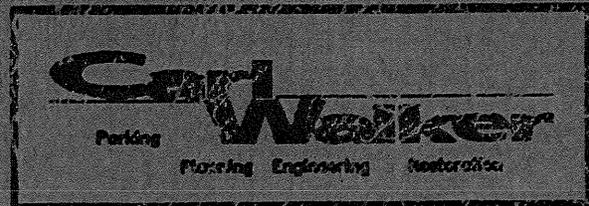
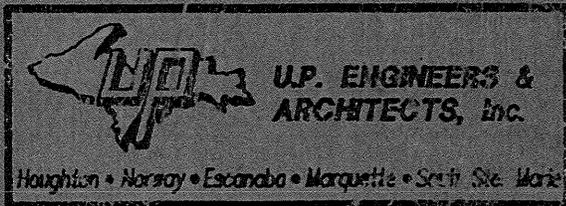


DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND PARKING DEMAND ANALYSIS

MARQUETTE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

OCTOBER 1996



**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN
AND
PARKING DEMAND ANALYSIS**

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960's, changes in urban development patterns, consumer shopping habits and preferences, and America's reliance on the automobile has negatively influenced the strength and business climate of downtown areas. Downtown areas in nearly every American city have been affected by this trend. However, some downtown areas have rebounded by responding to market changes and positioning themselves for growth and development. Successful downtown areas are continuously planning and carrying out development programs.

Downtown Marquette followed national trends and suffered a decline as major retailers relocated to new commercial sites outside the city. In response to this decline, the Marquette Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was created under Michigan PA 197 of 1975.

The Marquette DDA successfully implemented improvement projects, including a streetscape project, low-cost financing for facade renovations, and a major parking structure development. These projects improved the image and business climate of the downtown, reversing the trend of downtown deterioration.

DDA members strongly believe that the construction of the Bluff Street parking structure spurred considerable investment in the downtown. Because of this, and a perception that there is a parking shortage in downtown Marquette, the DDA commissioned an analysis of downtown parking conditions and demand. In addition, the DDA wanted the analysis to consider future downtown development potentials, in order to accurately assess future parking demand, as well as the best locations for investment in parking facilities.

The project team of U.P. Engineers & Architects, Inc. and Carl Walker, Inc. was retained by the DDA to analyze parking utilization, future parking demand, and downtown development opportunities. This report summarizes the planning process and recommendations of this work.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section of the report summarizes information gathered about physical and economic conditions in downtown Marquette.

STUDY AREA

The downtown Marquette study area is generally defined as that part of the city bounded on the Bluff street on the north, Lakeshore Boulevard on the east, Baraga Avenue on the south, and Sixth Street on the west. This boundary generally follows the boundaries of the Downtown Development Authority District.

ECONOMY

Marquette, Michigan is the largest city in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, with a population of approximately 22,000 persons and serves as the region's center for retail trade, health care and education. According to the recently completed City of Marquette Community Master Plan, the potential regional trade area includes approximately 110,000 persons.

In 1995, the KI Sawyer Air Force Base located south of Marquette was officially closed. With a base civilian payroll of nearly \$20 million, the Marquette area was projected to suffer major economic setbacks. Although nearly 10% of the county population was lost due to out-migration after the closing, the impacts have not been as devastating as originally projected, with the exception of impacts on townships in the immediate KI Sawyer vicinity.

In order to assess growth in downtown Marquette, a survey of employment was conducted by the Marquette DDA/Downtown Marquette Association staff in July 1996. This survey was also conducted to update information to be considered by the consultant team in the evaluation of parking needs.

A similar study of downtown employment was carried out in 1985. Since that time, employment in downtown Marquette grew from 1,688 persons to 2,318 persons, an increase of 27%. During the same time period, employment in the overall city and county grew by 13% and 17% respectively. Downtown revitalization efforts have had a documented, positive impact on the business climate, as measured by employment.

The characteristics of employment are an indicator of the type of development found in downtown. Nearly 53% of downtown employees are professionals, 26% are employed in retail and 21% in government. Downtown Marquette has evolved into a professional and office environment.

According to the Community Master Plan, nearly \$32 million in non-residential building activity was experienced in the City of Marquette between 1990 and 1995. Presently, two large commercial developments are under construction downtown. The Rosewood and Landmark Inn projects are strong indicators of the positive business climate present in downtown Marquette. Based upon the region's stable economic conditions, and the confidence displayed by recent investment decisions cited above, we can assume downtown can support a modest level of continued development in the future.

LAND USE

A comprehensive inventory of land and building use was made as one of the first steps of the planning process. This existing land and building use inventory goes beyond a traditional land use inventory. The inventory was carried out in order to determine actual building usage and underutilized building space.

This inventory provides a basis for evaluating future development potential, as well as the specific character and use of downtown buildings. It also provided an excellent reference for use when determining parking needs and future parking demand.

Within the downtown area, there is a good mix of land uses. Specific land and building uses include retail, food and beverage, office, government, residential, industrial, institutional, hotel/motel, finance, instructional, entertainment, storage, and transportation.

These categories of land and building usage were mapped. The Existing Land Use Map, included with this report in the Appendix, shows these land use categories. The uses of upper floors are noted by the colored stripe on the building footprint on the map

Estimated square footage calculations were made for each building, and for each use within a building. The table included in this report provides a comprehensive inventory of building use. The number assigned to each building on the Existing Land Use Map corresponds to the table of building uses.

Land use in downtown Marquette is characterized by one, two and three story buildings, many of which contain a mix of uses. Land use generally follows the historical development pattern of Marquette, although the development of off-street parking lots has significantly changed the intensity and character of downtown.

Concentrations of retail businesses are located in the 100-400 Blocks of Washington Street, and the 200 Block of South Front Street. Most retail businesses are located on the ground/street level of downtown buildings. Several buildings have used downtown's hillside topography to advantage, creating accessible retail opportunities on upper floors.

Downtown's favorable location has helped the district transition from retail trade to an office and professional center. Office space is a major land use in downtown Marquette, as evidenced by the land use map.

Industrial and warehouse-type activities are focused on their historical location. These land uses are oriented to the Lower Harbor.

Housing is not a major land use in downtown, in contrast to what is found in many central business districts. Residential land use is found on the second and third stories of a few downtown buildings in Marquette. Single-family housing is located on the periphery of the downtown.

Many government offices and services are located in downtown Marquette. The Marquette City Hall and County government complex are situated southwest of downtown. The Post Office and Peter White Library are also located downtown.

TRAFFIC/CIRCULATION

The Marquette downtown area is easily accessible from the U.S. 41 by-pass via Front Street, or from West Washington Street. Front and Washington Streets are designated as U.S. 41 business route.

Third and Fourth Streets are major north-south streets in the City of Marquette, and provide access to downtown from neighborhoods within the city. Third Street links downtown to the Village shopping area, located several blocks north of downtown. Both Third and Fourth Streets link downtown to the campus of Northern Michigan University, and the Marquette General Hospital complex.

Traffic counts are periodically made by the Marquette City Police Department at key locations on Washington and Front Streets. A 1991 count in the 400 block of Washington Street revealed an average daily total (ADT) of 18,163 vehicles. A 1994 count in the 1100 Block of Front Street showed an ADT of 17,707 vehicles.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Downtown Marquette includes a number of historical and architecturally significant buildings. These structures contribute to the exciting urban fabric of downtown, and establish an important sense of place for the city.

The Community Master Plan lists sites and buildings included on the National and State registers of Historic Places. This listing includes downtown buildings and sites, as follows: the Lower Harbor Ore Dock, Iron Mountain Railway site, Savings Bank Building, Harlow Block, the old Marquette City Hall, Hotel Janzen, Marquette County Courthouse, and the Father Marquette Park.

In addition to those buildings and sites, downtown contains many other structures worthy of preservation. Recent renovation projects have been sensitive to the buildings' architectural character. This approach has greatly improved the overall appearance of downtown Marquette, as well as enhanced the climate for investment.

PARKING SURVEY

DOWNTOWN ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The failure of many development planning efforts is the lack of focus on the real issues and opportunities facing the community. During a planning process, it is critical to identify specific problems, issues, strengths and opportunities. By focusing on solving problems and/or capitalizing on opportunities, the planning effort is meaningful and gains more support.

The primary purpose of this planning effort is to identify and evaluate the parking needs of downtown Marquette, based upon existing and future demands. To evaluate the existing demand, a comprehensive parking survey was carried out. This survey is documented elsewhere in this report.

In order to determine future parking demand, an analysis of development opportunities in the downtown area is required. This analysis considered underutilized buildings suitable for rehabilitation, vacant sites and underutilized land.

During the Downtown Planning Program, several workshops were held to discuss the project and to receive input from the Downtown Development Authority, other downtown stakeholders and the public. These public meetings were held on June 19 and July 24, 1996.

Downtown issues and opportunities identified during the planning process are discussed below:

Downtown waterfront: The downtown waterfront has been recognized as a major city development opportunity for a number of years. Land ownership by the Wisconsin Central and the Lake Superior and Ishpeming Railroads, current leasehold interests of several parties, and environmental issues have delayed planning and development efforts.

Potentially, the waterfront offers exciting opportunities for attracting new investment and people to downtown. Presently, there is not consensus among the various stakeholders as to the type or character of future development desired for this area. ?

Rail corridor: The railroad corridor bisects downtown south of Washington Street. This corridor consists of on-grade tracks, which turn south at Third Street, and an elevated trestle structure, which was used to convey iron ore to the ore dock in the Lower Harbor.

The rail corridor and trestle create a physical barrier, effectively dividing downtown into two areas. The corridor defines the limit of commercial development west of Third Street. The free movement of pedestrians is also limited by the corridor, especially east of Third Street, where an embankment/retaining wall and the elevated trestle are situated.

Main Street Parking Area: Main Street, between Third and Front Streets, consists of a wide right-of-way that has been configured to provide angle, metered parking in the center of traffic flow lanes. Public (rental) off-street parking lots are situated adjacent to Main Street.

The Main Street parking area is both an issue and an opportunity. The metered parking is underutilized, despite its proximity to the retail shopping core and other downtown destinations. The parking and traffic flow configuration is an inefficient use of the space available. Redevelopment of this area could improve parking utilization and traffic flow, as well as create development opportunities for privately held land and the historic depot.

South Downtown: The area south of the trestle, between Third Street and Lakeshore Boulevard, lacks identity. The area is physically isolated from the north part of downtown by the trestle. Many buildings in this area are underutilized. Both public and private parking areas isolate land uses and buildings from each other.

This area is in great need of revitalization activities. Within the south downtown area, several buildings have potential for re-use. Several anchor destinations are present, including the Getz's Department Store and the U.P. Childrens Museum. The area is close to the waterfront. These strengths could provide the basis for the development of underutilized properties within this area.

Linkage to the Village: Both downtown and the Village Shopping District, on Third Street north of downtown, could benefit by improving the connection between the commercial areas.

Downtown Entry Areas: The primary entrances to downtown do not communicate a sense of arrival. Downtown Marquette "bleeds" into commercial and service business areas both on South Front and West Washington Streets. Special landscaping treatments and signage can be used to establish entrances to downtown.

Gaps in the Downtown Street Frontage: The development of off-street parking facilities by private parties and the city has created large gaps in the downtown streetscape. These gaps create a psychological barrier to pedestrian movements. Visually and functionally, these gaps create isolated islands of commercial activity with little or no interaction between them.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The future development plan for downtown Marquette provides a direction and guide for the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to continue revitalization efforts. The plan suggests a number of DDA-sponsored activities to improve the functional qualities of downtown, enhance community appearance, and stimulate economic development.

The development plan is based upon the following goals developed as the result of DDA and stakeholder input received during the planning workshops and DDA meetings.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

- Downtown Marquette should embrace its waterfront location by orienting development to the Lower Harbor, and creating functional, pedestrian and visual linkages needed to support this orientation.
- Historic preservation and the adaptive re-use of existing buildings provides the downtown area with a unique sense of place and character.
- The use of existing parking facilities should be enhanced through the development of improved access, signage, landscaping and functional layouts.
- New parking facilities should be developed, as necessary, to enhance the redevelopment of the waterfront, existing buildings and vacant properties.
- Existing businesses should be strengthened by creating new and/or improved linkages between off-street parking areas and groups of buildings.
- The railroad corridor, trestle, and ore dock are unrealized assets that need to be integrated into the development of the downtown.
- Infill development on vacant sites on Washington and Front Street should be encouraged to create continuity to the downtown development pattern.

These general goals provide a framework for the development program. From these guiding principles, specific public improvements and private development projects were identified. These are described below:

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Main Street Parking Area: The Main Street Parking Area should be reorganized to improve traffic flows, enhance visual conditions, and improve the utilization of the public parking. A pedestrian linkage through the Luke property to Washington Street should be planned and implemented, to improve access to the retail core.

With Main Street reconfigured, the public rental parking on the north side of Main Street could be converted to short-term parking, for the convenience of the visiting public. Rental spaces could be placed in another part of the Main Street area.

The existing public rental parking discussed above has also been studied as the site for a parking structure. While demand will not likely support a structure at this time, future development of adjacent properties may require it. The proposed site is of a somewhat inefficient size, but it does provide a central location for a parking structure, and is now publicly owned.

Third Street Parking Area: The Third Street Parking Area includes the public parking lot, as well as the privately-held corner lot, which is currently leased for public parking. The corner lot offers great potential for development because of its location. From a downtown planning perspective, vacant land (or a parking lot) on downtown street frontage creates a gap in the rhythm of the downtown streetscape, disrupting the flow of pedestrian traffic.

There is also concern about the loss of this important short-term, metered parking lot if it is sold and developed.

A plan has been conceptualized, as shown on the Development Program map, that would develop the corner property for retail and/or office space. The concept uses the sloped site topography to advantage. By reconfiguring the alley and the lower parking lot, the building can be located on Washington Street without a net loss in the overall number of parking spaces. The plan also maintains an equal number of spaces on grade with Washington Street for short term use. Interior and exterior pedestrian linkages provide improved access from the lower lot to Washington Street.

200-300 Block Washington Street

Additional development of the south side of the 200- 300 Blocks of Washington Street is constrained by the proximity of the railroad corridor. A privately developed parking area is situated south of the alley in the 300 Block, providing part of the parking need for this block of buildings, which includes retail, office space and residential land use.

A pedestrian linkage may be developed along the alley. This walkway would improve the access to these blocks from the public parking on Third Street.

Lakeshore Parking

During the study period, a critical need for parking was identified. The Rosewood project, under construction, had been unable to secure parking required for an occupancy permit. The lack of available, convenient parking was also limiting the developer's ability to lease the space being created by the project.

Adjacent to the lakeshore trestle and ore dock is a large parcel of land owned by the Wisconsin Central Railroad. The property is now used in a disorganized fashion for storage of boats. The property also provides unregulated, free parking for downtown and for waterfront festivals and events.

The property is available under a short-term lease. The City of Marquette is negotiating with the railroad and leaseholders of adjacent waterfront property to obtain a lease for the land.

This land can provide an ideal, short-term solution to the Rosewood parking situation and for parking needs for the Lower Harbor festival site. In the long run, the land is much too valuable to be used only for the daytime storage of automobiles. However, securing the land now is a beginning to the resolution of the development of the waterfront area.

A development plan is needed for this area to provide direction and resolution to the waterfront development issue. The plan should recognize the goals of all stakeholders in this part of the waterfront area, while achieving the full potential of the property.

Lakeshore Boulevard Private Parking

Several privately-owned parking lots are located next to each other on Lakeshore Boulevard, between Washington and Main Street. These lots are configured and managed as separate facilities.

By combining and reconfiguring these two parking areas, greater parking efficiency is possible, creating additional rental parking spaces.

This site should also be considered for the future development of a parking structure. The sloped topography of the block is ideal for a facility with on-grade access at several levels. The project could serve both downtown and the waterfront.

Pedestrian Linkages

The Development Program suggests a number of pedestrian linkages and improvements to create better access to underutilized parking. Similar linkages that serve the Bluff Street parking facility are successful. Other walkway enhancements are proposed to improve downtown's relationship to the waterfront. These are listed below:

South of the 200-300 Blocks of Washington Street
From the Third Street parking area to Washington Street
The interior connection from Main Street to Washington Street
A mid-block walkway south of Main Street to Baraga Street
Main Street parking area to the waterfront

Recreational Trail Corridor

The City of Marquette Community Master Plan recommends that the railroad corridor through the city be used to create a lineal parkway and recreational trail. It has been suggested that the rail corridor could potentially be used for snowmobile access to downtown. This is a great idea.

A trail corridor would turn the railroad barrier into a green, park-like corridor through the heart of downtown. The corridor could improve the movement of pedestrians and bicycles to and around downtown, instead of hindering movement in its present role. Rather than present a psychological barrier, the corridor could attract people.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Underutilized sites and buildings were identified during the planning process. This was carried out in order to determine the future demand for parking facilities in downtown Marquette.

At the present time, two key redevelopment projects are under construction in downtown. The Landmark Inn is being developed in the Northland Hotel building, after being vacant for a number of years. The Rosewood Inn will result in the addition of new retail and office space to downtown, and re-use one of Marquette's architecturally significant historic buildings.

Both projects attest to the stability of the local economy, despite the recent closing of K1 Sawyer AFB. It appears the market is modest for office and service space, with a more limited market for retail space. Downtown continues to be considered as a good location for investment and business. Housing is an untested market downtown, but residential units with a water view are extremely popular in similar markets.

The real estate development projects identified herein have not been subjected to market analysis and testing. They are suggested as future opportunities.

As with most private development projects in a downtown setting, public involvement may be required. Land swaps and exchanges, infrastructure, reconfigurations of right-of-way or other public easements, and the provision of parking facilities are often used by cities to induce or achieve the development and utilize downtown land at its highest and best use.

Listed below are the development projects identified. These sites are mapped on the Future Development Program.

Vacant sites:

Third and Washington site: 8,800 sf
MFC lot on Front at Main: 13,500 sf
Parking area, corner of Baraga and Front: 13,850 sf
Parking area, corner of Spring and Front: 13,000 sf

Building Re-use:

MFC buildings on Front at Main: 20,850 sf
The depot on Main Street: 8,960 sf
Buildings, north side of Spring Street: 24,035 sf
LS&I Warehouse: 19,800 sf
Lakeshore Boulevard warehouses: 10,840 sf

The Marquette DDA can facilitate private development projects through a program of action and regular communication with property owners and other stakeholders in downtown. If the DDA is moving forward with a plan and implementing improvement projects, confidence is generated in the DDA's capacity to assist development. Private developers will not consider a project if they believe public involvement will in any way hinder or slow a development schedule. Unfortunately, this is often reality, and is one of the reasons downtown revitalization efforts stall or are unsuccessful.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The Future Development Program proposes a number of activities for improving downtown. These projects focus primarily on improving the utilization of existing parking facilities. Establishing better access to parking will benefit existing businesses, and stimulate interest in the development of underutilized properties.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is the organization to lead this effort. The DDA has both the organizational, statutory, and financial ability to plan and implement projects in the downtown.

Four key parking-related projects are proposed in the Future Development Program. These projects are realistic and achievable. Implementation can be carried out in partnership with the City of Marquette, cooperating private property owners and the DDA.

Implementation steps for each of these four projects are described below:

LAKESHORE PARKING

- Negotiate lease for land
- Prepare the site for parking (grading, gravel, parking lane definition)
- Work with stakeholders to develop acceptable long-range plan

MAIN STREET PARKING AREA

- Develop a master plan addressing:
 - traffic flow
 - parking reorganization
 - pedestrian linkage to Washington Street
 - streetscape
 - financial package
 - phasing

THIRD STREET LOT

- Acquire corner lot or enter into agreement with landowner
- Develop a master plan for the public and private land areas
- Have plans "ready to go" for:
 - parking area reorganization
 - pedestrian linkages
 - alley relocation

200-300 BLOCK WASHINGTON STREET

- Improve alley for pedestrian linkage to Third Street parking
- Encourage building owners to improve rear entrances
- Low interest loan pool availability