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# Downtown District Implementation Recommendations

The following are potential administrative recommendations of this project. These recommendations are the result of a review of past planning efforts in Plymouth, a review of downtown revitalization best practices, and an evaluation of initiatives and projects administered in communities with successful downtowns.

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## 1. Hire an Economic Development Director at the City of Plymouth.

This strategy recommends that the City of Plymouth hire an Economic Development Director to help implement the recommendations set forth in this plan. This position is envisioned to work with downtown property owners to address economic development barriers and discuss funding opportunities, promote tourism and visitor spending, and support continued revitalization of the downtown area. An Economic Development Director could also help to establish and steer other city-wide economic development initiatives and projects.

## 2. Adopt standards in a new downtown design overlay zoning district.

An overlay district (standing in contrast to guidelines) is a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district over one or more existing (base) zoning districts. A design overlay district, in particular, will regulate building design elements, such as storefront facades, building materials and colors, and display windows.

## 3. Form an architectural design sub-committee of the Redevelopment Authority.

The City will need a review body with the technical expertise to evaluate permit applications to determine the extent to which they comply with the requirements and intent of the downtown design standards. It is suggested to be a small group, comprised of at least one member with subject-matter expertise (e.g., an architect or urban designer).



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#### **4. Support the formation of a steering committee to explore the establishment of a downtown business improvement district.**

A business improvement district (BID) is a special assessment district, authorized under state law. It is a defined commercial and/or industrial area, governed by a board of directors. When a BID is formed, property owners inside the BID are assessed an additional property tax to pay for specific projects and services that improve and market the area. A BID for the downtown area can provide the funding mechanism and operational structure to enhance Plymouth's commercial core.

#### **5. Improve the City of Plymouth's facade and signage grant program.**

Update the existing grant form, including the contact information. Update the program parameters and include important contextual information about the program. For example, reference the design standards that applicants must adhere to as a condition for receiving grant money.

#### **6. Evaluate the installation of placemaking elements to improve the look and appeal of the downtown area.**

The purpose of this recommendation is to transform spaces, often overlooked, into well-designed places for people to congregate. It will likely require the development of one or more programs to establish the parameters that property or business owners may follow prior to implementing placemaking projects on portions of City-owned rights-of-way (e.g., on-street parking stalls and alleyways). Placemaking program ideas may include a parklet program and an alleyway improvement program.

A parklet is a sidewalk extension onto one or more on-street parking stalls. The extension provides more space and amenities for people using the street. Parklets are typically used for passive recreation, public seating, and/or outdoor dining. An alleyway improvement program could serve in a similar capacity by providing space for public art, outdoor dining, etc.

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