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2015 PLACEPLAN: HEART OF MONROE

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2015 PLACEPLAN: HEART OF MONROE

Connecting the Historic, Entertainment, Arts, Residential, and Theater Centers

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Mlplace Partnership

PlacePlans is supported by Michigan State University (MSU) and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) as a component of the Mlplace Partnership. The Mlplace Partnership 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 strengthen those places. Learn more at miplace.org.



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ACTION SUMMARY

HEART of Monroe

Downtown Monroe faces the challenge of being sliced apart by high-traffic roadways, most notably the five lanes of Monroe Street (M-125). With the larger portion of downtown east of Monroe Street, the blocks just to the west face challenges of getting visitors and customers to the front doors of their destinations. This PlacePlan offers a strategy for not only improving access to this part of downtown but also creating new public spaces that can connect and strengthen the businesses and cultural destinations around them.

By rebuilding the deteriorating alley that runs parallel to Monroe Street as a shared space and pedestrian way, the city of Monroe can improve

access to businesses, strengthen downtown's connection to the river, and bring activity to hidden and unused scraps of land. At the same time, a new design for the alley is a chance to improve basic functions like trash collection, stormwater drainage, and lighting.

The PlacePlan includes a conceptual design for the alley and the spaces along it, recommendations for policy updates that can support the design, and a discussion of funding opportunities. While the full vision is likely to take several years to achieve, and the details will evolve as the city moves forward, the League and MSU provide the following as a short-term strategy for Monroe to pursue in 2016.



ACTION AGENDA

1. Adopt Vision at City Council and DDA Board Levels, Set Scope of Improvements

This vision for the alley has been developed with extensive input from its immediate neighbors and the general community. In order to advance its implementation, the City Council, DDA Board, and other relevant policy-setting bodies should additionally adopt it into their formal plans.

Some external funding opportunities rely on commitments by the city—e.g. establishing the alley as an access point drawing pedestrians and cyclists from the River Raisin Heritage Trail into downtown offers the possibility of DNR recreation development grants, but only with an “in perpetuity” commitment that the alley shall serve these users, and not just garbage trucks and delivery vehicles.

Creating the active spaces that invigorate these blocks requires additional commitment. The city must determine whether to pursue acquisition of the vacant private parcel in the block between Front and First, and whether a few parking spaces in the First and Monroe lot can be converted to sitting areas. These are clearly indicated in the concept designs, and are easily done from an engineering perspective—but need the affirmation of policymakers to proceed. These questions should be answered before detailed construction design proceeds.

2. Allocate Funding for Final Design in 2016, Alley Rebuild in 2017

The alley is in clear need of basic reconstruction, both to fulfill its current service roles and to provide a literal foundation on which to create the features that will draw people along it. To proceed down this critical path, the city and DDA should identify funding to prepare construction designs in the 2016 calendar year, and for reconstruction of the alley and subsurface utility work in 2017.

While construction may be phased over a few years, the final design process should consider the overall direction of the project, in particular:

Stormwater:

Stormwater management in the block from Front to First requires not just a storm sewer in the alley, but a decision about whether to extend leads to the adjacent buildings,

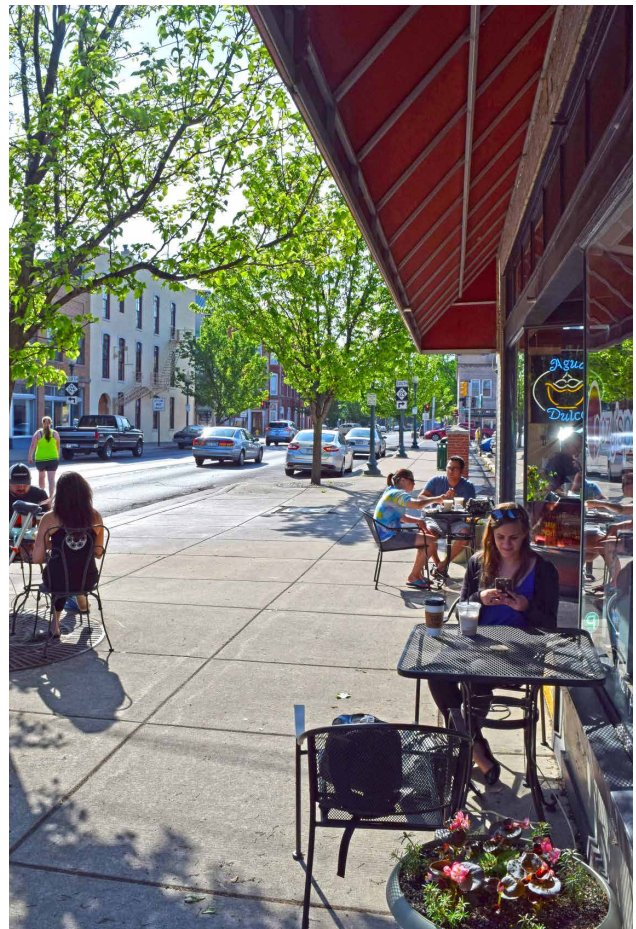
which produce the majority of runoff in this area. The best case scenario would be for building owners to partner with the city to complete the connections from their downspouts to the alley at the same time that the city is installing the main within the alley.

Lighting:

The overhead lighting style shown in the concepts, creating a type of “ceiling” over the alley, would require a local maintenance commitment—DTE’s streetlighting programs do not include non-standard installations like this. This lighting option would also require easements to anchor the lighting system on buildings along the alley. If this design proves infeasible, more standard decorative lighting options will require new underground conduit during alley reconstruction.

Concrete work:

Where the spaces along the alley need concrete curb or flatwork, this might be included in the rebuild to take advantage of costs of scale, even if the rest of the work in those spaces comes later. This most significantly affects the creation of new “loading zone” pull-off spaces in the courtyard between Monroe and First, which depends on the conversation around public ownership of that space.



3. Apply for DNR Recreation Development Grants by April 1, 2016

If the city makes the policy commitment to develop and maintain the alley as a trail spur by the April 1 deadline for those programs, it should pursue DNR Trust Fund or Land/Water Conservation Fund development grants. Funding decisions on these programs would be made late in the calendar year, supporting the timeline above of reconstruction in 2017.

The city could potentially identify the basic cost of reconstructing the alley and fixing stormwater problems as its local match, and pursue grant funds for the additional cost of stamped concrete, pedestrian-oriented lighting, wayfinding signage, and other features that support the alley's use as a shared space and trail. DNR's grants staff should be consulted during the preparation of any application to ensure the proper allocation of costs and matching funds.




4. Pursue High-Visibility Improvements at First and Monroe Lot, Including Crowdfunding

To maintain engagement and momentum around the alley, the city and DDA should make some visible improvements in the project area in 2016, preferably with the participation of as many partners as possible.

The concept design's improvements to the First and Monroe parking lot—adding seating areas and landscaping along the alley edge, as well as public art—is a good opportunity. This work can be done in advance of the rebuild of the alley itself, will draw attention from Monroe Street traffic and pedestrians, has a modest

CONNECTING THE HISTORIC, ENTERTAINMENT, ARTS, RESIDENTIAL, AND THEATER CENTERS

HEART of Monroe



COMMUNITY VISIONING SESSION
Join us to share your ideal design for the HEART of Monroe pathway to connect the riverfront to our Downtown. All are welcome to attend this interactive public session! Refreshments will be provided.

Join us on...
THURSDAY, MARCH 12
6:00–8:00 PM

MONROE NEWS
20 W. 1st Street
Monroe, MI 48161

For more information and to RSVP, contact
Matthew Wallace at matthew.wallace@monroemi.gov

price tag, and can involve both the arts community in the development of artwork and the general community with a crowdfunding campaign through MEDC's Public Spaces Community Places program.

Pursuing these improvements would require the DDA and city deciding to give up a few parking spaces at the alley edge to make active space for people, and conversations with the building owner to the north and the Historic District Commission to install a mural on the blank wall overlooking the lot. These are conversations that can begin immediately.

5. Pursue "Clean-Up" Scale Improvements Along Alley

A number of obsolete exterior fire escapes, disconnected gas meters, and tangles of overhead electrical, cable, and phone wiring—much of it not live—contribute to the negative appearance of the alley. The DDA should work with utility providers and building owners to identify what portion of this clutter serves no use, and to remove it.

This is not intended as an exclusive list; the city and steering committee partners may identify additional opportunities to implement pieces of the PlacePlans concept or to improve the use and functioning of the alley in the short-term.

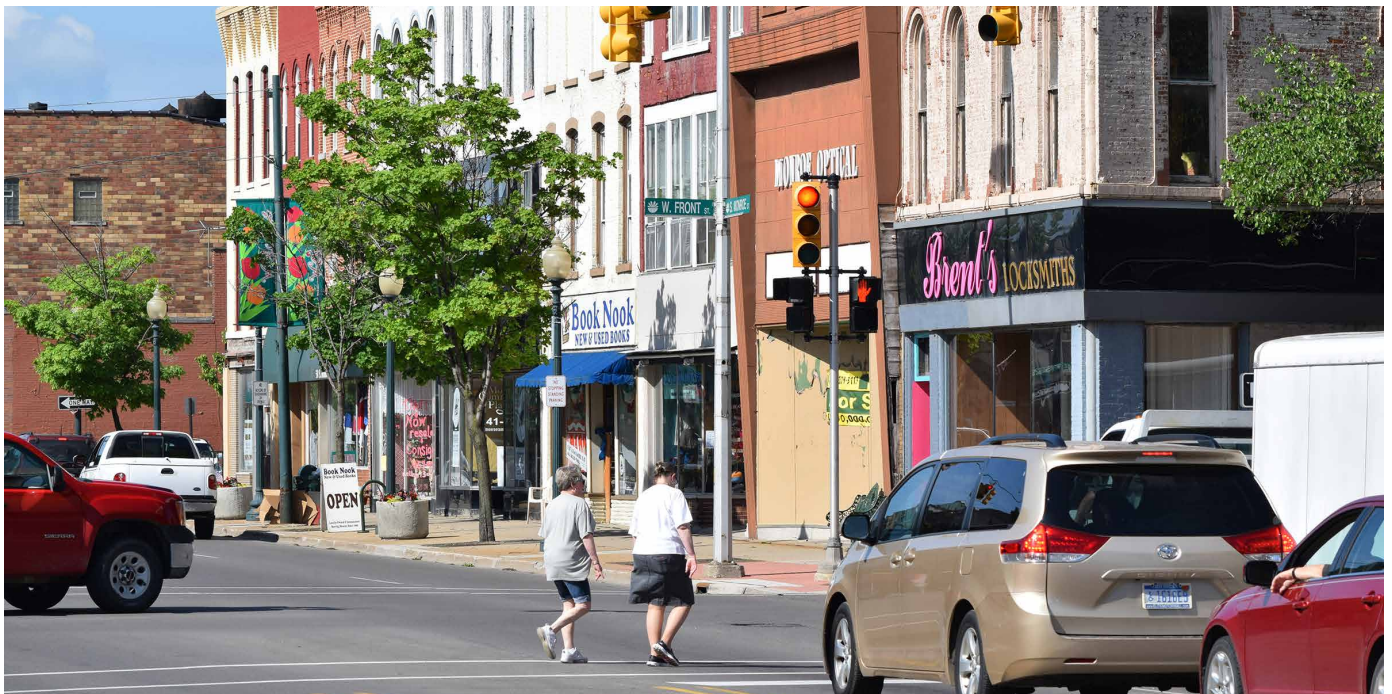
WHY PLAN FOR PLACE?

Monroe is one of nineteen cities participating in the PlacePlans pilot program, which began in 2012 as a collaboration between the Michigan Municipal League and Michigan State University (MSU), with funding support from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). PlacePlans assists communities with their efforts to carefully invest in key locations that will drive additional economic development and help them attract and retain residents and businesses.

MSU and MSHDA define placemaking as the process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play, and learn. Successful placemaking is a dynamic, strategic approach to community and economic development based on an individual community's strengths. PlacePlans is a joint effort between MSU and the League to demonstrate some elements of this

process, working through and supporting the leadership of local governments, nonprofit organizations, and businesses.

The PlacePlans process is customized to each project and community, but each involves selection of a priority site in the community, an intensive community engagement strategy and direct work with key community stakeholders along the way. Products of the PlacePlans projects include conceptual designs, market studies, analysis of community assets and opportunities and better connections to state agency support tools. The goals are to positively impact each participating community's ability to leverage their place-based assets as economic drivers and to provide lessons large and small for other communities across Michigan. For more information about placemaking in Michigan and the PlacePlans program, visit placemaking.mml.org.



Connection to Statewide Initiatives

The MIplace Partnership (www.mipace.org) is a statewide initiative to keep Michigan at the forefront of the national placemaking movement. The Partnership helps communities create and bolster those places through education, technical assistance, and implementation tools. It is led at the state agency level by MSHDA, and coordinated through a public/private leadership collaborative known as the Sense of Place Council. MSU and the League, the partners on the PlacePlans program, are part of the Sense of Place Council.

In parallel to PlacePlans demonstration projects, the League developed a policy agenda, called Partnership for Place, which proposes to change the way local and state governments invest in and support quality places. It is built on the idea of a partnership between the state of Michigan and its municipalities that will support sustainable economic growth and invest in key places. The agenda focuses on four fundamental areas of action:

- **Funding for the Future**

Making sure that appropriate funds and tools are available to operate efficiently and work regionally in order to succeed globally.

- **Michigan in Motion**

Shifting from near-exclusive vehicular-based investment to alternative modes of transportation that will accommodate all users.

- **Place for Talent**

Partnering with the State to attract and retain talented workers in our communities through placemaking policies.

- **Strength in Structure**

Seeking out solutions to invest in infrastructure and development where it will produce the best results and target resources with maximum outcomes.

You can find more information about the Partnership for Place at placemaking.mml.org

Project Overview

As one of Michigan's oldest municipalities, Monroe boasts a downtown filled with historic architecture, numerous museums and arts groups, and an attractive riverfront. However, downtown Monroe faces the challenge of being sliced apart by high-traffic roadways, most notably the five lanes of Monroe Street (M-125). With the larger portion of downtown east of Monroe Street, the blocks just to the east face challenges of getting visitors and customers to the front doors of their destinations.

The City of Monroe requested support from the PlacePlans program to examine how the alley running parallel and to the west of Monroe Street could be used to improve access and connectivity to the businesses and cultural institutions in this part of downtown.





These blocks face a particular challenge in their frontage on Monroe Street: this high-speed, high-volume road has no provision for on-street parking, loading, or deliveries on the west side, prohibiting vehicle access to these destinations as well as creating an unpleasant pedestrian environment. The city continues to work with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in hopes of reconfiguring the roadway to provide for these access needs, but with no on-street solution anticipated in the near future, city staff identified the alley behind these buildings as an opportunity to improve access while also strengthening a sense of place.

Strategic Impact

The Michigan Municipal League and Michigan State University School of Planning, Design, and Construction selected Monroe's proposal for technical assistance in the 2015 round of the PlacePlans program based on its potential to support revitalization of downtown Monroe. The PlacePlans team found the project area to have a mix of strong assets to build upon alongside weaknesses that clearly required intervention, and the alley to be a clearly-defined and achievable project that the city can use to catalyze investment in this part of downtown.



The alley touches several of Monroe's downtown attractions: the Riverwalk and River Raisin Heritage Trail, running along Monroe's defining natural asset, the River Raisin; the pedestrian bridge to the events space at St. Mary's Park; the Monroe County Historical Museum and Labor History Museum; and the River Raisin Centre for the Arts (RRCA). Improving the alley both as a connector among these and a destination in and of itself has the potential to strengthen all of them.

Additionally, improvements to the alley can help draw investment interest to the buildings along the alley. While several existing businesses, new and old, touch on the alley, several of the buildings in the northern blocks have vacant storefronts or upper stories or both. Some need extensive investment to improve both building code compliance and aesthetics; one fell into tax foreclosure during the course of the PlacePlans process. Public meeting participants noted a general appearance of blight in these blocks.

METHODOLOGY

and Public Input

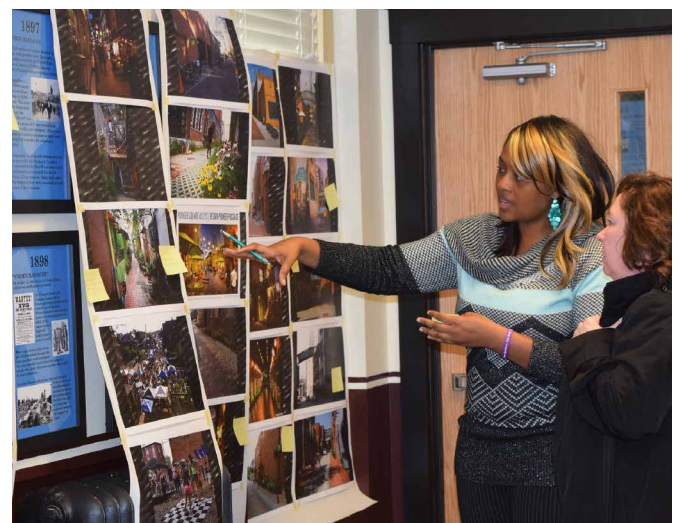
The PlacePlans process is centered on a public design process of establishing a shared vision for the future of the site. To ensure this process is grounded in local realities and reaches enough community members to be an accurate representation of the needs and goals for the place, the League coordinates the design process with two additional input methods. A steering committee made up of key stakeholders and decision-makers assists in defining the scope, planning public engagement, and developing the implementation strategy, while pop-up events use “lighter, quicker, cheaper” tactics to test out pieces of the concept on the ground.

Steering Committee and Anchor Institution Roles

To produce a plan that reflected the true public vision and to gather a number of champions to lead it to implementation, the city convened a group of community leaders to serve as a steering committee. The local steering committee increased project awareness, guided the PlacePlans process, and improved capacity for implementation. Local leaders assembled a diverse and representative sample of the community engaged in the process to build a broad base that would offer varying perspectives in decision making.

The members of the steering committee were selected for their interest and proximity to the project site. These representatives were business owners, residents, city officials, property owners, and institutional directors. The steering committee included representatives from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Monroe County Historical Museum, four local business owners, and the largest property owner on the alleyway. City staff facilitated and documented the public and committee meetings. The group further developed the project’s direction by:

- Providing unique input as far as the possibilities for and direction of the alleyway
- Deciding the methods and scope of outreach
- Guiding and participating in public events related to the project
- Acting as ambassadors for the project to the public and promoting the events



Public Design Process

In order to provide both a carefully considered design and implementation recommendations for Monroe, the PlacePlans team carried out the following process for gathering the necessary information and input:

- Reviewed local/regional land use plans and relevant data
- Inventoried policies against the MIplace Partnership’s Placemaking Audit Tool
- Conducted interviews with stakeholders
- Held four community meetings:
 - Phase One: Community Visioning
 - Phase Two: Design Workshop
 - Phase Three: Preliminary Draft Review
 - Phase Four: Final Report and Presentation
- Facilitated local steering committee meetings at critical stages in the process

National Charrette Institute's Charrette System

These phases were carried out following many practices recommended by 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 Monroe community was engaged in planning phases inspired by the NCI that helped to guide meeting development with meeting needs tailored to the Monroe community.

Placemaking Assessment Tool

The design team also used the short form of the Placemaking Assessment Tool developed by MSU's Land Policy Institute¹ to identify potential placemaking strengths and areas for improvement. This tool is focused on high-level plans and policies that can support or hinder placemaking, and can provide a starting point for discussions on additional actions that support and build from the work on the alley. Refer to Appendix 3 for a copy of the findings.

¹ Available online at http://landpolicy.msu.edu/uploads/files/Resources/Tools/MIplace_Partnership_Initiative/PlacemakingAssessmentTool_LPI_updated_041515.pdf

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Phase One: Community Visioning Kick-Off Workshop

At the onset of the HEART of Monroe PlacePlan process, the city hosted a kick-off community visioning meeting. The visioning session was held in March 2015 with approximately 50 community members in attendance. During the meeting, attendees were challenged to think about opportunities, discuss with others, and document their thoughts. This included what about Monroe makes them proud, what they are sorry about, and what they would like to see in Monroe—particularly in the alleyway—in the future. To encourage creative visions over the long term, questions were posed such as “you’re in a hot air balloon over the site 15 years from now—what would you like to see?” Participants were provided white sheets of drawing paper and markers to encourage not only written comments, but an opportunity to share visuals. On the next page is the summary of input received from the community visioning session.



Visioning Session

FIGURE 1: Community Visioning Summary Findings

This overview of community input is not an exhaustive list of comments received by the PlacePlan team, but rather provides a snapshot of the overall themes of comments provided by the nearly 50 community stakeholders in attendance at the kick-off. A more exhaustive listing of community input is included in the Appendix 4 of this report.

PROUD

- River access
- Lots of assets highlighting Monroe
- The riverfront parking (good access)
- Events/festivals
- General cleanliness (positives and negatives exist)
- Recent investments
 - Waterfront
 - Building facades
- Potential business connectivity via the alley
- Higher business patronage thanks to mutual pedestrian traffic
- Opportunity to connect to other alleys

SORRY

- No inviting connection to schools
- Signage (lack thereof)
- Grandfathering of signage leads to a lack of consistency
- Monroe/Washington Alley maintenance is poor
 - Think for connectivity
- Art (current lack)
- Young people leave Monroe upon graduation
- Safety
 - Alley has dim lighting
- Absentee landlords
 - Leads to poor property maintenance
- Lack of community compromise on major development issues
- Lack of draw for pedestrians
 - Need directional signage in alley development
- Aesthetics of the alley are poor
- Above ground utilities are unsightly
- No space for trash and other improvements
- Downtown is not cycling friendly
- Transient/Homeless population is an issue
 - Some minor drug issues as well
- Lack of alley entrances to businesses

VISION

- Easy relationship between city and businesses
 - Permitting, etc.
- Incentives for new small and local businesses
- Blending of River Raisin Corridor Plan and downtown planning
- Archways at alley entrances
 - Stands out
- Good lighting
- Cross business collaboration
- Riverfront utilized with synchronized event planning
- Utilized empty alley lot
 - Patio seating, dining, etc.
- Multiple connected “places”
- Clean energy
- Density
- Pocket parks
- Water to downtown access
- Dumpster enclosures
- Art in many locations
- Plants at alley entrances
- 24/7 activity
- Rear (alley) store access
- Wayfinding maps
- Green roofs/walls
- Underground utilities
- History tied into alley
- Local eating and drinking establishments
- Outdoor seating/gathering
- Clean and active alley
- Friendlier river crossing

Phase Two: Design Workshop

In April 2015, the design workshop was held to gauge stakeholders' feelings towards the alleyway and potential design recommendations. Prior to the meeting, an array of design images were produced to visualize the many directions in which the site could go. While developing the design, designers followed several key themes taken from the kick-off meeting. These were:

FIGURE 2: Design Workshop Themes

- Respect the scale of the alley
- Keep it a functional alley for service purposes
- Give the alley a pedestrian character
- Follow sustainable design practices
- Ensure connectivity from the River Raisin to Monroe Street retail
- Create back entrances to retail
- Trash pickup
- Allow for historical reflection
- Create a setting for activities
- Ensure the space provides year round opportunities
- Opportunities should exist for all ages and abilities
- Create cohesive design
- Include public art
- Design multiple use facilities and areas
- Beautification
- Connections, but also an experience
- Entrances to the alley need to be "statements"
- Street crossings need to be more pedestrian in character
- Alternative uses for undeveloped areas

Based on these key themes, two potential design plans were developed to receive further input from the community. These two design types were:

1. Traditional Monroe, Michigan:

A more reserved version of the alley which preserves functionality and makes minor adjustments.

2. Vibrant Monroe, Michigan:

A dramatic change to the alley which, while preserving functionality, makes the alley a vibrant pedestrian walk-away and community gathering center.

After all of the images and concepts were introduced, participants broke off into small groups and sat down at tables where facilitators led discussions about the project. Participants recorded their preferences, concerns, and recommendations for design improvements and returned this input to the planning team. In addition, sticky notes were placed on dozens of design images and feedback was recorded. Nearly 160 notes were placed on images and each recorded individually to ensure that citizen feedback was included in the final planning processes. Common feedback developed around the following areas:

1. Preserve the Functionality of the Alley:

The alleyway, while potentially a great addition to the downtown, must still be able to be used as a place for delivery and other general business needs. Do not create an alley similar to the development on the opposite side of Monroe St which lost much of its functionality and usability for business purposes.



Design Workshop



Design Workshop

2. Make the Alley Inviting:

Incorporate features that draw residents into the alley such as outdoor seating and dining, green installments such as green walls and rooftop gardens, and other features while promoting a feeling of both vibrant activity and safety throughout the area. Additional attractions should draw people in and make sure that the alley is functional.

3. Incorporate Monroe's Unique History and Identity:

Incorporate Monroe's unique and important history into alley development to respect Monroe's unique place in the State of Michigan and to capitalize on improvements occurring along the River Raisin and near the battlefield site.

Following this common feedback from community stakeholders, several overarching themes and recommendations were developed through planning and design in order to make the design of this site a reality.

Pop-Up Placemaking: Alley Activation During the DDA Wine Crawl

Communities are highly encouraged to pursue a pop-up placemaking project during the design process. A pop-up is a temporary transformation of a place to meet the desired goals of the placemaking project. By changing the appearance, use, and/or feeling of a particular place, one can test the feasibility of a long-term change, solicit feedback from the public, and have fun bringing a sense of vitality to a new area!

Within the PlacePlan process, a pop-up project can give the design team and community a chance to test out the results of the community visioning and community design workshop. At that stage, the design team would have had the chance to pose options for the community's public space improve-

ment based on feedback from extensive public engagement. This is a unique and essential opportunity to further connect with members of the public and to reach out to residents that may not have attended the previous public meetings. The members of the steering committee could then identify and partner to select a site, date, and method to activate the space. The most successful and informative pop-ups would be inspired by community members and tailored to the specific character of the community.

During the pop-up, a system for collecting feedback will be put in place. The public's reaction to the project will be reported to the steering committee and the design team to further shape the draft presentation product.

The HEART of Monroe project's main goal was to improve and activate the alley space that could bring public from the riverfront to the downtown. Therefore, it was important to the steering committee to test out methods for attracting and engaging people in the alley space. The steering committee planned a pop-up to be held with an existing annual event, the Wine Crawl on Friday evening, July 17, which would bring 300 people around the same area as the alley. The goal was to help the community see the possibility for the alley and ask what else could be done.



Wine Crawl Pop-up

The creative community in Monroe had been extremely vocal from the beginning of the public process. The city reached out to the local artists to paint a mural at the entrance of the alley during the Wine Crawl event. The mural added art and activity to an alleyway that was otherwise aesthetically unpleasing. The DDA was also able to create a temporary public space out of a parking spot on the corner of the alley with seating and plants to give the public a space to rest that was currently difficult to find on this side of the downtown.

It was also important to put up signs and displays of the designs to make more people aware of the project. There were displays on the main entrances to the alley that showed the changes the proposed designs would make. In order to collect feedback, League and city staff directed the pop-up attendees to record feedback to two key questions:

- 1

What if the alley looked like the designs?
- 2

How would you like to use this space?

Afterward, League staff recorded over 100 comments and condensed feedback into Figure 3.

Lessons Learned

It proved to be difficult to bring a large number of community members through the alleyway during the Friday evening Wine Crawl. While 300 attendees of the Wine Crawl seems like a large number of people, this event did not generate as much traffic through the alley as the team would have liked. Downtown Monroe tends to be more active during the day than during the evening, and for the League recommends holding future tactical placemaking events earlier in the day or during a larger event to be able to engage as many people as possible.



FIGURE 3: Pop-Up Event Public Feedback Summary



In addition, there seemed to be some apprehension about bringing people to downtown for multiple “conflicting” events held at the same time. Monroe’s downtown is large enough to support much more activity than currently occurs there. Increasing the number of people and the amount of programming in the vicinity of the alley would do well to improve the area. There are a number of successful event series put on by various organizations that could be expanded and enhanced in order to increase social and commercial activity.

Phase Three: Preliminary Draft Review

In August 2015, the design team presented a single, near-complete draft concept for the alley and adjacent spaces, and asked for feedback on how well the concept reflected the goals and priorities developed at prior meetings. Attendees provided feedback that helped the PlacePlans team both refine the final design and develop implementation recommendations.

Phase Four: Final Report and Presentation

On October 15, 2015, the PlacePlans team presented the final design concept to the community at the River Raisin Centre for the Arts, as well as introducing several recommendations for maintaining the momentum of the project and engaging the community in activating the alley. The final design and recommendations are detailed in the following section.



FIGURE 4: Summary of Public Feedback on Preliminary Draft

PRESERVE ACCESS

- Potential for parking in the back courtyard
- Ensure safety in back area at night
- Ensure that overhead wires or arches do not conflict with ability to get delivery trucks and other service vehicles into the alleyway
- Address snow removal issues in the winter
- Ensure redesign for trash collection is possible
- Address War of 1812 monument design in drawings

INCORPORATE HISTORY

- Include local Native American and French history in the alley
- Don't overkill with the informational trees
- Connect design of alley to recent improvements to the River Raisin and battlefield
- Show location of bicentennial memorial
- Highlight port/river history

DENSE, VIBRANT

- Look to Charleston, SC or New Orleans for communities that have incorporated a rich history into vibrant redevelopment projects
- Make private, dense spaces feel inviting
- Capitalize on open space in second block for lively festivals

CONNECTIVITY

- Connect this design with the riverwalk and other improvements via clearly marked pedestrian walkways (stamped concrete) and overall shared design amongst projects
- Consider an arcade through currently vacant building on Monroe Street
- Bike trail signage connectivity to riverwalk, Heritage Trail, Battlefield, Munson Park
 - Bike racks at parking lot

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Concept Design Narrative

As background for the design of the city alley, several factors must be kept in mind. This is a working alley with day-to-day activities related to the businesses along the length of the alley. Deliveries, trash pickup, and access to the rear of buildings need to be accommodated. Development of the alley is also an excellent opportunity to connect the riverfront and parking to the downtown with an enhanced pedestrian experience. Various elements along the alley, such as the two museums and the theater, are integral parts of this experience. Monroe and vicinity are also significant historically and as such, an historical timeline becomes the thread that ties the entire design together. This timeline could be presented in a variety of ways, including: posters; street art; murals; and interactive electronic displays.



ALLEY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
MONROE, MICHIGAN





Riverwalk Connection



Riverwalk Gateway to Front Street



Courtyard Between Front and First Streets



Courtyard Between Front and First Streets

Although the original study area for the alley design was from Front Street to Second Street, connection to the River Raisin north of Front Street and a transition to the neighborhood south of Second Street were also included. The paving, landscape, lighting, wayfinding signage, and historical interpretive elements that are being proposed for the alley have been extended through the new parking lot to the river's edge. This includes the first of several interactive electronic historical markers as well as wayfinding signage. All entrances to the alley would receive a welcoming arch feature that is reflective of the eventual branding of the alley. Street crossings, Front, First, and Second, would be enhanced to include upgraded pedestrian-style paving to match the alley, street trees, and narrowing of the actual crosswalk distance where possible. The alley itself would be repaved with concrete stamped and colored to look like brick pavers. Special attention will need to be given to storm water management. Overhead lighting throughout the alley would be placed high enough to allow delivery and trash collection trucks to pass, although low enough to provide for a quality pedestrian experience. Likewise, the width of the alley was maintained to allow for services to continue. As an element linked to potential funding sources, it would be best if all overhead wires could be buried and poles removed. Common areas for garbage collection, utilizing compacting dumpsters, is proposed in both blocks of the alley.

The Front Street to First Street block of the alley has three primary features. The "apartment" sub-alley would be upgraded but remain housing. This is not a public area, however, and would be accessed through a controlled gate. The area behind the labor museum and newspaper would contain a building extension of the labor museum and also access to the back of the newspaper building would be retained. The larger open area on the east side of the alley would be developed into a public space while retaining access to the rear entrances of several businesses. Several pull off spaces have been added for pickup and delivery, as well as several parking spaces. The public space would contain seating, a small outdoor fireplace, and historical markers. This area could be used by adjacent businesses for outdoor activities as well as general public use. As businesses transition over time, this would become an excellent location for one of the adjacent buildings to become a restaurant with an outdoor/indoor all season café. Wayfinding signage is located here as well. Public art, historical posters, and electronic displays are included along the alley that continue the historical timeline.

The First Street to Second Street block of the alley has four primary features. The existing parking lot at the alley and First Street intersection has been retained with a few parking spaces next to the alley converted to sitting areas and bicycle parking. Future use of this location could be a mixed-use building constructed above the parking lot with several

small retail establishments included along the alley as part of this project, with vehicle access maintained in and out of the parking from the alley. Rear entrances to businesses have been improved and small public sitting areas added. The new memorial location has been incorporated into the alley design and is also the site of an interactive historical marker. The area between the theater and museum maintains its service and parking functions, although the paving has been changed to match the pedestrian look and character of the alley. A public green space with sitting areas and a walkway connection to Monroe Street have been included. This section of the alley has been maintained for day-to-day service functions but also has the same paving, lighting, and overall pedestrian character as the Front to First section. Green wall opportunities exist along this section of the alley, as well as the Front to First section, although any green wall activity must be coordinated with historical considerations of the building. Wayfinding signage is located here as well. Public art, posters, and electronic displays are included along the alley that continue the historical timeline.

Once the alley continues south of Second Street, the character changes to more of a residential neighborhood area. Reconfiguration of parking in this area and additional landscaping are proposed to assist in this transition.

Appendix 1 contains additional images of the final concept design.



First and Monroe Lot Improvements



Bicentennial Monument Area



Historical Museum Lot

RECOMMENDATIONS

for Design Implementation

The planning and design team developed six major themes with a key focus on the input received and conversations with the general public and various representative organizations of the city of Monroe. Recommendations were made based on comments and discussion during the community meetings, a review of the project area using the MIplace Partnership's Placemaking Audit Tool, and the PlacePlans teams' experience in other communities.

The major planning themes determined through this process, designed to make Monroe a vibrant and active community in concert with the expressed desires of the community, are as follows:

Where possible, lead actors have been suggested for these recommendations, along with partners who can support action—but these suggestions are not intended to preclude others from volunteering to lead the work!

As the city and its partners pursue the implementation of the design concept, keep in mind that physical design is only one aspect of placemaking. The section, "Making a Well-Rounded Place" describes eight asset areas that the League has identified as necessary for successful communities. Monroe should use this framework as it moves forward to identify new opportunities that build on the physical design of the alley.

»» **Preserve the Alley's Functionality**

»» **Make the Alley Inviting**

»» **Connect the Alley to the Community**

»» **Incorporate Monroe's Unique Identity**

»» **Incorporate Green Features In and Around the Alley**

»» **Manage and Care for the Alley**

Making a Well-Rounded Place

While the bulk of this report is focused on proposed changes to the built environment in the first few blocks of South Monroe Street, creating a quality place requires a focus on more than just physical design. The League has identified eight assets that each thriving community must build in today's global competition for residents, visitors, and businesses. Physical design is only one of the eight. A brief summary of the other seven follows.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Placemaking is strongly connected to environmental concerns because of the critical role that Michigan's waterways, parks, and green spaces play in defining our communities. Whether through access to healthy local food, recreational trails, streets that prioritize walking and biking, or clean air and water, the environment is a vital part of healthy vibrant communities. Young educated workers consistently express preferences for living and working in communities that value the environment and communicate those values.

CULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Arts and culture are essential components of a thriving, knowledge-based economy. A healthy creative sector attracts and retains residents and businesses, and produces economic benefits including jobs, a stronger tax base, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, and tourism.

WELCOMING TO ALL

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

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 and economic gardening strategies 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 Millennials looking to apply their optimism, energy, passion and skills for a positive, tangible impact, as well as Baby Boomers looking for new business opportunities.

MESSAGING AND TECHNOLOGY

People communicate, connect, and engage differently today than they did ten years ago, or five years ago, or last year, or even last month! Rapidly evolving 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.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

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

EDUCATION

Education is critical to competing in a global, 21st century economy, and centers of education 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 not only for 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.

Preserve the Alley's Functionality

While an alley can be a great gathering spot, it must still maintain a primary function as an area for deliveries, service, and other needs for the businesses that front the alley. Alleys can be gathering spaces for dining, festivals, concerts, and general leisure time in a way that preserves the alley's traditional functions. Business owners expressed a concern about a loss of functionality if the alley became too pedestrianized to the point of inconvenience for general business needs. The following recommendations are designed to ensure this balance and preserve a functional alley:

Inventory Vehicular Uses to Inform Final Engineering of Shared Spaces

The goal of improving access to and between locations along the alley includes access by delivery trucks, garbage trucks, and snowplows. As the project moves into construction design, Monroe will need a clear and detailed inventory of what demands are placed on it in order to accommodate and balance different users. The inventory will expose opportunities or constraints on changing the use pattern in the alley. One goal of

this process should be not disrupting any critical access needs; another should be to identify periods of time when vehicles can be prohibited from portions of the alley, whether for single special events or on a daily or weekly basis to enhance its use for outdoor dining and similar purposes.

This inventory should address not just, "businesses need delivery access," but what type of vehicle is used for deliveries to each business, how often those deliveries happen, and what that means for other users. For example, the alley is signed for

one-way traffic behind the County Historical Museum and River Raisin Centre for the Arts, but when RRCA is loading a show in or out, its truck will block the alley for an extended period, requiring two-way use of the alley to access the museum's parking.

This is not to say that all needs must be met in exactly the way they are met now—establishing shared dumpsters with a single hauler will change collection patterns from the current individual contracts, as well as provide an opportunity to require that these pickups happen at certain



The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) provides guidance for shared-use streets and alleys in their Urban Street Design Guide, <http://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/streets/commercial-alley/>

times of day, for example. Also, not all of these needs must be met in the alley itself. Some of the recommendations later in this report regarding the surrounding street network and parking areas may address some of the current demands on the alley.

- Action lead: DDA
- Support: Community Development, city dept. of public services, alley property owners

Evaluate Other Downtown Alleys for Opportunities

Participants at the design workshop stated an interest in evaluating other alleys' role within downtown. While this alley and the spaces along

it provide the greatest opportunity, a system for ranking others can help inform future reconstructions or improvements around downtown.

- Action lead: Community Development
- Support: DDA, Engineering

Case Study: Birmingham Alley Plan

The city of Birmingham has developed an alley plan that maps out the differing types of alleys throughout its downtown, using these differing typologies to ensure pedestrian usability and service functionality. The tiered structure of Destination Vias, Active Vias, and Connecting Vias

allows for differing types of activity in each alleyway and differing levels of permanence for alley features. The HEART of Monroe project could be an example of the Active Via category, which still allows for functionality and service usage but also pedestrianized features and infrastructure improvements that make the alley an inviting place.

http://www.bhamgov.org/document_center/Planning/Master_Planning_Docs/Strategy_for_Alleys_and_Passages.pdf



As part of the alley's future, property owners expressed a need for improving snow plowing, trash pickup, and other services. Setting up a business improvement zone (as discussed in the Funding Opportunities section) could provide a mechanism for enhanced services.

Make the Alley Inviting

Oftentimes, alleyways hold a negative connotation associated with crime, blight, or a general sense of avoidance. However, many of the most vibrant urban centers in the world have made alleyways attractive gathering spaces and prime commercial real estate. Throughout hearing resident feedback on proposed design improvements and strategies, an opportunity to create a destination in Monroe was expressed again and again with positive comments associated with designs that made the alley more vibrant, active, and urban in appearance. Planning recommendations for making this vision a reality include:

Case Study: San Francisco “Market Octavia” Living Alleys

In San Francisco, community organizations developed a plan that designed alleyways to be “urban living rooms.” While the Market Octavia district did not allow for vehicles in the district which presents some noticeable variations from the conditions in Monroe, several of the key sets of strategies and recommendations from this plan are applicable to the Monroe alleyway. This plan is

designed around a key set of features such as outdoor seating, traffic calming, sustainable features, paving, and entry/exit features that if implemented correctly can make the Monroe alleyway not only a passage for travel but a destination to be visited. By following many of the recommendations and strategies laid out in the Market Octavia plan, Monroe can have its own urban living room that incorporates features that integrate this overarching theme with other key areas of recommendations.

(<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3510>)

Concentrate Development Incentives Along Alley to Maximize Impact

The city and DDA have used a number of tax abatements and grant programs to encourage investment in

downtown. In concert with improvements to the public space of the alley, they should consider proactively targeting and focusing these incentives on the surrounding vacant properties.

For example, Monroe has already established an obsolete property rehabilitation district for downtown under PA 146 of 2000. Working with the city assessor to issue statements of functional obsolescence for key vacant properties even in advance of a particular investment proposal can streamline the process for a developer and serve as an aid in marketing the property. Committing one year of the DDA’s façade grant program to properties that adjoin the alley would ensure that both the public and private spaces look attractive and welcoming.



Investment in the alley should be paired with existing incentive programs that support private owners in rehabbing vacant upper stories and making façade improvements.

A concentrated incentive strategy would both help make the greatest use of the public investment in the public spaces of the alley and also support the rehab projects currently underway by bringing the adjacent properties up with them.

- Action lead: DDA
- Support: City Assessor, Community Development, MEDC Community Assistance Team

Consider Zoning Ordinance Updates to Support Active Uses Along Alley

Encouraging active use of the alley spaces requires active uses in the buildings along the alley, at least some of which will need to open onto the alley. Not every business can support two “front doors” to address both the street and the alley. However, storefronts at the alley entrances may be able to wrap around the corner to draw interest with display windows, if not additional entrances. A restaurant

on the first block of Monroe Street could activate the courtyard area by providing table service or an outdoor café or beer garden to the rear. A business such as Agua Dulce could host a walk-up service window for to-go coffee. Specifically permitting food trucks or similar vendors in parking areas along the alley can both support near-term active use of the alley and also be an incubator or springboard for new businesses that grow into larger storefront restaurants.

A full review of the zoning ordinance is outside the scope of this project, but the city may consider form-based code elements in the blocks along the alley that focus on enabling and encouraging buildings to engage the alley in these ways.

- Action lead: Community Development
- Support: DDA, MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities

Case Study: Marquette Michigan's Form-Based Code

Marquette, Michigan, a community of comparable size to Monroe, looked to transform its waterfront into a walkable, mixed-use zone that was connected with the rest of downtown. To do this, the zoning ordinance was changed to focus not on separating incompatible uses as is the norm with most zoning ordinances and is the case in Monroe, but rather it focused on the form of the structures that those uses occupied. By encouraging a physical form for the built environment through a form-based zoning code, Marquette has been successful in developing a pedestrian-friendly waterfront that connects well with the city's downtown. By adopting a similar code, Monroe could create the sort of vibrant pedestrian environment that residents have expressed such a desire for throughout the public input sessions of this planning process. (www.wateraccessus.com/case_study.cfm?ID=43)



“Mark's Carts” turned a vacant lot into a lunchtime destination on the edge of downtown Ann Arbor, bringing new customers in to support nearby businesses. For more details, find the full case study at <http://placemaking.mml.org/how-to/marks-cart-ann-arbor/>



Connect the Alley to the Community

The alley as envisioned will play a vital role of increasing access to the businesses and cultural destinations along its length. To have the most impact, though, it needs to be a part of Monroe's overall transportation network, rather than standing on its own. Looking at how the surrounding streets work—and how they could work better—will help Monroe provide visitors the best access to downtown.

Reconsider the One-Way Street Grid to Improve Access

Beyond the lack of on-street parking on Monroe Street, the one-way streets that surround this area are another major barrier to accessing downtown businesses and destinations. While good for moving traffic quickly through downtown, the one-way network often requires an unnecessarily long and circuitous route to reach destinations within downtown, and can be especially confusing and discouraging for the first-time visitor. Restoring two-way flow to some of these streets could make it easier for visitors and customers to navigate downtown and reach destinations.

In particular, restoring two-way traffic to Cass and Harrison Streets could cut down on the use of the

alley for high-speed cut-through traffic, which came up several times as a hazard to other users of the alley. This would require some revising of the streetscape where these streets intersect Front Street, because the curb bump-outs prevent some turns. Additionally, any conversion of these streets south of 3rd Street would require engaging the neighborhood around these streets.

Front Street and First Street would likely be a more difficult and long term conversion, due to the intersection at Harrison and interactions with Monroe Street, but two-way traffic on these streets could make it dramatically easier to get to destinations (and parking) in these blocks, as well as encouraging drivers to maintain the low speeds appropriate for a downtown.



The downtown mall in Charlottesville, VA, provides a wayfinding directory at the end of each block to help visitors find their way to individual businesses and destinations. A system like this could be particularly helpful in a situation like the alley where visitors may be passing the back or side of their destination rather than the front door. Such business directories require active maintenance by the DDA, a BID, or similar entity—out-of-date wayfinding that confuses visitors can be worse than none at all.

Image by Flickr user kal.bates under a Creative Commons license

- Action lead: Community Development
- Support: Engineering

Inventory Public Parking Usage and Consider Wayfinding Needs

Successful downtowns dedicate very little land to parking, and the HEART of Monroe project smartly tackles downtown access questions as a problem of connecting the parking that already exists, rather than a problem of needing more parking. Still, as some participants in the public meetings noted, a large share of downtown's land area as a whole is tied up in parking lots, and many of those sit on land that could potentially contribute more to downtown if developed for productive uses that add to a critical mass of activity.

The DDA should undertake an inventory of downtown parking utilization at various times of the day, week, and year to understand how the parking supply is being used. In

the short-term, a data-driven understanding of how the parking system is being used can inform additional wayfinding and connectivity efforts that help visitors get to their destinations. Wayfinding should both guide drivers to parking from the points where they enter downtown, and then guide pedestrians from the parking areas to destinations within downtown. While there are currently signs at the entrances to public parking lots, these don't necessarily provided a visitor the guidance they need—a driver entering downtown from the north via the Monroe Street bridge, for example, is not given any indication of how to access the public parking on the waterfront.

As investment in downtown continues, some city-owned surface parking lots should be considered as sites for infill development—the parcel on the southwest corner of Monroe and Second, which backs up to the alley, may be one candidate for this. Infill development will likely require some replacement parking in the form of

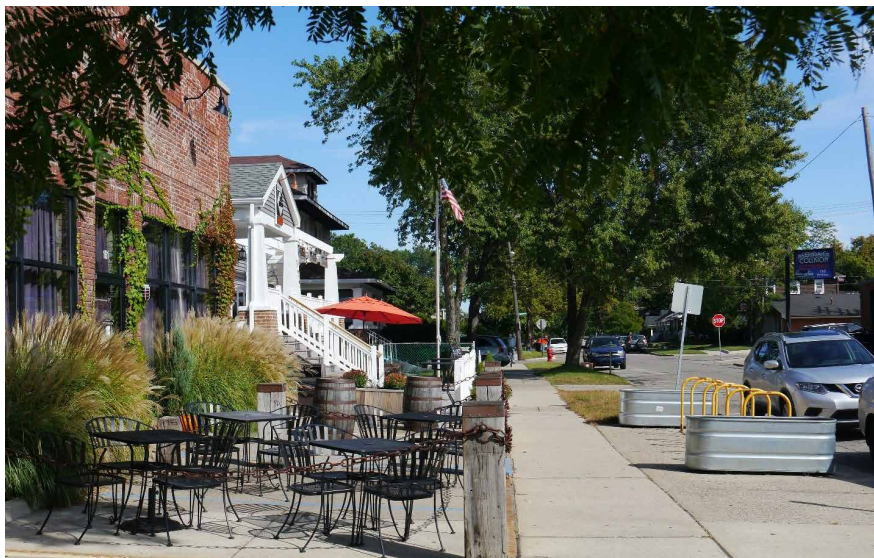
parking structures: the higher construction costs of structured parking should be compared to the opportunity cost of maintaining surface parking lots that cut up the fabric of downtown.

- Action lead: Community Development
- Support: Engineering, DDA

Develop a Complete Streets Policy and Bicycle Network Around Downtown

While one of the major motivations of this project is to make it easier for drivers to access downtown destinations from public parking areas, several comments also pointed to a desire for better bicycle access to downtown. Aside from the riverfront trail, meeting attendees perceived a lack of safe cycling routes into downtown from surrounding neighborhoods. Identifying a network of current and future bicycle routes, and beginning to make small changes can help more people get to downtown destinations without taking up parking spaces when they arrive. Even adding sharrows—pavement markings that show cyclists are expected to ride in the same lanes as other vehicular traffic—to appropriate streets can raise awareness for both cyclists and drivers. Supporting bicycle riders does require providing secure bike parking throughout downtown; this should be incorporated into the design of the spaces and streetscapes along the alley.

- Action lead: Community Development
- Support: Engineering, recreational cycling groups



Ferndale has addressed demand for bicycle parking by deploying several protected bike racks around their downtown. Each of these racks can convert a single on-street or surface lot parking space into parking for a dozen bicycles; planter boxes at the ends increase visibility as well as protecting the bikes from accidental damage by adjacent automobiles.

Image courtesy Melanie Piana, Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Ferndale.

Incorporate Monroe's Unique Community Identity

Known to many in Michigan, the City of Monroe has an amazing history. From its famous War of 1812 battle to the preserved historic structures in the downtown historic district, residents of the city have displayed much pride in its history. This alley also passes by several key community landmarks including the Monroe County Historical Museum, Monroe County Labor History Museum, the Monroe News, and the River Raisin Centre for the Arts (RRCA). The alley's unique geography gives it the ability to capitalize on these community institutions within the context of Monroe's amazing history in general. Throughout the visioning and design workshop, residents expressed a desire to incorporate this history in a manner that fit well with the alley's design. In order to ensure that this development capitalizes on this history and community identity, the following steps are recommended:

Establish the Alley as a Gallery of Monroe's History

The blank walls lining the alley present an opportunity to celebrate Monroe's historical highlights and the talents of the arts community; the linear form of the alley can be used to offer visitors a physical timeline, drawing them along the alley and giving the opportunity to discover the various destinations along it.

Exhibits affixed to the walls will need to respect the integrity of the historical structures and building materials. While every project in a historic district requires review, the city can develop guidance that supports building owners and artists in developing

appropriate proposals. The City of Ypsilanti can offer one example of meshing the desire for art with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: that city's Historic District Commission has discouraged the painting of murals directly onto historic structures, instead supporting murals created on durable panels that are affixed to the structure via fasteners located in the mortar joints, rather than into the bricks, of the structure.

The paving of the alley can itself serve as a canvas as well. Familiar examples of this approach range from the stars of the Hollywood Walk of Fame to "buy a brick" fundraising drives, but a historical timeline ap-



A 2008 mural on the side of Ypsilanti's Corner Health Center was painted on aluminum panels which were attached to the historic masonry building with expansion bolts in the mortar joints, to meet standards of removability, and a 3/8" air gap between mural and wall to prevent possible damage from trapped water. The mural was designed and painted by the Health Center's youth clientele, in collaboration with artist Mary Thieffels of Tree Town Murals, providing a strong link between the users of the space and the art.

proach could be especially well suited to installing in or on the paving along the length of the alley.

- Lead: DDA
- Support: Historical Society, Historic District Commission, museums

Coordinate New and Existing Events in Spaces Along the Alley

The open spaces along the alley, whether green or paved, should be looked at as opportunities for one-time or periodic events. These events both take advantage of improved access, visibility, and connection that the alley creates, and also introduce visitors to the alley as a route through downtown, creating an ongoing benefit to the permanent businesses and institutions along it.

Some of these events could be already happening in other places in downtown: public meeting attendees suggested moving the farmers' market to the riverfront parking lot, or moving the art fair to some location along the alley to create a stronger connection to and from the Jazz Festival across the river. Others could be new events, such as outdoor educational programs by the museums or small-scale performances by the River Raisin Centre for the Arts or other groups.



Artist Candy Chang used temporary spray chalk to create a 300-foot-long pedestrian timeline of local events on Governor Island, New York. A temporary approach like this could be used to test the timeline idea along the alley in conjunction with other downtown events.

Images courtesy of the artist: candychang.com/pedestrian-timeline

Incorporate Green Features

In initial design recommendations, features like rooftop patios and gardens, green walls, and pervious pavements were displayed. These designs were included based on community input from initial meetings that expressed a desire for environmentally-conscious themes to be incorporated into the alley. Positive feedback was received on these proposed designs which can be incorporated into the alleyway in several different ways. In order to make these features a reality, the following are recommended planning steps:

Take Advantage of Connection to Riverwalk and Trail System

The northern end of the alley, extended through the riverfront public parking, connects to the city's riverwalk and to the River Raisin Heritage Trail, providing connectivity to regional recreational destinations. At present, the trail system is somewhat out of sight and out of mind to many visitors to downtown. The alley can serve as a trailhead, extending trail access several blocks into this part of downtown from the river.



The Semiahmoo Library in Surrey, BC, presents the most intense example of a green wall, with over 10,000 plants rooted in lightweight panels that are mounted in front of an existing wall.

Image by Flickr user [curioustangles](#) under a Creative Commons license.

The role of the alley as a trailhead is especially significant due to the mix of business and cultural destinations along the alley. Trail users can be drawn into downtown for coffee at Agua Dulce or to visit events at the museums, while Jack's Bikes already offers bike rentals, which lowers the barrier to entry for first-time trail users. Trail users should be considered in designing alley wayfinding, in placing adequate bicycle parking along the alley, and in future business development efforts.

Include Living Walls Along the Alley

Portions of the alley offer no flat surface for landscaping, but the community may be able to add greenery vertically. "Living walls" can serve as both green features and visual accents that will make the alley more inviting and unique to visitors in and around the Monroe area.

Case Study: Parti Wall, Hanging Green

The Young Architects Boston Group, consisting of ten recently established design firms, created a prototype project in 2008 that turned a bare brick wall into vibrant green wall. It was done as an installation during the American Institute of Architects conference. The architects hung over 100 panels of felt with seeded plants on the side of a loft apartment building. The goal of the project was to improve public space by incorporating sustainable designs and using pleasing natural materials. Green walls are a popular design feature in urban areas all around the world, spanning from intricate designs that cover an entire building, to temporary installations that can be easily tried out and maintained. This kind of experiment would

allow Monroe to give the residents the green aesthetic they want, while preserving any historic brick.



Manage and Care for the Alley

In many cases, a project needs champions to carry it to implementation—great places need to be managed, not just built. The city can work with property and business owners and community members in order to continue to build the HEART of Monroe vision and move it forward. There will need to be multiple steps, collaboration meetings, and incentives in order to make sure the alley is properly refitted, improved, and maintained.

Continue Involvement of Steering Committee

The HEART of Monroe steering committee provided many benefits to the PlacePlan process and their involvement should continue after the grant term ends. By raising awareness, gathering feedback, and promoting placemaking throughout the process, steering committee members are now viewed as project experts and have a unique position to take on further leadership roles through implementation. Using the steering committee model can help improve communication, enhance transparency, and facilitate community ownership of the project.

Keeping the group involved will help ensure activities that reflect the community's interests continue through-

out the longer planning process. Consider establishing the group as an ad hoc committee of the DDA to provide an ongoing channel for advancing this project.

In addition to being community leaders, the steering committee members are in the best position to assist in improvements to the alley since their properties, businesses, and institutions border it. These stakeholders must continue to be part of the discussion and decision making process to ensure the alley is meeting their needs and serving a wider public purpose.

Tactical Placemaking: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper

There were a number of the lessons learned from the pop-up activity during the grant period. It was clear that the public was open to increased activity in the alleyway space and would like to see the alley used for public space. A few of the desired uses from the alley identified during the pop-up could be easily offered during another tactical placemaking activity or quickly added, such as: public art; live music; outdoor seating; greenery; lighting; and/or refreshments (e.g. beer garden or food truck).



St. Joseph Public Art

The DDA or individual property owners could make temporary improvements to the alley and adjacent spaces with small planter boxes, off-the-shelf lighting, movable seating, and similar cheap and readily available items. These can help activate the alley in the short term and demonstrate how the eventual permanent improvements would work.

In making these tactical, temporary improvements to the alley, local government is often tempted to use the same level of scrutiny as for permanent construction—a standard which can easily thwart improvements. Instead, the city and DDA might consider a “24 hour rule” on this type of activity: if any possible concerns or problems that might arise can be rectified in under 24 hours, the experiment doesn’t have to go through traditional comprehensive reviews and permitting ahead of time.

Continue to Engage Arts Community

Monroe has a strong artistic community interested in being involved in this project. Representatives from the Monroe Art League consistently participated in public meetings during the PlacePlan process and there are several artist-owned businesses along the alley. The desire for public art has been consistent throughout the public input meetings and there are a number of local artists willing to contribute their talents to public space.

Case Study: Leveraging Public Art for Community Branding

Developing effective community branding and organizing cultural events can be an effective way to increase resident quality of life and increase tourism. A group of city leaders and concerned residents

came up with the St. Joseph, Michigan, public art project to re-energize the community. A theme is selected each year and local artists paint and decorate unique sculptures, which are placed around the downtown. Past themes include Horses on the Beach, Beach Bears, Hot Cars, Cool Beaches, and more. The public art initiative has helped increase downtown storefront occupancy, tourism, downtown foot traffic, and an overall change in attitude among local residents.²

2 “St. Joseph Public Art,” Michigan Municipal League: Placemaking, 2014, accessed June 11, 2014, <http://placemaking.mml.org/st-joseph-public-art/>.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The alley as envisioned will likely require phasing over time and leveraging of multiple funding sources. Monroe should expect local dollars to be a part of this mix, but can also tap into a number of state grant programs and other funding opportunities. The following considerations have been compiled from conversations with city staff, state agency representatives, and other Michigan cities that have undertaken similar projects.

Construction Considerations

After the completion of the concept designs for the alley and surrounding spaces, the League approached Beckett & Raeder, Inc., (BRI) to provide an opinion on the rough costs estimated for final design and construction of the concepts.³ The line items and unit costs in these estimates can be used as a guide when preparing the city's capital improvement program or grant proposals, in combination with city staff's experience on past projects.

However, two significant cautions apply. Because the designs developed in the PlacePlans process are at a conceptual level, and do not include precise measurements or survey work, these numbers should be used as an order of magnitude, and not be relied on for precise costs—final design and field conditions may create significant changes in costs, either higher or lower.

Also, the cost estimates include all of the work shown in the final concepts, including reconstruction of some of the existing streetscaping and riverfront parking area to establish a common theme throughout the area. Much of this work is newly completed within the past few years, though, and any changes to these areas should be expected only as a longer-range phase of the project. Considering the rebuild of the section of alley between Front and Second as a first phase, for example, this area includes less than a third of the 31,000 square feet of stamped concrete is included in the estimate.

Three estimates are included in Appendix 2:

- The first, labeled "Overall Alley," includes all of the areas shown in the final concept design that are currently under city ownership, including the alley itself, work within the riverfront and other parking lots, and nearby streetscape.
- The second, "Café & Garden Area," covers the concept design for the mid-block courtyard between Front and First.
- The third, "Green Space & Parking," covers the reconfiguration of the area around the Historical Museum that are part of that parcel.



Local Funds

In addition to the city's general fund and DDA TIF, city staff identified two other funds that could potentially be used for portions of this plan.

- The city has a policy of paying 50% of the cost of paving alleys, typically subject to adjacent property owner petition and special assessment for the remainder. While this is usually applied to residential alleys, it provides a template for the city's expected share of the work of rebuilding this alley.
- The city's parking fund uses meter and ticket revenue to maintain the public parking system; this fund could support portions of improvements in the First and Monroe lot or public parking lot on Cass behind River Raisin Centre for the Arts.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Recreation Grants

The MDNR administers several annual grant programs for development of recreation facilities. The opportunity for the alley to serve as a connection from the cultural destinations on the alley to the River Raisin Heritage Trail—and therefore to the National Battlefield, Sterling State Park, and other destinations—positions it to seek funding as a trail segment.

The city could apply to any of three DNR-administered programs for “development” funds for this purpose; all have annual application deadlines of April 1, with awards announced late in the calendar year. (i.e. April 1, 2016 application for funding that could be used for the 2017 construction season.)

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund: maximum \$300,000 award for development projects, with separate category for applications under \$50,000; local match of at least 25% of total project cost
- Michigan Recreation Passport: maximum \$45,000 award; local match of at least 25% of total project cost
- Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund: maximum \$100,000 award; local match of at least 50% of total project cost

For all three programs, the city must have an up-to-date five-year recreation plan and include the proposed project in its Capital Improvement Plan. The facilities funded must all be located on publicly-owned property, and operate for recreational use in perpetuity. DNR grants staff stated that use of the alley for garbage pickup or delivery access in addition to recreational use would not disqualify the project.

These sources could potentially also be used to develop the courtyard between Front and First as a plaza, if the city were to first acquire that parcel. However, trail projects are generally a higher priority within these funding programs, meaning that the development of the bicycle and pedestrian elements along the alley that lead it to function as a connector and trailhead would likely be a more competitive proposal.

Public Spaces Community Places Crowdfunding Match Program

The Public Spaces Community Places program provides a 50/50 match of up to \$50,000 to successful crowdfunding campaigns by the community for public space improvements. Proposals are reviewed on an ongoing basis, with no deadline, but a limited amount of match funding available statewide each year.

To qualify, communities must submit a proposed project for review by MEDC, MSHDA, and crowdfunding partner Patronicity. Projects must be located in a traditional downtown, activate a public space, and demonstrate that the funds raised through the campaign will be adequate to implement the project. (Projects that are larger than the maximum \$50,000 match + \$50,000 crowdfund must demonstrate that the other required funds have already been committed, so that the funds raised through this program will be the “last dollars” needed for implementation.)

Several components of Monroe's alley concept could be implemented through this program, including:

- Development of pedestrian and bicycle amenities along the alley
- Creation and installation of public art and historical exhibits along the alleyway
- Development of the courtyard plaza between Front and First, the seating areas between the alley and public parking lot south of First, or improvements around the Historical Society's monument between First and Second

A crowdfunding campaign may be sponsored by a local unit of government (the city, DDA, or county) or by a 501(c)3 nonprofit. In any case, the project proposed should have a realistic expectation of hitting crowdfunding goals; while Patronicity will help project sponsors craft their outreach campaign, the sponsoring organization should select projects that local residents and businesses will rally behind and contribute to monetarily. Nearly 50 campaigns have been successfully completed through the program, providing good case studies of successful asks.

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The TAP program uses federal dollars, administered by MDOT, to fund pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, streetscaping, wayfinding, and similar amenities. Unfortunately, its applicability for this project is limited by rules from Federal Highway Authority that do not allow for use on shared space projects. This funding could be used to reconstruct the alley as a bike and pedestrian space, for example, but only if it were closed to vehicular traffic, which is not an option here.

Monroe could still consider the TAP program for transportation-related improvements outside of shared-use spaces, such as upgrades of the connection from Front Street to the riverwalk and pedestrian-scaled wayfinding for downtown destinations (however, the portions of a wayfinding system that direct visitors to individual private businesses could not be funded through TAP).

Foundation Involvement Opportunities

In initial conversations about the concept design, the Community Foundation of Monroe expressed an interest in the plans, especially the arts and historical elements. The city should engage the foundation in implementation conversations, such as in scoping and planning out a crowdfunding campaign for the First and Monroe lot.

Business Improvement Zone

The business and property owners in the blocks along the alley repeatedly raised the question of maintenance: trash collection, snow plowing, and similar unglamorous but necessary tasks. One mechanism for addressing these functions at a higher level of service than the city is able to supply is through a Business Improvement Zone, or BIZ.

This tool, enabled by PA 281 of 1986, allows private property owners to vote special assessments on themselves to pay for public space improvements

and services. Rather than the city or DDA creating a plan, determining the assessment, and managing the services, the property owners involved in a BIZ come together to establish and execute a service plan. This allows for direct involvement and control by the affected property owners, while also preventing “free riders” from taking advantage of the services provided while skipping payments, as sometimes happens in a voluntary cost-sharing system.

While a BIZ would not be very appropriate for the capital improvements envisioned in the plan, it is included as a tool for the existing maintenance needs that the alley stakeholders noted.

3 BRI was selected and contracted for this work by the League as part of an RFQ process that covered multiple cities in the statewide 2015 PlacePlans process. BRI was not selected or paid by the city of Monroe.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Monroe PlacePlan Design Images



ALLEY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT MONROE, MICHIGAN



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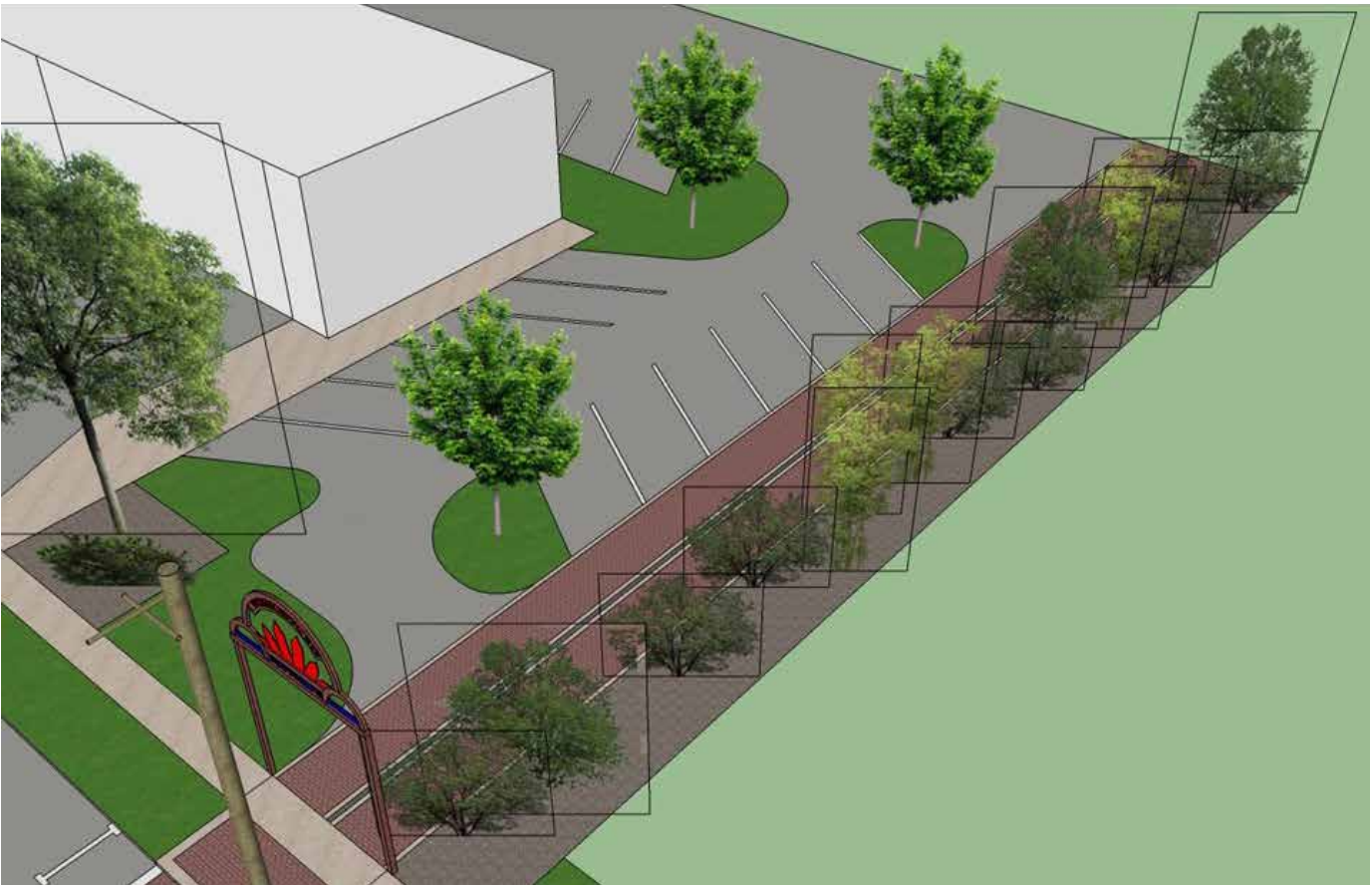






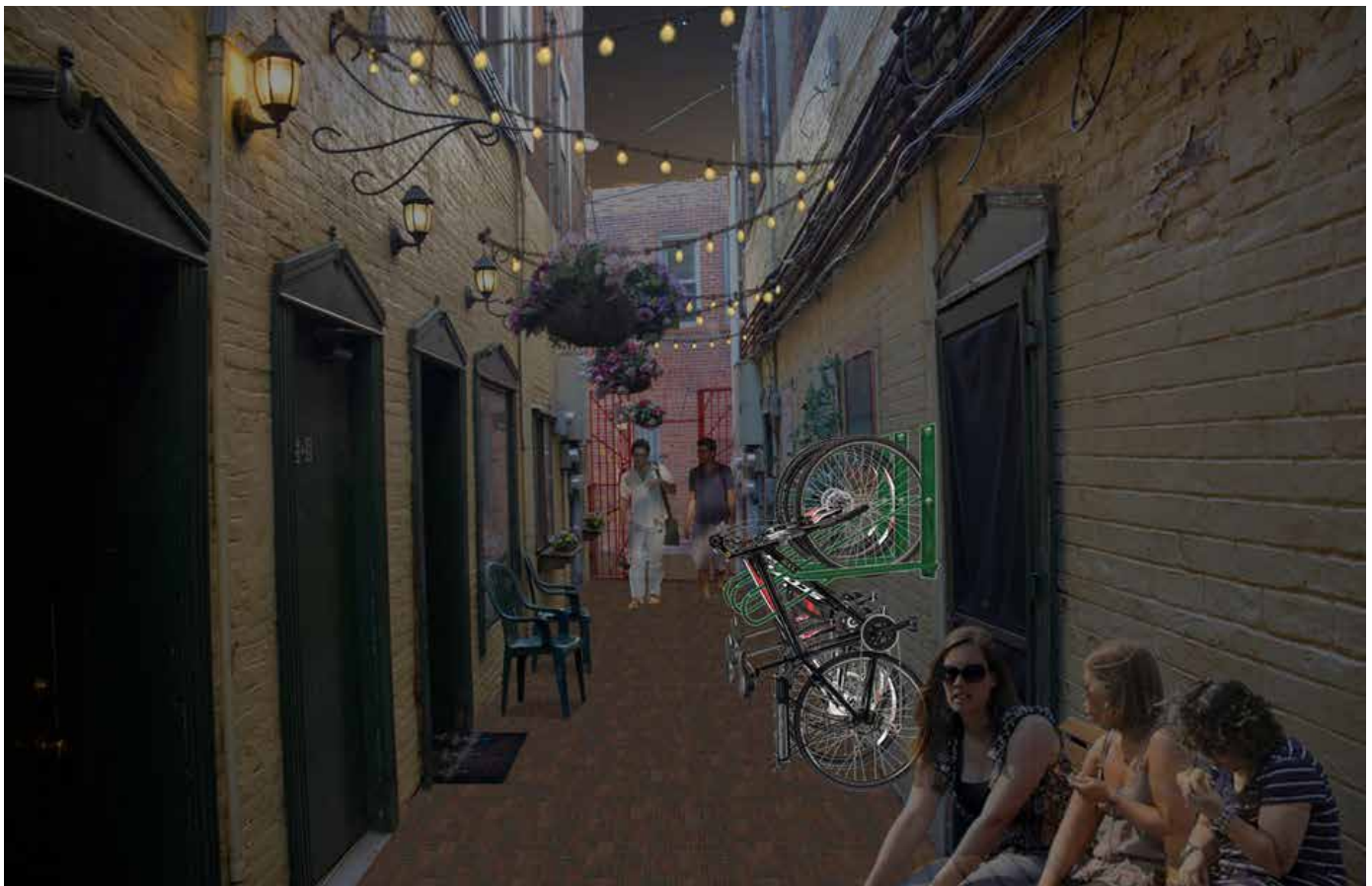


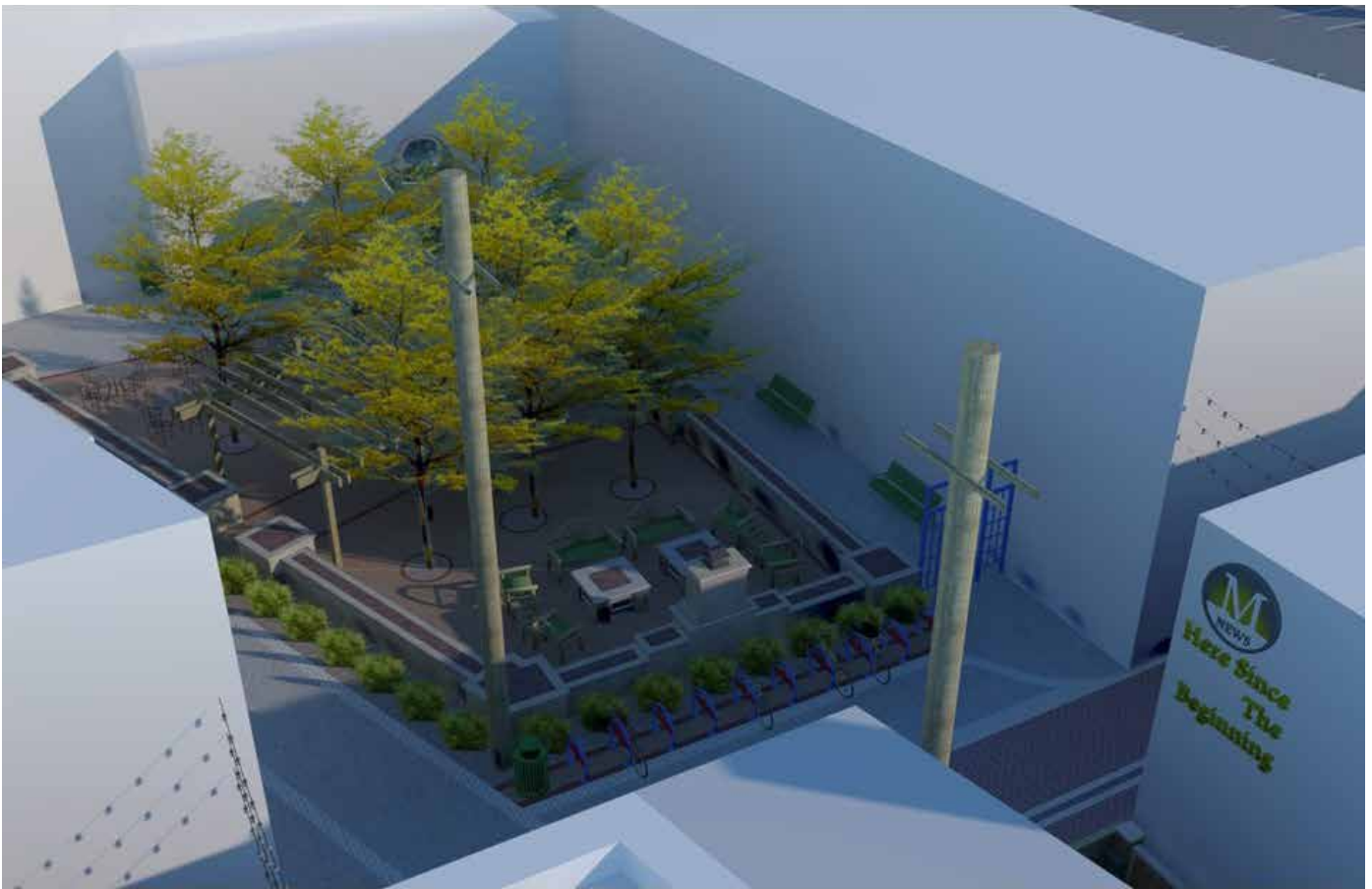
























APPENDIX 2: Representative Cost Estimates

Michigan Municipal League / City of Monroe
Downtown Monroe Alley
 Preliminary Opinion of Probable Construction Costs
 November 20, 2015



Overall Alley

Qty	Unit	Description	Unit Cost	Unit Total	Total
Site Preparation					
450	lf	Filter Fabric Fence	\$3.50	\$1,575.00	
15	ea	Structure Soil Erosion Control	\$225.00	\$3,375.00	
4	ea	Construction Entrance Mud Mat	\$1,200.00	\$4,800.00	
1	ls	Traffic Control	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	
					\$17,250.00
Demolition					
12	ea	Tree Removal	\$250.00	\$3,000.00	
8	ea	Tree Grate Removal	\$250.00	\$2,000.00	
1,778	lf	Sawcut Pavement	\$4.00	\$7,112.00	
420	lf	Curb & Gutter Removal	\$7.00	\$2,940.00	
7,192	lf	Concrete Pavement Removal	\$1.25	\$8,990.00	
26,255	sf	Bituminous Pavement Removal	\$1.25	\$32,818.75	
7,720	ea	HD Concrete Pavement Removal	\$1.75	\$13,510.00	
2	ea	Masonry Pier Removal	\$750.00	\$1,500.00	
252	lf	Ornamental Fence Removal	\$20.00	\$5,040.00	
1	ls	Misc Demolition (Posts, Signs, etc.)	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	
					\$84,410.75
Earthwork					
1	ls	Earthwork	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	
					\$50,000.00
Utilities (Allowance)					
14	ea	Adjust Structure	\$500.00	\$7,000.00	
2	ea	2' Diameter Inlet	\$1,500.00	\$3,000.00	
3	ea	4' Diameter Catch Basin	\$2,000.00	\$6,000.00	
3	ea	4' Diameter Manhole	\$2,500.00	\$7,500.00	
300	lf	12" Diameter Storm Sewer Pipe	\$55.00	\$16,500.00	
10	ea	Adjust Water Shut Off	\$500.00	\$5,000.00	
					\$45,000.00
Site Improvements					
605	lf	Concrete Curb & Gutter	\$25.00	\$15,125.00	
2,225	sf	Concrete Sidewalk, 4"	\$4.75	\$10,568.75	
1,675	sf	Heavy Duty Concrete	\$6.75	\$11,306.25	
31,440	sf	Heavy Duty Colored, Stamped Concrete	\$16.50	\$518,760.00	
875	sy	HMA Pavement Standard Duty	\$28.00	\$24,500.00	
110	sy	HMA Patch	\$45.00	\$4,950.00	
5	ea	Masonry Piers	\$2,500.00	\$12,500.00	
50	lf	Ornamental Fence	\$100.00	\$5,000.00	
240	lf	Barrier Free Railing	\$50.00	\$12,000.00	
180	lf	Decorative Dumpster Enclosure Fencing	\$75.00	\$13,500.00	
2	ea	Steel Dumpster Enclosure Gate	\$2,500.00	\$5,000.00	
120	lf	Masonry Dumpster Enclosure Walls	\$300.00	\$36,000.00	
					\$669,210.00
Site Electrical					
8	ea	Decorative Street Lights	\$8,500.00	\$68,000.00	
500	lf	Conduit	\$9.00	\$4,500.00	
2	ea	Multi Media Tree	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	
378	lf	Tivoli Lights	\$25.00	\$9,450.00	
378	lf	Tivoli Light Cable	\$7.00	\$2,646.00	
					\$184,596.00

Site Furnishings

13	ea	Benches	\$1,800.00	\$23,400.00	
7	ea	Litter Receptacles	\$1,500.00	\$10,500.00	
8	ea	Decorative Bollards	\$1,500.00	\$12,000.00	
45	ea	Bike Hoops	\$700.00	\$31,500.00	
6	ea	Movable Picnic Tables and Chairs	\$3,750.00	\$22,500.00	
7	ea	Decorative Entry Arches	\$25,000.00	\$175,000.00	
1,500	sf	Pergola	\$35.00	\$52,500.00	
2	ea	12'x12' Pavilion	\$37,500.00	\$75,000.00	
1	ls	Wayfinding Allowance	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	
1	ls	Historical Posters & Interpretive Signage	\$37,500.00	\$37,500.00	
					\$514,900.00

Landscaping

26	ea	Canopy Tree	\$400.00	\$10,400.00	
5,025	sf	Perennials	\$12.00	\$60,300.00	
1	ls	Irrigation	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	
186	cy	Plant Mix	\$35.00	\$6,513.89	
62	cy	4" Mulch	\$35.00	\$2,171.08	
179	cy	Topsoil	\$35.00	\$6,265.00	
1,629	sy	Sod	\$2.50	\$4,072.50	
					\$124,722.47

Subtotal		\$1,690,089.22	
General Conditions (5%)		\$84,504.46	
Design/Estimate Contingency (10%)		\$177,459.37	
Subtotal Hard Costs (Construction Bid)			\$1,952,053.05
Soft Costs (25%)			\$488,013.26
Construction Contingency			
Geotechnical			
Materials Testing			
Architectural & Engineering			
Legal			
Permits & Inspections			
Total Project Costs			\$ 2,440,066.31

Note: This estimate prepared without benefit of topographic survey and therefore should be considered to portray magnitude of cost, rather than a detailed depiction of probable construction costs.

Note: Addressing overhead utilities through either raising or burial could range between **\$110,000 and \$550,000** depending on the option pursued and requires further discussion with utility owners before determining more specific costs.

Café & Garden Area

Qty	Unit	Description	Unit Cost	Unit Total	Total
Site Preparation					
100	lf	Filter Fabric Fence	\$3.50	\$350.00	
3	ea	Structure Soil Erosion Control	\$225.00	\$675.00	
1	ea	Construction Entrance Mud Mat	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	
1	ls	Traffic Control	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	
					\$4,225.00
Demolition					
1	ea	Tree Removal	\$250.00	\$250.00	
	ea	Tree Grate Removal	\$250.00	\$0.00	
100	lf	Sawcut Pavement	\$4.00	\$400.00	
	lf	Curb & Gutter Removal	\$7.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Concrete Pavement Removal	\$1.25	\$0.00	
13,800	sf	Bituminous Pavement Removal	\$1.25	\$17,250.00	
	ea	HD Concrete Pavement Removal	\$1.75	\$0.00	
	ea	Masonry Pier Removal	\$750.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Ornamental Fence Removal	\$20.00	\$0.00	
1	ls	Misc Demolition (Posts, Signs, etc.)	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	
					\$20,400.00
Earthwork					
1	ls	Earthwork	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	
					\$15,000.00
Utilities (Allowance)					
2	ea	Adjust Structure	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	
2	ea	2' Diameter Inlet	\$1,500.00	\$3,000.00	
1	ea	4' Diameter Catch Basin	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	
1	ea	4' Diameter Manhole	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	
120	lf	12" Diameter Storm Sewer Pipe	\$55.00	\$6,600.00	
2	ea	Adjust Water Shut Off	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	
					\$16,100.00
Site Improvements					
	lf	Concrete Curb & Gutter	\$25.00	\$0.00	
	sf	Concrete Sidewalk, 4"	\$4.75	\$0.00	
	sf	Heavy Duty Concrete	\$6.75	\$0.00	
4,500	sf	Heavy Duty Colored, Stamped Concrete	\$16.50	\$74,250.00	
550	sy	HMA Pavement Standard Duty	\$35.00	\$19,250.00	
	sy	HMA Patch	\$45.00	\$0.00	
8	ea	Masonry Piers	\$2,500.00	\$20,000.00	
145	lf	Masonry Screen Wall	\$225.00	\$32,625.00	
1	ls	Masonry Fireplace	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	
	lf	Decorative Dumpster Enclosure Fencing	\$75.00	\$0.00	
	ea	Steel Dumpster Enclosure Gate	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Masonry Dumpster Enclosure Walls	\$300.00	\$0.00	
					\$171,125.00
Site Electrical					
	ea	Decorative Street Lights	\$8,500.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Conduit	\$9.00	\$0.00	
1	ea	Multi Media Tree	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	
	lf	Tivoli Lights	\$25.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Tivoli Light Cable	\$7.00	\$0.00	
					\$50,000.00
Site Furnishings					
9	ea	Benches	\$1,800.00	\$16,200.00	
3	ea	Litter Receptacles	\$1,500.00	\$4,500.00	
	ea	Decorative Bollards	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	
10	ea	Bike Hoops	\$700.00	\$7,000.00	

6	ea	Movable Picnic Tables and Chairs	\$3,750.00	\$22,500.00
2	ea	Water Bubbler Pot	\$10,000.00	\$20,000.00
1,000	sf	Pergola	\$35.00	\$35,000.00
1	ls	Outdoor Sofa/Table Furniture Allowance	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
1	ls	Wayfinding Allowance	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
1	ls	Historical Posters & Interpretive Signage	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
				<u>\$132,700.00</u>

Landscaping

6	ea	Canopy Tree	\$400.00	\$2,400.00
120	sf	Perennials	\$12.00	\$1,440.00
1	ls	Irrigation	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
5	cy	Plant Mix	\$35.00	\$175.00
2	cy	4" Mulch	\$35.00	\$70.00
	cy	Topsoil	\$35.00	\$0.00
	sy	Sod	\$2.50	\$0.00
				<u>\$14,085.00</u>

Subtotal		<u>\$423,635.00</u>
General Conditions (5%)		\$21,181.75
Design/Estimate Contingency (10%)		<u>\$44,481.68</u>
Subtotal Hard Costs (Construction Bid)		\$489,298.43
Soft Costs (25%)		\$122,324.61
Construction Contingency		
Geotechnical		
Materials Testing		
Architectural & Engineering		
Legal		
Permits & Inspections		
Total Project Costs		\$ 611,623.03

Note: This estimate prepared without benefit of topographic survey and therefore should be considered to portray magnitude of cost, rather than a detailed depiction of probable construction costs.

Note: If this is the initial project, Multi Media Tree cost would increase on the basis that initial design costs would not have already been accomplished and spread out over several fixtures. Increase cost to \$65,000 in that case.

Green Space & Parking

Qty	Unit	Description	Unit Cost	Unit Total	Total
Site Preparation					
100	lf	Filter Fabric Fence	\$3.50	\$350.00	
3	ea	Structure Soil Erosion Control	\$225.00	\$675.00	
1	ea	Construction Entrance Mud Mat	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	
1	ls	Traffic Control	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	
					\$4,225.00
Demolition					
	ea	Tree Removal	\$250.00	\$0.00	
	ea	Tree Grate Removal	\$250.00	\$0.00	
150	lf	Sawcut Pavement	\$4.00	\$600.00	
	lf	Curb & Gutter Removal	\$7.00	\$0.00	
360	lf	Concrete Pavement Removal	\$1.25	\$450.00	
6,000	sf	Bituminous Pavement Removal	\$1.25	\$7,500.00	
	ea	HD Concrete Pavement Removal	\$1.75	\$0.00	
	ea	Masonry Pier Removal	\$750.00	\$0.00	
75	lf	Chain Link Fence Removal	\$15.00	\$1,125.00	
1	ls	Misc Demolition (Posts, Signs, etc.)	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	
					\$11,675.00
Earthwork					
1	ls	Earthwork	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	
					\$7,500.00
Utilities (Allowance)					
2	ea	Adjust Structure	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	
1	ea	2' Diameter Inlet	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	
1	ea	4' Diameter Catch Basin	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	
1	ea	4' Diameter Manhole	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	
100	lf	12" Diameter Storm Sewer Pipe	\$55.00	\$5,500.00	
2	ea	Adjust Water Shut Off	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	
					\$13,500.00
Site Improvements					
	lf	Concrete Curb & Gutter	\$25.00	\$0.00	
640	sf	Concrete Sidewalk, 4"	\$4.75	\$3,040.00	
800	sf	Heavy Duty Concrete	\$6.75	\$5,400.00	
600	sf	Heavy Duty Colored, Stamped Concrete	\$16.50	\$9,900.00	
	sy	HMA Pavement Standard Duty	\$28.00	\$0.00	
	sy	HMA Patch	\$45.00	\$0.00	
	ea	Masonry Piers	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Ornamental Fence	\$100.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Barrier Free Railing	\$50.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Decorative Dumpster Enclosure Fencing	\$75.00	\$0.00	
	ea	Steel Dumpster Enclosure Gate	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Masonry Dumpster Enclosure Walls	\$300.00	\$0.00	
					\$18,340.00
Site Electrical					
2	ea	Decorative Street Lights	\$8,500.00	\$17,000.00	
180	lf	Conduit	\$9.00	\$1,620.00	
1	ea	Multi Media Tree	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	
	lf	Tivoli Lights	\$25.00	\$0.00	
	lf	Tivoli Light Cable	\$7.00	\$0.00	
					\$68,620.00
Site Furnishings					
3	ea	Benches	\$1,800.00	\$5,400.00	
	ea	Litter Receptacles	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	
	ea	Decorative Bollards	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	
	ea	Bike Hoops	\$700.00	\$0.00	
	ea	Movable Picnic Tables and Chairs	\$3,750.00	\$0.00	
	ea	Decorative Entry Arches	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	
	sf	Pergola	\$35.00	\$0.00	
	ea	12'x12' Pavilion	\$37,500.00	\$0.00	

Is	Wayfinding Allowance	\$75,000.00	\$0.00
Is	Historical Posters & Interpretive Signage	\$37,500.00	\$0.00
			<u>\$5,400.00</u>

Landscaping

2	ea	Canopy Tree	\$400.00	\$800.00
	sf	Perennials	\$12.00	\$0.00
1	ls	Irrigation	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
	cy	Plant Mix	\$35.00	\$0.00
	cy	4" Mulch	\$35.00	\$0.00
17	cy	Topsoil	\$35.00	\$595.00
150	sy	Sod	\$2.50	\$375.00
				<u>\$11,770.00</u>

Subtotal		<u>\$141,030.00</u>
General Conditions (5%)		\$7,051.50
Design/Estimate Contingency (10%)		<u>\$14,808.15</u>
Subtotal Hard Costs (Construction Bid)		\$162,889.65
Soft Costs (25%)		\$40,722.41
Construction Contingency		
Geotechnical		
Materials Testing		
Architectural & Engineering		
Legal		
Permits & Inspections		

Total Project Costs **\$ 203,612.06**

Note: This estimate prepared without benefit of topographic survey and therefore should be considered to portray magnitude of cost, rather than a detailed depiction of probable construction costs.

Note: If this is the initial project, Multi Media Tree cost would increase on the basis that initial design costs would not have already been accomplished and spread out over several fixtures. Increase cost to \$65,000 in that case.

APPENDIX 3: Miplace Placemaking Assessment Tool

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

School of Planning, Design
and Construction



Background on this Tool

This tool was developed by the Land Policy Institute of Michigan State University in collaboration with the MiPlace Partnership Initiative.

Purpose of the Assessment Tool

There are three main purposes for this Placemaking Assessment Tool.

1. To help neighborhoods and communities understand the scope of what might be involved in different types of placemaking. The text that follows in this introduction section should help communities decide which of four different types of placemaking they are prepared to pursue.
2. To help communities think about placemaking in the context of larger efforts of strategic planning for the community and region. Placemaking is a vital part of strategic planning for economic development.
3. To help neighborhoods and communities determine their capacity to do effective placemaking at the present time, and determine what to do to become more effective in the future.

Placemaking Defined

“Placemaking is the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in.” What is critical to understand is that placemaking is a process, it is a means to an end; the end is the creation and ongoing maintenance of quality places. People know and understand what quality places are when they are in them. They tend to be walkable, provide the opportunity for people to gather, are welcoming, have amenities such as places to sit and art or fountains to look at, and are surrounded by interesting buildings. Quality places also provide for economic, social and cultural exchange among people, businesses and institutions.

Plans Reviewed in the Development of this Assessment

In developing this assessment specifically for the City of Monroe, general web searches and reviews of city websites and community organizations were completed. In addition to these more cursory reviews, the following plans were reviewed before beginning on the development of the Monroe PlacePlan:

- City of Monroe Draft Master Plan (2015)
- City of Monroe Draft Zoning Ordinance – Last Section of Master Plan (2015)
- River Rising Heritage Corridor-East Master Plan (2013)
- Tax Increment Financing Plan #4 (2007)

City of Monroe Assessment

Table 4. Short Assessment Question	Yes	No	Source	Comments
Does your community encourage art in public spaces through coordination with local arts organizations, schools and external funding opportunities?	X		Monroe Art League: http://www.monroeartleague.com/	The Monroe Art League often displays works in public spaces and in conjunction with major festivals in the manner proposed by this question.
Does your community plan and put on festivals, fairs, or outdoor concerts?	X		http://www.monroeo.com/events-calendar.php	Events like the Jazz Festival, Farmers Market, and more are common in Monroe which has a lively festival season.
Does your community provide public space for a Farmers' Market?	X		MP, Chapter 7, p. 1 http://downtownmonroeemi.com/farmers_market/	Monroe's Farmer's Market is open weekly throughout the summer and fall, providing a place to sell fruits, vegetables, flowers, and craft items.
Does your community intentionally make its institutional buildings (government offices, libraries, schools, etc.) a focal point in the community, maintained well and landscaped, oriented toward the streets and pedestrian traffic, and complemented by amenities, such as bike racks, lighting, benches, etc.?		X	No proof that this is done	City Hall is currently not a focal point and inviting to residents. However, the <i>Resilient Monroe</i> plan devotes an entire chapter to placemaking and discusses working to make the Downtown in general more pedestrian focused and friendly.
Does your community engage in cooperative, historic preservation efforts through coordination with historic preservation boards, education to increase public awareness and build support, and maintaining a historic resources inventory that is consistent with or more extensive than that maintained for your community by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office?	X		City Code, §383	This section of the city code is entirely on Historic Districts, including information about the establishment, designation, and elimination of districts; rules, duties, and powers of the Historic District Commission; grants, gifts, and programs; historic resources; etc.
Does your community have an active arts organization?	X		Monroe Art League: http://www.monroeartleague.com/	The Monroe Art League is a local arts organization founded in 1959 that promotes and encourages artistic talent and art appreciation in the community.

Table 4. Short Assessment Question	Yes	No	Source	Comments
Does your community have public spaces (plazas, parks, institutional building entry areas or front lawns, wide sidewalks, or downtown street parking spots) that could be transformed into small sites for temporary or extended recreation or commercial activities?	X		MP, Chapter 9, p. 16	A map is included in this section of the plan of all existing recreation facilities in the city.
Does your community have buildings or sites of historic significance, either on an historic registry or not?	X		MP, Chapter 3, p. 1-5	A map is included in addition to a list of all buildings and sites in the city.
Does the community's Master Plan include standard, creative or tactical placemaking as strategies for community improvement?	X		MP, Chapter 7	The Master Plan provides definitions of each type of placemaking, and the entire chapter follows the outline of definitions given.
Does your community have a business organization (Chamber of Commerce, Visitors and Convention Bureau, Downtown Business Association, etc.) that has expressed an interest in placemaking or downtown improvements?	X		Monroe County Chamber of Commerce: http://www.monroecountychamber.com/	The city has no listed business-specific organization like those mentioned here, but the City website does link to the County organization, the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce
Does the Master Plan include the creation of quality public spaces as a goal, objectives and strategies?	X		MP, Chapter 9, p. 17 MP, Chapter 5, p. 16	Goals in Chapter 9 focus on creating and maintaining quality public green spaces. Goals in Chapter 5 include enhancing open spaces as part of neighborhood improvement & sustainability. Chapter 7 (p. 4) also speaks of the importance of quality public spaces.
Does your Master Plan encourage the development of 3 rd Places/Spaces in dense areas of the community for social gathering opportunities with a strong sense of place?	X		MP, Chapter 7, p. 4	Though the Master Plan does not state "3 rd Places/Spaces" exactly, it does state the importance of having quality public spaces.

Table 4. Short Assessment Question	Yes	No	Source	Comments
Has the community adopted a capital improvement plan, coordinated with the Master Plan, with a six-year minimum projection and reviewed it annually?	X		City website	City website states that it has a CIP (http://www.monroemi.gov/government/departments/community-development/), but the actual document could not be found.
Total this page (sum of the number of Yes and No responses):	12	1		

Table 4. Short Assessment Question	Yes	No	Source	Comments
Does your community have a sign ordinance that permits decorative banners, and appropriate temporary signs to advertise festivals or other activities?	X		Ordinance, § 720-175	The ordinance allows temporary banners with permit.
Are there any codes that specifically enable placemaking, such as allowing sidewalk seating for restaurants, or public gathering permits for outdoor activities by right?	X		Zoning ordinance, § 720-61	This is a section in the zoning ordinance specifically for sidewalk café service.
Does your community permit food trucks or carts on public property?		X		No information could be found in City codes on allowing food trucks.
Does your community's Zoning Ordinance permit related commercial activities near recreation and heritage sites (rivers, lakes, parks, trails, historic districts, etc.), such as kayak or canoe rentals, bike or Segway rentals, walking tours, etc.?	X		Zoning ordinance, § 720-37	This section lists permitted and special uses.
Does your community's Zoning Ordinance permit community gardens or small urban farms?		X		No mentioning of community gardens or urban farms could be found in the zoning ordinance.
Does your community have an active garden club, which may include a Master Gardener education program that devotes efforts toward plantings in civic spaces?	X		Eden's Garden Club http://edensgardenclub.com/	Monroe County has Eden's Garden Club.

Table 4. Short Assessment Question	Yes	No	Source	Comments
Does your community have, or is it in the development stages of an entrepreneurship incubator, innovation incubator, kitchen incubator, or similar program?		X	No such organization could be found	No such organization could be found.
Does your community have, or is it planning to develop fiber cable, broadband, or community Wi-Fi?		X	No proof that this is being done could be located.	No proof that this is being done could be located either in the reviewed plans or in general searches.
Does your community have, or is it planning to develop a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line or smaller-scale bus/trolley along a major corridor or fixed route? If so, where will it run?		X	No proof that this is being done could be located.	No proof that this is being done could be located either in the reviewed plans or in general searches.
Is your community implementing complete streets?		X	Michigan Complete Streets Coalition: https://michigancompletestreets.wordpress.com	According to the Michigan Complete Streets Coalition, the City of Monroe has not adopted a complete streets ordinance or resolution.
Do your community's economic development officers understand and practice private-public partnerships as an investment strategy for new development and redevelopment?	X		MP, Chapter 6, Goal #2 (p. 27)	Objective i: "Encourage public-private partnerships to demonstrate innovative approaches to environmental due care leading to economic development"
Is Low Impact Development (LID) the default approach for stormwater management?	X		MP, Chapter 8, p. 4	Goal #7 for stormwater infrastructure: "Mandate water-quality treatment elements consistent with the <i>SEMOG Low Impact Development Manual</i> during the site plan review of any parcel greater than one acre."
Does your community have a green building ordinance, or require submission of a LEED-ND checklist for proposed projects?		X	City Website, Building Department	No discussion of a green building ordinance, LEED-ND checklist or other similar requirements could be found in the City's building department page or in general searches.
Do your community codes permit green roofs and living walls on buildings?		X	City of Monroe Zoning Ordinance	No such permitting could be found in the City of Monroe's zoning ordinance.

Table 4. Short Assessment Question	Yes	No	Source	Comments
Does your community employ Charrette-type public planning sessions for its key centers, nodes and key corridors, or other methods, including through a Community Involvement Plan? (this question relates to the Redevelopment Ready Community Best Practice Review Process)	X		Resilient Monroe!	During the Resilient Monroe planning process, a design charrettes were used as a tool to gain public insight and engagement.
Does your community engage in activities to promote community interaction between merchants and residents in mixed-use areas?		X	No such activities could be found.	While a DDA does exist and could do such activities, no specific mentioning of activities geared towards this end could be found.
Does your community have, or help organize, ride-share, car-share, or bike-share programs?		X	No such programs could be found.	A bike-share program could not be identified and while services like Uber and Lyft operate in nearby Detroit, their service boundaries do not include the City of Monroe.
Does your community participate in a Main Street program, at either the Associate, Selected, or Master level?		X	Michigan Main Street Center: http://www.michiganmainstreetcenter.com/OurCommunities.aspx	Monroe is not listed as a Main Street community by the Michigan Main Street Center at either the Master, Select, Graduate, or Associate levels.
Does your community have high standards for the type and quality of building materials used on all public buildings (especially no to cement block, split block, corrugated metal, vinyl siding, and yes to brick, rock, and cut stone)?		X	Monroe Historic District Commission: http://www.historic-monroe.com/Home.html	Many public buildings are located in the historic district and may be protected if they are older structures, but there is not explicit reference that could be found requiring public buildings to be built or maintained in a fashion similar to this.
Is your community enrolled in the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program? (this question relates to the Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practice Review Process)		X	Michigan Economic Development Corporation	Monroe is not listed by the MEDC as a community currently going through the Redevelopment Ready Communities process.
Total this page:	7	13		
Total from both pages:	19	14		

APPENDIX 4: Public Comments



City of Monroe PlacePlan Visioning Session (Downtown Alleyway) – March 12, 2015

Feel free to use space on the back to continue discussion

What are you proud of about the project site and immediate area?

- Current businesses/bars have improved stores in this part of Downtown lately (5)
 - Alley is adjacent to businesses investing in Monroe
- Nothing yet related to the alley
- Riverfront parking (6)
 - Convenient Parking
 - Connection to Riverfront Parking
 - Free Parking
- Connecting South end of Downtown to the River
- Historical Museum (2)
- Connection to the Riverfront (3)
 - MLK Bridge
- River Raisin Center for the Arts (6)
 - Could draw large volumes of people and pedestrian traffic on a consistent basis.
- Jack's Bicycle Shop (2)
- Cute shops
- Durock's Appliance
- Open Spaces
- Johnson Phinney Building
- Art Studios (4)
- Monroe News (2)
- Susie's Sweets and Eats (2)
- Art
- Dense collection of cultural assets
- Business and Commercial Presence
- Museum (4)
 - New millage for museum shows community support.
- New Downtown/Riverfront Parking Lot (3)
- Riverwalk (3)
 - Gazebo on Riverfront
- Festivals
 - BBQ (3)
 - Live music concerts
 - Jazz Festival (6)
 - Monroe Art Fair (2)



- St. Mary's Park
 - Bridge
 - Events and planning
 - Picnics
- Agua Dolce (3)
- Redevelopment by the River (3)
 - Riverwalk (River Raisin Esplanade)
 - Connection to the River (2)
- Hotel Sterling (3)
- Day Spa
- Central Downtown Location
- Creates Corridor from St. Mary's Park to the theatre
- Theatre (4)
- Connectivity (2)
 - Potential convenience to walk from Point A to B
 - Alleys are accessible and cut from one area to the next.
 - Alleys bridge the gap amongst businesses.
 - Connects downtown East and West from the Parking Lot.
 - Connects to activities available downtown (2)
 - Most buildings are connected underground (potential to develop this further) (2)
- Unique space behind the Book Nook
- Unlimited possibilities/potential (3)
 - "Remoldable canvas"
- New Businesses opening in the area.
- Landscaping that has been done.
- Businesses on Front St.
 - Restored facades on Front Street (2)
- History of Downtown (5)
 - Historic preservation
 - Historic buildings
 - Historic architecture
 - Custer Battlefield
- Size of Downtown
- Cleanliness
- Infrastructure reinvestment
- Gutsy investors
- Upper floor residential.
- Quirky local shops
- Labor Museum (2)
- Potential for More Parking
- Contains are for courtyard in alley
- Monroe Tourism/Patterson's Place

- Calendar Bldg.
- National Park

What are you sorry about for the project site and immediate area?

- Hope that this plan doesn't move slowly.
- Very hard for new businesses to deal with the regulations of the city.
 - Poor municipal cooperation.
- No murals on building sides (2)
 - Alley needs art.
- Trash overflows from dumpsters. (7)
 - Dumpster divers
- Poor property maintenance (8)
 - Front facades (3)
 - Rear facades poor
 - Poorly cared for neighborhoods
 - Blight in surrounding neighborhoods. (2)
 - Owners of properties seem not to care about the neighborhood.
 - Absentee building owners (2)
 - Poor existing alley maintenance
 - Vacant storefronts
 - City needs to crack down on absentee owners before this project.
- Power lines (5)
 - Excessive cost to relocate utilities.
 - Lines in disrepair
- Poor bike route safety
- Dark (Poor Lighting) (10)
- No anchor store (3)
- Appears unsafe (7)
 - Alley has a negative connotation, especially for females.
- Lack of Directional signage (2)
 - Need walking map
- Lack of consistent signage (3)
- Dirty (4)
 - Poor looking area
 - Ugly
 - Unkempt
 - Litter
 - Specifically cigarette butts
- Concern about the alley behind McGeady's
 - Poor upkeep

- Section 8 renters
 - Low income housing?
- More communications about events
- Little to do
- Need more good stores
- Graffiti (2)
- Potholes (2)
- Garage (7)
 - Random Shopping Carts
- Pet waste
- Narrow
 - A few more feet would make a huge difference.
- Property acquisition
- Businesses not currently set up to take advantage of proposed changes.
 - No alley entrances to businesses
 - Expense of developing alley entrances
 - Backs of stores are not attractive
- Zero businesses appealing to young people.
- Crime (2)
 - Drugs (2)
- Homelessness issues
- Lack of connectivity
- Multidemographically unappealing.
- Lack of pedestrian draw. (2)
- Pedestrian street crossings are hazardous
 - Need tunnel from Downtown parking to locations. (2)
- A lot of bike traffic downtown?
- Lack of willingness to compromise
- No place for parking or dumpsters
 - Lack of parking for apartments
 - The Parking Red Herring
 - 1 hr parking timeframe is a big limitation
- Lack of landscaping (2)
- More bike racks needed
- Not enough funds to maintain/invest (2)
 - Worried about ability to maintain in the future
- Accessibility for all users.
- Lack of access to proposed site
- Flowering trees gone
- Lack of outdoor gathering spaces

- Need to adapt spaces.
- Need to focus on utility, not aesthetics. (2)
 - Keep room for delivery trucks
 - Know that business owners work
- Bar related traffic along Front St.
- Snow removal

What would you like to see as you float over the site in a hot air balloon 15 years from now?

- Green Roofs (2)
 - Rooftop atriums
- Eco-New Tech “Green” Alleyscape
- Busy streets and sidewalks (5)
 - More people walking through (8)
 - Youth, family and young adults downtown (3)
 - Many more people enjoying Downtown. (3)
 - People using the space, specifically the more unique features.
 - Lots of foot traffic through the Downtown.
 - A main street USA town full of unique businesses and places to see.
- A nice 8 city block area slowed down to have pedestrian shopping and walking, where people visit us they say wow and cannot wait to come back.
- More residents
- No trash (2)
 - Clean and safe neighborhood.
 - Clean active spaces (2)
 - Clean and well maintained businesses
- Back entrances to stores (2)
- Themed walkways
 - French corridor with awnings at back entrances with hanging signage
- More pedestrian friendly walkways
- Inviting places to sit (2)
 - Patio/Courtyard Seating
 - Respite areas
 - Picnic spot
- Window Boxes
- Painted sidewalks with chalk
- Pet friendly
- Picnic tables
- Benches (2)
- Well lit (14)

- Old fashioned lighting
- Cool lighting
- Rope lighting (3)
- Lighting as an accent
- Lights across the street on Front
- Twinkle lights
- Solar panel lights (2)
- Lights across rooftops
- LED lighting
- Green Wall
- Archways Entries (5)
- Art (3)
 - Murals (6)
 - Sculptures
 - Galleries
 - Statues
- Maps (2)
 - Maps showing businesses and historical places
 - Map Kiosk (2)
- Greenery (4)
 - Trees/Shrubs (4)
 - Nice landscaping
 - Flower beds – well maintained (6)
 - Green space
- Greenway
- Farmer's Market
- History
- Every store filled, no vacant spaces (4)
- Alleys used for events and festivals (2)
- Greenspaces/Parks being used (2)
- Clean paint
- Full parking spots
- Develop outdoor space behind Book Nook.
- Businesses with patios and Café style seating. (2)
 - Outdoor space – pocket – café
- An entire loop linking the proposed corridor to the alley to the east of Monroe St.
- Potential Parking Garage
- Site being used expanded upon.
 - Develop the alley all the way to 5th Street.
- Quality signage (3)

- Ex. “Alley St.”
- Directional signage
- Allow signage to face the alley (treat alley as a right of way)
- People kayaking down the river
 - Kayaks and canoes (2)
 - Clean River
 - Kayak/canoe dropping point
 - Canoe/kayak facility
- Removal of blight
- Space of commerce and art activity
- Bike traffic
 - Bike routes (3)
 - Bike Racks
- Enlargement of the tree canopy.
- Street closures during festivals.
 - Tents for outside events.
- More restaurants (3)
 - Rooftop access
- Music
- Brick paver look (2)
- Accessibility to all ability levels.
- Buried utilities. (5)
- Underground (2)
 - Ex. Given: Crystal City Washington DC or Montreal
 - Using the alley as an underground corridor would make this work. The lower levels are the most underused space in the city. (2)
 - There exists underground connections between buildings in the city. Connect them and get elevators or escalators to access this “hidden” space.
- Positive leaders with the ability to work together
 - Less separate organizations working to do the same thing.
 - Less negativity.
- Diversity in attractions
 - No “one trick pony.”
- Tied down to FrenchTown and the Monroe Charter
- Festivals
- Informational kiosks
- Walking tours
- Shoveled roads/alleys
- Wayfinding
- Tie in alley to the River Raisin Heritage Corridor

- Riverfront business utilization
- Alleys have same building materials used – consistency
- Food trucks/open markets
- Addressed garbage pickup in alley
- Build-in maintenance plan
- Purchase and development of empty lot into short term parking for existing Monroe St. businesses
- Newly asphalted drive

Monroe PlacePlan Design Workshop (Alley Site) – April 23, 2015

Feel free to use space on the back to continue discussion

What do you like about the designs presented today?

- Mixed use over parking garage
- Covered pavilion
- Flowers and lighting
- Emulated other well-known places with character
- Moving farmers' market near waterfront
- New development
- Integration of municipal services (2)
- Paving/permeable reuse/bury utilities (2)
- Connection with river
- Interior infill building
- Murals
- Blade signs over rear doors
- Gross walkway between theater and museum
- Garbage in one spot/compacted trash containers
- Green well
- Pedestrian oriented

What do you dislike about the designs presented today?

- Be more conscious of historic landmarks – walls should not be painted (2)
- Parking at riverfront – underutilized riverfront – consult MDOT
- Museum greenspace should be historic park
- Too many materials – adds complexity
- Want to ensure a mix of peds and vehicles
- Overhead gateways arches are overused
- Put people first – no driving access (2)
- First floor retail should be utilized instead of first floor parking

What improvements/additions would you like to see regarding the designs presented today?

- Blend the two plans

- Lighting that adds to character (2)
- Preserve brick
- Alley should be covered arcade with farmers' market at end with café by Knights of Columbus hall
- Use American tree/plant species and flowers
- Connect the nodes
- Go bigger in planning
- More local artwork and statues
- Unique signage
- Rethink and emphasize river in plans
- Consider more what land is owned by whom and how this effects plans
- Connect to other parts of city/master plan
- Build mixed use parking/retail/condos between RRCA and parking lot
- Schools should be involved somehow
- More out of the box ideas
- Change "corny" name of arch
- More density
- Destinations map

