

Theme 1

Creating a Vibrant Downtown

The theme of “Creating a Vibrant Downtown” focuses on land use, urban design, and public activity issues. A vibrant downtown is one that is active and attractive. It offers a variety of activities, attractive urban design both in the public and private realms, a mix of dynamic new buildings and well preserved older ones and a broad range of uses for persons of all ages. The vibrant downtown is easy to get to and around in via all types of transportation.

Vibrancy is critical to the success of downtown in order for it to continue to attract shoppers and workers, be they residents or visitors. Participants in this roundtable articulated the need for Downtown Highland Park to be a place that has accessible public spaces, a broad range of community activities, throughout the day and year, including living opportunities, and is a focal point for the visual and performing arts. That notion for Downtown is expressed in the vision sentences below.

Rank	Vision Sentences	Ranking Points (Low scores are relatively ranked higher)
1	The Downtown will create a sense of place with inviting destinations that offer a diversity of experiences, activities, and retail opportunities	140
2	The Downtown will have affordable places to live, varied places to work, and distinctive cultural events which draw diverse ages, animate public spaces, and encourage education and the visual and performing arts throughout the day and the year.	152
3	Building form and design will engage the pedestrian, honor the community’s historic character, and establish a visually rich and well-functioning pedestrian experience.	191
4	The walkable Downtown will knit the pedestrian commercial core to nearby civic, cultural, recreational, and natural area amenities.	202

Theme 2

Promoting Commerce and Service

The theme of “Promoting Commerce and Service” focuses on the types of policies the City could implement to assure a good business climate for Downtown, the actions the private sector could take and the understanding that a successful Downtown requires public-private partnership. A City that promotes commerce and service is cognizant of the overall ambiance of the place but is also aware that there are many details that function together to assure the success of Downtown. Underlying the theme of promoting commerce and service is an understanding that a successful Downtown is easy to locate and navigate within and offers a wide variety of things to do (shop, live, work, play).

Promoting commerce and service is critical to the success of Downtown for without a positive and successful business climate, one of the central functions of the place will not meet the expectations of its users. Participants in the roundtable described an ideal Downtown Highland Park as offering variety and convenience, being a multi-faceted and attractive place, and a true partnership between the public and private sectors.

Rank	Vision Sentences	Ranking Points (Low scores are relatively ranked higher)
1	The Pedestrian Commercial Core will be a welcoming place that is regionally known as a destination with distinctive style, and many opportunities: fashion, dining, cultural arts, and a well-maintained streetscape.	120
2	Downtown businesses and the City will be partners in ongoing economic development that is necessary to sustain the economic vitality of the Downtown.	160
3	Visitors, employees, and residents will be able to conveniently find and access the Downtown District using integrated modes of transportation: transit, bus, automobile, bicycle, and walking.	168
4	Land Use in the Downtown District will be a mix of non-residential and residential uses to provide a steady consumer base for purchase of goods and services sold in the District.	174

Theme 3

Creating a Sustainable Downtown

The theme of “Creating a Sustainable Downtown” focuses on the types of policies and actions the City and the private sector can implement to assure that Downtown Highland Park embodies principles of sustainability, those being mixed land uses, compact development form, energy efficient buildings, ease of use and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, and conservation of scarce energy and natural resources. A City that promotes sustainability is cognizant of its environmental impact on the community, region and planet and promotes sustainable practices relative to energy and resource consumption and stormwater management into its future plans.

Incorporating sustainability is critical to the success of Downtown in that as resources become scarcer and more costly, the cost to the City and the private sector of maintaining Downtown in the future will increase. Participants in the roundtable discussion articulated the need to assure that future public buildings and improvements are built incorporating sustainable design principles and construction techniques and to encourage the private sector to adopt similar goals. Furthermore, participants were cognizant of the mobility needs for pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users while acknowledging that automobiles will be a primary form of transport to and within the Downtown. In addition, participants want the City to assure that publicly accessible open space is available within the Downtown and provided as a part of private development.

Rank	Vision Sentences	Ranking Points (Low scores are relatively ranked higher)
1	Public and private improvements in the Downtown will reflect sustainable design, energy and resources conservation.	100
2	The Downtown will be a compact, mixed-use urban village built on sustainable practices.	127
3	The Downtown will be highly accessible through an integrated transit, pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular system.	143

Theme 4

Assuring a Well Functioning Downtown

The theme of “Assuring a Well Functioning Downtown” focuses on the systems that the City provides to make sure that Downtown is easily accessible, easy to get around in and has the infrastructure capacity needed to support current and future public and private development. A City that has a well functioning downtown has the support structure necessary to achieve the goals of the other vision themes: vibrancy, sustainability and promotion of commerce and service.

Planning for a well functioning downtown is a primary responsibility of the Department of Public Works. The vision set forth herein needs to be implemented as part of the City’s capital planning program. Participants in the roundtable discussions articulated the need to assure that on-street and off-street parking is readily available, that structured parking is easy to find and inviting to the user; that traffic to and in downtown is managed in such a way as to limit congestion. Furthermore, there is a recognition that both the perception of and actuality of automobile, pedestrian and bicyclist safety in downtown can and should be improved through thoughtful design and increased enforcement. In addition, participants identified the need for an attractive Downtown supported by necessary and thoughtfully designed streetscape elements including lighting, benches, trashcans and plantings.

Rank	Vision Sentences	Ranking Points (Low scores are relatively ranked higher)
1	Downtown will feature “complete streets” that safely and efficiently accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers and do not impede circulation.	121
2	Downtown land use and activities will be balanced with a built environment that preserves and enhances the pedestrian experience.	130
3	Downtown users will have access to a variety of inviting and well-maintained parking facilities that meet demand, are strategically located and are not overemphasized.	149