

1.3 The Oshkosh Downtown Design and Development Planning Process

The Downtown Oshkosh Planning Team

The City and three organizations assembled a steering committee, the "Oshkosh Partnership Committee," to work on various facets of the study. The committee included representation from the City, the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce, the Oshkosh Commercial Development Corporation, the Downtown Oshkosh Business Improvement District, Winnebago County, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, the Oshkosh Northwestern newspaper, and the Experimental Aircraft Association. The Oshkosh Partnership Committee led the effort with by holding public meetings, helping to identify local neighborhood leadership, gathering data for the consultants, and maintaining open communication between the City Councils and public interest groups. LDR was responsible for conducting the public sessions, conducting research, providing recommendations for implementation strategies and developing the Downtown Design and Development Plan.

Input Process

With these tasks in mind, LDR embarked on a thorough process to garner stakeholder input for the plan. The team conducted one-on-one interviews, small group sessions, telephone conference calls and community "town hall" meetings. During this process, the LDR team gathered input from approximately 400 people. The objective of these efforts was to listen to what Oshkosh stakeholders had to say about the future of Oshkosh and its downtown and to guide the Plan's development.

Area Analysis

In addition to the listening process, LDR conducted a thorough site analysis to categorize opportunities and challenges within the study area, establish land use patterns, and identify key development and redevelopment sites. The LDR team reviewed existing documentation provided by the City of Oshkosh. This included the zoning ordinance, prior planning documents, historic literature, marketing and demographic data. The team also conducted field research including a detailed photographic inventory as well as a walking tour and windshield survey. LDR also produced electronic base maps for the project area.

Strategy Development

It was through this process that the final plan was developed. Each of the steps of the process outlined above was synthesized into the key issues that faced the community and was compiled into an overall plan for downtown Oshkosh. The Plan is a long-term vision for the future that will be implemented over time. A strategy for implementation that helps prioritize the recommended actions and projects is included in this report. The plan is intended to be flexible in order to respond to changing conditions in Oshkosh and can be molded as opportunities and challenges are confronted. Finally, the plan is a result of a consensus building process that acknowledges that compromises will need to be made in order for successful implementation to occur.