



DOWNTOWN HERSHEY


a plan for continued revitalization



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CAMPUSES · DOWNTOWNS · ATHLETICS

volume one



DOWNTOWN HERSHEY

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On the Cover:

The vistas of downtown Hershey are distinctly theirs and symbolic of the rich heritage and legacy of Milton S. Hershey. These views create the dramatic and inspirational backdrop for a *continual strive for greatness in the community.*



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- The Foundation for Enhancing Communities
- Downtown Hershey Association Board
- Derry Township
- Dauphin County
- The Office of Rep. John Payne
- First United Methodist Church
- The Hershey Story
- Hershey Entertainment and Resorts
- The Hershey Company
- Hershey Trust Company
- Milton Hershey School
- Hershey/Derry Township Historical Society
- Penn State Hershey
- Derry Township School District
- Hershey Volunteer Fire Company
- Manada Conservancy

Evolution of the Downtown Hershey Association

The notion of a dedicated downtown revitalization organization was first identified in the Derry Township Comprehensive Plan in 1991. For more than 20 years, that seed of an idea was cultivated in a variety of ways before being formalized in early 2013 with the formation of the Downtown Hershey Association (DHA). The DHA maintains a 25 person board of volunteers from local businesses and community members who work in concert with many other public and private groups and resources to help move the downtown revitalization process forward. The mission of the DHA is to bring together government, residents, the Hershey entities, local businesses, and civic organizations to enhance the beauty of the downtown, attract new businesses, and improve the quality of life for everyone with a walkable, bike-able, safe, welcoming, quaint, and delightful downtown that respects Hershey's heritage.

The Downtown Hershey Plan for Continued Revitalization creates a new paradigm in planning and development within Derry Township, emphasizing unbridled enthusiasm for the town that Milton S. Hershey built, an unprecedented spirit of collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to protecting and enhancing his dream.

Development of Project Boundary

Defining the "town" of Hershey is difficult due to the lack of any governmental borders. The village is defined by the iconic crossroads of the aptly thematic Chocolate and Cocoa Avenues, respectively, and emanates in the cardinal directions along those two axes.

For the purposes of this plan, the "town" is a 225 acre area bound on the east by East Mansion Road, the west by Hockersville Road, the south by South First Street, and to the north by the active CSX rail corridor.

Currently, this area encompasses five (5) distinct zoning districts, as shown on the Derry Township Zoning Map:

1. Village Core
2. Downtown Commercial
3. Village Residential
4. Public
5. Commercial Golf

Additionally, many properties within the study area are subject to the Chocolate Avenue Preservation Overlay Zone and subsequent review by the Design Review Board for appropriateness.



Public Outreach and Stakeholder Inclusion

In Hershey, planning for continued revitalization began with the stalwart and steadfast pillars of the current community. The process was both deliberate and intentional in the inclusion of key stakeholders and broad public input throughout.

Stakeholder Input

Working with the DHA Board and Derry Township, private interviews occurred with more than 25 individuals representing ten unique organizations. Complete minutes of those meetings are included in Appendix 1.

To gain input from the public, a broadly advertised and promoted public event was held on April 10, 2014 at the Hershey Story. That meeting was designed and executed to facilitate measurable input related to twelve (12) essential physical elements of successful downtowns (heretofore known as the Character Preference exercise). In addition open forum sessions for information-sharing related to both public realm and private realm (Blue Sky exercise) development patterns and uses within the downtown study area, were also conducted.

Character Preference

Describing how something should look or exist in the future can be a very nebulous and therefore anxiety-inducing request for non-planners. With this understanding, the Character Preference exercise for the Hershey community was organized using 102 photographs exemplifying the following essential elements; community brand, streetscape, landscape, pedestrian crossings, site furniture, building styles, architectural character, lighting, paving, park/recreation, seating, and gathering spaces.

Participants were given 15 individual tickets with which they were able to cast votes for individual preferences in each category, allowing them one vote for each category and three additional bonus votes for areas of particular interest. Simultaneously, an on-line version of the same exercise was posted for broad community input.

In total, 8,506 votes were cast. Within each category, there were one or two selections that comprised the majority of votes cast. The details of each preference provided the foundation for future design and planning decisions, to ensure that all solutions were firmly rooted in community sentiment and preference.

Blue Sky

To ensure that every participant had an equal opportunity to express their thoughts related to public and private realm development within the community, two Sticky Walls™ were posted, and participants were asked to write their comments on individual index cards and adhere them to the wall under the corresponding public or private area.

By allowing small group discussions to occur concurrently with individual participation, a broad and inclusive response was achieved. More than 800 individual responses were posted and recorded. The information gathered with this exercise provided further definition to the design concepts as well as provided the basis for future land use and development planning, including zoning ordinance modifications.

Attendance at the event topped 175. Sign-in sheets, agendas, minutes, and support graphics are included in Appendices 2-5.



Participants voting in the Character Preference exercise on April 10, 2014 in the Hershey Story lobby space.



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Department of Community and Economic Development Five Year Action Plan

The DHA has led the effort to bring together government, residents, the Hershey entities, local businesses and civic organizations to enhance the beauty of the downtown, attract new businesses, and improve the quality of life for everyone with a walkable, bike-able, safe, welcoming, quaint and delightful downtown that respects our heritage.

Using the Keystone Community five-point strategic framework, goals and action items were developed within each of the five core categories below:

1. Organization
2. Design
3. Asset Enhancement (Economic Development)
4. Promotions
5. Clean, Safe, and Green

These 23 unique goals and 77 supporting action items will form the basis of the action plan required for Main Street designation and thus formulate the road map to continued revitalization of downtown Hershey.

To achieve the vision of the Downtown Hershey Association (DHA), goals and action items were derived from the planning process. Input gathered from field reconnaissance, stakeholder interviews, board meetings, public outreach efforts, staff interviews, and institutional collaboration formed the guiding principles of these strategies, with one very clear constant: the plan and its goals should respect the heritage and legacy of Milton S. Hershey while aiming for continued revitalization into the future.

As previously noted, the individual goals are organized within broad categories defined by Pennsylvania's Main Street and Elm Street programs. All goals and respective action items relate specifically to projects, sites, corridors, and buildings within the defined boundary of the DHA study area. That said, many of the enhancements proposed will have replicable elements that apply to the entirety of Derry Township. For each of the following goals and action items, consider the boundary as indicated on page 2.



Figure A (above) - This section of West Chocolate Avenue, coated in a winter snow fall, is an iconic representation of the ongoing revitalization efforts in downtown Hershey. The intersection of Chocolate and Cocoa Avenues is truly the nucleus of the community and the vibrant hub of activity that will be further enhanced through the broad strategies of this planning effort.

Organizational Strategy

Goal O-1: Create and sustain a community and economic development organization following the Main Street model

1. Action: Complete the IRS process to have the Downtown Hershey Association recognized as a 501.c.3 organization
2. Action: Work with Derry Township to create a dedicated staff position to act as the overseer of the activities of the Downtown Hershey Association, meeting the management requirements of DCED Main Street designation
3. Action: Create an Organization subcommittee, consisting of seven (7) members (with a minimum of three (3) current DHA board members)
4. Action: Create a Design subcommittee, consisting of five (5) members (with a minimum of three (3) current DHA board members)
5. Action: Create an Asset Enhancement (Economic/Finance) subcommittee, consisting of five (5) members (with a minimum of three (3) current DHA board members)
6. Action: Create a Clean, Safe, and Green subcommittee, consisting of five (5) members (with a minimum of three (3) current DHA board members)
7. Action: Create a Promotions subcommittee, consisting of seven (7) members (with a minimum of three (3) current DHA board members)

Goal O-2: Redefine DHA board structure

1. Action: Establish board terms and limits
2. Action: Create subcommittee leadership roles
3. Action: Update current bylaws to align with Main Street/Keystone Communities approach

Goal O-3: Build the DHA financial portfolio

1. Action: Create multi-year partnerships to grow the DHA
2. Action: Seek grant opportunities
3. Action: Establish fundraising activities coordinated by the Promotions Committee
4. Action: Establish a *Friends of Downtown Hershey* membership opportunity to provide an operational on-going funding stream

Design Strategy

Goal D-1: Create a unified and cohesive aesthetic streetscape within downtown Hershey

1. Action: Utilize Landscape Forms Melville Benches as the downtown standard for all projects. Bench shall be 6' aluminum bench, with back and intermediate seat divider, and have a standard Ivy powder coat finish.
2. Action: Utilize Landscape Forms Poe Litter Receptacles as the downtown standard for all projects. Litter receptacles shall be 34 gallon, with side access, and have a standard Ivy powder coat finish.
3. Action: Utilize Landscape Forms Emerson Bike Rack as the downtown standard for all projects. Bike rack shall have a standard Ivy powder coat finish.
4. Action: Utilize Landscape Forms Hawthorne Lighted Bollard as the downtown standard for all projects. Bollard shall have a standard Ivy powder coat finish and utilize an LED luminaire for maximum efficiency.
5. Action: Support the use of period style street lighting that matches the historic lamps currently in use within the downtown core.
6. Action: Utilize Longshadow planters for seasonal plantings in public spaces:
 - Lake Bluff 24, 32, and/or 38
 - Marlia 30, 40, and/or 50



Figure B (above) - Melville Bench by Landscape Forms

Figure C (right) - Poe Litter Receptacle and Emerson Bike Rack by Landscape Forms

7. Action: Work with Derry Township public works to develop a list of suitable street trees to be incorporated into codes.
8. Action: Install public art in public spaces
9. Action: Install wall murals on existing building walls
10. Action: Install patterned crosswalks (to match existing pattern, color, and material at Rt. 743/422 intersection) at the each crosswalk along Chocolate Avenue
11. Action: Install green signal pole and mast arms to match Rt. 743/422 style
12. Action: Install patterned crosswalks (to match existing pattern, color, and material at Rt. 743/422 intersection) at the each crosswalk along Caracas Avenue
13. Action: Install on-street parking stripes along Chocolate Avenue
14. Action: Promote and support structured parking initiatives and projects
15. Action: Promote and support revisions to surface parking design and dimensional standards in current ordinances

Goal D-2: Coordinate transportation (vehicle, bike, and pedestrian) planning with Derry Township Comprehensive Plan



Goal D-3: Create a predictable process for review of projects in the downtown

1. Action: Provide suggested text modifications for upcoming zoning ordinance updates related to demolition, construction, and use or reuse of current structures
2. Action: Work with Derry Township to appoint a planning consultant to provide design review for development projects

Figure D (below) - Green signal poles and mast arms with historic Hershey Kiss lights will be replicated at all signalized intersections.



Asset Enhancement (Economic Development) Strategy

Goal AE-1: Attract development interest to core downtown

1. Action: Establish a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District
2. Action: Provide conceptual planning concepts for land owners to encourage desirable land uses (see Appendices 6 - 9 for sample projects that were developed during the planning process)

Goal AE-2: Pursue public finance sources to incentivize and enhance private development (please see Appendix 10 for a summary of funding strategies)

1. Action: Prepare Act 13 grant applications to support Chocolatetown Square and adjacent enhancements
2. Action: Prepare a request to RACP funding to expand Chocolate Avenue resurfacing project (scheduled for Spring 2016 construction)
3. Action: Prepare DCNR grant applications for applicable projects
4. Action: Prepare DEP grant applications for applicable projects
5. Action: Prepare PADOT/ DCED Multi-Modal grant applications for applicable projects

Goal AE-3: Work collaboratively with Derry Township Industrial/Commercial Development Authority (ICDA)

Goal AE-4: Establish the Downtown Hershey Association as an accredited Main Street program

1. Action: Prepare DCED Keystone Communities single application for designation
2. Action: Activate memberships to National Main Street Center and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center to gain access to training and educational opportunities specific to Main Street programs

Goal AE-5: Be active in all community development projects to enhance development potential, ensure compatibility with DHA vision, and provide support and advocacy

1. Action: Partner with Hershey Volunteer Fire Company design/build team for an expanded downtown fire station
2. Action: Partner with the developers of the Post Office property
3. Action: Partner with the Hershey Company to provide input into planning for downtown land holdings
4. Action: Partner with Mohler Center, Derry Township Parks, and other interested wellness groups to explore a mixed-use wellness center

Goal AE-6: Create a business-friendly growth corridor on Caracas Avenue

1. Action: Provide suggested zoning language to encourage commercial uses within existing building stock
2. Action: Encourage adaptive reuse around Pronio's (Valley/Caracas)
3. Action: Encourage business cluster at Linden/Caracas intersection
4. Action: Encourage business cluster at Ridge/Caracas intersection

Goal AE -7: Create and foster environments for life-long learning within the core downtown

1. Action - Explore partnering with Harrisburg University of Science and Technology and the Harrisburg Area Community College to provide programs in dual enrollment, science and technology, and adult education
2. Action - Explore local and regional partnerships with higher education institutions to accommodate satellite facilities
3. Action - Continue to partner and grow relationships with the Milton Hershey School and local school districts for programming, development, and activities

Promotion Strategy

Goal P-1: Create a strategic alliance with the Hershey entities, including Hershey Entertainment & Resort Company, The Hershey Company, The MS Hershey Foundation, Hershey Trust, Milton Hershey School as well as the Hershey Partnership

Goal P-2: Establish a unique brand and identity for the core downtown

1. Action: Crowdfund for brand identifiers
2. Action: Create a communications guidebook (logo, font, colors, message)

Goal P-3: Celebrate the diverse and growing dining scene

1. Action: Hold a yearly roundtable meeting with all local restaurants
2. Action: Create a dining guide (print or digital)

Goal P-4: Cultivate a base of retail shopping establishments

1. Action: Provide online promotional support for existing business
2. Action: Celebrate openings (create a welcome package)
3. Action: Hold a yearly roundtable meeting with all proprietors

Goal P-5: Expand the downtown entertainment calendar

1. Action: Establish a seasonal concert series
2. Action: Hold at least one marquee event (Sweetest Saturday)
3. Action: Invite Spring Art Show to relocate to a downtown venue
4. Action: Align with existing programs, events, or activities to broaden or link with existing events

Goal P-6: Make the heritage of "Hershey" present within all events and activities

Goal P-7: Promote Downtown Hershey within media outlets

1. Action: Provide press releases to local newspapers
2. Action: Invite regional television news outlets to participate in events and press releases
3. Action: Generate content to feature on the Derry Township website
4. Action: Utilize social media to increase civic and community engagement, including #DowntownHershey

Goal P-8: Create promotional partnerships with established area organizations

1. Action: Work with area lodging operators for targeted tourist promotions
2. Action: Hold quarterly meetings with concierge staff at hotels
3. Action: Create content for inclusion on 1-800-HERSHEY messages
4. Action: Work with Hershey/Harrisburg Visitors Bureau for broad advertising

Clean, Safe, and Green Strategy

Goal CSG-1: Improve storm water management within the downtown core:

1. Action: Install water quality areas along Chocolate Avenue
2. Action: Install water quality areas along Caracas Avenue
3. Action: Install water quality areas along Cocoa Avenue

Goal CSG-2: Increase recreational opportunities within the downtown core

1. Action: Renovate Chocolate Town Square
2. Action: Create a public park adjacent to the Hershey Community building (Mt. Hershey)
3. Action: Work with Post Office developers to create a park within their plan for development
4. Action: Work with developers to create a linear green space or trail system along rail line



Figure E (above) - Residents and visitors celebrate the inaugural Sweetest Saturday event on September 13, 2014. The event promoted the activities of the Downtown Hershey Association and featured live music, dance, unique culinary options, and broad based community engagement.

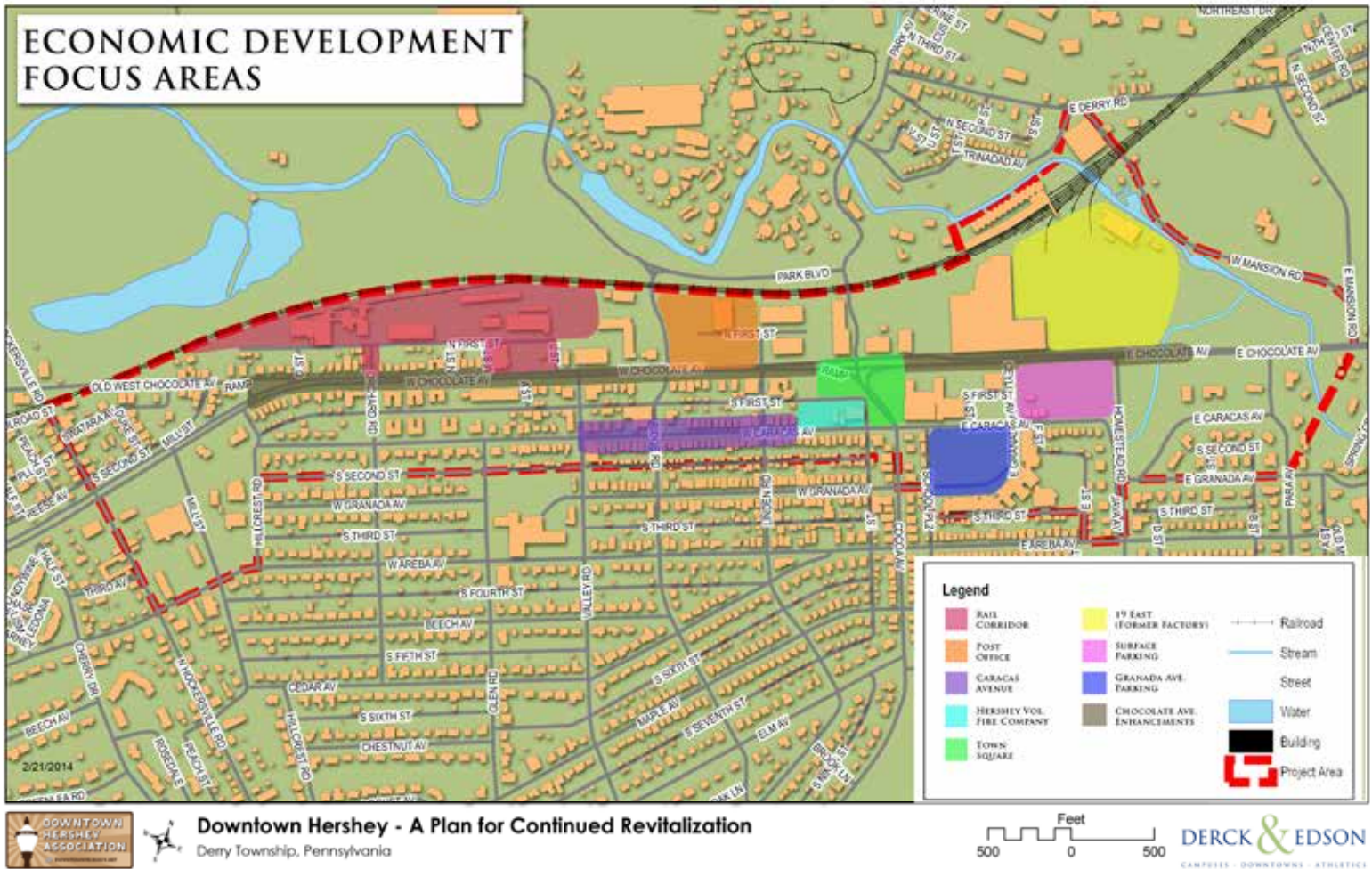


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Preliminary Enhancement Options



Setting the Stage

The development of the overall plan focused on several guiding principles geared toward the strengthening of the core downtown and the enhancement of a traditional downtown sense of place. Among these principles were the following:

1. Expand the overall tax base within the core downtown and study area (depicted by the red dashed boundary above)
2. Continue to enhance Chocolate Avenue with pavement markings, median enhancements, traffic calming, and updated signal hardware
3. Grow a broad continuum of housing in the downtown, preferably on upper floors
4. Create more street-level activity and interactions to enhance walkability, pedestrian energy, and duration of visitor stays

5. Provide guidance and support for development patterns in select areas (noted above by color designation) with higher density, taller buildings, community supported uses, and creative fenestration to re-establish a traditional Main Street aesthetic on under utilized properties
6. Encourage the use of diverse construction materials, architectural styles, and built forms to continue the evolution of downtown and protect against homogeneity
7. Support projecting signs on buildings to enhance the traditional retail district aesthetic
8. When possible, explore and support structured parking within all redevelopment projects
9. Emphasize opportunities for adaptive re-use of high quality architectural stock along Caracas Avenue

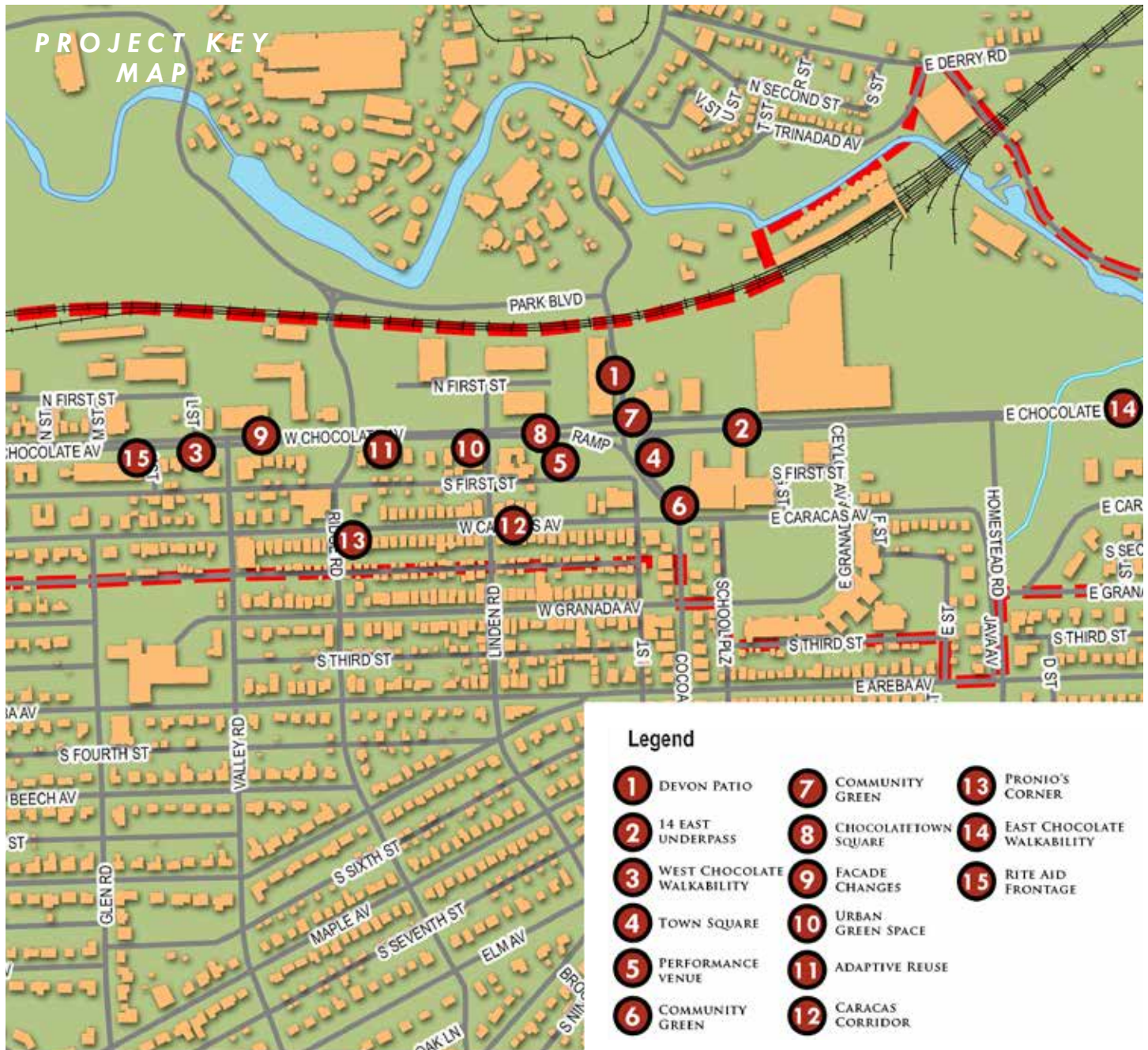
The map above graphically depicts several focus areas for economic development activities within the study area. Visualizations of a variety of preliminary enhancement options follow.

Preliminary Enhancement Options

Utilizing the results of the information gathering phases, including an area-wide photo inventory and field analysis, the following preliminary enhancement options were developed. Each design graphic embodies the character preferences expressed during the community meeting and depicts the enhancement in locations specifically noted during the planning process.

The intent of these graphics is not to portray the exact details and final design of the improvement, but rather reveal the inherent opportunities to further enhance the sense of place in downtown Hershey and interpret the community's voice in real-world settings.

The key map below indicates the location of the following 15 conceptual revitalization graphics.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

DEVON PATIO SPACE

Outside dining spaces are visual cues that a downtown is vibrant and open for business. The existing patio offering at Houlihan's is an important node in the downtown. The realignment of Park Avenue creates a new opportunity for the Press Building's other dining tenant. The proposed patio depicted will be positioned to take advantage of sweeping views of the Kissing Tower and other iconic elements of Hershey's skyline.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



14 EAST UNDERPASS

The existing underpass along East Chocolate Avenue has the potential to be a distinctive feature in the community. Borrowing heavily from the architectural ironwork details in the Community Center courtyard, the street level walls can be lightened and augmented with special paving to call attention to the space. The addition of precast columns, similarly inspired by the Community Center, will create beneficial continuity while planters can add seasonal color and texture.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

WEST CHOCOLATE WALKABILITY

Walkability is not simply defined by the presence of sidewalks. The sidewalks must provide the space and alignment to move people where and how they want to get around. Providing wider sidewalks ensures that users are able to walk side-by-side, push strollers, pass on-coming walkers, and generally utilize the sidewalk without barriers. Adding special paving elements and/or interpretive plaques will add character and interest as well.



EXISTING



PROPOSED



Preliminary Enhancement Options



TOWN SQUARE

The intersection of Rt. 743 and Rt. 422, or the more nostalgic, Chocolate and Cocoa Avenues, forms the nucleus of the downtown. The park spaces that envelop the southern quadrants of the intersection must function together during major events, while having their own unique sense of place and characteristics as standalone spaces. These green spaces further link the Hershey Theatre and the Hershey Volunteer Fire Company, both spaces that the public and visitors experience and visit routinely.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

PERFORMANCE VENUE

A dedicated performance venue enriches the sense of place for a community. Its permanence begins to suggest to residents and visitors that there is an emphasis on special events and activities in the core downtown. That level of activity and vibrancy leads to a positive economic impact to area businesses that provide necessary services to the attendees of such events. Additionally, the form and style of the structure can be an iconic element in a public space when it is not in use.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



COMMUNITY GREEN

Among many of Hershey's assets, the views and vistas must be held in the highest regard. Approaching the square from the south, the ability to frame a dynamic view of the past, present, and future is evident. The development of a flexible green plaza that continues the architectural details of the Community Center will help buffer the adjacent vehicular corridor and focus the attention towards the architectural icons in the background.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

COMMUNITY GREEN

The realignment of the Chocolate Avenue/ Cocoa Avenue intersection presents a wonderful opportunity to create a new gathering space in the core community. To enhance the sense of safety for pedestrians and welcome visitors to the center of town, the proposed plaza is elevated above the adjacent road network. The elevated plaza is proposed to extend the public space along the west side of the Community Center to effectively create a green forecourt to the building.

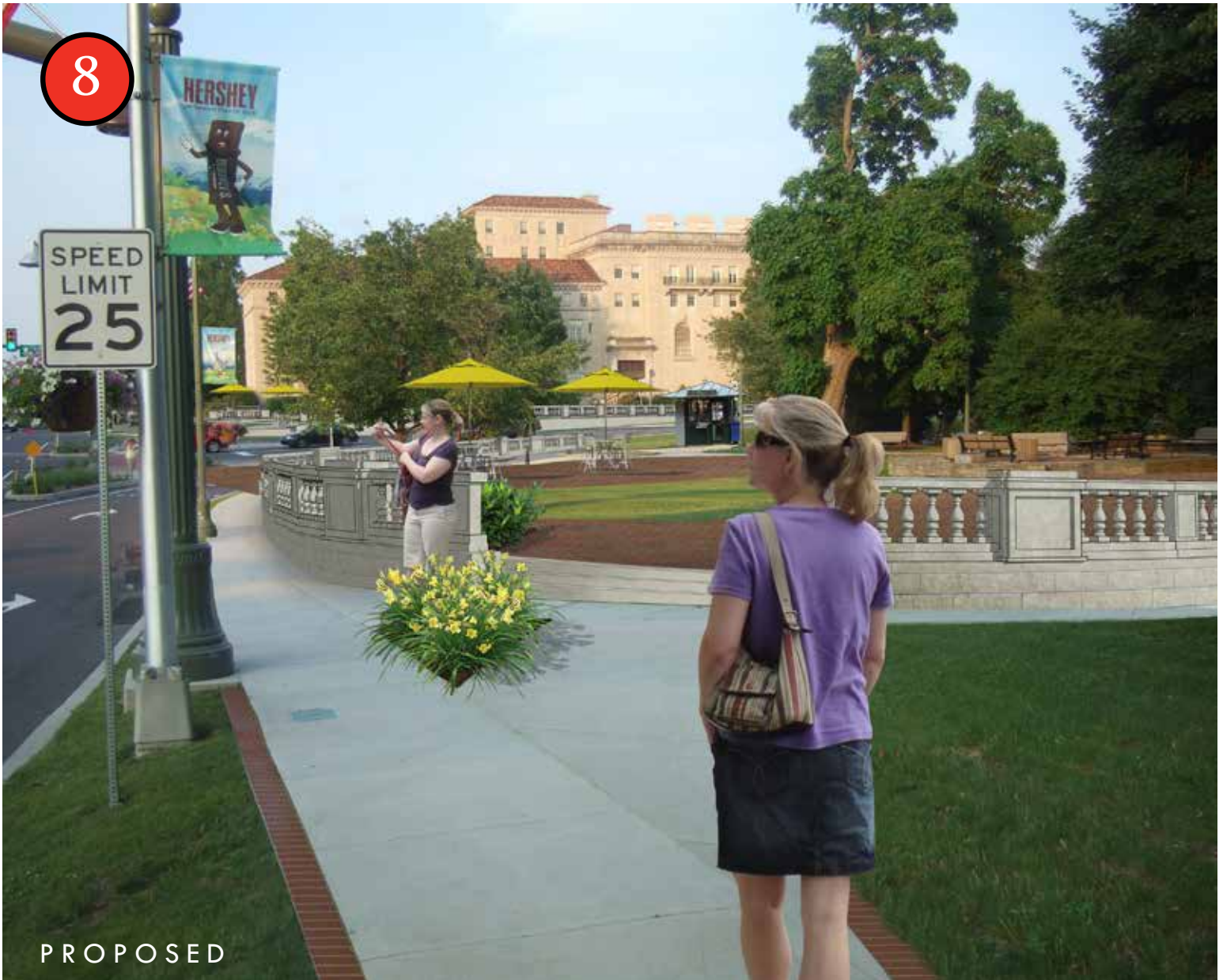


Preliminary Enhancement Options



CHOCOLATE TOWN SQUARE RENOVATIONS

To ensure that all four corners at the intersection of Chocolate Avenue and Cocoa Avenue form a cohesive visual experience, the material selections must be consistent with local precedents. The form and character of the retaining walls are inspired by and connected to the adjacent Hershey Community Center, an early 20th Century landmark building created by Milton Hershey. Matching walls and steps are proposed for the existing Chocolate Town Square to further enhance the safety of park users while creating a more usable program space.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

FACADE CHANGES

There are great buildings along Chocolate Avenue that are functioning very well but could celebrate their character and history with appropriate architectural planning and design. The presence of awnings presents an opportunity to dramatically alter the appearance of existing buildings with limited impact to the users. Accompanying façade changes could include new doors, windows, and most importantly, projecting (or blade) signage to highlight the business and animate the pedestrian environment.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



URBAN GREEN SPACE

Reducing impervious coverage in the core community will provide multiple benefits to the environment. The first benefit is an increased amount of infiltration for stormwater, which can have positive impacts on water quality, flooding, and erosion. Additionally, colorful shrub and perennial plantings in place of the paving add seasonal interest and provide a buffer for pedestrians from the traffic, while enhancing continuity within the streetscape.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Much of West Chocolate Avenue is spatially characterized by single family structures with consistently deep front yard setbacks. One suggested architectural approach includes a new patio and signage which will better engage the pedestrian and create a more animated and vibrant streetscape environment, by providing outdoor gathering and dining space within the core community. Within the public realm, landscape enhancements are proposed to enhance the water quality of stormwater runoff.



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Preliminary Enhancement Options



CARACAS CORRIDOR

Representing a convergence of residential and commercial development patterns, Caracas Avenue is an important transitional corridor within the core downtown. Current and future adaptive reuse of residential structures enriches the mixed use character. To promote pedestrian safety, walkability, and visual continuity within the core community, the plan proposes brick-patterned crosswalks, pedestrian-scaled signage, and additional street trees. These improvements characterize a consistent and cohesive approach to streetscape enhancements within the village.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

PRONIO'S CORNER

Planning for new development opportunities is an important aspect of the process, but celebrating and enhancing iconic local businesses and cultivating their continued growth and development is equally important. Pronio's Market is a community anchor where residents meet routinely. The conceptual plan depicts several additions to expand that community role by providing a new plaza with seasonal landscaping, ample space for public gathering, and façade improvements to the building which emphasize the history and legacy of the Pronio's business.



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Preliminary Enhancement Options



EAST CHOCOLATE WALKABILITY

Approaching downtown from the east, there is an opportunity to utilize the broad green space for added whimsy and interest for not only the pedestrian, but also the vehicular traveler, providing a noticeable change when you arrive in the core downtown. The concept depicts a subtle undulation in the sidewalk alignment, which will help direct the pedestrian to new views and perspectives. The provision of lighted bollards will enhance walkability for pedestrians.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

RITE AID FRONTAGE

The existing streetscape is characterized by broad setbacks for pedestrian areas. Within these setbacks, there are opportunities to add a strong sense of place to the community through design. Street trees will provide shade and overhead structure to the space while the inclusion of a buffer of colorful perennials along the curb line will allow for a variety of low maintenance, high impact plantings.

Furthermore, brick or other paving accents communicate a sense of destination in the paving.



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Conclusion

The Plan for Continued Revitalization is the result of intentional collaboration, broad public outreach, copious stakeholder input, creative vision for the future, and a reverence for the history and heritage of Hershey.

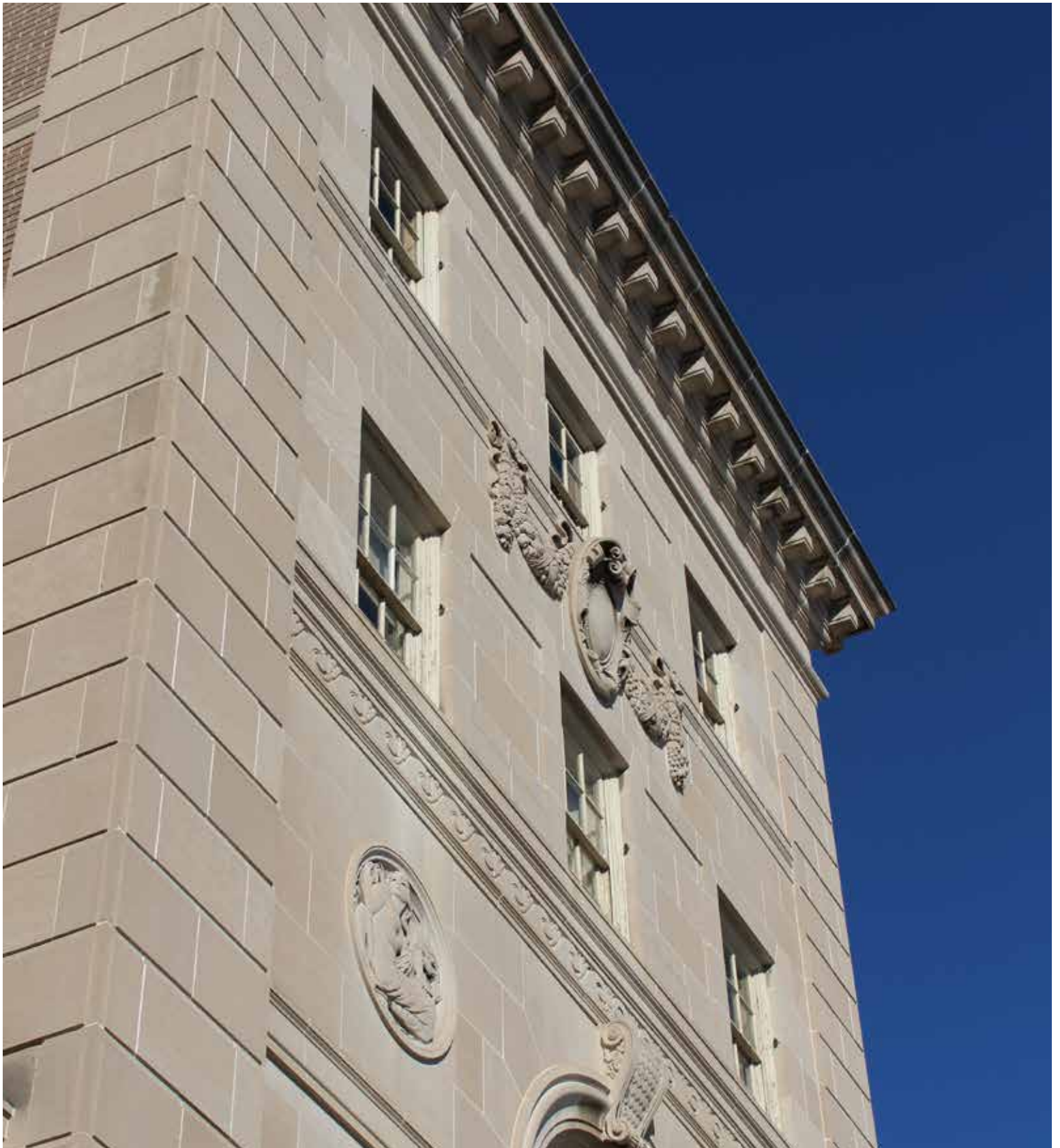
It is also a living document that must evolve as implementation occurs. Many of the strategies and action items in this plan document are already in progress which speaks to the appetite and energy for fresh perspectives and an aspirational blueprint for the core downtown.

Next Steps

The road ahead is defined by the 23 unique strategies each focused on the long-term vitality and wellness of the community, making downtown Hershey amazing, and stewarding the legacy of Milton S. Hershey.

The accompanying 77 action items now become the focus of implementation activities for the community. The success of the plan will be measured in part by these metrics and in part by community sentiment.





DERCK & EDSON

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