Urban Revitalization
With a sustainable approach: Elkhart, Indiana

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Spring 2007
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L.A. – 404 Thesis
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Spring 2007
Abstract

Urban revitalization is a concept that needs further investigation among some of our nation’s urban centers which lack in appeal and/or environmental qualities. The concept can be approached in many different ways creating a difficult task in deciding the best solution to each individual situation. This report is a guide on how to approach a revitalization project. The projects main focus is on sustainable principals. The principals find a balance between social, economic and environmental aspects which are the foundations behind urban life. This project is located in Elkhart Indiana which is a town of about 60,000 residents.

Elkhart Indiana is a place of thriving industry, technology and diversity. It’s a place that at one time had a thriving downtown and led the country in technology by having the second ever electric car. Today the city has pushed away from the downtown focusing more on its rural communities. This has led to urban sprawl patterns that have degrade the unification within the community and has developed poor environmental conditions. Elkhart is said to have one of the worst air qualities in the nation which is followed by fairly poor water quality within the rivers that surround its downtown. Problems like this do not have to persevere. With good urban design and sustainable design principals Elkhart once again will be a thriving urban center that all community members can be proud to say they are a part of.

This urban revitalization project focuses on integrating economic, social and environmental aspects that are essential to achieving sustainability. This revitalization project demonstrates the ability to build upon the existing economic foundation while integrating structures with landscape systems and provides diverse opportunities for social activities to take place which build a strong and unique community. The overall design offers many opportunities for the City of Elkhart to provide for present needs while looking towards the future with the ability to adapt.
Building a lasting community is not an easy task and most often can never really be planned for. Times, cultures and ideals are always changing thus any good development must have the ability to adapt to these changes. One problem that persists across the nation especially for smaller urban areas is urban to rural migration. (1.1,1.2) Many people have been moving away from the city to acquire more land or open space that the city does not provide. Others move due to overcrowding or simple lack of amenities, but what these migratory people don’t realize is that they are really missing out on numerous opportunities. The idea of community is extremely appealing to most people but a good community can only be achieved within a well designed urban setting. Smaller urban areas do have the ability to revitalize unsatisfactory conditions in order to retrofit modern community ideals that reverse the urban to rural transition and Elkhart Indiana posses that potential.

Elkhart has great potential for urban revitalization to take place. One major opportunity lies in the aesthetic quality of the Elkhart and St. Joe River which surround the downtown area. A well designed water front has great potential to attract many people to any city. The city also has a great historical heritage in its architecture and musical arts. Elkhart is located between Chicago, Illinois and Toledo, Ohio, on a main rail road transportation route which helped to build upon the cities success. Elkhart became the second city behind Chicago to have an electric car that serviced the downtown area. After that Elkhart has been a leader in technology and manufacturing. Elkhart is also centrally located between other major cities like Fort Wayne, Detroit and Indianapolis which are all within a three hour drive. The opportunities are there to attract people but some issues need to be dealt with in efforts to attract people to live or visit the city. (see context map 2.1)

One of the city’s major problems is its economic foundation. Higher income residents tend to live away from the downtown which puts a strain on possible development. Currently, lower income citizens surround downtown Elkhart struggling to support its existing amenities. If the money is not there, a city can not provide the amenities needed to facilitate growth or revitalization. Since businesses and residents have fled to the outskirts of town an uncertain need for amenities took place in downtown Elkhart. This movement has created an undesired pattern in the landscape known as urban sprawl. Urban sprawl destroys land that could be put to better use for human survival and ecological restoration. But, since rural dwellers now demand amenities within
a close proximity, commercial developments have been popping up in random linear fashions throughout the city. Urban sprawl patterns infringe on the true urban fabric which was once thriving for the City of Elkhart.

Another issue downtown Elkhart possesses is the overall lack of social spaces. There are small neighborhood pocket parks located throughout the downtown but none of them make a connection to one another which essentially make them isolated to their immediate context. There are social events such as a jazz festival every year which creates a strong social component but these are just a few things on a framework with endless possibility that have not yet been explored.

Landscape Architecture is a profession striving to build upon these various ideals and has the ability to distinguish major issues from the opportunities and create a program for sustaining a thriving urban environment. Sustainable practices may also be applied to facilitate the perseverance of the urban realm over time making sure it has the ability to adapt to present and future needs.
Urban environments are the backbone of human attempts to integrate social and economic opportunities which focus on human survival. Humans need and depend on each other for survival. Ever since the industrial revolution, the United States has pushed development to a point where human needs depend on much more than each other, we are now depending more and more on the environment to sustain human conditions. Resources are being consumed at alarming rates and recharge rates of those resources are inadequate. Over extensive development efforts have put environmental conditions at risk. We now find ourselves trying to answer questions to self-inflicted problems such as over consumption, water and air pollution and alterations in global temperatures. Within the realm of urbanization designers, planners and some government officials share a certain consensus. The consensus in short reveals that, "Good development is only that which achieves progressive advancement to the human condition" (Sustainable Urban Planning, 18).

We need to develop or revitalize under strict limitations on conserving existing conditions in order to advance the human condition, otherwise we may be putting ourselves at further risk.

Urban developments should not harm the human condition, destroy the environment or segregate its population. Much of what not to do in an urban environment has happened to The City of Elkhart. These issues are very real and deal with current development strategies which spawn the necessity of change. A good revitalization plan along with sustainable practices is the ultimate answer to the dilemmas faced by decaying urban centers like Elkhart.
The City of Elkhart was first developed as a highly industrial city which remains today, but much of what remains in the downtown is the ruins of many industrial activity. There are several sites within the downtown that are either classified as Brownfield or Greyfield sites which are very undesirable for the environment and the overall aesthetic quality of the area. Brownfields are those which have been classified based on the type of production and the byproducts of that production. They leave behind potential hazardous chemicals in the surrounding soils and/or groundwater that pose harmful effects to the human condition. There is one major Brownfield site within the proposed site which was an old iron ore factory called The Elkhart Foundry that is approximately 6.2 acres and is addressed in the solution to this project. (fig 4.1, 4.2, 4.3) Greyfield sites are those classified as abandoned commercial properties that carry with it a significant amount of unused parking. This type of classification is also very abundant in Elkhart’s downtown and takes up approximately 18.5 acres of the proposed site. (fig 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7) Many of these structures posses potential reuse capabilities within their materials. Some of their structural components may also be used in efforts to uphold the sustainable practices which are achieved in this project.

Economically, downtown Elkhart has suffered from lack of private and public interest. Over the past ten years the only real big business the city has been able to attract is banks. Other corporations move their business elsewhere due to the lack of amenities and aesthetics of Elkhart’s downtown. This has put a major strain on the economic development of the city as a whole. Under sustainable pretences the proposed project will bring in the necessary economic components which will build upon the existing framework.
The third major component in achieving sustainability is the social aspect. Without the opportunity for social activity to take place a city loses its ability to attract residents, customers and outside visitors. Currently downtown Elkhart has limited opportunities for social interaction. Some restaurants and bars add to the social component but the effort remains timid. Other social spaces include small segregated pocket parks and streetscapes which again help but are not strong social components that make the city a lively place. This project focuses highly on creating social space which provides multiple opportunities for diversity in numbers and in culture.

Ultimately sustainable ideals would create a healthier environment, economic stability and social unification within the urban realm for the people of today and future generations. The main idea behind sustainable development is best put by the World Commission on Environment and Development; they say that, “sustainable development meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Sustainable Urban Development, 29). If only implementation of these ideas were set forth about eighty years ago at the height of the industrial revolution we would not be faced with such daunting issues in today’s urban conundrum.
"The future presents itself as an impenetrable medium, an unyielding wall. And when our attempts to see through it are repulsed, we become aware of the necessity of willfully choosing our course" (Karl Mannheim, 1929). There is no short or easy answer in solving all the issues dealing with a revitalization project whether it’s on a larger or smaller scale. In Elkhart’s case the size of the project does not present itself as the problem but the size of the revitalization itself that needs to take place in order to be successful. The answer finds itself in good design and making the choices that will advance the development into future generation without creating strain on other elements of the equation of sustainability.

In conjunction with urban environments Landscape Architects, along with related design professionals, inherently possess the mindset, talent and authority to revolutionize these types of development strategies to achieve maximum sustainability with a social, economic and ecological outlook on design. Overall, the compilation of all proposed elements remains essential in creating a sustainable urban development for The City of Elkhart. The success of this development has the opportunity to advance the human condition, meet the needs of every member of society and remain sustainable overtime. This revitalization proposal for Elkhart Indiana achieves maximum sustainability of economic, social and environmental aspects which advance the fading condition of its downtown while providing a model for future sustainable developments.
Elkhart Indiana is a place with numerous opportunities that provide a formula for success. The city is in a great location and has various aesthetic natural qualities that are being under utilized. The city’s residents are ranked 3rd in the state of Indiana for containing more millionaires per capita, but there in lies one of the major problems. Most of the private companies within the city tend to create most of the revenue that comes into the city which leaves the city to fend for itself. Most of these businesses are larger corporations tied to the RV industry and are located in the rural areas where taxes are cheaper. The City of Elkhart has struggled to promote private investment into the downtown area for some time. Why invest in something that is underutilized and unattractive to its users?

The urban to rural migration talked about earlier, highly reflects on the city’s current unappealing conditions. This is one of the reasons why people began the migration to in the first place leaving behind a city that has suffered in its existence. The migratory trend has lead to the stagnation and deterioration of the downtown area. Residents flee and businesses loose customers which in turn leads businesses to flee as well. This is a problem for many underdeveloped cities around the nation but the problem does not have to persist.

This urban revitalization project for Elkhart focuses on addressing these different issues and effectively demonstrates the ideals behind sustainable practices that will lead the city into the future. The application of sustainable principals enforced within the existing urban fabric of Elkhart Indiana provides a great place to live and visit. The idea is to create an environment that will encourage, not discourage, public and private investors with an entrepreneurial spirit to take pride in their city and give something back to the community as it is needed. The revitalization focuses on introducing additional office and retail space for these investors while providing each other with multiple and diverse amenities within the downtown area. The revitalization also provides a place for them to live which conveys a true urban lifestyle. The third major component the project provides is additional opportunities in outdoor spaces where families and individuals can be active living a healthier lifestyle.

All these amenities mentioned are important for any urban center to survive and they are provided by this revitalization project. All of these proposed amenities are provided within an existing urban environment that currently lacks in each segment mentioned. The project also builds upon a sustainable framework that will lead Elkhart towards positive growth without compromising present and future needs.
Significance is described as being important. The City of Elkhart is an important commodity for many people. Elkhart provides various medication, plastic products, steel products, electrical components, musical instruments and RV’s for the nation and/or world to purchase. Elkhart holds a very important job in maintaining these services that supply multiple needs. These are just a few significant reasons why this revitalization project is being proposed. Many other opportunities have been ignored by the city and its residents. The rivers that surround the downtown are extremely hot commodities that people love to be around. People are naturally drawn to water and the features that surround its presence. (fig 8.3, 8.4) The city also has a strong historical significance. From the architecture to its technology and music, Elkhart has been a leader in historical significance for some time. (fig 8.1, 8.2)

Given the previously discussed significance you would think Elkhart would have a great community based development, but the city and its residents seem to lack a strong sense of pride in their community. By revitalizing downtown Elkhart this project expresses the opportunity to rebuild that strong sense of pride and culture within a very diverse community.

The last major significance is to provide a model for future sustainable developments. There are many smaller cities around the nation and even the world that have been neglected. This project will provide those cities with a simple model of how to rebuild or revitalize their city under sustainable pretences in efforts to guide them into the future without being left behind to decay.

To achieve the goals offered by the city’s significances the sustainable approach will be a major guide in its success. One requirement, that was a huge challenge to the project, was to designing under the sustainable practices that would be beneficial to all. The project benefits all members of society from public to private investors to local residents simply there to enjoy Elkhart’s many opportunities and amenities offered by this revitalization. The success is found it the projects ability to offer mixed income housing and multiple opportunities for the entrepreneurial spirit that the city seems to have pride in. Building upon these economic and social foundations provides the city with limitless opportunity for a successful revitalization process.

The overall goals of the revitalization are to focus on rebuilding and adding to the foundations of the social, economic and environmental issues that have been discussed. The major site issues are to revitalize the Brownfield and Greyfield developments that put a strain on the ecological and aesthetic qualities of the city. Another issue is to revitalize the riverfronts to promote passive and active uses among residents and businesses. This project will essentially benefit the city and rescue it from any social or economic turmoil that it might be in or be heading towards. Local residents and visitors will benefit from the diversity in culture as well as the diversity in amenities that the downtown offers from this revitalization project.
Extensive case study research was conducted and proved important throughout the design process on this revitalization project. They helped to dictate what has worked in the past and what has not worked so well. Case studies facilitated different ideas which may or may not have applicable to the proposed site. Overall, the research of these various case studies in sustainable design helped to better understand what The City of Elkhart needs to guide it into the future with a positive outcome which creates a successful design.

The main case study I have looked at in depth is Holbeck Urban Village located in the United Kingdom. Just like the proposed site the Holbeck Urban Village development has been located within multiple Brownfield sites located within an existing urban context. First of all the project has done a magnificent job in reusing materials and structures to create various housing types and office spaces. These structures have achieved an adaptive reuse in the form of apartments, condos, mixed use units and commercial units. (fig 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5) Holbeck Village has taken a major stride in achieving sustainability because the development reuses existing building materials, creating less use of raw materials while reducing waste considerably. The development controls the amount of destruction to the environment by its ways of structural conservation and at the same time it is conserving 60 percent of its total land area for open space and prairie plantings which will help reduce environmental impacts. (fig 9.6)
In most urban areas density becomes a serious issue and could make or break the developments success. At Holbeck, the village manages to densely populate its area while having a balance of marketable business opportunities as well as maintain the proper open space to be used by its residents. Holbeck defines its urban village as a sustainable development combining a mix of uses including residential, business, leisure and community uses. Amenities such as bars, cafes, and shops form the key focus for ground level development. Healthcare, primary and nursery schooling, together with recreational and cultural facilities are also provided within an urban village. The balance of social, economic and environmental aspects have definitely have been achieved in Holbeck Urban Village and most of its ideals will be mimicked in The City of Elkhart’s revitalization plan.

Some of Holbeck’s minor details, which also lead to big strides in sustainability, offer all the amenities to aid in human survival while maintaining a good quality of life. A minor detail making major environmental impacts is the fact that Holbeck provides alternative means of transportation. These alternatives in transportation rely on low environmental impact strategies. Transportation ranges from pedestrian walks that connect to the rest of the major city amenities and are within reasonable distance, biking which coincide with pedestrian paths and public transportation via light rail and low carbon bus routes. (fig 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.7) These ideas would ultimately reduce carbon emissions lower urban heat island temperatures and protect against the overall environmental degradation of urban life. They would also help build upon the cities economic status and would provide a strong communal response against sheltered vehicular occurrence.
In creating a well designed sustainable development careful consideration must be taken in efforts to balance the economic, social and environmental aspects to assure the developments success in an urban setting. To achieve sustainability in the urban realm the development must:

- Provide multiple housing opportunities ranging from low to high income levels creating diversity in the social component.
- Create various job opportunities for small or large entrepreneurs in business or retail. It also must provide office space for larger corporations or research institutions.
- Provide a number of service options from trash collecting and recycling to transportation and recreation.
- Provide educational opportunities on multiple levels, from ages 5 and older.
- Provide entertainment options ranging from restaurants and nightlife to culture and arts.
- Provide recreation opportunities which allow for passive and/or active uses
- Use energy efficient practices such as solar energy, wind energy, hydrologic energy and reduce reuse and recycle on a regular basis and throughout the construction process of the development.
- Use proper storm water retention and drainage techniques like buffers around water bodies and gardenscapes around street corridors leaving flooding and contamination issues a thing of the past.
- Introduce conservation and preservation techniques. Preserving existing structures and materials will reduce waste considerably and conserving open space will add to the social and environmental qualities of the urban lifestyle.
- If raw materials are needed the use of local low toxicity recycled materials that are recyclable, repairable and durable are preferable.
- Educating residents in the operation and maintenance of their dwelling to assure sustainable practices are made aware and are put to use in terms of recycling.
- Use of low maintenance plantings that require minimal watering will help in using water resources for more desired purposes.
Program

In practicing all of the preceding elements and strong sustainable framework may be set forth in order to deliver success to any urban development. Elkhart’s urban revitalization is designed around the implementation of these ideals. As described earlier the proposed site possesses great potential to address all the issues at hand while providing the balance of social, economic and environmental stability Elkhart is looking for that will last over time.

Housing - (300% increase)
- condos
- apartments
- townhomes

Professional Office Space - (200% increase)
- smaller entrepreneurial
- larger corporations

Retail Units - (200% increase)

Restaurants, Entertainment and Nightlife

New Major Hotel in Key Location

Additional Park Space - (connections)
- outdoor athletic fields
- skate park / jungle gym
- walking trails / passive spaces
- festival space

More Education Facilities - (campus life)

New Library

Outdoor Arts Garden
SITE LOCATION

Elkhart Indiana is located in the Midwest region of the United States. The surrounding states are Michigan (being the closest), Illinois, and Ohio. Some of the major surrounding cities are Chicago to the west, Detroit to the northeast, Toledo to the east, and Indianapolis to the south. Elkhart is centrally located between all of these great cities within 150 miles which calculates into two to two and a half hour drive from each one. This great location creates a great opportunity for outside visitor to come and experience what Elkhart has to offer.

Elkhart is also located centrally between some local cities and towns within the northern part of Indiana. There is Goshen to the southeast which is much like a sister city to Elkhart. Then there is Mishawaka to the west which is in a high economic development stage. You can see on the map located in red is a large commercial shopping area which has a major drawl for northern Indiana and southern Michigan. A bit further to the west is South Bend which is a larger city but struggles economically and development seems to be somewhat stagnant. Granger and Bristol are the last surrounding cities which remain relatively small but maintain strong character within them. From the map above you can see that there are two major highways to the north and south of downtown Elkhart which provide easier access for outside visitors or commuters. The rings seen on the map show a distance of five miles from the proposed site.
As we zoom into the site specifically you can see the immediate context of the site. The proposed site is located close to the cities center and Main Street which is indicated by the blue dot. In red is the area in which the project focuses on revitalizing. To the north of the site is the St. Joe River and the rest of the site is surrounded by the Elkhart River which flows around the south end of the site. This site was chosen because of the aesthetic and economic opportunities in the riverfront property and the environmental necessity to clean up degraded areas within the site. The Brownfield and Greyfield sites located within the proposed area are great opportunities for future development and growth. The entire site is approximately 180 acres and is almost completely surrounded by riverfront. The site has many more opportunities that will be discussed later in the site analysis.

Site Inventory

In viewing the images on the next page you can clearly see that this revitalization project is needed. First of all from the figure ground image (fig 15.1) you can see that there is no real organization to what's going on in the site. There seems to be a lot of random placements for buildings and streets where they are able to fit. There is no real unity within the structures or overall character of the site, it lacks tremendously in identity. Once again notice the Brownfield and Greyfield sites and how they have a negative effect on the site’s aesthetic quality. Some of these building are located on prime street frontage property and truly subtracts from a comfortable urban street life feel. A definite change is in order for the proposed site but before that is addressed further discussion of the site and its context is needed.
From the map above you can see that population density is a major problem for Elkhart’s downtown. With such a low density and low income levels it becomes hard for residents to support the downtown amenities. There is a good amount of park space surrounding the site but additional connections throughout the site would make for a stronger design. As density rises so will the need for additional park space. The site is also surrounded by some pretty substantial opportunities for commercial and retail to take place. Main Street to the west would be a major commercial incentive for the city and further development of that corridor would be ideal in supporting the proposed revitalization site. The Elkhart High School takes up the southeast boundary of the site and provides an added community element to the overall equation. The YMCA is located in the northwest corner which adds another social element to the site.
FOR LEASE

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In further analysis of the site, breaking down the vehicular patterns become essential in understanding how people begin to move through the site. As vehicles remain the number one mode of transportation roads become very important in the design. As you can see there are two major roads. One is E. Jackson St. which splits the site in half from north to south. (fig 19.4) You can also see that Jackson St. is a good east-west connector to the rest of the city which has the opportunity to bring in high volumes of traffic which business love.
That main corridor through the site has the opportunity to have a strong commercial essence. The other major road on the east side of the site is Johnson St. This street is a semi major road connecting north and south neighborhoods. These major roads create a couple of node opportunities which may lead to signage or gateway opportunities.

Next we will take a look at the park space in and around the site. (fig 19.7, 19.8) You can see the existing green space and how the different spaces are very much disconnected to one another. There is a great opportunity her along the riverfront to build upon the existing park space to create an enjoyable experience for visitors and residents.

The downtown as a whole lacks identity. (fig 19.3) Located in yellow are various gateway opportunities that would distinguish downtown from other areas within the city and even further develop the districts the city has already developed. Another great opportunity is found in the existing railroad tracts. At one point the Elkhart depot was a thriving transportation node going from Chicago, IL to Toledo, OH. (fig 19.2) Today the depot is rarely used. There is a rail line that comes off the main east-west rail that has the opportunity to be transformed into a lightrail system connecting neighborhoods around the city. (fig 19.1)

The opportunities highly outweigh the constraints on and around the site. The only real constraint that exists is the rivers that surround the site which give it a very strong border line, but there have already been enough pedestrian and vehicular bridges established that this constraint becomes and opportunity for further connection to the rest of the city. (fig 19.5, 19.6)
The first design concept seen here expresses the big idea of continuing Main Street activity into the proposed site via shopping loop. This loop would give an overall grand pedestrian shopping experience that would offer a variety of different amenities covering all shopping basis. The loop would be about a mile around the entire experience and would offer a passive/active recreational opportunity as well as a major social component. The loop would also build upon the economic foundations which would achieve the sustainable focus. The rest of this concept offers business frontage along Jackson St. and high density residential units which would bring residents in from those rural areas. Being able to walk to work recreational opportunities and amenities would convince anyone to take part in this development scheme.
Concepts two focuses more on business and educational opportunities. Centrally located and along the main Jackson St. corridor you would find most of the business and retail opportunities. This plan offers various opportunities for the small entrepreneur and larger corporations to take part in the city’s culture while building on the city’s economic foundations. The educational component would be to attract a small campus like feel to the area building upon the existing plans for bringing in Indiana University Elkhart branches. High density housing would surround these areas offering business men/women and students to live work and play within a reasonable walking distance.
The third and final concept goes a bit more in depth. To see what’s really going on and what needs to happen on the proposed site a wider scope and time frame must be looked at in order to plan for the future in sustainable terms. By zooming out and looking 30 years down the road this third concept makes more sense. It looks at how the entire are will increase in population density especially as this revitalization take hold. More and more residents will want to experience the urban lifestyle that Elkhart has to offer. This concept also looks at additional park space and pedestrian corridors that will be essential as density increases. Overall this concept highly builds upon the social, economic and environmental aspects to creating a sustainable urban development that meets present needs while preparing for the future.
Here is that final concept transformed into a developed master plan which addresses all the issues at hand. Beginning this project on a sustainable level was the most challenging ideal behind this project. Under the sustainable principals one of the major aspects in design is to reduce, reuse and recycle. The challenge was to use the existing infrastructure, being roads and sewage, in efforts to save on raw materials and materials sent to waste facilities. As you can see from the 95 percent of the roads where kept as is. Some roads have been added or made into boulevards which requires minimal effort and enhance environmental and aesthetic qualities.
From figures 24.1 and 24.2 you can see how much of the existing conditions have been saved. The majority of the structures taken out were damaged beyond repair. Material were saved and put to use elsewhere in the plan. For example, the Elkhart Foundry building which had a massive brick wall on its façade has been reused as paving for the main pedestrian corridor that shoots through the site ending with the Hart Tower at its terminus.

The overall master plan offers tremendous versatility within its design. Throughout the mixed use units it is left up to the building owner and tenant to decide the spaces which will be used for individual uses. For example, the canal units can either be housing units throughout or combine commercial units on the first floor levels. The dynamic versatility is a strong addition to the social and economic aspects of the plan for sustainability.

You can also see from the master plan image that Jackson St. has become a commercial boulevard that does not subtract from Main Street but compliments it by adding different elements of larger and smaller businesses. You will find within this corridor the Hart Tower. This tower adds a dramatic effect to only from the ground but as you experience its inner beauty as well. As you climb the tower accessible from any street corner you come to the first viewing deck which doubles as a restaurant that offers grand views of the city. As you make your way to the top you pass a museum of artifacts that describe exiting conditions of downtown Elkhart and plans for the future. At the peak is the final viewing deck, which is approximately 15 to 20 stories high, were one can gaze across the beautiful revitalization and the historic City of Elkhart.

The new riverfront property connects the existing park space that surrounds the site by offering pedestrian walkways throughout. The riverfront not only offers a place to enjoy a stroll on a sunny day but it also offers a place to stop visit with other residents and share a cup of coffee or shop for that special gift you have been looking for. The whole site is really intended to be experienced at a pedestrian level while adding strong social components that make urban life fun and exciting.
LEGEND

A.1 - existing apartment structure
A.2 – new apartment structure
AM – art museum
C.1 – existing commercial units
C.2 – new or revitalized commercial units
CO – corporate office or technology research center
D - depot
EB – existing bank
FM – farmers market
HT - hart tower

LB – new library
M.1 – smaller mixed use units commercial / residential
M.2 – canal mixed use units retail commercial / condos / studios
M.3 – larger mixed use units commercial / retail / business
M.4 – smaller mixed use townhomes
PS – possible parking structure
R.1 – single family residential
RF.1 – new riverfront structure
RF.2 – structural reuse for riverfront commercial
PLAN ENLARGEMENT

26 Master Plan
The master plan enlargement on the previous page shows just how pedestrian friendly the new riverfront is and how it adds to the social component of urban life. This area is perceived to be a lively area that any person would want to experience. From the various shopping opportunities to the canal to the waterfall at the end of the canal, this area has it all. You can shop, you can relax and enjoy great views of the river and you can just get out for some exercise.

The sections on this page help to better understand the character of structures and how they relate to the landscape. The canal section above cuts through the apartment building at the end of the north end of the canal. There is a hole cut into the structure to continue the grand view into the distance viewing a fountain feature on the backside of the building. The section below describes what the canal shops may look like and how the waterfall goes out into the Elkhart River. The section on the bottom shows building heights throughout the development and how it relates back to the river.
Figure 28.1 shows the character of what the M.1 mixed use structures would look like. They have commercial/retail on the first floor and residential above. This has the opportunity to create a live work environment which would be ideal for those of a lower income status that are either just working or own their own business. Figure 28.2 is a perspective of the pedestrian corridor that ends at the Hart Tower. This image also shows the proposed library with some mixed use opportunities on the first floor. Again these elements add to the social and economic components of the plan. Figure 28.3 shows the park space between the canal structures and looks out onto more park space in front of the new art museum. These elements add to the environmental aspects of the development and enhance the sustainable efforts of the design. Finally figure 28.4 shows the character and levels expressed earlier within the Hart Tower.
CONCLUSION

Overall The City of Elkhart has come a long way since it first became a city back in the 1800’s. The major downfall to its hindered success has mostly been due to the urban sprawl effect. The urban to rural migration of resident and businesses lead to the deterioration of downtown Elkhart. What has remained is a low income low density community that struggles to fend for itself thus the degradation sets in. Throughout the process of revitalization many strategies have been looked at in order to rebuild the city and its lack luster image. The best strategy for success was found in a sustainable approach.

This revitalization project has successfully addressed all the problems associated with current conditions. Within the realm of the three major focus areas, of social, economic and environmental, this revitalization plan has done a great job in supplying the city with multiple opportunities. Within the social realm, the plan has offered numerous gathering places and spaces. The plan incorporates mixed use and mixed income opportunities that give people of all economic backgrounds to partake in the cities offerings. Within the economic realm, the plan highly incorporates opportunities for small and large business to take place. The number of units has increased substantially and with the added social and aesthetic qualities the city should have no problem getting businesses to find space in downtown. Finally, in the realm of the environmental component, the plan offers more greenspace, reduced waste and added vegetation along the river corridors to protect against water contamination. Other elements added are solar components blended with structural elements, wind energy elements and green roof elements that reduce urban heat island effects and add to the overall green space.

“Good development is only that which achieves progressive advancement to the human condition” (Sustainable Urban Planning, 18). This development has surpassed the expectations of the advancement of the human condition in Elkhart. This plan also offers opportunities for growth and services the needs of future generations.


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