

JAMESTOWN URBAN DESIGN PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



GOODY
CLANCY

ARCHITECTURE
PLANNING
PRESERVATION

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF
JAMESTOWN, NEW YORK

AUGUST 2006

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

This plan outlines a vision for renewing downtown Jamestown, identifies the actions needed to accomplish the vision, and defines the roles and responsibilities of the institutions and people who can make it happen. It grew out of an extraordinarily collaborative effort involving city government, business and community leaders, foundations, downtown businesses and city residents.

A strong and healthy downtown is increasingly recognized as a key contributor to community identity and economic success. Regions with strong and appealing urban centers can better attract private investment, encourage new businesses formation and support residential growth.

The vision outlined here paints a picture of what downtown Jamestown could be and what it must become if it is to serve as the economic, social and environmental catalyst that the region needs. The plan combines interrelated initiatives designed to be undertaken in phases over several years.

The challenges Jamestown faces in addressing downtown's significant problems have been extensively documented in prior planning efforts. As is the case in similar communities across the nation, its retail base has declined over three decades in the face of competition from regional malls and newer retail offerings. Yet, unlike many downtowns that

are rebounding after years of decline, the continued economic weakness of the regional economy—reflected in a declining population and loss of manufacturing employment—poses special challenges.

These problems have received widespread attention, but downtown's notable successes and resiliency have received less public recognition. From the opening of the Reg Lenna Civic Center in 1990, to establishment of the Jamestown Savings Bank Ice Arena, downtown has incorporated new activities and uses. Other notable successes include the founding of the Robert Jackson Center, several ongoing efforts related to Lucille Ball, proposals to establish a Children's Museum, and the recently completed transformation of a former Ames store into the Riverwalk Medical Complex.

Reg Lenna Civic Center



In order to succeed, downtown must continue to be reshaped—in ways that reflect national trends favoring expansion of cultural, educational, recreational, entertainment, and residential uses and waterfront renewal—and to tap specific regional opportunities and growth trends associated with expanded tourism. Its success will also depend on continued strength as an office and employment center.



Robert H. Jackson Center



Jamestown Savings Bank Ice Arena



The Chadakoin River opens to a large and underutilized basin near the Board of Public Utilities facility. The basin offers substantial opportunities for waterfront recreation that can bring new life to the city's core.



'City Life' on Third Street has grown with numerous new programmed events by DJDC and the opening of a few new retail stores, yet the downtown retail base remains weak.



PUBLIC PROCESS

The Urban Design Plan and associated design guidelines have been developed through a process that engaged the Jamestown community as a whole. Beginning with more than 50 informational interviews with downtown stakeholders—including residents, businesses, developers, community leaders, foundations, agency representatives, and others—and continuing through a series of public workshops and meetings, the year-long planning process has benefitted directly from diverse community insights. These public forums and discussions have been supplemented by presentations to the City Council, Planning Commission, BPU Board, foundation boards,

and other interested groups. The plan continued to evolve over the course of a year in response to comments and understanding gleaned from discussions at these meetings.

Turning the vision described in this plan into a reality will require the financial support of committed partners at the state and federal levels to invest in the infrastructure and projects essential to creating an economically sustainable downtown for the region. But with this support, and with the full commitment of the diverse partners who came together to create the plan, Jamestown stands ready to capture the opportunity.

URBAN DESIGN PLAN

By preserving the best from its past, addressing current challenges, and capturing emerging opportunities, downtown Jamestown can establish itself as a vibrant and attractive urban center for the region. The benefits of an attractive, vital, and physically cohesive downtown extend well beyond the boundaries of Jamestown itself, enhancing the attractiveness of the entire region as a center of business, tourism, and as a place to live.

No single action by itself can restore downtown's vitality. Such a transformation can only grow out of multiple coordinated activities over time, and only a combination of public- and private-sector investment can preserve downtown's strength as an employment center, while enhancing its appeal to regional residents and visitors.

This change will not occur overnight, but in phases over several years. This plan provides a guiding framework that will ensure that individual initiatives advanced by public, private and nonprofit entities complement each other and reflect an overarching vision for downtown's future. Significant near-term actions—and investment—will be needed to build on the recent community successes that have stemmed disinvestment and decline.

This plan embodies a vision of a downtown that is the region's great urban setting—a place to live, work, and play. It rests on three fundamental initiatives:

- 1 Transform the Chadakoin riverfront into a regional waterfront destination** by developing new public open spaces on the river's banks; introducing water-related activities and events; creating a destination-tourism attraction; building enhanced public access and new connections to the lake; and encouraging residential development.
- 2 Strengthen the downtown core through a combination of new development, streetscape improvements and programming.** Promote new residential development, create an arts-and-heritage trail, complete the West End redevelopment initiative, build connections to the riverfront, improve the design of downtown gateways, and improve traffic and circulation.
- 3 Adopt a series of design guidelines that promote higher design standards for new development to ensure compatibility with Jamestown's character and architectural heritage.** Standards will be implemented through the City's design revile process to ensure that even modest and incremental changes downtown are in harmony with the community's vision and contribute to the creation of a more vital and cohesive place.



The Chadakoin River today



The vibrant waterfront along Montreal's Lachine Canal is a compelling mix of industrial structures and new public destinations and open spaces.



Swan boats attract families and visitors to Boston's Public Garden, bringing the area to life.

illustrative plan

COMPLETE THE PLAN FOR THE WEST END so that the district becomes a setting for new commercial, cultural, and recreational uses.

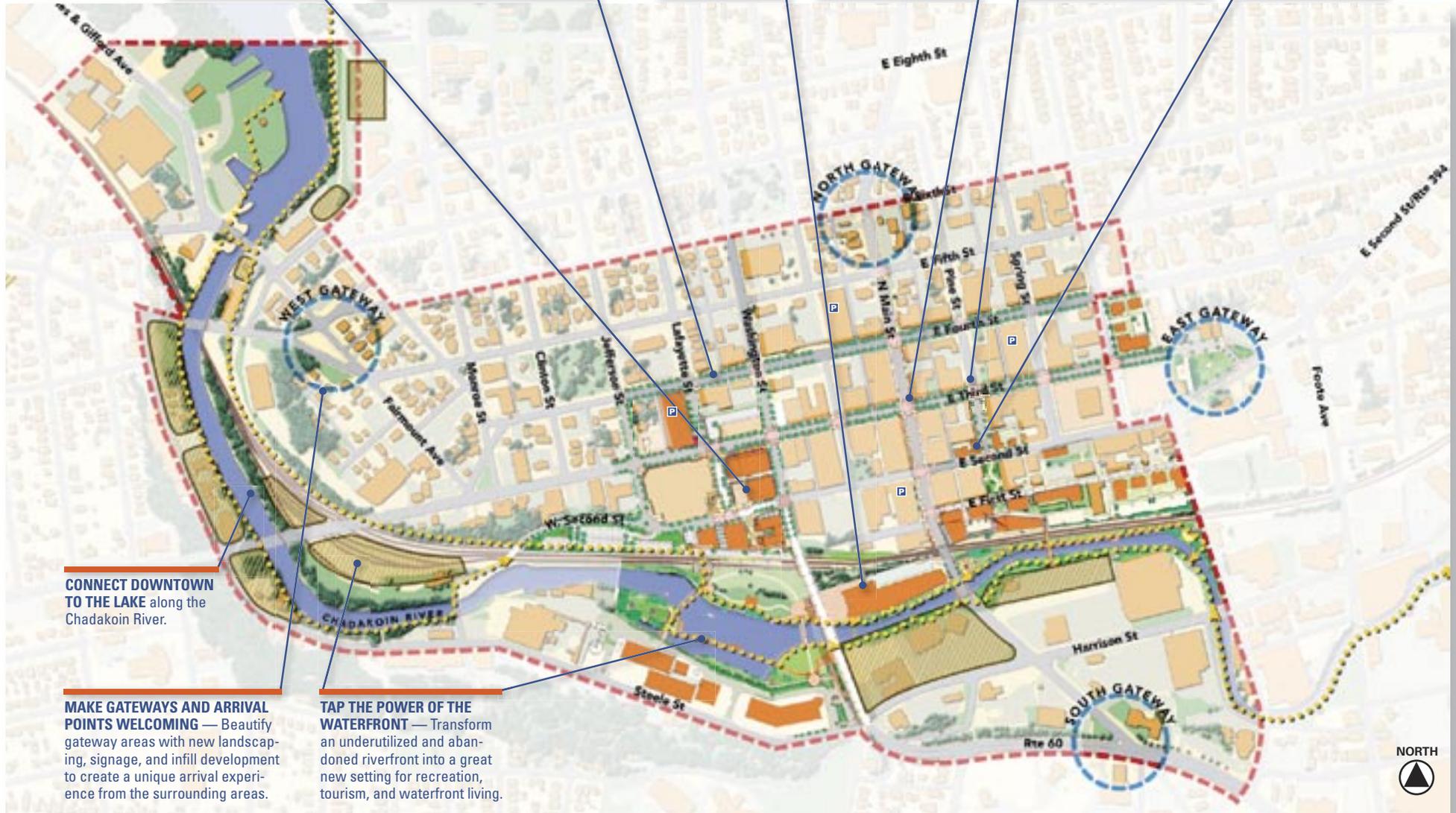
MAKE GETTING AROUND EASIER—Simplify traffic flow within the downtown core to promote access and support walkability. Seek conversions of one-way streets (like Fourth) into two-way thoroughfares.

CREATE A NEW DOWNTOWN VISITOR DESTINATION along the river.

THIRD AND MAIN—Make these streets the region's best urban places.

CELEBRATE JAMESTOWN'S HERITAGE AND ITS VITAL ARTS AND CULTURAL COMMUNITY by developing a downtown trail.

SECOND & FIRST—Incorporate housing and other uses in underutilized buildings and forge new connections to the river.



CONNECT DOWNTOWN TO THE LAKE along the Chadakoin River.

MAKE GATEWAYS AND ARRIVAL POINTS WELCOMING — Beautify gateway areas with new landscaping, signage, and infill development to create a unique arrival experience from the surrounding areas.

TAP THE POWER OF THE WATERFRONT — Transform an underutilized and abandoned riverfront into a great new setting for recreation, tourism, and waterfront living.

the chadakoin

A series of great waterfront places



- ① Jamestown Savings Bank Ice Arena
- ② Restored train station
- ③ New “West End” development
- ④ Reused mill building on Washington—active ground-floor uses and access to river
- ⑤ Surface parking along the rail lines and future rail excursion
- ⑥ New coal-unloading building and pedestrian bridge from the train station—provides access from the West End to the river
- ⑦ New waterfront and public event/performance area
- ⑧ Expanded Riverwalk Park with small-boat dock and canoe/kayak launch
- ⑨ New connection to the “Island Park”
- ⑩ Landscaping improvements for Island Park
- ⑪a BPU future expansion (multiple phases)
- ⑪b South bank landscaping
- ⑫ Watersheet activities—boats, canoes, pontoons, etc.
- ⑬ New south bank “Basin Park”—connecting Jamestown’s southern neighborhoods to the waterfront
- ⑭ Resurfaced Washington Street bridge—widened sidewalks, new lighting and viewing platforms to river
- ⑮ Iconic new interpretive stair tower—connects downtown to the river and creates a new landmark for Jamestown
- ⑯ Major waterfront attraction—Brings families, downtown employees, and regional tourists to the riverfront and is the heart of the Riverwalk park system
- ⑰ North bank Riverwalk park
- ⑱ South bank Riverwalk park
- ⑲ North Main Street
- ⑳ Existing Arcade Building
- ㉑ El Greco site (potential new housing and arts uses)
- ㉒ New access between north and south banks via a new pedestrian bridge
- ㉓ New access to Riverwalk via the existing rail underpass
- ㉔ New “in-town” housing can be accommodated on many sites in downtown
- ㉕ The Second Street area is a prime location for new housing
- ㉖ Continued enhancements—including streetscape improvements and programmed activities—make Third Street the region’s urban “Main Street”
- ㉗ Streetscape improvements on Third Street should extend east to the high school and enhance the visual qualities of the existing park, becoming the eastern “gateway” to downtown

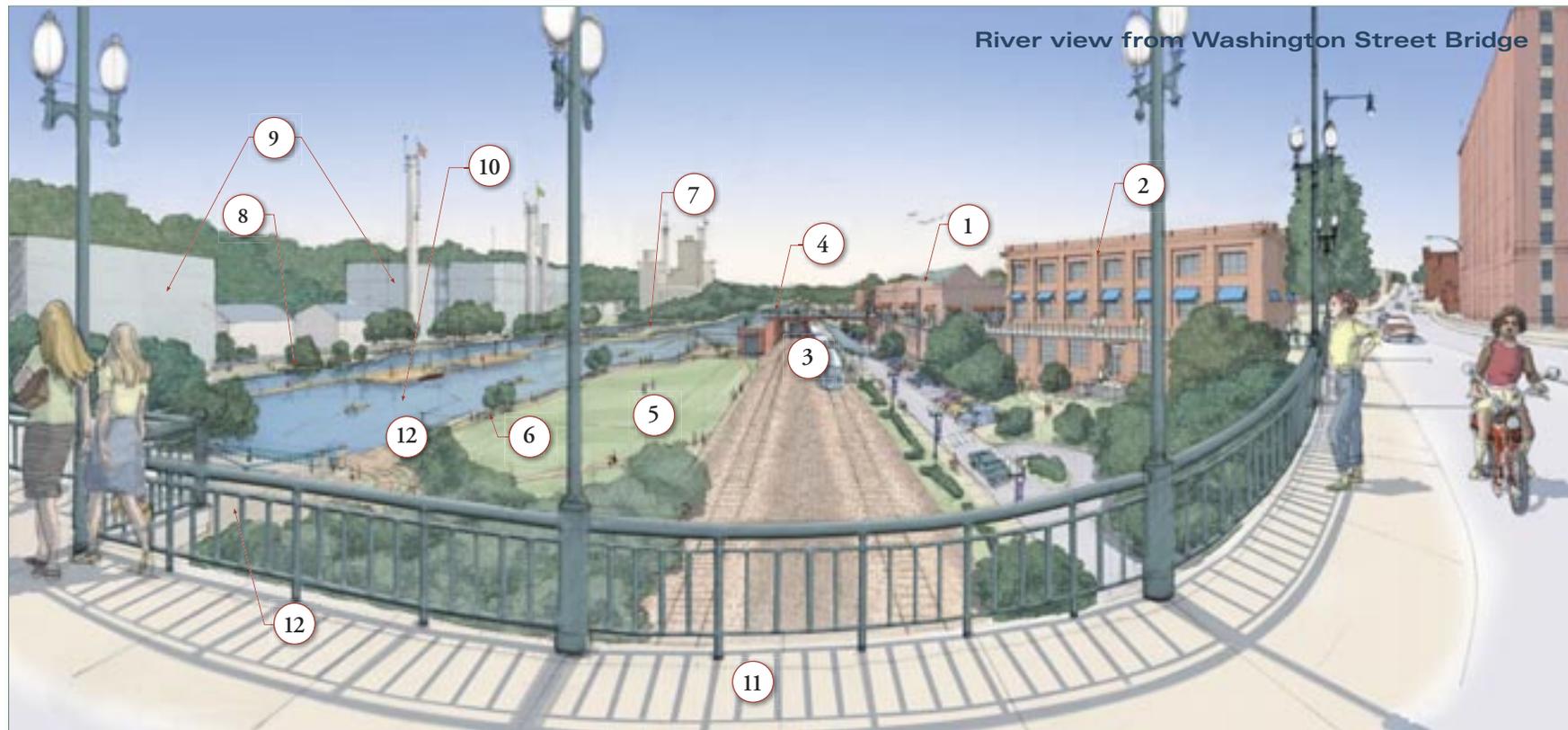


FIELD OF VIEW IN AERIAL

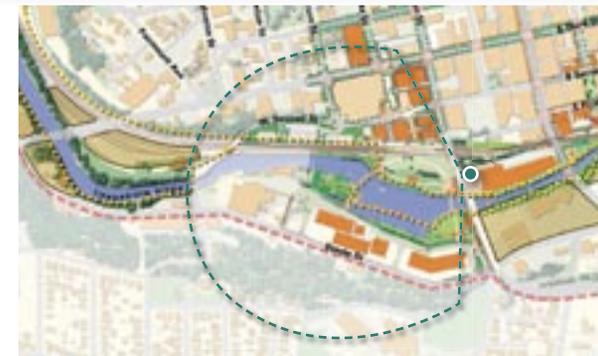
- ㉘ Fourth Street is converted to two-way traffic and has angled parking for downtown shoppers, workers, and visitors
- ㉙ Future development should fill in vacant sites and surface parking lots to “build out” the downtown core and create new destinations on Third Street
- ㉚ Coal chute linking rail line to BPU facility

waterfront power

A celebration of the industrial past



- ① Restored train station
- ② Reused BPU building on Washington—active ground-floor uses, access to river
- ③ Surface parking along the rail lines and future rail excursion
- ④ New coal-unloading building and pedestrian bridge from the train station—provide access from the West End to the river
- ⑤ Re-use opportunities for rail yards—short term/ open space; long term/a unique waterfront development site
- ⑥ Expanded Riverwalk Park—used for performances, festivals, and events
- ⑦ New bridge connection to “Island Park”
- ⑧ South bank landscaping
- ⑨ BPU future expansion
- ⑩ Watersheet activities—including boats, canoes, kayaks, paddle boats, model boating, floating art, and pontoons
- ⑪ Resurfaced Washington Street bridge—widened sidewalks, new lighting and viewing platforms to river
- ⑫ Iconic new interpretive stair tower—connects downtown to the river and creates a new landmark for Jamestown



● VIEWPOINT OF PERSPECTIVE

KEY FACTORS FOR DOWNTOWN'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS

The formula for downtown's economic success is simple: it must attract more people to live, work, and play downtown; and it must offer them a great experience in a lively, attractive, and cohesive urban environment. Every downtown initiative should contribute to accomplishing one or more key goals that will lead to success:

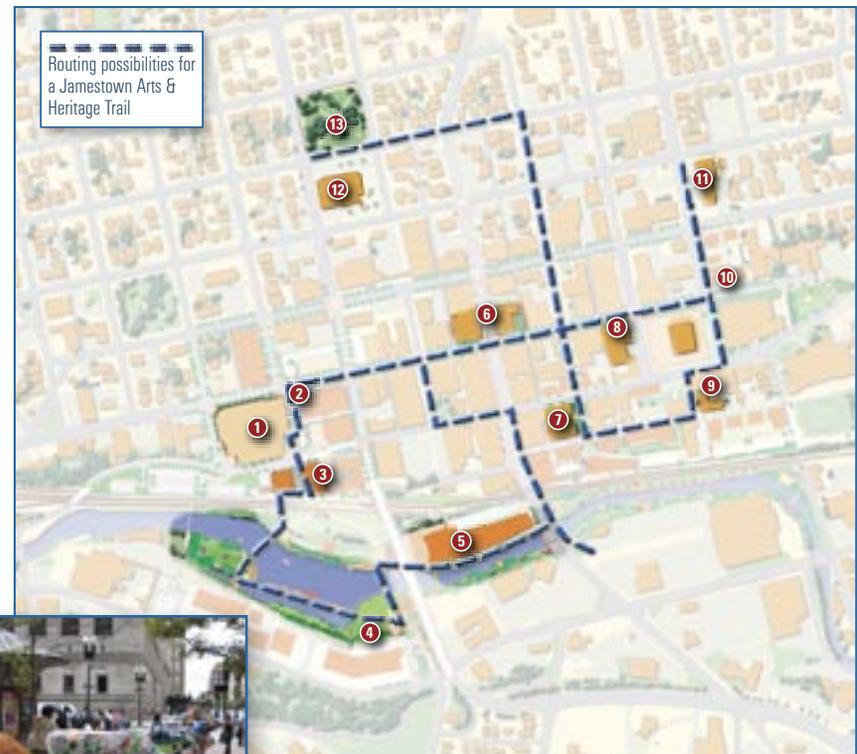
- ✓ **Draw more regional visitors and tourists** downtown to experience the riverfront, cultural and educational attractions, restaurants, businesses and other amenities.
- ✓ **Attract more people to live downtown**—building an increased base of support for downtown businesses, restaurants, and other retail uses.
- ✓ **Enhance downtown's identity as an appealing urban environment.** The design of every individual element—from a sign to a large development or streetscape improvement—should contribute to this urban experience.
- ✓ **Strengthen connections** between each of the parts of the downtown to create a more cohesive place whose parts create a stronger and more unified whole.
- ✓ **Reinvent the riverfront** as a compelling public destination for residents and visitors alike—the hook that draws people downtown. Establish a well-connected riverfront as an integral part of the downtown experience.

Establishment of an arts and heritage trail linking cultural resources illustrates the kind of initiative that will promote economic success for downtown. Among the report's near-term recommendations, such a trail could be implemented relatively quickly and would meet many of the goals on the

checklist of key factors for economic success: draw visitors; reinforce the idea of downtown as an appealing urban environment; strengthen the core's connections to the West End and the riverfront; and contribute to the effort to harness the riverfront as a redefining new component of downtown's identity.

arts & heritage trail

- 1 Jamestown Savings Bank Ice Arena
- 2 "Jamestown Square"
- 3 Train Station
- 4 "River Basin" Park
- 5 "Waterfront Attraction"
- 6 The Lucy/Desi Museum
- 7 The Lucille Ball Little Theatre of Jamestown
- 8 Reg Lenna Civic Center
- 9 The Arts Center
- 10 City Hall Plaza
- 11 The Robert H. Jackson Center
- 12 Sixth Street Park
- 13 The James Prendergast Library



Following the lead of Boston and other North American cities, Jamestown could make temporary arts programming a humorous and enjoyable part of its arts and heritage trail.



IMPLEMENTATION

This plan establishes a guiding framework for the physical development of downtown over the long term. Over the next several months the City of Jamestown, community residents and businesses, foundations, the Downtown Jamestown Development Corporation, BPU, and other stakeholders that participated in creation of the plan must work to develop a schedule and detailed strategy for advancing the plan within the framework of this document.

This dialogue will include further discussion of these key issues:

- **Roles and responsibilities** of each of the parties—for each element of the plan
- **Schedule**, including identification of priority initiatives for the near, mid-, and longer terms
- **Funding strategy** for advancing plan elements

These two pages provide a general overview of the sequence in which this work might occur.

FIRST STEPS

- **Formally adopt the urban design plan.**
 - > In addition to City Council and other bodies, seek formal support from a wide variety of local and regional groups.
- **Create/designate an organization to implement the plan.**
 - > Iron out the details of how this will work and identify who will do what and when they will do it.
- **Create a communications strategy and treat every activity as linked to the plan.**
- **Hold a “celebration” to launch implementation of the plan—September 2006.**
 - > Announce specific implementation commitments.
 - > Identify what’s going to happen over the next year.
- **Commit to a public event in 2007 to review progress, announce achievements, and roll out plans for subsequent years.**
- **Talk about the plan regionally in planning/development circles; build awareness.**
- **Continue to strengthen the relationship between city officials and private/nonprofit entities.**
- **Formalize agreements between plan partners.**
- **Continue to build working relationships with state officials and create working partnerships needed to advance downtown development.**
- **Communicate directly with property owners in areas where the plan anticipates new/different development—explain what the plan means and what it does not mean and look for win-win opportunities.**
- **Secure public/nonprofit control of key parcels.**

MID-TERM FOCUS

- Focus on implementing improvements in the core of downtown. *Target things that can get done in two to three years:*
 - > West End parking area
 - > Train station
 - > Arts & Heritage Trail
 - > Conduct a traffic analysis.
 - > Establish property-tax incentives for new residential development.
 - > Negotiate a transfer agreement for Arts Council properties.
 - > Develop a management program for downtown property.
 - > Set the stage for marketing residential development opportunities.

LONGER-TERM FOCUS

- Transform the downtown riverfront and reconnect the city to the lake, making substantial progress over the next five years. **Near-term actions for accomplishing this mission include advocacy and planning of riverfront renewal as a regional attraction:**
 - > Secure control of key parcels.
 - > Identify a riverfront “champion.”
 - > Develop a vision and strategy for introducing a regional attraction to Jamestown.
 - > Draw up a local waterfront development program (LWRP).
 - > Secure funding for public improvements.
 - > Work with BPU to advance its expansion plan.
 - > Work with the railroad to secure long-term control of multiple parcels.
 - > Develop a brownfields strategy that prioritizes key waterfront parcels.

FROM VISION TO REALITY

Turning the vision described in this plan into a reality will require the financial support of committed partners at the state and federal levels to invest in the infrastructure and projects essential to creating an economically sustainable downtown for the region. But with this support, and with the full commitment of the diverse partners who came together to create the plan, Jamestown stands ready to capture the opportunity.