



**LYONS DISTRICT
CLINTON, IOWA**

Downtown Assessment Visit
June 20 & 21, 2006

Consultant Team:

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Iowa Downtown

Resource Center



INTRODUCTION

The Clinton City Council, Clinton Great Places Task Force, and the Lyons Business and Professional Association contracted with the Iowa Downtown Resource Center, Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED), to conduct a Downtown Assessment Visit which included the following services: "Coordinate, implement, and participate in a two-day assessment visit in the Lyons District in Clinton, Iowa on June 20 and 21, 2006. The assessment visit team will be comprised of two downtown development professionals. The team will participate in a familiarization tour of the community, a downtown walking tour, interview local community leaders, assess the current state of downtown, and develop oral and written observations and recommendations."

The Assessment Team conducted interviews with 66+ individuals representing a variety of public and private sector stakeholders to learn about the Lyons District's development history and inquire about their aspirations for the future. The report's summary and recommendations are based upon this input, the familiarization activities and the Team's extensive working knowledge in downtown economic development. The community of Lyons was established over 170 years ago and the Lyons District began its development as a traditional downtown. With the growth of the nearby community of Clinton, city boundaries were obscured and eventually Lyons merged with the city of Clinton. Today, this historic commercial district is referred to as the Lyons District. Because of its origin, present day building stock, and strong business presence, downtown revitalization and preservation strategies are applicable to the Lyons District. For the purpose of this report, the Lyons District may also be referred to as "downtown" or "the district".

The Assessment Team included two development professionals:

Debi Flanders CMSM, Downtown Center Consultant, Iowa Downtown Resource Center, Iowa Department of Economic Development, Des Moines, Iowa. Flanders began her career at IDED in 2000, serving in the capacity of Community Consultant for the first three years. She worked with economic development organizations and city and county governments in a 34 county region, providing technical assistance and guidance in tourism, commercial and industrial economic development. In her present capacity as Downtown Center Consultant, her responsibilities entail working with Main Street communities and providing assistance related to downtown commercial development and revitalization to cities throughout Iowa. Flanders' economic development career began as the Main Street Sigourney Program Director for nine years and Director of the Sigourney Area Development Corporation for 4 years. She earned Certified Main Street Managers (*CMSM*) credentials through the Certification in Professional Main Street Downtown Management Institute, a National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center course. She is also a graduate of the Heartland Basic Economic Development Course and the Economic Development Institute. She has served as a consultant for the National Main Street Center and a presenter at state, regional and national conferences. Flanders is a graduate of Truman State University, earning a Bachelors Degree in Science Education and a Masters Degree in Art Education. Past occupations include teaching, cottage business owner and downtown retail.

Cary Darrah CMSM, Executive Director, Community Main Street, Cedar Falls, Iowa. Cary Anglum was born and raised in Cedar Falls and literally grew up on Main Street. She worked at the family department store from the time she was tall enough to stock the thread rack until Willoughby's Department Store closed in the mid-70s. After graduating from Cedar Falls High School she attended and graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in merchandising. Before becoming the Community Main Street Director in 1997, Cary's work experience included: owner / operator of 4th & Main Deli and Townsend Place Bed and Breakfast as well as real estate agent for Oakridge Realtors. Cary completed the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Certified Main Street Managers (*CMSM*) course. While serving in her present capacity as director of Community Main Street, Cedar Falls has received several prestigious local, state, and national awards for their revitalization efforts, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Great American Main Street Award in 2002. Cedar Falls was also named one of the states first Cultural and Entertainment Districts by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs in 2004.

OVERVIEW

The Downtown Assessment Visit report and recommendations for the Lyons District in Clinton, Iowa, are based on the Team's professional experiences, totaling over 25 years. Their beliefs are grounded by the philosophy that in order for a traditional downtown to re-establish itself as the social and commercial center of the community – *the physical heart and soul of the city* – downtown must become more valuable physically, economically, socially and politically.

The dialog with the community begins with the community's need to understand why downtown is important.

- 1) Downtown serves as the symbol of the community's economic health. The commercial activity and vibrancy of downtown is a reflection of the health and investment within the entire community.
- 2) The viability of downtown is important to both public and private sectors. Government officials and taxpayers have a vested interest in the health and viability of downtown and the valuation of its commercial properties. Since the welfare of downtown is both a public and private concern, it is in everyone's best interest to form a partnership to address its revitalization. Both sectors have resources and expertise to contribute to the revitalization process.
- 3) The local quality of life (livability) is reflected through the condition of downtown. Today, young workers will change their employment and careers multiple times, many of them basing those decisions solely upon where they prefer to live. Quality of life is a key factor in industrial, commercial and professional business and employee recruitment.
- 4) Downtown reflects local pride and the values of the community. Much can be learned about a community and its values by exploring its downtown.
- 5) Downtown is a functioning, living museum. It speaks volumes about how the community began developing, how it has evolved and what influences have been instrumental in its development. The Lyons District is unique--with its own character and history that sets it apart from any other place.

The health of downtown has a direct impact upon the entire community's economic well being. They are inter-related. Downtown revitalization IS economic development. Downtown is a prime location for incubating small business. It is an affordable location for independent businesses, and is one of the community's major employers. The commercial center provides a compact environment with multiple stories for commerce, government and living spaces, thus reducing sprawl and the cost associated in extending city services and infrastructure. The pedestrian friendly environment is convenient and accessible, serving as the center for not only commercial trade but also cultural, social and civic engagement. Historic downtown districts can serve as heritage tourism attractions. A building's condition, the business' viability and maximization of the building's square footage for income generation affect not only the property's value, but also the value of the neighboring properties and real estate in the entire community. When the downtown is healthy and vibrant, it can "*pay its fair share*" of the community's tax burden, thus lessening the tax burdens on residential and industrial properties.

Downtowns in general, look and function differently than they did just a few decades ago. The Lyons District is no exception. External forces have had dramatic effects upon the district's character and business viability. Increased mobility, commuter trends, and technological connectedness have significantly altered retail business. Regional and even global competition (big box retail, lifestyle centers, e-tailing, shopping networks, catalog sales) have expanded consumers' options. Women make 70% to 80% of the household purchases and with the increased number of women in the workforce; they are making the majority of their purchases on weekends and weekday evenings. Different generations of consumers have different spending habits and expectations. Downtown businesses are finding they need to think and operate differently: specialized products and services, draw more customers from larger geographic areas, provide authentic and unique experiences for their customers, establish more convenient store hours, provide exemplary personalized customer service, exceed customer expectations, and/or identify their niches and customer base and operate as cooperative units with their marketing and promotional efforts.

Internal forces at work in downtowns include the investments or lack of investments to the buildings and infrastructure. The use of improper procedures, materials, and techniques and inappropriate infill construction over the years have compromised the historic integrity of individual properties, impacted property values, and altered the overall appearance of the district. The under-utilization of buildings has reduced the potential for property owners to maximize their income, which directly affects the amount of capital available for reinvestment in the structures. Covered, boarded up, and scaled down display windows have reduced and/or eliminated product advertising space and created barriers between the businesses and the customers. Inconsistency in business signage (unprofessionally designed, in disrepair, obsolete, or lacking altogether) affects the customers' expectations of the value of the goods and services they will find inside the store. It is important to note that alterations were not made with malicious intent to harm the historic character of a particular building and adversely affect adjacent properties. Rather, building and business owners were seeking possible solutions to the external influences that were changing commerce in downtown. They did not realize that when character-defining elements were destroyed, removed or concealed, it not only affected the value of the individual property, the modifications altered the image of downtown as a whole and has been a contributing factor in its decline.

Internal and external forces have substantially changed the dynamics of downtowns. When a downtown's physical and economic value diminishes, its social and political values are also affected. The more varied the functions of downtown, the more often people have reasons to come downtown at different times of the day, thus adding more value to downtown. Promotional venues that attract people to downtown for social, cultural, recreational and retail experiences increase citizens' appreciation of the downtown through positive associations and interactions. This association between the fond memories that promotions create and the built environment in which they occur, becomes a strong emotional connection. Participants will care about downtown and feel they have more of a stake in its future. Because of these pleasant experiences, it is more likely the participants will come back to make purchases at a later date.

It is important to note, downtown belongs to everyone and the revitalization process requires a strong commitment from all sectors of the community. Strategies need to be developed to promote downtown and stimulate appropriate reinvestments in downtown properties and businesses. Educating the stakeholders and changing attitudes takes time and persistence, but is a critical component to successfully revitalizing downtown. As understanding grows, citizens will become more actively engaged in the implementation of strategies to improve downtown's economic and physical condition. The public and private sectors must form a partnership to pool their resources to address the future of downtown and stimulate and direct positive change. Through this assessment process, the Lyons District has taken a positive step in addressing the district's future. Now, additional actions are necessary to improve the climate for reinvestments, improve the viability of existing businesses, increase customer traffic, and attract new business to fill the vacant and under-utilized properties, invest in building improvements and increase downtown's uses, thereby increasing its value. Change will not occur overnight. The successes will be incremental and should be celebrated. Failures will occur and lessons will be learned.

The intent of this document is to assist the community in its continual journey to improve downtown physically, economically, socially and politically. This assessment occurred in a relatively short span of time and addresses the issues participants identified as important during the visit. Despite limited time, the Assessment Team interviewed approximately 66+ individuals representing a cross section of stakeholders in the community. This assessment should serve as a call to action and provide the community with a starting point in formulating strategies necessary to address the very serious issue of saving downtown for future generations. This report cannot and does not provide all of the answers. Ultimately, the Lyons District must explore their options, decide what is relevant and realistic, and acquire additional information and resources as they address downtown's future.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed dependable citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

-Margaret Mead-

"ONE WORD" DESCRIPTIONS OF CLINTON

**indicates responses voiced multiple times*

The Assessment Team asked interviewees for "one word" descriptions of Clinton. Collectively Clinton was described as:

- Caring*
- Potential*
- Friendly*
- Home*
- Hometown*
- Great town*
- Proudful
- Pride
- Promising
- Ready
- Fragmented
- Neutral
- River
- Dysfunctional
- Homey
- Small
- Viable
- Slow moving
- Negativity (*sometimes*)
- Cheap
- Giving
- Dead (*compared to 30 yrs ago*)
- Behind the times
- Stagnant
- Helpful
- Great
- Picturesque
- Moving
- Family
- Progressive
- Progressing
- Compact
- Blue collar
- Industrious
- City of pride
- Compassionate
- Active
- Hopefully dynamic
- Work in progress
- Improving
- Dump
- Uniqueness
- History
- Long (*geographically*)
- Lifelong
- Economic concern
- Mediocre-growing
- Fractured
- Divided
- Anticipation
- Dynamic
- Incomplete
- Messy
- CAVE (*citizens against virtually everything*)
- Eyesore
- Growth
- Opportunities
- Hungry
- Revitalizing
- Optimistic
- Rebirth
- Visionary
- River town
- Unkempt
- **Students' Responses**
- Changing
- Calm
- Boring
- Smelly
- Homely
- Family
- Home
- Declining (population & condition)

"ONE WORD" DESCRIPTIONS OF THE LYONS DISTRICT'S DOWNTOWN

**Indicates responses voiced multiple times*

The Assessment Team asked interviewees for "one word" descriptions of the Lyons District's downtown. Collectively, their downtown was described as:

- Struggling*
- Potential*
- Eye appealing*
- Disjointed*
- Unified*
- Unique*
- Friendly*
- Close knit*
- Growing*
- Neighborly*
- Caring*
- Bond
- Like family/family
- The Best
- Under-utilization
- Homey
- Privatized (no chain stores)
- Family owned
- Visitor friendly
- Developing
- Aggressive somewhat
- Aggressive
- Streetscape
- Unknown
- Charming potential
- Convenient
- Niche
- Comfortable
- Community
- Possibilities
- Neighborhood
- Committed (mainstay businesses)
- Historic
- History
- Teamwork
- Proud
- Innovative (events)
- Cohesive
- Competitive (-)
- Re-inventing
- Frustrating
- Holding on
- Small
- Helpful
- Belong
- Independent
- Loyal
- Quaint
- Sense of place
- Energetic
- Disconnected
- Welcoming
- Individual pride
- Mismatched
- Skippy (gaps between buildings)
- Self contained
- Safe
- Taverns
- Determined
- Stagnant
- Provincial
- Tight knit

Students' Responses

- Nothing
- Empty
- Abandoned
- Small
- History
- Kind of pretty
- Clean
- Cozy
- Old-fashioned
- Loyal

CLINTON'S AND LYONS DISTRICT'S ASSETS

**Indicates assets voiced multiple times*

Interviewees were asked to identify Clinton's and/or the Lyons District's assets. Collectively, they responded with the following list of assets:

Quality of Life

- Parks*
 - Eagle Point Park*
 - all 3 major parks
 - other pocket parks
- Recreation System*
- Picturesque setting
- Topography
- Location—by river and close proximity to Chicago
- River* and riverfront*
 - completed improvements
 - beach proposal
 - drive with river view proposal
 - saw mill museum proposal
 - new marina with dock proposal
 - North River Drive*—will be huge asset connecting the riverfront to the Lyons District
- Cultural amenities
 - literary clubs
 - ballet
 - symphony
 - theatre
- Choices—plenty of things for people to do/a variety of things to offer
- Affordable to buy and live in Clinton
- Quiet and safe/low crime rate
- Family roots are deep
- Nice size
- Ease of getting around town
- Clinton has done a good job planning development
- Good quality of life
- Variety of churches
- Schools*/school district
- Attitudes of the principals are great
- 2 Colleges*
- Victory Center-free clinic
- Nice housing/nice residential areas
- Young growing industry/jobs
- ADM—huge asset and strong loyalty to Clinton
- Thomson Prison—potential for great economic impact

Tourism/Lyons District Promotions

- Calendar of events/great events*
 - Farmers Market*
 - Christmas Walk*
 - Annual events—no cost to participants but generates traffic
 - District is self-sufficient with regard to events
- Tourism, existing and potential
 - great community tourist attractions in general*
 - arboretum
 - river attractions
 - showboat is great—could be an even bigger draw
 - Lumber King baseball team and Vision Iowa grant improvements to the facility
 - Julie Allesee works hard to include the district in tourism oriented marketing efforts
 - District's unique heritage and its potential use to promote the district as a heritage tourism destination
 - McEleney gave the property to Kiwanis for tourist related development*

Lyons District/Businesses

- Businesses in the district*
 - can take care of majority of consumers' needs within the 3 block area*
 - variety*
 - convenience is a real advantage for Lyons
 - mom & pop stores*/only 1 chain store in the district/independently owned*/ locally owned businesses strengthen district*
 - stability and longevity*/multiple generation-owned & operated*
 - businesses are doing well*
 - potential for business growth—seeing it now
 - Rastrelli's & Tuscany center
 - night life with so many restaurant and bar establishments/several taverns—pub crawls
 - the only 2 certified watchmakers in Iowa are located in the Lyons District
 - bike shop generates lots of traffic
 - deli and bakery

Lyons District/Businesses (*continued*)

- Business owners
 - very cooperative and supportive--a major advantage*
 - support each other*/strong loyalty
 - promote each other—strong referral*
 - support the events and activities*
 - strong networking—huge advantage
- Some investments have been made in properties
- Community Initiated Development (i.e. ice cream shop)
- Lyons District has become more of a destination*
- So much potential right now
- Tourism related attractions at the river can stimulate business activity*
- Like the small town feel of the district
- Four Square Park* (great place for events)
- Beautiful historic churches located in the district
- Walkable district

People/Volunteerism

- Strong loyalty*
- Family roots
- Have some generational residents that are committed to improving community*
- Brenda Thorton
- People*
- Sense of pride
- Care about each other
- Level of volunteerism
 - Small group committed and donate to community—a lot of volunteer time
 - LBPA—exceptional group of people willing to do things
 - Eagerness and willingness to volunteer*
 - Work together-stand together
 - More folks in Lyons District are doers

Students' Responses

- River*
- Close knit community
- Eagle Point Park*
- Good childhood memories
- Cosmic bowling

CLINTON'S AND LYONS DISTRICT'S CHALLENGES AND/OR DESIRES

**Indicates responses voiced multiple times*

The Assessment Team asked interviewees to identify the challenges and/or their desires for change regarding the Lyons District and Clinton. Collectively, they responded with the following:

Quality of Life

- Not much youth or young adult recreation
- Need better paying jobs*
- Difficult for young professionals to make a living in Clinton
- Need to keep our young people in the community*
- North Clinton and South Clinton*
 - need to solidify and break the boundaries/history of animosity/act as if they are two different cities/history of the oak tree
 - Lyons District really struggles within context of larger community—need to work together better to make opportunities for all
 - Lyons needs to be connected with the greater Clinton area with some riverfront improvements
 - City needs to make investments on the north end
 - frustration with the City over Lyons District infrastructure improvements and support of requests (trash cans, traffic issues, taking projects seriously under consideration, Four Square Park, etc.)
 - City doesn't take Lyons Districts' needs seriously
 - police don't come down to the Lyons District at night to patrol
 - Great Places designation provides incredible opportunity for building local capacity and strengthening relationships between the City of Clinton, the two commercial districts, and other entities
- Local economy in general*
- High property taxes*/big gap--inequity in property tax assessments (100% commercial vs. 60% residential)*
- City and Chamber do a poor job saying "thank you" (i.e. folks weren't publicly recognized for working on Great Places proposal, etc.)
- City wide condition of the city streets is terrible*
- Need to rename the Mill Creek Parkway to Eagle Point Parkway
- Business Tech Center empty in industrial park

Promotions/Tourism

- 3 highways but they don't bring traffic into the Lyons District
- Bridges closed—affects access to businesses in the Lyons District—both tourist and commuter*
- 19th Avenue—will cause additional traffic to bypass the Lyons District to Mill Creek*
- Riverfront and North River Drive projects*
 - imperative to approve and fund the North River Drive project—part of the funding Great Places strategic plan and a minimal cost compared to other aspects of the initiative
 - North River Drive project—not sure it will be good for the district
 - need to conduct study to determine justification of the North River Drive project
 - road along the river (with a river view) that would connect to the Lyons District Main Street and bring tourists into the district to shop*
 - need signage once traffic is redirected
 - riverfront development projects/need to make Lyons District riverfront a destination*/potential is untapped/benefits residents and tourists
 - once riverfront development occurs, need to tie the district to that attraction to draw visitors into downtown/some type of visual connection like streetscape improvements
 - purchase a carousel—riverfront tourist attraction
 - development of sawmill museum*
 - need a beach within walking distance of Lyons District
 - need fishing pier or boardwalk
 - need hotel on Lyons riverfront*
 - need a restaurant in the Lyons District with a river view*
 - need a marina with a dock*
 - need hotel and marina combination
 - turn McEleney lot into mini golf course
- Gambling boat—get rid of it/*get it as far away as possible/doesn't help the Lyons District whatsoever

Promotions/Tourism *(continued)*

- Marketing the district*
 - local and regional/need some type of brand-gimmick to market effectively
 - need to capitalize on the district's history and use it to market the district*
 - need to attract more people outside the district to Lyons' events
 - Clinton Chamber newsletter only reports on downtown events/we need to build a stronger partnership for promoting
 - some Clinton residents and tourism attraction staff aren't familiar with the district businesses and don't make referrals to visitors
 - we're not "selling" what we have/don't toot our own horn
 - tourism has untapped potential—we don't promote our cultural opportunities
 - WPA projects--need to promote to visitors
- need to attract more unique businesses to the district*
- internet shopping—global competition
- in general, City doesn't act like they want new businesses—road blocks and no tax breaks
- too many empty storefronts*
- sprawl development on outskirts impacting downtown and contributing to storefront vacancies*/eventually bypass will too

Lyons District/Businesses

- LBPA
 - needs to be involved more with the side-street businesses—not always recognized or asked to become involved
 - LBPA needs "meaningful" funding (hire staff, stimulate physical improvements, etc.)
 - need to get more business owners involved
- Education*—making people more aware/appreciate/value the Lyons District
- Old oak tree has +/- associations with the district*/ could replant an oak tree as a landmark for the district again
- Businesses in the district
 - Lyons District businesses need to be supported*
 - lack of money coming into the district*
 - need to get more people to "shop locally"
 - continued "survivability" of the businesses and being able to provide diverse products
 - merchants are struggling but optimistic
 - no transition planning strategies in place once owners retire
 - Lyons turning into primarily a service business district/voids of certain products
 - loss of the anchor business, McEleney's--substantial negative affect on customer traffic*/was a magnet for the district*
 - need another grocery store in the Lyons District*
- Building and property investment
 - several empty lots/gaps create a disconnect between businesses
 - potential for infill buildings*
 - City needs to help stimulate investment-development of vacant properties
 - condition of some properties/need to invest in the properties*
 - need a building improvement incentive program
 - tenant vs. owner occupied vs. absentee ownership creates building investment challenges
 - district seems to lack the developers to invest
- Can't develop east (*river*) or west (*residential*)
- Parking
 - major concern*
 - spaces aren't the issue—there are plenty of spaces, just not always right in front of store
 - merchants and employees park in front
- Street and streetscape improvements needed*/ need to modernize infrastructure*
- Vacant school building
- Once new church is completed, 2 beautiful, historic churches will be vacant in the district

People/Volunteerism

- Too many people with "negative against everything attitude"/CAVE people (*citizens against virtually everything*)
- General feeling of apathy
- No diversity
- Lack of pride

Students' Responses

- Activities all for adults or young kids—nothing for teens and younger adults--no place to hang out*
 - would like a miniature golf course
 - would like a discount movie theater or drive in theater
 - coffee shop targeted to college age customer
 - entertainment oriented businesses geared toward high school and college age students
- Events are poorly advertised to kids and young adults
- Education*
 - prevailing attitude in recent years--the community doesn't support education (*bond issues have failed and support of programs not evident*)
 - with so many program cuts, students are finding it harder to compete on the college level/the cuts and lack of appropriate programs in high school don't prepare students for college level courses/quality of education has declined in recent years
 - students are disillusioned—wouldn't consider coming back to Clinton because of the struggle over program cuts and poor quality education*
 - high turnover of teachers
- Liked growing up here but don't want to develop their career here
- Love the river and wish there was more use and better access*
- Large elderly population

"COMMUNITY QUOTES"

During the interview process, the following comments were shared:

"If it costs money, people are against it."

"There are so many people here that are willing to do things and not for their personal gain. They are genuinely concerned about the Lyons District."

"City and the Chamber do a very poor job of saying "Thank You". To this day, I don't know who they are (people that worked on the Great Places proposal). It would be nice to walk down a street and see a person that did the work on a project and say "thanks".

"I would like to see us (Lyons District, Clinton Chamber and City) work more closely together in all areas. All benefit from cooperative efforts."

"As the older generation leaves, there will be a stronger merger of Lyons and Clinton. A lot of younger residents don't realize there was ever that division between the two. So many people don't even know there was a big oak tree...."

"The ghost of the old oak tree is still much alive...and the autonomy it represented. This town remains divided."

"There is a general feeling of apathy right now. It is much easier to complain than to be involved."

"We are one city, but we act as if we are two cities. We have to fight for the attention to get anything from the City."

"Healthy animosity is good." (regarding Lyons District and downtown Clinton)

"I don't think of the Lyons District as being a separate entity at all."

"The Lyons District struggles within the context of the larger community. Protecting what is in the district's best interest isn't considered important to others."

"What has the Clinton Chamber done for me.....nothing." (Lyons business owner)

"Even members on the Clinton Chamber board will go to Davenport to buy their car. Unless we absolutely can't purchase it in Lyons, we don't buy out of town."

"If I had to grade us, we're a 'D' community with the potential of being an 'A'."

"COMMUNITY QUOTES" *(continued)*

"Our streets all over Clinton are awful. I don't ever recall seeing an actual street replaced. We just keep patching them."

"Lyons...it is re-inventing itself again."

"We (Clinton) always have these great ideas, but nothing ever seems to get done."

"Clinton is making some strides in the right direction.....we're progressing but I wouldn't consider us progressive."

"Clinton does what it can with what it has to work with. We didn't become one of the Great Places pilots without working at it."

"Clinton is a 'City of Pride'."

"I enjoy living here. It is a wonderful community. We don't appreciate it like we should." (newer resident)

"I had been looking for a place to move to for a job opportunity. I came here to interview and liked what I saw. It was also located in close proximity to my extended family. Once I saw the Lyons District, I didn't consider anywhere else."

"I think we are hungry in the sense of wanting change and improving ourselves. We've got to do something for ourselves."

"I'm really proud of my town—I just love it!"

"Family—if you need something, people are there for you."

"It's safe—my children can ride their bikes around the neighborhood."

"Our schools are second to none."

"The Lyons District has to fight for everything we want." (related to their frustrations with the City)

"On a per capita basis, there are more folks in the Lyons District that are doers—there's a bunch of them. This relates to their sense of pride. The Lyons District is just ready....."

"The ratio is pretty high in the Lyons District regarding willingness and eagerness to roll up our sleeves and be involved. Much higher than in downtown Clinton."

"We don't 'toot our own horn' loud enough sometimes. And we are sometimes at fault because we aren't always persistent when we ask (the City) for something we need for the Lyons District."

"Lyons District needs to modernize the infrastructure with the City's help."

"I think the Lyons District is GREAT....but it could be even better."

"Pretty much everything I need I can purchase in the district. I bet I drive maybe 5 miles a week. I don't have to."

"As a newer business in the district—we felt we were accepted right away....fit in and have made great friends."

"In the Lyons District, everybody knows everybody and the business owners are in their business."

"You can walk the three blocks in the Lyons District and know everyone you see."

"The Lyons District needs something more to bring people into the district."

"I just don't have the volume—customer traffic...."

"The Lyons District is a little disconnected, but the people are very determined...."

"There's a need for investments (buildings and streetscape) in the district....we need to create a sense of place."

"They (downtown Clinton business owners) are more competitive down there. Us here? We realize to make Lyons successful; we have to make all of us successful. We have to work together."

"The boat—it doesn't help the Lyons District. People don't shop that are going to the boat. They just gamble and leave."

"When you drive into town, I don't like the first impression we make with the debris and junk in the yards."

"COMMUNITY QUOTES" *(continued)*

"Development on the west edge has hurt Lyons. The City needs to support the northern end now--as much as it has the downtown and west side."

"I think we've done a good job with a balanced approach to development in the city."

"The billboard on 3rd Avenue advertises 'Shop Downtown Clinton' and doesn't promote the Lyons District, too."

"The riverfront isn't only downtown, it's on this northern end, too. It's just as beautiful and should be developed—make it a riverfront destination--so tourists will also enjoy this part of Clinton and be drawn into the Lyons District."

"North River Road project versus investing in extensive streetscape improvements—I don't think it's a contest. Investment in the streetscape will generate more tax dollars than traffic that is routed on the North River Road. An attractive streetscape will help create that sense of place."

"The North River Drive project isn't a City priority. It is frustrating. It would require a very small percentage of the monetary resources and could be completed in a relatively short time frame. It is crucial to the viability and sustainability of the district."

"We are wasting the riverfront. We have the ugliest marina and worst streets."

"Riverfront development in the Lyons District area is so crucial to us. It is almost like we hide it (the river) from others."

"When McEleney's moved their car dealership out of the Lyons District, it made a big difference in the amount of traffic. It hurt the district because they drew so many customers into the area. Their customers could see there were other businesses they could shop in."

"These empty lots don't do us any good....We need the traffic—volume. I just don't have the customers. McEleney's...when they were located down here....you wouldn't believe how much customer traffic they generated for other Lyons District businesses."

"It's our locally owned, independent businesses in the Lyons District that strengthens our economy and sets us apart from other shopping districts."

"We don't address the different stratifications of the community—40% to 50% of our students are on the reduced price lunch program. This is a huge area of concern and the lower income of so many of our residents has a direct affect on our businesses. People can only purchase the necessities and not the frills."

Students' Responses

"I wouldn't want to see kids have to fight the way we did." (Comment regarding frustration with issues in the school system over programs they wanted to protect.)

"If the educational system keeps declining like it is, I wouldn't want to come back here to live and raise a family after college." (Students were asked if they would consider coming back to Clinton after they graduated college. Initially one student responded that it would depend on job opportunities, but once several others commented about the school system, the student reconsidered and responded in this way.)

"A Clinton graduate came back and taught in the school system and told me that the school system had changed (declined) drastically in just 4 years."

"I'd move to somewhere like Clinton." (Response when asked if they'd consider coming back to Clinton once they graduated.)

"Good place to grow up. It is safe."

"It's a good place to grow up and raise kids, but there aren't career opportunities."

"It's a good size...not too small and not too big."

"It does get boring. No one really comes back. They just all want to graduate college and go elsewhere."

"Seems like a lot of people get cancer. Maybe it is something in the environment."

ASSESSMENT TEAM'S OPINIONS

The Assessment Team bases the following remarks on the pre-visit packet of information, the driving tour, walking tour, and discussions with local business owners and community representatives:

- The Team reviewed the pre-visit packet of information, reviewed the Iowa Great Places proposal, and also conducted a web search prior to the visit. The following is what they discovered:
 - 1) The Clinton website was informative and was easy enough to maneuver. However, no specific information about the Lyons District was readily discovered in the search.
 - 2) The Team accessed the community information through the Iowa Department of Economic Development's website (*LOIS*). Information seemed to be complete.
 - 3) The pre-packet information included a helpful business list with descriptions of products and services, LBPD organizational information, event listing, cooperative light pole banner plan, newsletter, maps, "Clinton Map and Street Guide", "Clinton Visitors Guide", "Antiques, Gifts & Crafts" cooperative marketing piece, and examples of advertisements.
 - 4) The Iowa Great Places proposal and the North River Drive Concept Plan provided the Team with valuable insight regarding plans for future improvements and developments along the riverfront.
 - 5) The Team acquired U.S. Census data on the community of Clinton:
 - 2000 population was 27,772
 - 0-19 27.6%
 - 20-34 17.7%
 - 35-54 28.2%
 - 55-64 9.4%
 - 65+ 17.1%
 - Median household income \$34,159 in 1999 (U.S. \$41,994)
 - 51.1% below \$34,999
 - 18.9% \$35,000-49,999
 - 19.9% \$50,000-74,999
 - 12.5% below poverty level
 - 69.3% owner occupied housing
 - Education
 - 14.9% bachelors degree or higher
 - 28.8% some college/associates degree
 - Mean travel time to work 17.2 miles
 - Ancestry 36.7% German 15.3% Irish English 8.5%
- The Team interviewed 66+ individuals representing various Lyons District stakeholders. The vast majority of participants represented the business interest. The student group was comprised of 8 high school and college age students. The following is a review of some of the more prevalent opinions:
 - 1) One word descriptions of Clinton voiced multiple times: caring, potential, friendly, home, hometown and great town. Students' responses included: changing, calm, boring, smelly, homely, family, home, and declining (population and condition).
 - 2) One word descriptions of the Lyons District voiced multiple times: struggling, potential, eye appealing, disjointed, unified, friendly, close knit, growing, neighborly, and caring. Students' responses included nothing, empty, abandoned, small, history, kind of pretty, clean, cozy, old-fashioned, and loyal.
 - 3) When interviewees were asked what Clinton's and the Lyons District's assets were, they responded consistently in several areas.
 - Every group cited the river and/or riverfront potential.
 - In regard to the riverfront, overwhelmingly, the North River Drive plan was identified as having the potential for the greatest impact on the Lyons District in the near future.

- The parks in general and Eagle Point Park specifically, the recreation system, and educational institutions ranked very high.
 - In regard to the Lyons District, strong sentiment exists in regard to the great events held in the district and the committed people willing to make a difference.
 - Clinton's existing tourist attractions were cited as great assets.
 - The Lyons District's unique heritage was considered by many to be extremely important, including its potential use to promote the district as a heritage tourism destination.
 - In regard to the Lyons District's businesses, many interviewees remarked about the significance of all of the district's commercial enterprises being independently owned with the exception of one. Several comments were made about the stability of a number of well established businesses (25 to 50 years old) that have remained owned and operated through multiple generations.
 - The Lyons District's business owners' networking, referral, and support of each other are considered major advantages.
 - The students' list was short but included the river, Eagle Point Park, and cosmic bowling. They indicated Clinton is a close knit community and they have good childhood memories.
- 4) When asked to identify the challenges and/or desires for change regarding Clinton and the Lyons District, interviewees were very vocal and passionate about several aspects.
- The local economy in general, the need to keep young people in the community, and the difficulty for young professionals to make a living in Clinton were important to the interviewees. Serious concerns were raised over the high property taxes and the inequity in property taxes of commercial versus residential.
 - Participants voiced frustration with the city leaders regarding the lack of investment in infrastructure. They cited the poor condition of all of the city streets and the City's disinterest in taking the Lyons District's needs seriously and investing in its downtown area.
 - There were major concerns raised about the history of animosity between the Lyons District and Clinton. Some indicated this has been perpetuated by the City's indifference to the district's requests to invest in physical improvements on the "north end". Interviewees remarked that the "south end" has been the beneficiary of the City's monetary resources for quite some time. Sentiment was strong that there needs to be a connector (riverfront transportation and streetscape links) between the Lyons District and downtown Clinton. They believe this would help break down the "boundaries", solidify the relationships, and nurture more cooperativeness.
 - The "oak tree" is still obviously important to many as it was brought in every group. Some participants could not relate to the historic significance of the oak tree because they were either too young or were newer residents. Opinions varied as to whether it was considered a positive aspect of the district's heritage (a landmark that identified the Lyons District's gateway) or if it served in the past as a statement of autonomy which aided and abetted the animosity that some consider still present today.
 - Clinton's Iowa Great Places riverfront development plans and the North River Drive component were discussed in every group. Many ideas for riverfront improvements and tourist oriented attractions were shared. With the exception of one interviewee, there was general consensus that the funding and completion of the North River Drive project was crucial to the long term viability and sustainability of the Lyons District. Interviewees stated that within the big scheme of the initiative, this development would require a very small percentage of the monetary resources and could be completed in a relatively short time frame. One participant felt the City's investment in extensive streetscape improvements within the district would be the wiser investment with more impact.
 - Viability, competition, the changing dynamics of the retail versus service business mix, empty storefronts, the decrease in customer traffic, the need to develop a marketing gimmick, and parking issues were cited as major concerns in the district.
 - Many regarded the number of storefront vacancies, the condition of some buildings, and the lack of property investments in the district as major challenges. The commercial sprawl (big box and other commercial development) along the outskirts and eventually the bypass are creating more retail

space than the community and the region can support. This is affecting the level of property investments and contributing to the storefront vacancy rate within the district and downtown Clinton.

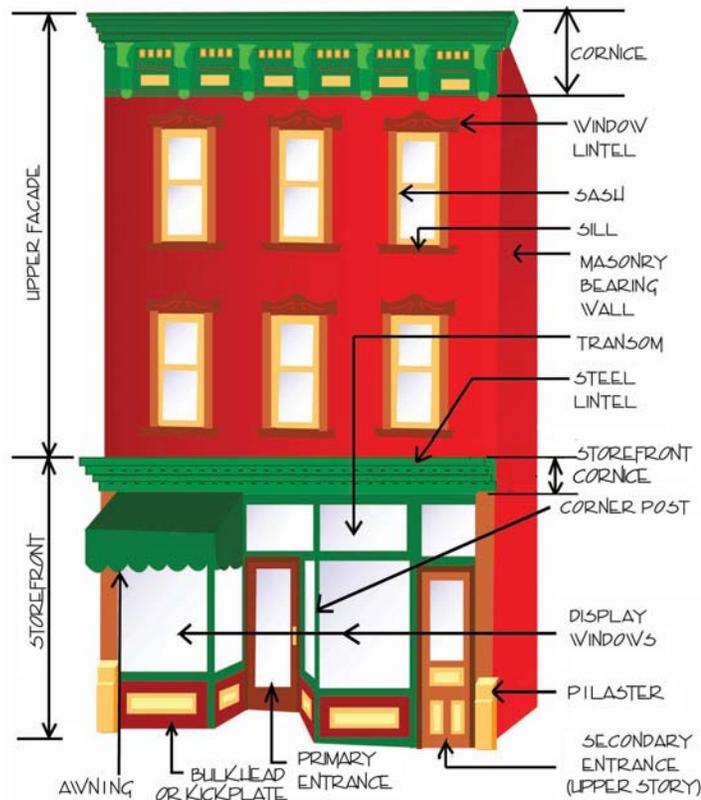
- The relocation of McEleney's dealership to the outskirts of the city and the noticeable decrease of the dealership's customer traffic in the district has had a negative impact on the businesses.
 - Frustration was expressed over 19th Avenue and the bridges being closed for so long, creating additional diversion of traffic away from the Lyons District resulting in reducing exposure and commerce.
 - Parking was cited as a challenge. Opinions varied as to whether this is really an issue, or if there is ample parking spaces if merchants and employees would find alternatives to parking in front of businesses.
 - A few interviewees voiced strong opinions that the gambling boat was a detriment to the district. They stated that it is purely a destination, does not generate any customer traffic whatsoever, and competes for the discretionary income of potential business patrons.
 - The students raised major concerns over the education institutions. They passionately voiced their grievances about the struggles they encountered over cuts in school programs during their high school years and their feelings about the declining quality of education in the Clinton schools. They love the river but wish there was better access and utilization. They also said there is a large elderly population, there is nothing for teens and younger adults to do, and events are poorly advertised to younger residents.
- Clinton's Great Places designation provides an incredible opportunity for building local capacity and strengthening relationships between the City of Clinton, the two commercial districts, and the other entities involved.
 - Although the Team did not have the opportunity to conduct a thorough inventory of businesses or an assessment of the physical aspects of the district during the walking tour, the following are some observations:
 - 1) Regarding the pedestrian-friendly aspect of the Lyons District, there are steps up to the sidewalk along Main Street. Patrons with disabilities would have to access the sidewalks at the cross walks.
 - 2) Several gaps exist where buildings have been demolished. The visual disruption the voids create decreases the potential to visually entice the impulsive shopper on down the sidewalk and into the next shop.
 - 3) Four Square Park is a unique feature and serves as a wonderful outdoor space for promotions. The newly installed event sign and attractive vintage lights are great amenities. The older remaining streetlights in the district are in need of a few coats of paint.
 - 4) New trash receptacles are located throughout the district.
 - 5) Regarding niches, the Team determined there are a number of businesses that collectively could be identified as a "self improvement-health niche". Several pubs and eating establishments contribute to a "restaurant-entertainment niche" which also indicates the district has a "night life".
 - 6) They are fortunate they have a public library and branch post office located within the district. It is important to downtown merchants to retain these types of "necessary services" that the majority of residents need to access within the district. The more reasons people have to come downtown increases the likelihood that additional commercial transactions will take place during those same trips.
 - 7) Without having an inventory of upper story use to substantiate this observation, the Team noted there appears to be a substantial number of apartments in the upper stories. Multi-story buildings were built with the expectations that the entire property would contribute economically--maximizing its functionality and providing income which could partially be diverted for investments in the building's upkeep and maintenance. It is unrealistic to expect first floor spaces to carry the economic burden of a multi-story property. There is potential for the creation of additional, quality housing units.
 - 8) At the very least; there are seven vacant commercial properties plus an occupied vacancy (property used for storage or other minimal uses) on Main Street alone. These vacant storefronts and all of the vacant upper stories are not contributing to the economic value of downtown. As tax payers, every citizen has a financial stake in these vacancies and under-utilized buildings. Considering the decreased value of the properties and

the absence of income from businesses and apartment rents, the properties are not contributing their fair share towards the community's tax burden. (See enclosed "Cost of an Empty Storefront".)

- 9) Although the high school was not included in the number of vacant buildings, there is potential for that structure to be adapted for a combination of multiple uses—hotel, housing units, studios, a production facility with retail space, business incubator, or a retail coop. This, too, could be "contributing" property.
- 10) There are some merchants who utilize their window displays very effectively and others that are not taking advantage of that advertising opportunity. Some windows have been altered substantially; therefore they can not utilize the windows as they were originally intended.
- 11) Business signage is inconsistent. Some signs are very attractive, while other signage needs to be repaired, replaced, and/or redesigned to project a positive professional image. Great wayfinding signage in Clinton.
- 12) The Team visited one business and noted that the pressed tin ceiling is still intact. Undoubtedly, there are others that are hidden under lowered ceiling tiles that could be discovered and unveiled someday.
- 13) A number of display windows, upper story windows, and storefronts have been substantially altered. Metal fronts and metal awnings are abundant and paint is peeling off other facades. There is some great architecture in the district. Obviously some of the buildings have significant architectural elements still intact. Quite possibly, others may have retained these features, only they are hidden or obscured under metal siding and other "appendages". This creates a physical, and therefore a visual, disconnect between the upper stories and storefronts in the Lyons District. There exists the potential of making a real visual impact if the buildings are given the proper attention.

FEATURES OF A TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN BUILDING ON MAIN STREET

This diagram illustrates the basic architectural elements of a typical downtown building. Individual properties possess basic qualities with unique and distinguishable architectural elements--a unified visual composition from storefront to rooftop. Adjacent properties were built with the intention of complementing each other with consistency in the use of the same fundamental architectural features and construction materials. Through variations of patterns, elements, color and signage, each building possesses its own unique, distinctive, and identifiable qualities and contributes to the overall physical character of downtown.



ASSESSMENT TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessment team's recommendations are categorized into immediate, very short term, short term, and longer term. It is important to take one step at a time and understand that the longer term recommendations are not of much consequence until the shorter term recommendations are addressed. As the process gains momentum, the Lyons District Business and Professional Association (LBPA) will need to re-evaluate, re-prioritize, determine additional strategies, and develop more sophisticated approaches.

RECOMMENDATIONS—IMMEDIATE

- LPBA board members should continue acquiring the information from the rest of the businesses in the district and complete the list they developed for the assessment visit. This is important information that can be utilized in a variety of ways as you proceed with the implementation of later recommendations. See the following list of potential uses of this information:
 - 1) Business owner database information and email addresses for communication purposes
 - 2) Employee data base provides baseline information regarding the number of full and part time employees in the district
 - 3) Business information for business directory
 - 4) Business anniversary recognitions
 - 5) Fundraising
 - 6) Niche identification and marketing
 - 7) Documentation of the present use of multi-stories
 - 8) Intentions for future investments in business and building

Once committees are established, this information should be shared with them as it will be useful to all. (The "Commercial Business Visitation" document was emailed to LBPA.)

RECOMMENDATIONS – VERY SHORT TERM

- As soon as possible, complete this year's fundraising campaign and start planning a more aggressive annual fundraising approach for next year. Look at past years' membership and determine if there are former members that have not contributed. Follow up with personal contacts with the business owners who have not responded to the campaign notice.
- Plan to attend the Iowa Downtown Summit in Sioux City, August 22 and 23. (*LBPA was provided with the information during the visit.*)
- Upon receiving the downtown assessment report LBPA board members should:
 - 1) Review the report and distribute copies to other appropriate entities (i.e. City officials, Great Places leadership, Clinton economic development groups).
 - 2) Schedule a meeting and invite the appropriate entities to meet with LBPA to discuss the report, determine if there is enough initial support to proceed, and identify their respective roles in addressing and implementing the recommendations. Some of the recommendations will obviously be the LBPA's responsibility, others will require a partnership effort, and the City will need to take the lead regarding some areas. Keep in mind that Clinton's downtown district has just participated in the same downtown assessment process. LBPA should review their report also, as undoubtedly there will be overlapping areas the two entities should address together. Both downtown districts are a part of the Great Places initiative and recommendations in both reports will apply to that cooperative venture. Discussions will need to be continued with the Clinton Area Chamber, Great Places task force, and the City.
 - 3) Put a notice in the newspaper and newsletter to invite citizens to review the assessment report. Have copies available at convenient locations such as the Library.

- 4) Write a series of articles featuring sections of the report. Submit these to the newspaper and include them in the newsletter.
- 5) Hold a Lyons District stakeholders' meeting to garner their input and validate its contents, prioritize, and plan the next steps. (*Stakeholders include those who were involved in the assessment visit, interviewees, business and building owners, business and apartment tenants, residents, employees, customers, commuters, and youth—basically those who live, work, shop, and/or play in the district.*)
 - Prior to the meeting, categorize the recommendations (*physical-design, organizational, business improvement, promotion, tourism, and Great Places-riverfront development*). Record the lists by category on large chart paper. Tape these to the wall at the meeting. Provide attendees with hard copies of the same information. Following discussions about each category, allow participants to vote on their 3 top priorities within each category.
 - Share the enclosure "Benefits of a Healthy Downtown" with the participants. Solicit volunteer involvement at this meeting. After this meeting, board members should divide the list of those who were invited to the meeting but could not attend. Ask them if they would be willing to be involved with the Lyons District revitalization plan. (Participants in the assessment visit expressed genuine interest in the future of the Lyons District. One participant brought a list with him outlining his opinions about the Lyons District and included constructive suggestions.) Ask individuals to be involved who have constructive ideas and want to be a part of the solution.
 - Discuss effective ways of communicating—internally with those who have pledged to become involved and externally to the public at large. Expand upon the ideas in the chart below and begin incrementally incorporating these strategies over the course of the next couple of years. Ongoing communication is critical to long term success.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES (*communication with involved persons and partners*)

- Schedule monthly network meetings—LBPA, Clinton Area Development and Chamber organizations, Downtown Partnership, and the Great Places Task Force. Identify common concerns (i.e. highest property tax rate in state, wages, tourism oriented initiatives, enticing the boat's visitors to the two downtown districts once it is relocated to the outskirts) and discuss strategies and implementation responsibilities.
- Determine appropriate frequency and e-mail committee progress updates to LBPA board and volunteers.
- Schedule periodic sharing sessions for all committees to convene and provide updates on progress.
- Provide regular updates to the city council. Visit with the council to determine their preference regarding the frequency of these updates (quarterly, semi-annually...).

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES (*communication with district's stakeholders*)

- Expand the business networking invitation list. Be inclusive and invite non-member business and building owners. These are all prospective members. Impress upon the prospective business members that LBPA needs their input to keep the business representation balanced in order to better serve the district.
- Determine the most effective modes of communication that will reach various audiences and establish regular and consistent communication (electronic updates, newspaper column and articles, local cable access channel...).
- Expand LBPA's business newsletter distribution and include all business and property owners, the mayor, and city council members. (Do not forget to include the absentee building owners in communications.) Include the tourist sites so they can keep updated about changes in the district for cross promotion and referral purposes.
- At least once a year, reach beyond and send a special newsletter edition to the general public. Create a Lyons District "Friends" program. Residents need to be informed they are just as important to the revitalization process as the businesses. They can learn to appreciate the preservation activity and its importance as well as promote and support the district. If not financially feasible, contact a group willing to take on a public service project and hand deliver the publication to households in the Lyons District.
- Develop a Lyons District marketing brochure that outlines LBPA's vision, mission, goals, objectives, specific activities, past successes and goals, and the benefits stakeholders derive by the revitalization initiative.
- Develop a PowerPoint presentation that explains LBPA's mission, goals, objectives, activities and successes. Contact appropriate interest groups, including the high school, and share the presentation frequently.
- Work together with the Great Places Task Force to develop a marketing brochure and PowerPoint presentation, concentrating on the benefits of the initiative. Share this presentation as frequently as possible.

- To be effective, LBPA should address the following organizational operatives:
 - 1) Establish a committee structure.
 - Look at the areas of interest identified through the downtown assessment process. Basic categories of focus in a comprehensive downtown revitalization approach address organizational, physical-design, business improvement, and promotion-tourism. Obtain copies of the four committee publications (Promotion/Economic Restructuring/Design/Organization) Main Street Committee Members Handbook. Review the enclosure "Committee Activities Checklists", the report's recommendations, and the input generated at the stakeholders' meeting for guidance in determining each committee's focus. (The publications are available through the Downtown Resource Center Lending Library or ordered from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. See enclosures "Downtown Resource Center Lending Library List and Reservation Form", "National Main Street Center Books Catalogue", and "Promotion/Design/Business Improvement/Organization Committee Activities Checklist".)
 - Ensure there is representation of the Lyons District's stakeholders on the LBPA board and committees. Their different perspectives and resources benefit the organization. Include youth involvement in planning and implementation of activities.
 - Identify the volunteer needs: chair positions, committee positions, board positions, and short term commitments. (Five to six persons per committee is a good start.) The best method for recruiting volunteers is the personal approach. Each board member should ask two people. In a few months, all involved should ask two more people.
 - 2) Since Clinton is involved in the Great Places initiative, they should add a committee to address the district's interest in Clinton's strategic plan. There should be representation on the task force, as communication is crucial to the plan's success. (LBPA will undoubtedly re-prioritize some of the report's recommendations related to the Great Places plan because of the time limitations placed upon the plan's implementation.)
 - 3) Learn more about the successful Four Point Main Street Approach®. (At one time, Clinton participated in Iowa's Main Street program.) Plan visits to the Main Street communities of Dubuque, Elkader, Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Waverly. Learn from their experiences. Check out the Downtown Center's resource library for guides like Revitalizing Downtown, The Professional's Guide to the Main Street Approach. (See enclosures "Downtown Resource Center Lending Library List and Reservation Form" and "Contacts and Resources".)
 - 4) To be most effective, they need to clearly define their organization's mission and solidify committees' goals and objectives. For the time being, the Great Places plan could actually serve as an expanded version of a vision statement since it does address their aspirations for the future. Contact Cali Beals, Iowa Department of Economic Development, to discuss the mission statement and goal setting processes and schedule a work session as soon as possible. (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)
 - 5) Once this process is completed, each committee should review the report and stakeholders' input, identify the activities, and develop work plans for each. The board should also develop work plans for their annual responsibilities (i.e. new board member appointee process, etc.). Be realistic about the timeframe. Set goals--a timeline for completion of activities. Momentum will depend upon how quickly they organize and how many persons become involved and engaged in implementation.
 - These plans outline the necessary steps to implement an activity and include due dates, completion dates, costs, and responsible persons for each task, serving as tools to long term effectiveness and efficiency.
 - After these plans are established the first time, in addition to serving as planning and implementation tools for annual activities, they become a yearly budgeting tool. Annually, the committees should draft their work plans for the upcoming year and include estimated costs. Committees submit their work plans to the board prior to the annual fundraising campaign so the board knows how much money needs to be generated through the campaign.
 - The board approves or asks for revisions to the plan(s), contingent upon the outcome of the fundraising campaign. It is not necessary for the board to micromanage the committees as they proceed with implementation. Unless there are major changes to the budget or components of activities, the committees should be able to proceed and supply the board with periodic progress reports. (See enclosures "Elements of an Action Plan", "Central City Mainstreet Promotions

Committee”, and “Promotion/Business Improvement/Design/Organization Committee Activities Checklists”).

- 6) Once items 1, 2, 3 and 4 are accomplished, this information should be incorporated into LBPA’s marketing efforts—organizational brochure, PowerPoint presentation, fundraising materials, etc. Include the mission statement on the meeting agendas. Post the mission, goals, objectives and list of committee activities on the meeting room wall. Having the organizational purpose visible during meetings helps keep the group focused. (See enclosures “Waverly Chamber of Commerce-Main Street” and “Central City Main Street Rocket Ship”).

RECOMMENDATIONS – SHORT TERM

- The focus of the assessment visit was the Lyons District’s downtown. Interviewees shared their opinions and ideas related to the North River Drive and riverfront development within the immediate vicinity of the district, which is directly linked to Clinton’s Great Places plan. Effective communication and representation on the Great Places Task Force is crucial. The Team met with 66 participants and not all of them had the same ideas about the riverfront development and the corridor connecting Main Street to those proposed developments. The one resounding desire was funding the North River Drive project. The Team is at a disadvantage not knowing how the input was gained or if studies were conducted when the Great Places plan was formulated. With that in mind, the Team’s recommendations for the Great Places Lyons District committee are:
 - 1) Lyons District stakeholders need to arrive at consensus about what they truly feel is in the best interest of the district and the community of Clinton. Input can be acquired in a variety of ways and might even include more than one approach. Start with a meeting, inviting all stakeholders. Share the projects noted in the Great Places plan and the input acquired through this assessment that relates specifically to the initiative. Brainstorm and add ideas to the list. Ask participants to prioritize the ideas. Discussion also needs to occur regarding possible ways to leverage funding for implementation. This consensus building and prioritization exercise validates what the stakeholders think will have the most significant impact on the businesses in the district. An alternative to a large group meeting would be to conduct focus groups to acquire additional input and validation. (See enclosure “Focus Groups”).
 - 2) Meet with the city council and the Great Places Task Force and share the outcome of this meeting. State their case, using facts and figures as much as possible to substantiate and emphasize the potential impact of implementation. Make sure the Lyons District representatives are part of the solution and not part of the problem by taking a proactive part in the discussions and implementation. If indeed the North River Drive is their number one priority, they need to work with the City to re-prioritize the project and help find a solution in financing the project. Contact Main Street Elkader and talk to them about the positive impact of the redevelopment and eventual extension of a trail that links their campgrounds to downtown. (See enclosure “Contacts and Resources”).
 - 3) Spend time during the LBPA business networking opportunities to discuss the challenges and solutions associated with the potential increased number of tourists the culmination of the Great Places plan would attract to the district. These same questions are relevant to a discussion with the Great Places Task Force.
 - How do they market their Great Place and who and how do they cover the costs of marketing?
 - How will the increased numbers affect the present City services (*police, emergency medical, infrastructure repairs, trash disposal, maintenance and repairs of public spaces, creation of associated amenities like public restrooms, etc.*)? As property owners and citizens, which of these tax related burdens are they willing to bear?
 - How will they build the capacity to handle the increases?
 - How do they educate the public about the benefits and build support?
 - What adjustments will need to be made regarding business operations? Are businesses willing to establish different store hours, add different product lines tourists would need/want, etc.?
 - Is there an existing niche with the potential to expand with the addition of complementary businesses tourists would want to access?
 - 4) Contact Julie Allesee, Clinton CVB, and discuss the following:
 - Explore the possibility of conducting familiarization tours for local leadership and tourism entities. The tourist site staff needs to be knowledgeable about both downtown districts. Referrals go both ways—

the downtown merchants should also promote the tourist oriented facilities. Establish a regular means of communicating updates about changes in the downtowns and tourist sites.

- Conduct hospitality training for managers and front line employees of Clinton's businesses and the tourism oriented entities. This would be a great cooperative partnership with the various economic development groups and tourist sites.
- Start discussions regarding a cooperative marketing strategy that highlights benefits of downtown revitalization. What benefits one district benefits the other within the context of Great Places. Build upon what is already done through the CVB to cross promote both districts. Brainstorm ideas for promotions (*special or retail events*) that will bring people into both districts. (Example—if downtown has a classic car show, the Lyons District could capitalize on that audience and coordinate a kids' car show "Cruisin' Lyons" on the same weekend. Or coordinate a biathlon where participants race in canoes to the downtown district then bike race back up to the Lyons District to the finish line on Main Street.) Once the riverfront area is re-developed, there are unlimited possibilities to tie the districts together for mutual benefit.

5) Contact Nate Hoogeveen, Water Trails Coordinator, Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Investigate the National Park Service's Water Trails Grant. Contact Nate Hoogeveen, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and ascertain how he can assist in identifying and developing a water trail project. A water trail initiative would be a great addition to the riverfront ideas in the Lyons District and Eagle Point Park. Part of the plan will involve gaining an understanding of canoe/boat enthusiasts' preferences, what motivates them, what amenities entice them, etc. (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)

- The designated committee responsible for design oriented activity should begin assessing the district and prioritizing the physical needs. (See enclosure "Common Downtown Design Challenges" and "Main Street Messenger, article Design Notebook Storefronts".)
 - 1) Conduct a physical assessment of buildings, sidewalks, storefronts, signage, building condition, parking lots, etc. View it from the perspective of customers and guests. Adapt the "Downtown Revitalization Tips" and/or the "Downtown Conditional Assessment Guide" report enclosures for this activity.
 - 2) Supply the business and building owners with the same assessment form and ask them to conduct their own self-assessment. Provide each of the merchants with a copy of the enclosure "Store Image Self-Audit". Hold a meeting with all of the business and building owners to share LBPA's and the owners' assessments. This would be the opportune time to prioritize design issues with the business and building owners' input.
 - 3) In conjunction with this physical assessment, conduct an assessment of existing and potential parking spaces and lots. Do not forget to check behind the properties as there are often areas employees could park. Determine if the perceived parking issue is a result of employees and business owners parking in prime spaces. Contact Mount Pleasant and inquire about their parking program to encourage off street employee parking. (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)
 - 4) Prioritize the design related needs (infrastructure, amenities, building improvements) using the report information and the physical assessments they conducted.
 - 5) Using volunteer labor, spruce up the district--pick up, pull weeds, wash windows, clean up alleyways, etc. Work out a plan with the City and paint the light poles.
 - 6) Committee members need to become knowledgeable about historic preservation and the resources available in order to educate property and business owners. Educate the committee members about Preservation Briefs and the Secretary of Interior Standards. Access this type of information through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and National Park Service. Order the "Main Street Building Improvement File". It is an excellent resource to use as guidelines for design review, approval and educational purposes. Check out the design related resources from the Iowa Downtown Resource Center library. (See enclosure "National Main Street Center 2005 Catalog", "Resource Listing", "Preservation Resources on the Internet", and "Contacts and Resources".)
 - 7) Educating building and business owners is essential to the long term success of a revitalization program. Plan a series of workshops on a variety of topics—window display training, historic preservation resources, identifying building structural issues, building codes, quality signage design, etc. Utilize local expertise

and/or acquire training tools from the Iowa Downtown Resource Center. (See enclosure "Resource Listing".) Individually educate those who indicate they are receptive to investing in their property.

- 8) Take photographs of each property to document its current condition. These images serve multiple purposes—"before investment" to the "after" comparisons, PowerPoint presentations, displays, documentation of the businesses and the appearance of downtown, award nominations, etc. Even the property owners will forget what the building looked like in just a few years.
- After completing the initial business information (see Immediate Recommendation), the business focused committee can begin building upon this information, acquire additional baseline information, and begin formulating strategies. (See enclosure "Business Retention, Expansion, Recruitment".)
 - 1) Document relevant baseline information already obtained: number of full and part time employees, years in business, etc. This will be information the program uses to gauge economic impact as the revitalization process proceeds. Share the information with the other committees, board, businesses, and other appropriate entities. Utilize the data websites noted on the "Contacts and Resources" enclosure.
 - 2) Inventory the present use of the multiple stories of each building. The building inventory includes information regarding present use, upper story use, ownership, size, construction materials, etc. This activity will take a considerable amount of time, depending upon the number of volunteers, so start with the vacant buildings first, then target one block at a time until all are inventoried. A three ring binder works great with two sections—available properties and occupied properties. A college intern or retiree could work on this project. Most county assessors have the property information available on-line. The inventory needs to be updated periodically as ownership and availability changes. This information will be utilized for multiple purposes. (See enclosure "Building Inventory".)
 - 3) Brainstorm adaptive use of the old school—hotel with a combination of short term and longer term housing units, combination artisan studios, production area, and gift store, retail space on the first floor with apartment or condo units, etc. Contact Burlington and Spencer to find out how they creatively adapted white elephant buildings. (See "Contacts and Resources".) Interviewees talked about the need for a hotel in the district. Contact Bonaparte about the conversion of the pants factory into lodging units and reception hall. LBPA has experience with Community Initiated Development projects (i.e. ice cream shop) and this could be the next success. (See enclosure "Community Initiated Development".)
 - The promotion focused committee should continue to strive for quality activities/events. Review the purposes of special events, image oriented campaigns, and retail events. The merchants seem to realize they are inter-dependent not independent and seem very receptive to participating in promotional activities and supporting each other. They already understand the entire district benefits from cooperation. LBPA can organize promotions to get people downtown, but ultimately it is up to the business to get them in the door.

SPECIAL EVENTS are intended to generate "people" traffic, introduce or re-introduce participants to the downtown and create or reinforce the participants' positive associations (*pleasant experiences*) with downtown. Businesses can capitalize on the opportunity immediately or benefit in the future as these events create a positive association with downtown and many will return to make purchases at a later date. These include heritage, special holidays and social events.

RETAIL EVENTS are designed to make cash registers ring by unifying merchants' activities that focus on their goods and services through retail activities (cooperative, cross retail and niche promotions) and discount oriented sales events.

IMAGE CAMPAIGNS AND EVENTS are intended to create a healthy image, reverse the negative perceptions and reinforce the positive perceptions and associations through advertising campaigns, promotional materials, image events and media relations.

- 1) Formally evaluate each of the existing events. Review the goal of each and determine if it is indeed meeting the intended outcomes. (See enclosure "Event Assessment Form".)
- 2) Make a chart—across the top axis, list the various events held in the district. Along the left side, list the groups that are responsible for various elements of the promotion. Within the grids, record the elements of the promotion (i.e. entertainment, food vendors, parade, advertising, etc.) that correspond with the group and

event. Identify which promotional category the activity falls within and color code accordingly. Some events may serve dual purposes so that should also be indicated. Through this process, determine the promotional voids.

- 3) Once both of these processes are conducted, identify ways to improve and/or expand existing events and identify potential partners. Consider adding image and retail oriented components to the established, quality special events.
- 4) As is often the case, young adult activities are missing. Invite students, including the college students, to be involved in the brainstorming, planning, and implementation. Some events could be expanded to incorporate youth oriented activities. Not only will this address one of the challenges the student interviewees identified, their inclusion will instill a greater sense of belonging and connection with the district. Contact Cedar Falls and inquire about their movie and open mike nights. Schedule a visit at the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and investigate the promotional folders for ideas. (See "Contacts and Resources".)

RECOMMENDATIONS - LONGER TERM

Fundamental processes should have been addressed at this point by each of the committees and they should have a better understanding of their district, the business climate, and its potential. Many of the earlier recommendations will be ongoing in one form or another—conducted on some type of regular basis throughout the duration of the revitalization process. Some of the earlier recommendations were "self-awareness" processes. These initial activities may have uncovered challenges or areas that need addressed that had not been previously identified and prioritized. As activities are implemented and new persons become involved who bring new insight into the planning process, the action plans will inevitably change and new ideas will be incorporated into the plans. The Team realizes since Clinton is a Great Places pilot program, their attention may be diverted toward efforts in that regard. These factors will inevitably influence the next set of priorities for each of the committees. The following are some logical steps once the short term activities have been accomplished.

- Organizational and operational recommendations:
 - 1) Upon the completion of a work plan, all committees should formally assess the effectiveness, impact, and whether they have achieved their goals. (See enclosure "Event Assessment Form".)
 - 2) Re-invent the annual fundraising campaign the next round.
 - Find out what the percent of businesses are members of LBPA by comparing the membership listing to the new business list. Compare this to the membership lists for the past five years. Set realistic goals of how many new memberships they want to gain.
 - Determine if the \$100 membership is adequate to cover the expenses of implementing new projects and activities. Consider adding graduated levels that are associated with benefits the business derives from their level of contribution.
 - Form teams of board members to visit with those businesses about the benefits of their membership to LBPA. This is the opportune time to share the new mission statement, goals, objectives, and activities. Be inclusive. Fundraising campaigns are more fruitful if the business and property owners are approached personally.
 - Make an appointment and visit the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and explore the fundraising files for examples of fundraising approaches. Good ideas are shared, great ideas are stolen." (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)
 - 3) As committees become more implementation oriented, the budgetary requirements will also increase. This will necessitate additional fundraisers, more aggressive annual campaigns, acquiring sponsorships to offset the cost of events, and other creative solutions. Downtown Clinton and Cedar Falls have been successful in establishing self-supporting municipal districts. Others, like Hampton, have utilized TIF district monies for façade grants since their downtown is within the designated parameters. Contact Cedar Falls and Hampton about how these processes work for them. Visit with the City to see if creating a TIF district is feasible. (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)

- 4) In addition to fundraising, communication, volunteer recruitment, volunteer orientation, volunteer recognition, and acknowledgment of accomplishments are the mainstays of the organizational oriented committee. These require continual attention.
- Physical-design component recommendations:
 - 1) Develop grant and low interest loan incentives to encourage investments within targeted areas (signage replacement, removal of metal siding or awnings, awning grants, etc.). Include design review and approval in the application process. (In the case of façade improvements, returning the facades to their original appearance is ideal. Initially a more realistic goal is to educate the owners and encourage sensitive, appropriate, phased changes.) These types of first time incentives are often more productive if there is a time limitation placed upon submission. If no one applies, adapt the grant or low interest loan and target another area. Examples of a variety of incentives are available at the Iowa Downtown Resource Center. (See "Contacts and Resources".)
 - 2) Celebrate the investments by publicly recognizing the improvements—open houses, news articles, champagne toasts, etc.
 - 3) Research local regulatory processes like the building improvement permit process. Make sure building and business owners are aware of all regulations/processes. A one page informational sheet should be developed and distributed. Ask the City to keep LBPA informed of regulatory changes that would affect the district.
 - 4) Regarding the oak tree, its existence has actually become folklore now as it has been gone for a number of years. An interviewee made the recommendation that they plant another oak tree at the same site. Years ago when Clinton was involved in the Main Street Iowa program, it was suggested they paint the oak tree on the street surface. Decide if the tree has enough historic and positive emotional significance to link the present with the Lyons District's past. Opinions were mixed about whether the tree served as a landmark or gateway symbol or if it was a visual divider. Through discussions and consensus building, they need to determine if reintroduction of the tree in some form sends a negative message and perpetuates the perceived division within the community—or if it signifies a positive message as a landmark that denotes the gateway of the district.
 - 5) Research the history on the properties, copy the historic photos, and share this information with the property owners. A technically savvy person could create a panoramic representation of what the blocks could look like from collection of old photos. Use the pictorial representation to encourage phased restoration or rehabilitation.
 - 6) A streetscape plan is generally a much longer term goal, but in the Lyons District's situation, the Great Places initiative may necessitate more immediate attention. An improved, attractive new streetscape is just one piece of the district's revitalization puzzle. It goes hand in hand with the other internal and external investments in the district. Keep in mind it generally takes a couple years to develop the plan. Utilize the observations made during the visual assessment process and parking assessment. Acquire input from the business and property owners. Contact Keokuk, Cedar Falls, State Center, and Central City and investigate their projects. The streetscape plan should include investigation of street furniture, trash receptacles, lighting, bike racks, and attractive entryways, and a connecting riverfront corridor. During street and sidewalk reconstruction, there is considerable disruption. Plan for this well in advance and work with the promotion committee. Contact Cedar Falls and ask about the activities they implemented to promote the district so customers knew they could still access the businesses during construction. (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)
 - Promotional component recommendations:
 - 1) Balance the promotional calendar by gradually introducing image oriented activities that fill the promotional voids. This report contains considerable input regarding the assets and challenges of the district. Image campaigns reinforce the positive aspects and reverse the negative perceptions. Image activities can include district marketing pieces, business guide with map and parking areas, a series of ads with continuity in the message--to a full blown media blitz targeting the Chicago market. The content and campaign approach will be influenced by the Great Places progress. This is the ideal timing to conduct an image marketing campaign to promote Clinton and the commercial districts that would be more effective and reach a larger

market. Access the promotional files at the Iowa Downtown Resource Center for ideas and brainstorm with the Great Places partners. (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)

- 2) In addition to marketing the district outside of the Clinton trade area, target local residents with a "shop the district" campaign. Use the interviewee input and develop a catchy theme and/or use the quotes as testimonials. Examples are available at the Iowa Downtown Resource Center.
 - 3) Promote community and downtown activities and businesses during college registration and/or during parents' weekend. Develop informational pieces that can be distributed to new students and their parents. Entice them into the district so they become familiar with what the businesses have to offer.
 - 4) Start introducing retail events. These do not have to be "bargain basement" events. Contact Cedar Falls about their business open houses where each business sends a postcard invitation to their existing customers (preferred customers). Postcards are all the same but the individual business personalizes the invitation and open house "deal". (See enclosure "Contact and Resources".)
 - 5) Continue to work with the CVB to cross promote both commercial districts. Questions to explore: How can they increase the distribution of the antique shop flyer? What could they develop to market other district niches? How do the tourism entities cross promote and how can that be improved? Any package deals the Lyons District can participate in? (If not, develop one.) Do visitors at the motels and B&B's know there is a Lyons District? Can they develop a gimmick, package deal with the boat and/or combination of tourist destinations to include an enticement to get them into the district? This could include motel lodging, boat/ball game/other tourist sites and lunch, dinner, dessert, drinks, massage, etc. in the Lyons District. When the riverfront plans come to fruition, think about a bike tour package where visitors can rent bikes in the district and tour the riverfront/park/etc. Whenever they can get visitors into the district for one purpose, it increases the likelihood the visitors will make other purchases.
 - 6) Design some events to be revenue generating through sponsorships. Contact Cedar Falls and acquire their information about event sponsorships. Although it has taken years to arrive at this point, they now have businesses approaching them about specific event sponsorships. (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)
- Business retention, expansion, recruitment component recommendations:
 - 1) Business retention should always be the priority. Continue to acquire additional fundamental information— demographics, retail trade analysis, conduct customer focus groups and business focus groups. Basically what this entails is a market analysis. This data is valuable information for existing businesses, business expansions, and their recruitment efforts. (See enclosure "Market Analysis".)
 - 2) Conduct formal visits with the business owners in the district. This is necessary if they are truly going to understand the present business climate and develop strategies for retention and recruitment efforts. Every couple of years, this should be conducted and be inclusive of all businesses. Not only does this establish and strengthen relationships with the business owners, LBPA can ascertain in what shape or form they need to provide business assistance.
 - 3) If in fact the district is serious about appealing to the tourist market, they will have to evaluate the present district's store hours. In this order, Sundays, Saturdays, and weekday evenings are the preferred shopping days. Educate the business owners about the necessity of being open when visitors and working residents need or want to access the businesses.
 - 4) Use the business list and categorize every business by their business classification— convenience/service, retail, specialty shops, office/professional/financial, auto/auto repair, restaurants/entertainment, etc. If necessary, narrow them down further. The Team identified some niches with the potential to cooperatively market and draw customers into the district: Determine if there are additional or more prominent niches. (Generally, there are just one or two major niches in a downtown.) Work with those niche-merchants by facilitating discussions with them to develop marketing and promotional strategies. (See enclosure "Establishing Economic Niches" and "Retail and Service Businesses".)
 - restaurant/entertainment niche--number of pubs and eating establishments
 - health and self improvement niche--hair and barber shops plus dance studio, massage therapy, and medical services
 - specialty and décor niche--a few unique specialty shops and home décor

- 5) Inventory local and regional incentives and their eligible uses. Compile the list of available incentives with a summary of each program, eligibility, and contact information on how to access. Distribute this information to all building and property owners. If there is not design review and approval required for building improvement incentives in those existing incentives, work hard to influence the granter to include this stipulation. This will ensure they will have some influence and control over quality and respectful rehabilitation. "Sensitive change accepts the façade qualities and builds upon them. Insensitive change ignores and often negates the qualities of the original resource."
 - Hand deliver the incentives information to the owners. This also provides an opportunity to personally encourage them to utilize the programs. Make sure realtors and others, who may likely be a business prospect's first point of contact, have the most current version of the incentives list. Examples are available at the Iowa Downtown Resource Center. (See enclosure "Contacts and Resources".)
- 6) Develop a "one stop" informational packet for business prospect inquiries and recruitment purposes. LBPA should be the lead in directing and connecting the prospect leads to the available resources. This should include a wide range of information from demographics and market analysis information, financial incentives, community information, LBPA brochure, and contact information for permits, licenses, etc. The building inventory will be another tool LBPA can use to connect the prospect with an available property. (See enclosure "To Include in a Business Recruitment Packet".)
- 7) Determine the potential for additional apartment creation and/or improvements. A rule of thumb is approximately 3% of the population will live in downtown upper story apartments. There is a broad range of prospective dwellers that find upper story housing appealing--retirees, empty nesters, college graduates, young professional couples, and single mothers with children.
 - Research ordinances to ensure that first floors are protected from conversion to housing.
 - Visit with the realtors and existing upper story apartment owners to find out from their perspective what the level of inquiry is for rental units.
 - Investigate whether a recent housing study has been conducted. Contact the Council of Government (COG), City, and/or Clinton development groups to inquire.
 - Contact the (COG) and find out if they have housing programs that would apply to apartment creation or rehabilitation.
 - Share this information with the appropriate property owners and encourage additional apartment creation. Financial incentives can provide the impetus for this type of investment.

These recommendations are based upon the Assessment Team's years of experience working with downtowns. They understand the philosophies that apply to downtown revitalization and have seen the positive results of the implementation of comprehensive strategies. They understand there are many influences at work in every community. Participation in Great Places initiative will undoubtedly influence the priorities and focus. Standard methods apply to all communities. Because of the unique differences among communities, sometimes a variation of that method is more effective. Some creative approaches are acceptable in one city and not in another. There is "no one right way of doing everything" and many lessons will be learned through trial and error. It is inevitable that many of the recommendations will be adapted to fit the district's personality. Ultimately, it is the people who live, work, and play in the Lyons District that truly understand its uniqueness and its possibilities. They have to be flexible enough in their approaches to accommodate the changes and understand that this is just the beginning.....

SUMMARY

This is an exciting time for the community of Clinton, its downtown, and the Lyons District's downtown. They have been given the opportunity to create a Great Places vision and pursue their dream. Communication, public-private partnership development, and education are critical keys to their success. The Lyons District has taken the next step forward with the Downtown Assessment. This process serves multiple purposes—raising awareness, educating, recommending, and empowering the community. This is a self-discovery process and the Lyons District stakeholders have stepped out of their comfort zone to face the realities and embark on an exciting journey. They need to understand the process will take creativity, hard work, and an understanding that the revitalization process requires incremental steps and grassroots commitment. The content of this report will help the citizens address their future in a positive fashion by focusing on the many possibilities and capitalizing on their assets and resources. If they make the commitment to revitalize the Lyons District, they will find the resources.

Not many communities can boast they have two downtowns like Clinton, both with very significant histories. Downtown's vitality not only affects an entire community economically, it affects its physical and mental well-being. Downtown is the heart and soul of the community, its living room. In Clinton, the Lyons District could be considered its "family room". It is important for everyone to feel welcome and at home in the district. Its properties and surrounding spaces serve as the center of commerce, social and civic activity. The district is a place to work, gather, play, and live. Its downtown represents the longevity, stability, values, and pride of the community, connecting its unique past with the present. Its downtown is a place for investment opportunities—a place to make a living. The Lyons District is a place with physical, economic, social, and political value.

It is important to preserve the authentic past in a culture that is moving towards uniformity and sameness. In too many instances the most visible and character defining aspect of our nation's downtowns—its unique architecture—has been disguised, deteriorating, or demolished. The following is a paraphrase from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's website article "Why Preserve?" *"Some buildings are worth saving because they are good to look at. They are a gift to the street that enriches the surroundings. Some buildings are worth saving because there is plenty of life left in them. Some buildings are adapted for other innovative and/or multiple uses. And others are worth saving because they are a link to our past and help us understand who we are."* The Lyons District's architecture should not be taken for granted. Downtown was built with pride and purpose—with the intention the buildings would be cared for through multiple generations. Questions they should ask themselves are, "Would the designer, builder and/or original owner recognize their property today? Would they be pleased with the care and attention the property has received?"

Most of our memories are directly associated with a place. We "go back" to places we feel good about. We "go back" to places where we've had positive shopping experiences. We "go back" to places where we have had fun. We "go back" to places we think are important. We are also attracted to places where "we think" we will have positive experiences. Are people passing through the district to go somewhere else, or is its downtown a "go to" destination? The Lyons District will always face challenges and competition will never go away. To remain competitive, the district needs to be protected, nurtured, and marketed in order to retain existing businesses and customers and attract investors, new businesses, and new customers. The recommendations are based upon a comprehensive and incremental approach that addresses the social, political, physical, and economic values of downtown through the implementation of activities to increase its worth and importance.

This is an exciting time with many challenges ahead, lessons to be learned, and rewards to reap. The Lyons District did not change overnight nor will the revitalization and reversal occur overnight. A great deal of planning, patience and persistence will be required along with courage, vision, and conviction to take this journey one step at a time. The citizens can either choose to sit and watch as change continues to occur downtown and accept the consequences or take a proactive stance and guide their future in a more predictable and productive direction. Remember, every community eventually gets the downtown they deserve. The Lyons District stakeholders have to decide what kind of downtown that is going to be.

"If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got."

--Ben Boozer--

CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

COMMUNITY CONTACT INFO:

Bonaparte	Bonnie Cass, Bonaparte Main Street	319.592-3400
Burlington	Val Giannettino, Downtown Partners, Inc.	319.752-0015
Cedar Falls	Cary Darrah, Community Main Street	319.277-0213
Dubuque	Dan LoBianco, Dubuque Main Street, Ltd.	563.588-4400
Central City	Flo Roberson, Central City Mainstreet	319.361-6621
Elkader	Ollie Bruns, Main Street Elkader	563.245-2770
Hampton	Deb Kalousek, Main Street Hampton	641.456-5668
Keokuk	Joyce Glasscock, Main Street Keokuk	319.524-5056
Mount Pleasant	Lisa Oetken, Main Street Mount Pleasant	319.385-3101
Spencer	Bob Rose, Spencer Main Street Company	712.262-7246
State Center	Donna Sampson, State Center Main Street	641.483-3002
Waterloo	Terry Poe Buschkamp, Main Street Waterloo	319.291-2038
Waverly	Tara Harn, Waverly Area Development Corp.	319.352-4526

RESOURCE CONTACT INFO:

Iowa Department of Economic Development, Iowa Downtown Resource Center, Iowa Tourism Office:

Iowa Department of Economic Development www.iowalifechanging.com

Iowa Downtown Resource Center 515.242.4733 or www.mainstreetiowa.org

Iowa Tourism Office www.iowalifechanging.com/travel

Cali Beals 515/242-4723 or cali.beals@iowalifechanging.com

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs/State Historical Society of Iowa, preservation services, programs and cultural arts:

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs www.culturalaffairs.org

Lowell Soike 515.281.3306 or www.iowahistory.org

National preservation services and programs, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Main Street Center Resources and National Park Service:

National Trust for Historic Preservation www.nthp.org

National Main Street Center www.mainst.org

National Park Service www.2.cr.nps.gov

Retail Trade Analysis, sales tax data, census and demographic information, and consumer characteristics:

Iowa State University www.seta.iastate.edu

state.ia.us/tax/educate/statereports.html#salesuse

Iowa Data Center www.iowadatacenter.org

ESRI/ACORN www.esri.com

Claritas www.claritas.com

Other resources

Department of Natural Resources, Nate Hoogeveen 515.281.3134 or nate.hoogeveen@dnr.state.ia.us
www.iowadnr.com/watertrails/

USDA, Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program www.rurdev.usda.gov/id/redig/html

Iowa Rural Development Council www.iowarural.org

Iowa League of Cities 515.244.7282 or www.iowaleague.org

ENCLOSURES:

- Elements of an Action Plan
- Downtown Revitalization Tips
- Downtown Conditional Assessment Guide
- Storefront Image Self-Audit
- Benefits of a Healthy Downtown
- Promotion/Business Improvement/ Design/Organization Committee Activities Checklist
- Common Design Challenges
- Business Retention, Expansion, Recruitment
- Focus Groups
- Event Assessment Form
- Building Inventory Form
- Community Initiated Development
- Cost of an Empty Storefront
- Establishing Economic Niches
- Market Analysis
- Downtown Resource Center Lending Library List and Reservation Form
- National Main Street Center Books Catalogue
- Central City Main Street Rocket Ship
- Central City Mainstreet Promotions Committee
- Waverly Chamber of Commerce-Main Street
- To Include in a Business Recruitment Packet
- Preservation Resources on the Internet
- Retail and Service Businesses
- Main Street Messenger, article Design Notebook Storefronts