



3. Recommendations for Three Downtown Spaces

Hamilton Park

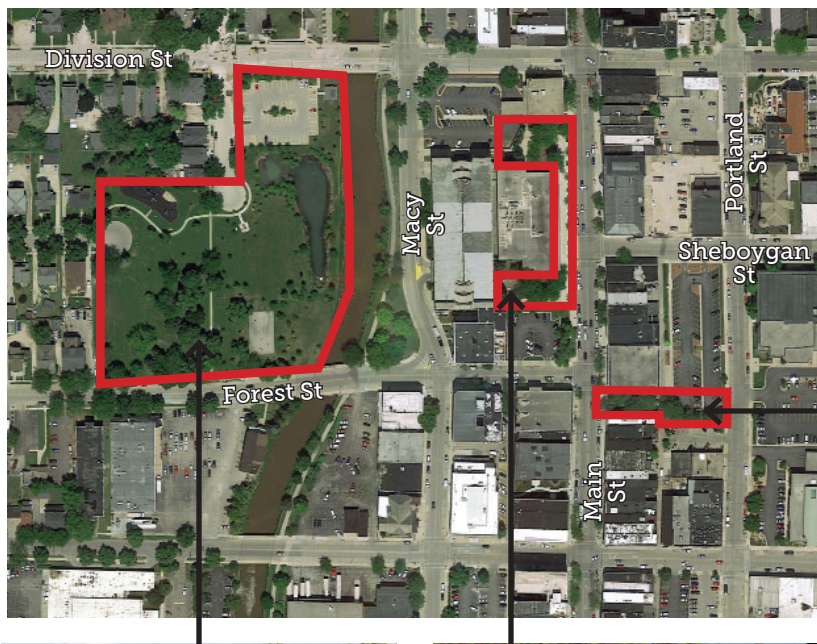
Main Street Plaza

US Bank Greenspace

Introduction

Hamilton Park, Main Street Plaza and the US Bank greenspace were selected as three spaces to initially examine and improve. Working together with the Steering Committee, the team conducted a day-long analysis of these three sites. The three sites were chosen because they represent three different types of spaces downtown, and they each have different user groups.

The analysis consisted of on-site observation and of how the space is being used, what behaviors and activities occur, whether the physical space is conducive to positive behaviors and what small, medium and large scale investments can be made to further improve the use and care of these spaces.



**Three Spaces in Downtown
Fond du Lac**



Hamilton Park



Main Street Plaza



US Bank Greenspace

Hamilton Park

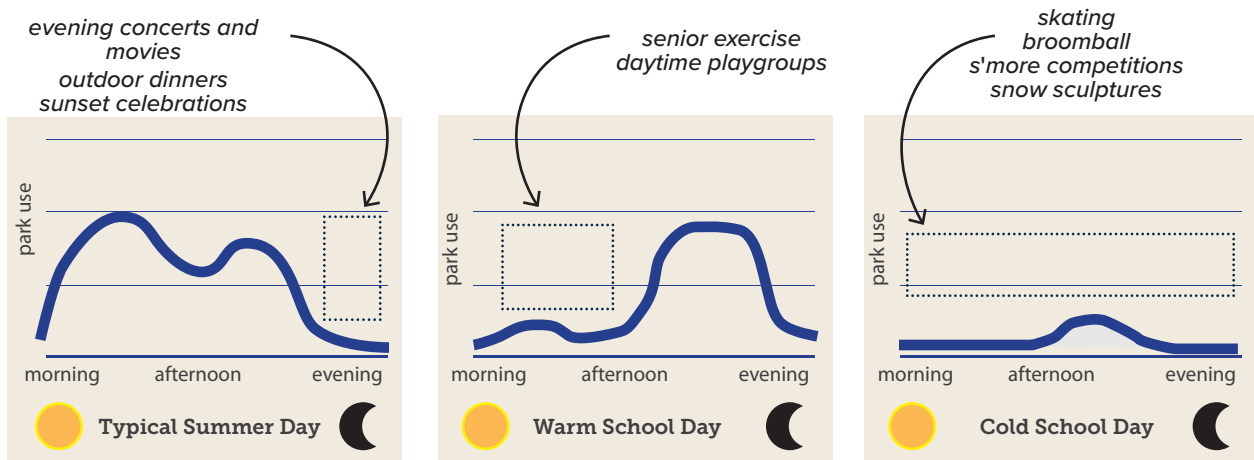
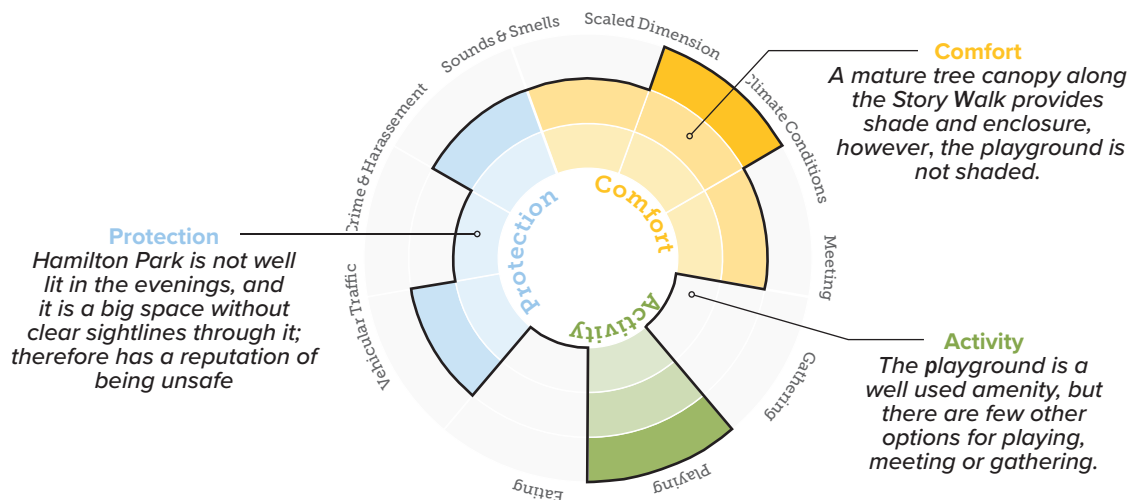
Analysis of Hamilton Park

Despite its proximity between the neighborhoods and Downtown and its location along the river, Hamilton Park is not considered a Downtown Riverfront Park. Many downtown visitors and employees and business owners are scarcely aware of the park's existence. Others who may be aware of the park may not feel comfortable using the park. Families and children who use the park rarely combine it with a visit to downtown - just a block and a half away.

The playground is well used by younger children in the neighborhood. It is a recent investment and it provides the most consistent activity in the park. However it is tucked away in the north east corner of the park, sight lines to the playground are obscured and there are not paths to the playground from Forest Avenue. The playground also attracts a relatively narrow spectrum of the community - young children and young families. The lack of shade seating, restrooms and other uses in the park are limiting factors to the use of the playground.

The Story Walk is another popular attraction. It is used in the warmer months by staff at the Library and children throughout the city. This activity exposes people from beyond the neighborhood to the park.

Hamilton Park is a downtown riverfront park, however it is generally not considered to a downtown riverfront park



Vision for Hamilton Park

Hamilton Park will become a Downtown riverfront Park that mixes neighborhood/family uses with community gatherings, and environmental awareness

Primary Recommendations

1. More and Wider Programming for all Parts of Hamilton Park

For the park to become more successful it should fulfill the needs of both residents who live nearby as well visitors, employees, and business owners downtown. It is a relatively large park, therefore it has the capacity to be heavily used, with multiple activities and events (programmed and not programmed) throughout any given day, week, or month.

In order to facilitate broader programming, the park should be better defined into a series of zones that structure uses and programming.

- The Play Area: The Playground and west half of the park
- The Meadow: The east half of the Park
- The Riverfront: both sides of the river and the wetlands
- Forest Avenue

2. Take Better Advantage of its Location

The park can take greater advantage of its location along the river and proximity to downtown.

The riverfront, bridges and wetlands can be developed into a recreational and educational focal point. Partnerships with the DNR and environmental advocacy groups can explore ways to increase access to and stewardship of the river and watershed. This can include adding flood storage capacity, a small boat launch, trails along the river and use of the bridges for fishing and weekend plaza.

Actively engaging the riverfront and the bridges as an integral part of Hamilton Park so will give the park a greater purpose and identity of its own.

In addition, to engaging the river Hamilton Park has an opportunity to become Downtown's primary greenspace and gathering space. With appropriate improvements it can become a place for larger gatherings such as concerts, movies, and large picnics. To become such a place, it would need facilities such as a gazebo or bandshell, restrooms and concessions, and better access.

3. Build off What is Currently Working

The playground in the north east corner of the park is the most consistently active place in the park. It is a popular attraction for kids and families in the neighborhood. In order to leverage this success and create greater use of the park, efforts should be made to allow playground users to spend more time in the park and to attract more people to use the playground.

With better access to the playground (sightlines and paths) a shade structure, restroom, picnic tables and chairs, and integration of the large lawn to the south, entire west side of the park would become a larger attraction for more children and families. With access to balls and games, the playground activity can expand into the lawn and basketball court for informal recreation and large motor play for children and adults.

Programming for Hamilton Park

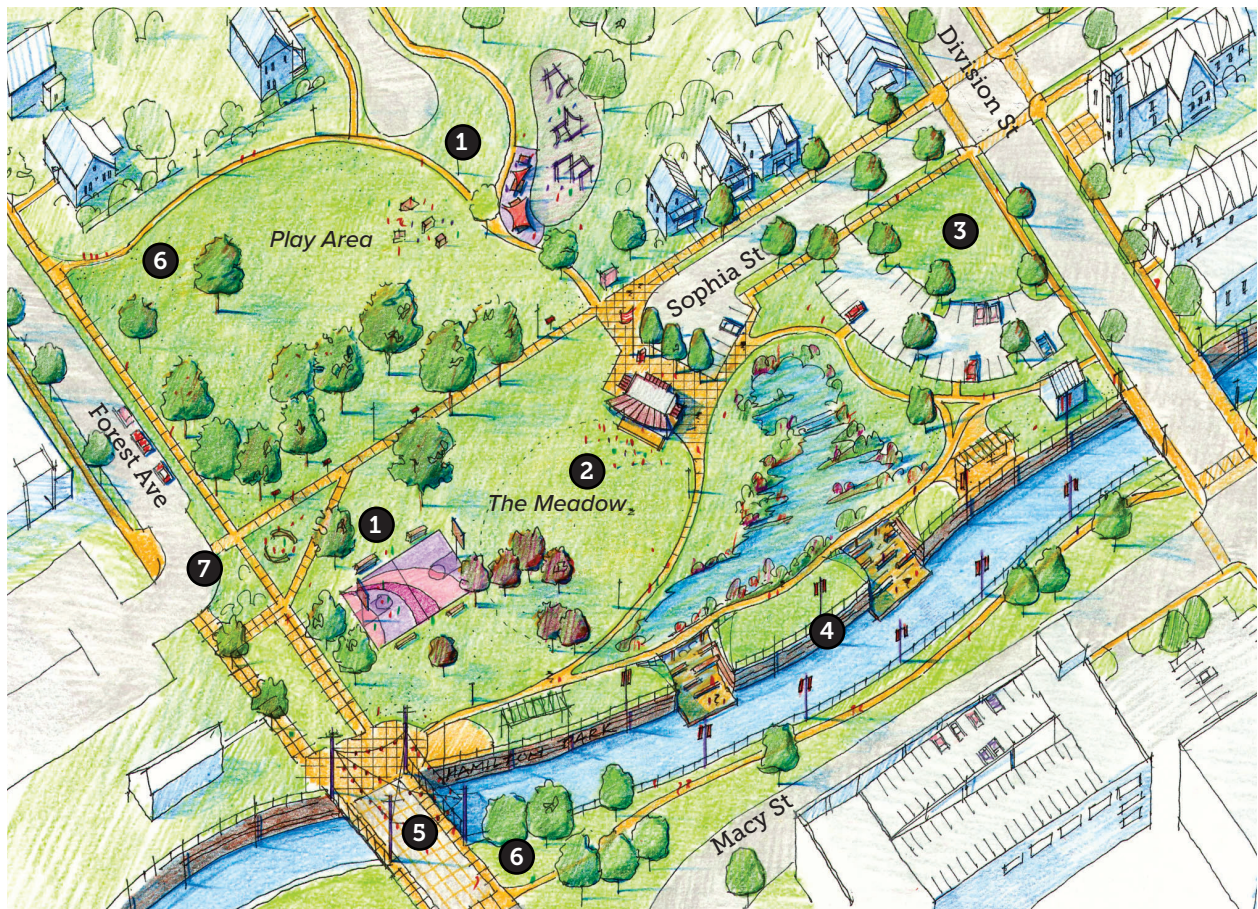
Your invitation to use Hamilton Park:

- to the **faith community** for weekend services
- to **children and adults** for informal pickup soccer, basketball, touch football games
- to the **Downtown Partnership and the arts community** for concerts, performances, watch parties, and movies.
- to the **maker and diy community** for arts and crafts fairs in the park and on the bridges
- to **environmental advocacy groups** and horticulturists to use the park educational programs along the river
- to **fitness enthusiasts** for group exercises
- to **fishing enthusiasts** to fish from the bridges
- to **the neighborhood** for picnics and annual events
- to the Y, Boys and Girls Club, and other **youth organizations** for after school and summer activities



Design for Hamilton Park

Potential Improvements to Hamilton Park



Recommendations	
1	Add shade structure and picnic area to playground to allow more people to use the playground more frequently and longer.
2	Provide small bandshell or gazebo with restrooms and entry plaza to facilitate larger gatherings and events.
3	Reconfigure parking lot and entrance to the park from the north to create a more welcoming entrance to the park, reduce runoff and create more usable park space.
4	Augment wetland with greater flood capacity, new paths and better connection to the river in order to provide new recreational, educational and horticultural opportunities .
5	Consider permanent closure of Forest Avenue and bridge in order to expand the park, convert the bridge into a plaza.
6	Improve entry to park and pathways through the park in order to better define the edges and circulation through the park.
7	Support the Story Walk with a small gathering area for storytime readings.
8	Improve the basketball court with new paint and benches.



Design for Hamilton Park



Existing



a small bandshell with restrooms and concessions for medium and large events in the park

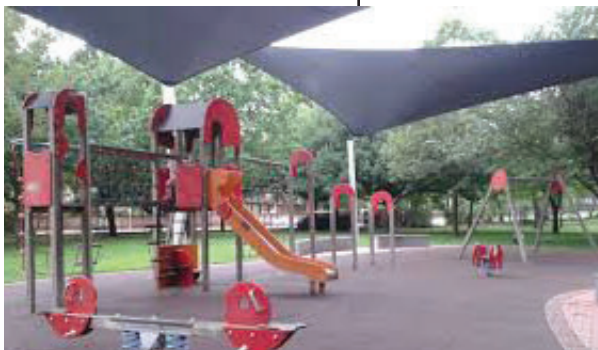


Proposed

shading and picnic tables to allow kids and families to use the park longer and more frequently

new paths through the park improve access and define spaces within the park

larger flexible play objects attract a different age group to the park and allows them to exercise in the large grassy area



Main Street Plaza

Analysis of Main Street Plaza

Main Street Plaza is located in front of the Marian Center for Health Professionals, between Forest Avenue and Macy Street. The Plaza consists of a widened sidewalk as well as the spaces leading to the parking garage on the north and south sides of the Marian building.

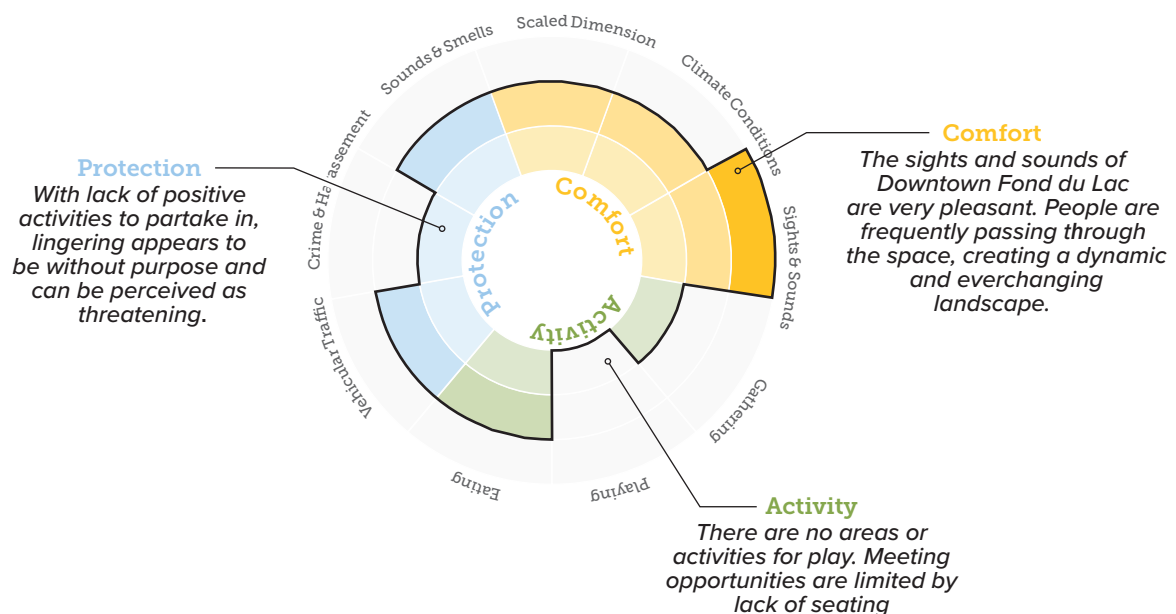
It is a busy location, with a relatively high amount of pedestrian traffic because it is located at the intersection of a public sidewalk, a well used parking garage, and the Marian Nursing school.

The space was formerly a bus transfer location; currently it is used for the Wednesday Farmer's Market. The low walls are often used for sitting and relaxing over the lunch hour by the general public.

Main Street Plaza suffers, primarily from lack of definition and purpose. Participants in the study knew where Main Street Plaza is, generally, but they did not know the purpose of the space aside from being the location of the Farmer's Market.

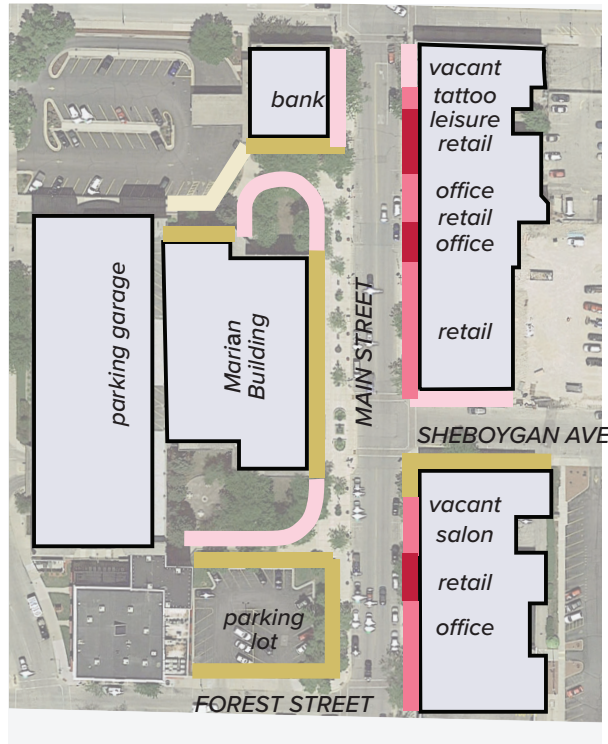
Main Street Plaza is also challenged by being dominated by a building edge (the Marian building) that has no doors or active uses facing the sidewalk. Unlike the rest of Main Street that has small mercantile buildings with doors every 30-50 feet, the Marian building is a long facade with no doors or windows to animate the sidewalk.

Main Street Plaza has great potential because it is a crossroads with high pedestrian volumes; however it suffers from lack of purpose and invitations for staying.



Analysis of Main Street Plaza

Edges Defining Main Street Plaza



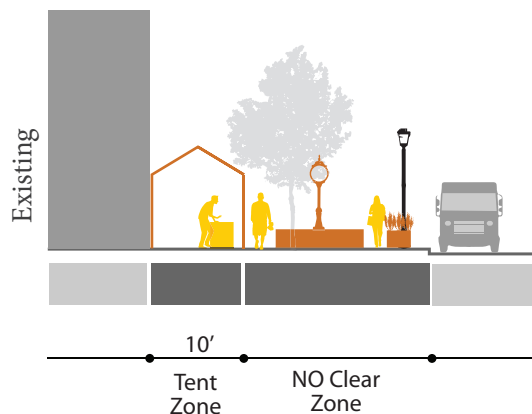
- Hostile Edges
- Plain Edges
- Comfortable Edges
- Semi-active Edges
- Active Edges



Edges of Main Street Plaza

The edges of Main Street Plaza are not fully supportive of an active space. The buildings across the street are lively and transparent, however, the Marian building is a blank wall. Walkways to the parking garage are plain and uninteresting.

Circulation on Main Street Plaza



Main Street Plaza

The 30' wide sidewalk is encumbered with several fixed and mounted objects. On Market days the large planters and mounted benches prevent clear circulation and easy access between stalls.

Vision for Main Street Plaza

Main Street Plaza will become an active plaza in the Downtown, filled with daily opportunities for fun, music, food, and spontaneity

Primary Recommendations

1. Define the Spaces within the Plaza

The plaza suffers from lack of definition and purpose. Generally people know the Main Street Plaza is the space around the Marian Nursing School building, however, the lack of programming within it creates confusion as to the purpose and identity of the space.

One of the issues is that the Main Street Plaza is a large space - stretching around the sidewalk side of the Marian Nursing School building and connecting to the parking garages. So Main Street Plaza is really three separate spaces.

This Plan recommends defining the spaces and giving them more clarity. The space in front of the building should have a clearzone in the middle of the walkway with areas aside it that can be programmed.

2. Improve the quality of edges of the Plaza

While the east side of Main Street is relatively active with transparent ground floor facades, multiple doorways, and active or semi-active uses within the buildings, the west side is the opposite. All the edges along Main Street Plaza, whether defined by a building or a parking lot can be greatly improved with low cost and simple interventions.

This Plan recommends the walkways connecting the parking garages to the sidewalk be improved with wayfinding, landscaping, and benches located under trees.

3. Create invitations to spend time in the Plaza.

People will not spend time in a space unless they are invited or prompted to do so with amenities, features, and events that welcome them. Main Street Plaza is in a good location, what it lacks are the invitations for people to spend time in the space.

The Plan recommends the City work together with Marian Nursing School and the Downtown partnership to initiate a program in which colorful lightweight moveable chairs and tables are brought into the space in warm weather months. Initially they can be located around the curved low wall, however over time, the Plan recommends redesigning the space in front of the building to have fixed and flexible furnishings / amenities to create a lively space.

Programming for Main Street Plaza

Your Invitation to Use Main Street Plaza

- to the **nursing school** to perform health screenings and blood pressure tests
- to **local musicians** to do lunchtime and weekend performances
- to **artists** to create sidewalk masterpieces
- to the **gaming community** to compete in giant jenga, ping pong and chess
- to **piano players** to entertain on a free piano
- to the **bike community** to design an install personalized bike racks
- to **industrial designers and artists** to design interactive art pieces

