

# Greenwood plans to rebuild downtown



Vic Ryckaert, vic.ryckaert@indystar.com 10:18 p.m. EST January 5, 2015



(Photo: 2014 Downtown Revitalization Plan, HWC Engineering and Axis Architecture)

GREENWOOD — Greenwood's city council is weighing a new plan to bring charm and style to an aging downtown.

The council held a public hearing but postponed voting on the [151-page Downtown Revitalization Plan](http://www.greenwood.in.gov/egov/documents/1418069686_47205.pdf) ([http://www.greenwood.in.gov/egov/documents/1418069686\\_47205.pdf](http://www.greenwood.in.gov/egov/documents/1418069686_47205.pdf)) during Monday's meeting at the City Center, 300 S. Madison Ave. The council will take up the measure again Jan. 19.

"This is an excellent plan," said Chuck Landon, a downtown resident and a member of the city's Economic Development Commission. "It preserves old town, which is what we should be doing for the integrity of our city."

The downtown plan, paid for by a \$40,000 state grant, calls for the city to create a "vibrant and active" downtown that is pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.

Greenwood plans to apply for another grant to help fund facade repairs to downtown buildings. It was this next phase in the process that drew skepticism from some council members who questioned the wisdom of using tax money on dilapidated buildings.

"I think something can be done down there," Councilman Thom Hord said. "I have been on record before saying let's tear some of it down and rebuild it in an old-fashioned way."

Hord joined Brent Corey, David Hopper and Mike Campbell in expressing concerns that the plan appeared to omit language and drawings that illustrate a downtown with some buildings removed.

"This plan doesn't mandate anything; it presents options," Campbell said. "My concern is I thought the options were limited."

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A crowd gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house for the new \$6 million Greenwood City Center at 300 S. Madison Ave. on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2014. The

building anchors a new plan to revitalize downtown Greenwood. (Photo: Rob Goebel/The Star file photo)

Last year, Greenwood kicked off its downtown revitalization by transforming a foreclosed office building into the City Center, which houses city offices.

The city also opened the new splash pad in the new City Center Park in 2014 and began investing about \$16 million in infrastructure work in and around downtown in hopes of drawing new investment.

Greenwood has been talking about fixing downtown for more than a decade. Officials hope to do away with the narrow sidewalks, run-down buildings and heavy traffic that have been blamed for stifling development.

Old town resident Maggie Farley captured the frustration of many who for years have heard city leaders talk about downtown without acting.

"It needs to happen," Farley said. "The plan needs to get voted on and get going."

Highlights of the new plan include:

- Eliminating turn lanes and building wider sidewalks at Madison Avenue and Main Street.
- Turning Market Plaza into a connector street that shunts traffic around the busy Madison-and-Main intersection.
- Revitalizing the "streetscape" by adding amenities, including brick pathways, attractive crosswalks, benches, trash containers, landscaping, planters, street lights and bike racks.
- Building new trails that connect downtown to area parks and extend north toward Greenwood Park Mall.
- Building a gathering place around the City Center with public art, a fountain or statue and an outdoor farmers market or entertainment venue.
- Beautifying and restoring Pleasant Creek to create a smaller version of [the Canal Walk in Downtown Indianapolis \(http://www.visitindy.com/indianapolis-canal-walk\)](http://www.visitindy.com/indianapolis-canal-walk).

"You need to invest in infrastructure if you're going to bring developers and businesses in," Landon said. "Business will drive this thing. Once they see that, they'll come."

Call Star reporter Vic Ryckaert at (317) 444-2701. Follow him on Twitter: @VicRyc.

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