

# City Council Staff Report



**Author:** Colin Hilton  
**Subject:** Review of recommendations of the  
Task Force On Downtown Enhancements  
**Date:** 11-20-03  
**Type of Item:** Informational Update & Request for  
Authorization to proceed with Additional Analysis

Economic Development &  
Capital Projects

## Summary Recommendation:

Review the findings of the 2003 Task Force on Downtown Enhancements and provide direction on the following suggested next steps:

- 1) Instruct Staff to pursue any needed survey, technical study, or funding research steps necessary to put more clarity and detail to the suggested task force recommendations. Any individual expenditures beyond \$20,000 would come to City Council for authorization to proceed. The Downtown Revitalization Fund currently has funds capable of covering an investigative study needs.
- 2) Consider any budget allocations or amendments for any supported projects as a part of Spring 2004 City Budget Review.

## Description:

**A. Topic:** Review of recommendations of the task force on downtown enhancements

### **B. Background:**

During the Spring 2003 City Budget review, City Council instructed Staff to put together a group that would take a holistic approach to reviewing capital project needs in the downtown area. This was prompted by Council's uneasiness to approve a CIP line item in the City Manager's recommended budget for a \$4.8 million parking structure. Concerns stated at the time included a curiosity of how other downtown project ideas would impact the need for additional parking supply.

With assistance from Council Liaison's Jim Hier & Fred Jones, Staff organized a task force that set out to accomplish the following:

1. Discuss, debate, and make suggestions as to what capital improvement projects & program development ideas should receive further attention by the City and interested individuals & organizations.
2. Review 1998 Downtown Action Plan (DAP)
  - a. Report on the status of proposed projects
  - b. Decide which unfinished projects should be acted on.

3. Discuss and identify any new factors that have come into play that were not present in 1998. (ie: mix of business, competition from surrounding areas, etc.)
4. In light of the new factors, discuss and identify any new capital project or program ideas that would enhance the vitality and activity in downtown.
5. Identify potential funding sources for projects either left unfinished from the 1998 DAP or newly suggested project/program ideas.
6. Summarize Task Force recommendations & report back to City Council.

Membership in the task force included (2) council liaisons, (2) planning commissioners, (3) HMBA business owners, (2) Old Town residents, and a number of City Staff. Over the course of an eight week period, the task force met to discuss the outlined task force responsibilities.

### **C. Analysis:**

The full findings of the Task Force are outlined in the attached report.

Important highlights include:

“The task force started with a review of the ideas generated by the 1998 Downtown Action Plan (DAP) committee. While much of the previous committee’s suggested projects have been completed, those that were not, have now become the focus of the current task force’s primary recommendations.”

“Upon reviewing the ideas generated, the task force would like to stress the need to view and the suggested projects and program ideas as integrated.

Drawing upon previous studies & actions (1998 Downtown Action Plan, 2002 Hyatt Palma Study, HMBA plan to create a BID, 2002 OTIS Study, etc), this task force strongly suggests that both capital project and program development initiatives need to be made together in order for an effective implementation strategy to work.”

“In a nutshell (the task force recommends actions to):

1. Implement a capital project plan that creates a new downtown outdoor activity center while providing for a consolidated and expanded parking supply.
2. Create an operating organization that has a budget to promote, program and plan activities in the downtown area.
3. Strive to properly track and adjust to economic data trends.
4. Further define a multi-pronged funding strategy that can support these integrated projects and programs.”

Many of the suggested ideas from this recent task force are similar in nature to suggestions brought up by previous studies (1998 DAP, 2002 Hyatt Palma Study, 2002 OTIS Study). Additionally, the nature of the projects suggested by this recent task force also reinforces the recent goals set by City Council for economic development initiatives.

Staff has included as an attachment, a “draft – Prioritization Summary of Park City’s Economic Development Initiatives.” Based on earlier direction from City Council, City Staff has taken the results of the recent goal setting exercise and created a “evolving document” that visually portrays the links between the developed goals, strategies, and projects geared towards economic development. It is Staff’s plan to further develop this document and discuss it as a part of the January workshop with City Council. Even in draft form, it is important to point out how multiple efforts are pointing towards similar suggested projects.

**D. Department Review:** This report has been reviewed by the City Manager’s office, Special Events & Facilities Dpt., Planning Dpt., Budget Dpt., and Public Works Dpt.

**Alternatives:**

- A. Approve Staff’s recommendation**
- B. Modify in some way the suggested Staff recommendation**
- C. Deny approval to proceed with Staff’s recommendation**

**Significant Impacts / Consequences of not taking the recommended action:**

If no action is taken, the risks include loss of business and activity in our downtown area to regional and other resort competition. Further delays could result in the same issues lingering for years to come.

**Recommendation:**

- 1) Instruct Staff to pursue any needed survey, study, or funding research steps necessary to put more clarity and detail to the suggested task force recommendations. Any individual expenditures beyond \$20,000 would come to City Council for authorization to proceed. The Downtown Revitalization Fund currently has funds capable of covering an investigative study needs.
- 2) Consider any budget allocations or amendments for any supported projects as a part of Spring 2004 City Budget Review.

**Attachments:**

- Summary Report
- Draft “Prioritization Summary of Economic Development Initiatives”

**Summary Report**  
**Recommendations of the Task Force**  
**for Downtown Enhancements**

Membership:

Fred Jones

Jim Hier

Andrew Volkman

Bruce Erickson

Rick Anderson

Monty Coates

Ken Davis

John Plunkett

Barbara Kuhr

Patt Putt

Jonathan Weidenhamer

Report written by Colin Hilton

**Date:** November 20, 2003

# **Recommendations of the 2003 Task Force for Downtown Enhancements Draft – November 12, 2003**

## **I. Summary of Task Force Purpose**

The 2003 Task Force for Downtown Enhancements set out to accomplish the following:

1. Discuss, debate, and make suggestions as to what capital improvement projects & program development ideas should receive further attention by the City and interested individuals & organizations.
2. Review 1998 Downtown Action Plan (DAP)
  - a. Report on the status of proposed projects
  - c. Decide which unfinished projects should be acted on.
4. Discuss and identify any new factors that have come into play that were not present in 1998. (ie: differing mix of businesses, competition from surrounding areas, etc.)
4. In light of the new factors, discuss and identify any new capital project or program ideas that would enhance the vitality and activity in downtown.
6. Identify potential funding sources for projects either left unfinished from the 1998 DAP or newly suggested project/program ideas.
6. Summarize Task Force recommendations & report back to City Council.

The Task Force met to discuss & itemize a list of recommendations on suggested capital projects and program ideas for enhancements to the downtown area. Starting on September 30<sup>th</sup>, the task force met every two weeks for a total of four meetings. The following report reflects the discussions and recommendations given.

## **II. Meeting Topics / Ideas Generated**

The following is a collection of thoughts, ideas, and comments made by various task force members throughout the 8 weeks of task force meetings. This section merely lists ideas captured in meeting notes and does not necessarily reflect the collective views of the entire task force membership. Section III provides a listing of the group supported recommendations.

Topics / Ideas / Comments generated:

### **A. 1998 DAP Status & Summary of Projects Unfinished**

- A Parking Structure was suggested to be completed within 12 months of the 1998 report. Action has not been taken on this recommendation of a previous task force.
- Bulb-outs and sidewalk dining areas were suggested with numerous actions taken over the past 5 years. Only requests for increased sidewalk dining areas remain.
- The suggestion of a gathering area(s) near Main/ Swede/Post Office and/or Heber/Main location were made in the 1998 report. Action was not taken since it was recommended. Increased emphasis on this has been a topic of much recent discussion.

- Additional public art displays were encouraged in the DAP report with increasing desires to see greater emphasis placed on this goal over recent years.
- Additional “coordinated” wayfinding signage did see efforts made – however several members of the recent task force recommend another push to coordinate the messaging better.
- Refuse structures were suggested to hide unsightly dumpsters. One location has been built. A second location near China Bridge remains unfinished pending the direction given on any possible enhancements to the existing garage.
- Swede Alley sidewalk & lighting improvements were emphasized in the 1998 DAP. Not a whole lot was done to implement the suggested projects. Increasing growth and activity in this area suggests doing improvements to make this area more “pedestrian-friendly.”
- The corridors and pedestrian linkages to and from Main Street were emphasized many years ago, and have seen beautification projects improve these walkways. Additional efforts to improve these access ways were supported by the majority of the new task force.

## B. New Factors In Play in 2003

1. Transit Center existence on Swede Alley – this addition now places a much greater emphasis and first impression on transit visitors entering Main Street from Swede Alley.
2. Main Street Use Shift
  - a. A loss of office & personal service industries (salon etc) has occurred
  - b. Usage has changed on Main Street. (you don’t pull up in your car to visit the hardware store anymore). The commercial mix of businesses has changed.
3. Parking
  - a. There is an increasing perception problem of parking in Old Town.
  - b. There are more times that there is a supply shortage
  - c. Not so much a new factor, but an ongoing debate about how to best park in downtown remains a contentious issue suggesting further actions be made.
4. Swede Alley’s continued development
  - a. There is a continued increase in commercial storefronts on Swede Alley
5. Regional commercial growth is providing increased competition to Main Street

## C. General Statements

- A collaborative effort should be made to enhance the unique character of Main St
- Recognition of regional competition (big box) needs to be had with a way to differentiate the attraction of “In-town” businesses.
- We should promote a unique experience to both locals and tourists
- A new target audience should be:
  - Lost locals (including Basin). What can we do to bring them back? No compelling reason to come
  - Locals come when: 1. They are showing town to guests. 2. It’s economically feasible (2 for 1’s) 3. For events
  - Local service industry (salons) and other general industry (offices) forced off the street

- Wasatch Front day visitors?
- We should be looking at filling vacant 2<sup>nd</sup> story and basement spaces
- There is a finite # of square footage, restaurant seats, parking, etc. Rather than creating more commercial space through zoning and new development, we need to promote the most efficient use of existing space.
- You know the existing sign program is not working if more and more signs keep popping up.

#### D. Suggestions on Downtown Area Capital Projects

- Gathering/Activity spot – “Downtown Plaza” concept
  - We should investigate this concept further and review all possible locations. If a Post Office site is best, conduct an in-depth analysis.
  - We should define the scope – produce conceptual plans (square footage, cost, capacity, intended use)
  - Needs to be supported with an updated public transportation and parking plan.
  - Need to review the parking impacts.
  - All contingent on a proper funding plan.
  
- Expanded Parking Structure
  - Consolidate needed parking supply to the existing China Bridge structure
  - Promote easier access between China Bridge floors with connection all the way through from Swede Alley to Marsac
  - Increase ease to reach the overflow Sandridge lots
  - Mixed-use square footage on front face of proposed garage?
  - Simple, clear message on where to park
  - Funding thoughts
  
- Other Parking Lot Enhancements
  - Sandridge improvements (lighting, stairs, make more friendly, signs)
  - Parking under Main Street Mall
  - Marsac to Swede Alley connection behind China Bridge structure
  - Comprehensive way finding program for parking (public and private)
    1. Electronic auto count
    2. Maps of available stock at every lot
    3. Mitigation plan for when no spaces are available
  
- Close Main Street
  - Start with event closure periods to test out
  
- Sidewalk improvements
  - Main Street – No push for widening of sidewalks
    - Leave alone. Fact of life in mountain town
  - Widen a little for added outdoor dining areas in certain areas
  - Swede – We should have at least one complete sidewalk (east or west) for the length of Swede Alley
  - Lighting on Swede

Replicate main street fixtures.

- Parking on Main Street
  - Maintain current pay system
  - Adjust pay system to traditional meters
  - Go with diagonal parking (lose 60 spaces, allows wider sidewalks)
  
- Refuse Buildings

Should look into doing a cost estimate for enclosed structure adjacent to china bridge as:

  - i) Part of new parking structure
  - ii) Stand alone

Cosmetic improvements to existing building- Mural / art
  
- Redevelop brewpub parking lot
  - Create mixed use to terminate commercial end of main st.
  - City should possibly lease or sell to private developer w/stipulations
  - Should maintain existing numbers of parking spaces in any suggested development here.
  
- Museum Expansion Project – Has positive influences on other downtown project ideas
  - Suggests promoting a sense of arrival as you leave the transit center coming towards Main Street (Signage and building painting)
  - Enhance the pedestrian links to Main Street (both from Transit center side and from Park Avenue side – Deffenbach land – creating an east-west link to Main.)
  - A good example of creating “destination attractions” for the downtown area.
  - Suggest Downtown Park City as an overall destination area – not just Main Street.
  - Resort /Tourism focus supports the notion of promoting “destinations”
  
- Add additional mixed-use development in Swede Alley
  - Create a live-work-play-shop/eat activity area
  - More pedestrian-oriented, more urban, mixed economy
  - Expand downtown retail / restaurant to Swede Alley
  - Provide for additional 2<sup>nd</sup> floor office space and third floor and above residential units.
  - Residential units for affordable housing? Assisted living? Upscale condo’s?
  - Expand off the idea of the Downtown Plaza concept

E. Suggestions on Program Development Ideas in the Downtown Area

- Publish quarterly sales tax reports – differentiate by type use (rest v retail, etc)



- Measure other indicators (wealth, # of 2<sup>nd</sup> home owners, etc.)
- Promote better utilization of 2<sup>nd</sup> story & basement retail / office space
- Look to create an umbrella organization to promote, stage events, and market the downtown area (ievail valley association or DDA type of organization - events / marketing of downtown)

#### F. Funding Strategies

- A Main Street RDA extension could be sought for a two year extension – per approvals from just the P.C. School district. A longer extension could be looked into for anywhere from 10 to 20 years extended. The longer term extension would require approvals from 5 of the 8 members of a RDA committee – consisting of (2) City appointments, (2) PC School District appointments, (1) State School Board representative, (1) Fire District member, and (2) County appointments.
- Currently – a cap of \$1.3 million a year is put on the RDA’s funding – The current Main Street RDA area collects 8-10 times that. A request to increase the ceiling could be made if desired with decent arguments.
- Of the \$1.3 million/ year collected – an approx. \$400,000/yr mitigation payment is made to the PC school district. Therefore, any extension of the Main Street RDA would produce a net gain of approx. \$900,000/yr.
- Other possible funding sources were itemized, but with little time for discussion. They included:
  - A possible increase to the TRT rate.
  - Increase of up to a ½ percent on the resort city tax
  - Special Improvement District area
  - Private / Public partnerships – with allowances for placing mixed-use development along with the public projects.
  - Sales Tax revenue bonds
  - Property tax increases
  - City CIP & general fund \$\$’s
  - RAP Tax / Restaurant tax \$\$’s
- Generally speaking, the group was in favor of having multiple funding sources pay for the suggested projects. However – much of the discussion focused primarily on the concept of extending the Main Street RDA.
- Thoughts were expressed at contacting the County early on to introduce the thought of the City’s desire to do the extension of the RDA.

### **III. Recommendations of the Task Force**

#### **Overview**

The task force started with a review of the ideas generated by the 1998 Downtown Action Plan (DAP) committee. While much of the previous committee's suggested projects have been completed, those that were not, have now become the focus of the current task force's primary recommendations.

Much foresight and creative energy was placed in the 1998 DAP and those who served on that committee should be commended for their action-oriented visions.

Listed below is a collection of new and old ideas put into categories of recommended:

- ✓ Capital Projects
- ✓ Program Ideas
- ✓ Funding Suggestions

The level of detail on many of the suggested projects is conceptual and broad in scope. It is felt that the City Staff could further analyze and report on such areas as cost projections, land-use impacts, and detailed funding options. If the current City Council also concurs on the appropriateness of the concepts put forward, it is strongly recommended by the task force members that these be acted upon in a swift, action-oriented way.

#### **Rationale for Suggested Implementation – “Projects/Program Ideas are Linked Together”**

Upon reviewing the ideas generated, the task force would like to stress the need to view and the suggested projects and program ideas as integrated.

Drawing upon previous studies & actions (1998 Downtown Action Plan, 2002 Hyatt Palma Study, HMBA plan to create a BID, 2002 OTIS Study, etc), this task force strongly suggests that both capital project and program development initiatives need to be made together in order for an effective implementation strategy to work. In other words, one suggested project needs another. One capital project needs another capital project. A brick and mortar project needs an effective program to best use it!

An overriding theme supported by the entire task force is the need to further enhance and promote Park City as an overall attractive “destination.” The uniqueness of Park City is in its make-up of the town's three resorts and a Main Street that binds it all together. We should do more to articulate and brand our town with this unique destination message. Not only should we market these unique elements, but we should do more with our downtown infrastructure to give increased reasons for visitors and residents to spend more time here.

The elements suggested below either are destination elements themselves or enhance the ability to utilize and access the overall downtown destination area.

## Recommended Capital Projects

1. Downtown Plaza Concept - (a strong, catchy name is needed for this!)
  - a. The concept of providing a gathering space that can be utilized in many different creative ways is consistent with numerous City goals.
  - b. The suggested location would be from the current Post Office, 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the steps up to City Hall.
  - c. Possible uses could include:
    - Everyday green space enjoyable to both visitors and locals
    - Venue for holding events of all varieties
      - i. Biggies – Art Fest, Jazz Fest, America’s Opening, Sundance, etc.
      - ii. Not so biggies – Wednesday night concert series, farmers markets, entertainers of all shapes and styles
      - iii. Unknown – a place for any creative entity to come up with a good idea to host an event or approved display
    - Site for town gatherings, assemblies, peaceful demonstrations
    - Site for public art displays
    - A focal point for Main Street & all of Park City
  - d. The scope of this concept should include:
    - Appealing landscape features: to possibly include a water feature
    - Sidewalks, “street/park furniture”
    - Enhanced lighting similar to Main Street
    - Stage with support infrastructure for permanent power & speaker wiring
    - Permanent restrooms
    - A long-term Post Office presence on Main Street – the location of the post office on Main Street is extremely important and would remain an integral part of any gathering space concept.
  - e. It is the task force’s opinion that further research should be done. To include potential impacts on parking and area businesses. The feasibility of this taking into account uses of the post office property and the costs associated with acquiring additional land. Cost estimates and potential funding sources per the scope outlined above would be a good next step.
2. An Expanded / More Accessible China Bridge Parking Structure
  - a. Suggestion is to expand the existing China Bridge structure to:
    - a. Improve the accessibility of existing floors of China Bridge
    - b. Improve the accessibility and ease of getting to the overflow Sandridge Lots
    - c. Consolidate lost surface parking from other downtown area projects
    - d. While constructing to improve the accessibility and to recover the lost surface spots due to the new downtown improvements, build as many additional parking spaces as possible in the area previously looked at in the OTIS study. Rough estimates project this to be an added 320 spaces with a loss of close to 100 spaces – therefore giving the downtown area a net gain of approximately 220 spaces.

- e. Create an ability to simplify the parking directional signage by designating this parking facility as the primary parking lot for those who choose to drive downtown.
  - f. Concentrate on adding the parking supply and enhanced access ways without trying to add a mixed-use commercial component to it. Earlier thoughts of masking the added parking element with a public safety or commercial / residential mixed use component would seemingly be counterproductive in attempts to gain a parking supply. New commercial development would only generate new parking needs.
3. Improved and enhanced pedestrian walkways / features on Swede Alley, Main Street, and other thoroughfares leading to the downtown area.
- ✓ Improved wayfinding signage
  - ✓ Added Swede Alley sidewalk along its west side
  - ✓ Widened sections of Main Street sidewalk to allow for added outdoor dining and small gathering spaces.
  - ✓ A new refuse structure near or in an expanded China Bridge structure

The task force is also very supportive of the planned expansion of the history museum. This project serves as a terrific example of creating an enhanced destination attraction.

### **Program Ideas**

1. Look into setting up an organization that promotes, markets, and programs events for the downtown area.
  - ✓ With the fact that there is no clear cookie-cutter model to do this, attempt to piece together an organization that has a “board” that is made up of an assembled group – say of the City, Chamber, HMBA, restaurant association, etc – whoever had a vested interest.
  - ✓ Suggest having a full-time Executive Director position who would execute a comprehensive strategy for promoting the downtown area.

Recent studies the City has commissioned have mentioned this before (Hyatt Palma). The recommendation would be to act on this as soon as possible.

### **Funding Suggestions**

1. Look for multiple sources of funds to pay for the suggested projects
2. Favor as the most intriguing source of new funds, the thought of extending the Main Street RDA – minimum of 2 years. Desired 20.
3. Ideally have a dedicated funding source for the umbrella organization looking to program events and promote the downtown area.

- a. Perhaps corral a pool of existing funding sources (Rest tax, RAP tax, city tax, dues, fees, etc) to get a better bang for the buck with a cohesive long-reaching organization.
4. Look into putting the upper Main Street parking lot (Brew Pub lot) out for a sale / lease arrangement to solicit development proposals that could generate new funds while still maintaining the same amount of parking space.

## **Summary**

In a nutshell:

1. Implement a capital project plan that creates a new downtown outdoor activity center while providing for a consolidated and expanded parking supply.
2. Create an operating organization that has a budget to promote, program and plan activities in the downtown area.
3. Strive to properly track and adjust to economic data trends.
4. Further define a multi-pronged funding strategy that can support these integrated projects and programs.