



Urban Land
Institute

Meridian, Mississippi

Advisory Services Panel

June 6-11, 3004



About ULI

- Nonprofit education and research organization founded in 1936.
- More than 20,000 members worldwide including developers, market analysts, architects, urban designers, public officials, and academicians.
- Mission: To provide responsible leadership in the use of the land in order to enhance the total environment.



The Panel

Chair

Laurin McCracken AIA,
Looney Ricks Kiss
Architects, Memphis, TN

Panelists

Nathan Moeder, London
Group Realty Advisors,
San Diego, CA

Michael Beyard, ULI – the
Urban Land Institute,
Washington, DC

Marc McConnel, Marc
McConnell & Associates,
Roanoke, VA

Satyendra S. Huja, City of
Charlottesville,
Charlottesville, VA

Mark Albrecht, City of Akron,
Akron, OH

Kenneth T. Bacchus, HEDFC,
Kansas City, MO

ULI Project Staff

Jason Bell

Nicholas Gabel



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Market Potential

Nathan Moeder
Michael Beyard



Recommended Uses: Threefoot Building

- Reserve the opportunity for development of a hotel to support the Riley Education and Performing Arts Center
- Timing: 2 – 3 years after the opening of the Riley Education and Performing Arts Center
- City continue to be actively planning this project with the developer

Recommended Uses: Threefoot Building

➤ Market Summary

- Hotel demand is stagnant or slightly declining (2004 – 60% Occ., \$62 ADR)
- While it is needed to support the Riley Center, it should not be viewed as a downtown anchor in Meridian’s landmark property
- Demand must be evidenced and not speculated in the marketplace to justify compelling market need

HOTEL MARKET DEMAND			
<i>Proposed Hotel at Threefoot Building</i>			
	MSU Projected Demand	Required 100-Room Hotel Support	Required 200-Room Hotel Support
Total Rooms	67	100	200
Room Nights Supplied	24,455	36,500	73,000
Room Nights Demanded	17,000	25,550	51,100
Occupancy	70%	70%	70%

Source: ULI Advisory Panel, MSU

➤ Recommended Development Approach

- Allow time for proven history of bookings and future reservations at conference center (risk mitigation)
- Project planning flexibility in scale (number of rooms)
- Hotel should be a limited-service, high-quality facility
- Hotel to provide catering and kitchen service for the conference center



Recommended Uses: Kress Building

Recommendations

- Magnet School for the Arts (visual, performing, culinary)
- MSU Technical Research Center (expanded Medical Program)
- MSU Hospitality Management School
- Other users have interest in locating in the Kress Building, some of which might find the Newberry building a suitable location
- Kitchen to be used in interim to service conference center events until the Threefoot Building hotel is completed

Attributes

- Located in the heart of the emerging Arts & Entertainment District
- High ceilings and generous spaces for performances/rehearsals
- Introduces younger population to downtown
- Balances day and evening population

Recommended Supporting Uses for Riley Center

Functional Support

- High quality hotel
- Temporary kitchen (Kress Building) until the hotel is completed
- Riley Center to explore joint management agreement for conferencing and catering with proposed hotel
- Magnet School of the Arts

Audience and Delegate Support

- Restaurants & Cafes with outdoor seating
- Clubs/Pubs
- Delis
- Coffee
- Museums
- Public open space

Public Support

- Security
- Tourism Center for marketing performances and events

Positioning the Land Uses: Physical Geography

Downtown Gateway

- Redevelop Village Fair Mall, which will function as the 'gateway' to downtown and encourage traffic on the north side of Interstate 20

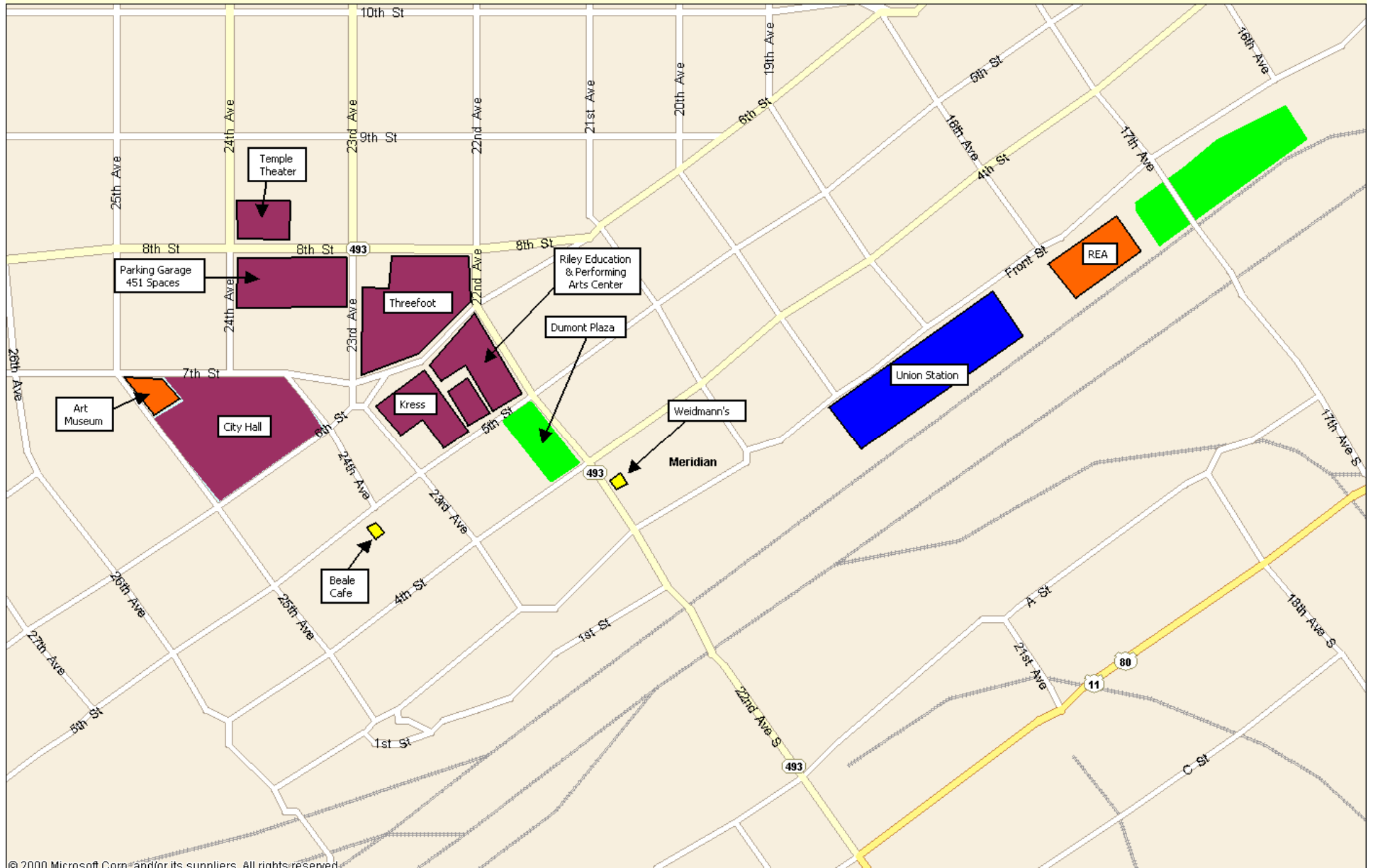
Downtown Districts

- 22nd Avenue Gateway
- Front Street: Specialty Retail, Museums
- Arts & Culture District: Riley Center
- African American Historic Business District
- Medical District

Anchors & Pedestrian Itineraries

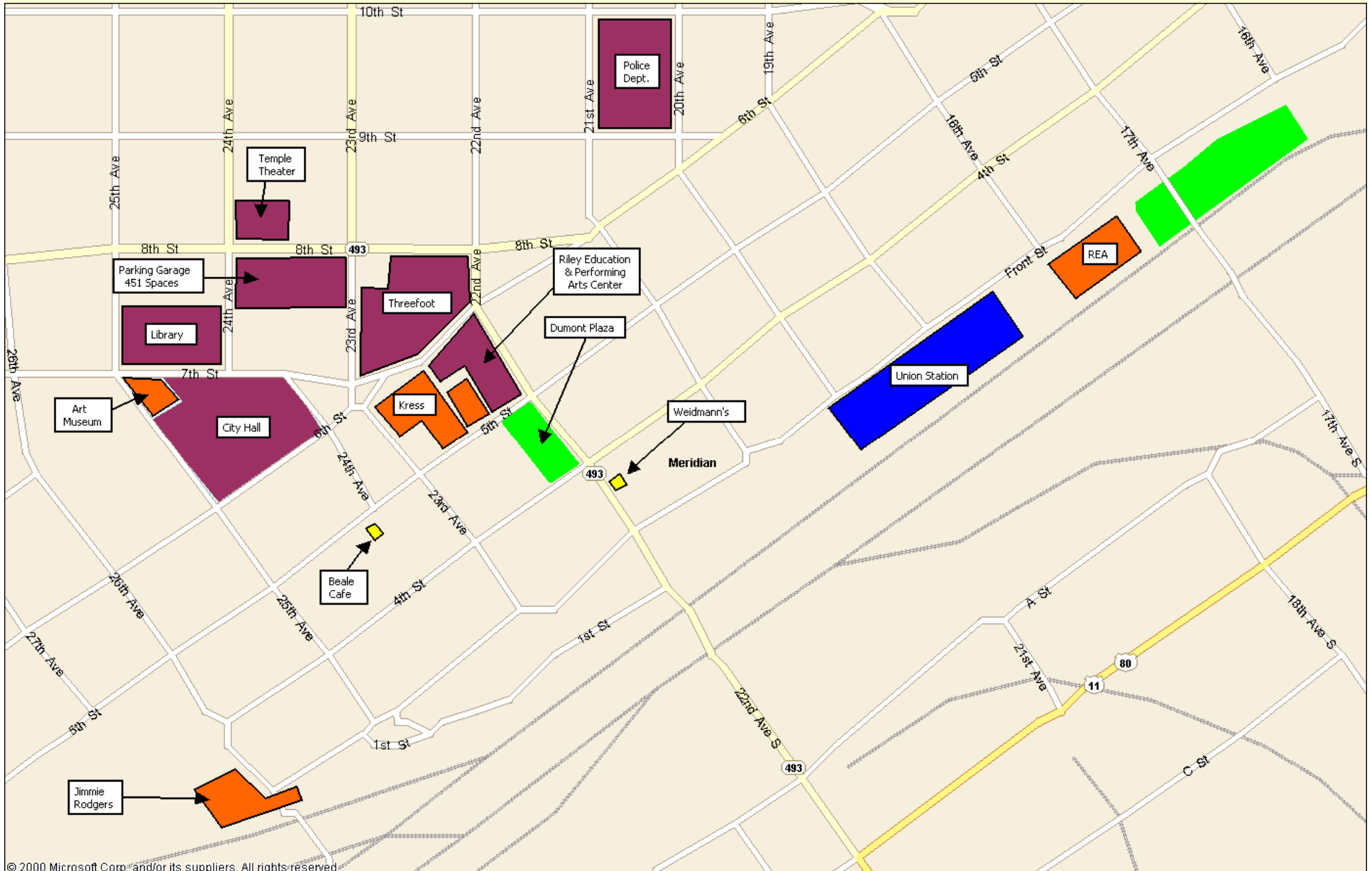
- Position anchors to balance and redirect pedestrian traffic through downtown
- Creation of pedestrian itineraries to connect the points of interests
- Itineraries creates integration of uses (e.g. museums, historical points of interest, cafes, public space, etc.)

Current Development Activity

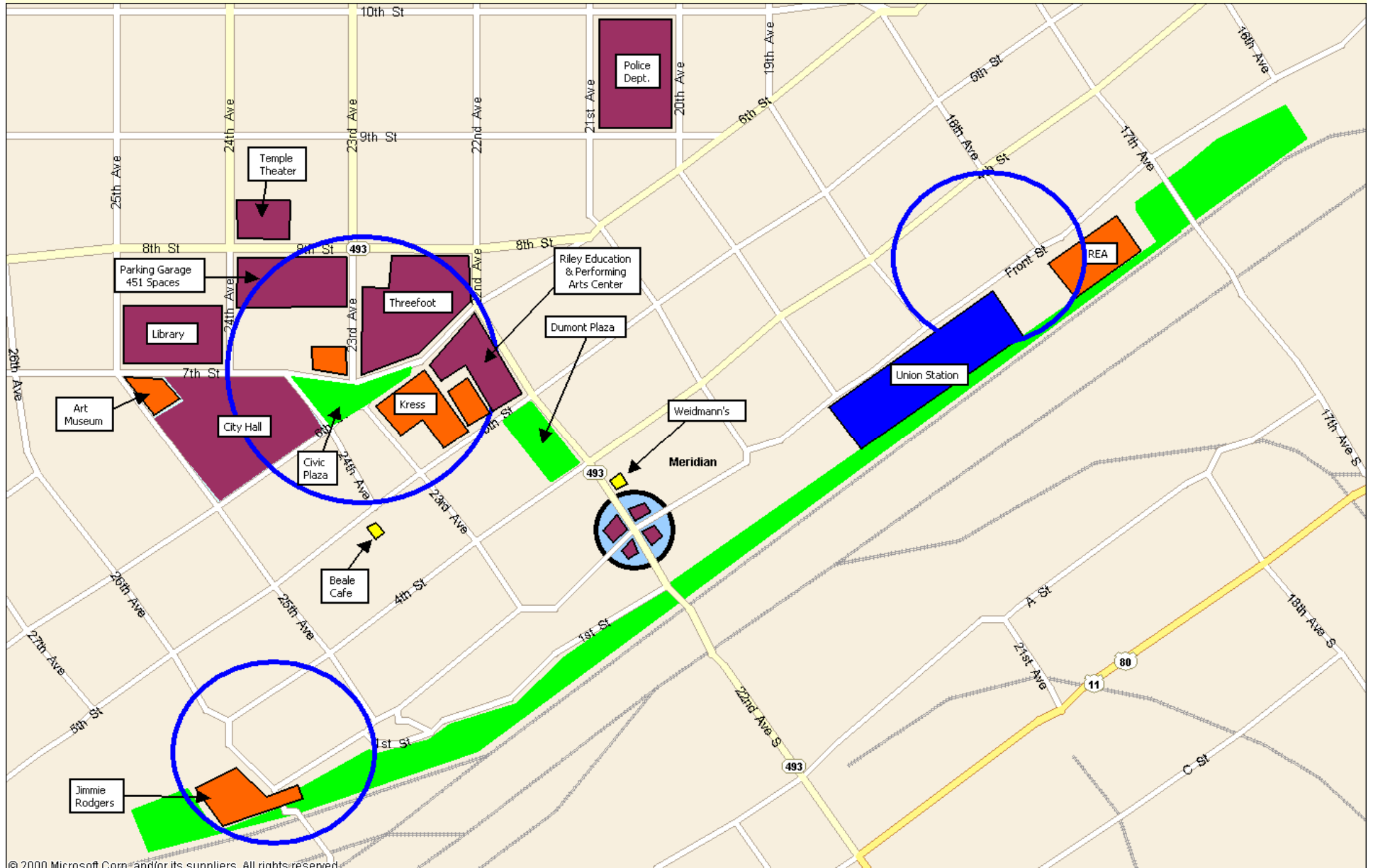




Positioning the Anchors



Pulsing the Development





Economic Generators Downtown

- Government, medical, services, culture, entertainment, tourism
- Each depends on the others' success
- Diversity is the draw, and combination is the key
- Meridian has an active artistic life and many proposed museums.
- Pedestrian itineraries
- Anchors and clusters



Proposed Downtown Museums

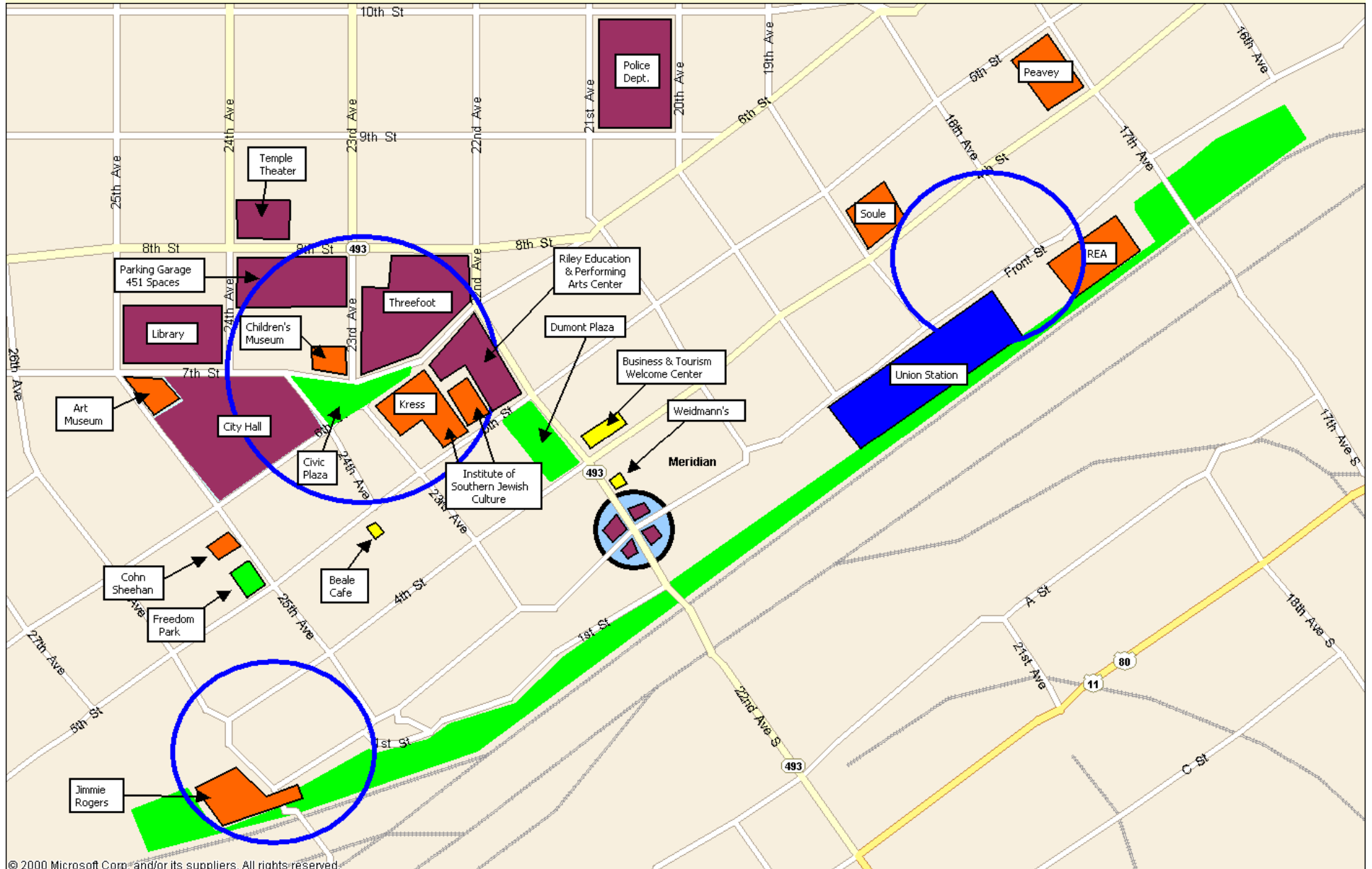
Anchor Museums:

- Jimmie Rodgers Museum
- Children's Museum

In-line museums:

- Cohn Sheehan Design Center
- Institute of Southern Jewish Culture
- Mississippi Industrial Heritage Museum/Soule Steam Engine Museum
- Peavey Museum

Proposed Museum Sites





Essential Supporting Uses

Phase 1

- Antiques and art galleries
- Eating and drinking
- Evening music clubs/bars
- Live/work spaces
- Coffee houses/deli
- Specialty retail

Phase 2

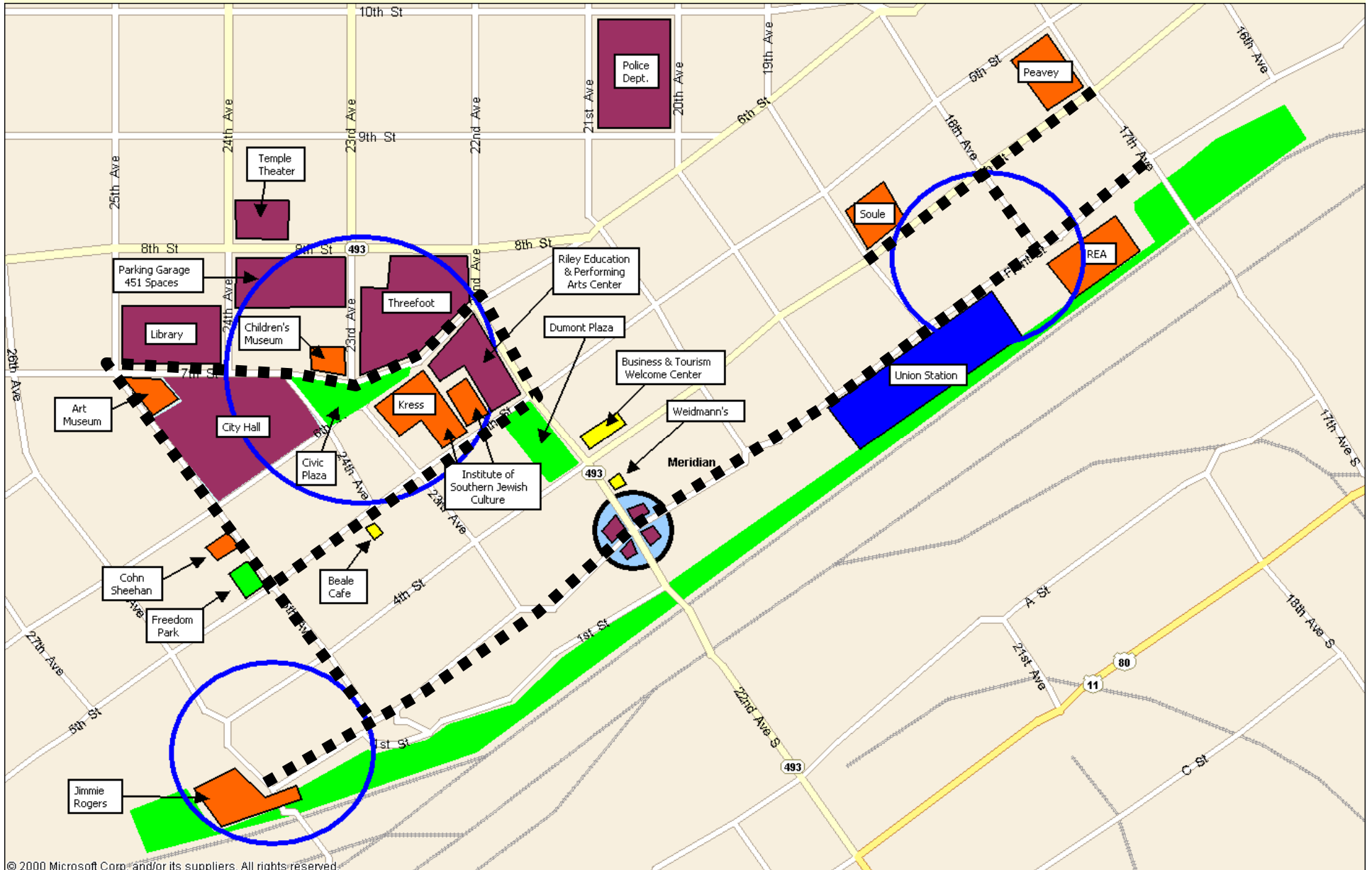
- Incubator service businesses
- Local grocer
- Apartments



Sustainable Downtown Growth

- Create a Downtown City Walk
- Designate an Urban Revitalization District
- Form a downtown partnership.
- Open a Business and Visitor Welcome Center.
- Expand the Meridian Arts Council.
- Streamline the Development Approval process.
- Gather more information.

Downtown City Walk





Urban Revitalization District

- An overall framework for achieving the city's goals downtown
- Focus on key properties that are damaged or vacant
- Condemnation of offending properties
- Deliver key properties to developers and cultural users



Downtown Partnership

- A business improvement district
- Includes property owners, retailers, hospitals, and city representatives
- Provides added level of services within the district.
- Marketing, Promotion, Clean-up, Security are Most Popular.
- Self funded, self administered, self benefits
- Interim voluntary partnership?



Business and Tourism Welcome Center

- A central place for information on downtown Meridian
- For tourists, for retailers, for businesses, for residents
- One-stop shopping for investing, visiting, and living downtown
- Downtown model, maps, available commercial spaces, development assistance and subsidies
- Potential home for Downtown Partnership, tourist office, Main Street, Chamber of Commerce, representative of redevelopment Authority
- Located on a visible “gateway” site

Meridian Arts Council

- Expand to serve as the umbrella arts organization for the city/county.
- Coordinates all events, festivals, shows organized by members.
- Funded by dues and Percent of Arts program.



Streamline the Development Approval Process

- One-stop approvals
- One city staff walks a project through the process
- Improve city response times
- Expedited process for ridding downtown of building “cancers”



Gather More Information

- Economic base study
- Downtown market potential
- Feasibility studies for proposed arts and cultural venues
- Marketing and branding plan



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Planning & Design

Marc McConnel
Satyendra S. Huja

Transportation

- Three Key Elements: Efficiency, Safety, Appearance
 - Efficiency
 - Ability of Street System to Accommodate Traffic.
 - One-way Streets are Confusing.
 - Recommend Changing All One-Way Streets to Two Way.
 - Poor Signal Timing to be Corrected With Change in Pattern.
 - Safety
 - Ability of Motorists to Move and Park Safely.
 - Sight Lines.
 - Diagonal Parking Poses Greatest Threat.



Transportation (Cont.)

● Appearance

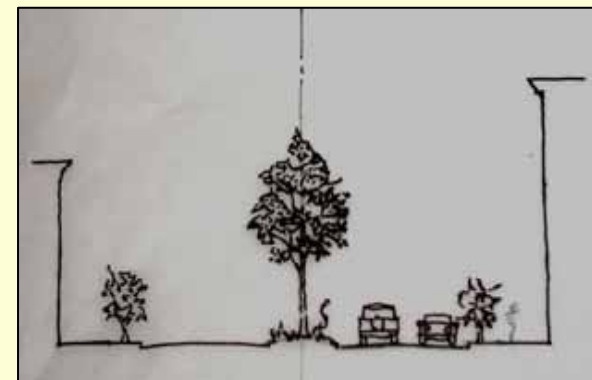
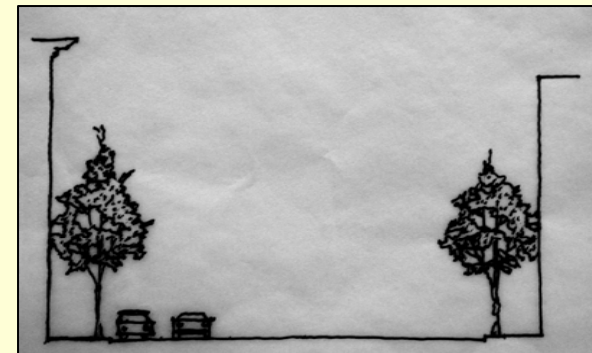
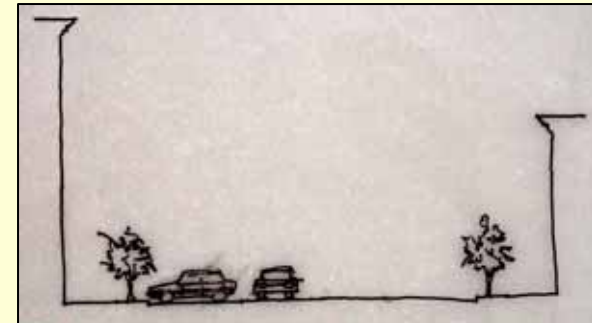
- Entry/City Gateway
 - The 22nd Avenue Bridge is the Most Important Entry Point into the City and is Akin to the Castle Portal.
- 22nd Avenue from I-20/59 is Entry to City.
- Interchange
 - Landscaped, Low-Maintenance, High Impact Planting.



Transportation (Cont.)

Three Streetscape Design Scenarios

- **Parking Intensive Streets (ex. 4th Street)**
Two way, one lane each direction, with small trees and islands at intersections - diagonal parking on each side.
- **Arterial Streets (ex. 22nd Avenue)**
Two-way, two lanes each direction, with street trees on sides - parallel parking.
- **Retail and Pedestrian Streets (ex. Front Street)**
Two-way, one lane each direction, with median containing large street trees with small flowering trees at sidewalk – parallel parking.





Example of a Street with Potential



Existing Condition

Example of a Street with Potential



Add Proposed Buildings

Example of a Street with Potential



Addition of Street Trees

Infrastructure

- Adequate Infrastructure is Necessary.
- Parking
 - Parallel Parking Loses Approximately 35 Spaces
 - Loss is made up by parking structure (451 Spaces)
- Storm Drainage/Sanitary Sewerage
- Gas Supply/Water Supply
- Electrical Service
 - Uniform Street Lights Needed for Historic Districts of the City.
- A Master Plan for Infrastructure Repair and Improvement.





Creative Life

Art is a proven economic development tool. America's non-profit arts industry generates \$134 billion in economic activity every year - \$53.2 billion in spending by arts organizations and an additional \$80.8 billion in spending by arts audiences.

The panel recommends that Meridian join over 400 other American cities in enacting a Percent-for-Art program for the installation of art in public places as an economic development activity.



Housing

Key Component of Successful Downtowns

- Identify compact housing districts.
- Tax Credits, and Incentives.
- Corner of 22nd Avenue & Front Street.
- Upper floors, e.g., Front, 22nd, 23rd
- Down payment assistance.





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Center City Plaza



Green Space

Breathing Rooms of the City

Public

Center City Plaza

Pedestrian Connection

– opera and hotel

Freedom Park at

corner of 25th & 5th

Dumont Plaza – clarify

use; murals.



Green Space

Private

Landscaping requirements

- in zoning ordinances.





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Plans and Studies

Thinking Ahead

Downtown Strategic Development Plan

- Vision
- Priorities
- Public Investment





Plans and Studies

Medical Area Plan

- Definition of boundaries
- Development Plan
- Coordination
- Zoning





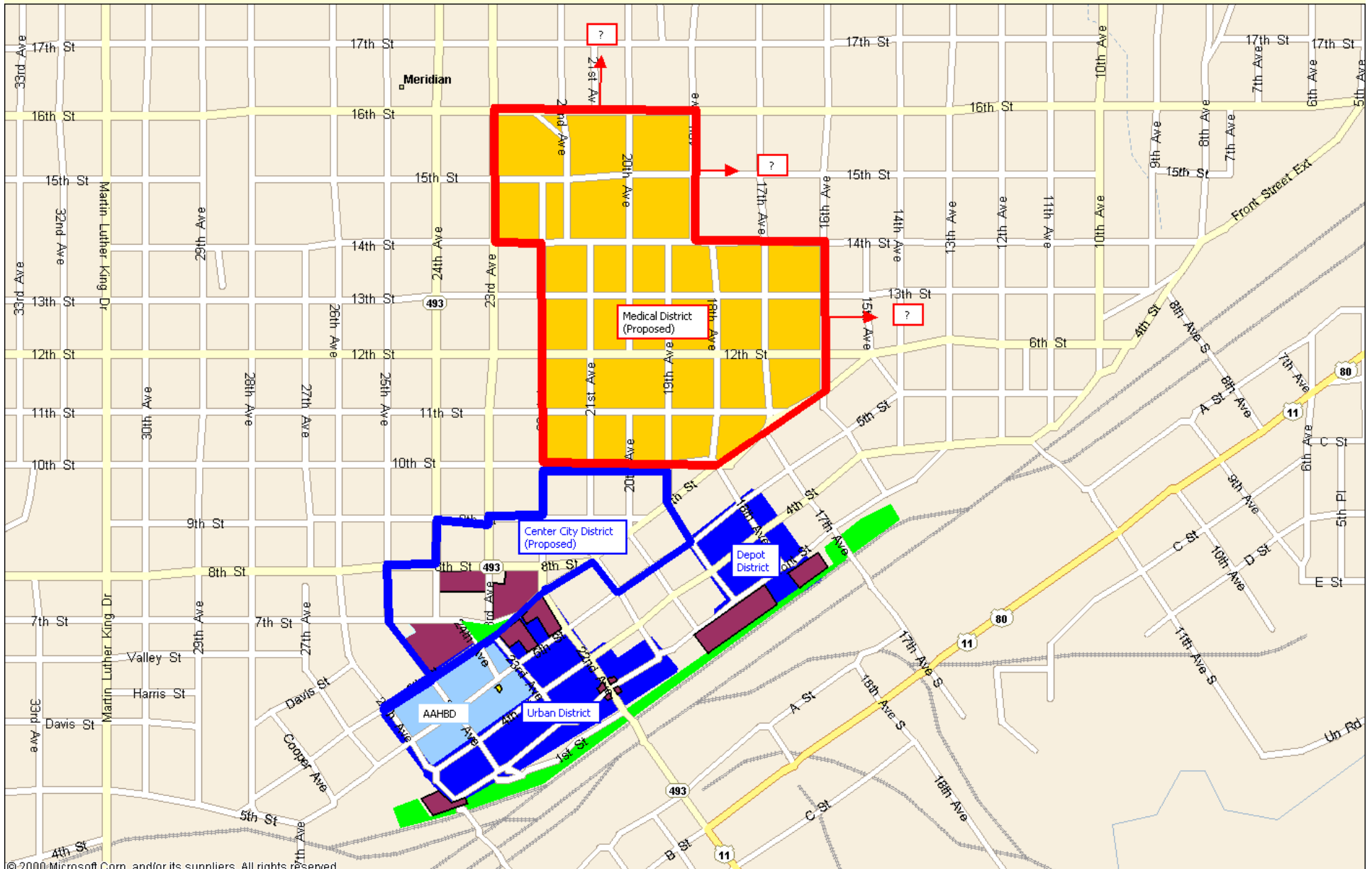
Plans and Studies

Historical Districts

- Create new city center historic district-connect urban and depot districts.
- Identification plaques – district four buildings.
- Street Signage
- Lighting



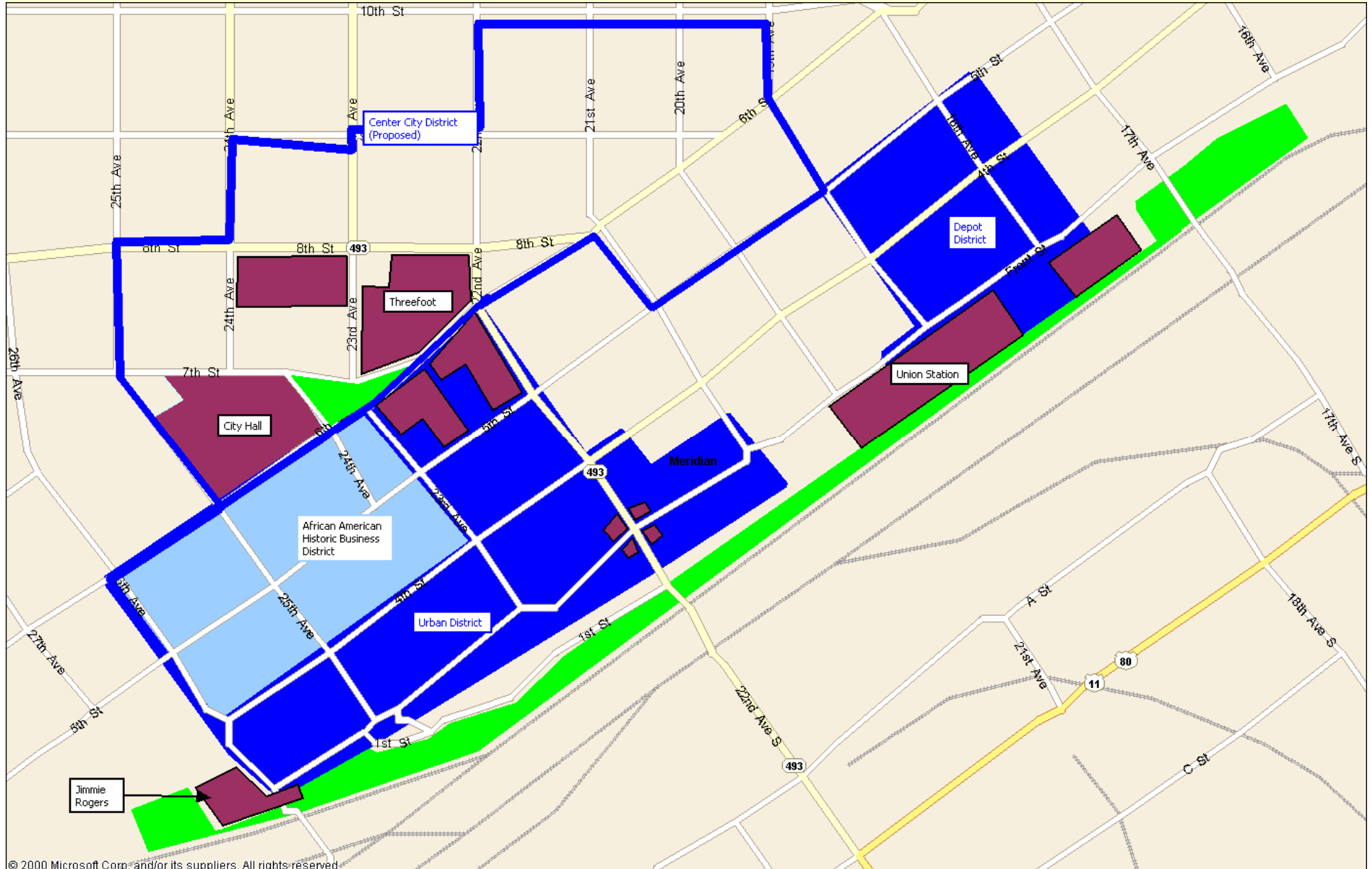
Proposed Medical District





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Proposed Center City Historic District





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Development & Implementation Strategies

Kenneth T. Bacchus
Mark Albrecht



Development Strategies

- Build upon previous work product completed and/or underway by the City of Meridian, including local foundations, the private sector, Mississippi State University, Lauderdale County, the Meridian Redevelopment Authority, and *draft* plans completed by the John C. Stennis Institute of Government.

Collaboration of Stakeholders

Provides leadership, vision, and financial sustainability for the many projects.

City of Meridian

Meridian Redevelopment Authority

East Mississippi Business Development Corporation

Meridian area foundations (Riley, Hardin & Community)

Lauderdale County

Private sector investors and business

Meridian Arts Council

Development Strategies

- **Adopt a Strategic Development Plan for Downtown Meridian.**
- **Complete the redevelopment and programming for existing and planned projects**
- **Develop a coordinated development plan with area medical institutions in the downtown area.**
- **Identify a governance structure to implement the Strategic Plan.**



Development Strategies

- Streamline development process.
- Identify and market other key vacant/underutilized buildings.
- Encourage more downtown housing.
- Develop and implement a Capital Improvement Program
- “Streetscape Plan” for the 5th Street Cultural Corridor.
- Design and implement an entry/gateway to downtown along 22nd Avenue from I-20 to Downtown including a City Emblem.



Development Strategies

- Insist on independent market analysis for major developments.
- Utilize all available financial incentives available.
- Identify private sector and donor support for various projects.
- Rehabilitate and/or stabilize existing historic buildings.



Development Strategies

- Develop a density of core activity that will encourage the private sector to fill in the “gaps”.
- Key buildings in the Historic AABD should, at a minimum be stabilized and utilized by interim tenants to create a core of activity.
- Plans for Freedom Summer Memorial Park should be finalized and constructed.
- Identify immediate and long-term uses which support an art & entertainment district.



What is the best way to encourage redevelopment of the African American Historic Business District?

The ULI Panel recognize there is a sense of apprehension and reluctance of long-term property owners to re-invest in the redevelopment of their Properties.



**Collaboration of the City of
Meridian, the Meridian
Redevelopment Authority and
building owners would result in a
“win” for the city and the AAHBD**

Three phased approach

First Phase

Construction of a “streetscape Plan” for 5th Street from 22nd to 26th Avenues to physically link the Cultural Corridor of arts and museum facilities.



Three phased approach:

Second Phase

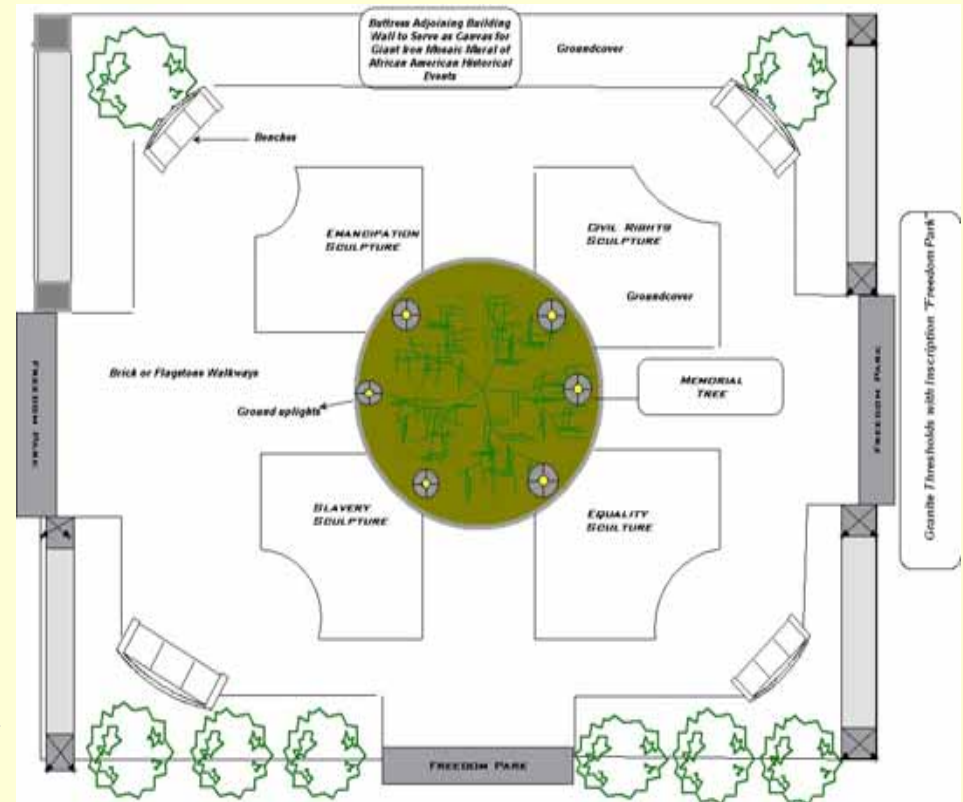
The ULI Panel support *draft* plan prepared by the Stennis Institute, including the rehabilitation of several buildings, the Cohn Sheehan Building, stabilization of Fielder & Brooks Pharmacy Building, and construction of the proposed Freedom Summer Memorial would create a “core of activity”.



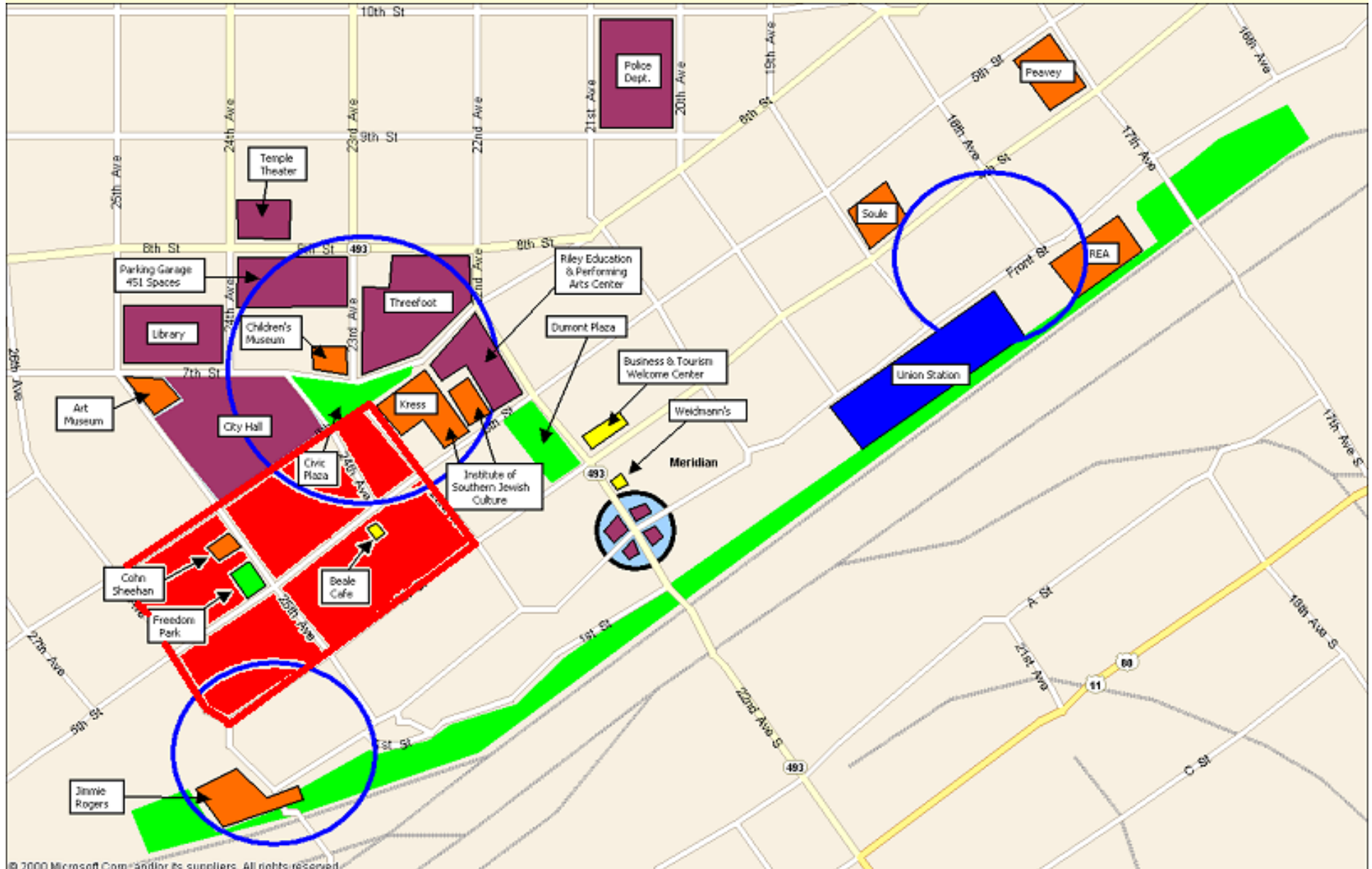
Three phased approach:

Third Phase

This core of activity and interest along with public infrastructure may convince other existing owners to further invest in their properties.



Integral Part of City Walk Tour





Implementation Strategies

- **Financial**
- **Organization/Partnerships**
- **Communication**
- **Customer Service**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Financial Tools**



Financial Recommendations

- Create an annual Capital Improvements Program(CIP) that includes specific recommendations for Downtown
- Dedicate a portion of the annual TIF collections to the Downtown CIP
- CIP should reflect key infrastructure improvements
- Closely coordinate Lauderdale County's funding contributions annually into the Downtown Strategic Plan and the annual CIP.
- Establish a Percent for the Arts Program



Organization & Partnerships

- Expand the Meridian Arts Council to serve as the umbrella for all arts organizations in Meridian and Lauderdale Co.

- Educational Initiatives in Downtown
 - Magnet School for the Arts
 - Hospitality Arts

- Downtown Partnerships
 - Create a Business Improvement District for Downtown
 - Create a Business and Tourism Welcome Center

Organizations & Partnerships Continued

- Museums – With 6 proposed museums, careful coordination and planning is required
 - Seek new sources of funding outside Meridian
 - City assist with site assemblage

- Meridian Redevelopment Authority
 - Strengthen tools available for redevelopment including land assemble and a dedicated funding stream

Communication

- Enhanced communication between the City of Meridian and the general public to ensure continued public interest and acceptance
- City of Meridian and Lauderdale County continue to enhance its policy and strategic planning
- Increased planning between the hospital district and City
- Branding and Imagining Initiative



Customer Service

- Enhance City of Meridian employee customer service
 - All City employees should understand they are critical to implementing the vision for the new Downtown

- Streamline the planning and permitting process
 - The private sector is sensitive to amount of time it requires to process permits

- Meridian must address the general public's perception of safety in Downtown



Infrastructure / Public Improvements

- Gateway improvements at 22nd Ave. Bridge
 - upgraded street lighting, hanging flower baskets, & banners
- Enhance the Interstate 20 Interchange at 22nd Ave.
- Traffic Circulation in Downtown - return to a two way system
- Streetscape Enhancements
 - New curbs, decorative sidewalks, street trees, and decorative street lighting
 - First priority to 5th St. and 22nd Ave.
 - Dumont Plaza



Financial Recommendations

- City of Meridian currently avails itself of a wide variety of financial programs
- The City of Meridian's strongest financial asset is the number and amount of land buildings it controls and owns
- The ULI Panel recognizes that the preceding recommendations represent a significant additional funding investment
- The City of Meridian should carefully prioritize all of these recommendations to ensure it uses its financial resources prudently
- The City should use its financial resources to maximize private investment
- The ULI Panel feels strongly that the City should initially focus its energy and financial resources on the Threefoot Building and its conversion to a hotel and associated conference center



Development Projects-Prioritized

- Projects Already Underway
 - Marks Rothenberg Building-Riley Education and Performing Arts Center
 - Downtown Parking Structure
 - Weidemanns
 - Temple Theater





Projects That Require Significant Support

- Physical Infrastructure
 - Front St., 5th St. & 22nd Ave.
- Threefoot Building
 - Hotel & Conference Center
- Housing over Retail
 - East Side of Front Street
- Vise Building
 - Business and Tourism Welcome Center



Projects That Require Significant Support

- Cohn Sheehan Building
 - Urban Design Center (John C. Stennis Institute of Government)
- Kress Building
 - Arts Magnet School Above the Institute for Southern Jewish Culture
- Newell Paper Company Building
 - Artist Live/Work Space Above Gallery
- Armour Meat Packing Building
 - Artist Live/Work Space Above Gallery





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