



Transit-Oriented
Development Plan

Section 4:
Vision & Goals

Downtown Riverside Transit-Oriented Development Plan

VISION & GOALS

Planning for Downtown Riverside

Riverside has a long history of planning which began with the original plan for the community prepared by Olmsted and Vaux in 1869. Olmsted’s plan is, and always should be, the guiding document against which all proposals are measured. However, a major challenge that the community has faced for years is the fact that Olmsted’s plan does not address all aspects of community development and urban design; certainly not in light of the automobile phenomenon or modern commerce patterns. As such, the community has been left to accommodate change based upon the “*Spirit of Olmsted*,” as gleaned from his published writings and built works. Consensus has been difficult to achieve as there are well-intentioned citizens who believe change is necessary to accommodate modern growth and business development, and others who accept no change at all.

The Village and various citizen groups have engaged in plan preparation for downtown and the broader community for well over thirty years. Participants in this Study expressed concern over the chance that it would result in just another plan document filled with good ideas that are never implemented. Based upon stakeholder guidance, the charge for this effort is to provide the implementation tools and roadmap for change that other initiatives did not produce. As the result, all recommendations contained in subsequent sections of this report are tied to specific

Vision Statement

“Frederick Law Olmsted was visionary in his design of Riverside. It has been the responsibility of ensuing generations of caretakers to see that his vision remains ever-evolving and viable: rooted in the past, mindful of present realities, projecting and planning for a vital future.

As such, Downtown Riverside is situated at the center of our community and reflects the balance struck between preserving its historic character and landmark status and fostering an environment that is supportive of contemporary residential and commercial needs.

Located within mixed-use buildings that feature ground level shops and restaurants with residential units above, niche businesses thrive in Downtown Riverside. These businesses provide the day-to-day necessities for residents, as well as a wide variety of unique, specialty items.

The existence of rail transportation allowed Olmsted's dream to become a reality, and it continues to be an important part of the community today. High quality transit service provides convenient regional access to jobs, culture and education.

Downtown Riverside is blessed with both natural and man-made beauty. Its older buildings are well maintained, and its new buildings reinforce the area's small-scale, pedestrian-oriented character. Its public gathering spaces, streetscape features, planting areas, and amenities make spending time there pleasurable and nurturing of the human spirit. Artful design, blending into the topography and greenery of the Des Plaines River, contributes to the unique experience of being downtown.

Downtown Riverside is a destination for scholars and tourists who have come to appreciate the design and architecture of the Village. The landmark Water Tower Campus and museum provide sources of study while our guests sojourn at the bed and breakfast or a quaint hotel on the banks of the Des Plaines River. The evenings gently bustle with diners, community center patrons and art lovers.

Downtown Riverside's success is not coincidental: it is the product of the long-term commitment and hard work of its citizens and institutions to effectuate positive, consistent development. Downtown Riverside is a special place: the focal point of the Village we are proud to call home.”

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implementation tools and actions that can be used to obtain results. Stakeholders observed that the time may have finally come, given the strong leadership exhibited by the community’s elected officials, to deliver the improvements for which the community has been asking.

Previous plans that were reviewed as part of this study include:

- ✓ **SUBURBAN VILLAGE PRELIMINARY REPORT, Olmsted, Vaux & Co. - 1868**
Developer sponsored plan for the establishment of Riverside.
- ✓ **OLMSTED SOCIETY & NATIONAL LANDMARK - 1970**
Village action which is responsible for Riverside’s National Historic Landmark status.
- ✓ **MASTER PLAN FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, Ed Straka – 1981**
Citizen based initiative to document physical conditions within downtown and provide recommendations for architecture and landscape improvements.
- ✓ **VILLAGE OF RIVERSIDE STRATEGIC PLAN, Center for Government Studies, NIU - 1995**
Village sponsored plan to identify community development needs.
- ✓ **THE “OUR TOWN” PROJECT – 1996**
Citizen based initiative to identify improvement actions for downtown and resident quality of life.
- ✓ **CONSERVING THE OLMSTED LEGACY, A COMPREHENSIVE VISION PLAN, DLK/LDR/Beveridge - 1999**
Village sponsored initiative undertaken to assess community development needs and to provide recommendations based upon Olmsted’s design philosophy.
- ✓ **CBD ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT, Camiros, Ltd. – 2003**
Village initiative to establish a downtown zoning classification which safeguards its character while accommodating modern development.

A review of these plans indicates the identification of a clear and concise pattern of physical and operational business district needs which fall into 5 categories: 1) Community Sustainability, 2) Business District Development, 3) Urban Design, 4) Natural Features and Civic Space, and 5) Marketing, Promotion and Tourism. A “Previous Plan Summary Matrix” is provided on the following pages to chart key plan recommendations and similarities.

Downtown Riverside Transit-Oriented Development Plan

Previous Plan Summary Matrix

This matrix documents the range of guiding principles and actions identified for downtown improvement over past years. It demonstrates consensus about what needs to be done. The purpose of this study is to equip the Village with the tools to get it done.

GOAL/ACTION	Straka Plans	Our Town Project	Strategic Plan	Vision Plan	B2 District
Community Sustainability					
Preserve & protect Riverside’s historic character & landmark status.	•	•	•	•	•
Base change upon Olmsted’s founding principles.	•	•	•	•	•
History begins but does not end with Olmsted.	•	•	•	•	•
Protect what we have – do not harm.	•	•	•	•	•
Sustain the economic viability of the CBD.	•	•	•	•	•
Grow the Village tax base.	•	•	•	•	•
Utilize “development incentives” to benefit the Village.	•	•	•	•	•
Business District Needs					
Support existing businesses & proactively recruit new businesses to balance the mix.		•	•	•	
Target specialty or “niche” businesses.		•		•	
Implement management strategies in the business district. (Business support & recruitment, parking, operating hours, marketing, maintenance, etc.)		•		•	
Implement a consistent maintenance program for downtown.	•	•		•	
Reestablish a small hotel in downtown.		•		•	
Urban Design					
Maintain mixed-use, small-scale, pedestrian orientation character in downtown.	•	•	•	•	•
Bring commercial areas up to the historic character of the Village.	•	•	•	•	•
Fill street level with shops & restaurants, locate office & residential above.	•	•		•	•
Support new construction & redevelopment that is compatible with historic Riverside.	•	•		•	•
Implement a unified streetscape program for the CBD.	•	•		•	•
Improve downtown storefronts & rear building areas.	•	•		•	

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GOAL/ACTION	Straka Plans	Our Town Project	Strategic Plan	Vision Plan	B2 District
Urban Design (Continued)					
Develop and implement a parking plan.		•		•	•
Locate parking behind buildings.		•		•	•
Balance vehicular needs with pedestrian needs.	•			•	•
Improve safety & traffic control downtown at street crossings & parking entryways.		•	•	•	
Establish pedestrian linkage between Burlington & Quincy at east end of downtown.	•	•			•
Enhance the trainscape.	•			•	•
Improve connections to regional roadways. (gateway & wayfinding features)		•		•	
Natural Features & Civic Space					
Protect Riverside’s natural features.	•	•	•	•	•
Enhance public gathering spaces.	•	•		•	
Engage the River, Swan Pond & Swinging Bridge with downtown.		•		•	
Improve river frontage at Library & Town Hall.		•		•	
Relocate Public Works to redevelop site.		•		•	
Marketing, Promotion & Tourism					
Market Riverside to shoppers, business owners & investors.		•	•	•	
Promote tourism to support Riverside’s business & tax base.		•		•	
Establish strong links to adjacent communities & tourism organizations.		•	•	•	
Establish linkage to Brookfield Zoo. (marketing, tourism, trolley)		•		•	