

CHAPTER 8: implementation

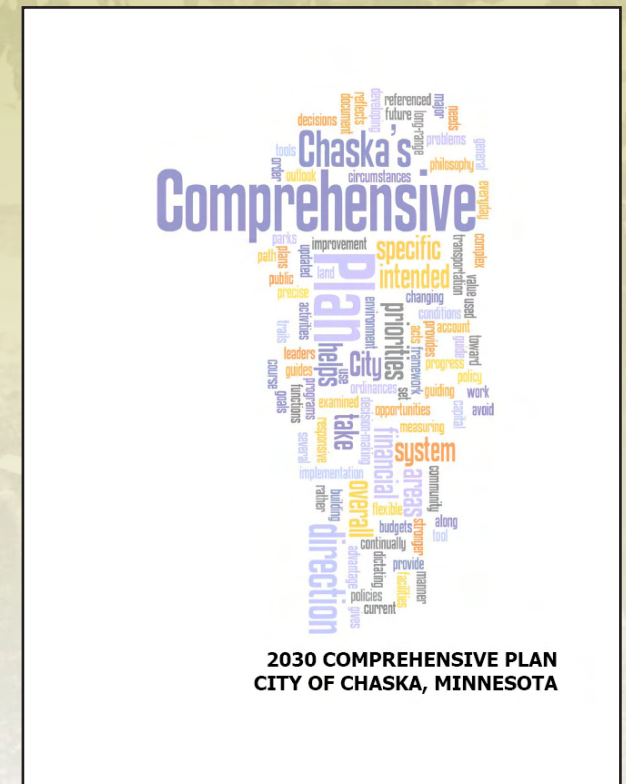
Implementation is an essential component of the Chaska Downtown Master Plan in order for the plan to be actionable and achievable. This chapter of the plan identifies the recommended strategies for implementing the vision, guiding principles and strategies of the Downtown Master Plan. The Implementation chapter is organized around the following topics:

- » *City policies & regulations*
- » *Recommended implementation actions*
- » *Partnership & financial considerations*
- » *Next steps*

City Policies & Regulations

Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan will require updates to the City's policies and regulations, including the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and the Downtown Parking Management Plan. In addition, the City should consider establishing Downtown Building Design Guidelines for non-historic building improvements and new buildings in downtown, building upon the design guidelines for historic buildings contained in the Downtown Preservation Design Manual. The recommended City policy and regulation actions are as follows.

- 1. Amend the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan to reflect goals of the Downtown Master Plan:**
 - a. *Amend Mission Statement and Core Strategies to incorporate downtown vision*
 - b. *Amend 2030 Land Use Plan map & tables*
 - c. *Potentially amend the Medium Density Residential LU category for Pine St and Walnut St "downtown edge" properties or guide them as DT-MU*
 - d. *Amend land use policies regarding downtown (e.g. mixed-use core, parking, street design types, catalyst redevelopment sites, parks, etc.); Chaska Blvd redevelopment sites; public facilities (e.g. potential expansions of library and faith-based institutions); and historic preservation*



2. Modify Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with & supportive of Downtown Master Plan:

- a. Update Zoning Map
- b. Create a Business Park zoning district
- c. Modify Downtown (C3) zoning district
- d. Modify parking requirements for downtown businesses
- e. Expand the Chaska Historic District boundaries (local) to include Chestnut Street and West Second Street commercial properties

3. Establish Downtown Building Design Guidelines for non-historic building improvements, new buildings and residential structures in downtown, building upon the design guidelines for historic buildings contained in the Downtown Preservation Design Manual

4. Create downtown building signage design guidelines and revise sign ordinance

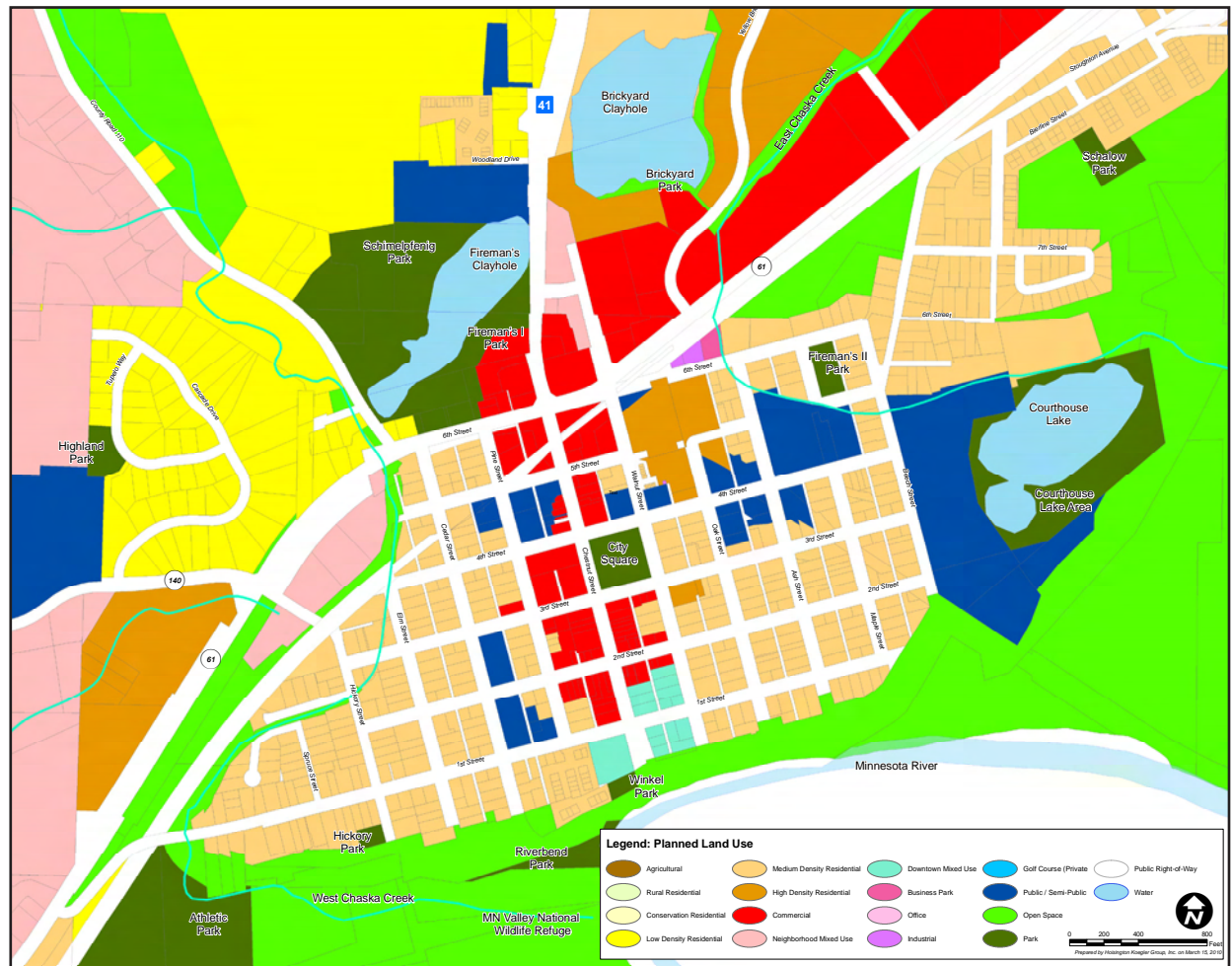
5. Develop a Heritage Preservation Plan as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan that clearly links heritage preservation goals with economic development, public improvements, redevelopment, and placemaking

6. Designate additional eligible properties as local historic resources, e.g. all Chaska Brick buildings in downtown

7. Establish a stronger downtown parking management plan

8. Active police enforcement of parking regulations

9. Active/continual police enforcement of speed on MN Hwy 41



Recommended Implementation Actions

These implementation actions essentially serve as the community’s “to do list” for revitalizing downtown over the next several years. Some of these actions will be clearly defined improvement projects that have a start and an end point. Other actions will be ongoing or recurring initiatives that will bring more incremental improvements to downtown. These recommended implementation actions encompass short-range (1-2 years), mid-range (3-5 years), and long-range (5 or more years) improvements.

- » *Business environment/development*
- » *Private properties/buildings*
- » *Public properties/buildings*
- » *Streets, sidewalks & trails*
- » *Parks & open spaces*
- » *Potential redevelopment sites*

Downtown Business Development Actions

A primary focus of revitalizing downtown should be improving the overall downtown business environment in ways that would positively existing businesses and attract new businesses. These actions relate to such things as downtown organization, design (streetscape, signage, wayfinding, historic interpretation, etc.), branding, marketing, business retention & expansion, and business recruitment.

The recommended downtown business development actions are as follows:

1. **Establish Chaska Main Street Program to provide downtown-focused staff resources for coordinating efforts with City Staff and the Downtown Business Council/Southwest Chamber of Commerce relating to downtown organization, design, marketing, and economic development**
 - a. *Develop a downtown business retention & expansion program, e.g. downtown anchor businesses like the grocery store*
 - b. *Develop a downtown business recruitment program*
 - c. *Develop a downtown branding & marketing program, e.g. Chaska – Minnesota’s Brick City*
2. **Re-establish downtown parking management plan and provide adequate & convenient public parking options:**
 - a. *Expand Two Hour Parking areas, signage & enforcement*
 - b. *Add on-street diagonal parking through street restriping and reconstruction*
 - c. *Strengthen the downtown parking management plan*
 - d. *Add public off-street parking lots where necessary in conjunction with the redesign and reconstruction of adjacent streets*
 - e. *Explore feasibility of developing a public parking structure*



3. Design and implement streetscape enhancements program, in conjunction with the street reconstruction program
4. Create a walking tour map of downtown historic buildings and sites
5. Develop a multi-faceted wayfinding program to guide visitors to and around downtown Chaska, within the southwest region level and within the City
6. Study potential for establishing a downtown business improvement district/special service district
7. Consider establishing a local lodging tax to help fund downtown promotion efforts
8. Consider establishing a Chaska downtown convention & visitors bureau
9. Expand the interpretation of downtown's historic resources, working with the Chaska Historical Society, the Heritage Preservation Commission and the Downtown Business Council
10. Develop relationships with the organizations and visitors associated with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, such as USFWS, MN DNR and Friends of the Minnesota Valley, to better link downtown's businesses, services, information and marketing to their needs



Private Property Improvement Actions

The focus should be on creating awareness, assistance and incentives for improvements to private properties/buildings. It is critical that property/business owners have adequate awareness of and easy access to existing downtown programs, regulations and guidelines. To optimize the financial incentives for private property improvements, stronger and new loan/grant programs should be made available for downtown property/business owners.

The recommended private property improvement actions are as follows:

1. Consider strengthening and expanding the Downtown Storefront Rehabilitation Loan Program to become a stronger incentive for property owners, including a larger grant component, a matching funds component, and a technical assistance component, as well as including non-historic buildings and building interior improvements.
2. Recommend additional properties for national historic designation to make them eligible for federal & state historic preservation tax credits for building improvements, e.g. add Second Street West to historic district, locally designated properties that are not nationally designated.
3. Establish a downtown building signage replacement grant/loan program consistent with the recommendations of the upcoming downtown signage study.
4. Develop a downtown business resources program, such as dedicated staff (public/private), a resource guide and website that provides technical information and assistance for downtown businesses.
5. Identify funding sources and establish an incentive-based loan program for downtown residential property improvements.



Public Property Improvement Actions

Since there is a fair amount of publicly-owned property in downtown, it is critical that the City take the lead on optimizing the use and design of its properties to contribute to the revitalization of downtown.

The recommended public property improvement actions are as follows:

1. Explore feasibility of expanding downtown library, including possible relocation
2. Reuse of City-owned Walnut Street historic mansions
3. Reuse of former railroad corridor
4. Conversion of overhead power lines to underground/creating utility corridors
5. Relocation of transmission line

Streets, Sidewalks & Trails Improvement Actions

A key component to revitalizing downtown will be improving the streets, sidewalks and trails in the downtown area. Improving downtown's streets to be more attractive and safe for walking and as community gathering places should be the top priority. This goal needs to be balanced with the other uses of downtown's streets, including vehicle movement, vehicle parking, and bicycle movement. In conjunction with the street reconstruction projects, the downtown core alleys (blocks adjacent to Chestnut St/MN Hwy 41) and potential off-street parking lots should also be designed and constructed. Improving the comfort, safety and aesthetics of Chestnut Street/MN Hwy 41, which is the community's "Main Street", is critical for downtown revitalization. Similarly, Chaska Boulevard/Cty Rd 61, formerly MN Hwy 212, is in need of improvements that provide more pleasant and safe crossings by pedestrians and bicyclists between the downtown districts north and south of this highway.

Connectivity and access in the downtown area will also be greatly improved by adding key street connections, primarily in the northeast quadrant of downtown and to Chaska Boulevard/Cty Rd 61. Like the improvements to downtown's street connections, several trail connections are also needed to create a more connected downtown trail network, including streets along trails and independent corridor trails.

The recommended actions for streets, sidewalks and trails are as follows:

1. Develop schematic designs for all of the downtown street types consistent with the Downtown Master Plan Streets System Concept, including the Brick City Paseo, prior to street reconstruction.
2. Redesign and reconstruct downtown streets. In line with the City's Street Reconstruction Program, which includes reconstruction of all downtown streets over the next ten years, the focus should be on reconstruction of the Town Center Streets (east-west) first, all things being equal. Redesign of the Town Center Streets (Second, Third, Fourth & Fifth), Walnut Street and Pine Street should consider the addition of streetscape amenities, including trees, planters, lighting, bollards, banners, hanging baskets, benches, and alternative paving materials for streets and/or sidewalks. North-south streets will be constructed in segments as part of each east-west street reconstruction project.
 - a. Second Street
 - b. Third Street
 - c. Fourth Street
 - d. Fifth Street
 - e. Sixth Street (east)



3. Redesign and reconstruct downtown core alleys (blocks adjacent to Chestnut St/MN Hwy 41) to create the Brick City Paseo, in conjunction with the street reconstruction project.
4. Partner with regional roadway agencies to redesign and improve downtown's Main Streets that are also regional highways:
 - a. Chestnut Street/MN Hwy 41 working with Mn DOT
 - b. Chaska Blvd/Cty Rd 61 working with Carver County
5. Work with Mn DOT to increase flood protection of MN Hwy 41 and develop alternate regional highway system improvements that will bring less regional traffic through downtown, attract more downtown destination traffic, and allow for implementation of a three-lane design on Chestnut St.
6. Increase downtown's street network connectivity/access in the northeast quadrant, to Chaska Blvd/Cty Rd 61, and to Brickyard Clayhole District:
 - a. Extend Ash Street from Fourth Street to Chaska Blvd/Cty Rd 61 and Yellow Brick Road, including a new signalized intersection (potential to shift Yellow Brick Road east to CBC site)
 - b. Add a street connection between Stoughton Ave/Beech St/Fire Lane and Chaska Blvd/Cty Rd 61, including a new signalized intersection
 - c. Connect Fifth Street East (north side of Carver-Scott Educational Coop) between Ash St and Stoughton Ave/Beech St
 - d. Add a street connection between Walnut St and Yellow Brick Road in front of grocery store



7. Add trail segments to create a more connected downtown trail network:
 - a. Cedar Street
 - b. Ash Street
 - c. Beech Street/Stoughton Ave/Fire Lane
 - d. Third Street East (and West?)
 - e. Fifth Street West/Drainage Channel
 - f. Fireman's Clayhole/Chaska Blvd/Creek Road
 - g. Downtown Greenbelt/Levee/Athletic Park
 - h. Former railroad corridor
 - i. Sixth Street East
 - j. Trail connections between the levee lanes and the levee trail
8. Ensure that any new Highway 41 river crossing benefits Chaska and minimizes visual and noise impacts to downtown and improves local access.

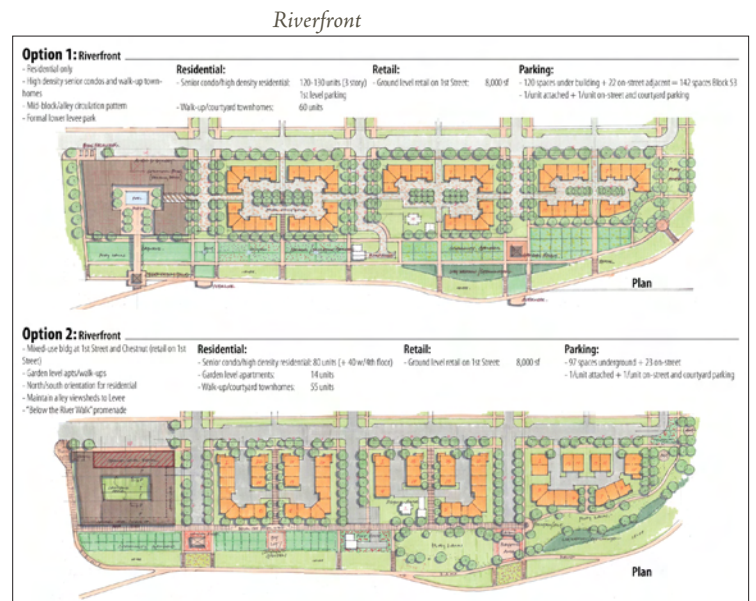
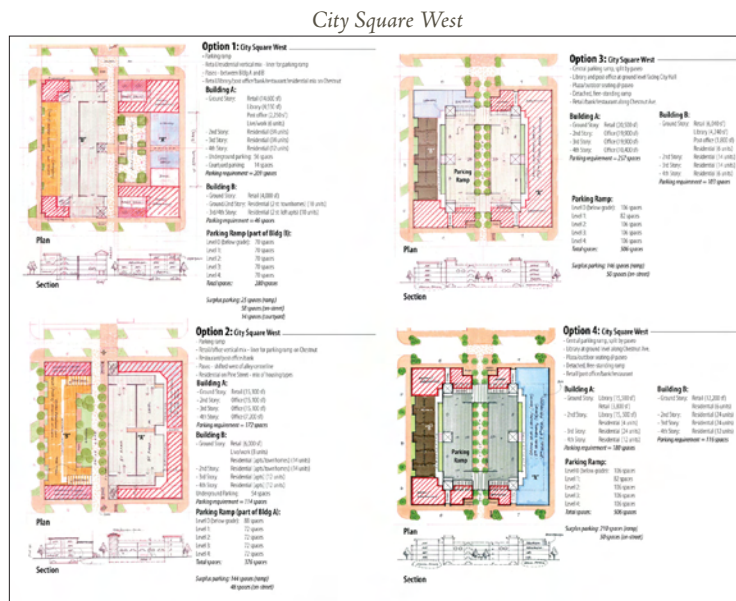
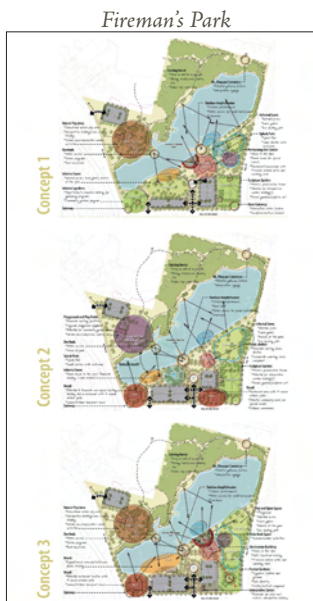
Park & Open Space Improvement Actions

Downtown's park and open space improvement opportunities encompass two community parks/playfields (Fireman's Park, Athletic Park), three community feature parks (City Square, Winkel Park, Riverbend Park), and future neighborhood parks.

The recommended park and open space actions are as follows:

- 1. Redesign and improve Athletic Park, Winkel Park, and Riverbend Park, including connections to the Minnesota River and National Wildlife Refuge. Redesign of these three parks within the Downtown West Greenbelt offer unique opportunities to better connect downtown to the Minnesota River, Minnesota River National Wildlife Refuge, and the Minnesota River State Recreation Area.**
- 2. Redesign & improve Fireman's Park as downtown's community park and a unique signature park that integrates the natural features of the site – Fireman's Clayhole Lake and the wooded upland area – with the site's heritage as a former brickyard and the site's gateway location for downtown.**
- 3. Add trailheads/kiosks to City Square, City Hall Plaza, Hickory St, Yellow Brick Road.**
- 4. Identify locations and design two neighborhood parks:**
 - a. Downtown west neighborhood park – partner with Guardian Angels church/school (would replace Hickory Park)*
 - b. Downtown east neighborhood park – partner with St. John's church/school (would replace Fireman's II Park)*
- 5. Designate and design vacant triangle site at Fourth St & Elm St as a mini-park in the downtown west neighborhood.**





Potential Redevelopment Site Actions

The Downtown Master Plan identifies a number of potential redevelopment sites in the downtown area, both in the downtown core and the downtown edges. Although the City can have a major influence on how and when these sites redevelop, ultimately the timing of redevelopment is determined more by the market. Some of the redevelopment sites are publicly owned, so the City has more influence with those sites which include the Fireman's Clayhole district and the vacant block in the Riverfront district.

The recommended redevelopment site actions are as follows:

1. **Fireman's Clayhole district/site** - Create site master plan for new downtown gateway park and retail/restaurant businesses, including a developers' forum
2. **City Square West block** - Explore financial & political feasibility of redeveloping as a mixed-use "Main Street" block, including potential public library, public parking structure, retail, office, residential, Brick City Paseo connection and transit park & ride facility, working with property owners, Carver County, and SW Transit
3. **Riverfront block/district** - Redevelop with a gateway building at entrance to downtown and the community, potential redevelopment to the east should wait until downtown revitalization creates enough amenities to make this a value-added district for housing redevelopment
4. **Chaska Building Center site** - Amend land use designation & zoning classification for the property; collaborate with property owner on a redevelopment process by jointly marketing the site and establishing a TIF district
5. **Fireman's II Park** - At such time that an alternative park is identified and constructed in the Downtown East neighborhood, collaborate with property owner on a redevelopment process
6. **Former railroad corridor** - Collaborate with Carver County on the reuse of this land
7. **Overhead power line corridor/St. John's Church land** - Collaborate with St. John's Church on future land use and development of this land
8. **School bus barn site** - Collaborate with property owner on a redevelopment process

Partnership & Financial Considerations

Although the City of Chaska will play a major role in implementing the Downtown Master Plan, the ultimate success of the plan will depend upon the City's partnerships and collaboration with both public and private downtown stakeholders. In addition to the City, key public sector stakeholders include Carver County, MN DOT, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), USFWS, MN DNR, and the Metropolitan Council. Key private sector stakeholders include the Chaska Downtown Business Alliance, property owners, business owners, residents, downtown institutions (faith-based, school, and senior housing/services), Chaska Historical Society, National Trust for Historic Preservation, community lending institutions, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, and others.

Within the City of Chaska, successful implementation of the Downtown Master Plan will require the collaboration of the City Council, Economic Development Authority, Planning Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Parks/Arts/Recreation Board, and Human Rights Commission.

One of the keys to successfully implementing the Downtown Master Plan is the ability to facilitate and finance the desired public improvements and leverage private reinvestments. The City has a variety of implementation policies, programs and tools in place to assist in downtown's revitalization.

City's existing implementation policies, programs, and tools relevant to downtown:

- » *Public ownership of property (e.g. Firemen's Clayhole District, Athletic Park, other park lands, Riverfront District block, Second St parking lot, historic buildings, abandoned rail corridor, etc.)*
- » *Economic Development Authority, e.g. levy authority*
- » *Tax Increment Financing (TIF)*
- » *Park dedication*
- » *Special assessments for street reconstruction, including public parking facilities and alley/Chaska Paseo improvements*
- » *Storefront Architectural Feasibility Grant program*
- » *Storefront Rehabilitation Low-Interest Loan program*
- » *State Historic Preservation Office - Certified Local Government (CLG) program*
- » *Local and national historic property designations*
- » *Community Land Trust*
- » *Christmas in May building rehabilitation program*
- » *Municipal State Aid (MSA) roadway program – Second St, Fourth St, Walnut St, Pine St, Beech St/Stoughton Ave*





- » County State Aid Highway (CSAH) program – County is planning to widen Chaska Blvd (CSAH 61) to four lanes between Hwy 41 and Audubon Road
- » Carver-Scott Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) – trails & sidewalks

The City also should consider enlisting additional implementation tools that are available, including the following.

Potential implementation tools:

- » Minnesota Main Street Program (Preservation Alliance of Minnesota)
- » Small Cities Development Program (MN DEED)
- » Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- » Metro Council's Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) grant program
- » Business improvement/special service district for parking, streetscape and wayfinding improvements
- » HRA levy increase
- » Developers' Forums/RFPs
- » Federal historic tax credit
- » State historic tax credit
- » Preserve America Program
- » Convention & visitors bureau
- » Historic preservation sales tax
- » Watershed district funding initiatives
- » Local lodging tax
- » Local sales tax
- » MN Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund grants
- » Parking dedication or fee-in-lieu-of-parking program
- » MN DNR trails grants
- » Southwest Transit

Next Steps

Implementation of the Chaska Downtown Revitalization Plan is not a single project or action. Implementation is a collection of public and private actions that occur over a period of years. Based on the anticipated needs, impacts and feasibility of all of these recommended implementation actions, the following next steps or priorities are identified to jumpstart downtown's revitalization efforts.

- » *Adopt the Downtown Revitalization Plan as a Sector Plan per the Implementation Chapter of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan*
- » *Update the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to reflect the directions of the Downtown Revitalization Plan*
- » *Develop schematic designs for all of the downtown street types, including the Brick City Paseo, prior to street reconstruction*
- » *Redesign and reconstruct Second Street, including off-street parking improvements and upgrading the adjacent downtown core alleys as the beginning of the Brick City Paseo*
- » *Establish Chaska Main Street Program to provide downtown-focused staff resources (public/private) to coordinate efforts with City Staff and the Downtown Business Council/Southwest Chamber of Commerce relating to downtown organization, design, marketing, and economic development*
- » *Establish downtown building signage design guidelines and revise sign ordinance*
- » *Establish Downtown Building Design Guidelines for non-historic building improvements, new buildings and residential structures in downtown*
- » *Retain, improve and expand downtown grocery store*
- » *Develop a Heritage Preservation Plan*
- » *Re-establish downtown parking management plan and provide adequate public parking options:*
 - *On-street parking - restriping from parallel to diagonal*
 - *On-street parking – street reconstruction*
 - *Off-street parking lot – Second St E/Chestnut St (Block 37)*
 - *Strengthen Two Hour Parking program*
 - *Establish parking management plan for business owner & parking*
- » *Fireman's Clayhole District - Create site master plan for new downtown gateway park and retail/restaurant businesses, including a developers' forum*





- » *City Square West Block - Explore financial & political feasibility of redeveloping as a mixed-use “Main Street” block, including potential public library, public parking structure, retail, office, residential, Brick City Paseo connection and transit park & ride facility, working with property owners, Carver County, and SW Transit*
- » *Riverfront Gateway District – Redevelop with a gateway building at entrance to downtown and the community*
- » *Redesign and improve Athletic Park, Winkel Park, and Riverbend Park as Downtown West Greenbelt, including connections to the Minnesota River and National Wildlife Refuge*

These next steps or priorities should be reviewed, discussed and updated on a regular basis. The City, in partnership with the Downtown Business Council, should create an Annual Downtown Action Plan as a means of maintaining the focus on current actions to be taken. The Annual Downtown Action Plan should include the following elements:

- » *Review of progress made over the past year*
- » *Identification and prioritization of steps to be taken in the next year*
- » *Assignment of responsibilities for guiding each implementation step*
- » *Determination of budget, funding needs, and possible funding sources*

