



Strategic Redevelopment Plan for North Main Street, Herkimer New York

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A. Overview

The Strategic Redevelopment Plan for North Main Street in Herkimer (the Main Street Plan) is intended as a framework for the phased implementation of site development, new construction and building renovations in the historic center of Herkimer, NY. The Main Street Plan proposes development on North Main Street between Highway 5 and East German Street, with a particular focus around the “four corners” intersections of North Main Street, Church Street and Court Street (Refer to Figure A-i).

The intent of the Main Street Plan is to provide a vision for the facilities and infrastructure that will enhance existing trends for growth in Herkimer and provide a foundation for the revitalization of the area as a center of the activity and commercial expansion.

The proposed development centers on the themes of Herkimer’s role in the history of American basketball, Herkimer’s historic buildings and prominence in the 19th century and early 20th century, and Herkimer’s early industry, as exemplified by the Quakenbush Factory.

Refer to Figure A-i. The Main Street Plan includes the following three phases:

1. North Main Street Commercial Core development
2. North Main Street Historic Core development
3. North Washington Street-North School development

Each of these phases are described in the sections that follow. For the purposes of this document, Phase 1 includes the highest level of detail regarding specific projects, with Phases 2 and 3 remaining more general in nature.

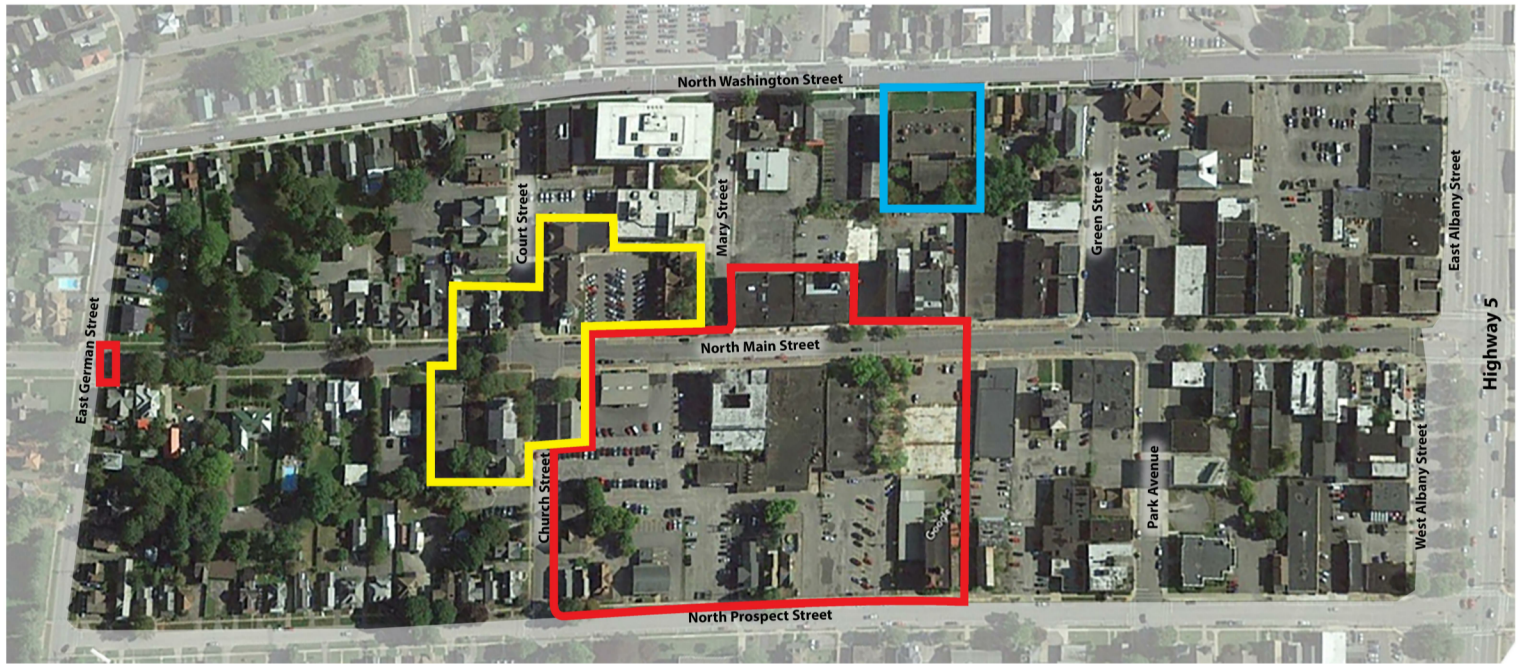
The Main Street Plan is intended as a general proposal for development. If accepted, the elements of this plan will require additional market analysis, programming, site study, detailed building design, as well as community and civic engagement before the Main Street Plan can be realized.

B. Strategic Vision- Planning themes

The site for the Main Street Plan is steeped in a rich cultural history from which the proposed development of the area draws its inspiration. Three major themes provide the foundation for the planning, as described below.

1. Herkimer’s role in the history of American basketball: The first game of basketball is believed to have been played, and many of the rules which govern modern basketball are believed to have been developed, at the Herkimer YMCA in 1891.¹ Although the original YMCA building, which stood near the corner of North Main Street and Church Street, was raised in the mid 1970’s, the significance of the site for the history of American sports should not be forgotten, and accordingly this history provides the inspiration and the theme for much of the development recommended under Phase 1, the Main Street Commercial Core development.

¹ <http://sonahrsports.com/basketballs-origins-lingering-questions-remain-p109-109.htm>



Key:

- Phase 1: North Main Street Commercial Core development area
- Phase 2 : North Main Street Historic Core development area
- Phase 3: North Washington Street- North School development area

2. Herkimer's prominence in the 19th century and early 20th century: Originally chartered in 1807, Herkimer rose in importance as a civic and cultural hub for the region- *"this spot was for many years before and after the revolution the most populous of any in this part of the country; the public buildings of the county have always remained at the Village, and for several years it enjoyed a commercial prosperity unrivaled by any locality in the county."*² This era of special prosperity remains evident through the historic buildings within the area of the Main Street Plan. Significant historic buildings include, but are not necessarily limited to³:
 - a. The Palmer House, 267 North Main Street (1889-91)
 - b. Van Kirk Apartments, 274 North Main Street (1900-1906)
 - c. Metzler Building, 268-272 North Main Street (1902)
 - d. Hemstreet Apartments, 260 North Main Street (1880)
 - e. Old County Courthouse, 320 North Main Street (1873)
 - f. Herkimer County Jail, 327 North Main Street (1834)
 - g. Reformed Church, 413 North Main Street (1835)
 - h. Masonic Temple, 415 North Main Street (1918)
 - i. Suiter House, 400 North Main Street (1884) and Eckler Building, 406 North Main Street (1870), which form the Herkimer County Historical Society offices
 - j. Christ Episcopal Church, 300 North Main Street (1889)
 - k. Quackenbush Factory, 220 North Prospect Street (1874)
 - l. North School, 217 North Washington Street (1922)

Many of these buildings retain much of their original character and testify to Herkimer's historical significance. Retaining historic buildings and, where practical, repurposing select buildings to contemporary use is central to the success of the Main Street Plan.

3. Industry- The Quackenbush Factory: Herkimer's role in industry within the Mohawk Valley is perhaps best exemplified by the Quackenbush Company, begun in 1871. Based on U.S. Patent Office records, the Quackenbush Company was responsible for inventing or significantly contributing to the development of numerous early 20th century inventions, including the .22 caliber rimfire rifle; various air rifles and pistols; ammunition for airguns including lead air rifle shot (commonly known as "BBs"); bicycles; a foot-powered wood lathe; the scroll saw; darts; stair rails; the extension ladder; the nut cracker and picks; the Kaleidoscope; and coat hangers.⁴

The original Quackenbush Factory still stands on 220 North Prospect Street, providing a unique opportunity to pay homage to Herkimer's industrial past. The Main Street Plan includes a role for this building as a cultural center and museum honoring Herkimer's manufacturing history.

² A History of Herkimer County (J. Munsell, Albany, N. Y., 1856) by Nathaniel S. Benton

³ Intensive Level Survey of Historic Resources-North Main Street Corridor Herkimer, New York by Bero Architecture PLLC, 2016

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Quackenbush

C. The Main Street Plan, Phase 1: Commercial Core Development

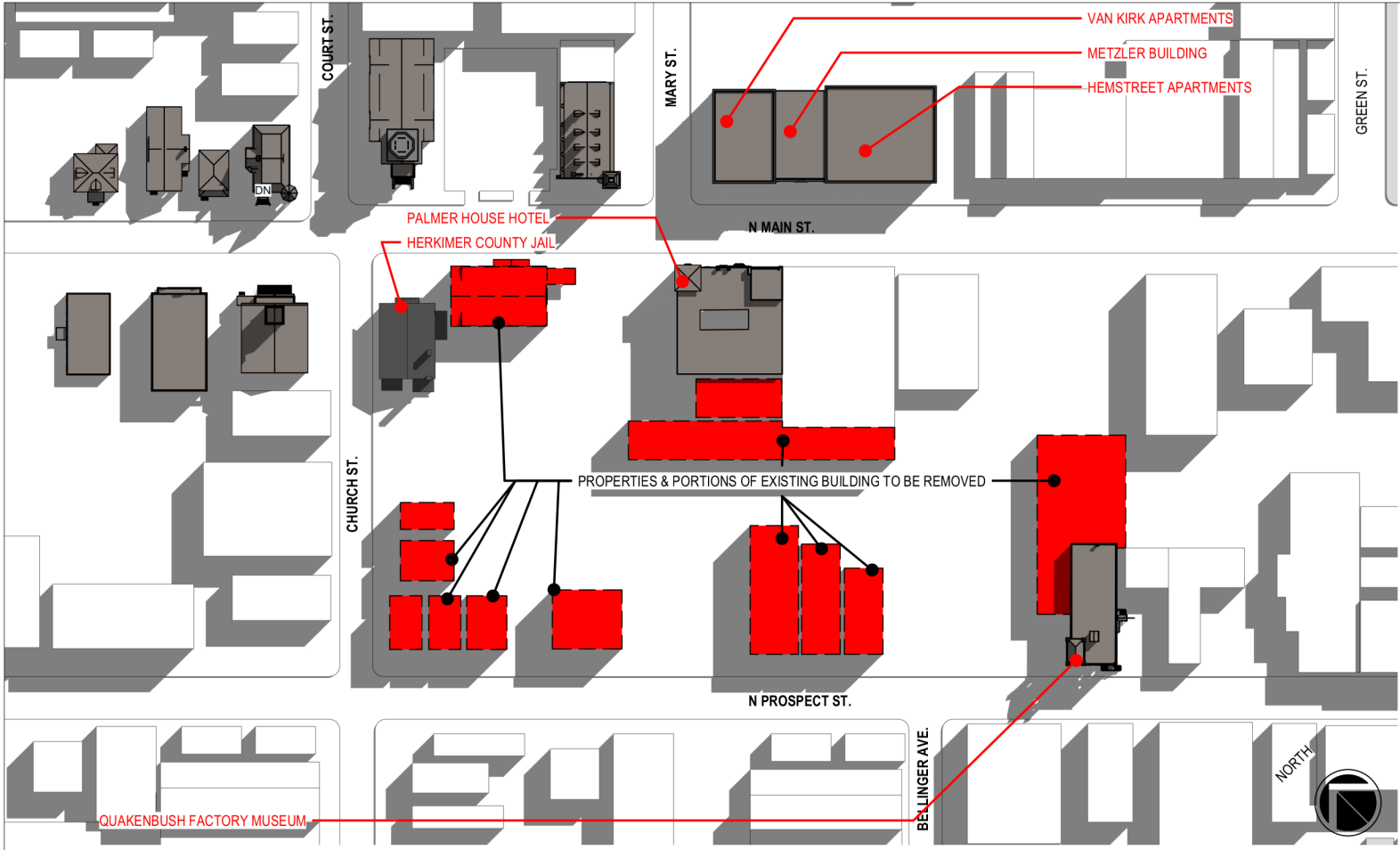
Refer to Figures C-i, C-ii, C-iii, and C-iv. Phase 1 of the Main Street Plan draws on all three of the Planning Themes noted above through a series of site development, demolition, new construction and renovation projects.

1. Athletics Complex: Phase 1 begins with the demolition of existing structures around the intersections of North Main Street, Church Street and North Prospect Street to allow for the construction a new athletics complex. The complex is intended to host youth basketball tournaments and other athletic events that will both act as a draw for tourism and promote the role Herkimer plays in the history of basketball. The complex will also provide a new amenity space for downtown Herkimer. The athletics complex has been sized to accommodate three youth league basketball courts overlaid with one regulation NBA court, bleachers, locker rooms, concessions sales and storage spaces, restrooms, offices, storage for athletics equipment and mechanical and electrical support spaces. The complex main entrance faces North Main Street, but is set back to create an entrance plaza that allows bus drop off, includes a historical marker noting the site of the original YMCA, and is the site for the World's Largest Basketball venue, described below. Refer to Figure C-1-i for a concept level plan of the Athletics Complex.
2. Palmer House Renovation: The historic Palmer House was once Herkimer's most elegant hotel.⁵ Phase 1 includes renovating the Palmer House as a contemporary basketball themed hotel including 30 suites, one for each team in the NBA. The hotel will host patrons for events at the athletic complex as well as support the tourism of the region. The design intent is to retain and restore the façade in support of recreating the late 19th century streetscape around this portion of North Main Street, while completely renovating the interior consistent with the features and amenities of a contemporary high end hotel.
3. World's Largest Basketball venue: In support of the basketball history themes established by the Athletic Complex as well as the renovations to the Palmer House, Phase 1 includes the creation of a "World's Largest Basketball" attraction. Currently the world's largest basketball is located over the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tennessee. The basketball for Phase 1 o Herkimer's Main Street Plan will be slightly larger, sized as a standard men's league basketball proportional to the women's league basketball atop the Knoxville facility.

A currently conceived, the World's Largest Basketball will be located on the plaza in front of the Athletic Complex and immediately adjacent to the renovated Palmer House, where it will be visible on the approach from East German Street. In addition to providing a landmark attraction for the plaza from the exterior, the venue is also intended to provide a unique interior space, accessed from the hotel, to host VIP events.

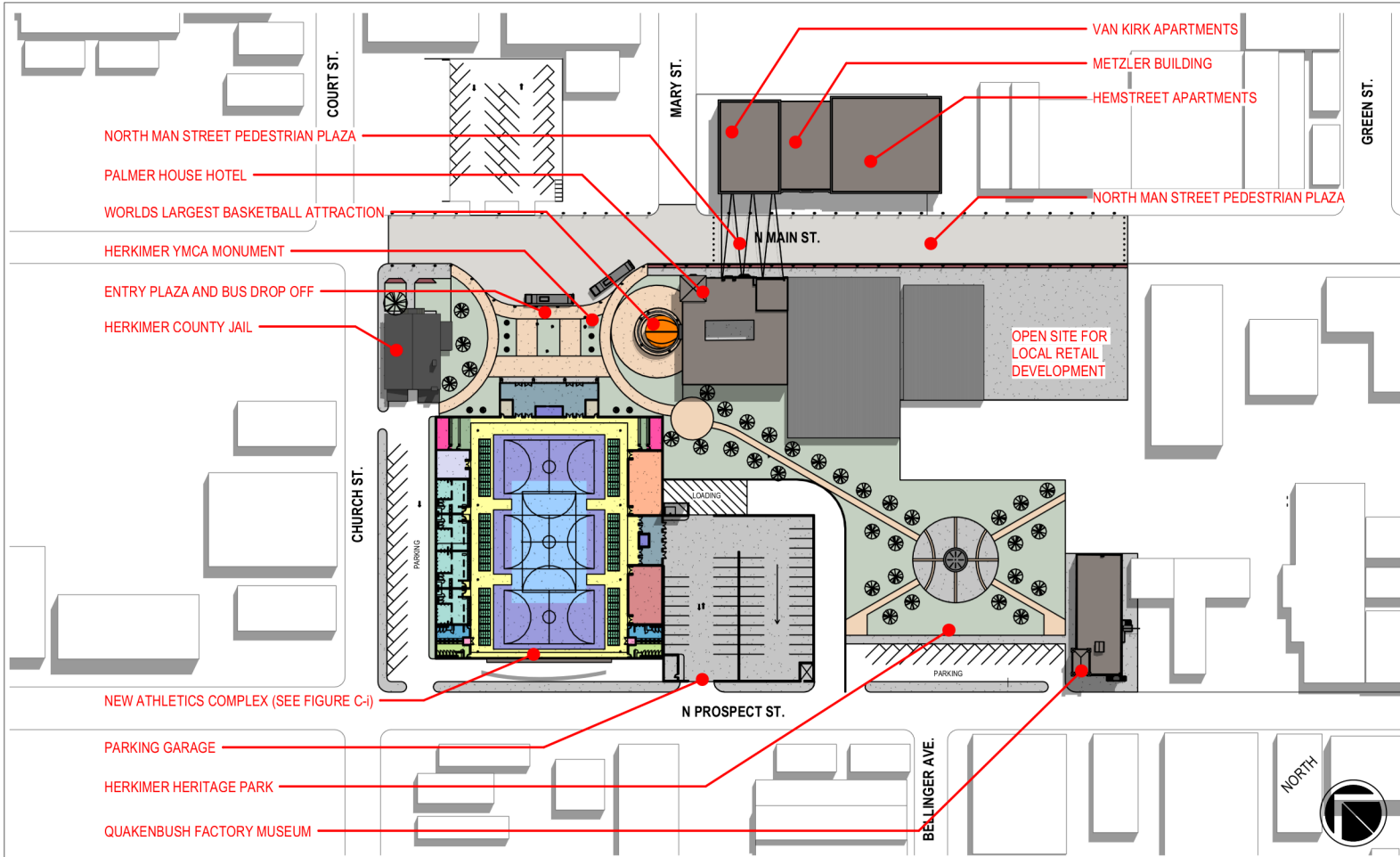
⁵ Intensive Level Survey of Historic Resources-North Main Street Corridor Herkimer, p. 10.

4. Historical marker for Herkimer YMCA: The plaza will include a monument to the Herkimer YMCA on the site of the original building, celebrating the role that the facility plays in the History of Basketball.
5. Parking facility: To support the needs of Athletic Facility and Hotel, Phase 1 includes a four story, 135 space parking garage.
6. Quakenbush Factory Renovation: Phase 1 includes the renovation of the Quakenbush Factory as a cultural center and museum, celebrating Herkimer history and focusing specifically on the contributions of the Quakenbush Company to manufacturing in the city in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
7. Herkimer Heritage Park: Phase 1 includes a new green space off of Prospect Street, between the new Athletic Complex and the Quakenbush Factory Museum. The park is intended to provide an outdoor venue for public events such as local farm markets and artisan fairs, as well as to enhance the visual link and public way from the plaza in front of the Athletic Complex through to the Quakenbush Factory Museum. As shown on Figure C-ii, the center of the park includes a large fountain, which may be converted to an ice skating rink during the winter.
8. Van Kirk Apartments, Metzler Building, & Hemstreet Apartments: Under Phase 1 the three buildings facing the Palmer House would be refurbished and renovated to support the recreation the late 19th century streetscape around this portion of North Main Street noted above. The renovations will include new retail at the street level. The programming for the upper floors is currently undetermined but will likely maintain the residential use a condominiums, rental or additional hotel space.
9. North Main Street Pedestrian Plaza: Under Phase 1, North Main Street will be closed to vehicular traffic from Mary Street to Green Street to create a pedestrian plaza fronting the renovated Palmer House and the new retail ground floor level of the Van Kirk Apartments, Metzler Building, & Hemstreet Apartments. Cobbled streets and period lighting will be used to enhance the historic character of the buildings and the recreation of late 19th century character of this block.
10. Civic Gates: To signal the entrance to the Main Street Plan development area, Phase 1 includes the addition of two Civic Gates at the beginning of North Main Street on East German Street. These gates front the residential end of the Main Street that leads directly to the main Street Historic Core which constitutes Phase 2 of the Main Street Plan. Refer to figure C-iv, View 4, for an initial concept perspective for the gates.



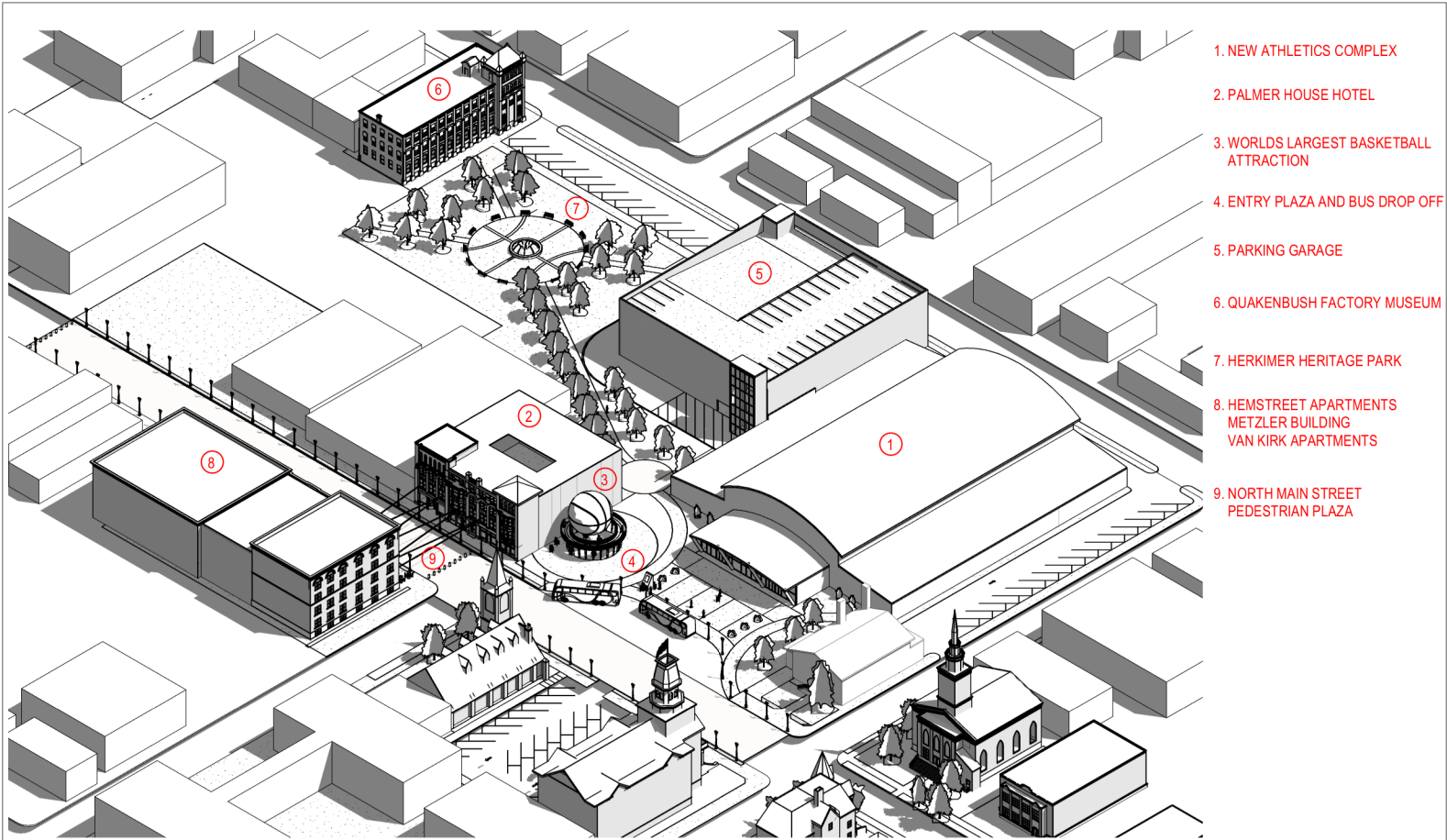
STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR HERKIMER NEW YORK NORTH MAIN STREET: PHASE I DEMOLITION

FIGURE C-i



STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT FOR HERKIMER NEW YORK-NORTH MAIN STREET: PHASE 1 NEW WORK PROJECTS

FIGURE C-ii

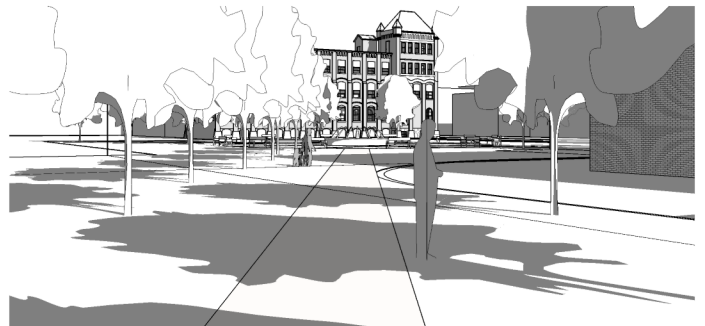


STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT FOR HERKIMER NEW YORK-NORTH MAIN STREET: PHASE I NEW PROJECTS OVERHEAD VIEW

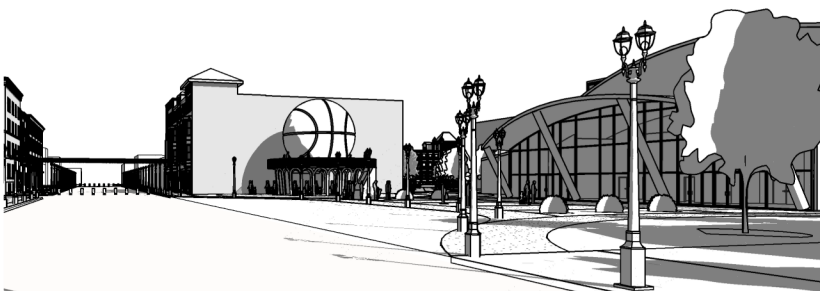
FIGURE C-iii



View Palmer House Hotel, World's Largest Basketball, and Athletic Complex



View of Quakenbush Factory/Museum across Herkimer Heritage Park



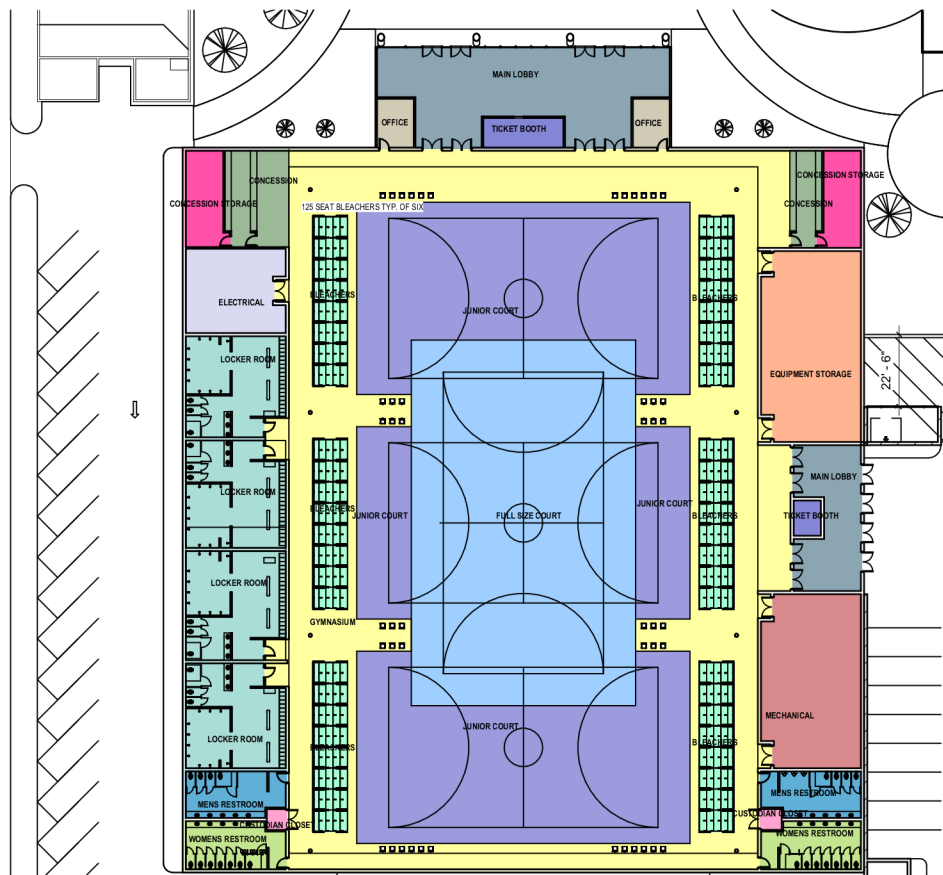
View down Main Street from Church Street



View of Civic Gate from East German Street - Civic Gate entry to North Main Street

Room Legend

- BLEACHERS
- CONCESSION
- CONCESSION STORAGE
- CUSTODIAN CLOSET
- ELECTRICAL
- EQUIPMENT STORAGE
- FULL SIZE COURT
- GYMNASIUM
- JUNIOR COURT
- LOCKER ROOM
- MAIN LOBBY
- MECHANICAL
- MENS RESTROOM
- OFFICE
- TICKET BOOTH
- WOMENS RESTROOM

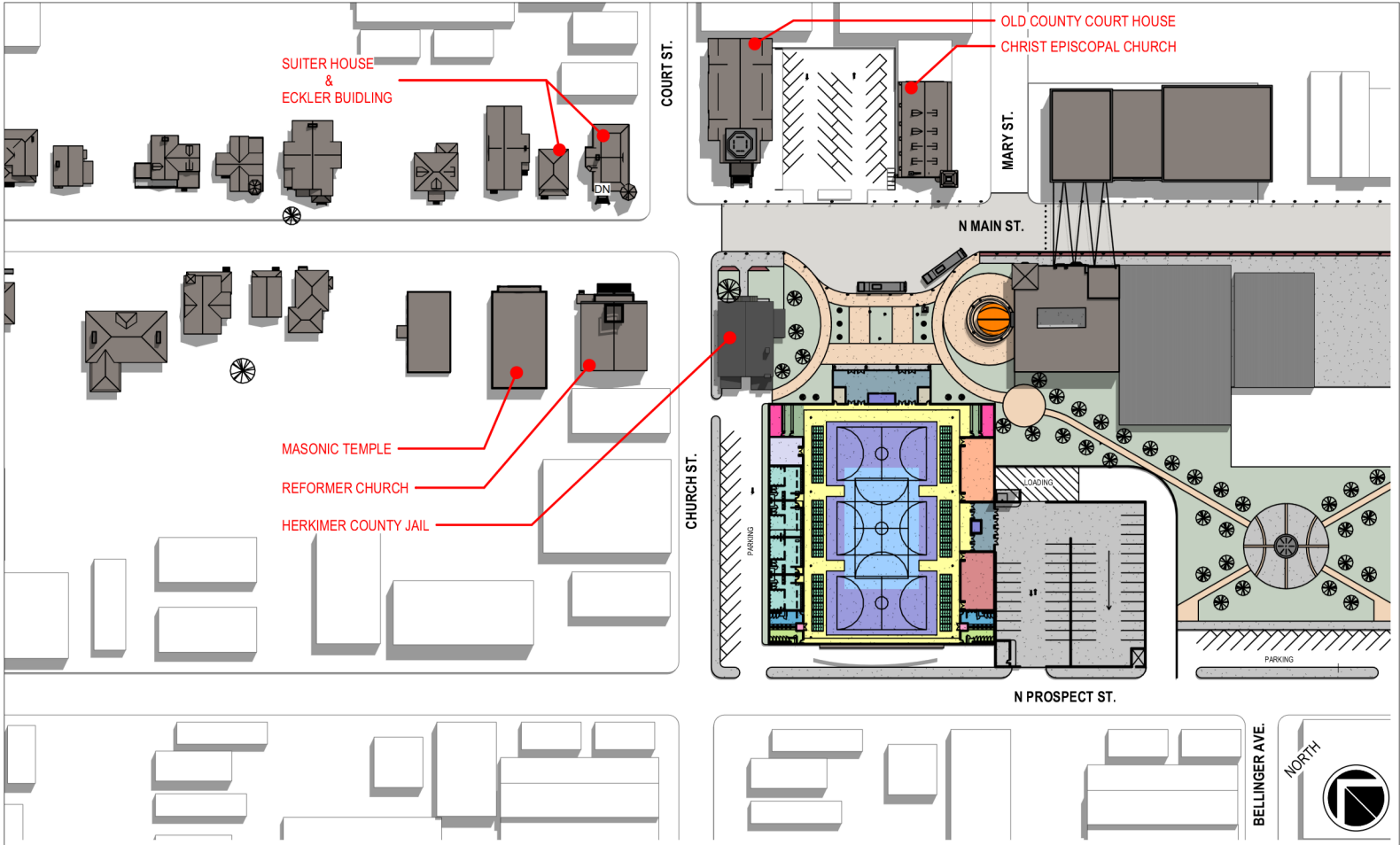


D. Main Street Plan Phase 2: Historic Core Development

Refer to Figures D-I and D-ii. Phase 2 includes restoration and development for the historic properties surrounding and north of the intersections of North Main Street, Church Street, and Court Street. As noted in the Overview, the planning for Phase 2 is currently general in nature, and specific programs for the subject buildings in this phase remain to be developed. That noted, Phase 2 is anticipated to include the following buildings, at a minimum.

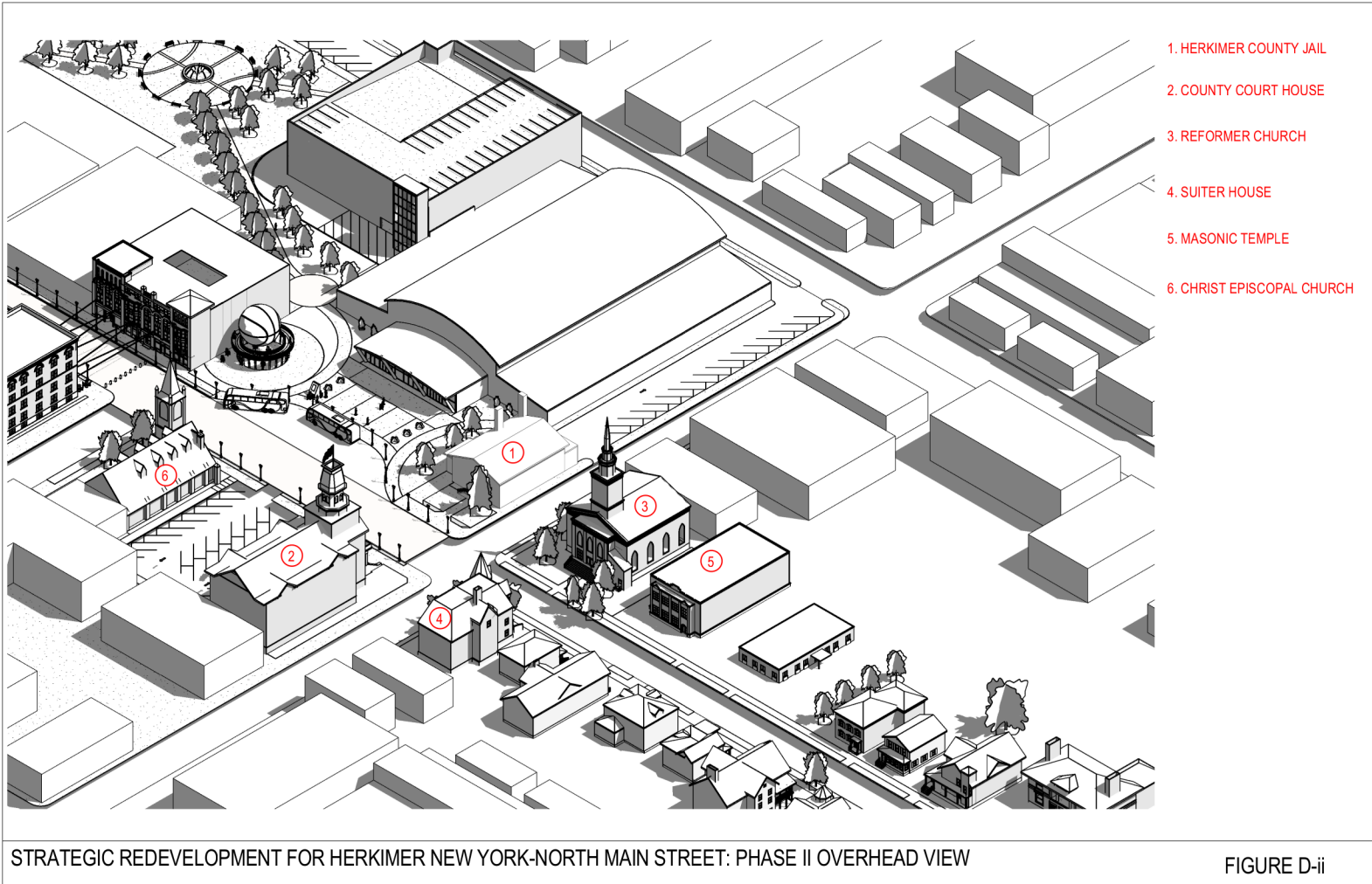
1. Herkimer County Jail, 327 North Main Street: The historic Herkimer County Jail, located on the southwest corner of North Main Street and Church Street, frames the northern end of the entry plaza for the Athletic Complex. As a historic site, development for this Building under Phase 2 is anticipated to be limited, including only restoration of the building where practical and landscaping in keeping with the development of the rest of the entry plaza.
2. Old County Courthouse, 320 North Main Street: The historic Old County Courthouse is a noble, imposing edifice located on the southeast corner of North Main Street and Court Street, immediately cattycorner from many of the major features of Phase 1. Under Phase 2 it is recommended that a program be developed for this facility which will enhance the overall viability of the redevelopment of this portion of North Main Street, such as an event center, conference center, and/or additional museum space.
3. Reformed Church, 413 North Main Street: The historic Reform Church, located on the northwest corner of North Main Street and Church Street, includes a graveyard and iron fence that are included as contributing characteristics to its designation as a historic site. The building retains much of its original character, and under Phase 2 no new program is anticipated to be required for this building or site.
4. Suiter House, 400 North Main Street and Eckler Building, 406 North Main Street: These former residences, on the northeast corner of North Main Street and Court Street and completing the forth corner of the intersections framed by the buildings noted above, currently house the Herkimer County Historical Society offices. This function is well suited to supporting the Main Street Plan, and under Phase 2 the intent is for these buildings to retain their role and be refurbished to the extent practical.
5. Masonic Temple, 415 North Main Street: The Gothic-style Masonic Temple is located immediately adjacent to Reformed Church. Under Phase 2 the historic building would be retained and refurbished, with a new program developed to support the other resources and activities that evolve under the Phase 1 development.
6. Christ Episcopal Church, 300 North Main Street: The historic Gothic-style Christ Episcopal Church retains much of its original character and function. Under Phase 2, like the Reformed Church, no new program is anticipated to be required for this building or site.

E. Main Street Plan Phase 3: Phase 3 of the Main Street Plan involves one remaining structure that is eligible as a historic site and that has played a significant role in the history of Herkimer and the history of basketball. The North School functioned as a public educational institution throughout most of the twentieth century, and still contains the original basketball court on which some of the earliest high school championship games were played. Retaining this facility and renovating it to a



STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT FOR HERKIMER NEW YORK-NORTH MAIN STREET: PHASE II PROJECT AREA

FIGURE D-i



new program supporting the redevelopment of downtown Herkimer is the final project recommended under the Main Street Plan.

F. Relationship to the Herkimer 2020 Master Plan: In May of 2018 Herkimer completed the “Village of Herkimer 2020 Master Plan” (2020 Master Plan). One of the purposes of that document, as stated in its introduction, is to provide the framework by which tactical plans for the Village of Herkimer may be developed. The Main Street Plan is intended as one such tactical plan, and draws its inspiration from key materials noted under the Village of Herkimer 2020 Master Plan, including the following:

1. Growth industry trends: The “Employment” portion of the 2020 Master Plan includes statistics from the U.S. Census regarding twelve industry sectors and the rate of growth or reduction for each between 2010 and 2015 (refer to page 16 of the 2020 Master Plan). Over this time, the industries that have enjoyed the highest rate of growth, 7%, are “Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services”. The Phase 1 projects envisioned by this Main Street Plan, including the new Athletic Complex, Palmer House Hotel renovation, outdoor attractions and parks and conversion of the Quakenbush as a museum, all fall within these fastest growing industries, and the Main Street Plan is thus well positioned to enhance and accelerate existing trends for growth within Herkimer.
2. Village Profile Survey: The 2020 Master Plan includes a survey “to identify the interest of those that either lived or worked in the Village specific to twelve (12) Characteristic Groups or profiles”.⁶ All twelve Characteristic Groups received positive responses from more than 50% of those surveyed, denoting that a majority of respondents were in favor of all of the Characteristic Groups for defining the future vision of the Village of Herkimer.

The projects envisioned by the Main Street Plan support most of the Characteristic Groups included in this survey, and provide direct support of the following five of the Characteristic Groups, as follows:

- a. Town of Herkimer’s role as a Herkimer County’s Retail Center Hub (ranked first in survey)
- b. Retail Offering in Line with Retail Center Profile (ranked fourth in survey)
- c. Visitor and Traveler Friendly (ranked sixth in survey)
- d. Expose and Clearly Define the County Seat Profile/Persona (ranked eighth in survey)
- e. Develop a Tourism Profile That Amplifies the Village as a Travel Corridor (ranked tenth in survey)

Refer to the 2020 Master Plan for additional information regarding each of the Characteristic Groups in the survey.

3. Retail Center Profile: The survey noted above concluded that the highest ranked priority for future growth was transforming favor the Village of Herkimer into a Retail Center of Herkimer County. The 2020 Master plan also recognizes that development of North Main Street is essential to achieving this goal.

⁶ Village of Herkimer 2020 Master Plan, p. 23

As noted under the Retail Center Profile of the 2020 Master Plan, “The **primary** issue of the retail profile of the Village is the **current state of Main Street...** Therefore **it is necessary for this plan** to define how to restore Main Street to its prior profile”.⁷

The Main Street Plan directly addresses this concern, recommending projects for the revitalization of North Main Street and its rejuvenation as a center of activity for Herkimer.

⁷ Village of Herkimer 2020 Master Plan, p. 30