

Downtown team shapes strategic plan

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"What kind of experience yet," Schultz said. "Because it doesn't deal with tactics, the strategic plan will be followed by a series of action plans outlining specific improvement projects and potential funding sources. The strategic plan asks such point-of-view questions as:

- How large a market area can the downtown retail and service complex expect to penetrate? What additions to the retail and service mix will be needed to improve downtown's competitive position?
- Does downtown require a new centerpiece? Can traffic patterns, parking and walkways be changed to better meet retail and service needs?
- What are the implications of the demographic projections for the city? Demographics are expected to

remain stable with, at best, a marginal decline in average age?

- Can new development funding sources be found to replace diminishing federal and state programs?

AMONG THE plan's principal strategies are:

- Assisting businesses to improve merchandising and marketing.
- Recruiting new businesses to fill gaps in the retail and service mix.
- Exploiting Farmington's name recognition and historical heritage.
- Linking downtown's various zones — central business district, historic district, neighborhoods.
- Recruiting a major attraction, such as a hotel and meeting complex or a recreation and entertainment center.
- Establishing a year-round promotion program.
- Improving vehicular and

'(The plan) deals with all aspects of downtown development, not just capital investment.'

— Robert Schultz
administrative aide

pedestrian traffic flow.

- Improving and expanding parking.
- Insuring maintenance of common areas.
- Moving toward a paid DDA staff.
- Installing distinctive pedestrian, window and building lighting.
- Improving publicly owned facilities, such as sidewalks and public buildings.

POSSIBLE FUNDING sources include the city budget, state and federal grants, special assessments, a two-mile development district levy, tax increment financing, Economic Development Corporation revenue bonds and service fees.

The strategic plan urges the DDA to stay abreast of development op-

portunities arising through new federal grants, the Village Commons office-retail development and buildings in transition with either owners or new tenants.

Meanwhile, Deadman and Schultz continue work on drafting a comprehensive development plan for the 64-acre downtown development district.

State law requires the development plan to designate the development area's boundaries, identify existing and planned public and private land uses, establish a timetable and cost estimates for current and planned improvements, identify

open spaces and planned uses, detail DDA plans to sell, donate, exchange or lease property, and describe desired zoning and street changes.

The plan must contain an estimated number of people to be displaced by projected new housing and must include a mechanism to relocate displaced families. The plan also must contain a cost estimate of anticipated improvements, a statement about proposed financing and an explanation about the DDA's ability to arrange financing.

A public hearing must be held before the development plan can be approved.

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