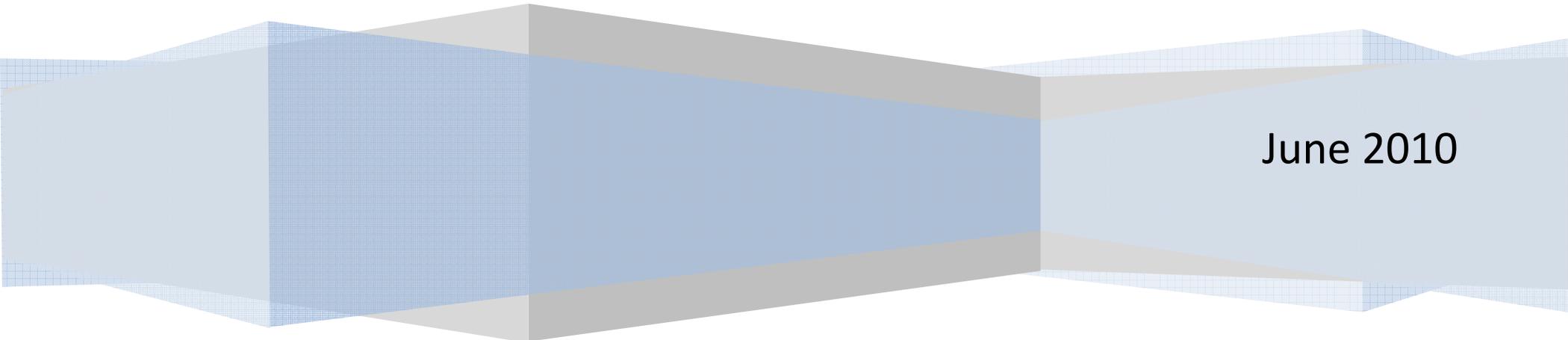


Nuguru Business and Marketing Consultants Inc.

North Battleford, “The Prairie Power City” Best Practices in Downtown Redevelopment



June 2010

Executive Summary

An examination of Downtown Redevelopment Best Practices reveals that most successful projects either knowingly or unknowingly follow the “Four Point Approach” and “Eight Principles” of the American Main Street Program. Hallmarks of these programs include initial research, community feedback, stakeholder involvement, private and public investment, inviting policy, dedicated staff and budget, strong communication, family and cultural events, and long term planning. The Provinces of Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec have adopted the American Main Street Program.

A baseline study is typically conducted to provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of redevelopment programming and to provide information to communicate to stakeholders. Typically the data will include vacancy rates, rental rates, changes in building value, number of new businesses, expansions, new and follow-on investment, increases in spending, and public perception of change through survey. In some cases, the baseline can be represented pictorially as well.

Incentives are publicly offered in many areas to encourage investment, primarily from local or regional investors. Large investors typically will require significant individualized incentives. Analysis of incentive programs suggests that the return on initial dollars is strong as follow-up investment is often created.

Disincentives can be difficult to administer or legally challenging. Taxation disincentives are used in the United States, but in Canada, by-law disincentives are more common as they are more legally defensible in this country. By-law disincentives may include additional monitoring and fees or higher cost licensing for less attractive business endeavours.

As with any project, some issues are location specific and surveys indicate that the most pressing issues in downtown North Battleford are policing, cleanliness, and pawnshops and secondhand stores. These issues are top of mind for the public and strategies targeting these issues need to be quickly developed and implemented.

1.0 Introduction

The City of North Battleford has contracted Nuguru to complete a Best Practices study related to their redevelopment of downtown. The study will examine incentive and approach best practices based on the experiences of other cities with a focus on programming that addresses similar downtown challenges.

2.0 Methodology

Best Practices in Downtown Redevelopment were identified in two main areas: approaches and incentives. Key to downtown redevelopment is the attraction of new businesses which complement and re-energize existing merchant offerings. Comparative analysis of incentive approaches and their relative success will lead to recommendations that are applicable to North Battleford. Solutions in similar demographic and socio-economic environments will be of particular interest. Incentives in training, taxation, infrastructure development, and other areas when applicable will be included.

Secondary research including websites and marketing materials were reviewed to assess best practices. Whenever possible, smaller communities, similar in size to North Battleford, were targeted for information. Larger centres with similar downtown challenges were also considered, especially if strategies were scalable.

3.0 Best Practices

The American large city approach anchored by the mega project such as an Aquarium (Chattanooga Tennessee) or Stadium (Columbus Ohio) cannot usually be replicated in smaller centres and in many cases requires ongoing operational funding. In smaller cities, revitalization of the downtown follows a consistent pattern. Downtown redevelopment in most markets requires public and private partnerships, commitment, and long-term planning.

Approach

Lessons Learnt

There is a standardized approach that has proven successful in the United States (The National Trust Main Street Center) and has been adopted by Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec Main Street Programs. “The "Four-Point Approach" involves organization, design, marketing and economic development: Strong local organization engages community participation and builds collaborative relationships that are the foundation for downtown revitalization. A Main Street coordinator and an advisory board of local volunteers work together with other local groups to coordinate efforts toward achieving community goals.”

The Alberta Main Street Program adopts, “the "*Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*" to encourage heritage conservation and appropriate maintenance practices, and to promote new development that enhances and respects the character of the historic main street area”.

<http://www.albertamainstreet.org/default.aspx>

<http://www.fondationruesprincipales.qc.ca/en/>

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/inddr.htm>

The Four Point Approach

The following excerpt is taken from The National Trust Main Centre webpage:

As a unique economic development tool, the Main Street Four-Point Approach® is the foundation for local initiatives to revitalize their districts by leveraging local assets—from cultural or architectural heritage to local enterprises and community pride.

The four points of the Main Street approach work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort.

Organization

Involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program. A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of the volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director as well. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

Promotion

Sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

Design

Means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets — such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets — is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.

Economic Restructuring

Strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.

Coincidentally, the four points of the Main Street approach correspond with the four forces of real estate value, which are social, political, physical, and economic.

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/>

The Province of Saskatchewan conducted a review of the Main Street Program in 2009, "MAIN STREET: PAST AND PRESENT, Prepared by the Heritage Canada Foundation for Saskatchewan Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport March 2009", but the proposal for a Provincial program was put on hold due to budget constraints.

<http://www.heritagecanada.org/eng/MSPastandPresent.pdf>

The National Trust Main Street Center also advocates eight principles that have proven to be successful, and in general, are echoed by most successful projects in Canada:

- **Comprehensive:** No single focus — lavish public improvements, name-brand business recruitment, or endless promotional events — can revitalize Main Street. For successful, sustainable, long-term revitalization, a comprehensive approach, including activity in each of Main Street's Four Points, is essential.
- **Incremental:** Baby steps come before walking. Successful revitalization programs begin with basic, simple activities that demonstrate that "new things are happening" in the commercial district. As public confidence in the Main Street

district grows and participants' understanding of the revitalization process becomes more sophisticated, Main Street is able to tackle increasingly complex problems and more ambitious projects. This incremental change leads to much longer-lasting and dramatic positive change in the Main Street area.

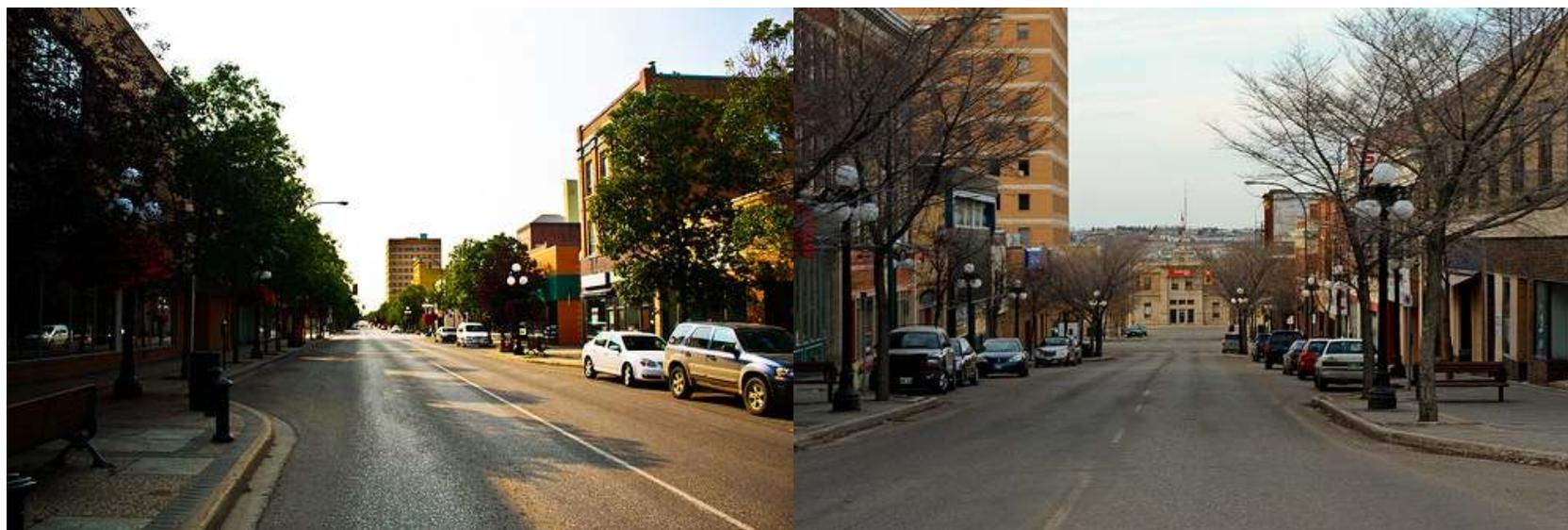
- **Self-help:** No one else will save your Main Street. Local leaders must have the will and desire to mobilize local resources and talent. That means convincing residents and business owners of the rewards they'll reap by investing time and money in Main Street — the heart of their community. Only local leadership can produce long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.
- **Partnerships:** Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the district and must work together to achieve common goals of Main Street's revitalization. Each sector has a role to play and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations in order to forge an effective partnership.
- **Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets:** Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.
- **Quality:** Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies to all elements of the process — from storefront designs to promotional campaigns to educational programs. Shoestring budgets and "cut and paste" efforts reinforce a negative image of the commercial district. Instead, concentrate on quality projects over quantity.
- **Change:** Skeptics turn into believers and attitudes on Main Street will turn around. At first, almost no one believes Main Street can really turn around. Changes in attitude and practice are slow but definite — public support for change will build as the Main Street program grows and consistently meets its goals. Change also means engaging in better business practices, altering ways of thinking, and improving the physical appearance of the commercial district. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.
- **Implementation:** To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization effort is under way and succeeding. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger ones as the revitalization effort matures, and that constant revitalization activity creates confidence in the Main Street program and ever-greater levels of participation.

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/eight-principles.html>

Success Stories

Large American cities with major downtown projects generate the most press releases and, due to massive private and public funding, tend to be the best reported and analyzed. There are, however, a number of Canadian small cities that have revitalized their downtowns. Focusing on the Western Provinces, the success of Brandon, Manitoba, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and Ladysmith, British Columbia illustrate the key elements required for success, but also the differences in approach to obtain it.

Brandon, Manitoba

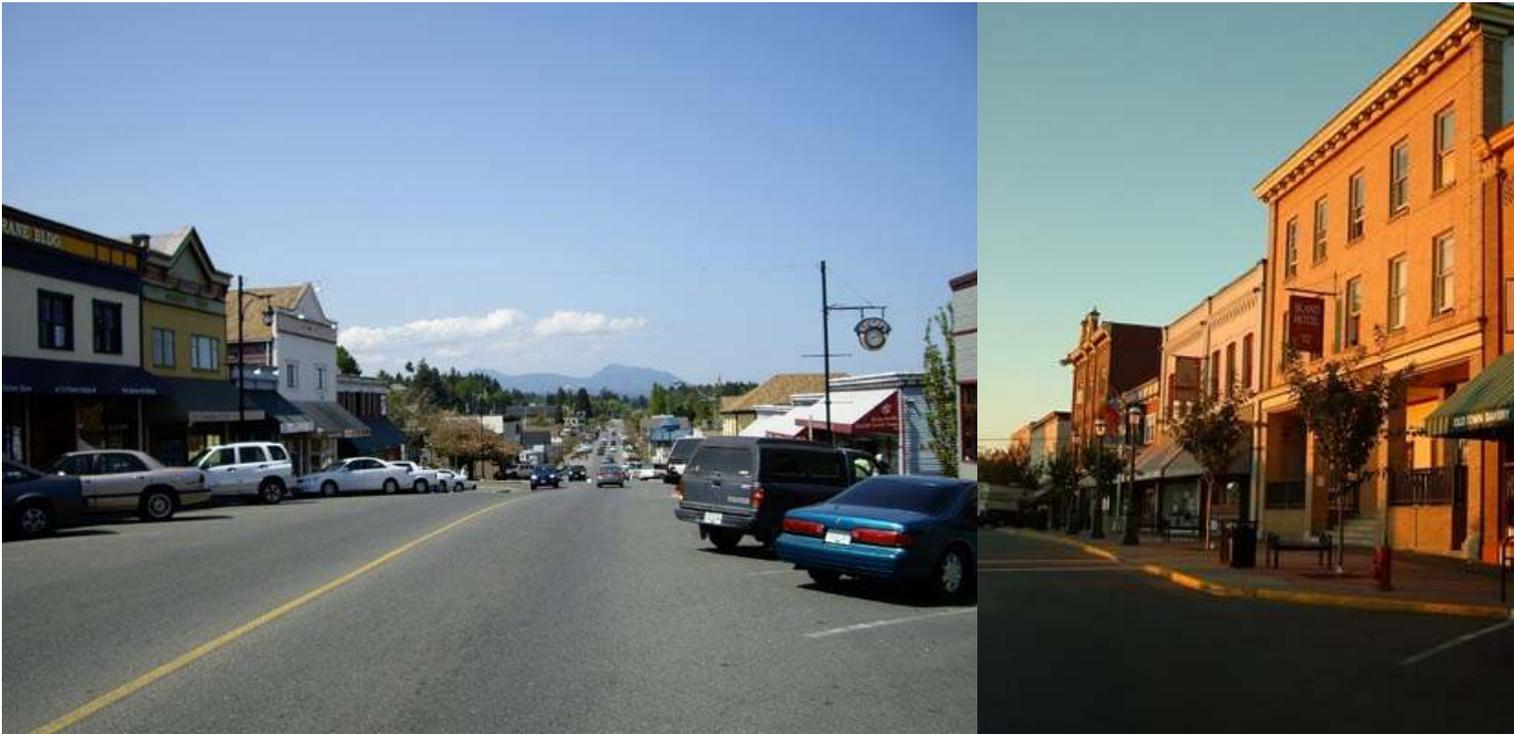


Brandon's downtown has been pressured by big box developments and suburban mall locations. The City of Brandon developed a downtown mall (completed in 1980) to compete, but results were initially mixed at best. Over time, the downtown mall has evolved into a service centre with niche market retailers. Brandon was a Heritage Canada Foundation Main Street Pilot Project (1985).

Private and public funding (primarily at the Municipal and Provincial) levels have driven façade, street, and pedestrian friendly improvements. A Business Improvement Association and Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation have continued to develop downtown.

http://renaissancebrandon.ca/about/an_academic_look_at_downtown_revitization.pdf

Ladysmith, British Columbia



This small community (population 10,000) located on Vancouver Island has a historic downtown overlooking a harbour. Despite a

challenging economy, the downtown has been redeveloped through the efforts of the Downtown Business Association and Town support. The Town has actively recruited new business in target industries.

http://www.ladysmith.ca/upload/dcd556_Lady_EDC_bro_gen_Jun19_n1.pdf

www.ladysmithdowntown.com

Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan



Moose Jaw has used virtually every revitalization strategy available to redevelop their downtown. Moose Jaw was a Heritage Canada Foundation Main Street Pilot Project (Saskatoon and Assiniboia became Main Street Projects as well in 1988). Starting with a downtown spa and casino created through a private public partnership, the community has made the most of its history and large scale projects. Further developments include murals, the Tunnels of Moose Jaw, and trolley cars. A large private development including hotel is underway and the City is building a new downtown arena.

Funding

Funding for downtown revitalization is typically a combination of private and public effort, but is dependent upon available programming. Federal and Provincial “Main Street” programs are typically utilized when available. Larger centres have greater success with “one off” applications to Government, while small centres are more reliant upon local private and municipal funding initiatives. A proposed Saskatchewan Main Street Program is on hold due to budget concerns.

A number of Canadian programs have measured the “returns” associated with downtown redevelopment. In order to effectively assess the impacts of funding, a baseline study is typically conducted to provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of redevelopment programming and to provide information to communicate to stakeholders. Typically the data will include vacancy rates, rental rates, changes in building value, number of new businesses, expansions, new and follow-on investment, increases in spending, and public perception of change through survey. In some cases, the baseline can be represented pictorially as well.

According to the Foundation Rues Principales, from 1985 to 2008, the ripple effect of implementing a Rues principales strategy generated more than 7000 new jobs, 1600 new businesses, over \$260 million in public investments and over \$630 million in private investments (<http://www.fondationruesprincipales.qc.ca/en/review/>). The average return on each public dollar spent in Quebec is 2.42.

Partners

All downtowns that have had success have some form of Business Improvement District in place and most have joint public/private organizations. As the market becomes more attractive, municipal responsibilities decline and outside investment (occurring in Moose Jaw now) can be attracted because of potential return.

Timelines

The review of downtowns reveals that typically there are no quick solutions. Brandon, Manitoba has been working on their downtown since 1980 when they launched a downtown mall. The National Main Street Program suggests a ten year plan. Ten year plans that include partner organizations and community stakeholders, investment targets, infrastructure upgrades, and the establishment of downtown event programming are reasonable and would be more likely to attract longer-term funding.

Events

All successful downtowns have become the cultural and family hub of the community with multiple events to attract customers in the community and region. These events take time to establish and events are often tried before an ideal fit is established and sustainable. All examples of successful downtowns have strong event calendars with annual signature events that draw local, regional, and even national visitors.

Incentives and Dis-incentives

Training

The Alberta Main Street Program includes available scholarships to attend the National Main Street Conference in the United States. The Foundation Rues Principal (Quebec Main Street Program) has available training for community coordinators and leaders.

Taxation

Five year tax abatements are common place in the attraction and redevelopment market. Many municipalities offer tax abatements on improvements in specific areas or under specific programming such as second and third floor redevelopment for live/work or retail projects and retrofit or development of greener operational systems. North Bay, Ontario is currently offering a 20 year commercial tax reduction program (<http://www.city.north-bay.on.ca/business/incentives/municipal.asp>). A Seniors' housing project in Saskatchewan has been given a ten year tax abatement in exchange for some land for in community park development. Brownfield developments (redevelopment of land used previously) in most communities generate the most generous taxation incentives.

A new tax strategy emerged in discussions with the City of North Battleford that merges best practices from incubation development and tax abatement programming. In addition to offering tax abatements for new developments and/or improvements to existing business, the City of North Battleford could offer a tax abatement program to owners of vacant or non-confirming use buildings if they agree to lease their premises to new business on a percentage of sales basis. This program would incent new business owners through lower risk rent costs, but also reward building owners through potential tax savings.

According to Tina Phillips, Manager of Taxation at the City of Victoria, the City had tried a novel tax approach that would increase fees for vacant building through taxation. The resolution was sent to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and not enacted due to potential legal issues. Some American States use similar strategies.

Vacant Buildings

The City Of Winnipeg has a more aggressive vacant building program that involves increasing fees for vacancy, quick title transfers, and increased regulatory and compliance measures with short timelines for empty buildings. Other jurisdictions, such as London, Ontario, have similar, less aggressive by-laws.

http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/pdf_files/Vacant-DerelictBldgs.pdf

http://www.london.ca/By-laws/PDFs/vacant_buildings.pdf

Non-conforming Use

Non-conforming use in North Battleford is focused on pawn shops and second hand stores as adult entertainment venues do not exist in the Downtown. In many communities, the removal of pawn shops and second hand stores signals a very obvious change in the retail landscape and is one of the first targets of downtown revitalization.

Some areas have aggressive license fees for pawnshops and second hand stores. The City of Coquitlam increased license fees for pawnshops from \$3500 to \$10,000 in order to encourage relocation (<http://www.citycaucus.com/2009/07/stewart-bans-massage-parlours-and-other-undesirable-businesses>).

Increasing informational requirements for pawnshops in some jurisdictions has been challenging due to privacy laws, but a recent court case in Alberta has upheld Edmonton's use of the "Business Watch International System" or BWI. Regina currently uses BWI as

well. The system allows for better detection of stolen property. It costs an estimated \$1 per transaction and some municipalities have required its use.

<http://www.lethbridgeherald.com/content/view/89756/26/>

http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/CityGov/05154_Pawnshop_Contract_Award.pdf

The City of Vernon has a very descriptive by-law regarding pawn shop operations. Some cities, like Vancouver, have by-laws that govern the minimum distance between pawn shops. Enforcement and resources present the biggest challenge for most communities, but most of the work is upon implementation.

http://www.vernon.ca/images/uploads/council/bylaws/4878_second_handdealers_consolidated.pdf

Infrastructure

Infrastructure agreements are typically packaged together for one development or negotiated for each project. The amount of negotiation varies with size and desirability of the new business. Extension of existing infrastructure, improvement of current infrastructure, and development and maintenance of landscaping are strategies used by most jurisdictions to encourage investment.

Other

Some cities have experimented with stamping and “sidewalk poetry and art” as a way to draw attention to local poets and artists (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/concrete-poetry-may-make-mark/article879064/>). This increases the cultural richness of the area at minimal cost as it is usually introduced when sections are rebuilt.

Most downtown programs recognize leadership, new ventures, and events through awards and public announcements. Initially, recognition should be frequent to encourage momentum in the redevelopment efforts.

Conclusion

Merchant interviews and public surveys demonstrated the need for redevelopment of downtown North Battleford. The interviews and surveys, along with current taxation, vacancy, and investment information provide a strong baseline to measure the impact of future initiatives. With strong investment coming into North Battleford from the power plant and recreation infrastructure projects, there is a window of opportunity to breathe new life into downtown.

Recommendations

1. The North Battleford Downtown Business Improvement District, once created, should adopt the Four Point Approach and Eight Principles of the American Main Street Program.

Rationale: The American Main Street Program has proven successful in Canada and materials and training to support North Battleford's downtown redevelopment will be more readily available.

2. The City of North Battleford need to commit long term resources and planning to this initiative.

Rationale: Most downtown initiatives will take ten years to completely develop and most require the municipal Government to act as a catalyst. Over time funding and resources will be transitioned to the Business Improvement District.

3. Specialized incentives including tax abatement programs for redevelopment of upper floor space and leased spaces needs to be developed and communicated.

Rationale: With large increases in spending in the community over the next three years, the best time to develop new business in now. Specialized incentives will encourage hesitant entrepreneurs and building owners.

4. By-laws that bolster the City of North Battleford’s ability to properly deal with vacant buildings need to be developed.

Rationale: Vacant buildings are a huge psychological barrier and liability in the downtown. New aggressive by-laws similar to Winnipeg’s will give North Battleford the power it requires to quickly deal with vacant buildings.

5. Changes in regulatory practices can be used to address non-conforming uses of downtown buildings.

Rationale: Increasing cost of doing business downtown provides incentive for non-conforming users to move to better suited areas. Used in conjunction with incentives, pawnshops and second hand stores could be moved quickly to other locations.

6. A Main Street Program, possibly as a pilot program in conjunction with the Provincial Government, needs to be developed.

Rationale: A wider base of support will only enhance downtown redevelopment initiatives and remove funding pressure from the City of North Battleford.

7. Internal and external marketing is required to rebrand the City of North Battleford’s downtown as “prime retail space”.

Rationale: Changes in the regulatory environment will support the commercial environment. Additionally, marketing should emphasize downtown as the centre of entertainment, recreation, and entrepreneurship.

Works Cited

Alberta Main Street Program

<http://www.albertamainstreet.org/default.aspx>

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http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/CityGov/05154_Pawnshop_Contract_Award.pdf

City of London – Vacant Buildings By-law

http://www.london.ca/By-laws/PDFs/vacant_buildings.pdf

City Of Winnipeg – Vacant and Derelict Buildings By-law

http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/pdf_files/Vacant-DerelictBldgs.pdf

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Lady Smith, British Columbia - Downtown

www.ladysmithdowntown.com

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<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/eight-principles.html>

Ontario Main Street Program

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Privacy, Pawnshops and the Police – The Lethbridge Herald

<http://www.lethbridgeherald.com/content/view/89756/26/>

Revitalizing Small City Downtowns: The Case of Brandon, Canada, *Doug Ramsey, Derrek Eberts, and John Everitt*
Brandon University

http://renaissancebrandon.ca/about/an_academic_look_at_downtown_revitization.pdf

Notes

The following are unformatted and unedited notes from a variety of Internet resources. Some of the sources were used in the report while others were reviewed, but not included. In most cases, the notes of interest appear first with the source below. The notes were used as a secondary filter for information from search queries that typically included phrasing on downtown redevelopment best practices, vacant building by-laws, main street redevelopment, and investment attractive incentives.

That project had three inter-locked things going for it, all of which can be considered as best practices:

- 1. It had 95 per cent private funding.** Since the private sector essentially paid for this development, it also made damn sure everything done was going to make economic sense. Highly-motivated private sector architects and businessmen focused all of their creative genius and ambition to make sure this project was going to be fantastic enough to make it pay off.
- 2. It had massive political support.** The mayor and the council was fully behind it, not wavering, not waffling, not sticking its nose in where it didn't belong, not trying to direct every aspect of the project, not jealously and zealously getting in the way of every good idea. It shared the vision of redeveloping an ugly, large and unused parcel of land on the edge of that city's downtown. And because the private sector was paying for the project, there wasn't pressure to count every penny.
- 3. The private developer, Nationwide, was given master architect status,** meaning it could move quickly to enact its vision, rather than go through a painful and costly planning process for each aspect of the plan.

<http://communities.canada.com/EDMONTONJOURNAL/print.aspx?postid=472314>

The resulting 2010-2012 Regina Downtown Strategic Plan identifies the actions necessary to stimulate public and private investment in creating a mixed-use, live-work environment that is the heart of growth in Regina, and the hub of economic and cultural vitality in Southern Saskatchewan. P.3

The Plan also envisions downtown as a cultural hub, a place where residents from across the city and tourists alike come to meet one another, to experience beauty in an urban setting, to visit galleries, to attend events, to access services, to shop at one-of-a-kind specialty retail stores and to dine at one-of-a-kind restaurants. P.4

The Downtown Neighborhood Plan

8 Big Moves

Walk to Work

The City Square

Pedestrians First

A Green Zone

A Cycling Culture

Exceptional Public Transit

Friendly Facades

Festival Places

p.4

Based on a proven best practices model from Seattle, Washington, Regina Downtown hired a summer student to program passive activities in the park and encourage the use of our beautiful park space. Having many people in a park setting had proven in the US to encourage more positive activities and discourage negative or intimidating behaviour.p.13

<http://www.reginadowntown.ca/siteimages/media%20release%20-%20year%20in%20reviewfinal.pdf>

• **Integration of different land uses and activities:**

Residential, mixed use, commercial, institutional / civic and industrial land uses are predominantly integrated throughout the area. The medium to high density residential uses are integrated with commercial and light industrial activities along the main road networks, with residential-only uses focused on green spaces and the greenway. Institutional / civic uses are incorporated at key nodes, including at the connection between the existing downtown and the island, and at the termination of the island at south beach. Commercial uses of a varied nature, including artisan shops, restaurants, retail, and a hotel complex are incorporated throughout.

- **Connection to Squamish Nation community:**

The connection of the downtown waterfront across to the Squamish community on the other side of Mamquam Blind Channel is given focus, either through the provision of a non-motorized ferry service, or through a pedestrian bridge. This connection is emphasized on the island through activities that are oriented to the First Nation community and heritage, such as an Interpretive Centre and artisan shops. P.3.

<http://www.sgog.bc.ca/uplo/sdw1.pdf>

<http://www.albertamainstreet.org/default.aspx>

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/eight-principles.html>

Compared to the previous OCP, several new smart growth policies were added that addressed staff and affordable housing, density bonus systems, LEED guidelines, Alternative Development Standards (ADS), and public access.

<http://www.roadmap2020.ca/resources/fcm-bp-guide-2006.pdf>

The preparation of this plan, and its recommendations, has followed these guiding principles:

☑ **Leadership** – create an environment in which people in the community can contribute to making Hope a better place: by

articulating goals without forcing them on others, by setting the agenda and not simply responding to current events, by initiating rather than by managing change, by encouraging community dialogue and finally by having transparent decisionmaking that will encourage results;

☒ **Participation** – encourage community participation in different forms and use the results of that process to inform the plan and set its priorities;

☒ **Equity** – seek all views and accord respect to all those who participate in the process;

☒ **Sustainability** – encourage the responsible use of natural and built resources and economic development that seeks the longterm maintenance of community wellbeing;

☒ **Partnerships** – seek out partnerships that improve access to resources, encourage innovation and empower the community as it adapts to change; and

☒ **Integrated planning** – incorporate the spirit and direction set by other local planning initiatives, especially those built around significant public involvement. P.2

D.1 Investigate the feasibility of a downtown shopping niche(s) in

Hope.

D.2 Work with downtown landlords on a targeted recruitment program.

D.3 Encourage the establishment of a Business Improvement Area for dealing with ongoing downtown issues and solutions.

D.4 Consider property tax deferrals for merchants and landlords involved in upgrading projects.

D.5 Prepare a downtown concept plan as part of the next OCP.

D.6 Establish quality visitor amenities in the downtown core including public washrooms (open late, 12 months of the year), and free wireless internet plus good timely information directing visitors to these services and facilities. P.6

K.1 **Truck stop**—location, large traffic volumes, availability of services, available zoned land with highway access are all assets. Lack of services to Flood Hope would be a barrier.

K.2 **Conference Centre and hotel**—proximity to Lower Mainland and Interior, outdoor recreation amenities, ability to bring clients from multiple directions could be foundation for small meeting and convention opportunity.

K.3 **Education and training facility**—location, available land, deficit

in post secondary seats in the province, presence of specialized institutions (e.g. Hope Mountain Centre), potential for small campus extension among existing institutions (e.g. Fraser Valley University) could mean opportunities for niche facilities. Socioeconomic conditions in Hope are very similar to those in Squamish before the establishment of Quest University.

K.4 Alternative energy— some investigation of wind power in Hope has occurred while two small-scale Hydro works (Berkey and Hunter creeks) have received electricity purchase agreements from BC Hydro but are not yet operating. Micro hydro opportunities for short, steep non-fish bearing streams that also double as potable water sources may have potential, possibly in the community forest (similar projects have been established in Lake Country and Nakusp). P.8

<http://www.hope.ca/upload/nwd261.pdf>

The prioritization matrix is based on a protocol system where there are six categories in which businesses are rated using numerical values. The higher the value a business has means the higher up it is on the priority list. There are six categories within the matrix for 2009/2010: community contribution, market loss due to highway relocation, economic trends, growth potential, demographics, and critical issues.

“The different criteria identified in the matrix and accompanying scoring system allows for scheduling BRE visits that set a high priority on locally owned and operated entities, and assists in the best use of scarce resources in the implementation of the BRE program,” says Donnie Cameron, development officer for the northern region with Nova Scotia Economic and Rural Development.

“With prioritized visits our referral rates are now two and a half times higher than our original annual program targets,” says Alana. “It makes us accountable to our stakeholders and ensures objectivity to the process. When someone asks me why I visited business A instead of business B I can explain the reasoning behind it.”

<http://www.antigonishrda.ns.ca/news/article/rda-best-practice-ardas-bre-prioritization-matrix/>

4.5 SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICES

While there may be differences in where and to what the guidelines are applied, the examples confirm that there are a number of Canadian municipalities working towards implementation of sustainable development guidelines. Common threads among the majority of the examples include the inclusion of guidelines and standards for:

- Natural heritage protection;
- Land use and site selection;
- Energy efficiency;
- Water and air quality;
- Transportation infrastructure (transit, pedestrian environment and roads);
- Municipal infrastructure design (water and wastewater, solid waste and

stormwater); and,

- Urban design.

The research into each of the cases discussed above, along with stakeholder consultation, has helped to shape the specific guidelines for Pickering.P.6

<http://www.sustainablepickering.com/photos/custom/MainReportFinalMay07.pdf>

Programs for Building Design & Building Revitalization*

DesignGuide Program

Grant program: Funding of up to \$1750 to develop a design to improve the exterior of existing core area buildings in a way that respects & enhances the integrity, heritage, and architecture of the core areas. Applications are available from the Planning Department (all applications must be reviewed and approved by the City of Cambridge prior to confirming funding). DesignGuide grant funding is provided after the City receives a copy of the final design and a copy of the paid invoice for design services by the design professional. Limit of one DesignGuide grant per property.

Building Revitalization Program (BRP)

Interest-free and partially forgivable (up to 35%) matching loan program for specific exterior improvements to existing core area buildings. Applications are available from the Planning Department (all applications and proposed items of work must be reviewed and approved by the City of Cambridge prior to confirming funding). BRP funding is provided after the work has been completed and the City receives copies of all paid invoices. Minimum project amount is \$4,000, which equals a minimum BRP loan amount of \$2,000. The maximum BRP loan amount is normally \$20,000 per building, however the City has the ability to increase the amount based on

specific criteria (e.g. heritage conservation, number of public facades).

Note: All BRP proposals will be subject to design review prior to approval of funding.

Fee Exemption Programs*

Development Charges Exemption: New development (including renovations and additions) is exempt from City and Regional Development Charges.

Planning Development Application Fee Exemption: All Development Application Fees under the Planning Act are included (site plan, zone change, official plan amendment, condominium, subdivision, minor variances and consents).

Sign Permit Fee Exemption: All new signs are exempt from Sign Permit Fees. Temporary / Mobile Signs are not eligible.

Building Permit Fee Exemption: New development (including renovations and additions) is exempt from Building Permit Fees.

www.cambridge.ca

Fundamental to the success of this Investment Strategy is the following:

1. **A management structure is necessary** - The process of ensuring a revitalized downtown Guelph will require cooperation among City staff departments, members of Council, the Downtown Board of Management, business owners, property owners and the residents of Guelph. With such a diverse range of interests and expectations, a clear understanding of responsibilities for downtown revitalization will be paramount. A strategy for the management

of downtown issues is required to ensure accountability. Clear goals, with measurable benchmarks, are necessary.

2. **Political will is critical** - Council must be the champion for a revitalized downtown and it must be willing to share in the risk of change and support the private sector. Without political will, the investment strategy will not be implemented and the desired downtown revitalization will be very slow to materialize.

An important philosophical adjustment that will have a dramatic impact on successful downtown revitalization will be the role of City staff when reviewing private sector redevelopment applications. To promote private sector investment, City staff will need to assist developers in overcoming the difficult challenges (including brownfield issues) to redevelopment in Downtown Guelph. A supportive framework at City Hall, working with landowners to make appropriate redevelopment happen, will result in positive change. Of equal importance, City staff must be strongly supported by Council in all efforts to facilitate positive revitalization efforts.

3. **The public sector must continue to lead through direct action** - The public sector has to lead the revitalization process by showing an obvious commitment to downtown revitalization by investing in the quality of the public realm and supporting infrastructure. This is especially true in the early stages of development, where the onus will be on the public sector to show new direction and to provide evidence of a lasting commitment to the downtown as a diverse, high quality, pedestrian-friendly urban district. Private development initiatives can be expected only in response to a demonstrated commitment of the public initiative.

New residents and businesses will be looking for a high quality urban environment. Basically, they will be trading space (large buildings on large lots, with plenty of surface parking) for a finer grained, higher quality character and an enhanced array of shopping, cultural, entertainment and housing options typical of a successful urban centre. It will be the public sector who will be responsible for starting the evolution.

4. *An array of planning and financial tools will be required* – It is important to recognize that a complex combination of actions and tools will be required to stimulate the revitalization of Downtown Guelph Investment Plan and Management Structure Report

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Downtown Guelph. No action or tool, on its own, will have a sufficient impact on the achievement of municipal goals and objectives for positive change.

The actions or tools that will have the greatest stimulative impact in Downtown Guelph are the establishment of a planning framework that facilitates private sector investment, the construction of infrastructure, and investments in public buildings and public realm improvements (streetscapes and public park development), including changes to the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law. The funding and financing for these actions and tools, and the political will to implement them, will be of paramount importance. The City must continue in its efforts because it is an important signal to the general public and the development industry that Guelph is serious about change in the downtown.

5. *Success takes commitment, cooperation and time* - The process of revitalizing Downtown

Guelph will not be quick, nor will it be a result of one single action. It will require a complex combination of actions, players and time. There is no set formula for success. Measuring the success in revitalizing Downtown Guelph will primarily be an exercise in determining when the City can stop providing incentives to the private sector to stimulate positive change - in other words, once the market for the desired forms of development is firmly established and critical mass has been achieved. P.23-24

There is a vast array of incentive programs that have been utilized throughout Ontario, and some are already used in the City of Guelph. The following Incentive Programs should be considered for implementation in the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan:

- Redevelopment Tax Rebate Program* - a program to provide grants that would offset increases in municipal property taxes that are as a result of an increase in assessment due to redevelopment;
- Planning and Development Fees Rebate Program* - a program that provides rebates of various municipal application fees;
- Study Grant Program* - a program that provides grants to offset the cost of required studies such as traffic impact studies, servicing studies, archaeological surveys, site contamination and remediation (brownfield) studies etc.;
- Façade Improvement Grant Program* - a program to provide grants for the sensitive redesign of existing building façades to enhance the image of the area;

- Landscape Improvement Grant Program* - a program to promote the establishment of improved landscaping on private property to enhance the image of the individual site;
- Residential Loan/Grant Program* - a program to improve existing residential properties and/or convert other buildings to residential use;
- Upper Storey Renovation Program* – a program to encourage the re-development of upper stories for residential use;
- Commercial Loan/Grant Program* - a program to improve existing commercial properties;

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- Heritage Grant Program* - a program to assist with the improvement of heritage buildings for adaptive reuse;
- Municipal Property Acquisition/Rehabilitation Program* - a program for the municipality to acquire and/or rehabilitate properties that are strategically located either directly or in partnership with other government agencies or the private sector; and,
- Realty Tax Arrears Cancellation Program* - a program to allow the municipality to cancel outstanding realty taxes to help facilitate redevelopment. This can be done in conjunction with School Boards. P.28-29

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MARKETING, BRANDING & COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES

- Winter Magic is Downtown Yonge’s annual signature event celebrating the winter season. In addition to a host of free activities – from Window Wonderland holiday window displays, KidzFest for families, and Illuminite – the event features spectacular holiday lighting throughout the district.
- Mobile Yonge – an innovate cellphone-based information service and iPhone app, providing users with instant access to event listings, business directories and GPS mapping in Downtown Yonge. Launched in 2009, it's the first of its kind for a BIA.
- Yonge Buzz, a bi-weekly hot sheet that keeps members and visitors in the loop on district news, road closures, events and member spotlights.
- Uniformed and multi-lingual Discovery Team ambassadors provide visitor services like district walking tours and tourist information daily from May through September.

OTHER INCENTIVES

- Facade Improvement Grant - an amount of up to \$12,000 is available to property owners for exterior building improvements. Subject to availability and other conditions, provided by the City of Toronto's Economic Development department.
- Signage Permissions - special signage rules are in place in part of the area that encourages vibrant signage as part of the bright lights, big city feeling of the area. Subject to city approvals.
- City Approvals - local political leadership, through City Councillor Kyle Rae's office, frequently helps businesses with issues pertaining to permits, licensing, signage applications, and development approvals.

www.downtownyonge.com

The City of Kitchener’s Downtown Incentives Program offers

several opportunities for grants, loans and other assistance to downtown property owners, investors, developers and business owners including:

- Façade/Interior Loan Incentive Program
- Upper Storey Renovation Program
- City of Kitchener Tax Rebate Program
- Grants for Planning and Building Permit fees
- Elimination of City and Regional Development Charges
- Elimination of Park Dedication Fees

Eligibility

Any owner of a property within the Downtown Community Improvement Plan area may apply. Tax and utility accounts must be current and the applicant cannot be in debt to, or involved in litigation with the City. Other eligibility criteria are specific to the individual incentive.

Discover Kitchener's EDGE

Encouraging Development for Growth Efficiency

In a number of ways, small city downtowns are distinct from those of large cities (Robertson 2001):

- 1) They are smaller, more human scale.

- 2) They have fewer and/or less severe 'problems' (crime, congestion, *etc.*).
- 3) They have lesser 'corporate' presence in physical structure (*e.g.* office towers) and economic influence.
- 4) They lack 'signature projects'.
- 5) They have lesser presence of regional and national chains in the retail structure.
- 6) They have no specialized 'districts'.
- 7) They are more closely linked to nearby residential neighborhoods.
- 8) They have a greater proportion of original (and historic) buildings intact.

In addition, in the Canadian prairies and United States Midwest, the railway had and continues to have a significant impact on the structure of downtown. Further, specifically in the Canadian context, the climate limits the options available in these cities. As a result of these differences and particularities, a number of principles and strategies that would be quite inappropriate for larger cities might effectively encourage the revitalization of small city downtowns.

First, as the discussion above attests, the efforts that appear to have been most fruitful in reviving downtown Brandon have been those which involve 'public-private' partnerships. Many

Revitalizing Small City Downtowns

parties have an interest in the vitality of downtown, but few are willing or capable of acting individually to effect real change. The BIA emerged only with the support, and then legal inducement, of City Council, who supplemented the initiative with cash to 'get the ball rolling.'

The NRC, which operates much like a citizens' activist group, has resulted in remarkable improvements in some of the residential building stock of the downtown area, but only with the

support of Provincial money.

Second, the role of the downtown has changed, and success has really only followed when this evolution has been embraced. The early failure of the downtown mall was a direct result of the strategy at the time to try to compete 'head-to-head' with the Shoppers Mall. Once it was realized that this was unlikely ever to succeed, and after several ownership changes, the Town Centre has emerged with a new role to play in the City. The mall is now home to regional services, and a smaller selection of mostly very specialized retailers. This has even been accompanied by a new 'model' of mall economics: the biggest tenants (spatially) now 'pay the bills' so that the smaller retailers can be attracted with cheaper rents. While the downtown mall, conventionally conceived, may now be seen as an inappropriate revitalization strategy, the case of Brandon illustrates that it can be put to effective use with some innovative thinking about the role it plays within the city and region.

Third, although not emphasized specifically in this chapter, the major efforts described above have incorporated several additional key strategies, as identified at the beginning of the chapter. All the efforts have included at least some attention to making the downtown more 'pedestrian friendly', whether it is the controlled climate of the mall, the improved streetscapes resulting from BIA investment, or the general improvement in the downtown urban fabric as a result of the NRC's efforts to upgrade many of the buildings. Related to the latter two points, downtown Brandon has generally aimed at preserving the heritage of the downtown, either through designating heritage buildings, or attempting to implement design guidelines to complement existing heritage structures (through the BIA and NRC, for example). In sum, while

not all the strategies for small city downtown revitalization have been appropriate to Brandon, several have been pursued with some degree of success, resulting in promise for the downtown whose future looked bleak without these timely interventions.

http://renaissancebrandon.ca/about/an_academic_look_at_downtown_revitization.pdf

Small Town Success: 7 Lessons Learned

Last month I attended a seminar and had discussions with a great team at the Rural Economic Development Centre of the University of North Carolina School of Government. This team had just finished an interesting project on community development: they identify 50 small towns that were implementing successful or innovative approaches to community economic development. The communities profiled in "*Small Towns, Big Ideas*" range in size from Chimney Rock in North Carolina with 175 people to West Helena in Arkansas with 15,000. The towns stretch from Oregon to South Georgia. The economic development strategies at work in these towns include industrial development, tourism, downtown development, entrepreneurship and arts, and cluster-based development. Case studies also describe a range of strategies for building local capacity for economic development, including innovative organizational structures, partnerships, leadership development. The study was conducted in 2006-2007.

There is no recipe or one strategy but an ensemble of strategies that must fit the opportunities out there and the assets and strengths of the community. Still, these common themes have emerged as central to the success of those small towns with big ideas:

1. Community development is economic development

Successful small towns tend to balance short-term economic gains with longer-term community development goals. In Davidson, N.C., Mayor Randall Kincaid said that every decision about development is weighed against the question of whether "this project is

something that our grandchildren will be proud of." Civic leaders in Ord, Nebraska, invest time and resources into entrepreneurship training in the local school system, with the hope that these activities will transform the local economy for the next generation.

2. Be proactive and future-oriented; embrace change and assume risk

Most of these towns perhaps relate to the fact that most communities featured here "hit bottom" and their stories evolved from circumstances in which local folks were willing to try new things and take new risks (don't let a good crisis go to waste!). In Ord, Nebraska, proactive meant preparing the community for opportunity. Having tackled a number of small-scale challenges in the community and seeded the roots of teamwork around development activities, Ord was prepared to act when the ethanol production facility project arrived.

3. Successful community economic development strategies are guided by a broadly held local vision (BUT start with a few champions)

The *Small Town, Big Ideas* team at the U of NC concluded that one of the success factors is the ability to establish and maintain a broadly held vision, including goals for all manner of development activities. My discussions with the team however showed that, at the origin of many initiatives in those communities, was an individual or an organization (leaders) that set the tone. I think it is important to distinguish between openness/inclusiveness in the community process/planning **and** waiting to have everybody agreeing on a vision to do something. A broadly held vision is not necessarily a simple top down - everybody joins hands and loves each other - type of approach. In fact, a broadly held vision is more the result of a series of activities/projects that worked and that were often initiated by a few individuals with (yes) a vision. Their enthusiasm, energy, luck (everybody needs it!) and results enticed other people to come on board. Contrary to popular belief, a few usually set the tone; they identify opportunities and talents and put them to work. Those leaders have to keep the process open and inclusive (if that is what we mean by a broadly held vision) and

take the time to meet individually with members of the community to ensure that opposition to development efforts does not take root for lack of understanding the larger vision. So the broadly held vision is a result put in motion by effective local leaders (champions) that will strive to put to work the best talents in the community.

4. Define your assets and opportunities broadly - it is the source of innovative strategies

In almost any small communities, given limited sources of competitive advantage, they must redefine economic development assets in a much broader framework. For example, Allendale, S.C., capitalized on a regional university to create a local leadership development program that, in turn, trained new economic development leaders for the entire region. In Fairfield, Iowa, civic and business leaders in Fairfield have exploited the perception that businesses located in small-town, rural locations carry a moral and ethical standard above their urban competitors. And, in the most extreme case, Reynolds, Indiana, is capitalizing on latent energy contained agricultural waste from 150,000 hogs to become BioTown, USA, the nation's first energy-independent community.

5. Innovative local governance significantly enhances the capacity for community economic development

It is hard to imagine how communities and economic development organizations can achieve results and progress if they use 20th century strategies and tactics in a 21st century economy. So most towns featured in *Small Towns, Big Ideas* include an innovative element of either organization or governance. Regionalism, or identifying opportunities and partnerships beyond municipal boundaries, is an emerging theme in successful cases. For example, in Washington, N.C., local officials recognized the growing marine trades cluster in eastern North Carolina and created a workforce and entrepreneurship development strategy to harness the regional economic opportunity. Public-private (including nonprofit) partnerships are emerging as the prominent organizational model for small town development. In Siler City, N.C., for example, the successful establishment of an incubator was the product of a partnership of the community college, local government and a state-level nonprofit organization.

6. Effective communities identify, measure and celebrate short-term successes

Given the long-term nature of community development, and the fact that measurable results from a particular project may be decades in the making, leaders in small towns must repeatedly evaluate their progress and make the case for it. Short-term successes build long-term momentum. Obviously, the best way to make the case for any intervention is to demonstrate success. Along these lines, Scotland Neck, N.C., began with actions that would demonstrate success quickly. Town leaders decided to support local hunting and fishing guides, to start bringing more tourists into town and to show local residents that there was reason to be optimistic. This initial success helped them build momentum before beginning to tackle more intractable challenges. Also, many communities in the study make an explicit effort to measure and monitor the impacts of their efforts. It seems obvious, but measuring progress and evaluating programs tend to get pushed to the end of priority lists. Not so in successful small towns. Data can be used to attract additional investment from outside sources, convince community's naysayers to join the efforts. Small towns profiled in the study tend to communicate and celebrate success. For example, in Douglas, Georgia, community leaders work hard to keep local papers informed about various economic development projects and publicize even the most modest success, including stories of local entrepreneurial successes.

7. Use a comprehensive approach of strategies and tools, rather than a piecemeal approach

There is no silver bullet. No single strategy saved any community in this study. Successful development in small towns is always multifaceted. Successful communities have a comprehensive package of strategies and tools that are aligned with the core assets, challenges and opportunities within their regional context. Decisions about what to do and why to do it have to be based on local conditions, context and capacity.

<http://www.nuno-id.com/articles-newsletters/building-great-small-town-communities.php>

10 Smart Growth Principles

"Smart growth" is a collection of land use and development principles that aim to enhance our quality of life, preserve the natural environment, and save money over time. Smart growth principles ensure that growth is fiscally, environmentally and socially responsible and recognizes the connections between development and quality of life. Smart growth enhances and completes communities by placing priority on infill, redevelopment, and densification strategies.

The smart growth principles are:

1. Mix land uses. Each neighbourhood has a mixture of homes, retail, business, and recreational opportunities.
2. Build well-designed compact neighbourhoods. Residents can choose to live, work, shop and play in close proximity. People can easily access daily activities, transit is viable, and local businesses are supported.
3. Provide a variety of transportation choices. Neighbourhoods are attractive and have safe infrastructure for walking, cycling and transit, in addition to driving.
4. Create diverse housing opportunities. People in different family types, life stages and income levels can afford a home in the neighbourhood of their choice.
5. Encourage growth in existing communities. Investments in infrastructure (such as roads and schools) are used efficiently, and developments do not take up new land.
6. Preserve open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas. Development respects natural landscape features and has higher aesthetic, environmental, and financial value.
7. Protect and enhance agricultural lands. A secure and productive land base, such as BC's Agricultural Land Reserve, provides food security, employment, and habitat, and is maintained as an urban containment boundary.

8. Utilize smarter, and cheaper infrastructure and green buildings. Green buildings and other systems can save both money and the environment in the long run.
9. Foster a unique neighbourhood identity. Each community is unique, vibrant, diverse, and inclusive.
10. Nurture engaged citizens. Places belong to those who live, work, and play there. Engaged citizens participate in community life and decision-making.

<http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=133>

<http://www.ladysmithdowntown.com/>

Bellingham Washington

<http://www.downtownbellingham.com/DBPInformation.htm>

<http://www.city.north-bay.on.ca/business/incentives/municipal.asp>

Stewart bans massage parlours and other "undesirable businesses"

15 Jul 2009

In a controversial move, Coquitlam has banned a number of "undesirable businesses" in their community

If you're looking for a pawn shop, methadone clinic, non-registered massage outlet, escort service or exotic dancing joint in Coquitlam, your search may be in vain. That's because Mayor Richard Stewart and his council have taken the bold move of banning all of the above from their quaint sub-urban community in Metro Vancouver.

In addition to the outright ban on the "undesirable businesses" listed above, the [Tri-City News](#) is reporting that you will not be able to establish an adult entertainment shop, adult video store, cheque-cashing outlet, scrap metal dealer or tattoo parlour within one-kilometre of any other "undesirable business" in Coquitlam.

One could only imagine the outrage from Downtown Eastside activists if a city like Vancouver attempted such a sweeping policy initiative. However, the reality is that with Coquitlam taking a "tough love" approach on this type of activity, more of it is now likely to end up in Vancouver's downtown core. The decision of council was unanimous.

Mayor Stewart says that his initiative is aimed at making his City's business zones "family-friendly."

Coquitlam resident Lisa Vallister told council that she "regrets" moving out of Vancouver to Coquitlam where she was likely seeking a quieter existence. She told council at a public hearing:

I feel embarrassed as a citizen of this area.

The Mayor is also raising the license fees for existing pawn shop from the current \$3,500 to \$10,000. By raising the fees, council is likely hoping a number of existing pawn shops will simply fold up and move to other municipalities.

Will other municipalities in the Metro Vancouver follow Coquitlam's lead? Or should they? Will this simply push the problem into a neighbouring municipality? What do you think?

<http://www.citycaucus.com/2009/07/stewart-bans-massage-parlours-and-other-undesirable-businesses>

<http://www.canada.com/calgaryherald/news/city/story.html?id=d97901cd-e90a-451e-9b77-09cda0af524b>