

7 Catalyst Projects **for Downtown Pontiac¹**

Priority: Increase tax base & generate revenue for the City!
Some of these projects may also serve as “Legacy Projects” for the City of Pontiac’s Sesquicentennial (150th Birthday) Celebration of 2011

- Strand Theater Rehabilitation, Professional Management & Operation
 - New City of Pontiac Public Library in Downtown Pontiac
 - Lot #9 Redevelopment
 - Pontiac State Bank Building Maintenance & Repair
 - Phoenix Entertainment Plaza Professional Operation
 - AT&T Tower
- “The Corner”, Old Waterworks – former “Hayes Jones Community Ctr.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. **Strand Theater**, 10-16 N. Saginaw Street. Now in the Feasibility, Development & Financial Planning Phase. Soon to be ready for RFQ, RFP Process to achieve best possible use & management.
 - A. Theater was previously, since 2001, under the management of a non-profit organization that was overseeing the rehabilitation and potential reuse management of the theater. That non-profit no longer has any ties to the theater, now owned by the City.
 - B. In 2001, the projected cost to complete and reopen the Strand was listed as 4 – 7 million dollars.
 - C. In fact, the theater rehabilitation (not a restoration) to date is less than half completed.
 - D. According to the Pontiac Growth Group and more recently by the current City of Pontiac Economic Development Staff, the total funds expended on the project since it began in 2001 are between 7 and 9 million dollars. Far more than ever expected or projected.
 - E. A new Professional Building Analysis (Preliminary Development Plan) was undertaken in the spring of 2009 and completed in the fall of that year.
 - F. The adjacent building to the south, 8 N. Saginaw, was added to the Strand project after it was vacated by the Pontiac Growth Group, in mid 2010.

¹ Members of the Pontiac DDA voted to dissolve as an authority by June 30, 2012. The group also approved selling its property, which includes Lot #9 and the Strand Theatre. The proceeds will be used to pay off the money owed to the Tax Increment Authority, or TIFA.

- G. The updated building Preliminary Development Plan was completed in May, 2011. It now provides building rehabilitation costs and programming options for a building proforma that include the former Growth Group building at 8 N. Saginaw.
- H. MSOC funded all of the recent analysis over the past 2 years (over \$35,000).
- I. Complete Professional Financial Analysis Update to be completed in August, 2011 by Ernie Zachary of Zachary & Associates, Detroit, who did the successful Book-Cadillac Reuse Project financial projections.
- J. Potential developers have expressed an interest in obtaining and redeveloping the theater. However, a lack of experience, lack qualifications and adverse personal vision/plans, versus what is best for Downtown and in the best interests of the Community, have been proposed and/or expressed without a public RFQ, RFP Process.
- K. The theater is now owned by the City of Pontiac. Therefore a public process to manage or purchase the property must be adhered to versus a behind the scenes conveyance of the property to a private entity.
- L. An RFQ, RFP & Preferred Developer Process/Agreement is necessary to begin ASAP
- M. Downtown or City-wide Entertainment Ordinance needed ASAP re: Operational Impacts upon the City, Fixed Seating & Security Issues

POSSIBLE ACTION: County/MSOC to oversee the process?

2. **New Downtown Library**, now in the Future Facilities Analysis Phase. Consideration of Old Central School at N. Woodward & E. Pike Street (downtown) in a walkable location vs. an non-walkable, non-central location out on the City's west boundary line.
 - A. Professional Future Facilities Analysis near completion
 - B. Consideration of Old Central School now being added to the potential options before the Future Facilities Study is complete.
 - C. Location is a key factor.
 - D. Ability to utilize as many financial incentives and funding programs as possible is also a key consideration.
 - E. Old Central School, with its status as a building "individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with "National Significance" meets the test of potentially providing the most financial incentives and the most centrally located.
 - F. The County/MSOC has committed \$4,000 to begin analysis of Old Central School Adaptive Reuse as the new City Library.

ACTION: County/MSOC to continue to assist the Library Board & Facilities Committee in their efforts to build a new City of Pontiac Library in the Downtown
3. **Lot #9 Redevelopment** Physical Master Plan completed. Ready for RFQ, RFP Process.
 - A. Pontiac (with assistance from MSOC and the Planning Group) received \$40,000 in funds from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's (NTHP) Preservation

Development Initiative (PDI) Program in 2004-2005 to do a complete Redevelopment Plan for Lot #9. A professionally managed week long, detailed, Design Charette was held in 2005 to gather professional and community-wide stakeholder input on the redesign. A Team of 23 Architects, Planners, Landscape Architects, Designers and Downtown Development Professionals conducted the Charrette. Pontiac was selected by the NTHP and the Knight Foundation as one of 8 National Pilot PDI Program communities along with St. Paul, MN, Duluth, MN, Columbus, GA, Macon, GA, Miami, FL, Philadelphia, PA and San Jose, CA. A complete report was prepared and it was incorporated into the 2001 Downtown Master Plan and the City's Overall Community Master Plan.

- B. It was made clear during the Design Charette Process that the highest and best (365 day) use (mixed use), with a traditional urban design, be undertaken rather than a suburban design or baseball park (with only 35 – 50 actual days of maximum use per year), be master planned for the entire open area of Lot #9 bounded by S. Saginaw & Pike Streets, Orchard Lake Road and Woodward Avenue. Copies of the Lot # 9 Plan are available and it was officially adopted as part of the City of Pontiac's Overall Community Master Plan in 2008.
- C. MSOC Co-facilitated the Design Charette Process for Lot #9 with Archive DS.
- D. A complete RFQ, RFP Process was not followed to find the best qualified developer
- E. A Plan and an option to develop Lot#9 expired over one year ago.

POSSIBLE ACTION: County/MSOC to oversee a new RFQ, RFP, Preferred Developer Process?

- 4. **Pontiac State Bank Building**, 28 N. Saginaw, now Chase Bank & private offices: Now in need of Maintenance & Repairs.
 - A. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Preservation and is eligible for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and other incentives based upon that status.
 - B. The previous owner of the building granted a "historic preservation façade easement" to the Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) for Federal Tax Credits.
 - C. MHPN has utilized MSOC Staff and the Historic Preservation Principal Planner for the annual inspection required to continue to receive the tax benefits of that easement.

ACTION: County/MSOC to prepare a list of financial incentives and programs at the County, State & National levels that may be available to assist in the maintenance and repair of the entire building?
- 5. **Phoenix Entertainment Plaza**, N. Saginaw and Old Orchard. Recently renovated and upgraded. Needs Professional Management.
 - A. Completely renovated approximately 7 years ago at a total cost of approximately 12 million dollars.

- B. Phoenix Plaza seta atop the Phoenix Parking Deck which was renovated approximately 8 years ago at a cost of approximately 10 million dollars to achieve an additional 15 years of structural integrity till the year 2018 according to the Pontiac Growth Group and the Pontiac Tax Increment Finance Authority during interviews for the Downtown Master Plan Update in 2001 and the Lot # 9 Design Charette in 2005.
- C. The Phoenix Entertainment Plaza has never been professional managed (before or after its renovation) to optimize its economic and cultural potential for the benefit of Downtown Pontiac and the entire community.

POSSIBLE ACTION: County/MSOC to oversee the RFQ, RFP Process to secure a Professional Manager for the Phoenix Entertainment Plaza?

6. **AT & T Tower/Advertising Beacon**, West Huron and Mill.

- A. Utilize the base information and concepts developed by Illuminating Concepts of Farmington Hills, MI, paid by a PDI Grant to the DDA in 2003 in cooperation with MSOC (See DVD Concept Images)
- B. Seek cost estimates from Illuminating Concepts and Sports Arena experienced Construction Co's.
- C. Utilize as an advertising revenue generator for downtown, AT&T and other public/private partners

POSSIBLE ACTION: Oakland County (MSOC) to seek cost estimates and work with AT&T and other public/private partners?

7. **Old Waterworks Building**, Hayes Jones Community Center & Site Pontiac's Historic Black Neighborhood – "The Corner" 235 Wesson Street, Pontiac, MI

- A. Work with the City of Pontiac's Historic District Commission and the Oakland County Historical Commission to identify & verify its local, County, State & National Significance
- B. Adhere to the U. S. Dept. of The Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation
- C. Adhere to U.S. Executive Order 11593 of 1970 re: Use of Federal Funds and Section 106 Review by the U.S. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- D. Seek Private Reuse Options for the building with public use/partnership of site
- E. Seek Private Sponsorship opportunities of this key historic site
- F. Embrace the remaining buildings & site as a key component of the City's Cultural History

POSSIBLE ACTION: Oakland County (MSOC) to assist in an RFQ/RFP Process, Preferred developer selection, architectural & historical review, financial packaging & planning?