Implementation

The recommendations outlined by the Joliet TAP flow neatly into a set of six broad implementation strategies that could be undertaken by the City of Joliet and its partners in the redevelopment of the Prison and U.S. Steel sites. The strategies are highlighted below, and additional information is included in the attached implementation matrix. The focus of the strategies is on actions that can be accomplished within the next two years, and each identifies a desired outcome that should be achieved within this period. The City and its partners should meet quarterly for the next two years to monitor action on each of these strategies.

Legislative Action

The City of Joliet should pursue the development of a legislative strategy that will lead to acquisition of the Prison site and the coordination of state agencies critical in the redevelopment process. This would mean the strategic engagement of state senators and representatives, regular meetings with state agency officials, and keeping neighboring communities – home to consumers of services at the Prison site – apprised of and supportive of redevelopment activities.

Outcome – Completion of acquisition activities by the end of 2013.

Acquisition Funding

In addition to legislative action, the search for resources for the acquisition of the Prison site is critical. The City of Joliet should engage in, and enlist the support of others in, the acquisition of funding to secure the prison. Specifically, the City should search federal, nonprofit and business resources for acquisition, using the results of this report to substantiate implementation activity.

Outcome – Complete gathering of acquisition funding by the end of 2013.

Site Management

The City of Joliet will need to consider management options once acquisition of the Prison has taken place. Will the City own and operate it? Will a nonprofit group need to be established to operate it? Must some other management entity, public or private, be created to oversee the Prison? The City will need to seek answers to these questions. In addition, once acquisition activities are completed, the City must be in a position to cede management authority to whatever group it deems suitable to do so.

Outcome – Establish a Prison management entity by the end of 2013.

Feasibility Studies

Studies that evaluate the viability and feasibility of redevelopment at both the Prison and U.S. Steel sites will be critical. Two studies are viewed as being necessary – a market study that examines the feasibility of tourism, recreational, retail, commercial and industrial uses at the Prison and U.S. Steel

sites, and a structural analysis that examines the building conditions of the Prison site and makes recommendations on renovations and demolitions.

Outcome – Complete feasibility studies by June 2013.

Open Space Implementation

Open space and recreational activities are a key component of the redevelopment of the Prison and U.S. Steel sites, and many of the actors needed to implement plans in the area have been involved already. Because there has been considerable action already, there is an opportunity to implement activities outside the realm of the Prison West and U.S. Steel site processes. The City of Joliet should play a facilitation role in bringing together open space actors in the area.

The City should convene an Open Space Task Force for the area, bringing together the Forest Preserve District, the I&M Canal Association, Openlands, the Joliet Park District, the Joliet School District #86, and others who could have an impact on open space and recreational uses. One of the activities of the Task Force would be to review the Heritage Park Corridor Plan completed by Openlands and determine if its recommendations are still viable. Another consideration for the Task Force would be to review trail and greenway connections with the Fairmont community immediately north of the Prison East site, identified in CMAP's Fairmont Community Plan and providing connections to trails and greenways to a much broader area.

Outcome – Convene the Open Space Task Force by the end of 2012.

Development Finance

Assembling the right redevelopment program for the Prison and U.S. Steel sites is essential to their success. A crafting of the right mix of development incentives is necessary to entice and incentivize potential developers of the sites. Four key implementation strategies are noted:

- Create and expand TIF district
- Focus TIF resources on site cleanup and infrastructure improvements
- Assemble other redevelopment tools (SSAs, tax rebates, etc.) into a redevelopment "toolkit" that can be used for site development
- Involve U.S. Steel as a critical partner in the redevelopment of the U.S. Steel site.

Outcome – Establish a regular meeting schedule with U.S. Steel by the end of 2012; Establish a TIF district by the end of 2014.