

2.9 Downtown Revitalization

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Assessment Process	
A.	Annual surveys, focus group studies, and an annual strategic planning retreat order the assessment and guide the direction for the Downtown Revitalization program.

Program Standards	
A.	Organization: The Lamar DownTown Association (DTA) is the primary organization for Downtown Revitalization efforts in Lamar. However, the DTA is a partnership of many strong forces. The DTA is an authorized subsidiary project of Lamar Community Betterment. The Economic Developer from the Chamber of Commerce maintains involvement and offers technical and administrative support in many DTA projects. Additionally, large-scale financial and technical support is provided by the City of Lamar and the Barton County Commission.
B.	Mission Statement: To preserve Lamar as a viable center of commerce with emphasis on the downtown area by way of securing funding to improve buildings and to attract new businesses to assure economic stability and growth.
C.	<p>Image Promotion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The DTA logo is a graphic design that has been created and is used in promotional materials. The logo is yellow and red in color scheme and features an image of the historic, restored Plaza Theatre, an icon of successful downtown revitalization and community improvement in Lamar. 2. Media coverage: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The community's bi-weekly newspaper, the <i>Lamar Democrat</i>, has a strong commitment to downtown revitalization and regularly publishes features on downtown b. The Chamber of Commerce publishes a weekly business journal newsletter, the <i>Barton County Advocate</i>, which profiles downtown business people and activities on a regular basis, along with articles on state and national trends that may affect local downtown businesses. c. Press releases often result in coverage by regional radio, TV, and print media 3. An annual brochure listing all retail and special events in a calendar format is published by the Chamber of Commerce both in print form and on the internet.
D.	<p>Retail Promotion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joint retail promotions in Lamar include (Events with * are held downtown): Spring Sidewalk Sale*, Spring Citywide Garage Sale, Easter Egg Hunt*, Truman Heritage Days Summer Festival*, Summer Sidewalk Sale*, Lamar Fair*, Fall Citywide Garage Sale, Apple Days Fall Festival*, Tradefest Business Expo*, Halloween Hullabaloo*, Home for the Holidays/Moonlight Madness Extravaganza*, Christmas Parade*, & Holiday Shop Local Campaign/Auction* 2. An article on effective window displays is published annually by the <i>Advocate</i>. Marketing and promotional workshops are held by the Chamber and the Small Business Development Center. 3. A Buyers Guide and Business Directory publication is published by the Chamber both online and in print formats. A shopping guide specific to the downtown square will be published as part of the adaptive re-use endeavor to convert downtown buildings into a Factory Outlet Shopping Center as more retail, infrastructure, and tourism venues are developed in the future.

E.	<p>Special Event Promotion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special events held downtown beyond the realm of shopping include: Easter Egg Hunt, Truman Heritage Days Summer Festival, Lamar Fair, Apple Days Fall Festival, Halloween Hullabaloo, and a Christmas Parade. 2. Events typically focus on a combination of any of the following, depending upon the event: seasonal/holiday celebrations, historic preservation, music, food, rides, contests, agriculture, activities for children, drama, arts/culture, etc. 3. Demographic targets of special events typically focus on families and retirees. Evaluations are conducted through focus groups of volunteers of each event's individual planning committee
F.	<p>Business Retention/Expansion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chamber of Commerce surveys business owners on an annual basis. The Chamber also includes downtown business owners in a rotating panel of monthly focus group sessions. 2. Business assistance workshops are conducted by the Chamber in conjunction with the Small Business Development Center at Missouri Southern State College. 3. Business intelligence articles on state and national trends affecting local businesses are published regularly in the <i>Barton County Advocate</i> business journal/newsletter.
G.	<p>Business Recruitment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The DTA maintains a detailed inventory of buildings in the downtown district. The inventory includes specific technical and historical information on each property. 2. Lists of vacant properties are published by the Chamber of Commerce in a database that may be accessed on a case-by-case basis. The database of commercial property is also on the internet through the Missouri Location One System. 3. The DTA maintains a detailed list and regular contact with downtown business owners contemplating retirement, relocation, and/or closure within the next five years. 4. A task force of DTA and Chamber officials is evaluating specifications of a survey research program to gather intelligence necessary for development of Factory Outlet Shopping in the downtown district. 5. A task force of DTA and Chamber officials is evaluating specifications of an intercept survey to gather intelligence necessary for development of Factory Outlet Shopping in the downtown district. This survey will likely take place at key retail points of the downtown square and at area tourism attractions. 6. Results of surveys and studies by a consultant retained for the development of Factory Outlet Shopping downtown will be used to develop a targeted recruitment list of stores that would be successful in an outlet center scenario. 7. Recruitment lists and strategies will be employed to develop Factory Outlet Shopping within the next three to five years.
H.	<p>Design Issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Historical and modern photo collections of downtown buildings and streetscapes are available for inspection at the Barton County Historical Society. 2. Illustrated design suggestions for downtown have been developed from an architect as a visioning tool by the DTA. 3. The DTA is preparing for design meetings for current and prospective building owners as part of the overall strategy to develop Factory Outlet Shopping downtown. 4. A streetscape has been designed and implemented downtown through the DTA, City of Lamar, and the Barton County Commission. Standards from this theme are to be expanded on the 11th Street traffic way connecting the Square to the Truman Birthplace State Park as part of the overall Downtown Redevelopment Strategy. 5. Historic Preservation incentives will be evaluated, cataloged, and made available to private developers as part of the overall strategy to recruit new businesses and Factory Outlet Shopping stores downtown.

I.	<p>Networking:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chamber, DTA, and City officials are engaged in regular networking and collaboration with the following resource and advocacy organizations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Community Development Block Grant Program b. Missouri Main Street Program c. Neighborhood Assistance Program d. Historic Preservation Program e. Missouri Downtown Association f. University Outreach and Extension g. Missouri Economic Development Council h. Missouri Municipal League i. Missouri Division of Tourism j. Southwest Missouri Tourism Association 2. The DTA subscribes to national professional publications, guide books, and industry journals related to downtown revitalization. The DTA shares these publications among its membership, including the Lamar City Administrator and the Economic Developer.
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Program Goals and Planning	
Goal #1	Revitalize Downtown Square through development of additional retail venues.
	(See MoCAP Section 2.5 and 2.7 for more information on this mutual goal.)
Goal #2	Expand entertainment venues through development of an Arts/Cultural Center
	See MoCAP Section 1.4 for more information on this mutual goal.)
Goal #3	Incorporate streetscape theme between the Square and the Truman Birthplace State Park
Strategy	Expand the identity of downtown and include the Truman Birthplace in the historical and tourism aspects of the downtown district. Attract visitors of the Truman Birthplace to the downtown square. Streetscape theme expansion will include improved sidewalks and the placement of the inviting benches and historically charming lamp posts already present on the main square area.
Funding	Funding will come from private donations and sponsorships secured through the Downtown Association together with infrastructure funding from the City of Lamar.
Timeline	10/02-6/03: Secure funding sources 10/02-1/03: Prepare specific site plans 1/03-6/03: Secure contractor by bid process 7/03-10/03: Begin construction 11/03: Project completed
Goal Evaluation	Project completion, increases in visitor counts at downtown attractions as well as the Birthplace State Park, increases in retail sales, increases in downtown property values

Program Evaluation	
<p>The success of Downtown Revitalization endeavors for Lamar are addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific economic indicators available from the local agencies, the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center and the U.S. Census Bureau • Benchmarks established through the Lamar Baseline Study • Monthly focus group sessions conducted by the Chamber of Commerce • Annual Surveys of the local business community • Best practices scenarios from state and national Downtown Development Associations 	