

Downtown Alpena Plaza Palooza PlacePlan Concept Report – July 2013



Preface

What is Placemaking?

The following proposed design, prescribed land use regulatory tools, and asset optimization recommendations for the Alpena Plaza Development Site fall under the planning approach termed “placemaking”. As an approach, placemaking recognizes that places (central gathering spots, downtowns, neighborhoods, regions) must be designed in a way that their **form** (physical scale, land use diversity and density) leads to and supports desired social activity, resulting in a positive psychological and emotional response from those who spend time, reside in, or work within the place at hand. In order to plan for the development and/or maintenance of places that offer the amenities that support a wide array of real estate market demands, placemaking combines a variety of land use planning principles that move communities away from conventional zoning and development that focuses on where a single use, such as restaurants / entertainment / retail / office, should be located and instead considers how these uses should be combined in an environment that draws residents and visitors alike to enjoy spending extended time in a space. Many of these guiding principles lean toward designing spaces mirroring bustling traditional neighborhoods and downtowns developed prior to widespread use of the automobile.



Quality public spaces are at the heart of what makes a quality place.

(Source: <http://blog.thedetroithub.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/capitol-park-downtown-detroit-vision-dan-gilbert-650x400.jpg>)

Acknowledgments

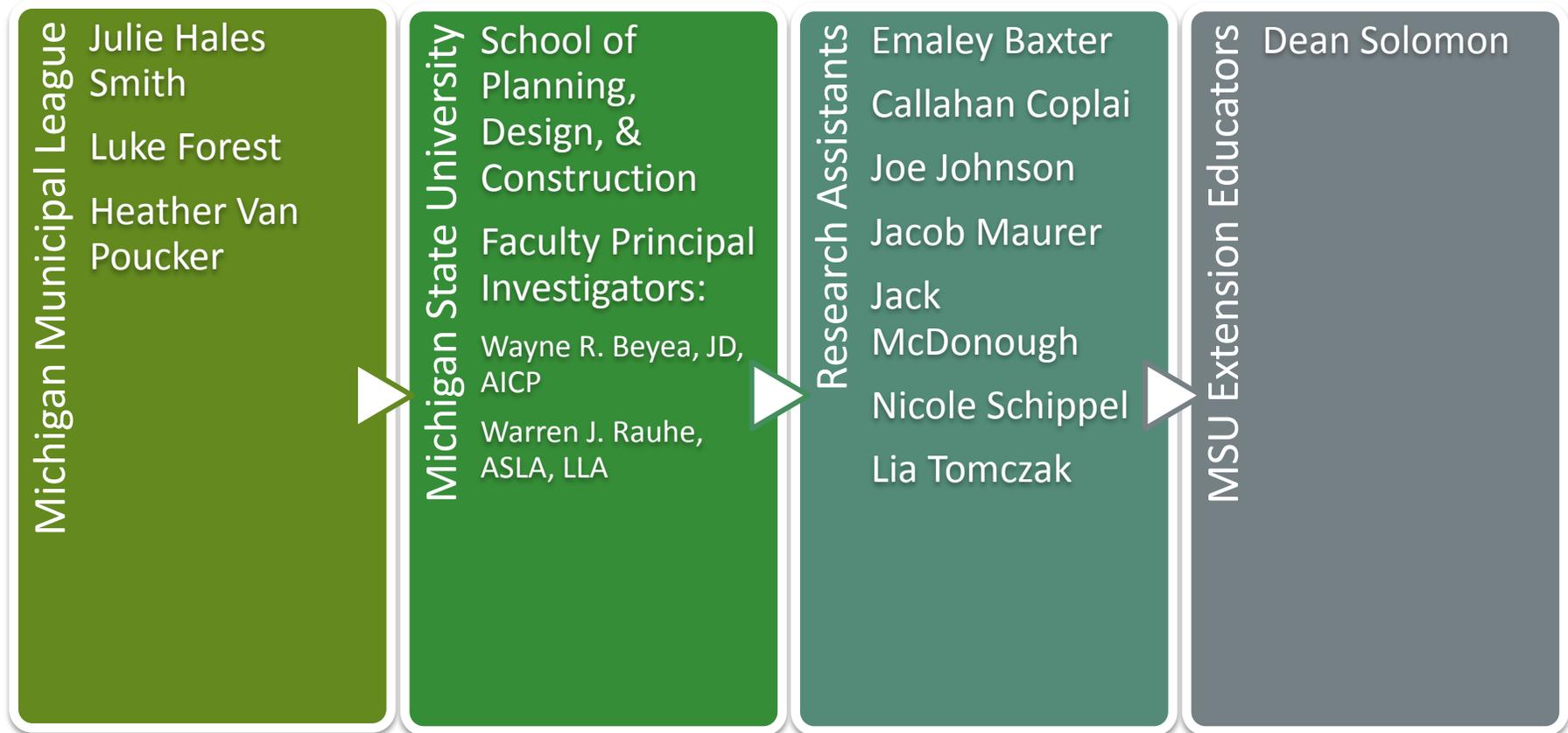
Governor Snyder's MiPlace Initiative

The MIplace Partnership¹ is a statewide initiative with the purpose of keeping Michigan at the forefront of a national movement known as placemaking. It is based on the concept that people choose to live in places that offer the amenities, resources, social and professional networks and opportunities to support thriving lifestyles. The Partnership helps communities create and bolster those places. It is led at the state agency level by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and coordinated through a public/private leadership collaborative known as the Sense of Place Council. Michigan State University and the Michigan Municipal League, the partners on this project, are collaborators with the Sense of Place Council.



¹ Source: <http://miplace.org/placemaking>

PlacePlan Technical Assistance Team Members



Local Partners

The PlacePlan Technical Assistance Team would like to acknowledge the Alpena city staff and elected and appointed officials for their constant support and assistance. The Local Partners ensured that the Team had data, documents, and community input necessary for completing the analysis and resulting asset, planning, and design recommendations for the Alpena Plaza Development site.

The PlacePlan Technical Assistance Team would like to express their sincere gratitude to the hundreds of residents, business owners, land owners, and other stakeholders that attended the Community Visioning Meeting, Multiple-Day Design Charrette, Post-Charrette Design Preview, and/or provided feedback during this process. Placemaking begins with a community-supported vision for what makes a place a true destination in the community. Without you, this process would not be possible.



Source: <http://greatlakesecho.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Alpena-Logo-300x256.jpg>

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Introduction

Project Overview

In response to the MiPlace Partnership request for applications, the City of Alpena submitted a request for assistance with focusing on development of a plaza in the heart of Downtown Alpena. The City of Alpena and local stakeholders envision a plaza serving as a focal point in the community, designed to accommodate events and public gatherings. In doing so, the plaza will fulfill a need for such a space that was recently identified during “Brand Camp”, a first step in carrying out a branding initiative conducted by the branding and marketing firm Destination Development International (DDI). During Brand Camp, the Alpena Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and partners developed a community brand and marketing program focusing on attributes unique to Alpena. The

resulting plan is to emphasize Alpena’s niche as a sanctuary from the hectic and pressured lives of larger urban communities. The lack of an identifiable central gathering place was cited in DDI’s recommendation to develop the downtown into a vibrant hub for the Alpena community and its visitors. Upon its creation, the plaza will be used by the Alpena Brand Leadership Team (BLT), among others, as a place to entice local residents and visitors to the downtown through aggressive programming of year-round activities. Furthermore, it will complement ongoing investments in affordable and market-rate housing, nearby park improvements, development and historic redevelopment of mixed-use buildings, and façade improvements.

The proposed site is inspired by a resurrected 1984 plan to add pedestrian walkways along the rear of an existing commercial block through the closing of

a public alley and the redesign of a public and private parking lot. The proposed city block is centrally located within the downtown and is adjacent to a 2-acre riverfront parcel that was recently sold to a local landowner who has displayed great interest in seeing the plaza space development project break ground. The City of Alpena and other stakeholders supportive of the project have proposed that the plaza transform the current land use of the site which includes a surface parking lot owned by the City, an alley, and private parking. However, despite strong support for the development of a plaza from local stakeholders, concerns have also been expressed over the proposed plaza location and the subsequent elimination of some downtown parking. Nonetheless, there are advantages to considering the current location as expressed in this report based on resident input and PlacePlan team analysis.

Overview of Methodology

In order to provide carefully considered asset, planning, and design recommendations for implementation of a plaza development project in Downtown Alpena, the following process was carried out for gathering the necessary information and input:

- Reviewed local/regional land use plans and relevant data
- Inventoried assets that fulfill MML's 21st Century Community criteria
- Conducted interviews with stakeholders
- Held three community input meetings
 - Phase One: Community Visioning
 - Phase Two: Multiple-Day Design Charrette
 - Phase Three: Post-Charrette / Input Session Feedback

- Final Report and Presentation

National Charrette Institute's Charrette System

These phases were carried out in line with the National Charrette Institute's (NCI) Charrette System. With objectives that include creating a safe environment in which all members can participate in planning their community; planning for scenarios at the neighborhood scale; bringing an on-the-ground reality to community planning by creating demonstration projects that often turn into real catalytic development; and anchoring public involvement with realistic constraints, the Alpena community was engaged in NCI's three planning phases, including a stakeholder interview process.

MML Stakeholder Interview Process

A critical element of the charrette process is engagement, including the preparatory

work of interviewing stakeholders in advance of the design charrette meetings. The purpose is to identify key stakeholders and allow ample opportunity for input in a non-public setting for groups with considerable vested interest in the project. Key stakeholders are decision makers, those with valuable information, those who will be affected by the outcome, and those who have the power to promote the project or block the project. Note that numerous public meetings provided access to a wide range of individuals and interests that could not be accommodated in the interview process due to time and travel constraints.

With regard to targeted stakeholder outreach, we prepared an initial stakeholder analysis, identifying individuals and groups that may be appropriate to speak with directly. We provided that to the client for review and input, then representatives from MML

and MSU embarked on unstructured interviews aimed at promoting a shared understanding of the project, identifying priorities, concerns, and potential barriers to success.

Phase One: Community Kick-Off Workshop

At the onset of the Downtown Alpena Plaza development project, the City of Alpena hosted a kick-off community visioning meeting. During the meeting, attendees were challenged to consider, discuss with others, and document what about Alpena makes them proud, what they are sorry about, and what they would like to see in Alpena, in particular within the development site, in the future. To encourage creativity and vision over the long-term, questions were posed such as “you’re in a hot air balloon over the Plaza site 15 years from now - what would you like to look down on?” and provided sheets of drawing paper and markers to encourage not only



written comments, but an opportunity to share visuals. Figure 1 summarizes the findings from the Community Visioning Meeting.

Figure 1: Community Visioning Meeting

Phase Two: Multiple-Day Design Charrette

After considering findings from the community kick-off workshop, review of applicable land use plans, and inventory of local/regional assets, a multiple-day design charrette was conducted. Shown were maps of the existing built environment and plaza site. Day one consisted of gathering input and illustrating suggestions on draft sheets of paper over the existing locations. Designs were prepared based on this input and displayed during day two. The displayed graphics included photos exemplifying what other communities have done to achieve desired attributes named during day one and preliminary design sketches. Attendees were provided with post-it notes on which they could write reactions / comments / suggestions with regards to the design layouts and photographs. The designs were further refined and presented to the community on day three of the charrette. Multiple

days provided ample time for interested participants to attend. It also provided the design team with time to work through concepts with key stakeholders and to respond to public comment with three preliminary designs presented during the final day of the charrette. Labeled “Art”, “Maritime”, and “Sanctuary”, all three preliminary designs received both praise and constructive criticism. Of the three designs, the two that received the greatest public support included the Art and Sanctuary themes. Design forms of the Maritime concept were also well supported. Some of the design elements that were praised included the use of historical paintings in the alley; creation of outdoor eatery options; linkage between downtown destinations; variety of seating options; color scheme enhancements; creation of



Figure 2: Multiple-Day Design Charrette

desired photograph opportunities; potential for a splash pad/skating rink; and covered alleyways. The public indicated some missing elements included winter activity planning; bicycle racks; trash receptacles; lighting; security / maintenance; shelter from undesirable weather; restrooms; lack of water features; among others.

Final Design Input

After considering the findings from the Design Charrette, the recommendations and design renderings were updated. On April 17, 2013, the third community meeting was held at Art in the Loft in downtown Alpena. Stakeholders representing the City, local businesses, and non-profit organizations were given the opportunity to see the updated designs and recommendations for the Plaza site. The attendees were asked three questions about the updated concept:

1. What elements do you like?
2. What's missing?
3. How could we enhance connectivity?

The attendees were asked to write down their comments on notecards and their input has been considered in completing the final design and recommendations for the Plaza project. Figure 3 depicts

common themes from the community comments.



Figure 3: Alpena Final Design Comments

Existing Conditions

Community Overview

Covering 8.93 square miles², the city of Alpena is situated along the northeastern coast of Lake Huron, overlooking Thunder Bay. Boasting a population of 10,483, Alpena fulfills the role of county seat for Alpena County in the state of Michigan³.

Local Economy

Alpena continues to maintain industrial/manufacturing jobs as part of its local economy. However, the 1990s brought with it a change in community focus, leading to the diversification of the local economy⁴. According to the US

² City of Alpena, 2012

³ US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

⁴ City of Alpena Planning Commission, 2007, p. 3-1

Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, the industry category entitled “Educational Services, and health care and social assistance” provides the greatest number of employment opportunities in Alpena at 27.5% (2007–2011). This can likely be attributed to the reduction in labor experienced by the manufacturing industry in the 1980s coupled with the expansion of both Alpena Community College and Alpena Regional Medical Center. Between the 1990s and 2007, Alpena Community College doubled its enrollment while Alpena Regional Medical Center grew in presence from a local primary care County-based hospital into a regional secondary healthcare center⁵. Following this industry sector, the sectors that provide the most employment include “Retail Trade” at 13.4% and “Arts,

⁵ Ibid.

entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services” at 10.5%.

Demographics

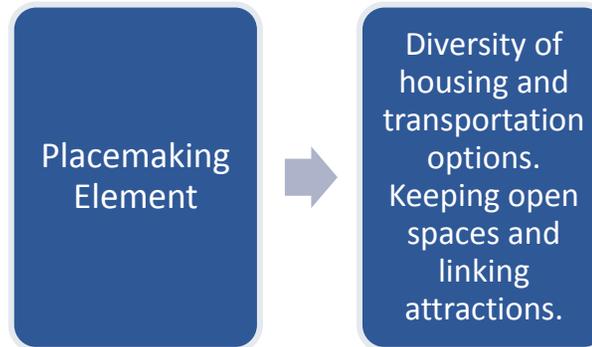
Of the 10,483 people that make up Alpena’s population, the age group that comprises the highest percentage of the population includes those age 50 – 64 at 20.8%. This age group is followed by children under the age of 18 (20.7%) and individuals 65+ (19.4%)⁶. The median age within the city of Alpena is 42.5 years, compared with Michigan (38.9 years) and the United States (37.3 years). Results from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate indicate that the average household income within the City of Alpena is \$43,038 (2007 – 2011), compared with Michigan (\$48,432) and the United States

⁶ US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

(\$51,914). With regards to race, Alpena's population is predominantly white (96.8%), followed by two or more races (0.01%).

Land Use

During their 2007 master planning process, fourteen land use categories were identified within the City of Alpena. Of the fourteen categories, the category that covers the largest area within the city at 23.6% includes single- and two-family residential housing. This category is followed by heavy industrial (17.8%) and forests (13.2%). Downtown Alpena, the location of the plaza project, accounts for 1.1% of the total land cover⁷. Figure 4 depicts the 2007 land use map.



A mix of land uses allows for a greater level of activity.

Source: http://www.smartgrowth.org/principles/img/mix_land.jpg

⁷ City of Alpena Planning Commission, 2007, pp. 6-1 – 6-4)

Downtown Alpena Plaza Site

The proposed plaza development site is centrally located within Downtown Alpena. Bounded by River Street to the northeast, Second Avenue, Third Avenue, and Chisholm (US 23), the proposed site is currently being used as a surface parking lot consisting of 78 city-owned spaces and 22 privately-owned spaces. The surface parking lot is surrounded by predominantly contiguous 1- and 2-story buildings along Chisholm and Second Avenue (southwest and south respectively). These buildings are occupied primarily by independently-owned retail stores and eateries. In addition, service-oriented businesses, a Curves fitness center, and Shoreline Church surround the proposed plaza space. Table 1 depicts buildings uses and square footage around the plaza site.

The site is currently zoned non-residential under category “Central Business District”, focusing on retail, institutional, culinary, hospitality, and service uses. The entire CDB is within a Downtown Overlay District (DOD) that also includes much of the “Water Development District” adjacent to the project site to the northeast as well as the historic Old Town Neighborhood located across the river. The intent of the DOD is to encourage and direct development within the CBD and Waterfront Development District, renovation of historic buildings and development of new building stock, provide a pedestrian-oriented downtown environment, and reinforce a compact development pattern, among others⁸. In addition, the

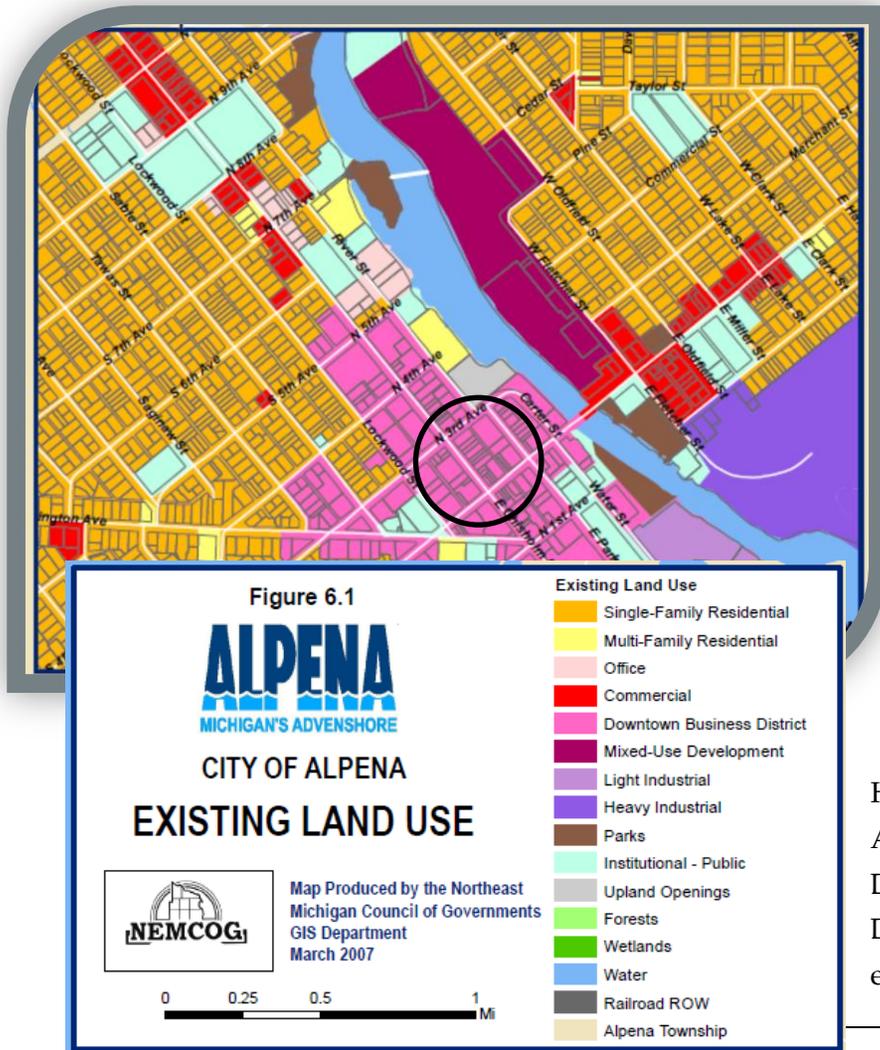
⁸ City of Alpena Zoning Ordinance, 2010

Use	Approx. Square Feet*
Residential Apartment	9,696
Store/Retail	52,873.5
Office	22,856
Warehouse/Storage	9,604
Restaurant	4,700

Table 1: Building Uses and Square Feet: 2nd Avenue and Chisholm St. at Plaza Site

Source: BS&A Internet Software, City of Alpena Database

* Available space may not be accounted for above due to unlisted building use/available square feet at 115 N. Second Avenue.



Source: City of Alpena Planning Commission, 2007

proposed plaza site finds itself within both a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) and a Downtown Rental Development Target Area⁹. Supported by Community Development Block Grant funding from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the Downtown Rental Development initiative endeavors to add full-

time residents to the downtown through development of moderate and market-rate rental housing units in vacant and underutilized upper floors of existing commercial buildings. To date, the City of Alpena, in partnership with private property owners, has completed 15 units with seven additional units under renovation. Two of these fifteen sites are located within the buildings bordering the plaza site, with an additional seven sites within a 2-mile radius.

Current land uses surrounding the plaza development site include multifamily residential, office, institutional, and park space to the northeast along the riverfront. The southwest land area adjacent to the project site is primarily single-family housing¹⁰.

⁹ City of Alpena Planning Commission, 2007, p. 2-12

¹⁰ City of Alpena Planning Commission, 2007, p 6-5

Asset, Planning, and Design Evaluation

Local and Regional Asset Analysis

A local and regional analysis was carried out by the Michigan Municipal League in an effort to identify assets and opportunities within eight categories. Identified as essential by MML for communities that endeavor to be vibrant places in the 21st Century, these eight categories are:

- Physical Design, Walkability & Connectivity
- Sustainability and Environment
- Cultural Economic Development
- Entrepreneurship
- Education
- Branding and Communications
- Welcoming to All
- Transportation

Research continues to show that “placemaking” matters more than ever,

as an increasingly mobile workforce seeks out neighborhoods before finding jobs and opening up businesses. The purpose of this analysis is to help Alpena’s local officials identify, develop, and implement strategies that will grow and strengthen their community and in turn Michigan in the coming decades.

Physical Design, Walkability & Connectivity

The physical design and “walkability” of a community helps create interest, connectivity and overall “sense of place.” Walkability and connectivity can afford people safe and convenient access to the places they live, work, shop, and play. Examples include a traditional downtown with easy access from historic and/or architecturally pleasing residential areas, and mixed-use development that encourages appropriate density, traffic and other infrastructure design features that value the human scale by considering the

pedestrian, bicyclist and other non-motorized uses of the space.

The challenge is that oftentimes our streets are designed to prioritize cars, aiming to move them through a community as quickly as possible, without appropriate consideration for pedestrians, bicyclists and other users. Market analysis continues to show that preferences are changing, and more and more people want to live in neighborhoods with walkable downtowns, access to cultural, social, and entertainment opportunities, with a variety of transportation options. Walkability not only helps to create a strong sense of place, it promotes a strong local economy and healthy lifestyle.

Economic Impacts

A one point increase in “walk score” can translate into a \$3,000 increase in property value.¹¹ Higher employment density is linked to higher productivity and more innovation.¹²

ALPENA’S ASSETS

Its street grid, sidewalks, trails, and connectivity all make Alpena a walkable community. Block length and frequency of intersections are key indicators of a neighborhood or district that is convenient for residents, employees, and

¹¹ “How Walkability Raises Home Values in U.S. Cities.” August, 2009, by Joe Cortright, Impresa, Inc. for CEOs for Cities.

¹² “The Benefits of High Density Development.” 2005 presentation by Amy Liu, The Brookings Institution; also NY Times, September 3, 2011, “One Path to Better Jobs: More Density in Cities.”

visitors who want to travel by foot or bicycle and utilize local amenities. Block lengths should be short and frequency of intersections should be high. According to walkscore.com, Alpena’s downtown area has a Walk Score of 91 out of 100, and is identified as a “walker’s paradise.”

The city’s complete streets ordinance is an important method for ensuring infrastructure is safe, accessible and supportive of all users, not just motorists. Inherent in complete streets is the use of applications to provide enclosure, slow traffic, improve safety and mitigate environmental impact. Often these techniques take the form of “enhancements” which have the added benefit of being aesthetically pleasing, for example using trees and shrubs to buffer the street from the sidewalk. Having a complete streets ordinance in place has the added benefit of requiring state and county transportation agencies to work

collaboratively with a local community in making design decisions about streets covered by a complete streets policy.

Downtown and neighborhood amenities, especially the architecture and aesthetics of nearby neighborhoods and the downtown districts, are an advantage to the city and the plaza project in particular. The downtown rental development area and neighborhood enterprise zones are valuable tools in creating residential opportunities in the business district and encouraging mixed use development patterns. As well, the façade program and other efforts to improve the buildings in the area, especially the rear of the buildings which will surround the plaza, will be very important to the overall aesthetics.

Alpena’s infrastructure goes beyond roads and sidewalks to include numerous parks, trails, over 14 miles of Bi-Path and waterways in proximity to the plaza area that support active living,

healthy lifestyles, and non-motorized transportation. The Bi-Path and marina are especially important non-motorized transport options, with considerable potential to positively impact the downtown district and plaza site.

Cultural Economic Development

Cultural economic development makes a place unique and feeds our appetite for fun. This may include social and entertainment opportunities, art galleries, museums, cultural attractions, celebrations of heritage and tradition, athletics, special events, and a myriad of others. An active and diverse complement of arts and culture activities are essential to a thriving local economy and high quality of life.

Economic Impacts

From 2006 to 2011, the number of arts-related jobs increased by 15 percent to 85,656 jobs in Michigan, while arts-related businesses increased by 65

percent to 28,072. Nationally, arts and cultural organizations generated \$135.2 billion in economic activity and supported 4.1 million jobs. Michigan's arts and cultural destinations generated more than \$2 billion in state tourism revenues in fiscal year 2011, representing 16 percent of the state's total tourism revenues in that year—more than golf, boating and sailing, hunting and fishing, and hiking and biking combined.¹³

ALPENA'S ASSETS

The branding process provided an excellent overview of the community's offerings, as does the master plan. With regard to the downtown area and the plaza project, the city's bike path, marine sanctuary, Michigan Arts & Culture North East (MACNE) network of arts

¹³ "Creative State Michigan." 2013 by ArtServe Michigan.

and culture (including Besser, NOAA and the Thunder Bay Arts Council), downtown theatres, farmer's market, and the library are key assets. Proximity of Art in the Loft and the Thunder Bay Arts Council will provide artistic anchors for the plaza.

Entrepreneurship

Growing jobs by ones and twos is key to creating strong local economies in the 21st century. Local communities are fueled by small start-ups and growth on main street; these economic gardening strategies are aimed at developing the talent and potential that already exists right at home.

Also central to success are social entrepreneurs, who act as change agents within a community, seizing opportunities others miss to create social value rather than profits. This type of entrepreneurial activity resonates especially with students and young adults looking to apply their optimism,

energy, passion and skills for a positive, tangible impact.

Economic Impacts

Small business is responsible for 75 percent of all net new jobs. There are 27.5 million small businesses in the U.S. (of these, about 6 million have employees and 21.4 million are "Solopreneurs" or businesses with no employees). In contrast, there are 18,311 businesses with over 500 employees.¹⁴

ALPENA'S ASSETS

Strong, committed, and active Brand Leadership Team, local business owners, Downtown Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Alpena Area Convention & Visitor's Bureau, Target Alpena Development Corporation, MSU

¹⁴ US Small Business Administration.

Extension, Michigan Works service center, the Alpena Community College Small Business Development Center and Renaissance Zones are all focused on supporting local business and regional economic success.

Branding and Communications

People communicate, connect, and engage differently today than they did ten years ago, or five years ago, or last year, or even last month! Next generation internet and communication technologies are allowing people to share information in the virtual world in unprecedented ways. Communities that use cutting-edge strategies in their approach to branding, engagement, and communication with new demographics, businesses, cultural institutions, and philanthropic communities are ahead of the game.

Economic Impacts

As of March 19, 2013, "Michigan's Upper Peninsula" Facebook page has 176,454 "likes" and 13,679 people are talking about it. Just one year prior, it had about half that!

ALPENA'S ASSETS

An excellent Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan has been developed and is being actively implemented by a strong cross-disciplinary team that has a laser focus on success. On the communications front, the fiber optic consortium to enhance voice, video and data communications among public/non-profit entities is a strength.

Education

Education is key in competing in a global, 21st century economy, and educational institutions are vital anchor institutions within communities. From K-12 schools to community colleges and

technical schools, to state universities, educational institutions bring innumerable benefits to a community. They are the hub for not only learning, but sports, entertainment, arts and culture, healthcare, and recreation, and serve as engines of economic development. Vibrant communities successfully collaborate with a full range of educational institutions to develop intellectual, human, and physical capital. Collaboration can be as simple as sharing physical facilities such as ballparks and swimming pools, or as complex as formal town-gown strategic plans.

Economic Impacts

In 2002, a Bachelor's degree-holder could expect to earn 75 percent more over a lifetime than someone with a high school

diploma. In 2011 that premium was 84 percent.¹⁵

ALPENA'S ASSETS

An active, engaged local school district, community college, library and related programs and services combine to create a solid educational network within the community. The only-of-its-kind Concrete Technology degree program at the community college is a point of pride and a significant asset, as are the 2,000+ students. The K-12 system is one of the largest geographic districts in the state, covering more than 620 square miles and serving over 4,300 students.

Welcoming to All

Successful 21st century communities are inclusive and welcoming to all,

¹⁵ "The College Payoff." August, 2011 by Carnevale, Rose & Cheah, Georgetown University.

embracing diversity and multiculturalism as a competitive advantage. These types of communities are most attractive to new businesses, and today's fluid, mobile, and global workforce seeks out places that embrace people of all ages, religions, ethnicities, national origins, and races.

Economic Impacts

It is estimated that immigrant-founded companies were responsible for generating sales of more than \$52 billion in 2005 and creating just under 450,000 jobs as of 2005. Immigrants have become a significant driving force in the creation of new businesses and intellectual property in the U.S.¹⁶

¹⁶ "America's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs." January 4, 2007 by Wadhwa, Saxenian, Rissing & Gereffi, Duke University.

ALPENA'S ASSETS

The brand report and our work with the public meetings revealed time and again that the Alpena community is close-knit, supportive, and friendly.

Sustainability and Environment

Sustainability and green initiatives encompass a broad range of environmental issues, including developing “green jobs,” valuing our natural resources, and leveraging them within our new economy. Recognizing that good environmental stewardship is not just a “feel good” effort, it is a core value that has become a driver for economic success in the 21st century.

Economic Impacts

Active outdoor recreation contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports 6.5 million jobs, and generates \$88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue. Active recreation is defined as bicycling, trail activities,

paddling, snow sports, camping, fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing.¹⁷

ALPENA'S ASSETS

The Alpena community has boundless assets when it comes to natural resources, including its waterfront, forestry, parks and greenspace, Wildlife Sanctuary, proximity to state parks and national forests, etc. The Resource Recovery Center and with private recycling options are initial steps in aligning values with practice.

Transportation

Thriving regions offer a range of transit options, from walking and biking to buses and other modes of transit.

Transportation has become an integrated part of all conversations concerning

¹⁷ “Economic Impact of Trails.” summer 2011 by American Trails.

economic development, particularly in Michigan, where we share a border with Canada, and are surrounded by some of the most important waterways in the country. Developing effective transportation options is a necessary tool for all communities interested in attracting and retaining residents, workers, and businesses. Research shows that people across the nation are choosing communities that offer various modes of transportation, with easy access to the places they live, work, and play. Multimodal transit can be as complex as rail systems and as simple as trails and bike paths.

Economic Impacts

It is estimated that 14.6 million households over the next 20 years will want housing within ¼ mile of a transit stop. Residential property value

increased from 10% to 20% when near a transit stop, and commercial property increased by 23%.¹⁸ In Phoenix only 2 percent of the region’s households live within a half-mile walk of a Metro station. However, even a relatively weak transit system has substantial benefits for nearby homeowners: Their home values outperformed the area by 36.8 percent, with apartments faring the best.¹⁹

¹⁸ “Transit-oriented Development: The Return on Investment.” By David Taylor, CNU Senior Vice President for NCPPP Partnerships in Transportation

¹⁹ “The New Real Estate Mantra: Location Near Public Transportation.” By the Center for Neighborhood Technology for the National Association of Realtors and the American Public Transportation Association, 2013.

ALPENA’S ASSETS

Non-motorized transportation, including water and bike systems, are strong assets in the Alpena community. Its high walkability score in the downtown area is also a strength, as is the Alpena Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART) service, which provides on-demand transportation service within the greater Alpena area.

Planning and Design Considerations

Planning Analysis

In order to plan for the development and/or maintenance of places that offer the amenities that support a wide array of real estate market demands, placemaking combines a variety of land use planning principles that move communities away from conventional zoning and development. Instead, placemaking focuses on where a single use, such as restaurants / entertainment / retail / office, should be combined in an environment that draws residents and visitors alike to enjoy spending extended time in a space. Many of these guiding principles lean toward designing spaces mirroring bustling traditional neighborhoods developed prior to widespread use of the automobile.

After receiving feedback from local stakeholders at the community visioning meeting and design charrette, the

following urban planning issues and considerations related to successful placemaking have been identified. Specific suggestions for the plaza development site and surrounding area are found in the Recommendations section of this report.

Downtown Parking

A universal issue identified during the visioning session and design charrette was downtown parking. Some concerns were expressed that downtown parking is insufficient and creating a plaza design that eliminates any parking would be problematic. Other participants suggested that the amount of public parking is sufficient but the parking behavior of residents and employees parking in close proximity to businesses contributes towards perceived parking deficiency. In addition, others expressed the lack of clear connections and visibility of public parking as the underlying issue.

According to the DDA, there are approximately 1000 parking spaces within four blocks of the plaza, including 250 on-street parking spaces. The plaza site currently contains 100 parking spaces (78 public, 22 private). A general parking standard for historic downtowns is approximately 4 spaces per 1000 sq. ft. of gross building area²⁰. However, much depends on the type of retail and the parking design, layout and location to provide the satisfactory customer experience²¹. For example, the Alpena Market Analysis and Downtown Strategic Plan prepared by Becket & Raeder, Inc. identified a parking standard range from 1 space per 1000 gross floor area (GFA) for service

²⁰ Gibbs, Robert J. Principles of Urban Retail Planning and Development. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2012. Print.

²¹ Ibid.

establishments (e.g. shoe repair, contractor showrooms) to 10.7 spaces per 1000 GFA for sit down restaurants.

Another key component of parking supply is on-street parking. In a small, historic downtown such as Alpena, customers expect to park directly in front of many retail establishments²². This is particularly true for goods & services such as convenience/corner stores and hardware, flower shop, and bakeries where remote off-street lots will create a negative customer perception²³. However, remote parking areas are a viable option for long-term users such as employees of downtown businesses.

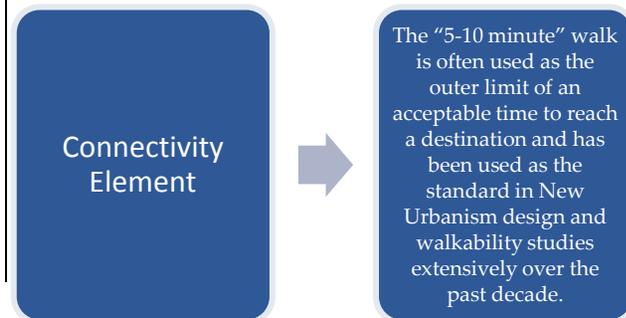
²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Connectivity and Complete Streets

Although Downtown Alpena receives a high walk score, connections between activity centers / parking areas and for users of non-motorized transportation can be enhanced. Placemaking at its core is about creating the appropriate emotional response from visitors about a specific place. Perceptions about accessibility, parking, and linkages to surrounding amenities play a key role in visitor satisfaction.

Walking distance and the time it takes to park and reach a downtown business is an important factor for framing customer perception. Therefore, understanding the walking behavior of those visiting downtown Alpena is critical.



Acceptable walking distances are also impacted by weather, site distances to desired location, pedestrian barriers, perception of crime and the type of business to name a few. A satisfactory walking distance is often between 400 feet (professional services/grocery establishments) and 1,200 feet (restaurants/general retail) for uncovered downtown parking areas²⁴. While most of the available downtown parking falls within these guidelines, clearly marked linkages to parking is an important consideration for a successful Alpena plaza project.

Another important tool is attention to Complete Streets, a planning and design

²⁴ Litman, Todd. *Parking management best practices*. Chicago, Ill.: American Planning Association, 2006. Print.

concept that endeavors to create streets that can be used by all. Alpena has taken an important first step in achieving complete streets by adopting a Complete Streets Ordinance. Implementation will require planning and design to enable safe access to users for a variety of transportation options including walking, bicycling, travel by automobile and transit of all ages and abilities. A complete street should ensure ease when crossing the street, walking to retail, and bicycling in addition to allowing buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from other transportation services.

Complete Streets asks transportation agencies to change their approach to community roads. Through the adoption of a Complete Streets policy, a community directs their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users,

regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. As a result, all transportation projects assist in making the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists²⁵.

Transect-Based Planning

Transect-based planning is an approach that divides the built environment into six categories that differ in land use diversity and density, ranging from “natural landscape” to the “urban core”. Its major driving principle is that certain forms and elements belong in certain environments. What may work well in a suburban neighborhood may ruin the street aesthetics and connectivity within an urban core. Transect-based planning expresses that successful growth requires the sequential influence of many

²⁵ Smart Growth America, 2013

Placemaking Elements of Quality Places

- Mixed Use Development (Land and Buildings)
- Quality Public Spaces
- Broadband Enabled
- Multiple Transportation Options
- Multiple Housing Options
- Preservation of Historic Structures
- Recreation
- Arts & Culture
- Green Places
- Linked Regionally

Placemaking Form Characteristics

- Accessibility, Comfort
- Quiet- unless designated otherwise
- Sociability
- Civic Engagement
- Resilient and Sustainable
- Mass, Density, and Scale
- Human Scale
- Walkable/Pedestrian-Oriented
- Safe, Connected, Welcoming
- Encourages Activity -Stumbling into Fun
- Allows Authentic Experiences

Source: MiPlace Initiative Curriculum, 2012

participants. It employs form-based code through a tool called SMART code that provides zoning guidelines that pertain to the Transect Zone being planned for. This allows the built environment to be designed and constructed by many individuals over years and/or generations, lending ingenuity to the landscape²⁶.

Within the Recommendations section of this report, the tenets of transect-based planning have been utilized while addressing how to create appropriate linkages between the plaza development site and locations of interest in greater downtown. The Team has defined the land use development pattern of Downtown Alpena on the transect scale at Transect Zone 5: Urban Center Zone. This definition was made based upon the

community's social activity goals for the plaza and downtown, existing land use, and future planned land use. A T5 pattern could provide for a land use density, scale, and diversity in uses that will support the activities the community would like to see take place in the plaza. With their prescribed land use density, scale, and diversity in uses in mind, strategies have been recommended for addressing connectivity that make sense within the urban fabric of Alpena's downtown.

²⁶ SmartCode Version 9.2, p. vii

Design Analysis

The placemaking process begins with asking questions of the people who reside, work, and play in a particular space in an effort to determine their needs and desires for a space. This information is then used to create a common vision for that place. The feedback of local stakeholders that attended the community visioning meeting and design charrette was necessary in order to develop the following design elements. These design elements inform the final PlacePlan concept design so that it succeeds in providing the form necessary to realize the social activities and emotional response envisioned for the space by the Alpena community. The diagram on the right depicts key design elements. Specific suggestions for the plaza site and surrounding area are found in the Recommendations section of this report.

Design Elements

- The "Art" and "Sanctuary" Concepts Received Much Support, as did the "Ripple" Idea from the "Maritime" Concept. As a Result, the Objective will Be to Blend All Three
- Large, Well-Defined, Multipurpose Space Within the Plaza
- Covered Alley
- Splash and Skate
- Note Overly Landscaped, but Needs Green
- Connections to the Surrounding Context are Crucial
- Fun Place to Be, both In Design and Programming
- Accessible to All, Universal Design
- The Site should have Something to Pose Next to
- Public Restrooms
- Year Round Use
- Easy to Walk Through
- Retain Safety and Service Capabilities
- Outdoor Cafes
- Bring History Alive
- Include Art in Design
- Maritime Heritage is Important
- Stage Area(s)
- Fire Pit
- Respect Key Branding Principles
- Social Spaces and Sanctuary Spaces
- Human Scale but also Sense of Place that is Plaza Palooza
- Welcoming

Recommendations

Overview

The City of Alpena has launched a downtown revitalization strategy comprehensive in scope. Leveraging funding along the way, Alpena has begun to address the creation of affordable and market-rate housing, park improvements, development and historic redevelopment of mixed-use buildings, and façade improvements within its Downtown Overlay District. In addition, the Alpena Convention and Visitors Bureau had the foresight to engage a branding team to assist the City with defining its image. This has resulted in a plan that has identified and seeks to capitalize and build upon Alpena's current assets, providing next steps for executing a public relations campaign that will reach out to local residents and potential visitors.

In the effort to fulfill the recommendation within the *Alpena Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan* to develop a central gathering space within Downtown Alpena, a design concept and recommended supporting land use regulatory tools and community economic development recommendations have been created in a comprehensive process employing the "Placemaking" approach.

Placemaking recognizes as an idea that people tend to choose the neighborhood they live in based upon that neighborhood's amenities, social and professional networks, resources and opportunities to support thriving lifestyles – as defined by the individual. As an approach, placemaking recognizes that places (central gathering spots, downtowns, neighborhoods, regions)

must be designed in a way that their **form** (physical scale, land use diversity and density) leads to and supports the aforementioned results.

Using identified urban planning and design guidelines, characteristics of placemaking form, and elements of quality places in mind, the following recommendations address these key objectives:

- Creation of a Quality Public Space
 - Comfort
 - Civic Engagement and Sociability
 - Encourages Activity – Stumbling into Fun
 - Allows for Authentic Experiences
 - Safe, Connected, Welcoming Environment

- Ensuring Connectivity/Linkage to Local Assets and Districts
 - Proximity to Assets/Districts
 - Parking Management
 - Optimize Alleys and Passageways
- Planning for Future Development: Mixed-Use, Density, and Scale for Transect 5: Urban Center Zone



Sources: Royal Oak: http://www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/portal/webfm_send/412
 Ann Arbor: http://blog.mlive.com/annarbornews/2008/05/large_DOWNTOWN1_051808.jpg
 Marquette: http://i2.cdn.turner.com/money/galleries/2011/real_estate/1109/gallery.best_places_retire.moneymag/images/marquette-mi.jpg

Final Design Concept

The final concept plan for Alpena’s Plaza Palooza provides a tremendous opportunity for economic development, creates a major identity for the community, and is a year round attraction. The plaza design works together, creating a multi-purpose public space for year round use. Major features such as the skating rink / splash pad / event space, access & circulation, gateways, sitting areas, and outdoor dining are discussed in this section.



Figure 5: Alpena Final Concept Plan

Figure 6: Alpena Plaza from Southeast looking Northwest



Figure 7: Alpena Plaza from Northwest looking Southeast



The major features within the plaza are:

Skating Rink, Slash Pad, Event Space –

This centrally located area will be multi-purpose and multi-seasonal in its use. The space would be slightly lower than the surrounding plaza and have universal access. The paving would have a “circular” pattern to it and all surrounding forms would mirror that pattern. The main stage area has public restrooms and storage built into it. Secondary stages are also located adjacent to the space. An outdoor fire pit has been included for winter and shoulder season use. In future detail design, it will be important that appropriate support elements such as sound, lighting, and other supporting technology be designed into the space in an unobtrusive manner.

Access and Circulation – The alley has been maintained for emergency and service access by vehicles. Service access will have to be “zoned” by time of day

such that it does not occur when people will be using the plaza. Bollards or some other form of constraint will have to be incorporated into both ends of the alley, but done so in a manner that will allow for them to be lowered for access and also be visually pleasing. Emergency vehicles would have 24/7 access via the same controlled bollard approach, via a wireless signal. Pedestrian access can occur at any point along the two adjacent streets, as well as the alley and the pocket park. Throughout the plaza, people can walk pretty much from any point to



Alpena Plaza in action as a Splash Pad



Plaza Palooza Skating Rink during the wintertime

another. Pull off spaces for buses or delivery vehicles have been provided on both 3rd Avenue and River Street. All paving in the plaza will be of a pedestrian scale, color and texture, not typical parking lot or street paving. Areas of the plaza that would not be actively used during the winter would be used to store snow before it was removed. Snow should also be considered a potential design element such as creating safely constructed tunnels and “snow houses” for entertainment. The area around

the perimeter of the plaza will be very active with people walking through, stopping to eat and drink, sitting on benches facing both into the central area and out to the perimeter, and in general be an attraction into themselves. Bicycle parking has been incorporated into the perimeter of the plaza at several locations.

Gateways – Overhead features that extend beyond the plaza over the adjacent sidewalks will act as both welcoming features and identify the plaza entrances from the adjacent downtown. Architecturally, future detailed design should incorporate historical forms, materials and colors into the gateway features. Visual connections to the downtown and riverfront have been maintained and enhanced. A strong vertical element has also been suggested as a signature wayfinding element and may also have an HD

camera mounted at the top to provide images of the surrounding downtown and waterfront.

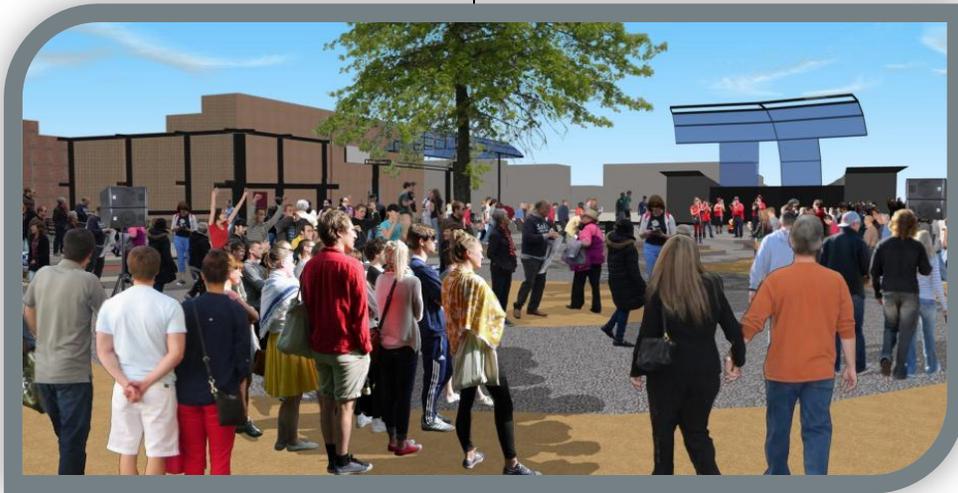
Sitting Areas – Throughout the plaza, benches, and related trash receptacles, have been included. There are areas for group seating as well as areas for a more sanctuary feeling.

Outdoor Dining – The sides of the plaza adjacent to the existing buildings have been designed for indoor/outdoor dining. Use of overhead structures and seasonal walls and heating elements could make this a year round activity. During detailed design various support elements/activities such as trash collection, lighting, etc. would be tastefully designed adjacent to these

areas. Management of liquor licensed areas would need to occur.

Greening of the Plaza – There needs to be a balance between green and urban. The plaza is essentially an urban space and thus should not be designed as a park. Overhead shade trees, shrubs in planters, and a modest lawn area for informal seating with blankets have all been incorporated into the design, but in a limited way. During detailed design, this will be a key element to “get right” such that the plaza does not come off cold and barren but likewise not over grown and park like.

Parking – The existing private parking lot has been retained and incorporated into the design of the plaza. Should that property become available in the future, the plaza could be easily expanded. The deck over the parking that was developed as concept plan 3.0, has not been pursued.



Plaza design features greenery, public open space, plenty of room for a hub of activity

Pocket Park/Covered Alley – Both of these areas present a key opportunity for pedestrian access to the plaza and along with that an experience into the history of the area. Seating, landscaping and public art have been incorporated into each area.

Overall Theme – This is an area that deserves significant thought and carefully consideration as detailed design evolves. There was strong support throughout the entire planning process to develop a maritime feel to the plaza, but to do so in a very tasteful and low key manner. For example, the porthole/LED screen idea for presenting information, history and entertainment would provide a low key maritime feel, where a giant ships propeller may not.



Bicycle Parking, Public Seating, and walking paths are among the many features in the Plaza Design

Design Recommendations

Creating a Quality Public Space

- The plaza should accommodate both active (e.g. outdoor games, children’s play space, fitness activities) and passive “sanctuary” (e.g. picnic space, meditation spot, biking rest spot, reading, people watching, viewing public art) uses
- Allow for both planned and spontaneous activity by creating and promoting flexible space
- Needs a “big wow” anchor element like an observation



The Alpena Plaza offers an opportunity to create a one-of-a-kind public space

Placemaking Element



Mixed use development, also referred to as land use diversity, can be described as locating residential, commercial and recreational uses in close proximity to one another (Smartgrowth.org, 2013). In addition, mixed use development applies to including a variety of uses within an individual building as well.

tower, public art, or a water feature that lets you know you’ve arrived at the Plaza

- The plaza should include four season features like water, ice, fire, canopy (natural or built), etc. to support year round uses

Connectivity/Linkage to Local Assets and Districts

- Wayfinding and signage are crucial to ensure that visitors and residents can enjoy all that Alpena has to offer.

- The plaza should connect visually and physically to other assets such farmer’s market, bi-path, riverfront, harbor, theatres, art galleries, shops, restaurants, etc.

• Linked greenspace emphasizes public spaces and their connections

- Ensure linkages & connectivity to the downtown, river and related assets

Using Scale, Density, and Mixing Uses to Create a “Sense of Place”

Specifically, placemaking elements and form characteristics consistent with the T5 development pattern have been addressed in the following ways:

- Spaces created at the pedestrian scale that are universally designed, interconnected, walkable, and welcoming that provide opportunities for protection from weather and climatic changes, bustle and solitude, people to gather or enjoy solitude, discovery, and surprise.



The Plaza should be an asset itself, as well as offering connections to Alpena's other assets

Planning Recommendations

Ensuring Connectivity/Linkage to Local Assets and Districts

Site Location Based Upon Proximity to Local Assets and Neighborhood Districts

The branding consultant, Destination Development International (DDI) identified the project site bounded by River Street to the northeast, Second Avenue, Third Avenue, and Chisholm (US 23) in the recommendation section within their report²⁷. The City of Alpena also identified this site, among others, as a preferred location for the plaza. Further review of Downtown Alpena and potential sites yielded this recommendation for the proposed plaza development project due to its central location within Downtown Alpena and

²⁷ Alpena Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan, p.20

its proximity to local assets identified during both Alpena's Brand Camp process and the community input process carried out for this project. Assets within a two mile radius of the site identified during the branding and PlacePlan processes included:

- Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
- Thunder Bay Shores Marina
- Riverfront Bi-Path
- Alpena Civic Theater
- Alpena City Hall
- Alpena Farmer's Market
- Shipwreck Tours & Diving
- 1914 Alpena Lighthouse

In addition, this site is within approximately 0.10 of a mile of Lockwood Street, which currently serves as a boundary between the downtown and traditional neighborhood districts of single- and two-family housing. This proximity more than satisfies the

distance requirement associated with a comfortable walking distance (1/4 mile), promoting the Smart Growth principle of creating walkable neighborhoods by locating multiple destinations in close proximity of one another.

By choosing this site for the plaza development project, the City of Alpena will not only save land acquisition costs, it will improve connectivity between the residential district and the greater downtown by creating a recognizable gateway linkage as well as supporting economic development in the area.

Perform a Walkability Audit between the Plaza Site and Locations of Interest

In order to address where immediate linkage improvements might be made between the plaza site and locations of interest, it is recommended that the City of Alpena conduct a walking audit. In particular, there is potential for creating a smooth connection to the Alpena Bi-Path

sub-area bounded by the Thunder Bay River, North 2nd Avenue Bridge, Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Trail, and North 9th Avenue Bridge. Attention should be paid to this circular path as a potential sub-area plan as it provides a pedestrian / bicycle friendly route that links between locations of interest while keeping a focus along the water.

Ensuring connection outside the site from those points to locations of interest will be a key next step in ensuring the success of the plaza and greater downtown. A walkability audit provides an unbiased examination / evaluation of the walking environment, with the purpose of identifying concerns for pedestrians related to the safety, access, comfort, and convenience in the walking environment. In addition to identifying problem areas, an audit can identify potential alternatives or solutions, including engineering treatments, policy changes, or education and enforcement

measures. The City of Alpena can choose to perform the audit themselves or hire a private firm, however it is suggested that an audit group include participants independent of the agency conducting the audit. Sample checklists can be found free of charge²⁸.

Optimize Alleys and Passageways

Rather than identifying the concrete alleys and passageways between buildings and parking lots as deterrents from achieving strong connectivity, it is recommended that the City of Alpena recognize alleys and passageways as opportunities for creating linkages from the plaza development site to locations of interest throughout greater Downtown Alpena. Alleys differentiate from passageways in that they satisfy a

²⁸ Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, 2013

service-oriented use (e.g. deliveries, trash pickup). Alleys must have vehicular access ability maintained. Passageways can be defined as non-motorized cut-throughs, where pedestrian scale and activity should be allowed and encouraged²⁹. With these definitions in mind, it is recommended that the City of Alpena consider taking the following approach:

1. *Identify and Classify Alleys and Passageways within Downtown Alpena/Between Locations of Interest*
Alleys and passageways could be classified within one of the three alley/passageway types (coined “vias” by the City of Birmingham) featured below in order to determine the level of regulation that will needed to

²⁹ City of Birmingham, 2012

Destination Via

- Draw residents and visitors as a destination for public to participate in cultural activities, commercial activities, recreational activities, outdoor dining, special events, etc.
- Spaces are designed and planned to fulfill pedestrian scale.
- Via type is the focus of capital improvement projects, new development and business attraction, and event programming.

“Via”: by a route that touches or passes through; by way of. (dictionary.reference.com)

achieve the desired outcomes within each category.

2. Document Existing Conditions within Key Linkage Alleys/Passageways

Document existing conditions within the alleys / passageways identified to provide key linkages from the plaza site to locations of interest downtown. Attention should be paid to items including pavement width, condition, etc.

Active Via

- Offer the potential to serve as a through-block connection utilized by multimodal transportation options (walking, bicycling, vehicle access for parking and service functions).
- Capital improvement projects focus on the safety of all users.
- Recommended that guidelines and incentives be created to encourage businesses to expand into the via and improve their alley façade.

3. Establish Design Guidelines and Enhancement Strategies

Streetscape design guidelines should be established based upon the alley/passageway classification type. Using human



Wayfinding is a necessary element of a quality place
Source: Fairbault MN Daily News

Connecting Via

- Provide through-block connections exclusively for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Via type has limited opportunities for commercial activity, limited service function, and no vehicular access.
- Encourage aesthetic enhancements in an effort to expand the pedestrian network.
- Capital improvement projects within this alley/passageway type include new paving, street furniture, public art, etc.

scale as a baseline, guidelines should dictate paving, lighting, street furniture, landscaping, and wayfinding. Additional enhancement options include adopting a naming rights program in the effort to raise funds for capital improvements; creation of crosswalks linking alleys and passageways where/if applicable; addressing commercial signage within the alley/passageway; and paying special attention to the aesthetics of alleys/passageways with blank building walls, incorporating

public art, interesting architectural details, etc.

Wayfinding (e.g. signage) is crucial within any downtown. Wayfinding allows residents and visitors alike to quickly and easily travel from one place of interest to another. Signage showcasing location of parking, restaurants, shops, and other key assets can lead to a much more pleasant experience in any community.

Parking Management

In order to ensure successful access and use of the plaza site and the greater downtown, Alpena must address parking. The following three-step approach provides an overview of the action steps that could be taken to conduct a comprehensive parking study:

1. *Survey Stakeholders*

The first step to conducting a successful parking study is to survey

stakeholders with regard to their parking needs and perceived problems. The agency conducting the survey should ask questions that address whether or not parking demand increases on weekends and/or are there periods of time during the day when a reduced supply of on-street parking meets parking demand. Following stakeholder interviews, the agency could inventory the number of on- and off-street parking spaces, whether spaces are publicly or privately owned, and counts of vehicles parked.³⁰ These numbers will help show current demand and potential demand of parking in the future.

³⁰ "How to Do a Parking Study." *Metropolitan Area Planning Council*. N.p., 02 Aug. 2010. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

2. *Research Land Uses in Study Area*

The second step to carrying out a parking study is to research and record the types of land uses within the study area. For each single use on a single lot, the following necessary information should be gathered: the size of the lot in acres; the number of usable square feet in the building; and all uses supported by the building.³¹

3. *Analyze Results*

Occupancy of current parking facilities (per defined area) will determine on average how much parking is available. The duration of a vehicle in a particular space will provide the agency a better understanding of the parking market

³¹ Ibid.

(the need for short-term versus long-term parking).³² With regards to the turnover, this will help determine how many cars can use a space in a given period of time³³.

If conducted properly, the interviews, surveys and research will provide an accurate outlook on the parking needs of the community. To ensure the data necessary for conducting a thorough, unbiased parking study as referenced above is carried out, it is recommended that the City of Alpena contract to have a professional parking study carried out that focuses on the following:

- Increase Parking Supply

A professional parking study completed for Downtown Alpena could find ways

³² Ibid.

³³ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 2013

to increase the parking supply while supporting compact development. A common way for municipalities to increase parking supply is to reduce minimum parking requirements while increasing shared parking opportunities between businesses.³⁴ Shared parking opportunities that Alpena could consider include increasing on-street parking and the development of parking facilities at strategic locations within downtown. There are numerous advantages to these recommendations such as providing a buffer between pedestrians and vehicle traffic, increasing visibility for multiple users, and cost efficiency.³⁵ In addition, increasing on-street parking will be especially beneficial to local businesses and shops that have customers

³⁴ "Parking Solutions: A Comprehensive Menu of Solutions to Parking Problems." Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 10 Sept. 2012. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

³⁵ Ibid.

throughout the day sharing spaces on the street. Sharing parking among different users and buildings can result in more efficient use of parking supply.³⁶

- Use Existing Parking Capacity More Efficiently

Using existing parking capacity more efficiently can be a flexible and cost effective method for meeting parking needs within a community. Alpena may promote existing parking by providing parking information to users. Relevant information may include location of parking, parking availability, and price using signs, brochures, maps, websites, and general marketing materials.³⁷ The City of Alpena might also consider regulating the time a vehicle can park to encourage long-term users (employees) to park in off-street facilities

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

Prioritizing pedestrian improvements to enhance the walking/bicycling experience is a way to promote efficient use of existing parking. Improving sidewalks / paths, developing shortcuts, adding shade or rain covers along walkways, improving personal security, and addressing aesthetic improvements can expand the range of parking facilities that serve a building or area. While users typically prefer the closest parking location, the opportunity to save on parking fees may influence some motorists to park farther away from their destination.³⁸

³⁸ "Parking Evaluation: Evaluating Parking Problems, Solutions, Costs, and Benefits." Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 10 Sept. 2012. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

Placemaking Element



Streetscapes can and should be used for multiple purposes. Parking is just one characteristic that makes a quality downtown.

- Address Variable Demand

To avoid expensive solutions, it is recommended that techniques, such as variable pricing, be used. Variable pricing is the act of charging higher prices for parking spaces during peak periods of activity and lower prices at the times of day when parking has lower demand. This can promote retail activity downtown, influencing some patrons to shift the time of their trip.³⁹ The enhancement of multimodal transportation opportunities may also lead to a

³⁹ "Parking Solutions: A Comprehensive Menu of Solutions to Parking Problems." Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 10 Sept. 2012. Web. 05 Apr. 2013.

reduction in automobile travel. This can be achieved by ensuring viable non-motorized trail connections exist between locations of interest throughout the downtown.

As of June 2013 a parking study⁴⁰ by Gibbs Planning Group, Inc., was underway for downtown Alpena. A list of preliminary action steps includes:

- On-street parking restriping and expansion
- Coordinated employee parking lots
- Replace existing two-hour off-street parking designations with all-day visitor parking
- Reinstating two-way streets

⁴⁰ "Downtown Alpena Proposed Plaza Parking Impact Study", Gibbs Planning Group, 25 June 2013.

- Shared private lot agreements
- Public lot enhancements: landscape and streetscape design, signage and resurfacing
- Improved maps and way-finding system
- Additional pedestrian street crossings
- Consideration of metered parking as warranted.

Ensure Zoning and Master Plan Support Mixed-Use Development, Density, and Scale for Transect 5: Urban Center Zone

The City of Alpena adopted a zoning ordinance in 2010 that addresses land use and building regulations that satisfies some characteristics of form-based code and transect planning. The zoning ordinance incentivizes mixed use development, addresses density with a minimum and maximum building height within their downtown, building maximum setbacks, building frontage, allowable facades and materials, lighting,

sign requirements, and landscaping. The existing Downtown Overlay District regulates that future development will follow a land use pattern similar to the suggested Transect pattern – providing density, scale, and diversity in uses that will support activities the community would like to see in the plaza. While there are land use regulations in place for future development, there is a perceived disconnect between the downtown plaza site to the many assets in the nearby radius due to the surface parking lots and alleyways found throughout greater downtown. Utilizing T5 zone characteristics moving forward will facilitate the desired development pattern. Combining existing zoning with the concepts in the Transect could support smooth transitions between districts and a common language to

update codes. The result could be the creation of a systematic process of recognizing desired development patterns and easily being able to implement the zoning regulations to achieve them. The T5 characteristics are highlighted in Table 2.

Transect Zone 5: Urban Center Zone Characteristics				
General Character •Shops mixed with housing, Offices, workplace, and Civic buildings; attached buildings; trees within the right-of-way; pedestrian activity	Building Placement •Shallow setbacks or none; buildings oriented to street defining a street wall	Frontage Type •Stoops, shop fronts, galleries	Typical Building Height •3- to 5-Story with some variation	Civic Spaces Supported •Parks, Plazas and Squares, median landscaping



Source: SmartCode 9.2, 2012

Table 2: Transect Zone 5 Characteristics

Asset Recommendations

As a result of the Local and Regional Analysis conducted by the Michigan Municipal League, the following opportunities were identified to capitalize upon the assets described under analysis section of this report. The City of Alpena should act upon these opportunities to ensure they apply a comprehensive approach to placemaking within the Plaza site and adjacent areas in conjunction with the design and planning recommendations.

- Physical Design, Walkability & Connectivity
- Sustainability and Environment
- Cultural Economic Development
- Entrepreneurship
- Education
- Branding and Communications
- Welcoming to All
- Transportation

Physical Design, Walkability & Connectivity

The branding report provides an excellent plan for improving wayfinding. With regard to the plaza project, downtown wayfinding would be a top priority, with connectivity to other destinations a key—for example the farmer’s market, trails, NOAA facility, parks, etc.

The amenities of Alpena’s downtown district are excellent and very supportive of downtown living. Continued development of housing within the downtown area will ensure the plaza becomes a “third place” within the community. The “third places” in a community is where people spend hang-out, connect and spend their leisure time. The strength and proximity of the community college also provides a ready-made market for potential renters interested in a downtown living experience.

Cultural Economic Development

More than once during the community engagement process people mentioned an underdeveloped local music scene. The plaza could serve as a great catalyst for small scale music performances or impromptu work. As well, dance might be an area of the arts that would add to the vibrancy of the plaza. The attached appendix of potential uses for the plaza feature artistic expression and culturally relevant activities, including extensive integration of the arts.

Entrepreneurship

The attached list of potential uses for the plaza is ripe with small business opportunities—either new ventures or expansion of what is already within the downtown or nearby. For example, the successful ice cream store and coffee shops that already have a strong “brick and mortar” business might opt to have seasonal carts within the plaza. The music store might use the plaza for

lessons, local fitness business could have classes in the plaza, the art galleries could show selected works, the plaza could cross-promote with the farmer's market to give local growers and artisans expanded exposure. The opportunities are limitless.

The Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan contains excellent recommendations and plans for attracting and developing some key businesses to the area. Continued work to implement these plans will support success for the plaza project. Given the role of local food, commercial kitchen incubation might be a consideration, as well as supporting local artists. Attached is a list of case studies including "Detroit Soup," a monthly public dinner event and presentation series, where attendees vote to fund small to medium-sized arts and community projects. This is a very low-cost, high-impact way to seed ideas and activities at the local level, and may

be especially helpful in connecting youth/students to business mentors.

Branding and Communications

Continue to implement the action plan, ensuring the three pillars of the brand are incorporated within the plaza design and its planned and unplanned uses. The brand pillars are:

Learning opportunities: Heritage, culture, the arts

Wellness: Fitness, silent sports, recreation, diet, training, and empowerment

Environment: The Marine Sanctuary, Island Park, Thunder Bay, the local lakes, trails, birding, and other environmental attractions and experiences

In implementing the plaza plan, the community will be well-served to invest in Wi-Fi access and cutting edge technology, sound systems, lighting, etc. The City's comprehensive master plan

from 2007 makes mention of a pilot program to test community wide wireless internet network, so perhaps this opportunity already has some foundation laid.

Education

School age children are one important potential user of the plaza, as are college students who crave a "third place" and a sense of activity and excitement in the downtown area. Ensuring programmed events and, more importantly, unplanned and spontaneous uses within the plaza for all ages will activate the space. On the structured side, working with the library, local schools and the community college to encourage them to use the plaza as a place for their activities, clubs, educational programs, etc. will engage those groups on a formal basis.

Welcoming to All

In implementing the plaza design and its activities/use, the community will be

well-served to ensure these are supportive of all ages, abilities, and interests. The reality is that the Alpena community is not very diverse⁴¹; however, it is a very warm, friendly, and down-to-earth place so visitors and residents alike should feel comfortable in Alpena and the plaza. The Alpena area is older than average, with 19.9% of the population age 65 or older, compared to 14.1% statewide, so features, uses, and activities catering to an aging population may be of particular interest.

Sustainability and Environment

The city may wish to consider joining the Michigan Green Communities network, which connects local government leaders across Michigan who are interested in

⁴¹ US census data: Alpena County, and the City of Alpena are 97.5% white, compared to 80.2% statewide; 1.7% of Alpena County residents are foreign born compared to 6% statewide

implementing creative sustainability projects, programs, and policies that save money and offer social and environmental benefits. Michigan Green Communities (MGC) connects local sustainability leaders and supports their work through training, education, and communications. This peer-to-peer network shares home-grown best practices to help other Michigan communities overcome barriers in the path toward sustainability.

In developing the plaza project, the community said very clearly how important sustainability and environmental sensitivity is, including featuring local and recycled materials wherever possible, rain gardens or related green storm water infrastructure, and incorporating low-maintenance plantings and landscape materials. Perhaps in developing the plaza the community would be supportive of seeking certification under The

Sustainable Sites Initiative™ (SITES™), which has voluntary national guidelines, performance benchmarks and a comprehensive rating system for sustainable land design, construction and maintenance practices for built landscapes.

With regard to plaza use, a mobile recycling center in or near the plaza, perhaps monthly to start, weekly as needed, could fill a need within the community, provide business opportunity to a new or existing business(es), and activate the plaza space around a shared value. A recycling program done in conjunction with another scheduled event, like the farmer's market, could provide valuable cross-promotion. People could come down to enjoy the market and bring in their recycling as well. And when it comes to engaging youth, recycling truly resonates. Attached is a case study of "Recycle Here," a community driven

recycling programming that began as a practical way to provide a recycling option to the community but grew to be a regular draw for people, a meeting place, a way to connect with neighbors and bring an area to life, and a platform for education.

Transportation

Fixed route transportation would be an enormous value added to the downtown area, perhaps starting on a seasonal basis, connecting waterfront assets, the downtown area, the parks and trail heads, and related key attractions.

Implementation

Opportunities & Barriers to Implementation

The public excitement about the plaza, the strength of the community, and the support of its local leaders are critical to getting the project launched and completed. However, there are several potential challenges that are especially important to recognize and address.

1. Parking & Alley Access

Parking and alley access for businesses were raised as a critical issues early and often. This topic has the potential to distract, delay, and even derail the plaza project if it is not adequately addressed in advance of any implementation action. The community would be well-served to have a comprehensive

parking study completed to independently and objectively address the true demand for parking within the downtown district and strategies for suitably addressing that demand. Alley access for business is accommodated within the conceptual designs, and should be clearly and directly addressed in implementation.

2. Funding

Dreaming of the plaza and its potential is easier done than finding the means to fund its development, construction, and programming. This report provides a table of potential resources to address parts and pieces, but the team that assembles to push the plaza project forward will need to be creative and diligent in finding

public/private mechanisms for bringing the plans to life.

Short-term temporary “pop-up” uses and demonstrations that show how the plaza will feel can help keep excitement going and build momentum during the development and fundraising phase. Phasing construction and development may be necessary as well.

With regard to programming, most successful place-based initiatives are community driven and require little by way of formal programming and paid staff. Over time, as demand evolves, perhaps the community will find the need for centralized programming and controls as envisioned in the branding report.

3. **Clarity in purpose of plaza**

There were some competing values that emerged through the community meetings and charrette process. On one hand, some people envisioned the plaza as a community gathering space, supportive of spontaneous uses, informal activities, and smaller planned events. Others pictured the plaza as home to many structured formal events and planned or closely managed activities. The design will allow for both, but funding constraints may help answer the question, “is the plaza an informal gathering space or is it primarily for planned events?” Resources may not be immediately available to schedule, plan, and manage a full agenda of events. So focusing early on encouraging unplanned or low-effort uses and activities will keep the space in action, and

will mean it is an interesting and creative place to be.

Concerns were also expressed that the plaza should not compete with or seek to replace existing larger venues like Bay View park. The size of the plaza alone should ensure this; it simply can’t handle the crowds that Bay View can. When considering programming, be sure to utilize both venues in a complimentary way.

4. **Need for constant activation of space**

Related to the previous point, the success of the plaza will be largely judged by whether it is used or sits vacant, and whether it has a positive impact on the business and housing in the area. A well-designed public space will inspire use organically, it will invite people to spend time there

and discover new ways to enjoy the space at each visit. This plaza site will support that model given its central location, proximity to existing businesses and cultural anchors like NOAA, the Library, Farmer’s Market, etc., its protective setting off the main road, access to trails and the riverfront, etc.

International expert Fred Kent has coined “The Power of 10” concept in placemaking, which means where there are 10 good things to do, things to look at, things to engage you—you can create a truly great public place. This plaza location together with the existing surrounding assets gives a running start on the power of 10 for this downtown district in Alpena.

Attached as an appendix is a list of over 100 ideas for things to do, or things to “let happen” in the plaza space. Most were mentioned in the course of the public visioning session and/or the charrette process, and some are ideas that came out of other communities’ projects. Some are things that have worked elsewhere and may be modified to fit Alpena. Some may be completely off-the-wall and not a good fit at all. The objective is to identify as many easy/organic uses and activities as possible to ensure active use of the plaza ongoing, and anchor those with larger planned/managed events.

5. Is the community ready to “let things happen?”

Through our process we heard some competing values and differences in the comfort level

people had with idea of “letting things happen” in the public plaza. For example, is a group of teenagers hanging out in the plaza a good thing or is it loitering? Is it nice to hear someone strumming their guitar in the plaza or is it noise pollution? What if that person sets out their case and takes tips? We heard numerous times that Alpena is close-knit and safe; so would an “honor system” fruit and vegetable stand work in the plaza? How about a take-one/leave-one book and magazine cart? These activities happen in great public spaces in communities large and small, but can they in Alpena? Most probably YES.

The biggest challenge here is going to be seeing whether folks are brave enough to try new

things, and will persevere when an experiment fails. A great public space, with non-stop activity and year-round use will demand tolerance, experimentation, and “letting things happen” even when they make people uncomfortable. Take, for example, a public fountain in a small alley park in Traverse City in the downtown area; kids started putting bubbles in the fountain periodically. The small park filled with bubbles, it was a spectacle! There was outrage! The authorities were called! It happened a couple more times and the businesses realized mom’s let their little ones play in that spectacle and they bought coffee and ice cream and found a cute sweater they didn’t know they needed. The plants didn’t die, the hardscape was unharmed (it was cleaner!), the

fountain worked fine, and the bubbles blew away quickly, and any residue washed away in the next rain. Some people love it, some people think it's terrible. But they don't call the police on bubbles anymore. It's cute to some, it's an attraction to many, and it's an occasional nuisance to others. Point is, a public space WILL be used in ways that some people won't like some of the time, but it is being used. Can Alpena get comfortable with that?

The branding report contained a section on the need for ordinances, busker (street performer) regulations, and related permitting requirements. We would encourage the community to begin a little differently, at least in the early stages of creating its central plaza. Perhaps a "bureaucracy free

zone" could be used in the plaza area for a specified period of time. During that test period the community could get a better sense of how people want to use the plaza, and see first-hand what problems may arise. Regulations can then form to address actual issues, rather than trying to anticipate and solve problems before they exist. A flexible public space, where success equals activity, shouldn't begin with a list of what CAN'T happen there. Rules may indeed become necessary, but maximum activity is encouraged when you start with the assumption that most people will honor and respect the space.

6. **Visibility/Wayfinding**

An advantage of the plaza location is its buffer from major thoroughfares which provides a

feeling of safety, protection, and "sanctuary"; it will encourage a wider range of uses. The downside of this is it is not highly visible from the main US 23 route so those visiting Alpena may have a harder time finding the plaza. Herein lies a challenge, but also an opportunity.

The pocket park on US 23 would make an excellent gateway to the plaza, with a prominent entry and signage, perhaps even extending over Chisholm/US 23. Consider adding a pedestrian crossing there to connect people across Chisholm to the plaza, a raised crosswalk with pavers or some other application to make the crossing prominent and safe and also to highlight the entrance to the plaza. This could also be where a prominent banner or permanent archway across

Chisholm could go, some amazing lighting or other feature to define that point—the entry to the plaza on Chisholm—as a critical connection. Similar applications and techniques could go mid-block on 2nd Avenue as well, at the alleyway entry to the plaza area, defining it as the secondary entrance to the plaza. Effective wayfinding and signage throughout the downtown

district to connect people to the plaza will be a must-have. The most significant challenge to the visibility issue will be working with transportation agencies on improvements to Chisholm/US 23. A key to overcoming the challenge will be the city's complete streets ordinance, and requiring transportation agencies to work with the community in a different way. The success of the

downtown, provided in part through this great public plaza, must be set above the need to move cars quickly. People crossing the street safely in the middle of the downtown must matter more than the people driving cars *through* the downtown.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Potential Community Economic Development Tools & Funding Opportunities

The following table summarizes community economic development tools and specific funding and technical assistance programs that may be relevant to the Alpena plaza project. In addition to these resources, reference the list of stakeholders identified in appendix D for additional partners in pursuing funding opportunities.

Agency/Program	Summary Overview	Contact/Learn More
Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs grant programs	The Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs coordinates grants to arts and culture organizations, cities and municipalities, and other nonprofit organizations to encourage, develop and facilitate an enriched environment of artistic, creative and cultural activity in Michigan. Grant areas include operational support, project support and capital improvements.	http://www.michiganadvantage.org/Arts/Grant-Programs/
DNR Land and Water Conservation Fund	The objective is to provide grants to local units of government and to the state to develop land for outdoor recreation.	James Wood 517-335-4050 woodj@michigan.gov
DNR Recreation Grants	One of the department's biggest priorities is getting people outside more often, and improving access to the natural resources and recreation.	Christie Bayus 517-335-2253 bayusc@michigan.gov

Michigan Complete Streets Coalition	The Michigan Complete Streets Coalition works with the Michigan Department of Community Health to assist communities interested in adopting Complete Streets policies by providing technical assistance.	http://michigancompletestreets.wordpress.com/
MEDC Community Revitalization Program	The Michigan Business Development and Michigan Community Revitalization Programs replace the state’s previous MEGA, Brownfield and Historic tax credit programs, which were features of the Michigan Business Tax that will be eliminated under business tax restructuring legislation.	Dan Leonard MEDC Community Assistance Team 989-387-4467 Leonardd6@michigan.org
Preserve America Grant program	Designated “Preserve America” communities have used this grant program for wayfinding. Alpena is a designated community and may be eligible.	http://www.nps.gov/hps/hpg/preserveamerica/index.htm
Transportation Alternatives Program	The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a competitive grant program that funds projects such as bike paths, streetscapes, and historic preservation of transportation facilities that enhance Michigan’s intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. These investments support place-based economic development by offering transportation choices, promoting walkability, and improving the quality of life.	Matt Opsommer, MDOT Office of Economic Development opsommerm1@michigan.gov 517-241-1317

MSHDA Modified Pass-Through Program	The Pass Through program offers tax-exempt loans to for-profit or nonprofit developers for new construction or rehabilitation of rental developments up to 150 units. Loans must be credit enhanced by a third party.	MSHDA Director of Legal Affairs (517) 373-8295
MEDC Brownfield Redevelopment Program	Michigan's brownfields redevelopment efforts are considered the premier model for the country. Properties that in the not-so-distant past were considered lost forever are now being actively pursued for revitalization. In Michigan, brownfields are considered properties that are contaminated, blighted, or functionally obsolete.	Dan Wells, Brownfield Program Specialist 517.241.4801 wellsd1@michigan.org Mary Kramer, Brownfield Program Specialist 517.373.6206 kramerm1@michigan.org
MSHDA Rental Rehabilitation	MSHDA's Community Development Division's (CD) Rental Rehabilitation program is designed to improve investor-owned properties and spur economic development in Michigan's downtowns. Funding for rental rehab is generally provided through the unit of local government with jurisdiction for code enforcement and/or rental licensing.	MSHDA Community Development Division (517) 373-1974

MEDC Signature Building Acquisition Grant	The Signature Building Acquisition Grant enables a community to secure a building that is a focal point within the downtown for commercial rehabilitation purposes that will result in job creation, and, once redeveloped, will become an asset and make a significant contribution to the overall downtown area.	Jennifer Tucker MEDC Community Assistance Team 906-241-0589 Tuckerj4@michigan.org
MEDC Downtown Façade Improvement	Grants are available for communities that seek to target areas of traditional downtown for façade improvements, which have a significant impact on the downtown community.	Jennifer Tucker MEDC Community Assistance Team 906-241-0589 Tuckerj4@michigan.org
MEDC Blight Elimination	The Blight Elimination program is structured to assist communities in removing blighted conditions that often hinder adjacent private investment in their community.	Jennifer Tucker MEDC Community Assistance Team 906-241-0589 Tuckerj4@michigan.org
Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act	The Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA) provides for a tax incentive to encourage the redevelopment of obsolete buildings.	Jennifer Tucker MEDC Community Assistance Team 906-241-0589 Tuckerj4@michigan.org

MEDC Farm to Food	Grants are available for communities seeking to construct, rehabilitate, acquire, expand or improve a facility for the support of a three- to four-season farmer’s market. The market must follow the program’s national objectives and must be located in a low- to moderate-income community or will lead to job creation in these communities.	Jennifer Tucker MEDC Community Assistance Team 906-241-0589 Tuckerj4@michigan.org
USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program	The Farmer’s Market Promotion Program (FMPP) offers grants to help improve and expand domestic farmer’s markets. Agricultural cooperatives, producer networks, producer associations, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers’ market authorities and Tribal governments are among those eligible to apply.	USDA FMPP 202-720-0933
MSHDA Pre-Development loans	Pre-development loans available to help nonprofit developers pay for pre-development expenses for affordable housing developments from project conception through submission for financing (including the Office of Community Development, the Office of Rental Development and Homeless Initiatives, & the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program).	MSHDA Community Development Division (517) 373-1974

MSHDA Community Development Technical Assistance	MSHDA has consultants available to provide technical assistance to nonprofit organizations and local units of government. These consultants provide guidance and training geared to increasing grantees' capacity to produce affordable housing.	MSHDA Community Development Division (517) 373-1974
MEDC	Grant program for business incubators	http://www.michiganadvantage.org/Press-Releases/MEDC-seeks-business-incubator-proposals-for-start-up-support/
DEQ	Guide to grant funding options for recycling	http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-rmd-recycling-funding_355618_7.pdf

APPENDIX B: Potential Uses and Activities in or Near Plaza

1. Ice skating
2. Interactive fountain/splash/water feature that can be played in
3. Outdoor fireplace
4. Marshmallow roasting
5. Hot chocolate stand
6. Cross country ski rental
7. NOAA hands-on programs, demonstrations, exhibits
8. Besser hands-on programs, demonstrations, exhibits
9. Bike rentals and racks
10. Kayak rentals
11. Scuba diving lessons, expeditions
12. Chili cook-off
13. Barbeque battles
14. Food truck rally
15. Top Chef Alpena contest
16. Harvestfest/Taste of Alpena
17. Outdoor cooking classes
18. Cake decorating demonstrations
19. Buy-and-decorate cupcakes, cookies
20. Library book club meeting
21. Kids story time, maybe even with dress-up props
22. Author book signing event
23. Poetry slams
24. Book cart with magazines, books, puzzles, board games for loan or for sale
25. Outdoor eating, whether formal cafés or informal picnic tables
26. Small music performances
27. Small theatrical performances
28. Improv/comedy
29. Artists working
30. Art classes/demonstrations
31. Strolling history installation
32. Sculpture/public art/murals
33. Pursue Detroit Institute of Art "Inside Out" program (maybe be first community outside metro Detroit to host it!) and have art viewing/discussion groups
34. Hands-on art for kids, sidewalk chalk out for kids
35. Yoga classes
36. Family fitness classes
37. Walking club start/finish
38. Turkey trot, 5k start/finish
39. Mom's club, mom-to-mom sales
40. Fencing
41. Karate
42. Parade start/end
43. Food carts, fruit/veggie stand
44. Tower/viewing structure
45. Dog area, watering station for pets
46. Street performers, clowns
47. Music classes, guitar lessons
48. Impromptu jams
49. Barbershop Quartet
50. Battle of the Bands (main stage at Bay View, small stage at plaza, one at Culligan plaza, one at Farmer's Market, and other locations throughout downtown)
51. Recycling program
52. Outdoor games (chess, ping pong, etc.)
53. Oktoberfest/Biergarten (pop-up temporary)

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| <p>54. Dancing</p> <p>55. Dance lessons (swing to hip-hop)</p> <p>56. Flashmobs</p> <p>57. Outdoor movies</p> <p>58. Wi-fi access, people surfing the web</p> <p>59. Meeting space for community groups</p> <p>60. “Adopt the Plaza” program; groups/schools, etc. assigned to raise/lower flag (if there is one) and clean up the plaza for a week at a time</p> <p>61. Major defining feature that could be the Alpena “photo-op”</p> <p>62. Riverview, place to sit and relax, meditation spot</p> <p>63. Complimentary market activities to Farmer’s market</p> <p>64. Knitting/quilting club</p> <p>65. Student photography exhibition with all Alpena or “Sanctuary” works</p> <p>66. Designated graffiti space (see The Alley Project case study)</p> | <p>67. School/church choir practice</p> <p>68. School band practice</p> <p>69. Cheer practice</p> <p>70. Holiday carolers</p> <p>71. Santa visits</p> <p>72. Live reindeer pen</p> <p>73. Pep rallies</p> <p>74. Formal posting site for hunting counts</p> <p>75. Formal posting site for biggest catches</p> <p>76. Christmas tree lighting (have an ornament decorating station at local stores for a few weeks before so people can put their own art on the tree)</p> <p>77. New Year’s Eve ball drop</p> <p>78. Egg hunt</p> <p>79. Memorial Day service</p> <p>80. Veteran’s Day service</p> <p>81. St. Patrick’s Day parade</p> <p>82. Valentine’s Day sweets stroll</p> <p>83. Labor Day barbeque/community potluck</p> <p>84. Martin Luther King Day service</p> | <p>85. Halloween parade</p> <p>86. Puppy parade/pet adoption drive</p> <p>87. Garden club perennial exchange</p> <p>88. Annual “clean sweep” program, volunteers meet there then do seasonal clean-up/beautification projects in the plaza area</p> <p>89. Fishing derby</p> <p>90. Fly fishing lessons, demonstrations</p> <p>91. Pinewood derby race</p> <p>92. Build-and-race model boats</p> <p>93. Model train or airplane building and demonstrations</p> <p>94. Ladies night downtown, babysitting available, shops stay open late, performance/entertainment in the plaza</p> <p>95. Water balloon fight on last day of school</p> <p>96. Blessing the backpacks before school starts</p> <p>97. Multi-denominational services, rotate a daily message</p> |
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| <p>98. Central place for community drives/drop-off (i.e. canned goods collection at the holidays, Toys for Tots)</p> <p>99. Community garage sale</p> <p>100. Community block party/potluck</p> <p>101. Face painting</p> <p>102. Lego building club</p> | <p>103. Robot club, build them and drive them around the plaza</p> <p>104. Downtown living tour start point</p> <p>105. Snow fort contest</p> <p>106. Snow ball fight</p> <p>107. Outdoor toy chest for kids with all-season toys</p> <p>108. “Soup” style micro-funding program (monthly pot-luck</p> | <p>where people pitch ideas and winner takes home the \$\$\$)</p> <p>109. Chair massages</p> <p>110. Rowing club on the river with warm-up at the plaza</p> <p>111. Walking history tours that start at the plaza</p> |
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APPENDIX C: Case Studies of Potential Interest

Visit <http://placemaking.mml.org/how-to/> to view case studies of successful placemaking projects and access how-to kits and best practices.

Those of particular interest to the Alpena plaza project may include:

- ✓ Detroit Soup (Micro financing for art/community projects, business start-ups)
- ✓ Recycle Here (Community recycling program that incorporates art, education)
- ✓ DIA Inside Out (Brings eighty reproductions of masterpieces from the Detroit Institute of Art Museum’s collection to the streets and parks of various communities.)
- ✓ The Alley Project (Alley gallery that showcases legal street art produced by local youth and community members. Professional artists, teens, and neighbors have worked together to build an infrastructure for creative expression and community responsibility.)

APPENDIX D: Stakeholder Analysis

Groups/individuals targeted for personal meetings and/or specific time to provide input during charrette process	
Viewpoint	Person/affiliation
Downtown Area	DDA
Cross-sector team	Brand Leadership Team
Economic Development	Target Alpena Development Corporation, US 23 South Improvement Corridor & North River District
Business	Chamber of Commerce
Tourism	Alpena Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Cultural Anchors	MACNE, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve (NOAA)
Property & Business Owners	Karen Bennett (Center Building), Chris & Missi LeFave, Dr. David Dargis, JoAnn, George LeFleche, Trina Gray, Jeff Konczak, Craig Patterson, Scott Barkley, John Benson, Paul Conger
Anchor Institutions	Community College, Library, Farmer's Market, K-12 Schools/Community Ed, Hospital
Students	Alpena Community College Student Leadership Group, Boys & Girls Club, youth advisory council
City of Alpena: Elected & Appointed	City Council, Planning Commission
City of Alpena: Staff	City manager/planner/engineer/public works
Regional government	Alpena County officials, Parks & Rec Board, Alpena Twp.
Media	The Alpena News, WBKB, local radio
Community Interest	Artists, theatres, service organizations
Residents	Neighborhood associations/groups, senior groups