

Memorandum
Community & Economic Development Department

To: Thomas Thomas, City Manager
Subject: Downtown Revitalization Plan
Date: May 13, 2015



The City of Rock Island contracted Houseal Lavinge in June 2014 to prepare a downtown revitalization plan. Over the course of the past 11 months, CED staff and the consultants have conducted an 11 month planning process that included a robust public outreach component to gather community feedback on the future direction of the downtown. The Downtown Revitalization Plan was developed based on that feedback and vetted at a public open house in February. The final Plan establishes a new comprehensive vision for downtown Rock Island provides a set of policies and recommendations to achieve that vision. Among them are five key redevelopment projects, including:

1. Removal of the Great River Plaza and construction of a “woonerf” (living street) along 2nd Avenue between 17th and 19th Streets to improve traffic circulation and create a more welcoming and accessible environment for all users.
2. Increase the friendliness and efficiency of parking in downtown Rock Island by improving the parking ramp for ease of use, removing parking meters and establishing a simple 2-tier system (short term and long term) for on-street parking, reconfiguring on-street parking to increase the overall number of spaces, and establishing shared parking agreements with private lot owners.
3. Install streetscape improvements, including benches, sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled lighting, banners, and bike racks to communicate a message of investment in the downtown.
4. Reconfigure 1st Street (IL/92) to reduce lane width, add parking, improve safety, and better connect the downtown to Schwiebert Park.
5. Add more residents and rooftops in the downtown by providing development incentives where necessary and appropriate.

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing and recommended approval of the draft plan on April 1, 2015. The process concluded with City Council study session on May 11, 2015 wherein the Council directed staff to bring the draft plan forward for consideration of adoption at the May 18, 2015 meeting. Included with this cover memo is a Resolution for adoption of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. The Downtown Revitalization Plan is available online:

<http://www.hlplanning.com/portals/rockisland/download/Rock%20Island-%20Downtown%20Revitalization%20Plan-%20DRAFT%20FOR%20REVIEW.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the proposed Downtown Revitalization Plan by resolution as prepared by City staff.

Submitted by: Jeffery A. Eder, Assistant City Manager / CED Director
Brandy Howe, AICP, Urban Planner

Approved by: Thomas Thomas, City Manager

RESOLUTION NO. ____-2015

WHEREAS, it is an objective of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Rock Island to update the Downtown Strategic Plan and initiate implementation activities to revitalize the downtown; and

WHEREAS, Houseal Lavigne Associates was selected and approved by City Council to prepare a Downtown Revitalization Plan for downtown Rock Island; and

WHEREAS, a Downtown Plan Advisory Committee (DPAC) was created consisting of members of the downtown business community and other stakeholders to provide guidance and generate support for the downtown planning effort; and

WHEREAS, in attempt to gain as much community input as possible, several community meetings and open houses were held throughout the process; and

WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing stating its purpose was published in the Argus Dispatch on the 4th of March, 2015, being at least 15 days prior to said hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Rock Island Planning Commission reviewed the Downtown Revitalization Plan and held a public hearing on April 1, 2015 wherein the Planning Commission recommended adoption of the Plan by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, having considered the findings of the Planning Commission made at the public hearing, finds that the Downtown Revitalization Plan should be adopted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Rock Island hereby adopts the City of Rock Island Downtown Revitalization Plan.

Passed this ____ day of May, 2015.

MAYOR

PASSED: _____

APPROVED: _____

ATTEST: _____
CITY CLERK