drive through downtown nonstop. Not friendly for kids to cross the street with the semis. • Facades downtown are raggedy. People have made some serious improvement and then others who have been in business for a long time that haven't done anything. • Murals in windows (not just Snyder building) need to come down. 	<p>make it a better place. All cross-promote each other's businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to get exposure on 23 • Great sense of community and people are coming together for events and other things. • Have a great waterfront, but haven't done anything to make it a draw • Have a great park. • Surrounded by larger, built-up cities, but room to develop here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant businesses on every block – more restaurants and outdoor cafes, more little shops, etc. • Really want a town square with a big archway and opportunities for events. • Want artwork and more murals. • Welcome center that is open and welcome • The people who work downtown all get out and walk from business to business and people see the business owners out walking. • Have current events like the Gamer night and downtown artists night out. • Have Summerfest and Christmas parade, ice rink, • Businesses support each other and welcome in other businesses. • No active recruitment plan for new businesses. 	<p><i>Design/Economic Restructuring Committee</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on Tolan Square to create a common area in the downtown – <i>Design Committee</i> • Take advantage of the water and tie it in with downtown – <i>Design Committee</i> • Consider Duck Races or remote controlled boats – <i>Promotions Committee</i> • Create a fountain – <i>Design Committee</i> • Create a pier – <i>Design Committee</i> • Want a bar, like a Bar Louie kind of a place with good food and drinks. – <i>Economic Restructuring Committee</i> • Pull-in parking spots on West Main – won't need a turn lane and could create additional parking – <i>Design Committee</i> • Do more clean-up and enclosing some of the trash areas with the big bins sitting out back – <i>Design Committee</i> • Alleys need to be clean with dumpster corrals. DDA was working on

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No movie theater, but have a theater sign. • Need more businesses and commercial space. • Have a reputation of being a prison town. • Cute, but too much vacancy. • No destination to bring people in from out of town. • Main Street is off the beaten path, but still has trucks. • Businesses come in for six months and then they leave. Need to retain the businesses. 			<p>this, but no money. – <i>Design Committee</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private properties along parking lot need to be cleaned or blocked off. – <i>Design Committee</i> • Flowers, trashcans, etc. that are updated – <i>Design Committee</i> • Get a movie theater – <i>Economic Restructuring Committee</i>
<p>DDA, Service Organizations, Chamber, Youth Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more businesses and destination businesses, including the right kind of businesses, that are not just here for the cheap rents. • Need to figure out “what’s missing” that people might buy here. • Need businesses that respect “our culture” and what we are as a community and will have the community surround them. Don’t want larger chains, but want to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Went from being static to seeing all kinds of groups popping up and wanting to get something done. • Youth organizations are starting to step-up and parks and rec is now planning all kinds of new things. • Currently, there is no organization that is the primary organization taking the lead on all of the different things that are going on. Need a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more downtown housing. Snyder project will add 15 units, but need to develop the current underdeveloped lofts, as well as utilize space around downtown that isn’t the highest and best use. • Music, entertainment, food, connecting people with each other. • Movie theater turned into an entertainment center would be great • Make use of Ford Lake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider creating a “little Italy” festival or events and capitalize on people mispronouncing the name. – <i>Promotions Committee</i> • Do something with the half block of Tolan Street. <i>Design/Promotions Committee</i> • Summer job fair for high schoolers – <i>Organization Committee/Economic Restructuring Committee</i> • Color run – <i>Promotions</i>

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	<p>able to know the owner and stay true to ourselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way it looks: streetscapes and buildings are rough. Want it to be welcoming. • Don't have a comprehensive vision of what downtown Milan out to look like. There are some guidelines, but they are for the entire community, and not the downtown. • Nothing to draw kids downtown. Nothing specifically for teenagers. From 13-25, you're just cut off. First teenage event was the broom ball event. Coffee shop is welcoming, but need something that is more entertaining. • Would love to see a movie theater. • Parking is terrible. Roads are bad. Parking isn't inaccessible, just busy during events. • The way that the town is arranged, there isn't the space to do what you want to do. 	<p>steering committee that consists of all of the different groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a number of small groups that are each coming up with their own projects, which in turn get stagnant, stale and hard to complete, and then have the mentality that things can't happen, based on a lack of success in the past. We just need to complete a few projects that were started and it will show that we have the momentum to do things. • Need to let more people know about the different events that are going on, but have a hard time getting the word out and marketing things. Have trouble marketing to the internal city and to those outside of the city. Branding will help with this. 	<p>Clean it up and make it usable. Create a path and trail system from Draper Houston preserve to Ford Park. Consider creating more islands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks give the opportunity to connect all of the land to the downtown. Dirt path already connects a number of parks, but it's currently hidden and a bit sketchy. 	<p><i>Committee</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More adult movies for movies in the park. – <i>Promotions Committee</i> • Larger farmers market – <i>Promotions Committee</i> • Murals – <i>Design Committee</i> • Scrapfest – <i>Promotions Committee</i> • Work on the entryway from the highway – <i>Design Committee</i> • Work on the bridges with a welcoming sign – <i>Design Committee</i> • Canoe or kayak event from Saline to Milan – <i>Promotions Committee</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want to develop a healthy pride; determine what we can be, not what we were. Need to change the mindset. The veteran park is a prime example of being able to accomplish something. 			

GROUP	CHALLENGES	VISION in 5 YEARS	ASSETS	PROJECT and Main Street Committee	VOLUNTEERS
Evening Community Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Empty storefronts Christmas décor left up year-round Appearance: run down Rear facades/second frontage Mismatched 4-corners Poor Signage Bad exit ramps (23) Semi's going through downtown Market – rents are too high – no money left for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People pay attention to downtown Ford Lake is a destination and a jewel of the community – trails, boardwalk, boats Ice cream shop Façade improvements Park-related businesses Promoting existing assets Don't have to leave downtown for basic needs Have a "five and dime" store Better marked parking and 			

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	<p>improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't recruit businesses • Businesses don't bring people downtown • Townspeople aren't aware of businesses downtown • Not enough activities • No foot traffic • No destination businesses • No connections to parks – activities need to spread from park to downtown • Main street needs to be open in the evening • Need more people living in downtown 	<p>cohesive lots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardware store relocated and building turned back into theatre • Uniform signage throughout city • Good branding • More retail • More support from townspeople • Downtown is larger; change zoning to increase housing • High quality businesses • More public art • Hanging baskets • Banners • Walkable (no trucks) • Embrace "bedroom" of Ann Arbor • Clean, smooth parking lots • Clean, attractive alleys with good rear facades • Businesses offering remarkable things • People willing to walk 			

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive marketing • Easy, fun community events • Tolan Street becomes a town square • Community members know each other • Strong identity 			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ford Lake • Park Activities • Beautiful parks 	Continuous Parks: Link parks, Ford Lake with paths – <i>Design Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rod Hill • Cassandra Smith
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community organizations • Walkable downtown • Geography • New businesses • People who care • Community involvement 	Create a townsquare that is made for pedestrians on Tolan Street with an archway – <i>Design Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edward Wollmann • Dave Baldwin
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Railroad • Factories/industry • Room for growth • Close to 23 • Ann Arbor to Toledo Corridor 	Re-route trucks: US 23 service drive (Plank to Allen) – <i>Design Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rod Hill
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth council • Old theater • Park • Tolan Street • Ford Lake 	More Downtown Activities – <i>Promotions Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dave Snyder • Ed Wollmann • Rod Hill • Cassandra Smith

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry Ford Dragway Prison 	Capitalize on Community Heritage – <i>Promotions Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Proximity to Ann Arbor US 23 Low Housing costs A2 Greenbelt 	Market living in Milan – Economic Restructuring/<i>Promotions Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marty Ritchie Vicki Zilke Ed Wollmann
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabelas U of M MIS 	Capitalize on area attractions – <i>Promotions Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dave Snyder
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close proximity to over ½ of Michigan population Active senior programming Churches Clubs and associations Affordable community 	Market as an attractive, affordable community for seniors – <i>Promotions Committee</i>	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hardware store/theatre School system Interesting history Ford Lake Wilson Park Historic buildings 	Movies/dinner theatre/ high school plays in the theatre – <i>Promotions Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edward Wollman Rod Hill
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ford Lake DDA Volunteers 	Expand and capitalize on existing, successful events/activities downtown. Create a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth council Bob Stevens Marty Ritchie

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautification committee • Chamber of Commerce • Veterans wall • Bakery • Baptist youth • Wilson Park 	more systematic way to collaborate and execute – <i>Organization Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbara Gardinier

Volunteers: Help to assemble Main Street application and work on Main Street Committees		
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