



*East Dundee Downtown Plan*  
Existing Conditions and Public Visioning Summary



Vandewalle & Associates  
Madison · Milwaukee

November 13, 2007

## **EAST DUNDEE DOWNTOWN PLAN EXISTING CONDITIONS AND PUBLIC VISIONING SUMMARY**

In May 2007, the Village of East Dundee initiated a downtown planning process in order to provide direction to the redevelopment and revitalization momentum in the downtown district. This planning process is partially funded by Kane County under the Small Cities program. The Village contracted with Vandewalle & Associates, a professional planning and design firm, to lead the planning and public participation processes. Together the Village and Vandewalle & Associates kicked-off the downtown plan with an assessment of the existing conditions in the downtown area followed by an initial public visioning forum. The following document summarizes these processes and results. A companion document presents the economic development and redevelopment opportunities in the downtown as well as an implementation strategy for success.

### **Existing Conditions**

For purposes of the existing conditions assessment, the planning area is generally defined as the area south of Carpentersville Middle School, east of the Fox River, west of Van Buren Street, and north of Williams Place.

### **Property ownership**

In looking at the property ownership, it is clear that many of the downtown parcels have been assembled by a few key players in the community. Map 1 illustrates the property holdings of these key property owners. The map highlights the property owned by the 15 individuals/entities that own more than 3 parcels each in the downtown area. A different color is assigned to each owner's property. It is clear from the map that there are several places where property has been assembled by one or two owners – Dundee Lumber, Doederlein Lumber, the Anvil Club, Haeger Potteries, Immanuel Lutheran Church, and the Village's municipal complex. This clustering of ownership is important to any future plans involving redevelopment or revitalization. Alternatively, Map 1 also shows the areas that have fragmented ownership. The ownership in the area south of Route 72 between the river and River Street is quite fragmented. Any plans for redevelopment in this area would be hindered by a property assembly process.

### **Building conditions**

Map 2 illustrates the analysis of building conditions in the downtown area. This analysis was conducted as a windshield assessment of the condition of building exteriors. This is not an architectural survey, but rather an exercise to highlight clusters of buildings with similar conditions and historical values. Map 2 assigns each building/parcel to a different category. These categories are defined as:

#### ***Building of Significance***

These buildings contribute to the predominant historic character of downtown East Dundee. These buildings are constructed of quality materials, well maintained, and have minimal façade alterations. These buildings are or should be occupied by retail, mixed-use, or civic uses that generate activity for the downtown.

***Building of Merit***

These buildings may contribute to the historic character of downtown East Dundee but may either represent architectural character from a wider historic period, or may be modern construction representing the original historic character of downtown. This category includes buildings that are constructed of quality materials and are well maintained, but also includes historic buildings that may require some façade improvements. These buildings are or should be occupied by retail, mixed-use, or civic uses that generate activity for the downtown. A building in this category has the potential to become a Building of Significance pending restoration improvements.

***Building of No Merit***

Buildings in this category may be in need of façade improvement, not properly maintained, or represent “out-of-date” architecture. These buildings typically do not contribute to the historic character of downtown East Dundee or interrupt the consistency of the downtown character. These buildings may be occupied or vacant.

***Building Redevelopment***

Buildings in this category may be in major disrepair, may be structurally unsafe, or may cause a public nuisance. These buildings may also create a major conflict with the highest and best use of land in downtown East Dundee. These buildings may be occupied or vacant.

***Vacant Lot***

These lots are vacant and unoccupied.

***Parking (public)***

These lots are municipally owned and provide parking spaces for the general public.

***Parking (private)***

These parking areas are privately owned or leased. These parking spaces may be available for retail customers or for employees only.

***Open Space***

These are currently undeveloped spaces in the downtown including park space, bike path right of way, or undeveloped lots that may be available for future development or preservation as open space.

***Façade Improvements/Screening Needed***

This symbol identifies sites or buildings that are in need of enhanced facades, screening, or landscaping. The sites may have little or no existing screening and the buildings may have original facades that are in need of rehabilitation.

The condition analysis clearly shows clusters of well-maintained and historic buildings. The commercial district on River Street, the Village Hall, and Anvil Club all create an anchor of significant buildings at the north end of the corridor.

The analysis also shows clustered redevelopment potential at the Doederlein Lumber site (west of River, south of Railroad and north of Hill). Other opportunities for redevelopment or revitalization

are clustered on the south side of the Route 72 frontage and Dundee Lumber, now the vacant lot, at the north end of River Street.

### **Physical Conditions**

The downtown area is generally free from major physical barriers to redevelopment. The greatest topographic changes occur on the river bank as well as heading into the residential area to the east. There is some low lying land in the area north of downtown. This area has potential for future development, as long as proper drainage is considered in the development plans.

The riverfront has recently been part of a restoration project aimed at reducing erosion as well as enhancing the natural features. It appears that this project is successful and will be continued. The natural setting on the riverfront creates a scenic amenity for residents and businesses.

The No Name creek runs through the northwest side of the downtown area. This creek is underground until it nears the Village Hall. Some of the areas lining the creek have redevelopment potential. Enhancements to the creek would create an amenity for existing residents and potential redevelopment projects.

### **Land use**

The land uses in the downtown area consist of commercial, manufacturing, and some residential. Much of the former manufacturing land has changed uses and is now either vacant, used for storage, or has become a business use. This mix of land uses is typical for a historical riverfront downtown that developed with its industrial companies and has moved into more service oriented businesses and residential uses.

Map 3 illustrates the observations made by Vandewalle & Associates during a field tour, as well as comments made in interviews with business owners and community members. Many of these observations relate to underutilized land. The significant areas where alternative land uses would better utilize the sites include:

- Dundee Lumber and the manufacturing uses to the north (all damaged in the recent fire)
- Vacant lots, or missing teeth, located in the River Street commercial corridor
- Doederlein Lumber
- SBC/Ameritech site
- Route 72 frontage on either side of the roadway
- River frontage south of Route 72

### **Traffic, pedestrian accessibility, and parking**

The traffic and pedestrian patterns in downtown East Dundee are affected by missing grid connections and offset intersections. Parking is also a concern shared by much of the business and resident community. Map 4 highlights the specific concerns, including:

- The intersection of River Street and Route 72 is misaligned and creates conflict for pedestrians utilizing the bike path.
- River Street running one way south of Route 72 causes congestion on Van Buren Street as well as inconvenience for the patrons of the River Street businesses.

- Hill Street’s disconnection from the grid is causing unneeded strain on River Street and Water Street.
- There is a lack of parking downtown.
- Many of the downtown parking lots are located on high value property and could be moved or integrated into new development sites.

### **Zoning and Village Ordinances**

The Village zoning map has not been updated to reflect the recommendations made in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. Although it is not critical to make the zoning correspond to the planned land use, making some of these zoning changes would facilitate future redevelopment and discourage inappropriate land uses in the mean time. The Village is currently working on drafting language for a historic sign ordinance. This ordinance will be instrumental in maintaining the historic character of downtown. Additionally, drafting downtown historic district design guidelines that will encourage historic character in building architecture as redevelopment and revitalization occur.

### **Public Visioning**

Village staff and Vandewalle & Associates conducted a full day of interviews with community stakeholders. These stakeholders included downtown property owners and business owners. Although the conversations from each interview are confidential, the notes and comments from the interviews have been incorporated into Map 3. In general, the property owners and business owners were eager to kick-off a downtown plan and implementation process. In addition to the stakeholder interviews, the planning team hosted a public visioning forum on May 8, 2007. Approximately 15 people attended the event although hundreds of postcards were mailed and a posting was placed in the local papers. Participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding their priorities for a downtown plan. Fourteen questionnaires were returned. The results to those questions are summarized below.

*1. What should be the primary focus of this plan? (The questionnaire gave multiple options and asked respondents to rank their top three choices)*

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 11 | Assisting small/local business development              |
| 5  | Improving downtown aesthetics                           |
| 5  | Attracting mixed-use development to downtown            |
| 3  | Identifying redevelopment sites                         |
| 1  | Improving the traffic movement downtown                 |
| 1  | Attracting housing to downtown                          |
| 0  | Improving the residential areas adjacent to downtown    |
| 0  | Enhancing the tax base                                  |
| 0  | Improving pedestrian connections to and within downtown |

2. *What absolutely should change downtown?*

Redevelopment/Revitalization/Land Use Changes

- Clean up rundown areas
- Turn the vacant lot adjacent to the depot into an actual park
- Develop open spaces
- Continue River Street to the north of Barrington Avenue and create retail, office, and housing
- Fill the “holes” downtown – River Street and Lumberyards
- Improve run down, outdated properties
- Add more parking
- Increase housing downtown – increased pedestrian traffic

Infrastructure

- Extend Hill Avenue across the bike path
- Get rid of lift station

Business Mix

- Remove East Dundee Flower Garden
- Eliminate some of the bars
- Reduce number of bars and noise levels
- Add no more bars! Focus on quality independent business, noise control, active promotion and support of business, quality drinking water, more “green” thinking, better trees, improve...parking (*couldn't read the end of this comment*)
- Acknowledge we have too many taverns – we are known as beer town and are #1 on the pub crawl list
- Lessen empty storefronts – we need to create a business area people frequent so the stores stay open. We need a variety of shops, not just bars and make sure people know about them!
- Don't attract more bars and hair salons

3. *What absolutely should not change downtown?*

- Quaintness
- Historic objects
- Historic look along River Street, keep depot a park area
- Depot on River Street
- Depot/parks
- Overall character of downtown – historic, quaint; depot, park
- “Old town Dundee” atmosphere, small shops
- Friendly bike path. Don't change the depot
- Historic buildings and local character can not change
- Quaint, small-town feel. Keep the charming atmosphere with historic feel
- Overall aesthetics to those properties that have been improved

4. *What is missing downtown?*

- Specific types of stores, open space, riverwalk
- Housing, retail, specific types of stores, office, open space, riverwalk, attractions, etc.
- Housing to draw people and walking community
- Grocery store or convenience store
- Independent retail, stores, 7-11, housing
- People, foot traffic – reasons to visit Dundee that include housing and retail
- Riverwalk but no bars!
- Grocery store
- Upscale condominiums, luxury apartments
- Landscaping, craft store
- Upscale business restaurant
- Consistency – some places look good some don't

5. *Please comment on other aspects of the project.*

- To involve businesses, residents and consultants
- South side of 72 needs to be opened and redeveloped
- Parking is a serious problem
- We need, as a Village, to support (buy and set up a museum for) Harold Haretel's wooden ducks. He's like our Norman Rockwell.
- Keep Haeger Pottery and our history.
- The key to bring a vibrant and thriving downtown to East Dundee is increasing housing - specifically for demographic with disposable income – DINKS (Double Income No Kids) and Empty Nesters.
- If residential is being considered, the number of rentals should be minimized. Homeowners should be encouraged to upkeep/remodel/refurbish the charming older homes in the area.
- You need a planning committee!
- Let's get something done! I have been to several such meetings and nothing gets done. All we hear about is in fighting within the board and everyone's ego. I know how to remodel kitchens and baths, not how to redevelop downtowns or figure out how to do this – I think hiring a professional is a good step in the right direction. I think the lack of attendance tonight reflects how everyone feels.

After the questionnaire and subsequent discussion period, attendees were asked to mark a map of downtown with comments on downtown issues. Each participant was given different colored dots to signify preservation sites, revitalization sites, redevelopment sites, traffic issues, public amenities, and important places. Participants were also asked to annotate the map with additional comments. Map 4 summarizes the dots and comments made on the maps. Preservation sites (purple dots) are clustered at the north end of River Street. Revitalization sites (yellow dots) line Route 72. A clustering of red dots (redevelopment sites) is located at Doederlein Lumber, Dundee Lumber, and the warehouse building on Jackson Street. Traffic concerns (orange dots) are prevalent at the Water, River, and Van Buren intersections with Route 72.

The results of the Vandewalle & Associates assessment, the stakeholder interviews, and the public forum are very much compatible with each other. All point to a redevelopment plan that is focused on revitalizing the downtown and enhancing existing property through appropriate redevelopment and traffic and pedestrian accessibility improvements. Based on this information, the Village and Vandewalle & Associates have created the accompanying plan outlining economic and redevelopment opportunities in the downtown as well implementation strategies for achieving success.



**MAP LEGEND**

*Revised: 06.27.07*

Note: This analysis indicates multiple properties that are controlled by a single owner. If a property owner controls three or more properties in the downtown area, all of that owner's properties are shown in a single color.

**MAP 1**

**MULTIPLE PROPERTY OWNERS**

**DOWNTOWN & RIVERFRONT DISTRICT**  
*East Dundee, Illinois*



- BUILDING OF SIGNIFICANCE
- BUILDING OF MERIT
- BUILDING OF NO MERIT
- BUILDING REDEVELOPMENT
- VACANT LOT
- PARKING (PUBLIC)
- PARKING (PRIVATE)
- OPEN SPACE
- FACADE IMPROVEMENTS/  
SCREENING NEEDED

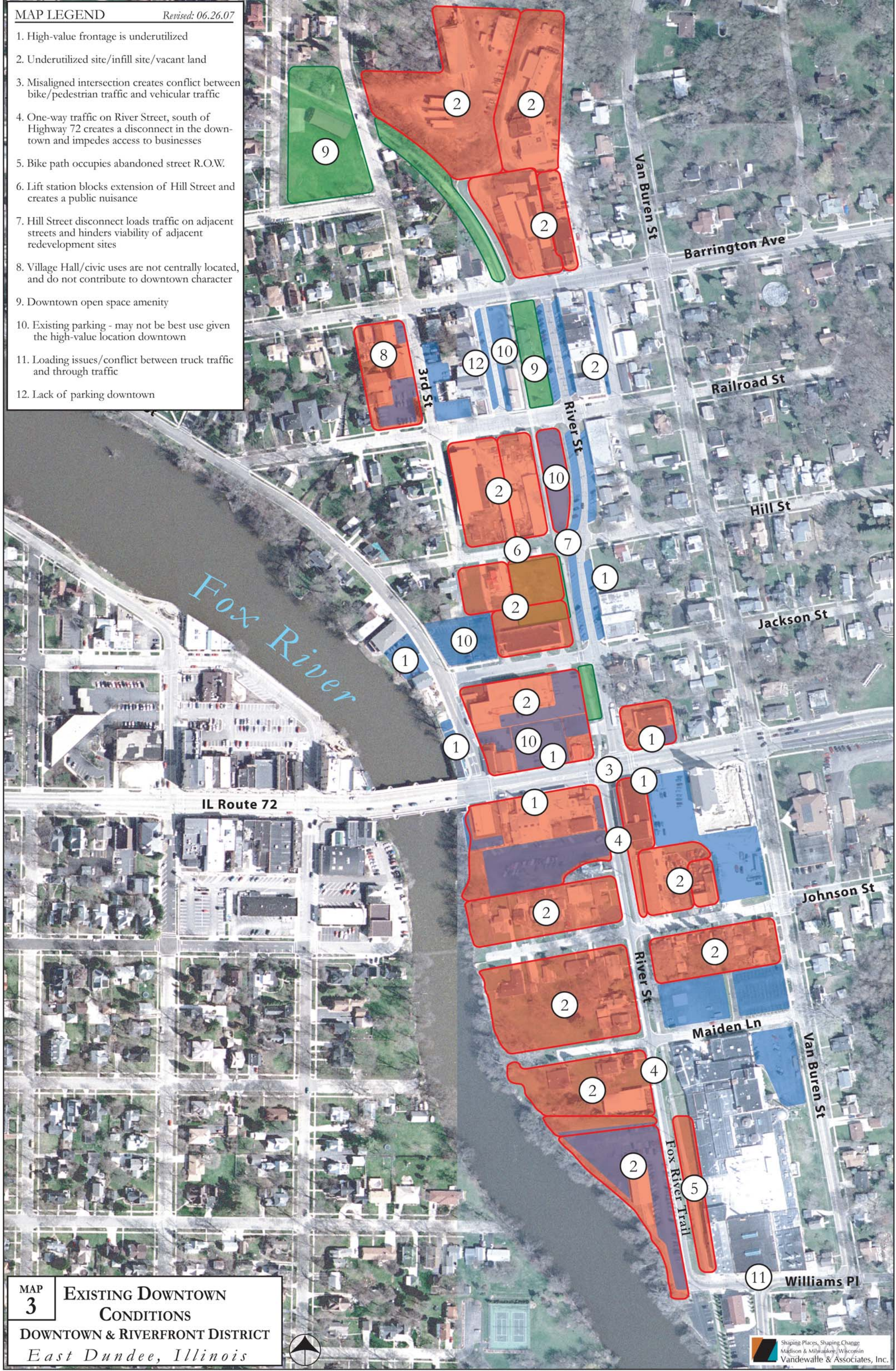


MAP 2

**EXISTING DOWNTOWN  
CONDITIONS**  
DOWNTOWN & RIVERFRONT DISTRICT  
*East Dundee, Illinois*

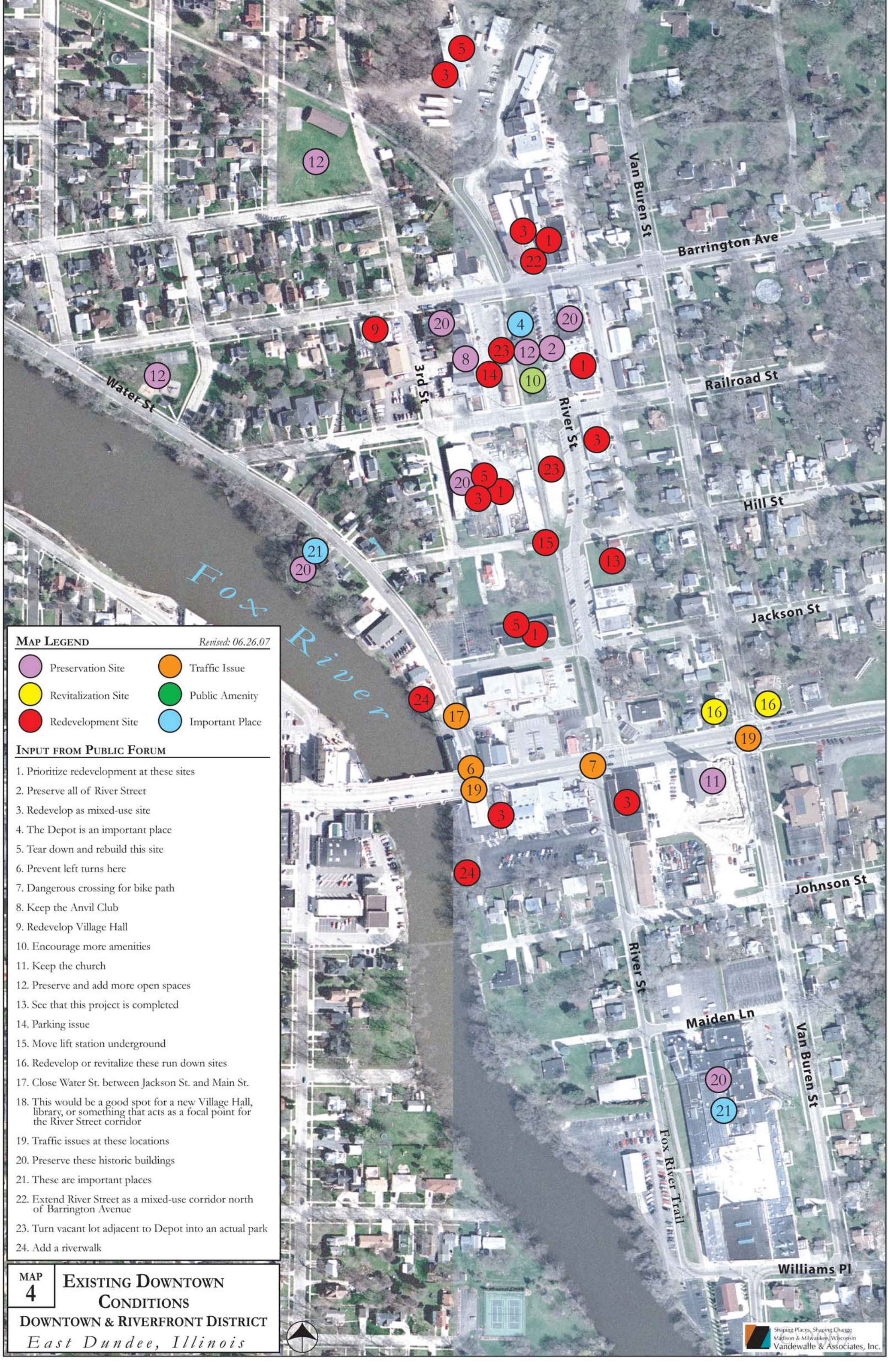


- 1. High-value frontage is underutilized
- 2. Underutilized site/infill site/vacant land
- 3. Misaligned intersection creates conflict between bike/pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic
- 4. One-way traffic on River Street, south of Highway 72 creates a disconnect in the downtown and impedes access to businesses
- 5. Bike path occupies abandoned street R.O.W.
- 6. Lift station blocks extension of Hill Street and creates a public nuisance
- 7. Hill Street disconnect loads traffic on adjacent streets and hinders viability of adjacent redevelopment sites
- 8. Village Hall/civic uses are not centrally located, and do not contribute to downtown character
- 9. Downtown open space amenity
- 10. Existing parking - may not be best use given the high-value location downtown
- 11. Loading issues/conflict between truck traffic and through traffic
- 12. Lack of parking downtown









**MAP 3** EXISTING DOWNTOWN CONDITIONS  
 DOWNTOWN & RIVERFRONT DISTRICT  
 East Dundee, Illinois





**MAP LEGEND**

*Revised: 06.26.07*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Preservation Site   |  Traffic Issue   |
|  Revitalization Site |  Public Amenity  |
|  Redevelopment Site  |  Important Place |

**INPUT FROM PUBLIC FORUM**

1. Prioritize redevelopment at these sites
2. Preserve all of River Street
3. Redevelop as mixed-use site
4. The Depot is an important place
5. Tear down and rebuild this site
6. Prevent left turns here
7. Dangerous crossing for bike path
8. Keep the Anvil Club
9. Redevelop Village Hall
10. Encourage more amenities
11. Keep the church
12. Preserve and add more open spaces
13. See that this project is completed
14. Parking issue
15. Move lift station underground
16. Redevelop or revitalize these run down sites
17. Close Water St. between Jackson St. and Main St.
18. This would be a good spot for a new Village Hall, library, or something that acts as a focal point for the River Street corridor
19. Traffic issues at these locations
20. Preserve these historic buildings
21. These are important places
22. Extend River Street as a mixed-use corridor north of Barrington Avenue
23. Turn vacant lot adjacent to Depot into an actual park
24. Add a riverwalk

MAP  
4

**EXISTING DOWNTOWN  
CONDITIONS**

**DOWNTOWN & RIVERFRONT DISTRICT**  
*East Dundee, Illinois*

