

Community's City Center Plan

2018 – Year End Report

ACTIONS COMPLETED:

Two major partnership efforts support multiple catalyst projects:

1. **1 Gigabit Downtown** - created innovative public/private partnership with Antietam Cable to create a 1 Gigabit Downtown which will support business retention, expansion and attraction. This initiative is supportive of several of the Catalyst Projects.
 - 1 Gigabit Service is being offered by both Antietam Cable and New Frontier Solutions.
 - Main Street Hagerstown developed and launched a logo and website: www.gigahubcity.com
 - Communications produced a public information video piece (see: https://youtu.be/cNpp_DK59SUU) that we have promoted and we have attended tech conferences to promote the service.
 - Information about 1 Gigabit Service is provided to business prospects.
2. **The Urban Improvement Project** – The City is working in partnership with Washington County, the Board of Education/Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, the Maryland Theatre, the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown (USMH), other community partners and private developers on the \$40+ million Downtown Improvement Project. The project includes:
 - Expansion and renovation of the Maryland Theatre (\$15M)
 - Expansion of an educational complex to support Washington County Public Schools (\$19.4M for BISFA expansion)
 - An outdoor plaza connection (\$2.9M).
 - A Hospitality Education Center to support a new degree program in Hospitality & Tourism Management at USMH (\$2M)

In December 2016, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan pledged \$7 million towards this project over 5 years. State bond bills totaling \$200,000 were awarded to assist the UIP project. In FY 2018, \$900,000 in a State Strategic Demolition Fund grant was awarded to support the Maryland Theatre, BOE, and plaza projects. In FY 2019, \$500,000 was awarded in a Strategic Demolition Fund grant and it will be utilized by the Maryland Theatre and \$400,000 was awarded in a Community Legacy grant and it will be used for the Plaza. Construction is underway on the Theatre expansion and the Board of Education expansion, and conduit has been installed to allow undergrounding of overhead utilities for the Plaza project. This initiative is supportive of several of the Catalyst Projects.

Catalyst Project #1 – Office Development and Recruitment:

GOALS: To position downtown to compete for new office development using portions of Central Parking Lot to build 154,000 sf across three buildings.

1. **Class A Office Development on Central Parking Lot** - The City and Bowman Development are in the exploratory phase on the Class A Office Building project.
2. **Marketing** – Staff regularly use the concept renderings to market the proposed building to prospective office tenants.
3. **Minimum Square Footage to be Attracted** – Attraction of a tenant or a combination of tenants to occupy a minimum of 20,000 sf is needed to move this from concept to a project.

Catalyst Project #2 – Maryland Theatre Expansion Project:

GOALS: Expand and improve the facility, and grow from 150 to 225 performance days per year, increasing the audience by 60,000 annually.

1. **Expansion of Facility** – Theatre Board contracted with Grimm & Parker Architects to design the expansion project and provide construction management. Morgan-Keller was hired as the construction contractor. Connectivity and shared space are being coordinated with the WCPS officials. Ground breaking occurred in early summer 2018. The project is 50% of the way through its timeline and construction remains on schedule. Topping out ceremony is planned for early April 2019 and the ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for October 11, 2019. (Maryland Theatre)
2. **Support for Expansion of Facility** – the Washington County Board of Commissioners and the Mayor and City Council of Hagerstown both provided up to \$500,000 by each entity towards the architectural services for the expansion of the theatre facility. The County Commissioners awarded an additional \$1 million for the project and the City awarded an additional \$200,000 in 2018. \$5 million of the Governor’s Allocation for the Urban Improvement Project has been earmarked by the County Commissioners for the Maryland Theatre expansion project. \$200,000 in State bond funds have been secured for the project. To date, \$800,000 in Strategic Demolition Fund grants have been awarded for the project. The project was awarded ARC grant funding for furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E). The Theatre continues to pursue other grant funding sources to close the gap of \$1,834,600 on this \$15 million capital project. The Theatre’s fund-raising consultant, CCS Fundraising, completed a feasibility study for the capital campaign which offered a very positive outcome, and the fund-raising campaign has raised \$4,686,665 as of January 26 in commitments and bequest. Two local banks and the County Commissioners have assisted with forward funding for the Governor’s funds and the private pledges. In March 2019, the Mayor and City Council committed to providing an additional \$300,000 to the project over three years starting in FY 2020. (Maryland Theatre)

Catalyst Project #3 – USMH Expansion Support:

GOALS: Support USMH growth from 500 to 750 students through the addition of new program offerings, and capture student housing opportunities with three (3) upper-floor renovation projects. The three (3) upper-floor renovation projects are planned to be implemented separately, in sequence to each other and throughout the 10 year plan.

1. **USMH Programming Expansion** – USMH is continuing work on development of three new programs: Hospitality and Tourism Management, Physician Assistant, and Community Health. The B.S. in Hospitality and Tourism Management through UMES begins at USMH with the Fall 2019 semester. The former BB&T Building, 59 W. Washington Street, is being renovated by the owner for lease by USMH for the hospitality program on the first floor. Completion is expected by June 2019. The Physician Assistant program will be housed in the new Health Sciences Center on Walnut Street, which is a former clinic owned by Meritus Health, that has been renovated for a physician practice on the first floor and the graduate program in physician assistant on the third floor. The third floor renovations and equipping are at USMH’s expense. The second floor will eventually be built out as additional Health Sciences Center space, once another clinical program is identified. The intended new program offerings at USMH are outlined in the following chart:

Program Offerings			
Date	Program	New Students per Entering Class	Total Forecasted Program Enrollment (presumes 2-year FT completion rate)
Fall 2019	BS in Hospitality Management & Tourism through UMES	15-18 (excluding 1 st year)	30 - 40
Summer 2019	MS in Physician Assistant through FSU	25	50
Fall 2019	BS in Community Health	10-12 (1 st year) 14 – 15 (thereafter)	28 - 30

3. **Student Housing** – The first student housing project at Patterson Hall was completed in 2015 and the apartments are fully leased with eight students. The City was awarded \$200,000 in Community Legacy grant funds in late 2016 to assist with development of a second Student Housing project in 2018/2019. A Request for Proposals for the developer partner was posted and three responses received by the December 5, 2017 deadline. City and USMH staff recommended the proposal by WLR for renovation of 140 W. Antietam Street. The Mayor and City Council concurred and an agreement was developed between the City, USMH and WLR for this 2nd student housing project. Construction is underway with completion anticipated by May 2019. The building will have 10 apartments housing 18 people. It is expected that almost all occupants will be Physician Assistant students.

Student Housing	
Date Available	Anticipated Housing Demand
May 2019	18 students (8 two bedroom en suite apartments and 2 one bedroom apartments)
May 2020	18 additional students – project site not yet identified

Catalyst Project #4 – Hotel/Conference Center and Heritage Center/Commemorative Park:

GOALS: Construct 200-room “Upper Upscale” hotel (ie: Sheraton, Wyndham, Hilton). Programmed with adjacent 20,000 square-foot conference center. Establish Civil War Heritage Center and Commemorative Park.

1. Exploratory conversations to date.
2. Project is more long-term in nature.

Catalyst Project #5 – Linking City Park/The Washington County Museum of Fine Arts and A&E District with Trail and New Housing:

GOALS: Construct multi-use trail linking City Park/WCMFA with the Arts & Entertainment District, and add 31 new townhomes along trail and rehab buildings to create 85 loft apartments (in 10 years).

Hagerstown Cultural Trail

Trail Construction

- Construction of Phase I of the trail began in April 2016 and was substantially complete by November 2017. The project was completed within budget. The Grand Opening was June 17, 2017.
- Trail amenities include trash cans, three benches, artistic three shade structures, dog mitt stations, granite insets, and extensive landscaping.
- Utilizing a grant from the Maryland Heritage Area Authority, entrance signs, wayfinding signs, art interpretive signs, and interactive history displays, etc. were installed.
- Planning and fund-raising for Phase II of the trail from West Antietam Street to the Urban Improvement Project plaza is underway. The plan is to bid the construction contract in October 2019.
- Conduit was installed in 2018 to allow for undergrounding utilities in the area of the UIP plaza and trail extension. All wires will be undergrounded by March 4, 2019. \$300,000 in Strategic Demolition Funds were awarded for this project.

Attractions:

- Completed art along the Trail includes: The Mural of Unusual Size, Rise (metal sculpture by Adam Curtis), The Fantastical Garden (metal sculpture by Alison Sigethy), Railroad Switch (laser cut metal sculpture by Vicki Scuri), POD (sculpture by Richard Deutsch).
- “Faces of Hagerstown” photo murals by local photographers were selected by a jury and the Artist Selection Committee for 3 foot by 3 foot displays at the Herald Mail fence and the Chic’s wall on Lee Street and on two utility pole wraps on Lee Street.
- Water Feature – a water feature that looks like water bubbling out of a rock formation was installed near the Housing Authority.
- Butterfly Garden –installed near the Housing Authority and maintained by the Lions Club.
- Hands on the Trail—mural of hand images of those who attended the grand opening was installed near Park Circle and was donated by the Housing Authority.
- 2018 - Installed “**Rivulet**” an interactive sculpture by Benefiel/McKibbin – “the forms of this piece imply movement or current flowing along the Trail, similar to a river.” Cast aluminum chairs ride the current and the viewer is welcome to place themselves either mentally or physically in the flow.
- 2018 - Completed “**This little Light of Mine**” mural by Eric Ricks. A great location for ‘selfies’, this mural depicts geometric designs, the beauty of nature, and the “Maryland” themes in honor of the nearby University. Look for the string art and the 3D butterflies.

Catalyst Project #6 – Expanded Downtown Arts/Events Programming:

GOALS: Leverage resources to produce more frequent events and build upon atmosphere created by popular downtown events.

Events

- A number of annual events took place downtown in 2018 including: Cabin Fever Blues Bash, St Patrick’s Day RunFest, Sweets on the Street, Maryland International Film Festival, Memorial Day celebrations, Western Maryland Blues Festival, the Tour of Washington County bicycle race, the Chalk Art Festival, the Miss Maryland Pageant, Shakespeare in the Park, the Washington County Free Library’s Longest Table, Thunder in the Square (two times – once in June and once in September), Hagerstown Hopes Pride Festival, USA Cycling Downtown Criterium bicycle race, the Downtown Block Party, the Dash n’ Splash fun run, Krumpe’s 5K race, What’s NXT Summer Slide, Augustoberfest, Taste of the Arts, City Center Ghost Tours, Spooky Sprint, Alsatia Mummer’s Parade, Veteran’s Day celebrations, Korean War Memorial event, awareness raising walks (Recovery Walk, Prayer Walk, Out of Darkness Walk, Walk for Freedom), City Center Tree Lighting, Christkindl Markt, Holly Fest, and Donut Drop. Porchfest was scheduled in 2018, but was cancelled due to weather.
- Wind Down Fridays – A series of six events were scheduled for 2018 (May 4, June 29, July 27 (cancelled due to rain), August 10, September 21 and October 5).

- St. Patrick’s Day Fun Run – Over 900 racers participated in this annual St. Patrick’s Day themed race in distances ranging from a one mile walk to a half marathon. An after party for runners followed the event.
- Event Guidelines – An event guidebook is under development and will serve as a resource to event organizers and create more event opportunities for downtown.
- The combination of the USMH Hospitality Center, which will seat 150 banquet-style and 200 auditorium-style, and new meeting space in the Maryland Theatre will complement one another in the recruitment of future conferences sized for these new venues.

Main Street Projects

- *Main Street Work Groups* –Nearly 50 volunteers are supporting Main Street Hagerstown through five (5) Work Groups on projects and initiatives intended to attract and retain businesses, investors, and property owners.
 - The Organization Work Group has maintained a web site to complement the City’s and to help visitors, residents, and business owners quickly find information about the downtown, developed volunteer and sponsorship forms, and held a volunteer recruitment and appreciation event. Additionally, this work group is fundraising to support Main Street projects.
 - The Design Work Group secured grant funding to update and replace the downtown street pole banners, worked with a graphic designer to redesign the holiday street banners. The banners were produced and installed in 2018.
 - The Clean, Safe and Green Work Group worked on ways to beautify and clean up city blocks by organizing spring and fall planting days along East Franklin Street. Additionally, Clean Safe and Green worked with city staff to add benches to the square and to update the lighting to LED lights on some cobra-head street lights. They also researched Adopt a Block programs and will be piloting a program in downtown for 2019.
 - The Promotions Work Group continued social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. Promotions also planned and executed the Christkindl Markt, the Sweets on the Street event, and the Chalk Art Festival. The group is planning additional events for 2019.
 - The Business Relations Work Group sends members of the ambassadorial committee to welcome new businesses to the Main Street area. Business Relations also held business focus groups, secured grant funding to create a speaker series for businesses, and continued to host monthly downtown business forums.
- *Façade Grant Program* – The City administered a \$25,000 Community Legacy grant for the Façade Grant Program for Commercial and Mixed-use Buildings in the Main Street area. The grant was awarded in late 2016 and the grant agreement was finalized in April 2017. (City and the State)
- *Engine Room Art Space* – Open Thursday through Sunday with fresh exhibits opening regularly. Continues to grow and flourish with new and alternative exhibits and continues to create opportunities for the community to interact with the art themselves. (City)

Catalyst Project #7 – Expanded Operations of the City Farmers’ Market:

GOALS: Expand operations from 7 to 35 hours per week. Implement private management approach. Make necessary capital improvements. Re-brand. Recruit additional tenants.

1. **Partnerships** – The Farmers’ Market has entered into an initial two-year partnership with the Valley Co-op for usage of the backroom of the market (April 2017 – March 2019). The Valley Co-op is a member based cooperative that specializes in providing the community access to over 35 local suppliers’ products including fresh produce, meats, and dairy products. (City)
2. **Promotion for New Vendors and Event Programming** – The Farmers’ Market offered three months free rent as a promotion to attract new vendors. Event programming at the Farmers’ Market in 2018 included Spring Cleaning Yard Sale (April 21); May Day at the Market (May 5); Breakfast and Blues (June 2); Ice Cream at the Market (July 21); Harvest at the Market (Nov 3); Veterans Day Thank You (Nov 10) and Hubs Hug (Dec 1). The City also increased social media marketing of the Farmers’ Market.
3. **Private Management Approach** – Reposting the RFP for private management of the Farmers’ Market with modifications from the initial RFP remains an area of opportunity. Modifying the RFP to receive proposals on a rolling basis until a viable private operator is identified is one possible option. (City)

Catalyst Project #8 – Expanded and Targeted Home-Ownership Support:

GOALS: Market home ownership incentives and support Neighborhood 1st programs. Establish annual rental licensing inspections, and continue excessive nuisance enforcement programs.

1. **Rental Registration Program** – annual exterior inspections to provide additional support to protect neighborhoods. In 2018, 9,233 units were registered in 3,621 properties. The Mayor and City Council amended the code in 2018 to allow inspections of the never-inspected units and to allow liening of unpaid license fees. The amendments go into effect on July 1, 2019. (City)
2. **Vacant Structures Program** – In 2018, there were 428 vacant properties in the program. Inspections of licensed vacant structures are ongoing to ensure protection of our neighborhoods and first responders from exterior blight and unsafe interior conditions. Prioritization of vacant blighted properties for demolition has begun and in 2018 a sixplex on E. Franklin Street and a duplex on N. Jonathan Street were demolished. In early 2019, another blighted vacant structure on N. Jonathan Street and a collapsing house on Summit Avenue will be demolished. (City)
3. **Home-Ownership Program** – The City was awarded a \$150,000 Community Legacy grant in FY 2016 to assist with our acquisition/renovation efforts to create home-ownership opportunities. This funding was utilized along with CDBG funding for the Homeownership project at 261 S. Prospect Street. Completion of two homeownership units at 261 S. Prospect Street expected in Spring or early Summer 2019. Assessment ongoing of other opportunities for this program in the three target neighborhoods. This includes opportunities to repurpose cyclical tax sale properties for homeownership. (City and State)

4. **City Center and City Wide Residency Initiative** – The City was awarded a \$50,000 Community Legacy grant in late 2016 to replenish the Down Payment Assistance programs. Using \$50,000 from City Economic Redevelopment funds, a total of \$100,000 for the Down Payment assistance programs became available for eligible home buyers. By the end of 2018, all of the funds were committed assisting three (3) new City Center homebuyers and ten (10) City Wide homebuyers. (City and State)

March 21, 2019