

FINAL

Strategic Plan  
For the

**Ortonville Downtown  
Development Authority**  
2014-2019



Prepared by

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May 2014

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## *Introduction*

The Ortonville downtown is a local commercial district catering to shoppers in Ortonville MI and some of the surrounding communities. The Ortonville Downtown Development Authority (ODDA) has been the downtown management organization for more than eight years. Its job is to enhance the district by presenting a wide variety of special events in the downtown for both area visitors and community residents.

Since 2004, the Ortonville Downtown Development Authority (ODDA) has been using an organizing method known nationally as the Main Street Four Point Approach.<sup>TM</sup> The downtown commercial district is the historic and current heart of Ortonville and defines the local identity and reflects the community's history and 'sense of place.' The Main Street Approach<sup>TM</sup> stresses historic preservation as the underlying design principle for the revitalization effort. Main Street efforts nationwide aim to maximize the economic potential of each historic commercial district while preserving its authentic character. For Ortonville, the volunteer-led committees or committees are important to the success of the program and involve stakeholders—be they residents, business owners or property owners—in making decisions about the future of the downtown. These stakeholders participated in all facets of the research leading up to the creation of this new Strategic Plan that represents the next phase in the ODDA's organizational development.

### *Consulting Services from Main Street Oakland County*

As part of Ortonville's participation in Main Street Oakland County (MSOC), staff assistance and consulting services were provided to the Ortonville DDA as part of the County's effort to enhance the growth, effectiveness and sustainability of participating MSOC organizations.

Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm, led an evening workshop to provide the basis for creating this Strategic Plan. Donna Ann Harris of Heritage Consulting Inc. worked collectively with Molly La Lone, the Executive Director of ODDA, as well as ODDA Board members, volunteers, business owners, an Ortonville Planning Board member and the Ortonville Village President to develop this Strategic Plan.

A Visioning and Strategic Planning Workshop was held on Tuesday August 6, 2013 in the evening. This session was three hours long and included a total of eighteen participants. During the workshop, all engaged in a visioning exercise to help the assembled group visualize the future of Ortonville's downtown five years from now. Finally, we used the visioning exercise to identify specific strategies to implement as projects toward the realization of the the Board's long-term vision of downtown.

## *What is a Strategic Plan?*

**Board Source**<sup>™</sup>, a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance the public good by building exceptional nonprofit Boards and inspiring Board service, defines a Strategic Plan as a written document that defines an organization's over-arching strategies and major areas of work for the next three to five years to achieve the organization's mission.

Strategic plans for nonprofit organizations are created through a process that builds on research to accumulate wisdom about the organization, its environment, and economic potential. This process involves stakeholders to assure that the resulting Strategic Plan contains a comprehensive understanding of the preferred future of the organization.

## *New Mission and Vision Statements*

As part of the Visioning and Strategic Planning workshop, we asked participants to review the existing mission and vision statements of the organization to determine if they are still valid, and to note if any changes were necessary. There were many comments made about the vision statement so we have created a new one that focuses on the strategic goals outlined during the workshop. There were no comments or changes made to the current mission statement, so we have made no changes to this document.

### *What is a mission statement?*

A mission statement articulates where the organization is currently, not at some desired future point. An ideal mission statement identifies why the organization exists, who benefits, what the organization does and, finally, how it does what it does. A good mission statement conveys how the organization relates to its public and communities; why and how it enhances the well-being of others and improves quality of life; and, finally, what service it provides. A mission statement should be easily memorized, as it becomes a part of the "elevator speech" about the organization. The current mission statement is clear and needs no changes.

### *Current Village of Ortonville Downtown Development Authority Mission Statement*

Dedicated to promoting economic revitalization, supporting local businesses and preserving the natural and historic heritage in the Village of Ortonville by using the Four Point Main Street Approach.<sup>™</sup>

### *What is a vision statement?*

A vision statement describes the preferred future of both the organization and downtown after five years of hard work towards fulfilling the dreams of stakeholders. A five-year vision statement is preferred rather than a ten-year or longer time horizon. Ten-year vision statements

for example often contain plenty of “wish list items” and unrealistic goals that show little understanding of the economic realities of the community. A quality five-year vision statement should focus on the community impact and the power of the organization to transform downtown within the current economic climate. A good vision statement is ambitious enough to force people out of comfortable routines, and is conceptual but practical, taking advantage of fundamental trends from consumer research. A vision statement should be aspirational and clear enough to articulate the visual changes in downtown.

#### *Current ODDA vision statement*

Reviewed and approved as of October 2012

In 2021, Ortonville announces itself with grand entrances along M-15 at South Street and at Grange Hall. Vintage looking signs announce the way to downtown Ortonville. One can access the downtown area from both North and South at gateway entrances. Old-fashioned street lamps lead one into the newly restored downtown area. Seasonal banners and flowers decorate the sidewalks in the Village of Ortonville. Covered Bridges are over the creeks on South Street and Mill Street. People walk along the brick-paved sidewalks and the creek side paths. There is a side park on Kearsley Creek near Mill Street. Downtown Ortonville is on the National Historic Register. Old Town Hall is the jewel of our historic preservation efforts. Through promotion and enhanced programs, Old Town Hall generates enough money to sustain itself and to create funds for future maintenance.

With the installation of sewers, we have been able to attract restaurants, cafes and new businesses into the downtown area. To accommodate the increased demand for prime retail storefronts, the DDA has relocated the main parking lot off Pond Street and added three two-story buildings in similar historic styles along Mill Street. Utilizing the County Property Bank, Ortonville has been able to change the look of South Street by acquiring properties and renovating them for prime use of the real estate and with historically accurate architecture. The new buildings and renovations to existing buildings are overseen by the architectural review board - The Historic preservation arm of the Planning Commission. Both the Planning Commission and the architectural review board have guided the village in following and completing the 2008 and 2019 Master Plan objectives. A review of the master plan took place in 2012.

The DDA continues to support businesses with an enhanced facade. County-wide training is now offered in the evenings and on Mondays to make it easier for Ortonville business owners to attend. Ortonville's Main Street program continues to thrive with active participation from business owners, property owners and area residents. Our occupancy rate is 100%. In cooperation with Brandon School District, Brandon Township and the Village of Ortonville, a comprehensive branding campaign for the area was created. Through this successful campaign, a Destination Publicity Plan is in place, including enhanced information at various websites

such as Pure Michigan, AAA and Historic MI Guide. Co-Op advertising for downtown businesses has also been increased.

Ortonville has become a Destination Village. We have a robust economy! Many visitors come to spend money in our shops and restaurants. They enjoy our creek side parks and the old-fashioned charm of our businesses and Crossman Park. We have been named a Great American Main Street. We love Ortonville, where we live, work and play

### *Proposed New Vision Statement*

Our Vision for Ortonville in 2019.

By 2019 downtown Ortonville will be recognized as a thriving commercial district where residents and visitors find exciting, independent shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. New development and new business continue to open in the downtown area.

Working closely with the Village, the ODDA has worked hard to bring a new sewer system into downtown. This long-sought project has fundamentally changed our downtown for the better and brought more than a dozen new or expanded businesses into the heart of our community. These new businesses have significantly increased the Village and Township tax base, created new jobs, a cleaner creek and created a positive buzz about our downtown and our future.

We have worked closely with MDOT to study the feasibility and funding for placing handsome new gateways to downtown along M-15, and new turning lanes so that drivers can access South Street coming from both North and South. Installation has begun for the old-fashioned street lamps that extend out to M-15. The downtown creek-side boardwalk is complete and heavily used by walkers and bikers. Colorful banners adorn each street light pole and these are changed seasonally. The district pops with color from the flower baskets and seasonally planted decorative flowerbeds installed by the ODDA. Seasonal decorations installed by the ODDA add to the festive atmosphere. The sidewalk cafes, newly connected trail system, weekly seasonal farmers market and monthly special events keep the sidewalks and parking lots full virtually year-round.

Customers walk our downtown during the week, as they visit The Old Town Hall, The Old Mill Campus, the library and post office. They use the walking and biking trails, run errands or go to appointments with the fine professional service providers in town. On weekend days, downtown is crowded with area families, enjoying our fine compliment of independent shops and restaurants. Both Friday and Saturday nights are hopping, as our downtown has become a small restaurant destination with more than a half dozen casual and more formal dining establishments.

The Friends of AMOS celebrated its fifth year in 2019, and has been consistently raising more funds from a variety of sources each year for downtown projects. The district is highly

managed with the ODDA taking responsibility for all aspects of the customer experience including event planning, and its traditional role in assuring that the downtown is sparkling.

Downtown Ortonville's historic buildings continue to be well maintained and celebrated. We are, in fact, celebrating our 170 year anniversary this year! Downtown is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which has spurred reinvestment and restoration of several historic properties. An architectural review board was created when the downtown was designated as a local landmark district. Our façade grant program continues to be helpful. New, appropriate, uses are found for storefronts when the rare vacancy occurs. When a storefront does become available, there are several potential tenants because the ODDA maintains a listing of interested local and national retailers. The ODDA is the "go to" place for those who wish to locate or expand downtown.

By 2019, the Village has acquired key parcels to create more space for retail, and successfully offered the Pond Street parking lot for mixed-use development. The Village also created several new parking lots in downtown. The recent spate of award-winning new construction compliments the existing historic buildings, bringing vital new uses to the district.

The ODDA works closely with merchants to promote a handful of high quality and creative retail events each year that appeal to the variety of market niches in the district. We celebrate our creek with a huge weekend festival yearly. The ODDA collaborates with many other organizations that host regular special events throughout the year. The ODDA has invested in an extensive communication program including both traditional and new media that regularly markets to more than 5000 area residents about the exciting events, shops and activities happening in downtown.

The 2019 ODDA budget is a quarter of a million dollars raised from the DDA and from a highly diverse number of revenue sources. There is superb Board and staff leadership. More than 250 volunteers on the roster provide leadership for and mount the award winning special events and retail events. Over 10,000 volunteer hours were expended in 2019 and partnerships with the area's civic and religious organizations are highly developed and beneficial to both parties. The yearly sponsorship calendar is eagerly anticipated and merchants vie to become premium sponsors of our events.

The ODDA continues its long-standing, productive and cordial working relationships with the Village, The Brandon Township School District, Brandon Township and the Ortonville Historical Society. All participated in a village wide branding campaign that has put Ortonville on the map.

By 2019, Downtown Ortonville has become a truly vital shopping district for the community and area residents while preserving our friendly and casual small town atmosphere.

# ODDA Strategic Goals

The goal-setting portion of the August 6, 2013 workshop helped to take the long-term vision and create a specific future direction for the downtown. The workshop participants provided insights that were used to create these goals to outline the results of five years of hard work. They neatly fit within the traditional purview of the Main Street Four Point Approach™ with the addition of a Public Works Advancement Task Force.

The following are the strategic goals for downtown Ortonville as prepared by participants in the Visioning and Strategic Goal Setting workshop on August 6, 2013.

## *2014-2019 Ortonville Strategic Goals*

1. By 2019, the annual operating budget of the ODDA will be \$250,000. Revenues will come from increased DDA revenues, vendor fees, sponsorships, and from contributions made to our companion nonprofit The Friends of AMOS. This 501c3 organization has become a vital tool for ODDA to raise funds from residents for downtown projects.
2. We involve hundreds of volunteers who donate their time to our work, and we continue to strengthen our partnerships with area organizations. Our extensive communication efforts tell visitors and area residents about our work and all of downtown's shopping and dining options.
3. We actively support the Village of Ortonville and its elected officials as they begin planning for the installation of the long sought after sewers in the downtown. ODDA will collaborate with the Village to consistently and positively promote the benefits of improved public infrastructure and assist in helping finance them through grant writing as needed.
4. ODDA manages and cultivates the downtown business mix by actively recruiting complimentary businesses and retaining existing retail, restaurant and service businesses. The anticipated new construction following the installation of sewers compliments the existing historic buildings, bringing vital new uses to the district. ODDA continues to be an effective advocate for overall economic development activities in downtown Ortonville.
5. ODDA's extensive yearlong calendar of retail and special events cater to area families and specific market niches, local corporations and communities. Our extensive marketing and advertising program uses traditional and new media to bring ever-increasing numbers of people downtown to shop and dine. All of our special events have become highly anticipated. Our signature event, CreekFest brings into town more than 10,000 attendees.



6. We continue to promote Ortonville hometown heritage, foster revitalization and beautification of our streetscape and historic buildings. We will work closely with MDOT to study the feasibility and funding for placing handsome new gateways to downtown along M-15, and a roundabout so that drivers can access South Street coming from both North and South. We will identify funding for new streetlights from downtown to the highway. ODDA will work with the Village to purchase property to provide more retail opportunities, and more parking and redevelop key parcels.

The six Strategic Goals serve as the bridge to the new vision for the future of the downtown district in Ortonville. All of the short and longer-term projects (individually and collectively) move the organization towards making this vision into a reality by allocating all of its financial and volunteer resources accordingly.

The activities and programs that the Ortonville Downtown Development Authority implements in the future, through the combination of Board, staff, committees, partners and individual task force volunteers, all must be aligned to achieve at least one (1) of the six (6) Strategic Goals as outlined above. If a project does not *clearly* meet any of the Strategic Goals, the project should neither be staffed nor funded, as the organization has a finite number of volunteers and financial resources.

#### *Role of Work Plans*

Work plans for each project are completed by the volunteer committees and are approved by the Board. The work plan provides details on how to implement an effective project. Every work plan contains the following elements: Who (person or partner organization), What, When, How Much Cost, How Much Income, Volunteer Hours, Staff Hours and of course, the Strategic Goal(s) met. Collectively, these work plans become the substance of the materials submitted to the DDA property owners and the Borough for support each year. The Work Plan can be used to sell sponsorships, as well as to assertively market the volunteer and collaborative opportunities therein to individuals and groups of current or potential stakeholders.

#### *Staffing and volunteers*

This Strategic Plan sets out a very ambitious improvement agenda for the ODDA over the next five (5) years. All of these activities are important and worthy, but the ODDA Board must reach agreement about how it will staff these activities. While there are already some volunteers involved with the organization, there are not enough to implement even a small portion of these activities. The current staff cannot take on any more duties, as it is already significantly overstretched.

If the ODDA Board, along with committees and new volunteers, is to be responsible for implementing these tasks, then the Board must continue to invest substantially in volunteer infrastructure. New systems will be needed, including more volunteer job descriptions,

updated databases, volunteer recruitment drives, volunteer training and continuing the annual recognition event. Leadership for any new volunteer effort must come from the Board itself, primarily in the form of promoting volunteer recruitment throughout the committees and organization as a whole.

### *Conclusion*

This 2014-2019 Strategic Plan for downtown Ortonville is a review of the past performance of the organization and a representation of its bright future. This Strategic Plan contains new mission and vision statements. The six Strategic Goals mentioned above organize the rest of the document and should be used to guide all of the organization's work in the next five (5) years, which is the useful life of this planning document.

# Organization Committee

- Strategic Goal 1: By 2019, the annual operating budget of the ODDA will be \$250,000. Revenue will come from increased DDA revenues, vendor fees, sponsorships, and from contributions made to our companion nonprofit The Friends of AMOS. This 501c3 organization has become a vital tool for ODDA to raise funds for downtown projects.
- Strategic Goal 2: We involve hundreds of volunteers who donate their time to our work, and we continue to strengthen our partnerships with area organizations. Our extensive communication efforts tell area residents about our work and downtown's shopping and dining options.

Responsible Committee: Organization Committee

## *Board leadership*

- Continue to retain the well-regarded and high quality Board and leadership of the ODDA.
- Create a public works advancement task force of the ODDA Board. Include board members and others with a keen interest in working with the Village to implement a quality Public Relations effort to finance and install sanitary sewers in downtown on this task force. (See separate Strategic Goal for this Task Force below).

## *Budget*

- The 2019 ODDA budget will be a quarter of a million dollars raised from the DDA and a highly diverse number of revenue sources including increased DDA revenues, vendor fees, sponsorships, and from contributions made to our new companion 501c3 nonprofit corporation, The Friends of AMOS.
- The yearly sponsorship calendar is eagerly anticipated and downtown merchants, businesses, area schools, universities, hospitals and media vie to become premium sponsors of our events.
- Develop one or more fundraising events with Friends of AMOS that will generate at least \$5000 in net profits in the first year. Grow these events so that they generate regular, predictable and growing net income yearly. Form a joint committee with the two organizations to develop these fundraising events and monitor the net revenue yearly

### *Friends of AMOS*

- Finish work to create a companion nonprofit 501c3 charitable corporation called Friends of AMOS (Always Making Ortonville Stronger) to raise tax-deductible funds from individuals for downtown projects. Identify quality board members with fundraising skills and contacts to serve on the AMOS Board. Share three board members between AMOS and ODDA organization to promote quality collaboration between the organizations.
- Closely coordinate ODDA and AMOS fundraising efforts so they complement each other.
- Grow the capacity of the AMOS organization to consistently raise more funds each year for downtown projects from individuals, fundraising events, donations from corporations, foundations and from grants from foundations and all kinds of government agencies.
- Raise \$25,000 from individuals and other grants to work with the Village to prepare a professionally developed PR campaign to design and install sewers in downtown through donations and grants.
- Raise \$100,000 to build the creek side path and boardwalk through donations and grants.

### *Partnerships*

- Continue our long-standing, productive and cordial working relationships with the Village, The Brandon Township School District, Brandon Township and the Ortonville Historical Society.
- Significantly expand our existing partnership efforts by targeting the following new partners: McClaren Heath Systems, Flint Institute of Arts, Ortonville TV, and area churches and theater groups to sponsor or participate in existing events or create new ones that appeal to their membership or constituents.

### *Volunteers*

- Continue to add more volunteers to our roster so that there are more than 250 volunteers in our database in 2019. Our volunteers provide leadership for and mount the award winning special events and retail events that ODDA presents each year. Our goal is 10,000 volunteer hours contributed in 2019.

- Follow up with any potential volunteer within 48 hours, and refer the potential volunteer to a committee chairperson or event chair within a week and find a job for the volunteer.
- Identify volunteers to develop simple volunteer job descriptions for specific volunteer tasks (writer, designer, accountant, etc.). In addition, promote these opportunities on the ODDA website, Facebook page and in a new e-blast newsletter.
- The ODDA Staff will review the current volunteer database and make sure information is complete in each record (name, home phone, cell phone, email, address etc.).
- Continue to track volunteer hours and report them to Main Street Oakland County.
- By 2019, our annual volunteer appreciation event will be considered an important annual event in town.

#### *Communications*

- Expand our communication efforts to promote our organization and downtown.
- Continue to gather email addresses and begin an e-newsletter to market the organization, downtown and downtown businesses.
- Continue to regularly update the website, continue our social media efforts (Facebook) and other advertising and PR efforts.
- Post the adopted Strategic Plan on the Ortonville DDA web site.

# Public Works Advancement Task Force

Strategic Goal 3: We actively support the Village of Ortonville and its elected officials as they begin planning for the installation of the long sought after sewers in the downtown. ODDA will collaborate with the Village to consistently and positively promote the benefits of improved public infrastructure and assist in helping finance them through grant writing as needed.

Responsible Committee: A new Public Works Advancement Task Force

- Work with the Village Manager, Village Council and others to create and implement a Public Relations campaign for installation of sewers. The ODDA will offer consistent and positive messages about the benefits of installation of sewers in Ortonville.
- Assist the Village in raising funds to hire appropriate PR professionals to plan and implement this PR effort.
- Advocate for installation of sewers at public meetings, public hearings and other forums.
- Write grants as appropriate or raise funds for this PR effort and support the Village in its effort to finance construction of this critical piece of infrastructure in our downtown.

# Economic Restructuring Committee

**Strategic Goal 4:** ODDA manages and cultivates the downtown business mix by actively recruiting complimentary businesses and retaining existing retail, restaurant and service businesses. The anticipated new construction following the installation of sewers compliments the existing historic buildings, bringing vital new uses to the district. ODDA continues to be an effective advocate for overall economic development activities in downtown Ortonville.

Responsible Committee: Economic Restructuring

*Support Public Works Advancement Task Force*

- Participate in and support the Public Works Advancement Task Force as appropriate on the PR effort to fund and install sanitary storm sewers in the downtown.

*Understand and monitor the current market downtown*

- Update and maintain a business inventory for both first and second floor spaces in downtown. Update the business directory portion of the Downtown Ortonville web site as needed.

*Recruit new complimentary businesses*

- Once sewers are installed and there are new retail spaces available (or as vacancies occur), recruit new complimentary business to downtown Ortonville.
- Create a small committee of board members, business owners and other volunteers to assist ODDA staff in making calls and visits to prospective tenants for new and vacant spaces in downtown.
- Target the following stores for recruitment when space is available:
  - Store selling fresh produce year-round;
  - Bakery selling artisanal breads and cakes; sporting goods store;
  - Crafters Corner—a hobby shop selling scrapbook, quilting, needlepoint, knitting supplies, clothes and classes;
  - A locally owned new or used bookstore that has a coffee bar, Wi-Fi, newspapers and magazines;
  - An upscale restaurant in downtown, with a full bar, for a nice lunch or evening out, could be a chain restaurant;
  - Locally owned café for breakfast or lunch in an existing building;

- Locally owned juice bar catering to creek trail walkers/runners, students, with Wi-Fi and is a community-gathering place;
- Family entertainment center in a new building with kids and family games, including pool tables, ping pong, etc.
- Locally owned Hallmark type store with cards, gifts, wrapping paper, engraving, and
- A locally owned boutique, selling women and children's wear.

*Retain existing businesses*

- Regularly visit existing business to keep up to date on their concerns, business promotions and expansion plans. Help these businesses expand in downtown.



# Promotion Committee

Strategic Goal 5: ODDA's extensive yearlong calendar of retail and special events cater to area families and specific market niches, local corporations and communities. Our extensive marketing and advertising program uses traditional and new media to bring ever-increasing numbers of people downtown to shop and dine. All of our special events have become highly anticipated. Our signature event, CreekFest brings into town more than 10,000 attendees.

Responsible Committee: Promotion Committee

## *Monitor existing events*

- Continue to create work plans for all events so that the ODDA Board can track them on a monthly basis at board meetings.
- Review existing special events to determine if they fit within the new strategic goals. Existing special events include: the weekly farmers market; Beets, Beats and Eats; CreekFest; SeptemberFest and Christmas in the Village. If any of these events do not fit, revise them to meet the strategic goals or pursue other events that meet the strategic goals.
- All event committees/committees should review profit/loss financial statements after each event to determine if changes are needed, and adjust the work plan for the event next year. All special events should at least break even, and all fundraising events should raise the net revenue goal set for it.
- Conduct simple evaluations of each event, to determine volunteer and attendee satisfaction.

## *Add new special events or expand existing*

- Expand the existing Halloween event including candy hand out in downtown, add other activities with emphasis on children's programming or a parade. Add music and art activities as appropriate. Coordinate with Historical Society on their programming for Halloween at the Old Mill. Expand committee to plan Halloween events in advance.
- Add additional downtown activities to existing Memorial Day community event. Focus on patriotic themes, veterans and saying thanks.
- Add art and music to other special events held in downtown as appropriate.

### *Communications*

- Continue an aggressive effort to collect email addresses and add these names to our e-blast list so that it continues to grow. Start to send our regular e-blasts to this growing readership.
- Continue to invest in social media. Maintain an active presence on Facebook.

### *Increase sponsorship opportunities for events*

- Substantially revise and expand sponsorship opportunities for existing special events.

### *Branding*

- Work with the Village, School Board, Brandon Township, to create a village-wide branding campaign to promote our downtown businesses, special events and to place Ortonville on the map as a family friendly destination. Identify funding for such a project.

# Design Committee

Strategic Goal 6: We continue to promote Ortonville hometown heritage, foster revitalization and beautification of our streetscape and historic buildings. We will work closely with MDOT to study the feasibility and funding for placing handsome new gateways to downtown along M-15, and a roundabout so that drivers can access South Street coming from both North and South. We will identify funding for new streetlights from downtown to the highway. ODDA will work with the Village to purchase property to provide more retail opportunities, and more parking and redevelop key parcels.

Responsible Committee: Design Committee

## *Maintenance*

- Continue to maintain the flower baskets and seasonally planted decorative flowerbeds installed by the ODDA. Continue to add other seasonal decorations to create a festive atmosphere.
- Add arms to existing decorative streetlights to support colorful banners. Change these banners seasonally, seek sponsorships for banners as appropriate.
- Continue to manage the district by taking responsibility for all aspects of the customer experience including event planning, and ODDA's traditional role in assuring that the downtown is sparkling clean.

## *Offer incentives*

- Continue and expand the existing revitalization façade matching grant program. Expand the dollar amounts to be offered and make larger grants, if funds are available.

## *Designate downtown as a landmark district*

- Investigate listing the entire downtown or individual buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, by speaking with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. National Register listing makes commercial property owners eligible for federal tax incentives for rehabilitation. Promote these incentives to spur reinvestment and restoration for designated historic properties.
- Consider whether creating a local historic preservation ordinance in downtown, discuss with partners in the downtown. If so, work with the Village to create a local preservation ordinance and an Architectural Review Board for new construction. List the downtown as a local landmark district. The Design Committee should work closely

with the Architectural Review Board on rehabilitation plans for any downtown building.

### *Trail System*

- Work closely with the Village and open space partners to raise sufficient funds to open the Creek-side boardwalk through downtown. Identify issues with right of way and flooding and assist in identifying solutions. Assist in fundraising as appropriate.
- Connect the walkway/path from Church Street to Edward Street and with the regional trail system.

### *New capital projects*

- Work with the Village on their efforts to install sewers downtown, which will enable the Otonville DDA to attract more businesses in downtown once installation is complete.
- The ODDA will support the Village's effort to maintain the Pond Street parking lot until other on-street parking becomes available.
- Support the Village to identify and create several new parking lots in downtown. These will be surface parking lots perhaps behind the businesses, and probably not a parking structure. No historic structures will be demolished to create surface parking lots.
- We will work closely with MDOT to study the feasibility and funding for placing a roundabout to downtown along M-15, and new turning lanes so that drivers can access South Street coming from both North and South.
- The Design Committee will work with the Village to identify an event area in downtown where ODDA can host September Fest.
- ODDA will support the Village should it purchase select property in downtown to provide more retail opportunities.
- Investigate funding sources to create a South Street Covered bridge.
- The Design Committee will work with the Village to secure funds to extend the decorative lighting in the downtown all the way to M-15. Any new light poles should be equipped with banner hardware, so these new poles can coordinate with the banner program in town.

- Speak with Frontier Cable to determine how the existing conduit laid 15 years ago in the street can be used to bury the telephone lines in downtown. Determine if this improvement can take place at no cost to the Village or property owners.
- Continue to work with the Village and the Historical Society to support their efforts to maintain and rehabilitate the Old Town Hall and The Old Mill.

*Provide good design advice*

- Continue to provide good advice to any district property owner or business owner by becoming the “go-to” office for design assistance with signage, façade or exterior improvements by maintaining abundant resource material including examples and vendors.

## **Visioning and Goal Setting Participants**

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## Credits

Donna Ann Harris wrote the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan for the Ortonville Downtown Development Authority.

**Donna Ann Harris** is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm that works nationwide in three practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation and nonprofit organizational development. Prior to starting her firm ten years ago, Ms. Harris was state coordinator for the Illinois Main Street program for two years and the manager of the Illinois suburban Main Street program for four years. During her tenure, Ms. Harris served 56 Illinois Main Street communities, led a staff of 12 and managed a budget of over a million dollars. Since starting her firm, Ms. Harris has worked with state, regional and local Main Street programs in 33 states. She has written five feature articles in The National Trust Main Street Center's monthly journal *Main Street Now* and writes regularly for Main Street Story of the Week blog.

Prior to her Main Street career, Ms. Harris spent 15 years as an executive director of three start-up and two mature preservation organizations, each with its own organizational and fundraising challenges. Ms. Harris has written scholarly articles in the American Association for State and Local History's *History News* and the National Trust's *Forum Journal*, and a book *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses* published by AltaMira Press in 2007. In the last ten years Ms. Harris has spoken at more than 35 conferences about her house museum research.

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