



## *State of the Downtown Report*

The Downtown Development Authority was created in 1983 to promote and enhance the commercial core of the community by making public improvements and encouraging private investment. Through its updated "**Second Amended and Restated Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan**", adopted by the City Council in 2007, focus is given to the downtown district where nearly half of Garden City's businesses are located. The DDA wishes to continue its efforts in order to further attract and stimulate additional commercial investment in the downtown area.

A ten member board of trustees are appointed to represent the City and its downtown business interests and serve along with the Mayor; serving as CEO.

The DDA Board is comprised of: John Prosch, Chairman, Randy Walker, Mayor/CEO, Bob Squires, Vice Chairman, Bruce Boland, Treasurer, Ken Versele, Secretary, Penni Klei, Dash Desai, Orin Mazzoni, Jr., Ron Tyszkiewicz, John Santeiu, Jr., and Brian Lindbloom.

The board meets monthly, generally on the third Tuesday with other meeting dates as posted. The DDA is a public body, meetings are posted and the public is welcome. The DDA Staff includes: Jackie Schatz, Executive Director, and Cyndi Bruski, Administrative Assistant. The DDA office is located in the downtown at 29213 Ford Road.

DDA Office Phone 734.261.2830 Website: [www.DowntownGardenCity.org](http://www.DowntownGardenCity.org)

### ***DDA 2009 Highlights and Future Goals***

In the past year, the DDA undertook an important study called for in its development plan that will form the basis for future activity.

A **Market Analysis and Strategic Action Plan** was completed to guide the redevelopment efforts, the report identified new businesses that should be attracted and businesses that should be expanded. The study's recommendations were based on demographic and survey data of Garden City and its market. The DDA also completed a **Marketing and Branding Project** with a marketing brochure created to market business attraction.

As part of its development plan, the DDA is in the process of updating the **1980 Garden Plaza Plan** with participation and input of the property owners and stakeholders for their vital input.

In 2009, the **Façade and Parking Improvement Loan Program** encouraged several business property owners to upgrade, resulting in the beautiful renovations to "Rare Muscle Car Parts" and "Allstate Insurance Agency". These projects also participated in the Wayne County TURBO program. Several other businesses completed parking lot upgrades with the Program. The DDA

is currently in concept development with several businesses working on façade and parking upgrades and a dental office relocation and expansion. The DDA is also working with a downtown restaurant for redevelopment and expansion.

Keeping the downtown attractive and well maintained is an on-going task of the DDA through its contracted **Maintenance Services Program**; the City has successfully performed the services in the past two years keeping the dollars in Garden City. The downtown businesses appreciate the litter-free, landscaped public area along the frontage making it appealing to visitors.

Last year, the DDA completed resurfacing work to several City owned **public parking lots** in the downtown, including the entrance to the Garden City Town Center with the shopping center owner doing their parking lot at the same time. The decorative streetlights were painted and the park benches and trash receptacles will be painted this spring.

Responding to a Michigan Department of Transportation requirement, the DDA upgraded the Ford and Middlebelt intersection with **new mast arms**. The new mast arms hold the latest LED traffic signals installed by MDOT, matching poles at the other intersections along Ford Road in the downtown were painted to match and also hold the new LED signals.

The DDA and its **Promotion Committee** hosted several successful events in the downtown with planning underway for the 2010 events to attract visitors to Garden City. Having developed the Farmers Market with the Chamber of Commerce, the DDA provided a grant in 2009 to the Chamber as they assumed ownership of the Farmers Market. The DDA will continue to promote and focus on the public improvements for the market as recommended in the Market Analysis.

The DDA's website **DowntownGardenCity.org** has been enhanced to promote the downtown and provide information on its businesses. Coming in 2010, the available properties section will be expanded. Also the business directory will be enhanced to provide more information and an optional print version for the visitor.

The DDA and its **Design Committee** has been working with George Hartman, Architect on three proposed public improvement projects: Community Pavilion, Civic Center Public Space, and Commons Corner.

The DDA invited leaders of the City, G.C. Schools, G.C. Hospital and G.C. Chamber of Commerce to **form a group to promote Garden City**. The first project was to organize an Open House to promote the Schools. With the group's assistance, the Open House was held last summer to attract students and families for the Schools of Choice. Secondly, a community ad was created for the new Wayne County Connect Magazine with the artwork donated by a Garden City resident and graphic artist, Brooke Rochon.

**Volunteers are vital** to the DDA for the success of its downtown events and last year more volunteers from the community participated offering their time and talent. The DDA office relocation to a storefront in early 2009 provided accessibility and encouraged involvement. The office display windows also played a part with attracting the interest of people walking downtown.

## **Future Goals**

The DDA's activities will be focused on the recommendations contained in the **Market Analysis and Strategic Action Plan** such as the redevelopment opportunities of the vacant and underutilized sites in the downtown. The DDA Board is currently considering additional incentives for its **Business Recruitment and Retention Program** like grants that would assist current business to expand and grants to recruit new businesses that are needed. Other incentives for development would provide funding for infrastructure costs and coordination with Wayne County's TURBO program. The DDA is considering property purchases that would encourage redevelopment of specific projects. Last summer, the DDA and City attended a networking event to market available properties and plans being considered to expand efforts in 2010. A new event, scheduled for April 15, 2010, is being planned by the DDA to host a tour of available properties by working with the property owners to attract potential new businesses.

The Market Analysis recommends certain **Civic Improvements in the DDA** such as: development of the public area at City Hall/ Civic Center to provide public gathering space for Veterans Day, Holiday Tree Lighting and other public events; redevelopment of the Commons Corner Plaza to enhance the appearance by creating a focal point downtown; development of the Farmers Market with a community pavilion to support the success of the market and host other attractions.

Currently, the DDA is gathering cost estimates for replacing the **streetlights along Ford Road** in the Gateway areas to complete the lighting plan.

The plan recommends strategies for design and zoning/regulatory issues, and the DDA is currently updating the **Central Business District Ordinance** to address business types (uses) for the core area and design standards for redevelopment and new construction. The DDA will be encouraging shared parking where possible, improved screening for dumpsters, improved rear entrances that are similar to the front treatment, and offering grants and low interest loans to the businesses.

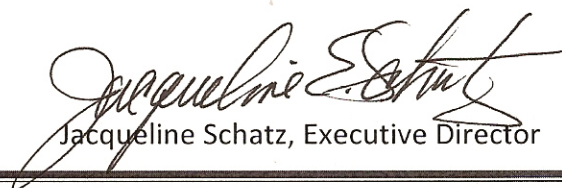
Once completed, the **updated 1980 Garden Plaza Plan** will have recommendations for the DDA to undertake public and private improvements to the Garden Plaza Block, that is home to the first Kmart and the city's first established retail center of businesses. The DDA is currently working with the business owners and stakeholders in a collaborate effort to identify realistic improvements for the block.

Lastly, encouraging an **inviting appearance and attractive downtown** is a primary objective of the DDA, now and in the future. The DDA will continue to maintain the downtown and work with property owners to create lively gathering spaces and pedestrian areas to encourage a walk able downtown. The DDA will continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations by forming partnerships for the success of Garden City.

Sincerely,



John Prosch, Chairman



Jacqueline Schatz, Executive Director