

Galesburg Downtown Plan

City of Galesburg, Michigan



8/8/23 DRAFT
FOR DISCUSSION ONLY



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Introduction

What is the Downtown Plan? Relationship to Plan Galesburg!

As a part of the Galesburg Master Planning process, the community also created a downtown plan. Much of what makes Galesburg special is centered downtown. The community visions and values related to downtown and the small-town character is epitomized in the downtown.

The Galesburg Downtown Plan is intended to help guide the collaborative efforts of local stakeholders in making downtown a thriving and vibrant center for the community. The plan outlines a variety of action that the community can undertake to help achieve that outcome. The City of Galesburg is fortunate to have a local Downtown Development Authority. This organization was formed on June 3, 2015. The purpose of this plan is to provide a road map for the community with actionable items they can accomplish together to achieve the goals and vision for Downtown Galesburg.

Downtown Galesburg is the heart of the city. Community assets such as the Galesburg Community Park, City Hall, the Galesburg Historical Museum, Galesburg-Charleston Memorial District Library, and local businesses are all centralized in this area. With these key institutions already drawing residents and visitors, the area is a hub for activity and commerce. Signature events such as the Greater Galesburg Days and the Holiday Parade provide fun, family-oriented occasions that bring residents and visitors out to enjoy the area. With thoughtful programs and a lot of community support, Downtown Galesburg can be the vibrant and thriving city center desired by residents and local business.

This plan was developed in conjunction with Plan Galesburg. The Master Plan contains a chapter that identifies goals and action steps particular to the

downtown area and that highlights the importance of the area in relation to the city as a whole. The Downtown Galesburg Plan will incorporate recommendations from that Downtown Chapter but also other Master Plan Chapters that are related to the success of downtown but are not limited to the downtown area. A review of goals in the Community Character and Economic Development Chapters will show that although these goals and actions are not limited to the geographic boundaries of the established downtown, they are important to the success of Downtown Galesburg. By including all of the goals and actions steps for the city that will impact the downtown into one document, users will not need to refer back to the Master Plan to find recommendations and goals that impact the downtown.



How Will this Plan be Used?

The Galesburg Downtown Plan was developed to assist the Downtown Development Authority in achieving its Mission and Vision. In addition, it will also serve as a resource for city officials, property owners, and prospective developers to use as they make decisions in the downtown to ensure their plans and projects are consistent with the established and future goals of the DDA.

The DDA and local stakeholders should work together to improve and revitalize Downtown Galesburg. The activities and steps outlined in this Plan are a tool to guide that process and provide resources to facilitate those efforts.

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC)

RRC is a free technical assistance program offered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) designed to help communities incorporate best practices in planning, zoning, and economic development to encourage redevelopment and new investment. MEDC Community Development also uses RRC as a prioritization factor when determining investments through their programs.

www.miplace.org

Communities that fully align with the program's best practices can become RRC Certified which can result in additional resources and benefits. The City of Galesburg has been engaged with RRC since September of 2019 and is currently working through the Essentials path certification process.



Throughout Downtown Galesburg Plan, this symbol indicates an item that fulfills a Redevelopment Ready Communities expectation for the Essentials Level of the program. The number within the circle refers to the Best Practice number as listed in the *Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practices Handbook*, September 2022.



This Downtown Plan has been developed to meet the expectations of the Downtown Plan Best Practice

CRITERIA: The governing body has adopted a downtown or corridor plan.

ESSENTIALS EXPECTATIONS:

- ☒ The downtown or corridor plan identifies development area boundaries.
- ☒ The downtown or corridor plan clearly identifies priority projects.
- ☒ The downtown or corridor plan includes mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development elements.
- ☒ The plan is accessible online.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) manages the development, redevelopment, and continuing improvement of Downtown Galesburg's business district, with a primary focus on its economic and physical revitalization. It preserves and enhances the business district through a broad range of projects, with a current focus on fulfilling requirements of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Program.

Galesburg DDA Mission

"To promote a vigorous downtown business and residential district while retaining and enhancing a friendly 'Main Street' atmosphere."

Galesburg DDA Vision Statement

"To be recognized and respected as a premier community in Southwest Michigan."

<https://galesburgddami.wixsite.com/galesburgdda>



Galesburg Vision & Values

As downtown is a central part of the City of Galesburg, the Plan Galesburg Vision and Values are also important guiding principals to be used in the Downtown Plan.

Vision Statement

The City of Galesburg is a small town with a big heart. The community recognizes its economic growth potential through a vibrant downtown, diversity of housing, accessibility to the Kalamazoo River, walkability throughout the community, and connectivity to employment opportunities. As it grows, Galesburg strives to preserve its unique identity and family-friendly atmosphere.

Values

The purpose of Plan Galesburg! and the Downtown Galesburg Plan is to transform the Vision Statement into actionable items that can be completed to create the future Galesburg that the community desires. A close reading of the Vision Statement identifies five core values. These values influenced the plan framework and implementation strategy. Using these community identified values as an umbrella ensures that the plan is designed with the community's overarching vision in mind.

These values in large part are directly related to a vibrant, walkable, and economically sound downtown as the heart of the city.

Locational Opportunities

The City of Galesburg is advantageously located within the region with convenient access to I-94 and 35th Street. This connection allows residents to access services and jobs in nearby communities as well as providing the opportunity for non-residents to enjoy Galesburg. The locational advantages should be promoted through sound planning and marketing of the community.

This relates to downtown as it provides the foundation for growing downtown as a place to attract both residents and visitors.

Safe and Attractive Community

Galesburg recognizes that a vibrant downtown and well-maintained neighborhoods are needed to encourage investment in business and housing developments that are attractive to residents and local businesses and their employees.

Downtown has several buildings in poor condition that are having a negative impact on current and potential investment. These buildings also represent lost opportunities for new business and residential units in the downtown.

Highlights from the Community Character & Preferences Survey...



Pedestrian-Oriented Community Opportunities for Growth

Existing businesses and services in downtown, access to local parks, proximity to the Kalamazoo River, and Kalamazoo River Valley Trail provide the opportunity for Galesburg to create a more pedestrian-oriented community. Improvements in pedestrian and bicycle facilities will create a more connected and attractive community that will support economic growth by retaining and attracting residents and businesses.

This value is critical for the downtown strategy to provide a high standard for quality of place amenities as a key business and residential development and retention tool.

The City is fortunate to have assets that can be utilized to promote growth and development. The excellent regional connectivity, extensive Kalamazoo River waterfront, commitment to a vibrant downtown, public infrastructure, and available land and buildings are all attractive features that can attract property owners and developers to invest in Galesburg.

Opportunities for development and revitalization in the downtown are important components of the city's overall growth strategy. A vibrant and active downtown is important for not only for the businesses and residents in the downtown, but for the entire community as it represents the social and economic hub for the city.

Small-Town Charm

The residents of Galesburg are proud of their community and its history. They embrace the sense of community that living and doing business with neighbors and friends provides and want to ensure that same spirit remains as the city grows and develops.

Downtown represents much of what people refer to as the "small-town charm" of Galesburg. The Main Street development type, local businesses, and historic buildings give Galesburg much of its character and aesthetic appeal. Along with events and programs held there, the Galesburg spirit is on display in downtown.



How Was this Plan Developed?

The Downtown Galesburg Plan was developed in conjunction with the Plan Galesburg! update to the existing 2012 Galesburg Master Plan. During this process, current community data was gathered and analyzed and public input was solicited on a series of topics including Downtown, Community Character, and Economic Development, all of which are central to a strong and vibrant downtown. For this reason, the action steps associated with the goals for those chapters of Plan Galesburg! are the basis for the actions outlined in the Downtown Galesburg Plan.

In addition to the general engagement and public input process for the development of Plan Galesburg, the Galesburg DDA also met to discuss the Downtown Galesburg Plan recommended actions. The Draft Plan was provided to the DDA for review and comment. After incorporating those comments, the plan was finalized and adopted by the DDA.

In accordance with RRC best practices, the final Downtown Galesburg Plan will be uploaded to the DDA's web page and made available to the public.

This Plan was developed through the following four phases:

SEPTEMBER 2022 - JANUARY 2023

1. Discovery

The Discovery Phase included identifying and reviewing previously prepared planning reports and collecting current data to analyze demographics, market, and physical conditions for Galesburg. Information was collected through a community survey, field reconnaissance, inventories, interviews, and publicly available databases. This phase provided a detailed assessment of the existing conditions, influencing factors, and future projections.

Review of the 2012 Master Plan included in-depth discussions with Steering Committee members about the relevancy of the Vision, Values, and Goals from that document to Plan Galesburg!.

Project Kick-off and Community Tour | September 2022

Steering Committee 2012 Plan Review Survey | October 2022

Steering Committee Meeting | November 2022

Community Survey | November 2022–January 2023

JANUARY - MAY 2023

2. Visioning

The next phase of the process built on the findings from the Discovery Phase by identifying key findings and priorities that are addressed in the Plan. This phase also included establishing the community's Vision and Values that act as the guiding principals for the Plan's recommendations. The planning team and Steering Committee worked together to develop the draft Vision, Values, and Goals for the Plan which were vetted through community engagement in the Framework phase.

Steering Committee Meeting | March 2023

Steering Committee Meeting | April 2023

MAY - JULY 2023

3. Framework

The Framework Phase synthesized the technical analysis of the Discovery Phase with the community input received during the Visioning Phase into the following plan elements:

- Land Use
- Community Character
- Downtown
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Public Services & Municipal Operations
- Transportation
- Parks, Recreation, & Natural Resources

The community was invited to review and provide feedback on the draft Vision, Values, and Goals for the Plan at a public open house and through another community survey.

Public Open House and Vision, Values, and Goals Survey | May 2023

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Focus Group | May 2023

Steering Committee Meeting | May 2023

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2023

4. Action

During the Action Phase, the planning team finalized the master plan document. This included integrating summaries of all plan processes and elements into an accessible document for both print and digital distribution to the public. Drafts of the Plan were reviewed with the Steering Committee and posted on the City of Galesburg website for public review.

The Galesburg Downtown Development Authority formally approved the Plan on:

_____, 2023

The Galesburg City Council adopted the final Plan on:

_____, 2023

After adoption, leaders and stakeholders of Galesburg should actively work to implement and complete the goals and action steps outlined in the Plan.

Steering Committee Meeting | May 2023

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Focus Group | June 2023

Draft Plan Open House | _____ 2023

Plan Adoption at City Council | _____ 2023



Engaging Galesburg

The Plan Galesburg and Downtown Galesburg Plan shared the same active and robust community engagement process. This involved multiple opportunities for the public to engage with their neighbors and the planning team at different phases in the process and to provide input related to their shared strategy for the future. The findings of the Discovery and Visioning Phases provided valuable information to the project Steering Committee and informed the Plan framework.

Working closely with the Steering Committee, the planning team developed a communications and outreach plan. The communications effort included raising general awareness of the process and specific promotional activities associated with all rounds of community engagement. The outreach components focused on leveraging existing networks in the city to maximize participation.

Multiple public engagement techniques were used to give the community the opportunity to speak and share their thoughts. Engagement activities utilized web-based tools, traditional face-to-face and remote interviews, and public meetings to cast a wide net and provide an inclusive atmosphere for stakeholders and community residents. Using the following public engagement efforts, the vision for Galesburg was captured in this Plan:

- Project Webpage
- Steering Committee Meetings (5)
- Online Surveys (2)
- Open Houses (2)
- Interviews
- DDA Focus Group Meetings
- Adoption Process

Plan Galesburg! Steering Committee

The role of the Steering Committee is to build local consensus and support regarding the various topics, approaches, and policies outlined in the master plan. Members of the committee are volunteers and work with the planning consultant, city staff, other local leaders, and the public to gather input throughout the duration of the project.

DDA Focus Group

In addition to the DDA members that were part of the Plan Galesburg! Steering Committee, the full DDA board was also engaged in the creation of the Downtown Galesburg Plan.

Plan Galesburg!

Small Town, Big Heart

It is time to update our City Master Plan and we want to hear from you!

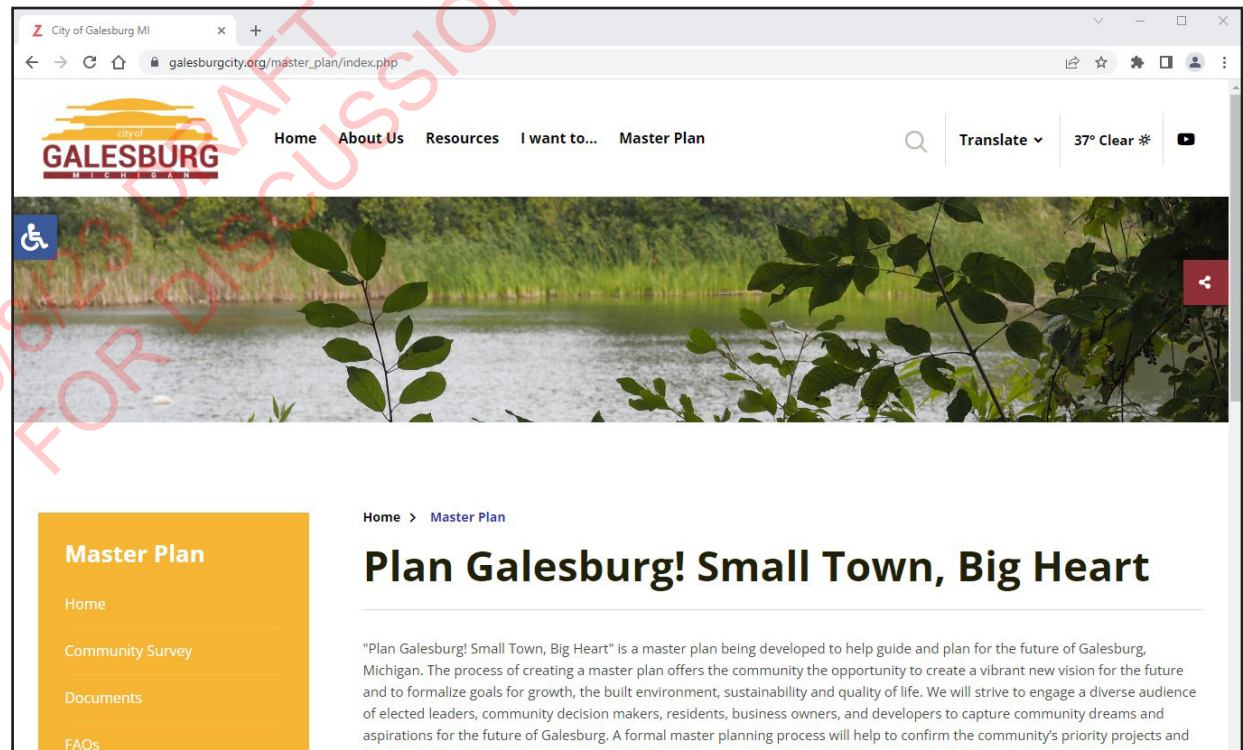
Tell us what is most important to you about Galesburg.

Scan the QR code below or type:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/galesburg-survey
into an internet browser.

Survey closes on January 1, 2023

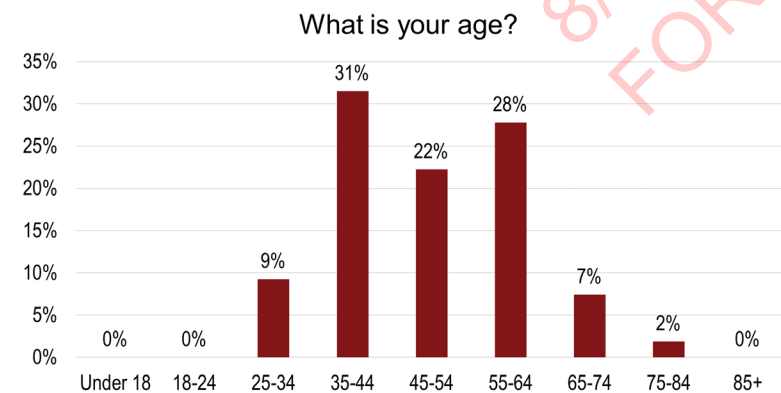
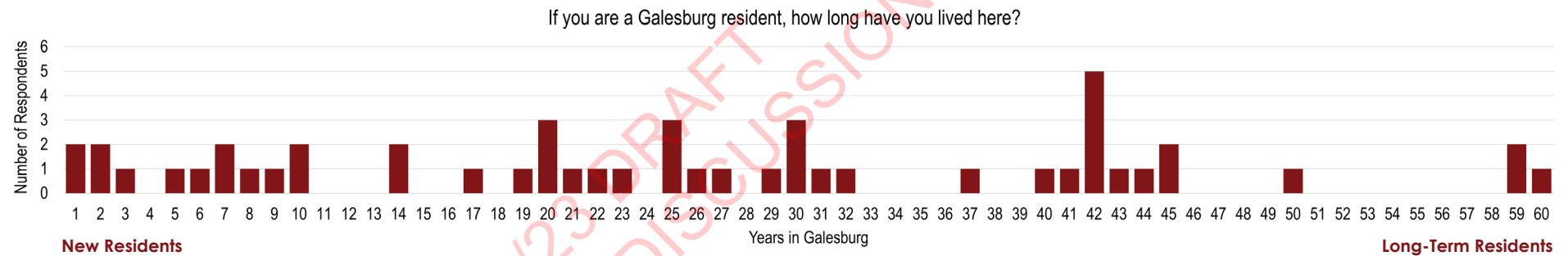
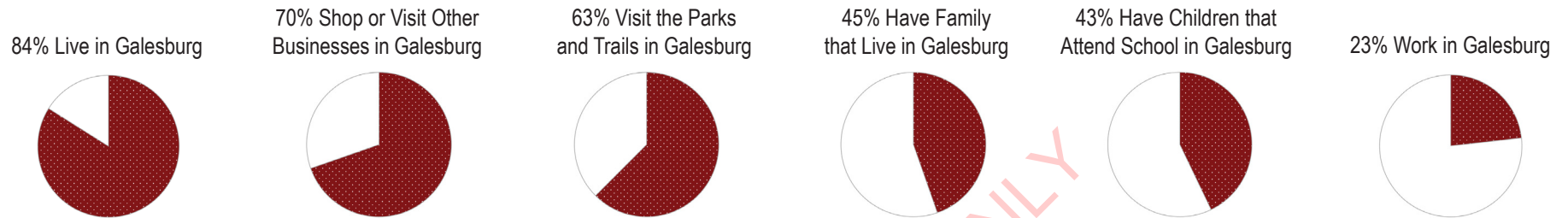
Get more information about the plan at
www.galesburgcity.org/master_plan

**Scan me with
your phone!**

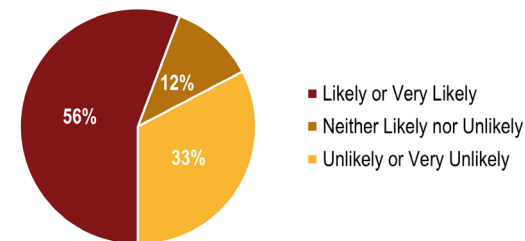


Community Character & Preferences Survey

Early in the planning process, a community survey was conducted to get insight from Galesburg stakeholders. The survey included questions related to community character, satisfaction with the quality of life, importance of various community assets, consumer behavior, and preferences for residential, business, and industrial growth in the city. Fifty-six surveys were submitted between November 8, 2022 and January 13, 2023. Key characteristics of the respondents include:



How likely is it that you would work from home if you had access to reliable internet?



- 63% of respondents work somewhere other than Galesburg:
 - 29% work in Kalamazoo
 - 14% work in Portage
- 21% are retired.
- 13% (7) respondents currently work from home.



Plan Elements Open House

The City hosted a public open house on May 11, 2023 at City Hall. The purpose of the event was threefold:

1. Share results of the Community Character & Preferences Survey;
2. Get feedback on the proposed vision, values, and goals of the Plan; and
3. Confirm the Future Land Use Map.

Twenty-four individuals attended the event, representing City Council members, School Board members, parents, youth, business owners, and other interested residents.

Attendees were invited to participate in conversation with the Plan Galesburg! Steering Committee and the consulting team through face-to-face discussions, written question prompts, sticker voting, and a live digital survey accessible through participants' smartphones. Refreshments and kids activities were provided, as advertised on promotional materials for the event.

In addition to the open house, the DDA held a special meeting to review the Plan Galesburg! process and discuss how it would be used to create the Downtown Galesburg Plan. DDA members reviewed the Downtown Specific goals and action steps and had conversations regarding the organization's priorities.

Vision, Values, and Goals Survey

As part of the Plan Elements Open House, the planning team conducted a survey to collect feedback on the proposed Vision, Values and Goals defined in the Plan. The survey was live digitally during the event and remained open until May 21. Participants were able to submit their responses directly on their smartphones, using a QR code. The planning team also provided a laptop at the open house event and had paper copies of the survey available.

Through this survey, the community was asked to agree or disagree with the Vision Statement for Galesburg. They were also asked to provide confirmation of their agreement or disagreement with the five overarching values that directed the Plan process and content. In addition, stakeholders were asked to prioritize the Plan

Goals using a numerical system of 5-1 with 5 as very high priority, through 1 of very low priority. The weighted average of all responses is what is reflected in the Plan as the goal's priority.

The survey received 16 responses. Results are summarized in the Master Plan chapter of this document and full results are provided in the Appendix.

Draft Plan Review by DDA

The draft Downtown Galesburg Plan was provided to the DDA at their regular meeting on July 20, 2023.



“What is your favorite thing about living in or near Galesburg?”



“What is one thing you would like to see change about Galesburg in the next 20 years?”



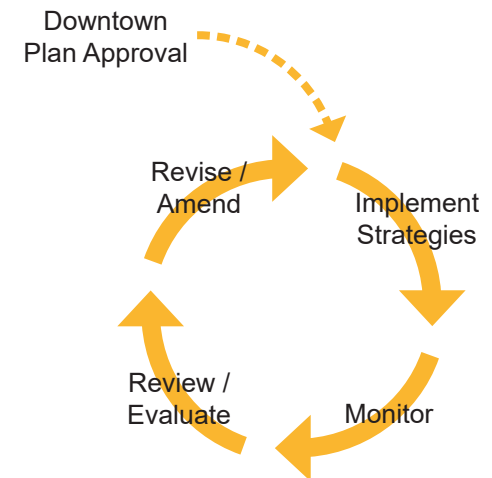
Keeping the Plan Updated

As an area specific plan, developed in concert with the Plan Galesburg! master plan, the Downtown Galesburg Plan uses the goals and action steps outlined in the Master Plan but in a more action oriented and detailed manner.

As with the master plan, it is a good practice for the DDA to review and evaluate progress. The need to update the Downtown Plan should be based on changing needs and accomplishing the actions,

outlined in the Plan. Reviewing and amending the Plan as needed can help to ensure it accurately represents the downtown's existing physical, social, and economic conditions.

An annual assessment of plan progress is important not only to recognize the past year's successes but also to plan for upcoming projects. The DDA and its partners should meet annually to review progress, identify possible barriers for completion, and assign tasks to responsible parties. This process might be effectively paired with an annual report or budget process.



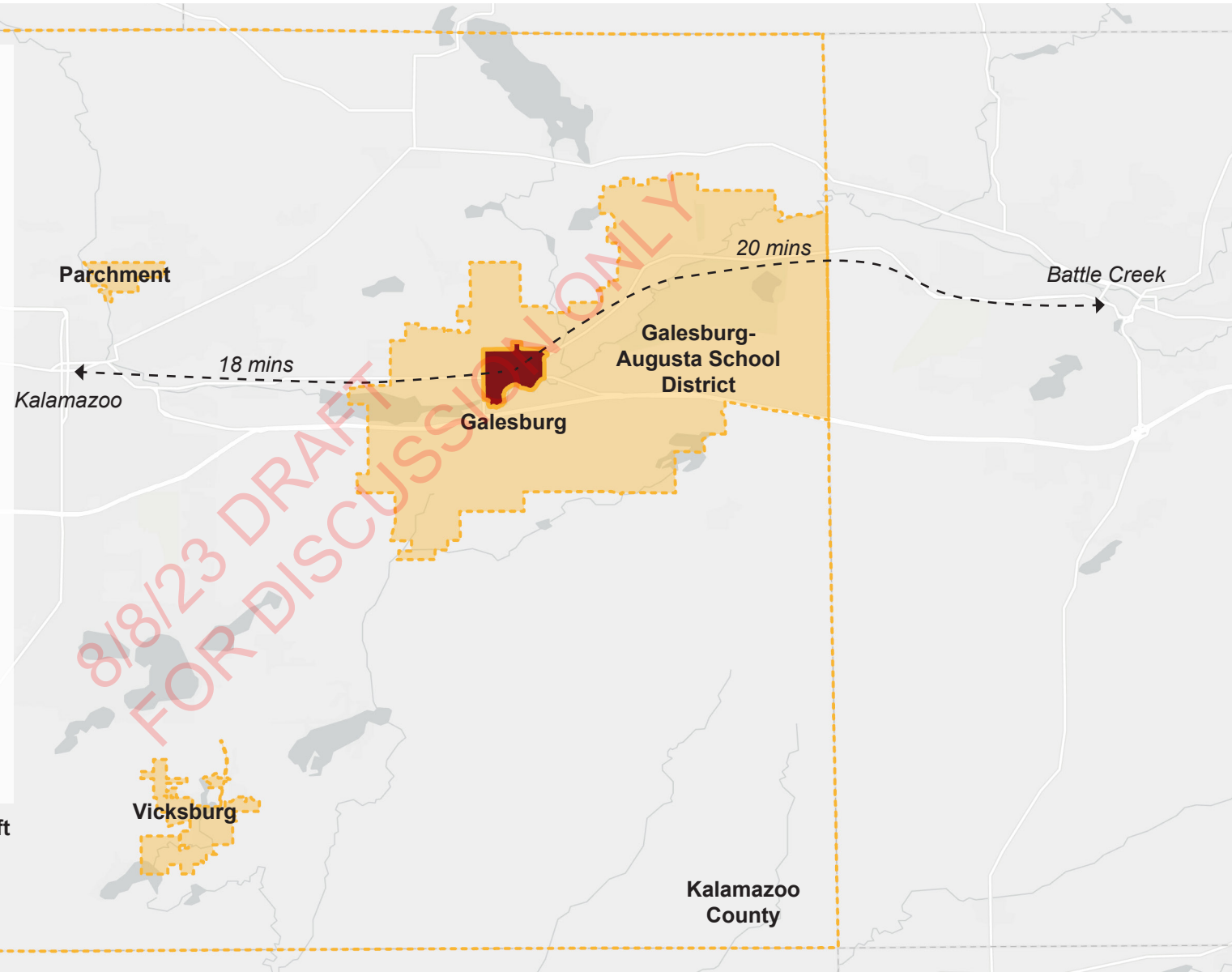
Galesburg In Context

Location

The City of Galesburg is approximately 1.4 square miles, located in eastern Kalamazoo County, in southwest Michigan. The City is 9.5 miles from downtown Kalamazoo, and 14.6 miles from downtown Battlecreek, both via State Road M-96. I-94 is located to the south of the city and has an exit for Galesburg at 35th Street. Comstock Charter Township borders the city on the west and Charleston Civil Township borders on the east.

For data comparison purposes and to place Galesburg into the wider regional context, several nearby municipalities were chosen to analyze alongside Galesburg: City of Parchment, Village of Schoolcraft, Village of Vicksburg, Galesburg-Augusta School District and Kalamazoo County.

As part of the planning process, team members interviewed representatives from the Villages of Schoolcraft and Vicksburg regarding their downtown programs.



A Brief History of Galesburg, Michigan

Provided by Mary Scott and Keith Martin, Galesburg Historical Museum

Galesburg was originally an area where the Native American Potawatomi lived. They farmed and utilized the Kalamazoo River, which eventually makes its way to Lake Michigan. A high point at the top of Schram's Hill just outside of Galesburg provided a strategic view. Many arrowheads have been collected around the area.

The property where Galesburg is located was platted in 1825. The town of Galesburg was established in the early 1830s and called Morton. It was named after Mr. Morton, an early pioneer who lived here for a year before moving to St. Joseph.

Galesburg's first settler who stayed was Isaac Toland, who came on Territorial Road, built a cabin, planted winter wheat, and returned to his home in Ypsilanti. He came back with his family the following spring. The area between Galesburg and Comstock was known as Toland's Prairie.

Morton was renamed Galesburgh after George Gale, an early settler. It was a village as of 1869 and became a city in 1931. The "h" at the end of the town name was dropped since it was the old English spelling. The city celebrated its centennial in 1969 with a parade, celebrations, historical reenactments, and a book of facts and photos.

Galesburg was located on the old Territorial Road (this eventually became US-12), which took pioneer settlers westerly from Detroit to Lake Michigan. As the city directly between Detroit and Chicago, Galesburg once had as many as eleven hotels. Steam railroads were built through Galesburg in 1845 and by 1846, many travelers were able to take the train and stop in Galesburg for a few days. They often wrote postcards about their experiences in the pleasant town.

As for employment, one of Galesburg's biggest industries was the Burgess Seed company, which employed many people. Burgess sent out so many catalogs to customers that Galesburg was able to elevate their post office to a Class 1 U.S. Post Office, which remains busy today.

The New York Air Brake Company, located just outside of the city of Galesburg, was a manufacturer of railroad equipment. It later became Hydreco, which produced hydraulic pumps. It then became Benteler and is now Shiloh. Many Galesburg people have been employed there over the years.

Galesburg's Roelof Dairy, once a small-town dairy, eventually provided milk all over southwest Michigan, including to several universities. Roelof also employed many Galesburg citizens and provided home milk delivery all over southwest Michigan for many years.

The construction of the I-94 highway in 1957 greatly affected Galesburg's population and business. The

highway replaced US-12 and people drove past Galesburg rather than stopping here to shop, eat, and stay.

A statue of General William Rufus Shafter stands in the center of Galesburg. He served in the Civil and Spanish-American wars and is considered Galesburg's most famous citizen. The cabin where Shafter was born was on display at the Kalamazoo Museum for years; one original wall, Shafter's desk, and other memorabilia are now housed in the Galesburg Historical Museum.

Like many small towns, especially those located between large cities, Galesburg has experienced a decline in businesses (for example, stores and restaurants) over the last 20+ years. People tend to drive into Kalamazoo or Battle Creek to shop in larger box stores or eat at a restaurant.

With Plan Galesburg, and the Downtown Plan, we see hope for the future.



Photos courtesy of Galesburg Historical Museum. Left, statue of General William Rufus Shafter in downtown. Right, The Galesburg House, located on the northwest corner of Main St and Pearl St (now W Michigan Ave and Norms Pl).

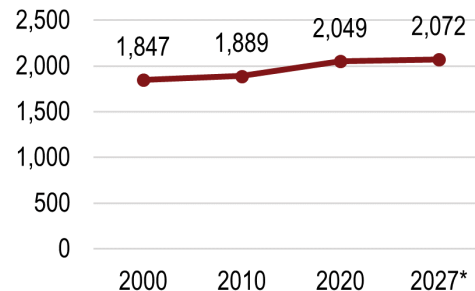


Population & Households

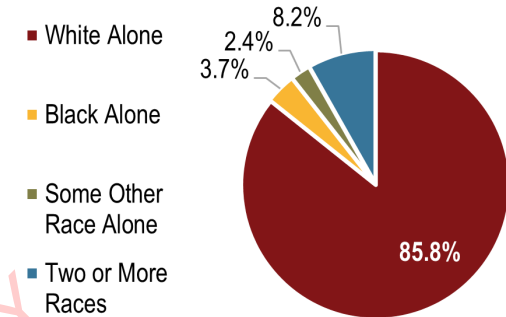
The population of Galesburg has been increasing in recent decades, from 1,847 in 2000 to 2,049 in 2020. This is an 11% increase over twenty years and an annual growth rate of 0.5%. This growth rate is similar to the much larger Kalamazoo County, which grew by about 10% during these years. In comparison, the Galesburg-Augusta School District grew by 20% (1.0% annually) and Vicksburg grew by 37% (1.8% annually) during 2000-2020.

Note: All charts on this page and next, from *ESRI Business Analyst*.
* 2027 data are ESRI projections

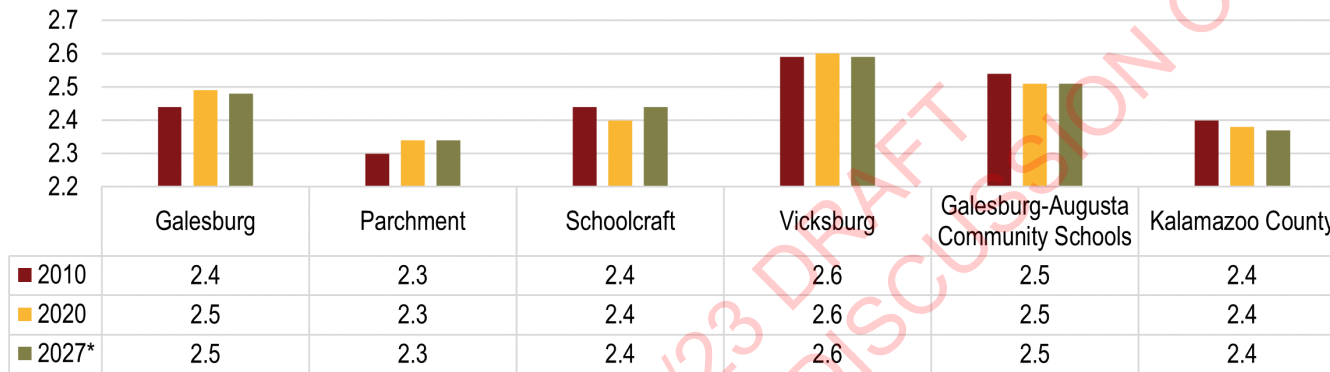
Galesburg Population



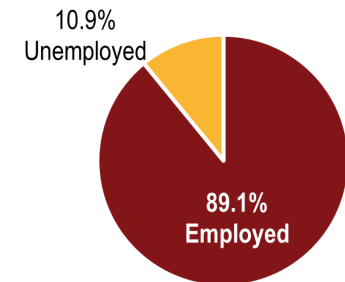
2020 Population by Race



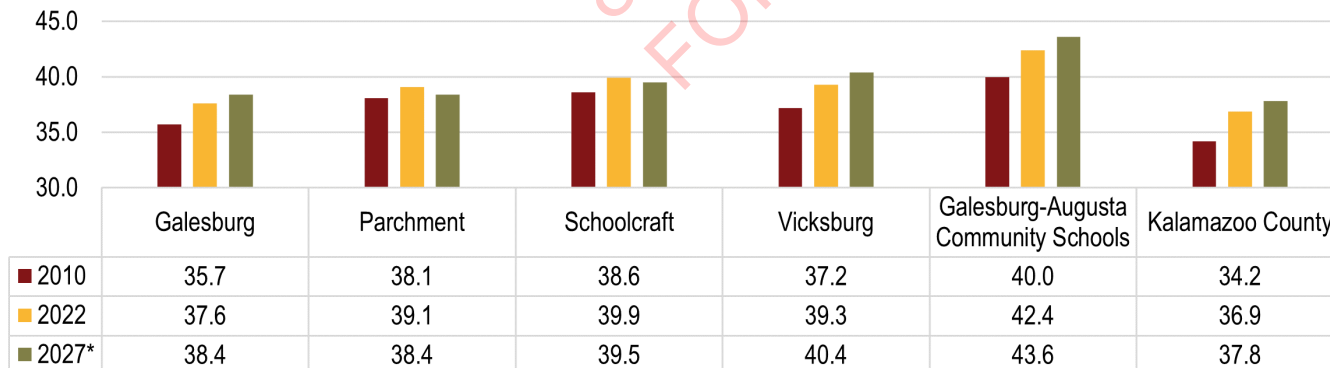
Comparison Communities, Average Household Size



2022 Population 16+ by Employment Status



Comparison Communities, Median Age



According to 2022 American Community Survey data, obtained through ESRI Business Analyst, nearly 11% of Galesburg's population is unemployed. This rate is higher than the comparison communities which range from 7.6% to 3.0%. The City's employment rate was identified as an ongoing issue during preliminary conversations with City staff.

	Galesburg	Parchment	Schoolcraft	Vicksburg	Galesburg-Augusta School District	Kalamazoo County
2000 Population	1,847	1,936	1,572	2,710	6,075	238,603
2010 Population	1,889	1,804	1,500	3,156	7,082	250,331
2020 Population	2,049	1,926	1,466	3,706	7,283	261,670
2027 Population (ESRI projection)	2,072	1,875	1,575	3,783	7,329	263,364
Average Annual Population Growth Rate, 2000-2020	0.5%	0.0%	-0.3%	1.8%	1.0%	0.5%
10-Year Population Percent Change, 2000-2010	2.3%	-6.8%	-4.6%	16.5%	16.6%	4.9%
10-Year Population Percent Change, 2010-2020	8.5%	6.8%	-2.3%	17.4%	2.8%	4.5%
2022 Median Household Income	\$128,629	\$141,667	\$177,105	\$229,555	\$220,461	\$218,373
2022 Per Capita Income	\$20,377	\$30,066	\$31,420	\$36,411	\$33,397	\$37,095



Downtown

Downtown Galesburg is the heart of the City. Community assets such as the Galesburg Community Park, City Hall, the Galesburg Historical Museum, Galesburg-Charleston Library, and local businesses are all centralized in this area. With these key institutions already drawing residents and visitors, the area is already a hub for activity and commerce. Signature events such as the Greater Galesburg Days and the Holiday Parade provide fun, family-oriented occasions that bring residents and visitors out to enjoy the area. With thoughtful programs and a lot of community support, Downtown Galesburg can be the vibrant and thriving city center desired by residents and local business.



Key Findings

- The existing Downtown Development Authority has been revamped in 2023 and is energized to make a positive difference in downtown.
- There is an existing Tax Increment Finance District downtown that can be used to support programs and projects in the area.
- The downtown is a recognized central business district, but additional work is needed to better integrate the business with the street and create a vibrant downtown vibe the community desires.
- Galesburg should capitalize on and market the specialty retail businesses located downtown to the greater region and tourists.
- Some storefronts are not currently oriented to effectively serve pedestrian traffic, but simple changes could rectify that situation.
- There is no clear style or theme to connect and provide a distinct character for downtown. Creating downtown design standards for public improvements could help reinforce the area as a destination and district in the city.
- Community facilities, library, park, trail are all assets that support downtown vibrancy.
- The addition of outdoor spaces for gatherings and events, either public or private, would boost vibrancy in downtown.
- The community has identified a desire for additional housing units downtown.
- Lack of charming streetscape detracts from the “Main Street” feel of downtown but the community supports efforts to make changes to address that concern.
- Movement around downtown is complicated by the crisscrossing of roads, including a state highway (M-96).
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) does not have any significant projects planned in Galesburg that would result in reconstruction or additional streetscape elements.
- Community members have indicated that the downtown is not pedestrian-friendly but there is a desire to correct that condition.
- Adding clear wayfinding for visitors to know where to go (e.g. library, museum, city hall, KRVF, schools, parks) would improve the downtown experience.
- Public or private street art would create a sense of place and notability downtown.
- Promoting Downtown Galesburg as a destination for retail, restaurants, services, and residential development will strengthen the entire city.
- Cross promoting Galesburg with other communities and not-for-profits in the region focusing on tourism, the Kalamazoo River Trail, and nature tourism can assist businesses in the downtown.
- Promoting the connection with Fort Custer Recreation Area and National Cemetery can increase visits to Galesburg and the downtown businesses.



"I especially like adding signs, streetlamps to make downtown look more attractive. I also am a fan of 'wayfinding' adding colorful directional signs to our downtown."

~ Survey Respondent

"I am an advocate for historic building preservation; however, our historic buildings in the City's downtown area have not been kept up and are falling under the Dangerous Building Ordinance, and City is not able to preserve some of these building."

~ Survey Respondent

"I would love to see more festivals/events like Greater Galesburg Day."

~ Survey Respondent

"Our community is in the middle of it all. We have all the tools we need to make it a destination!"

~ Survey Respondent

"We have to build infrastructure, business diversity, encourage maintenance of buildings, curb appeal - all before we want to try and get people to come or stop."

~ Survey Respondent

"I believe that the downtown needs a lot of revamping to attract people to the area."

~ Survey Respondent

"The City tried a farmers market pilot project a few years ago. That could be a fun, interesting attraction for families."

~ Survey Respondent

"The priorities of bringing people to our community cannot come before we have pride in what they are coming to see/do. We need to fix up downtown and have more offerings. Once we do, 'how to find us' becomes much more important."

~ Survey Respondent



Concentrated Development

The RRC recommends that the Zoning Ordinance allow areas of concentrated development to provide pedestrian mobility and a sense of place through context-sensitive design.

ESSENTIALS EXPECTATIONS:

☑ The ordinance allows mixed-use buildings by-right in designated areas of concentrated development.

The ordinance requires one or more of the following elements in concentrated development:

- ☑ Build-to lines
- ☑ Open store fronts
- ☑ Outdoor dining
- ☑ Minimum ground floor transparency
- ☑ Front-facing doorways
- ☑ Parking located in the rear of the building
- ☑ Walk-up windows
- ☑ Public art program
- ☑ Temporary or permanent parklets



Downtown (DT) Goals & Strategies

1 Preserve and revitalize the downtown area as a thriving commercial and residential district

Highest Priority Level (4.63)

Action Step	Time Frame
DT 1.1 — Prioritize the preservation of the historic character of the city.	Short
DT 1.2 — Develop preferred façade guidelines to promote the traditional “main street” aesthetic of downtown.	Mid
DT 1.3 — Stay in contact with MDOT so they are aware of Galesburg's plans, projects, and revitalization efforts.	On-going
DT 1.4 — Adopt a pro-active code enforcement practice in the downtown.	Mid
DT 1.5 — Develop a business retention program to assist downtown businesses.	Mid
DT 1.6 — Promote development of residential units in downtown.	On-going
RRC 1.2 DT 1.7 — Promote Priority Redevelopment Areas in the downtown.	On-going
DT 1.8 — Work with County Offices to better manage and plan for property issues in Galesburg.	Short

2 Utilize community branding and marketing plan to promote downtown and the larger DDA zone for tourism

Mid Priority Level (3.81)

Action Step	Time Frame
DT 2.1 — Market the historic character of the city.	Mid
DT 2.2 — Publish a downtown map showing connections to trails and natural areas.	Mid
DT 2.3 — Provide “wayfinding” in the City to guide motorists and pedestrians to local attractions.	Mid
DT 2.4 — Promote connections to Fort Custer Recreation Area and other regional attractions.	On-going
DT 2.5 — Promote consistent and signature event(s).	On-going



3

Mid Priority Level (3.81)

Action Step	Time Frame
DT 3.1 — Ensure the Zoning Ordinance requires one or more placemaking elements as required in the RRC Best Practices for areas of concentrated development.	Mid
DT 3.2 — Work with businesses to ensure they have a street-facing public entrance door.	Short
DT 3.3 — Add and improve sidewalks throughout downtown.	Mid
DT 3.4 — Identify locations for outdoor seating, and community gathering space(s).	Mid
DT 3.5 — Ensure downtown is adequately illuminated for safety and comfort by using streetlight fixtures and lights from storefronts.	Mid
DT 3.6 — Work with MDOT to develop an acceptable streetscape design.	Mid

4

Mid Priority Level (3.94)

Action Step	Time Frame
DT 4.1 — Hold regular volunteer clean-up days to ensure the area is clean, attractive, and safe for pedestrians.	Mid
DT 4.2 — Provide pedestrian amenities (street furniture, signs, etc.) along downtown corridors and at key focal points in the City.	Mid
DT 4.3 — Develop an "adopt-a-spot" program for downtown property owners to monitor and keep pedestrian amenities clean and in good condition.	Short
DT 4.4 — Add bicycle parking to all public spaces downtown.	Mid

5 Develop a funding mechanism to support façade and streetscape improvements

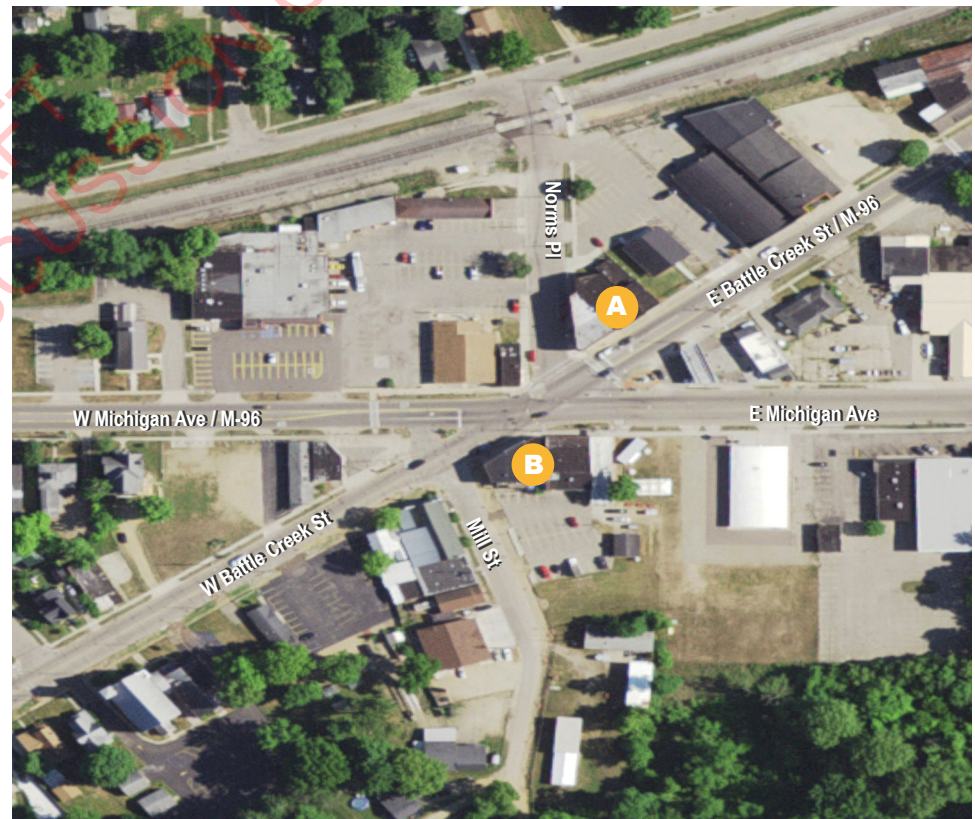
Highest Priority Level (4.56)

Action Step	Time Frame
DT 5.1 — Research county, state and federal programs that offer financial resources.	Short
DT 5.2 — Review façade programs offered by other communities.	Short
DT 5.3 — Review successful programs that utilize TIF revenue.	Short
DT 5.4 — Explore benefits of participating in the Michigan Main Street Program.	Short

Priority Redevelopment Areas

RRC
1.1

The RRC Best Practices are intended to prepare a community to get specific redevelopment projects underway. While a full prioritization and analysis of potential redevelopment sites is recommended as a post-certification best practice, Plan Galesburg! is preparing for the future, more in-depth work by identifying two key sites in the downtown area to consider. These sites were discussed with the Steering Committee and DDA members as timely and significant for redevelopment activities. Both sites are existing buildings that contribute to the downtown character but are in deteriorated condition. Renovating these structures and finding viable reuses for them will significantly boost vibrancy while preserving the historic character and charm of Downtown Galesburg.



Community Character (cc) Goals & Strategies

1 Develop a community branding and marketing plan based on authentic qualities of Galesburg Mid Priority Level (3.88)

Action Step	Time Frame
CC 1.1 — Implement design standards for all public improvements to establish a thematic, unified look for Galesburg.	Mid
CC 1.2 — Implement a network of wayfinding signage to direct visitors to special places within the city.	Mid
CC 1.3 — Enhance community gateway entrances with coordinated streetscape improvements and landscaping to inform the public that they are entering a special place.	Mid
CC 1.4 — Enhance the downtown area with coordinated streetscape improvements and landscaping.	Mid
CC 1.5 — Add representatives from State and County agencies to marketing and event mailing list to keep them up to date on events and activities in the city to build a stronger relationship.	Short

2 Project a positive and inviting appearance throughout the City Highest Priority Level (4.56)

Action Step	Time Frame
CC 2.1 — Review the existing code enforcement contract to ensure the program provides technical assistance that meets community expectations.	Short
CC 2.2 — Collaborate with local businesses and organizations to promote downtown and neighborhood clean-up events.	Short
CC 2.3 — Develop a program to promote low-cost improvements such as painting, landscaping, and maintenance.	Short



3

High Priority Level (4.14)

Action Step	Time Frame
CC 3.1 — Promote the heritage of the City through events and festivals.	On-going
CC 3.2 — Market access to parks and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail.	On-going
CC 3.3 — Promote the city’s location within the region as a quality bedroom community.	On-going
CC 3.4 — Coordinate local events with area recreational opportunities.	On-going

4

High Priority Level (4.21)

Action Step	Time Frame
CC 4.1 — Prepare a job description that outlines expectations for board and commission positions.	Mid
CC 4.2 — Adapt the City Council Handbook to specifically provide orientation material to all appointed and elected members of development related boards and commissions, including Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority, and Zoning Board of Appeals.	Short
CC 4.3 — Make bylaws for all appointed development related boards and commissions available online.	Short
CC 4.4 — Develop a documented Training Plan that addresses the training needs and desires of current board and commission members.	Mid
CC 4.5 — Support and promote GABCA activities.	On-going
CC 4.6 — Coordinate civic volunteer and educational opportunities with Galesburg-Augusta schools.	On-going

Economic Development (ED) Goals & Strategies

1 Promote growth of businesses that provide neighborhood goods and services

High Priority Level (4.21)

Action Step	Time Frame
ED 1.1 — Work with local property owners and realtors to inventory available buildings ready for occupancy in downtown and the surrounding area.	Short
ED 1.2 — Work with the community to identify a list of preferred professional services needed.	Short
ED 1.3 — Work with the community to identify professional services providers they do business with to send marketing information about Galesburg and available office space.	Short
ED 1.4 — Investigate the potential of a professional office shared-work space to attract professional services on a part-time basis at a reasonable cost.	Mid

2 Promote and support existing businesses

Highest Priority Level (4.31)

Action Step	Time Frame
ED 2.1 — Create an existing business inventory.	Short
ED 2.2 — Market businesses to visitors to area recreational facilities in Galesburg and Augusta.	Short
ED 2.3 — Work with business owners to cross-promote businesses and attractions in the region.	Mid
ED 2.4 — Share Galesburg marketing materials with local businesses to showcase the community for an employment recruitment tool.	Short



3

High Priority Level (4.06)

<i>Action Step</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
ED 3.1 — Ensure broadband coverage in the community to support local businesses and remote workers.	Long
ED 3.2 — Support remote workers by offering or marketing professional amenities (e.g. co-working space) and social opportunities (e.g. workout facilities or networking events).	Mid
ED 3.3 — Ensure the Zoning Ordinance allows for small business development in all appropriate districts.	Mid
ED 3.4 — Review Zoning Ordinance to determine if there are barriers to live/work options for small professional office uses in residential districts.	Short
ED 3.5 — Work with State and County agencies to explore the potential of offering job training and employment services locally to assist unemployed residents.	Short

4

High Priority Level (4.19)

Action Step	Time Frame
ED 4.3 — Promote a "buy-local" program so that residents are supporting local businesses, multiplying their impact on the economy.	Mid

Downtown Galesburg Plan Recommended Actions

Plan Galesburg! is structured around eight chapters with identified goals and action steps for each of those focus areas. Even though each of these plan areas impact and are impacted by the actions and efforts of the community in Downtown Galesburg, the action steps from the Downtown, Community Character, and Economic Development chapters are most relevant to the vision and mission of the DDA. Unlike the Plan Galesburg! Implementation Strategy that lists the plan action steps by community priority, the Downtown Galesburg Plan is organized around key Actions. The recommended actions are concrete steps that the DDA can undertake in partnership with other organizations, residents, businesses, property owners, developers, and stakeholders to create a thriving and vibrant community center for Galesburg.

This Downtown Plan recommends five key actions to assist the community in creating a sustainable organization and process for the DDA and stakeholder to use to make progress towards their goals for downtown:

- **Establish a committee to focus on streetscape, gateways, and pedestrian improvements made up of business owners, local officials, MDOT representatives, bike and pedestrian advocates, etc.**
- **Establish a joint DDA-GABCA committee to work to identify resource needs of local businesses.**
- **Establish a joint DDA-GABCA committee to work on marketing and events in Downtown Galesburg.**
- **Set up a committee of the DDA with local property owners, museum staff, code enforcement, and local historic preservation experts to lead and manage the building-based goals in the downtown.**
- **Establish a relationship with state and county organizations that can provide technical and financial resources.**

Each of these actions identify the action steps from Plan Galesburg! that are relevant along with providing more specific activities where applicable. The action steps include a time frame of Short, Mid, and Long-Term as well as on-going, to help the community organize and focus financial and technical resources more efficiently. We have also identified proposed lead organizations, community partners, and resources that could be helpful in successfully completing the actions outlined in the Downtown Galesburg Plan.

Timeframes are designated to estimate how long each Action Step is expected to take to complete:

Short = Within the first year after plan adoption (0-1 year)
Mid = Within one to five years after plan adoption (1-5 years)
Long = Within six to 20 years after plan adoption (6-20 years)
On-going = Action on this strategy does not have a defined end-point

Lead Organization is who will take responsibility for getting the Action Step completed.

Partners are other organizations and agencies that will need to be included to get the Action Step completed.



ACTION: Establish a committee to focus on streetscape, gateways, and pedestrian improvements made up of business owners, local officials, MDOT representatives, bike and pedestrian advocates, etc.

	Time Frame	Lead Organization	Partners	Resources
Enhance the downtown area with coordinated streetscape improvements and landscaping and provide pedestrian-oriented facilities to encourage accessibility to businesses. DT4, DT3, CC1	Mid	DDA	GABCA, City, MDOT, businesses, property owners, scouts, churches, schools, social clubs, etc.	City Maintenance Department, MEDC programs, review programs in similar communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular volunteer clean-up days to ensure the area is clean, attractive, and safe for pedestrians. 	Mid			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide pedestrian amenities (street furniture, signs, etc.) along downtown corridors and at key focal points in the City. 	Mid			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an "adopt-a-spot" program for downtown property owners to monitor and keep pedestrian amenities clean and in good condition. 	Short			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add bicycle parking to all public spaces downtown. 	Mid			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install low-cost improvements out of the right of way while plan is developed in cooperation with property owners. 	Short			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add and improve sidewalks throughout downtown. 	Mid			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include public art in streetscape design. Installation could be on either public or private property. 	Mid			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure downtown is adequately illuminated for safety and comfort by using streetlight fixtures and lights from storefronts. 	Mid			
Implement design standards for all public improvements to establish a thematic, unified look for Galesburg. CC1	Mid	City	DDA, Galesburg Historical Museum, Property Owners, MDOT	Michigan Historic Preservation Network, MDOT standards
Implement a network of wayfinding signage to direct visitors to special places within the city. DT2, CC1	Mid	City	DDA, Galesburg Historical Museum, Property Owners, MDOT	Sign regulations, MDOT standards
Enhance community gateway entrances with coordinated streetscape improvements and landscaping to inform the public that they are entering a special place – Downtown Galesburg. CC1	Mid	City	DDA, Galesburg Historical Museum, Property Owners, MDOT	Sign regulations, MDOT standards

ACTION: Establish a joint DDA-GABCA committee to work to identify resource needs of local businesses.

	Time Frame	Lead Organization	Partners	Resources
Develop a business retention program to assist downtown businesses. DT1	Mid	GABCA	DDA, Property Owners, Business Owners, MEDC	MEDC small business resources, County Tax Records, Similar communities, MEDC resources, Whats going on Galesburg and City's Facebook pages, DDA website
• Create an inventory of existing property owners and businesses. ED2	Short			
• Develop a marketing plan to focus on existing businesses.	Mid			
• Promote a "buy-local" program so that residents are supporting local businesses, multiplying their impact on the economy. ED4	Mid			
• Create a map of downtown that highlights local businesses and public amenities to be used in marketing and wayfinding.	Mid			
• Work with MEDC to identify existing programs and best practices that might be effective in Galesburg.	Mid			
Work with businesses to ensure they have a street-facing public entrance door. DT3	Short	DDA	Property Owners, Business Owners, City	MEDC small business resources
Identify locations for outdoor seating and community gathering space(s). DT3	Mid	DDA	Property Owners, Business Owners, City	County Tax Records
Work with the community to identify a list of preferred professional services needed. ED1	Short	GABCA	DDA, Residents, Business Owners	Community Survey
Work with community to identify professional services providers they do business with to send marketing information about Galesburg and available office space. ED1	Short	GABCA	DDA, Residents, Business Owners	Community Survey
Ensure broadband coverage in the community to support local businesses and remote workers. ED3	Long	City	State, County, Local broadband providers	Study underway
Support remote workers by offering or marketing professional amenities (co-working space) and social opportunities (workout facilities or networking events). ED3	Mid	DDA	GABCA, City, Property Owners, Realtors, Local and Regional Developers, MEDC	Remote worker research and best practices, research existing facilities

ACTION: Establish a joint DDA-GABCA committee to work on marketing and events in Downtown Galesburg.

	Time Frame	Lead Organization	Partners	Resources
Market and promote the historic character and heritage of the city through events and festivals. DT2, CC3	On-going	GABCA	DDA, City, Property Owners, Business Owners, Galesburg Historical Museum	Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Marketing resources
• Promote consistent and signature event(s). DT2	On-going			
Promote the city's location within the region as a quality bedroom community. CC3	On-going	City	DDA, GABCA, Property Owners, Realtors, Local and Regional Developers, Schools	MEDC
Coordinate local events with area recreational opportunities. CC3	On-going	City	DDA, GABCA, Discover Kalamazoo, Visitor and Tourism agencies, Fort Custer Recreation Area, Kalamazoo River Valley Trail	Trail link, agency and organization websites
• Publish a downtown map showing connections to trails and natural areas. DT2	Mid			
• Market access to parks and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. CC3	Short			
• Add signage along the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail to direct trail users to local businesses.	Mid			
• Market businesses to visitors to area recreational facilities in Galesburg and Augusta. ED2	Short			
• Establish a community events calendar to be hosted on the City's website. CC3	Short			
• Work with business owners to cross-promote businesses and attractions in the region and the Fort Custer Recreation Area. ED2	Mid			
Coordinate civic volunteer and educational opportunities with Galesburg-Augusta schools. CC4	On-going	DDA	GABCA, businesses, scouts, churches, schools, social clubs, etc.	Community calendar, school website, civic groups meetings, public media network
Share Galesburg marketing materials with local businesses to showcase community for an employment recruitment tool. ED2	Short	City	Businesses' HR departments	City's website

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ACTION: Set up a committee of the DDA with local property owners, museum staff, code enforcement, and local historic preservation experts to lead and manage the building-based goals in the downtown.

	Time Frame	Lead Organization	Partners	Resources
Prioritize the preservation of the historic character of the city. DT1	Short	DDA	Galesburg Historical Museum, Property Owners	Michigan Historic Preservation Network
• Develop an important building inventory using information and photographs from the museum.	Short			
• Develop a meet-the-building campaign to educate the community about historic buildings and their contribution to the Galesburg character.	Mid			
• Investigate creation of a local historic district.	Long			
Develop preferred façade guidelines to promote the traditional “main street” aesthetic of downtown. DT1	Mid	City	DDA, Galesburg Historical Museum, Property Owners	Michigan Historic Preservation Network, MEDC-MIPlace-Mainstreet
• Research historic character of Galesburg using museum resources to help establish the preferred design guidelines.	Short			
• Review sample local historic downtown design guidelines and modify to meet Galesburg history and character.	Short			
Collaborate with local businesses and organizations to promote downtown and neighborhood clean-up events in the downtown. CC2	Short	DDA	GABCA, businesses, property owners, scouts, churches, schools, social clubs, etc.	City Maintenance Department
Review the existing code enforcement contract to ensure the program provides technical assistance that meets community expectations. DT1, CC2	Short	City	DDA, GABCA, Property Owners	Contract, examples and policies from other communities
• Work with code enforcement staff to design a notification to be sent to property owners with minor code or aesthetic issues as a “friendly” reminder of their obligation to keep their property in good condition.	Short			
• If attempts to work with property owners fail, ensure code enforcement officials have the support and backing of the city to issue fines and tickets to achieve compliance to the full extent of the ordinance.	Mid			



	Time Frame	Lead Organization	Partners	Resources
Work with local property owners and realtors to inventory downtown buildings that are: ED1	Mid	DDA	City, County, GABCA, Property Owners, Realtors	County Tax Records, MLS listing, Zillow, GIS mapping of property with ownership information
• Ready for occupancy. DT1, ED1	Mid			
• Have existing housing units in commercial and residential buildings. DT1	Mid			
• Are commercial buildings that might have space available for additional residential units. DT1	Mid			
• Commercial buildings that have space for retail or restaurant uses. DT1, ED1	Mid			
• Suitable for professional offices. DT1, ED1	Mid			
• Might be an option for professional office shared-work space to attract professional services on a part-time basis at a reasonable cost. DT1, ED1	Mid			
Promote Priority Redevelopment Areas for mixed-use commercial-residential new construction projects to developers. 21 East Battle Creek Street and 2 East Michigan Avenue. DT 1	On-going	DDA	City, Property Owners, Realtors, Local and Regional Developers, MEDC	MLS listing
Develop a program to promote low-cost improvements such as painting, landscaping, and maintenance. CC2	Short	DDA	GABCA, businesses, property owners, scouts, churches, schools, social clubs, etc.	Similar communities in the region, MEDC best practices and resources, Main Street
• Research grant funding from state or foundations to develop a pilot program for minor renovation projects.	Short			
• Research how other communities such as Vickburgs, Schoolcraft, etc. help maintain downtown buildings.	Short			
Ensure the Zoning Ordinance requires one or more of the required elements in areas of concentrated development. (RRC Expectation, BP 2.3) DT 3	Mid	Planning Commission	City, Council, DDA, Property Owners, Realtors, Developers, MEDC	RRC Best Practices
Work with County Offices to better manage and plan for property issues in Galesburg. DT1, ED1	Short	City	DDA, Property Owners	County Tax Records, GIS mapping of property with ownership information
• Use GIS and County Tax Records to identify property owners and keep up to date inventory.	Mid			
• Review annual County Tax Records to determine if any properties in the downtown are tax delinquent and available to transfer through a tax certificate.	Mid			
• Develop a relationship with the County Treasurer and Auditor to keep up to date with any properties that are in jeopardy of tax default.	Short			

ACTION: Establish a relationship with state and county organizations that can provide technical and financial resources.

	Time Frame	Lead Organization	Partners	Resources
Work with MDOT to develop an acceptable streetscape design. DT3	Mid	City	MDOT, DDA, GABCA,	MDOT standards, RRC Best
• Reach out to local MDOT representative, Josh Grabs, to share a copy of the final plan and discuss implementation.	Short		Property Owners, Businesses, pedestrian advocates	Practices, Main Street resources
• Set a regular meeting with MDOT to discuss plans and approaches to manage traffic in downtown.	Mid			
Develop a funding mechanism to support façade and streetscape improvements. DT 5	Short	DDA	City, Property Owners, Realtors, Local and Regional Developers, MEDC	MDOT standards, RRC Best Practices, Main Street resources
• Research county, state and federal programs that offer financial resources.	Short			
• Review façade programs offered by other communities.	Short			
• Review successful programs that utilize TIF revenue.	Short			
• Explore benefits of participating in the Michigan Main Street Program.	Short			
Add representatives from State and County agencies to marketing and event mailing list to keep them up to date on events and activities in the city to build a stronger relationship. CC1	Short	City	DDA, GABCA, other local organizations	mailing list for agencies



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