



CITY OF ELKO

Planning Department

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Email: planning@elkocitynv.gov

1751 College Avenue • Elko, Nevada 89801 • (775) 777-7160 • Fax (775) 777-7219

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

The City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council will meet in a regular session on Thursday, January 23, 2020 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1751 College Avenue, Elko, Nevada, beginning at 4:00 P.M., P.S.T.

Attached with this notice is the agenda for said meeting of the Advisory Council. In accordance with NRS 241.020, the public notice and agenda were posted on the City of Elko Website at <http://www.elkocitynv.gov/>, the State of Nevada's Public Notice Website at <https://notice.nv.gov>, and in the following locations:

ELKO COUNTY COURTHOUSE – 571 Idaho Street, Street, Elko, NV 89801

Date/Time Posted: January 16, 2020 2:10 p.m.

ELKO COUNTY LIBRARY – 720 Court Street, Elko, NV 89801

Date/Time Posted: January 16, 2010 2:05 p.m.

ELKO POLICE DEPARTMENT – 1448 Silver Street, Elko NV 89801

Date/Time Posted: January 16, 2020 2:15 p.m.

ELKO CITY HALL – 1751 College Avenue, Elko, NV 89801

Date/Time Posted: January 16, 2020 2:00 p.m.

Posted by: Shelby Archuleta, Planning Technician
Name Title

Shelby Archuleta
Signature

The public may contact Shelby Archuleta by phone at (775) 777-7160 or by email at sarchuleta@elkocitynv.gov to request supporting material for the meeting described herein. The agenda and supporting material is also available at Elko City Hall, 1751 College Avenue, Elko, NV.

Dated this 16th day of January, 2020.

NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Members of the public who are disabled and require special accommodations or assistance at the meeting are requested to notify the City of Elko Planning Department, 1751 College Avenue, Elko, Nevada, 89801 or by calling (775) 777-7160.

Scott A. Wilkinson
Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
4:00 P.M., P.S.T., THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2020
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

The agenda for this meeting of the City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council (RAC) has been properly posted for this date and time in accordance with NRS requirements.

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Pursuant to N.R.S. 241, this time is devoted to comments by the public, if any, and discussion of those comments. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item on the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on a successive agenda and identified as an item for possible action. **ACTION WILL NOT BE TAKEN**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 24, 2019 – Regular Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

I. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Review, consideration, and possible action regarding the continuation of the Redevelopment Recognition Program, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

The RAC defined the details of the Recognition Program at their October 25, 2018 meeting. The RDA and RAC had a joint meeting May 21, 2019 to recognize the 2019 recipients of the Recognition Program. It was never determined if this program would be an annual or biennial program.

- B.** Review, consideration and possible action to elect officers. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

RAC Bylaws Article III, Section 1 states: The RAC shall elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary from its members in January of each year. There is no minimum or maximum on the number of times a member may serve in one of the elected offices.

II. REPORTS

- A. Budget
- B. Storefront Improvement Program
- C. Block End Design / Construction Schedule – Bob Thibault

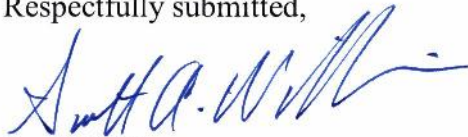
COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Pursuant to N.R.S. 241, this time is devoted to comments by the public, if any, and discussion of those comments. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item on the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on a successive agenda and identified as an item for possible action. **ACTION WILL NOT BE TAKEN**

NOTE: The Chairman or Vice Chairman reserves the right to change the order of the agenda and if the agenda is not completed, to recess the meeting and continue on another specified date and time. Additionally, the Redevelopment Advisory Council reserves the right to combine two or more agenda items, and/or remove an item from the agenda, or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda at any time.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott A. Wilkinson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott Wilkinson
Assistant City Manager

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
4:00 P.M., P.D.S.T., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2019
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jon Karr, Chairman of the City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council (RAC), at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Catherine Wines, ACAB
Jeff Dalling,
Jon Karr
Lina Blohm
Bill Hance, RDA (*arrived at 4:18 p.m.*)

Excused: Corey Rice, Elko Co.
Katie Neddenriep, ECVA
Sonja Sibert, GBC
Steve Bowers, Elko Co. School Dist.

City Staff: Cathy Laughlin, City Planner
Bob Thibault, Civil Engineer
Shelby Archuleta, Planning Technician

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 25, 2019 – Regular Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

May 21, 2019 – Special Joint Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

*****A Motion was made by Catherine Wines, Seconded by Jeff Dalling to approve both the minutes as presented.**

**Motion passed (3 - 0, Lina Blohm Abstained).*

I. PRESENTATION

- A.** Presentation of NV Energy Underground Management Plan to be implemented January 1, 2020 and how it relates to Redevelopment, and matters related thereto.

INFORMATIONAL ONLY

Josh Carson, Distribution Design Supervisor for NV Energy, mentioned that he was accompanied by Will Morgan, who is over streets and highways. Mr. Carson explained that he met with Mr. Thibault and Ms. Laughlin previously regarding this program. He explained that the Underground Management Plan was something new that has been recently established between NV Energy and the Public Utility Commission. The packet (**Exhibit A**) that has been provided establishes the criteria and the eligibility for the Underground Management Plan. What the program does is address the distribution undergrounding requests between the local jurisdiction and NV Energy. Mr. Carson gave an example of the project he discussed with Ms. Laughlin and Mr. Thibault that pertains to an alleyway off of Silver Street and between 4th and 5th Streets. There is an active project that is being looked at, and this plan could help provide some assistance for the project. The reason the plan was put together was because local governments have a direct interest in undergrounding facilities, which was the reason Ms. Laughlin approached NV Energy to look at this specific project. She wanted to know what kind of opportunities were available and if there was any cost sharing availability and participation. At the time Ms. Laughlin approached them, there wasn't anything available. This plan has since come into play. The City has current requirements for undergrounding utilities for any new infrastructure. From a utilities perspective, NV Energy supports undergrounding, because it produces a higher degree of reliability and reduces maintenance costs on their end. Mr. Carson then asked for any questions on the initial eligibility and criteria.

Chairman Jon Karr asked what size the standard lines are that are running downtown.

Mr. Carson said they typically run a 24-9 system in the incorporated city areas. The City would be eligible for the most part. Where this might come into play is some of the more rural areas, which might not meet some of the eligibility requirements.

Catherine Wines asked if the program would only be eligible in areas where construction is going on.

Mr. Carson said one aspect they were still seeking guidance from the PUC on was what defines a Redevelopment Area. He said the simple answer was yes, it typically is an area of redevelopment where they will be conducting construction.

Ms. Wines asked if it was available to built out areas, like some of the alleys in the downtown.

Mr. Carson said where it comes into play most is when you are undertaking a new construction project; where you want to incorporate the lines, or are upgrading the lines, and want to participate in undergrounding that structure.

Cathy Laughlin, City Planner, explained that it would be similar to when Steve Romero undergrounded the utilities behind his development on Idaho Street. It would also be similar to the project that Mr. Carson referred to, the Stockmen's parking lot. Staff met with NV Energy and asked what they could do and what it would cost to underground the line from Capriola's to Stockmen's. It would help with the ingress and egress out of the parking lot into the alley area. The layout of the poles was determining ingress/egress in the alley. Staff said the poles are compromising the design and a variety of other things. At the time, for Redevelopment to take that on as whole would be extensive. It would be similar to what was done on 7th Street. Staff dropped it at that point, and then Mr. Carson called to discuss the new program. Staff was excited, because now it would be more feasible with some cost sharing. The project would qualify for this program because it's a new construction of the entire parking lot area and reconstruction of the alley.

Jeff Dalling asked who would be sharing the cost, and if it would be the Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Carson said they would get into cost sharing later.

Ms. Wines had another question on where the program would be available. She asked about the corner lot where the Stumble Inn used to be. She asked if someone were to construct there, if it would be eligible for the whole alley.

Mr. Carson said yes. It would be eligible for any of the criteria listed on Page 2 of the packet, and within the Redevelopment Area.

Ms. Wines asked if they wouldn't just do it for the site where the project was located, but for the whole block.

Mr. Carson pointed out that it would be project and cost dependent. There are a lot of attributes that effect how they utilize the Plan in cooperation with the Redevelopment Agency.

Ms. Laughlin said Point No. 2 the physical conflict with the approved Redevelopment Plan was the key point. It is listed in the Redevelopment Plan to eliminate blight and to underground utilities.

Mr. Carson thought it would be widely usable within the downtown area, or the Redevelopment Area. He then went on to "The Plan" slide. There are currently 27 entities splitting \$5 Million over three years, which comes out to approximately \$1.67 Million per year. If there is less than one hundred percent participation amongst those 27 entities, then the funding could be reallocated to another project. One thing they don't know, at this point, is what the breakdown is going to be. As of today, they don't have any applicants, but that is subject to change by the December 15th cutoff date. Once all the applications are received the funding will be allocated appropriately.

Lina Blohm asked if December 15th was the deadline for applications for one cycle of funding. (Correct) She asked if they had a project being planned, such as the parking lot, if it would be too soon to apply. (No) Ms. Blohm then asked if they had applied yet.

Ms. Laughlin explained that they have not applied, because this was the first she had heard of the deadline. When they met there wasn't a deadline at that time yet. NV Energy is still in the process of working through all of the details for the program. They stated that they were going to reach back out to the City and let us know if there is an application, what the deadline is, and any other information we will need.

Ms. Wines asked if the application would be project specific.

Mr. Carson said it would be project specific.

Ms. Wines asked if the deadline for the next three years was December 15th.

Ms. Laughlin explained that there would be funding available every year for 3 years.

Mr. Carson said that the funding was over a three year period, so the \$5 Million would be spread out over a three year period. It is allocated amongst the 27 entities. The total amount of funding won't be determined until all the applications are received. They don't really know the extent of the actual funding that will be usable until a later date. They are still working through a lot of details, because this was just recently passed by Public Utility Commission. The December deadline is a deadline that is going to make this applicable and usable by NV Energy, so they can have a hard and fast date to stop applications. As they get more information and as this Plan and process moves along, they will be disseminating the information through Ms. Laughlin.

Ms. Wines asked if there was a project that came up next year, if it would be available for funding.

Will Morgan explained that it is a three year plan period. They have to go back to the PUC every 3 years to justify getting the \$5 Million. Each year is treated on its own. December 15th isn't a hard line, but they do have to draw a line in the sand, so they can figure out where the funding stands. For the 2021 cycle, the deadline would most likely be in October or September of 2020. If you don't apply by December for 2020 you won't be missing out for the whole three year period.

Mr. Carson said one thing to keep in mind, which came up in the project that Ms. Laughlin was discussing, is the Plan does not cover the cost to redistribute the services. Another thing to think about is the Joint Pole Agreements. There is not just power infrastructure to think about, there is also Joint Pole Agreements with phone and internet that would also have to be discussed and looked at for some poles too.

Mr. Morgan said another thing with JPA applications that the PUC was pretty strict on, was that they don't want to spend a bunch of money undergrounding the power lines when AT&T and Charter are allowed to stay on poles. The stipulation that they made was that there needs to be an agreement in place with whatever communication companies that might be sharing pole space; that within 12 months of NV Energy's project they will relocate their facilities under ground as well.

Ms. Laughlin pointed out on the Seventh Street project that they had communications on those poles. The City worked closely with the other entities and got all of it underground at the same time, and the City paid for that cost.

Ms. Blohm asked if the first in the shoot had a better chance at getting their particular request, or if NV Energy would be waiting for all of the 27 entities to bring something forward. She asked how they saw that process working.

Mr. Carson said they didn't have an answer yet to how that process was going to work this being the first year. He thought once all the applications came in, it would determine the allocation. Depending on the number of entities, it might not be as much as you are anticipating to cover the funding. It is something to consider. They thought they would have a determination of total funding approved by early spring.

Mr. Morgan said they should have the initial calculation of line miles, which will determine the pro-rata share of the basis budget, by the end of next week. All of the entities will be receiving a letter with the preliminary dollar amount that they are eligible for per plan year. One of the items they need to work through with the PUCN is if they only get Elko Redevelopment wanting to do one project, do they reallocate the total \$1.67 Million for that year, or does it roll to the second plan year. There is quite a bit that they are still trying to get answered by PUC staff. They geared this more towards Vegas, but they wanted to make sure that there was rural inclusion. In Northern Nevada redevelopment has a different meaning than it does on the Vegas Strip. They are also trying to outline a definition that fully applies to Northern Nevada, not just demolishing a hotel/casino on the Vegas Strip and rebuilding condos.

Bill Hance arrived.

Mr. Dalling asked what the cost was going to be for the power lines to be undergrounded at the dirt lot.

Ms. Laughlin said they received a ball park estimate from NV Energy. It was around \$50,000 for their portion. Staff ran some quick numbers and they figured it would be around \$200,000 to \$250,000 for the total project. Redevelopment paid \$200,000 for 7th Street, and it will be similar. That was depending on if we go underground at 5th Street, on the Capriola's side and bored under NDOT right-of-way, or if we go underground at the corner. It could be a good savings if we don't mess with 5th Street.

Mr. Dalling said they were looking at a cost of \$200,000, which would not be coming from the City.

Ms. Laughlin said it would be paid by the Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Dalling asked how much the parking lot was going to cost Redevelopment.

Ms. Laughlin explained that the Redevelopment Agency approved \$99,999 to Stockmen's for the parking lot construction. We have Shared Use Agreement with them that it be public.

Mr. Dalling asked if they now wanted to put another \$200,000 from Redevelopment into the parking lot.

Ms. Wines said it would only be \$100,000 if NV Energy paid for half of it.

Ms. Laughlin explained that this program wasn't part of the conversation when staff met with them about undergrounding those power lines. They met way before this program was developed. They figured a grand total cost of \$200,000, if they kept it on the west side of 5th Street. At that time staff decided that it probably wouldn't be worth it. Now if it is a \$200,000 project and it is only costing Redevelopment \$100,000, and we would be cleaning up that whole alley and all of that power line, because NV Energy is covering that cost; then it might be worth it. That is why this program is in front of the Advisory Council today, to get them thinking about it.

Mr. Carson explained that the specific project would be subject to change based on actuals at the time. Once the project moves forward, if Ms. Laughlin makes application, then they will be able to give a more solid answer on what the 50/50 cost sharing really looks like. Mr. Carson pointed out that the 15% variance, listed on Page 4, was removed from the Plan.

Ms. Wines thought it sounded like a great project. Power lines are blight. To have the great downtown that they are all hoping to have, the power lines need to be moved. It is expensive, but she thought it was awesome that NV Energy wanted to pay for half. She recommended making application just in case.

Chairman Karr said he appreciated presentation. He asked Mr. Carson to fill them in on the corridor lighting.

Mr. Carson said that Ms. Laughlin approached NV Energy quite some time ago in regards to making some assistance with changing out bulbs, specifically in the Stockmen's area of the corridor. NV Energy was looking at cost to assist with that project when they decided to revisit a previous attempt, which had come up approximately two years ago, to convey the lights directly to the City of Elko. They went through a series of approvals and estimated costs of the infrastructure. At that time, the depreciated value of the infrastructure came back at an amount that was higher than the City was willing to pay. After some time had gone by, and Ms. Laughlin re-approached them to assist with changing that area to LED, they decided to re-approach the conveyance of the lights to the City, because Ms. Laughlin expressed that it was something the Redevelopment desired to look at again. NV Energy is under some new management and has been going through the conveyance approval process for the better part of a year now. They are hoping that it is coming to the final stages, where they are either going to get final approval or a full denial. They have had to go through a key decision report to their Senior Vice President, which includes values and all the justification leading to why they would want to convey their assets to the City. They don't know if it is going to be at a zero cost, or what the cost will be at this point. Mr. Carson explained that the way they presented it was at a zero cost. They are

hoping that it will come through approval before the end of the year. One of the biggest hold ups was that they went through a general rate case this year, and that is a poor time to adjust assets within the company, so it was placed on hold for a period of three months. Now that that has been completed, it has gone through that process and is in the review stages. They are hoping that the remainder of the lights in the downtown corridor will be conveyed. There would be some stipulations, the lights would have to be metered, and they have looked at the potential of three specific locations for the meters. Mr. Carson thought it was a fair trade. As they gain more information, or inch closer to approval, they will relay that information to the City.

Chairman Karr asked if it was denied, if they could still try to work together on changing the bulbs.

Mr. Carson said that was something they could definitely look at doing. That is something that they would coordinate with their operations group to assist the City, and they have already provided the price quotes. He thought it was smart to approach conveyance first, because then the City would have the freedom to change and maintain as they see fit. Mr. Carson said their operating group had plans to give a presentation to the City, because they do have some general plans of doing LED change outs throughout the City.

Ms. Wines asked if it would help to get some influence from the different Boards, or the Mayor.

Mr. Carson didn't think it could hurt. It is already in the review process, but it's not too late to add a supplement such as that.

Ms. Wines asked where the decision came from.

Mr. Carson said it would come from the Senior Vice President, which is in Vegas.

Ms. Blohm asked, as the lights exist in the corridor, if there is a standard they should be meeting, and if they are meeting that standard for illumination.

Mr. Carson explained that all of the existing lights that NV Energy owns and maintain meet their current standard for the time they were installed, and as they get replaced they meet the current standard.

Ms. Blohm said they continually get comments from the community that it is dark in the corridor. They don't feel safe going into the downtown corridor area in the evenings, because it is not illuminated.

Mr. Carson thought the best way to assess that is these lights are reaching a point in time where they are not current, to current lighting standards as if they were new. They met City Standard and NV Energy Standard at the time they were installed.

Mr. Thibault had a question for Mr. Carson regarding the undergrounding agreement plan. He asked if the cost sharing, assuming the funding was available, could be applied to both the

trenching and conduit installation typically done by a contractor, as well as the work that NV Energy usually does to provide the wire, pull the wire, and make the connections.

Mr. Carson said yes, but it would also be dependent on the amount of funding that is received.

II. REPORTS

A. Budget

Ms. Laughlin went over the budget report.

Mr. Dalling thought the train turned out good that Byrnes Painting did.

Ms. Laughlin mentioned that there was a presentation to Les Byrnes at the City Council of a nice plaque with a picture of the train.

B. Storefront Improvement Program

Ms. Laughlin said there is \$25,000 remaining in the 17/18 budget that was approved, but has not been paid out due to a lack of proper invoicing. On the 18/19, Patray Assets are done and 100% paid; the Commercial, we've been seeing some action, but have not seen a reimbursement request from them; The Pat Laughlin Family Trust is 90% complete. In the 19/20 Storefront Grant Program; Capriola's was allowed to request half up front, because their project was over \$10,000, and they placed their order for all their signage. They actually came in less than what they were allocated, because they got a discount for paying up front. Jason Land's project is in progress. She asked Ms. Wines to give a report on her Storefront Project.

Ms. Wines stated that she didn't have anything to report.

Ms. Laughlin said they will be starting up for the next cycle. She has had quite a few calls lately in regards to the upcoming cycle. If we don't see any applications coming in by February we will have to do some sort of advertising.

C. Other

Ms. Blohm asked for an update on the Block Ends.

Ms. Laughlin explained that Mr. Thibault has been extremely busy with the Sports Complex, so we haven't gotten any further on the design work on the block ends. We are hoping to be going out to bid for the project in early spring and starting construction this summer.

Ms. Wines gave a brief report on the Mural Expo.

*There was brief discussion regarding the Fire Sprinkler rate increase.
Comments/concerns were directed to the City Clerk.*

There was further discussion regarding undergrounding the utilities at the proposed Stockmen's parking lot, the costs associated with that, the NV Energy undergrounding utility plan, and the corridor lights.

John Ellison stated that he could give an estimate on getting new services to all the business along the alley between Silver and Commercial and 4th & 5th Streets. He also stated that he had a meeting with NV Energy in Vegas about the lights in the corridor, and he was going to try to get Ms. Laughlin on a conference call.

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Mr. Ellison wondered if there was something they could do to get NV Energy to brighten or fix the street lights in front of the bowling alley and Dreez on Silver Street.

Bill Hance thought those were the City's lights. He also thought they were done about 6 or 7 years ago. He said he would talk to Dennis Strickland about it. Mr. Hance passed out some lighting information that has been included as **Exhibit B**.

NOTE: The Chairman or Vice Chairman reserves the right to change the order of the agenda and if the agenda is not completed, to recess the meeting and continue on another specified date and time. Additionally, the Redevelopment Advisory Council reserves the right to combine two or more agenda items, and/or remove an item from the agenda, or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda at any time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jon Karr, Chairman

Lina Blohm, Secretary

City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council
Agenda Action Sheet

1. Title: **Review, consideration, and possible action regarding the continuation of the Redevelopment Recognition Program, and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
2. Meeting Date: **January 23, 2020**
3. Agenda Category: **NEW BUSINESS**
4. Time Required: **5 minutes**
5. Background Information: **The RAC defined the details of the Recognition Program at their October 25, 2018 meeting. The RDA and RAC had a joint meeting May 21, 2019 to recognize the 2019 recipients of the Recognition Program. It was never determined if this program would be an annual or biennial program.**
6. Budget Information:
 Appropriation Required: **N/A**
 Budget amount available: **N/A**
 Fund name: **Redevelopment Fund**
7. Business Impact Statement: **Not Required**
8. Supplemental Agenda Information:
9. Recommended Motion: **Pleasure of the RAC**
10. Prepared By: **Cathy Laughlin, Redevelopment Manager/City Planner**
11. Committee/Other Agency Review:
12. Agency Action:
13. Agenda Distribution:

City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council
Agenda Action Sheet

1. Title: **Review, consideration and possible action to elect officers, FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
2. Meeting Date: **January 23, 2020**
3. Agenda Category: **NEW BUSINESS**
4. Time Required: **15 minutes**
5. Background Information: **RAC Bylaws Article III, Section 1 states: The RAC shall elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary from its members in January of each year. There is no minimum or maximum on the number of times a member may serve in one of the elected offices.**
6. Budget Information:
 Appropriation Required: **N/A**
 Budget amount available: **N/A**
 Fund name: **N/A**
7. Business Impact Statement: **Not Required**
8. Supplemental Agenda Information: **By-laws**
9. Recommended Motion: **Pleasure of the Advisory Council**
10. Prepared By: **Cathy Laughlin, City Planner**
11. Committee/Other Agency Review:
12. Agency Action:
13. Agenda Distribution:

**City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council (RAC)
Bylaws
(First Amended and Restated)**

ARTICLE I ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE; RECITALS

Section 1 The City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council (RAC) was established by the City of Elko Redevelopment Agency (RDA) on December 11, 2012.

Section 2 Whereas, on or about February 12, 2013, the RDA adopted the first set of Bylaws for the RAC; and

Whereas, the RDA has determined to amend and restate the Bylaws; and

Whereas the redevelopment and revitalization of the City's downtown is an integral component of the Redevelopment Plan; and

Whereas the RDA is committed to promoting the downtown area as a principal focal point for Elko community life, and making it an attractive, safe and economically sound city center with shopping, entertainment, cultural and recreational opportunities; and

Whereas the RDA recognizes and values community collaboration while maintaining the distinctive character of Elko as a pioneering and enterprising city; and

Whereas the RDA wishes to seek advice from a diverse yet representative advisory committee to advise it with respect to implementing the RDA Plan or any plans subsequently adopted for the implementation of the RDA Plan, to propose Plan amendments, to assist with marketing and economics as requested by the Redevelopment Agency, to suggest projects and priorities for possible expenditures during the budget process, to explore grants or other external funding sources, to develop Design Guidelines for possible use by the Redevelopment Agency, and to advise the Redevelopment Agency about ways to attract new business.

Based upon the foregoing recitals, the RDA hereby finds and directs that the RAC shall be subject to the following bylaws commencing on the date of adoption by the RDA:

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP, APPOINTMENT TERMS

Section 1 The RDA shall appoint five (5) members to the RAC board. The RAC board members shall satisfy the following criteria or have the following affiliations or associations, and shall serve without compensation: (1) a member of the RDA, (2) the president or designee of the Downtown Business Association, (3) the chairman or designee of the Arts and Culture Advisory Board, (4) one member who resides within the City of Elko incorporated boundary, and (5) one stakeholder from the redevelopment area. In the event that one of these members is not able to maintain his or her position, the RDA may select other representatives to serve. Membership shall also include four (4) ex-officio nonvoting members, being representatives of the Elko County School District, Great Basin College, Elko County, and the Elko Convention and Visitors Authority.

Section 2 The members of the RAC shall be appointed by the RDA annually in July; *provided*, in the event of a vacancy, the RDA may appoint an interim member for a term up to and including the next July 31. There shall be no limit on the number of reappointments of the members.

Section 3 Minimum Qualifications for appointment to the RAC include:

- a. Interest in the City of Elko community.
- b. Ability to work cooperatively with individuals, groups, community agencies and organizations.
- c. Willingness to meet and conduct business under the Nevada Open Meeting Law.

Section 4 Any RAC board member (excluding ex officio members) who accrues more than three (3) consecutive unexcused absences, or fails to attend more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the regularly scheduled meetings within a calendar year, shall be considered to have resigned and that person's membership shall thereupon automatically terminate. The foregoing sentence shall not apply to excused absences. Excused absences are defined as absences due to illness of a member or a person in a member's family, employment-related activities, or other instances as approved by the Chairperson on a case-by-case basis. Notification of absences is to be made to the Secretary of the RAC.

Section 5 Any board member may be removed or suspended by the RDA for good cause, as determined by the RDA.

ARTICLE III OFFICES, DUTIES AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Section 1 There is no minimum or maximum on the number of times a member may serve in one of the elected offices. In the event of a vacancy in an elected office, a special election may be held at any time during the year to fill the vacancy.

Section 2 The offices and duties of the officers shall be as follows:

- a. Chairperson: To preside over meetings of the RAC and to ensure that actions are properly taken, to sign official documents and correspondence on behalf of the RAC, to assist City Staff in preparing agendas, and to represent the RAC at City Council and RDA meetings, and other official functions.
- b. Vice-Chairperson: To assume the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson, and to assist with publicity efforts as needed.
- c. Secretary: To sign or attest official documents of the RAC, to keep minutes of the meetings, and to review any record-keeping functions of the RAC.

ARTICLE IV RESPONSIBILITIES, POWERS, AND DUTIES

Section 1 The responsibilities, powers and duties of the RAC shall include, but not-be-limited to, the following:

- a. Hold meetings in accordance with the Open Meeting Law (Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 241) to promote the exchange of information and otherwise fulfill the purposes stated in these Bylaws.
- b. Obtain public input.
- c. Assist in the development of Design Guidelines and any restrictions or controls upon the request of and subject to the approval by the Elko Redevelopment Agency.
- d. Recommend proposed amendments to the City of Elko Redevelopment Plan.
- e. Advise the RDA on implementation of the RDA Master Plan and any implementation documents.
- f. Monitor and evaluate progress in carrying out the vision for the purpose of advising the RDA.
- g. To the extent delegated by the RDA, oversee and coordinate among other advisory bodies, estimate the overall needs for resources to accomplish the various projects, and provide direction in the allocation of resources among these projects.

- h. Sort among competing priorities and conflicting activities within the scope of RAC's area of responsibility.
- i. Communicate the information regarding implementation of the Redevelopment Plan and implementation documents to the community, stakeholders, and interested organizations.
- j. Give recognition to people and groups as they accomplish action items and project implementation activities.
- k. As requested by the RDA, help with the identification, and recruitment, of Project Champions, as that term is defined in the Redevelopment Plan or associated implementation documents.

Pursuant to NRS Chapter 279, the RDA is responsible for overseeing, managing, and coordinating redevelopment and revitalization projects within the redevelopment area pursuant to the Redevelopment Plan. The RDA will, in its discretion and within the scope of its statutory authority (1) be the authority for implementation of the RDA Plan, (2) approve project budgets, (3) resolve conflicting priorities, (4) secure funding for specific projects, and (5) resolve project challenges presented by the City of Elko's regulatory structure. These duties and all other duties given to the RDA by statute may not be delegated to the RAC.

ARTICLE V MEETINGS, RECORDS, QUORUMS, AND VOTING

Section 1 The RAC shall meet quarterly or as needed as determined by the Chairperson of the RAC.

Section 2 Special meetings of the RAC may be called as directed by:

- a. By the Chairperson of the RAC;
- b. By a majority vote of a quorum at a meeting of the RAC;
- c. By request of a majority of the members of the RAC;
- d. By the RDA; or
- d. By the City Planner or his/her designee.

Section 3 All meetings shall be properly noticed, posted and conducted according to the Open Meeting Law, NRS Chapter 241.

Section 4 Three (3) members of the RAC shall constitute a quorum. No action may be taken without at least a quorum. The quorum shall not be reduced by abstentions or recusals. A majority vote of the members of the RAC who are in attendance and able to vote shall be necessary for official action.

Section 5 The RAC shall comply with these Bylaws for all business of the RAC.

Section 6 The RAC shall keep a written record of all meetings.

Section 7 Only such business specified in the published agenda for the meeting shall be transacted at a meeting of the RAC.

ARTICLE VI FILING WITH THE CITY CLERK

Section 1 The executed original of these Bylaws must be filed with the City Clerk within ten (10) days of adoption by the RDA.

Section 2 Originals of the agenda, agenda backup items, and certificate of posting are to be filed with the office of the City Clerk at the time of the posting of the agenda.

Section 3 The executed original of the meeting minutes is to be filed with the office of the Elko City Clerk within ten (10) calendar days of approval.

ARTICLE VII ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT

Section 1 These Bylaws shall become effective upon adoption by the RDA.

Section 2 An amendment to these Bylaws may be introduced and initiated by a majority vote of either the RAC or the RDA. The proposed amendment shall be acted upon at the next regular meeting of the RDA.

Section 3 The RAC is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 241, the RAC must prepare, publish and follow an agenda. Any action items must be submitted to the City Planner or his/her designee at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the official meeting date. Appropriate back up material must be submitted with the item.

Section 4 Notwithstanding any other provision contained herein, the RDA may, in its discretion, dissolve and terminate the RAC, or restrict or amend these Bylaws and the duties and responsibilities of the RAC to the extent permitted by the Redevelopment Plan and the Nevada Revised Statutes.

ELKO REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

By: _____

Its: _____

DATED: _____, 2016.

ATTEST:

Election Procedures

1. Current Chairman asks for nominations for the Chairman Position. A vote will be taken after all nominations are done. Those that decline nomination will not be considered.
2. Chairman asks for votes. If two or more people are nominated the votes are taken in order of nomination.
 - a. Remember to only vote aye for **ONE** person per position. It would also be helpful for everyone to hold their hand up and pause so the votes can be recorded.

Example: If Jane Doe is nominated and then John Doe is nominated, Chairman would ask for those in favor of Jane Doe for Chair say aye ... nay... If there was a majority vote for Jane Doe then the election process for Chairman is done.

If a majority did not vote for Jane Doe then the Current Chairman would continue for John Doe.

3. Current Chairman moves on to nominations for the other positions (Vice-Chairman & Secretary).
 - a. A person can be nominated for more than one position, but can't hold more than one position.

*The Current Chairman will conduct the entire meeting, and then the New Chairman will take over at the next meeting.

* A motion does **NOT** need to be made, only a nomination.

Redevelopment Agency 2019/2020 Budget

July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

Revenues		
	Approved Budget	As of 1/15/2020
Beginning Fund Balance	\$1,043,835	
Budget to beginning fund balance dif.		
Property Tax Revenues (anticipated)	\$355,538	\$201,998
Interest Revenues (anticipated)	\$7,000	\$7,220
Transfer in from General Fund		
Total Revenues	\$1,406,373	\$209,218

Balance to date	\$1,205,427
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Expenditures		
	Approved Budget	As of 1/15/2020
Legal	\$20,000	\$1,432
Public Improvements		
Misc. items	\$1,000	\$247
Storefront Program (pledged 2017/18)	\$25,000	
Storefront Program (pledged 2018/19)	\$55,105	\$25,000
Storefront Program (pledged 2019/20)	\$49,443	\$7,525
Public-Private Partnerships	\$75,000	
Centennial Train Refurbish	\$4,000	\$2,422
Art Spot Reno	\$10,000	\$10,000
RAC Recognition Program	\$1,000	\$1,000
Balance towards savings	\$1,165,725	
Revolving Fund	\$100	
Total Expenses	\$1,406,373	\$47,626



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

Vol. 66, No. 12
December 2019

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The Shared Kitchen Toolkit

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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Shared kitchens sprout nationally, fill vacant space and foster startups

In Tucson, AZ (est. pop. 545,987), and Boston, shared kitchens have attracted dozens of entrepreneurs who run catering businesses and food trucks.

The concept is taking off nationally, in big cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta and smaller cities like Shreveport, LA, Harrison, MI, and Loveland, CO, where community kitchens act as incubators for small businesses.

“Think of it like co-working space for small food businesses,” says Corinne Tso, head of Cook Tucson.

Cook Tucson occupies a 3,000-square-foot space just north of downtown. More than 50 food-related entrepreneurs have signed on, including makers of tamales, British meat pies, and other items.

Food-prep rules in most places require food products for sale to be prepared in commercial kitchens. That’s an insurmountable hurdle for many bootstrap business owners who simply lack the cash to buy or rent convection ovens and other commercial cooking equipment.

(Continued on page 3)

ATTRACTION

Holiday drawing drives traffic to downtown shopping district

In an effort to bring shoppers downtown and compete with nearby areas, a Canadian improvement district dusted off a classic downtown retail promotion and added some aggressive marketing techniques.

The Glebe Spree, hosted by the Glebe Business Improvement Area (BIA) of Ottawa, ON, Canada, is a program that runs from November 15 through December 31. Shoppers receive blank passports, and partici-

pating merchants stamp the passports each time a shopper makes a \$15 purchase.

After a shopper reaches \$150 in spending, the customer is eligible to enter a drawing for a \$10,000 grand prize. The windfall can be spent only at merchants in the Glebe Business Improvement Area.

“It’s really become an annual tradition,” says Dana Thibeault,

(Continued on page 7)

To manage parking, small city gets creative

Little Estes Park, CO (est. pop. 6,248), sees far more vehicle traffic than most towns its size. As a gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park gets 4.5 million visitors a year, most of them crammed into a tourist season from mid-May through October.

"We have such intense traffic congestion," says Vanessa Solesbee, parking and transit manager for the mountain town.

Meanwhile, Estes Park doesn't charge for parking in its quaint downtown or anywhere else within the town limits. The obvious result:

Estes Park's parking-management needs far outpace its budgetary capacity.

To cope, Solesbee has learned to adapt. In a case study that applies to cash-strapped downtowns

everywhere, Solesbee has sought out low-cost alternatives to the more expensive solutions that larger cities can more easily afford.

"We have been really creative in using existing technology to make it affordable for a city of our size," Solesbee says.

A digital alternative to chalking tires

Seeking to modernize the town's monitoring of its parking spaces, she looked into buying an off-the-shelf program with sensors for each parking space in town. The price tag would have been \$1 million, a sum that would have far outstripped Estes Park's budget.

So Solesbee came up with a workaround for a fraction of the cost. She reached out to a startup that was willing to cut a better deal than a well-established vendor. In this case, Solesbee managed her risk: She knew the startup was run by a founder with decades of experience, and she trusted he could deliver.

The price tag was just \$65,000 in its first year. Estes Park installed solar-powered cameras mounted on light poles, a vantage that gives a bird's eye view of parking spaces and can alert enforcement officers when a car has been in place for too long. There's also license-

reader technology that tracks where cars go and how long they stay.

To buy a system for a fraction of the going rate, Solesbee had to embrace a do-it-yourself mentality. The \$1 million solution would have meant a team of workers streaming into town to install cameras. Spending just \$65,000 was a different story — Solesbee had to see to all of the details herself.

"They ship it to you, and you assemble it and mount it yourself," Solesbee says.

Solesbee is the sole employee of Estes Park's parking department, but she didn't have to climb light poles to install parking cameras. She found another town worker willing to take on the task. One bitterly cold day in April, Solesbee looked on as a colleague ascended in a bucket truck to mount the parking cameras.

"It was literally me just asking for a bunch of favors," she says. "That's what you have to do in a small town."

Solesbee says parking officials in small towns think tech tools are out of reach. Her experience shows that assumption isn't strictly true.

Meanwhile, a federal court recently ruled that marking tires with chalk — a cheap, old-school tactic — represents an unlawful search and seizure. If that decision stands, it could force small cities to find ways to upgrade their parking technology.

Solesbee says her bootstrap strategy starts with asking lots of questions. What are the alternative products? What other vendors could meet the need? Is it cheaper to lease or to buy?

Data and ongoing software costs can add up, so Solesbee suggests posing a number of queries to vendors about the information collected by cameras and license-plate readers: What format is the data stored in? Will it be usable? Who owns the data? Will you have to buy back the data from the vendor?

Lamentably, far too many towns and small cities invest in high-tech solutions but never use the reams of data they produce, she says.

"We have been really creative in using existing technology to make it affordable for a city of our size."

C Solesbee also advises starting with a parking plan that outlines any investment required in your system. In six months or a year, when the bill comes due, you might need to remind public officials, business owners, and other stakeholders that you've already reached consensus on the topic.

Finally, Solesbee recommends networking

at industry events and not being shy about calling other parking directors. She says peers are more than willing to swap war stories and share the lessons they've learned.

"Most people in this industry are willing to give you the shirt off their backs," she says.

Contact: Vanessa Solesbee, Town of Estes Park, CO, 970-577-3957. **DIX**

Shared kitchens sprout nationally, fill vacant space and foster startups — Continued from page 1

When Cook Tucson opened three years ago, it opened new opportunities for entrepreneurs.

"These small food businesses had to beg, borrow, and steal space," Tso says. "It was difficult to find available commercial space."

C Shared kitchens are similar to but distinct from food halls, another culinary concept growing in popularity. While food halls tend to appeal to affluent consumers, shared kitchens often locate in struggling neighborhoods. In Shreveport, for instance, the new incubator is organized by Southern University, a historically black college, and is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Many of the kitchen incubators are in food deserts, so they address a public health need. By filling vacant space, they can achieve economic development goals. By giving food operators a cost-effective way to launch their concepts, shared kitchens might even cut down on the disruptive churn in the restaurant industry, a sector long notorious for high failure rates.

C "Shared kitchens and kitchen incubators play a unique and vital role in food and entrepreneurial ecosystems across the country," according to the Shared Kitchen Toolkit, a report jointly produced by The Food Corridor, a Colorado company that sells software systems to shared kitchens, and Purdue

University Extension. "Shared kitchens are licensed commercial spaces that provide a pathway for food entrepreneurs — ranging from chefs, caterers, food truck operators, and bakers, to value-added producers and packaged food and beverage makers — to launch and grow their businesses."

While hard numbers are hard to come by, an estimated 3,000 shared kitchens and food incubators are operating nationwide, says Ashley Colpaart, chief executive officer of The Food Corridor. A variety of trends are driving the growth. The sharing economy has taken off, and rising rents in many downtowns have increased the costs for entrepreneurial restaurateurs. The foodie trend is another powerful force at play.

"There's growing consumer interest in specialty foods and local foods," Colpaart says.

Business models and funding sources

Tenants typically rent space by the hour, day, or month. In addition to providing access to equipment, kitchen incubators may also offer education and business support. By hosting events such as farmers markets and food tastings for the public and training sessions for entrepreneurs, the community kitchens can drive clientele to small businesses.

"These small food businesses had to beg, borrow, and steal space."



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see The Food Corridor's guide to community kitchens, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

In Boston's Dorchester neighborhood, Commonwealth Kitchen occupies 12,000 square feet in a former hot dog factory. In addition to cooking facilities, Commonwealth Kitchen offers cold storage, dry storage, and office space that can be shared by tenants.

Executive Director Jen Faigel created the non-profit culinary incubator. She aims to help aspiring chefs and entrepreneurs — most of them women and immigrants — break into the food industry. The shared kitchen launched during the depths of the recession.

"We engaged with the local community and our neighbors told us, 'We want jobs,'" Faigel tells the *Dorchester Reporter*. "The economy was terrible. So, this was a way to meet that need for accessible jobs and also support small business development."

While immigrant workers are plentiful in the food industry, many struggle to transition into from low-wage entry-level jobs into owning enterprises. Many work as street vendors or unlicensed caterers. Commonwealth Kitchen brings these hustling entrepreneurs into the formal economy.

The company's model seems to be working well. Its annual revenue rose from \$2.1 million in 2016 to \$2.7 million in 2017, and revenues outpace expenses, according to its most recent tax return.

Cook Tucson started more recently, and it isn't quite so far along financially.

"It's a for-profit, although it's essentially a nonprofit," Tso says.

She's operating the shared kitchen as an entrepreneurial venture and aims to gain more traction for her facility, which includes two full kitchens.



Photo: Courtesy of Maui Food Innovation Center.

"Cooking is a passion of mine," Tso says. "I love the idea of supporting local businesses. It's something the community needed. And it's fun. It's fun to work with all these different food businesses."

At Cook Tucson, shared space starts at \$25 an hour, although hourly rates go down when entrepreneurs sign up for monthly packages.

Nationally, rates charged to entrepreneurs range from \$15 to \$45 an hour, according to the Shared Kitchen Toolkit.

Shared kitchens have been organized through a variety of structures, including non-profit models in Loveland and Dorchester, and Tucson's for-profit passion project. Another model involves government funding and sponsorship by an educational institution. That's the case for Shreveport's Milam Street Kitchen Incubator and Community Kitchen. It launched in August, with a goal of revitalizing two neighborhoods and training culinary entrepreneurs.

The project landed a \$1 million Housing and Urban Development Choice Neighborhoods grant. It also received part of a \$24 million HUD grant directed to the city. In Harrison, MI, the Harrison City Market was funded by a \$250,000 Rural Business Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a \$247,809 contribution from the city of Harrison.

A home-grown phenomenon

So far, there's no major national player in the shared-kitchen space, although the concept has captured the attention of Silicon Valley. Brooklyn incubator Pilotworks in 2017 announced it had raised \$13 million in venture capital to fund its model of providing kitchen space and professional mentorship to startups.

In 2018, the company shut down.

The smart money is still chasing the concept, however. Google Ventures in 2018 put \$10 million into Kitchen United, which promised to use the cash to open new kitchens in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Columbus, Phoenix, Seattle, Denver, and New York City by the end of 2019.

Contacts: Corinne Tso, Cook Tucson, 520-332-5473; Jen Faigel, Commonwealth Kitchen, 617-522-7900; Ashley Colpaart, The Food Corridor, 720-466-1832. **DIX**

Garbage can makeover creates a facelift for modest investment

St. Paul, MN (est. pop. 306,604), has long faced perceptions that its downtown is unsafe. The St. Paul Downtown Alliance has made strides on that front with an inexpensive makeover of downtown trash bins.

St. Paul's sidewalks are lined with decades-old concrete containers. Over the years, the garbage receptacles have been covered with graffiti.

The bins had become "really quite ugly — and a sign of disinvestment," says Joe Spencer, president of the St. Paul Downtown Alliance. City officials considered removing the containers.

Instead, the Downtown Alliance accepted a proposal from a local artist to cover the bins with tile mosaics. The artist tailored her works to the locations of the trash bins, so the container in front of the library pictures a child reading a book. The bin in front of the playhouse shows a drama mask. The installations in front of St. Paul's skating rink and concert hall are similarly customized.

The mosaics quickly turned eyesores into eye-pleasers. Perhaps most impressively, the project cost just \$10,000 for 20 cans, Spencer says.

"It's a phenomenal value for us," he adds. "When the artist first proposed it, we said, 'Are you sure? This seems like a modest investment for a pretty significant impact.'"

The refurbished bins underscore the reality that paying attention to little details can generate big payoffs.

"You take any piece of street furniture and ignore it for a couple decades, it reflects poorly on your environment," Spencer says. "And at the same time, if you create some art and beauty, it can be transformational."

Downtowns elsewhere have used public art to mask the ugly bits of downtown, as

Downtown Idea Exchange has reported in recent issues. Louisville, KY, has commissioned artists to paint alley doors. Ottawa, ON, Canada, put murals on utility boxes. And other downtowns have reimaged everything from dumpsters, to manhole covers, to outdated fire call boxes.



Perhaps the biggest lesson, Spencer says, is that even a modest amount of maintenance and care can pay hefty dividends.

"If you are in an environment it doesn't appear anybody cares about, it creates a feeling of being unsettling or unsafe," Spencer says. "On the other hand, if you're in an environment that it's clear is cared for and people are passionate about, there's a feeling of safety."

The St. Paul Downtown Alliance has commissioned other public arts projects, including an installation of miniature hot air balloons at a park. That eye-catching work became a hit on Instagram.

Meanwhile, the large plate glass windows of a downtown office building became the site of an outdoor art gallery. The gallery featured work from downtown artists which could be viewed directly from the sidewalk.

Contact: Joe Spencer, St. Paul Downtown Alliance, 651-503-3040. **DIX**

"You take any piece of street furniture and ignore it for a couple decades, it reflects poorly on your environment."

Educational series connects downtown merchants with business services

Downtown Mesquite, TX (est. pop. 142,874), positions itself as a destination for authentic local flavor. But the small business owners who contribute to the historic heart of the city don't always have a sophisticated grasp of business management or how to tap into the resources that will help them succeed.

To address this reality head-on, the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) task force launched a program to educate and support both aspiring entrepreneurs and established operators.

The task force is a partnership of five community partners who seek to bolster local businesses with a range of services and programming. The initiative includes the city, the school district, the chamber of commerce, Eastfield College, and Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas.

To link entrepreneurs to the myriad resources available, the task force hosted its first Entrepreneurs Day in 2018. To make the launch event convenient for aspiring business owners with day jobs, the sessions started in the late afternoon.

The event took place at a downtown venue. It began with brief keynote addresses by successful property owners and business developers. This was followed by roundtable presentations. Experts in planning, opening, running, and expanding businesses took stations at four different tables. The experts briefly introduced themselves and their areas of expertise and then lead discussions with attendees.

The roundtables were repeated throughout the event, so that would-be entrepreneurs could attend one roundtable or several. The expert speakers donated their time, so the cost to the task force was minimal.

Entrepreneurs Day also included a tour of available downtown properties.

Attendees included not just food operators and retailers but also artists and even

a trucking company, says Kim Buttram, Mesquite's assistant director of economic development.

The cost to attend the full day event was \$20 which included bilingual presentation materials and services as well as a networking dinner.

Program expands to meet needs

After the first Entrepreneurs Day proved a success, a series of more in-depth workshops was developed. Named Entrepreneurship to the Fourth Power (or E4), it's a four-part workshop series.

The workshops were scheduled in the evenings. Classes cost \$10 each, or \$35 for all four and included:

- **Planning for success.** Basics on legal formation, accounting, writing a strong business plan and where to find support.

- **Money.** Where it is and how to get it, including sources for funding, typical requirements and application processes along with an opportunity to apply for a \$10,000 loan.

- **Marketing and sales strategies.** Social media know-how, basics for creating a website, and the fundamentals of marketing.

- **Budgeting and financials.** Using budgeting to achieve short-term and long-term goals, debt management, and tracking.

While the Entrepreneurs Day and E4 are designed for startups, a number of established merchants attend the events. A side benefit of the courses is that they encourage networking among downtown merchants and aspiring entrepreneurs.

"By paying attention to the needs of our small business audience, we feel we have put together a growing set of resources that will contribute to the success of our businesses and community," Buttram says.

The training program comes against a backdrop of a booming economy for the Dallas-Fort Worth region and struggles for older downtowns.

"We have the same challenges that any

downtown has, which is that the investment tends to go to the new and shiny," Buttram says.

Contact: Kim Buttram, City of Mesquite, 972-216-6446. **DIX**

Holiday drawing drives traffic to downtown shopping district — Continued from page 1

programming and events manager for the Glebe BIA.

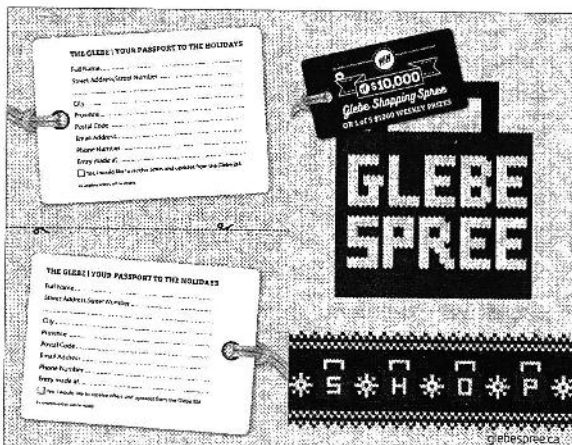
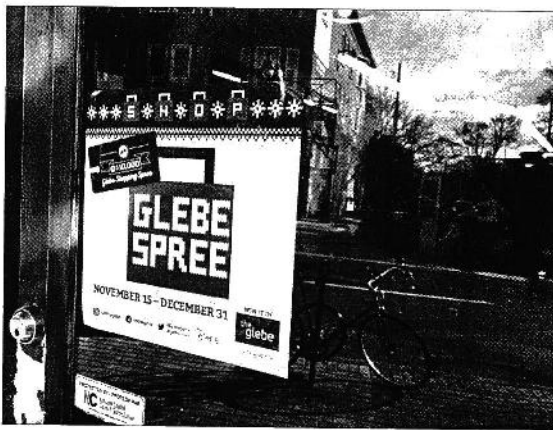
Dozens of merchants participate in the promotion. Most are independent coffee shops, bars, restaurants, bike shops, gyms, salons, yoga studios, and bookstores. But the Glebe BIA's membership also includes such national names as Pizza Hut, Starbucks, and Whole Foods Market.

In addition to the \$10,000 grand prize, there are weekly prizes of \$1,000 and daily giveaways of \$100 gift certificates.

The Glebe Spree's "Two-Stamp Tuesdays" promotion boosts activity on a slow day by giving shoppers two validations for one purchase of \$15.

The large and frequent prize awards keep the promotion highly visible for its entire month and a half span.

"The contest introduces top-of-mind awareness for the Glebe and Glebe merchants during a peak shopping period, creates a value proposition differentiating the Glebe from competing shopping destina-





DowntownDevelopment.com

To see the Glebe Spree promotional video go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

tions, encourages new and repeat visitation to the Glebe, and increases consumer spend during off-peak period shopping," the Glebe BIA says.

In 2017, to celebrate Canada's 150-year anniversary, the promotion focused on Canada-themed products.

Hightech and traditional marketing work together

Each year, the Glebe BIA provides strong marketing support. In early November, district leaders distribute promotional materials, including a branded ballot-style box, passports, window decals, and stamps. Employees are taught to provide shoppers with passports and to stamp them for each purchase.

In one change, the Glebe BIA's analysis of entrants' address showed that most of the contest entries came from people who lived within 2 kilometers (just under one and a quarter miles) of the district. So the Glebe Spree stopped marketing citywide and instead focuses on a smaller geographic area.

The change significantly reduced marketing costs from about \$125,000 a year to \$50,000 a year, Thibeault says. "Our ROI went through the roof."

In 2017, the BIA mailed more than 11,000 passports to residents in Glebe and the sur-

rounding area. An email campaign also alerted consumers to the promotion.

In addition, the BIA made a concerted effort to introduce the district and the Glebe Spree to visitors from outside of the area. To do this, the BIA used a geo-fencing strategy. When fans are attending Canadian Football League and National Hockey League games at nearby TD Place Stadium or the annual Santa Claus parade, their mobile devices are hit with ads about the Glebe Spree.

The Glebe Spree also used more traditional marketing tools such as print ads, street posters, web display ads, and organic and paid ads on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter.

In one north-of-the-border twist, the Glebe BIA awards the prize by simply opening a bank account on behalf of the winner and depositing \$10,000. The winner is asked to spend the money at Glebe merchants, and the BIA asks for receipts toward the end of the year. So far, Thibeault says, winners have faithfully spent their winnings in the Glebe.

The annual event has been recognized by the International Downtown Association as an effective way to drive traffic, to compete with other shopping districts, and to support economic activity.

Contact: Dana Thibeault, Glebe Business Improvement Area, 613-680-8506. **DIX**

ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Hip-hop signs ease pain of downtown road closing

An eight-month road closure in downtown Hartford, CT (est. pop. 122,591), caused shoppers, commuters, and business owners to groan.

While construction disrupted downtown businesses, the Hartford Business Improvement District (HBID) used whimsical construction signs to make light of the inconvenience and to stress that this, too, shall pass.

HBID recognized that traditional construction signs blend into the scenery. To grab the attention of a frustrated public, HBID replaced

bland construction signs with eye-catching messages.

One sign read: "Ditch, please. You can't stop me from shopping. All Pratt Street businesses are open during construction."

Another read: "We like big trucks and we cannot lie."

A third sign also alluded to hip-hop lyrics: "I got 99 problems but a ditch ain't one."

In addition to the irreverent verbiage, HBID used untraditional colors that would

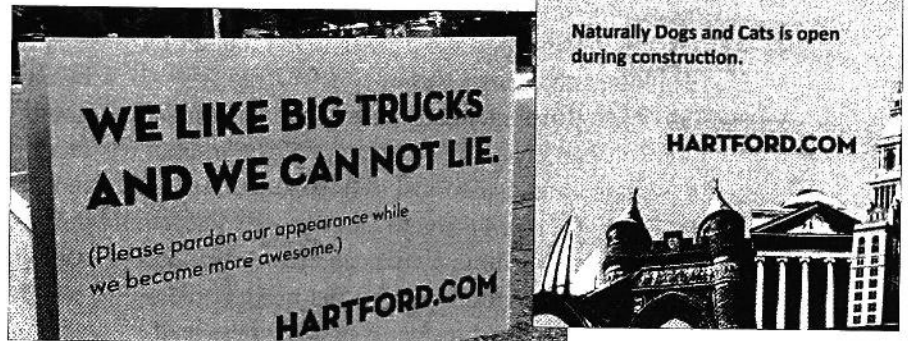
stand out from the standard orange and white signs.

The signs got plenty of love on social media and eased the pain of construction.

"Although sidewalks and businesses remained open, the street itself looked closed and threatened small business revenue streams," HBID says. "The construction project lasted months longer than originally planned, but the signs never felt stale or fell out of favor with local business owners or residents."

The signs cost less than \$1,000 and won an award from the International Downtown Association.

Proving that the signs were a hit, Uptown Greenville in Greenville, SC, copied the concept for its construction project. **DIX**



ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Closing main drag to cars speeds bus travel

The M14 bus usually crawls across one of Manhattan's busiest crosstown thoroughfares at 5 mph. After New York City officials barred car traffic along 14th Street, however, the buses suddenly zipped so quickly that bus drivers had to slow down to stick to their schedules.

New York City's promising results could offer an alternative to bus systems across the country, many struggling to gain ridership. However, there's a downside to the busway: Opponents of the pilot program say forcing cars off 14th Street will simply increase congestion on side streets.

Under the rules of the 18-month pilot program, taxis, cars, and vans can use the eight-block stretch between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. only for pick-ups and drop-offs or to enter parking garages. Left turns are banned, and vehicles that aren't buses or trucks must make the first available right turn off the street. The new rule is in effect seven days a week.

The busway will be enforced by police officers as well as by automated cameras

mounted on buses and on the street. After a 60-day grace period, the cameras and the officers will begin issuing tickets starting at \$50 and rising in \$50 increments to \$250 for each violation in a 12-month period.

Transportation officials hope the busway will reverse a ridership decline on the M14 bus. Since 2013, average weekday ridership on the route has fallen to 27,000 riders from 36,000 riders.

The crosstown bus route is among the slowest in the city. The average bus speed in Manhattan is 5.9 miles an hour, according to the state-controlled MTA. Until recently, M14 buses traveled at an average of 4.8 mph.

The MTA tried to improve M14 speeds this summer by spacing out stops and adding off-board payment and all-door boarding. The city also has tried to ease congestion by restricting some left turns from the street and by replacing parking spaces with loading zones. That helped raise the M14's average speed to 5.3 mph, an MTA spokesman said. **DIX**

Porch parties, street market among redevelopment strategies for historic area

In Birmingham, AL (est. pop. 209,294), a downtown group is encouraging economic growth through porch parties, a street market for vendors, and pop-up space.

REV Birmingham has been focusing on redevelopment of the Woodlawn neighborhood, a historic area located just east of downtown.

"There are a lot of people with ideas that could turn into businesses with a little support."

From April through October, Woodlawn business owners and residents host monthly porch parties that bring together like-minded residents and business leaders to help them in "turning their talent, hobby or passion into a viable business."

"Changing hosts each month allows us to connect with a wider network of Woodlawn residents and entrepreneurs," says Julie Clark McKinney, REV Birmingham's director of communications.

REV coaches entrepreneurs through business classes and through market-testing

opportunities such as pop-up space and the Woodlawn Street Market.

The street market was launched in 2014 by REV Birmingham as a way to highlight the good parts of a struggling neighborhood. While other parts of the city have farmers' markets, the street market is open to vendors of all types. A typical event draws about 80 vendors, Clark McKinney says.

"It's a more affordable market to be a vendor at than some of the farmers' markets in Birmingham," she says.

The Woodlawn Street Market serves as an incubator of sorts for startups and entrepreneurs with side gigs. In one success story, a Birmingham-themed stationery company opened a 500-square-foot shop downtown after first trying its concept at Woodlawn Street Market. A food truck and a bakery are other examples of success stories that first proved themselves at the street market.

REV Birmingham also provides one-on-one consulting and help finding real estate. And the organization hosts The Big Pitch, a business plan competition that requires entrepreneurs to hone their stories and sharpen their strategies. The winners get funding and other support.

The organization also has been sprucing up the business district through "façade refresh" projects that offer makeovers of storefronts, a commercial district banner program, and an art-in-windows campaign.

Restaurants, recording studios, medical offices, and REV Birmingham's headquarters are among the tenants that have moved into the neighborhood in recent years.

Clark McKinney says the goal is to unlock the untapped potential in the Woodlawn neighborhood.

"There is a lot of talent out there," she says. "There are a lot of side hustles. There are a lot of people with ideas that could turn into businesses with a little support."

Contact: Julie Clark McKinney, REV Birmingham, 205-595-0562. **DIX**

What are porch parties?

REV Birmingham provides guidance and a small stipend to encourage local residents and business owners to host Porch Parties and spur entrepreneurial growth. It's easy says the organization:

- Choose a 2nd Tuesday between April and October.
- Invite your Woodlawn neighbors, family, and friends.
- Host a small gathering in your front yard, back yard, or storefront.
- Use a \$50 stipend to provide light snacks.
- Welcome guests and facilitate dialogue with a guest speaker we've invited to share information about one of the many facets of entrepreneurship.
- Share your entrepreneurial spirit with the Woodlawn community. This is a great time for you to test your idea with those who will be your actual customers. We encourage you to share your own talents and small business dreams. For example, if you make candles, bring a few of your favorite scents to get unbiased feedback from your fellow Porch Party guests!

Idea Exchange

Small renovation project makes big mark

The renovation of a handful of highly-visible homes is being cited as a driver of the economic turnaround in Millinocket, ME.

The Northern Forest Center launched the Millinocket Housing Initiative in 2017 with the goal of renovating 10 properties and providing housing options for staff at nearby Millinocket Regional Hospital. As of October, the initiative had renovated five properties with another under construction says MaineBiz.com. The houses are all located in the downtown core. They include a two-family house, a three-family house, and two-, three- and four-bedroom single-family homes.

The biggest change, says Ailish Keating, project manager for the initiative was not the homes, but perceptions. "All of the sudden you get some local people saying, 'Hey, I'll snag that house before they get it,'" she tells MaineBiz.com. "They want to get there before we do, and that's great, that's the point."

Downtown farm-to-table dinner

Local talent, local food, and local businesses were featured at the 5th annual Texarkana Dine on the Line event. The community-wide farm-to-table dinner takes place at 5 p.m. right down the double yellow on State Line Avenue. Tickets were \$40 per person or \$75 for two and were available on Eventbrite.

Local restaurants prepared the meal in conjunction with Gateway

Farmers Market and Texarkana, Texas, Farmers' Market. The meal was served by a team of volunteers to the accompaniment of live folk and jazz.

While many downtown groups host similar events, Texarkana, which straddles Texas and Arkansas is the only one to include a toast across a state line.

Turning mess into opportunity

What could have been a messy and unpleasant situation has become an annual tradition and attraction in downtown Portland, OR.

The problem is crows roosting in downtown trees at night. "Cars, sidewalks, benches, handrails, and just about everything else under the trees is fair game when Mother Nature calls, leading to concentrated splatters of bird poop," says the local FOX News affiliate.

The solution is hawks. The trained hawks patrol the 72 block stretch of the main downtown corridor and discourage the crows from roosting.

A demonstration by the hawk handlers drew extensive press coverage and hundreds of onlookers.

The Alliance's clean and safe program is now in its third year working with a falconer to control the crow population. In a news release the alliance notes that, "Families and children are welcome to attend, and bird-themed treats will be provided."

ISSN 0012-5822

Downtown Idea Exchange

A publication of the
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Downtown Idea Exchange® is published monthly by the Downtown Development Center. The Center provides news, information and data for successful downtown revitalization through its newsletters, books, reports, and website.



Alexander Communications Group

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Idea Exchange

Pop-up igloos extend outdoor dining season

Igloos have been popping up in cold-winter cities for several years and the trend continues in 2019. On restaurant patios, decks, and rooftops, the dome-shaped igloos provide a cozy spot to dine, drink, and enjoy the outdoors.

In Michigan, they can be found everywhere from downtown Detroit to the suburbs to Petoskey and Marquette in the Upper Peninsula, notes the *Detroit News*.

"It's a fascinating idea and a great way to generate more business," says Carl Borchgrevink, director of the School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University.

Meanwhile, the City of Carmel, IN, set up heated igloos to help people keep warm during the second annual Festival of Ice at Center Green. The igloos have a cozy feel with upholstered furniture, end tables, and rugs.

While the igloos are generating buzz, the main attractions at the event are demonstrations by professional ice carvers, a fast-paced carve-off competition, a chili cook-off, an ice bar with luge (for drinks, not people), a children's play area, skating to a live DJ, and more.

Ice bars attract hearty visitors

The 9th annual SocialICE was held on Peace Plaza in downtown Rochester, MN, in February. The three day event lures people outside for "an icy experience fit for true Minnesotans." The highlight of the

Downtown opens doors to private restrooms

The Mpls Downtown Improvement District has launched an ambitious program to improve access to public restrooms. Called the 100 Restrooms Project, the initiative is a partnership of the DID and the City of Minneapolis.

The project grew from community input, a detailed assessment, and a pilot project called Little Free Lavatory.

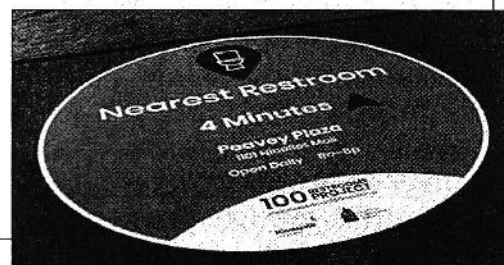
Starting with 29 publicly accessible restrooms the city aims to reach 100 by encouraging private business and property owners to open their facilities during normal business hours and by adding portable facilities in locations where gaps exist in the availability of permanent facilities.

To alert and guide the public the DID has installed distinctive sidewalk decals near 30 high-traffic downtown intersections.

"We know both from conversations with residents, workers, and visitors as well as data from our annual Mpls DID Perception Survey that access to high-quality restrooms downtown is a universal concern," says Steve Cramer, president & CEO of the Mpls Downtown Improvement District.



For more on increasing the supply of public restrooms, read the archive article, "Embrace the power of public restrooms." Go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."



event is seven uniquely themed ice bars each serving a signature drink.

In an effort to make downtown events more appealing for children and families, some new activities joined the line-up in 2019.

"The new programming stemmed from a community desire to see more and do more at the event," Meghann Southwick, director of events and strategic

partnerships for the Rochester Downtown Alliance told *Med City Beat*. "Not only can attendees enjoy the hand-crafted signature drinks and live DJs like before, they have the ability to experience local artists at work in this unique setting, connect with more local businesses, and stay warm inside the giant igloo or with a cup of soup in hand." **DIX**



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

Vol. 67, No. 1
January 2020

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ATTRACTION

If your downtown struggles with a bad reputation, don't fight it — embrace it

Deserved or not, many downtowns get bad raps. Crime, panhandling, a lack of parking, graffiti — many city centers battle challenges to their reputations.

How to respond? Savvy downtown marketers say the best approach is to swallow your pride, resist the temptation to shoot down the naysayers, and fully acknowledge your issues — preferably with a bit of self-effacing humor.

After giving a wink to the bad stuff, downtown marketers can more credibly talk up what's good about downtown.

There's no shame in embracing downtown's rough edges, says Stefan Poessiger of Mithoff Burton Partners in El Paso, TX. His marketing agency has helped El Paso promote its downtown, and he notes that nearly every downtown in the nation leans on a business improvement district, a downtown development authority, or some other formal body charged with improving the quality of life.

Downtown leaders can downplay bad reputations all they want. But polishing a rough image requires

(Continued on page 3)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Pop-up retail fills vacancies, enlivens streetscape

Brett Roler still cringes when he recalls walking through a block that he considered one of the liveliest stretches of Memphis' pedestrian mall. Roler, vice president of planning and development for the Downtown Memphis Commission, eavesdropped on the group of tourists strolling ahead of him — and he learned the visitors viewed the sec-

tion of downtown not as vibrant but as moribund.

"This place stinks," one said. "Let's go to Nashville."

Roler aims to keep an open mind when it comes to criticisms of downtown and its image, but the harsh commentary cut deep.

(Continued on page 8)

Closing downtown street brings new life — and spurs downtown events

Pratt Street is a brick thoroughfare in the heart of downtown Hartford, CT (est. pop. 122,591).

For all its promise, Pratt Street long has been bereft of pedestrian traffic. When the mayor proposed closing the street to cars, downtown leaders countered that further reducing activity on the street was the wrong approach.

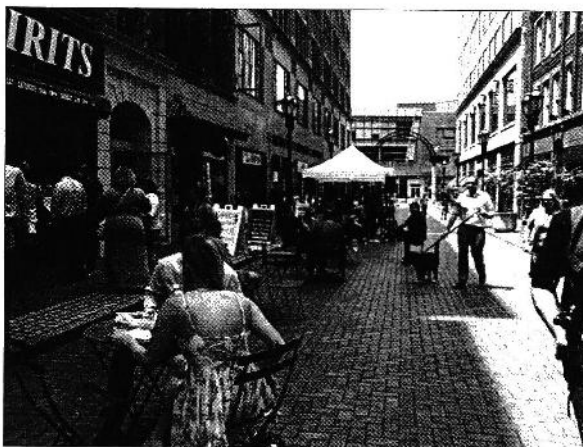
Instead, the Hartford Business Improvement District suggested a compromise: Close Pratt Street for a few hours a day.

The Pratt Street Patio project has been a success — and a model for temporarily repurposing other public spaces, says Chip McCabe, director of placemaking and events at the Hartford Business Improvement District.

Pratt Street closes for lunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, as tables and chairs take over. On Fridays, the narrow street shuts down from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

One Friday night event, Pratt Street Salsa Socials, taps into the large Hispanic population in Hartford.

"From 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on a Friday night, this is one of the most inclusive events you'll see in Hartford," McCabe says. "Everybody loves to dance."



About 400 people turn out for the salsa events. The Business Improvement District pays \$250 for a DJ, and the salsa nights bring in \$5,000 in sponsorships. When the dancing winds down, McCabe wants revelers to go out for dinner in the downtown district, or to go to a bar.

Other Pratt Street events have included yoga, hip-hop performances, face painting, and a pop-up brewpub.

Impressed by the success of the Pratt Street Patio, McCabe has begun to look for other opportunities for downtown placemaking.

Constitution Plaza, an area that doesn't get a lot of foot traffic, is the site of Meditation Mondays. A few dozen people show up for group meditation sessions that last for 15 minutes apiece.

The plaza also hosts a downtown horror-movie festival. The series, Spookie Popcorn, screens such films as *Pet Semetary* and *The Ring*.

In another quirky event, McCabe hosted a pop-up opera downtown.

"We literally called up the opera company and said, 'Do you want to sing for an hour? We'll pay you,'" McCabe recalls.

Those events aim to take advantage of foot traffic in a downtown that sees some 80,000 commuters flood in every day. Hartford is known as a hub for the insurance industry, but McCabe is aiming to make it a cultural center, too.

The Business Improvement District hosts a lunchtime concert series on Wednesdays in June, July, and August. The series, known as Audio Feed, draws 80 to 100 people a week. The BID sets up umbrellas and chairs. And local musicians play original music.

"I refuse to work with cover bands — and every musical act is paid cash money," McCabe says. "We're changing the

dynamic of how even artists view downtown Hartford.”

McCabe has another rule: He refuses to risk a financial loss on any event organized by the BID. The organization learned the hard way when it organized a parade and festival with designs of bringing in thousands of people on a Saturday.

“It was going to be the best day ever. And then, it rained — a lot,” McCabe says.

The BID took a \$10,000 loss, which felt like a financial disaster.

“As a two-person organization, we couldn’t afford to lose \$10,000,” McCabe says.

Now, any happening hosted by the BID has sponsorship money attached to it.

“Every event we do makes money,” McCabe says. “That’s our new rule.”

The edict requires quite a bit of cold-calling and cajoling. There’s already a successful jazz festival and a major Puerto Rican Day Parade, both vying for sponsors. Embracing his new sales duties, McCabe asked a local credit union to sponsor the music series. Downtown leaders typically don’t like to do sales, McCabe says, but that’s part of the role.

Contact: Chip McCabe, Hartford Business Improvement District, 860-728-2293. **DIX**

If your downtown struggles with a bad reputation, don’t fight it — embrace it — *Continued from page 1*

much more than a few sunny press releases or a cheerful ad campaign.

“Your brand is not what you say it is,” Poessiger says. “It is what people say about you.”

That reality is all too familiar to Lauren Hamilton, vice president at the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore. In one reputational hit for Baltimore (est. pop. 602,495), the TV series *The Wire* compellingly laid out the pathology of Baltimore’s violent inner city and its dysfunctional political scene. The HBO show popularized the city’s nickname of “Bodymore, Murderland.”

The hits have kept coming. In 2016, Baltimore was the site of protests after a black man, Freddie Gray, died in police custody. In 2019, President Donald Trump lashed out at a Congressional critic from the region by calling the city a “rat and rodent infested mess.”

There’s plenty of good news in downtown Baltimore, with its office towers, its bars and

restaurants, and the famed Camden Yards baseball stadium.

“We had a ton of new development, dramatic residential growth,” Hamilton says. “But nobody knew about it.”

To cut through the reputational miasma, Hamilton decided to take a risk. She embarked on a media campaign that involved fully acknowledging Baltimore’s reputation in a snarky way.

“We decided to poke fun at ourselves,” Hamilton says. “It worked. We reached a capton of millennials.”

One of the initial efforts was a city-produced post on BuzzFeed titled “The 10 Best Drugs Coming Out of Baltimore.” While the copy focused on caffeine, alcohol, and pharmaceutical breakthroughs from Johns Hopkins University, it also mentioned cracked crabs in a way that joked about crack cocaine.

The nontraditional branding wasn’t an easy sell. Hamilton had to persuade the

“Your brand is not what you say it is. It is what people say about you.”

Downtown Partnership's board to go along with the irreverent campaign.



"It's scary as hell," Hamilton acknowledges.

Hamilton was afraid she'd be fired for the crack cocaine joke. Half a decade later, she's still employed, and she says the edgy approach has been a success.

The contrarian approach requires a shift in mindset. In the traditional sales approach, marketers play up the good and downplay the bad. But Hamilton says playing it safe

is a losing strategy.

Instead of aiming her message at baby boomers who already have formed their opinions, she's targeting millennials who might be more willing to take a chance.

"I'm telling the 22-year-old to bring his dad down here for brunch," Hamilton says. "I'm not telling the dad to bring his 22-year-old down here."

Embracing the gritty

Another downtown leader fighting reputational issues is Joe Gudenrath, executive director of Downtown El Paso. While the Texas city might be perfectly safe, the Mexican city just across the border, Ciudad Juarez, is dangerous.

Gudenrath was reminded of that reality when he accepted his job six years ago and decided to move from Nebraska. His father-in-law had different ideas.

"You're not taking my grandkids to El Paso," Gudenrath recalled him saying.

It wasn't just grandparents living in the Great Plains who were unimpressed by El Paso's reputation. In 2015, just 35 percent of El Paso residents who responded to a survey agreed that downtown was clean.

Through a sustained marketing effort, the city has boosted that reputation.

"It's just getting people into the bars to experience what we are," Gudenrath says.

Downtowns have learned to embrace

some of their shortcomings — in the name of authenticity.

"Not everything is clean and new and shiny in our downtown," Gudenrath says.

Shifting the narrative

For many downtown districts, poor images keep people away. For Manhattan's Times Square, the bad reputation comes from too many people.

Some 400,000 pedestrians a day cram into Times Square.

"We're just looking at so many people in a very small place," says TJ Witham of the Times Square Alliance.

More than half that number consists of tourists and visitors attending Broadway shows. As a result, Times Square is filled with costumed characters, painted men and women, and hustlers passing out flyers for tours and shows.

"It's really difficult to get over a bad reputation — and this one is really bad," Witham says.

Considering that Times Square's bad reputation is so widely known, Witham couldn't ignore the district's image problems. His advice: Lean into it.

Acknowledging the district's problems helped spur new legislation. Mayor Bill DeBlasio signed rules that included no soliciting zones for Times Square and guidelines for the district's free-wheeling costumed characters.

"The focus is the 170,000, 180,000 employees who are coming in every day and leaving every day, and who are having a hard time," Witham says.

In addition, the Times Square Alliance has stressed the district's positives, including intriguing architecture and diverse businesses.

Witham asked board members and other Times Square insiders for suggestions of visually compelling features in Times Square, or unique small businesses. Then the Alliance created videos about the entrepreneurs and people of Times Square.

"You don't think about Times Square and small businesses in the same sentence," Witham says.



DowntownDevelopment.com

See the BuzzFeed post, *The 10 best drugs coming out of Baltimore*. Go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

The Alliance created video stories about makers of Cuban sandwiches, actors appearing in Broadway plays, and a New York City Police officer who works the beat. It published the content itself, and the Alliance also pitched reporters from the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time Out*

New York, and other publications.

Contacts: Joe Gudenrath, El Paso Downtown Management District, 915-400-2293; Lauren Hamilton, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, 410-244-1030; TJ Witham, Times Square Alliance, 212-452-5234; Steffen Poessiger, Mithoff Burton Partners, 915-544-9400. **DIX**

2020 TRENDS

Diversity, demographics will be driving forces for downtown development, study says

North America's population is growing both younger and older, and more culturally diverse.

Those demographic trends create both tailwinds and new challenges for downtown development, according to the *2020 Global Trends Report* by Progressive Urban Management Associates and the International Downtown Association.

Millennials and members of Generation Z have embraced urban living. Employers and employees are flocking to cities that offer walkability, good jobs, and a fun vibe.

Downtowns that offer the right ambience and amenities can become hubs of creativity and innovation. So a focus on entrepreneurship, tech skills, and authenticity is essential, says Brad Segal, head of Progressive Urban Management Associates.

"In its rawest form, it's about being relevant to younger people," he says.

One challenge, Segal points out, is that many downtown leaders and their boards tend to be older and whiter than the target market. That can create a disconnect.

Another reality to remember, Segal says, is that young people start their retail and transit experiences with the smartphone. The typical American household now owns five smart devices, so downtowns need to understand just how connected their target audience is, and respond accordingly.

Other trends Segal sees affecting downtowns:

Smaller cities have an advantage.

Small and mid-size downtowns might feel like stepchildren, but they can anchor the emergence of new "opportunity cities." Millennials might love "superstar" cities such as New York and San Francisco. But many are moving to smaller markets in search of affordable living and quality of life.

Uniqueness matters. Segal uses the phrase "local context" to encompass a place's history and diversity, both of which are critical to long-term success. "Creating welcoming public spaces and unique storefronts, and embracing diverse cultures, are all part of the power of place, an important attribute as urban districts increasingly compete with each other," the *2020 Global Trends Report* says.

Public investment is going local.

Rising federal debt and political gridlock mean there's simply less help available from federal and state governments. Cities will be forced to rely on themselves to find ways to fund public projects, whether through higher taxes or through public-private partnerships. This new political reality creates an opportunity for downtowns to take a stronger role in policy and investment. The *2020 Global Trends Report* calls cities, "bright spots of democracy."



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see the *2020 Global Trends Report*, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

Retail is changing, not dying. Main street merchants once were a staple of downtowns. Then they left for the 'burbs. Now that downtowns are seeing a renaissance, mall-based retail is struggling. "People are always concerned that brick and mortar is dead. Not true," Segal says.

"People are always concerned that brick and mortar is dead. Not true."

But it is changing in ways that can play into the strengths of downtowns.

The emergence of Generation Z. Many downtown leaders have been hyper-focused on millennials, but it's time to start thinking about the next generation of Americans. Millennials were born from 1981 to 1996. Gen Z followed. "A lot of downtowns have been

millennial-crazy," Segal says. "Gen Z is going to continue to be attracted to downtown areas."

Downtowns can't appeal to everyone. While downtowns are important hubs, some people want a suburban lifestyle. "We are seeing millennials with kids moving out to the suburbs," Segal says. "I'm starting not to worry about that as much, because Gen Z is filling the pipeline."

Climate change has returned as a crucial concern. Rising seas and intensifying weather could disrupt the U.S. economy and create waves of "climate refugees." The topic increasingly will be an issue for downtown leaders.

Contact: Brad Segal, *Progressive Urban Management Associates*, 303-997-8754. **DIX**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Opportunity Zone investment lags optimistic predictions

Opportunity Zones, those tax-advantaged areas created as part of President Donald Trump's 2017 tax package, aren't living up to expectations.

The U.S. Treasury Department expected the program to spur investment in blighted neighborhoods and transitioning urban areas totaling \$100 billion. The actual amount is likely to be just a fraction of that, perhaps \$10 billion to \$15 billion, says Anthony Scaramucci, the former White House communications director and an Opportunity Zone investor.

"It's going to be a way smaller program," Scaramucci said during an October appearance sponsored by the commercial real estate group NAIOP.

As a result, downtown leaders hoping for a flood of investment from the new initiative will need to temper their expectations. Federal and state officials designated nearly

8,800 Opportunity Zones nationwide, many of them in downtowns and in struggling areas near urban cores. The entire borough of Brooklyn, for instance, is an Opportunity Zone.

"There are three things that are stopping the opportunity zones," says Scaramucci, who helped design the program.

First, the tax break simply isn't large enough to attract large sums of money. Opportunity Zones let investors defer capital gains if they invest the proceeds from a taxable gain in designated projects.

The idea, Scaramucci says, was that an investor sitting on appreciated stock in a company such as Amazon would sell the shares and roll the money into a hotel or apartment project in an Opportunity Zone. The tax rate on long-term capital gains is 15 percent, so an investor cashing in a \$1 million profit wouldn't owe the IRS

\$150,000 so long as the money went into a real estate project in a designated district.

"We thought that was going to be a big-time incentive," Scaramucci says. "It turns out that wasn't a big enough incentive."

A second obstacle, Scaramucci says, is that investors must agree to keep their money in the Opportunity Zone project for a decade.

"The 10-year hold was just too long for too many people," Scaramucci says.

The third problem was that the feds dragged their feet in releasing rules about the program. While Trump signed the law creating Opportunity Zones in late 2017,

the Treasury was still spelling out the rules nearly two years later. Scaramucci is running an Opportunity Zone fund himself, and he said the delays have hampered investor interest.

"There are many lawyers and many accountants that are telling potential clients of ours, 'Don't do it. We're uncertain,'" Scaramucci says.

Scaramucci's fund is working on a hotel development in an Opportunity Zone near the Superdome in New Orleans. He aims to develop other downtown projects, although he has scaled back his ambitions. **DIX**

ATTRACTION

Use this three-step plan to promote your events on social media

Social media is a crucial tool for promoting events. But with the range of social media channels it can be overwhelming. Britt Diehl of the Downtown Denver Partnership says the marketing of any event should follow a three-step plan.

First comes the pre-party. Before you even begin promoting a festival or a pub crawl, you should identify your goals and your audience.

"Think about who you want to come to the event," Diehl says.

Part of the plan includes choosing a hashtag and consistently promoting it.

This is the time to reach out to other social media users who can act as co-promoters.

"You don't want to be the only person promoting your event," Diehl says. "It's a really powerful thing to have others talking about how great it's going to be."

You can write Facebook posts and Tweets for them, or ask co-promoters to like your posts. Make it easy for them to plug your event, Diehl advises.

When the day of the event arrives, make sure to share posts about your event in real time. Also use attendee-generated content.

Your goal: Create fear of missing out. Instagram Stories and live Tweeting can create buzz around your event. Even in the bustle of



the event, think long-term. Use this content to generate interest for next year.

The third step is what Diehl calls the after-party. Write public thank you notes using the event's hashtag. Tee up what's next. And analyze results and adjust accordingly.

"The beauty of social media is you have all these amazing stats," Diehl says.

Look at which posts or links generated traffic and ticket sales, and which didn't.

The partnership boasts a full calendar of events from small stakeholder forums to activating public spaces with festivals and events. Virtually all are promoted via social media.

Contact: Britt Diehl, Downtown Denver Partnership, 303-534-6161. **DIX**

Downtown uses pop-up retail space to fill vacancies — Continued from page 1

"It hurt me on my insides," Roler says.

Not that Roler has an unrealistic view of downtown. He acknowledges that the retail property market in Memphis' core is "soft." That's the main reason Roler has championed pop-up retail space along Memphis' pedestrian mall. He has spent years laying the groundwork, marketing the initiative to tenants, and cajoling landlords to give the concept a try.

"I got tired of walking by these vacant storefronts year after year and decided to do something about it," Roler says.

Now, Memphis' pop-up program is paying dividends. By providing small spaces to startup retailers for free, Downtown Memphis has helped incubate such businesses as a reseller of collectible sneakers and a purveyor of custom soaps.

Working with landlords

While the results are promising, Roler cautions that downtown leaders who expect instant success are likely to be disappointed. Roler says his first hurdle was persuading landlords to take a chance on pop-up spaces.

"It's been a challenge to convince some property owners that this is worth doing," Roler says.

In some cases, owners of otherwise-profitable properties don't care that they have an open space or two in their multi-story buildings

on the pedestrian mall. While dark windows are deadly to the street's image as a bustling place, an empty space doesn't faze a landlord who has plenty of tenants on higher floors. As a result, owners aren't keen to take on the headache of an additional tenant for a mere \$800 to \$1,000 a month.

Roler stepped in to overcome that objection. For some long-empty storefronts facing the street, the Downtown Memphis Commission leased the spaces and then subleased them to pop-up tenants. Roler promised to take the calls about backed-up toilets and other routine nuisances.

Roler's program began in 2016, when he rented a long-empty retail space that, despite a prime location, had sat vacant for five years. The Downtown Memphis Commission made some cosmetic fixes, such as ripping out the tattered carpet.

The broker who leased the space called Roler and complained that he shouldn't have rented it so cheap to the Downtown Memphis Commission — he suddenly was receiving inquiries about the space. Roler was surprised the broker didn't realize that sprucing up a vacant storefront would make the space more attractive.

At any rate, Roler agreed to a concession: If a landlord signs a tenant to a lease of five



DowntownDevelopment.com

View the Open on Main guidelines. Go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

years or longer, the Downtown Memphis Commission will turn out the pop-up tenant with 30 days' notice.

As the pop-up program — known as Open on Main — has grown, the length of pop-up leases has expanded from just a month to as long as six months. To find tenants, Roler has issued calls for proposals from small businesses and makers.

Free rent

The terms are attractive: Tenants pay no rent or utilities. The Downtown Memphis Commission typically pays about \$750 a month to lease the space and \$100 a month for utilities.

A couple of the success stories have caught Roler by surprise. He acknowledges he almost passed on Buff City Soap. However, that company launched in a pop-up space and has gone on to franchise several locations.

"It was a huge success," Roler says. "You have to be willing to take risks on people."

In another instance, an entrepreneur pitched a sneaker resale business. The proprietor scouted thrift stores for old sneakers, cleaned them up and resold them.

"There was a little bit of skepticism on our staff's side," Roler says.

However, the three-month pop-up was a success, with the entrepreneur finding some gems that he was able to resell for as much as \$600.

In Memphis, a city with a large African-American population, Roler has made diversity a priority. Fully 85 percent of pop-up tenants have been businesses owned by minorities or women.

Because many of the tenants are testing their concepts and learning how to run a business, Roler keeps the pop-up spaces small. They're just 400 to 800 square feet.

"A lot of our pop-up tenants don't realize how much inventory they need to fill a big space," Roler says. "If you have 1,600 square feet and six T-shirts, it looks pretty bad."

High-maintenance tenants

Roler clusters pop-ups in the same block, and he has learned that landlords who don't

want to lease small spaces to small businesses might have legitimate misgivings.

"Pop-up tenants can be high maintenance," Roler says. "Even if they get zero dollars rent, they'll still call and complain about things that are wrong."

That doesn't mean you should skip pop-up programs, Roler says. But you should plan for the reality that pop-up tenants will require constant attention.

Even in the worst case, if a pop-up fails, it's better than the alternative, which is a chronically empty storefront staying empty.

The pop-up program isn't the only way that Memphis is trying to enliven its pedestrian mall. The downtown commission also launched a new retail tenant improvement grant that provides up to \$30,000 for interior renovations.

"We think it's going to help fill the gap between what property owners can do and what tenants can do," Roler says.

Other carrots include development loans at 1 percent interest and exterior improvement grants. The city also attempts to crack down on blight and neglect.

Roler is also monitoring foot traffic. He installed pedestrian counters along the mall to accurately tally how many people are coming downtown, and where and when they're walking around. In some instances, Roler will pass on the information to merchants, telling them, for example, that several hundred people passed by in the hour after the doors closed.

That underscores the real value of downtown. "The No. 1 incentive we can offer retailers is still customers," Roler says.

As for temporary storefront space, even if pop-up programs require significant effort, they also can pay off, he argues.

"It's not that we're going to spin off a hundred tenants that are going to sign 10-year leases," Roler says. "Our goal is to improve pedestrian experience and activate vacant space. This is worth doing. Our stakeholders love this."

Contact: Brett Roler, Downtown Memphis Commission, 901-575-0574. **DIX**

"This is worth doing. Our stakeholders love this."

Struggling trolley service raises questions about streetcar future

Cities across the country have invested hundreds of millions of dollars on streetcar services. Despite much fanfare, the results have been mixed.

In one recent example, the Loop Trolley in St. Louis, MO (est. pop. 318,000), is struggling to attract riders.

The Loop Trolley launched in late 2018 with support from the federal government and local government. The \$52 million streetcar project runs for 2.2 miles between a historic park and an entertainment-and-business district on the edge of the city. The trolley, after just a year of offering limited service, is out of money. In mid-October, the project cut its hours of operation to noon to 6 p.m. daily.

"It would be a horrible shame for the trolley to shut down before the system would even have a chance to demonstrate its value," said John Meyer, president of the all-volunteer board for Loop Trolley Co., the nonprofit that runs the service, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Others have proven skeptical.

"Realistically, it's a tourist attraction and not that good of one at any rate," said Tim Fitch, a St. Louis County commissioner.

The St. Louis project received a \$25 million federal grant in 2010, part of a wave of federal spending amid the financial crisis.

The most successful trolley projects, including streetcars in Seattle and Portland, connect with transit and are used by commuters, not just tourists. **DIX**

CLEAN AND SAFE

Cutting down on cigarette butt litter

Most places banned indoor smoking decades ago. Smokers moved outside, and so did their butts. The Cigarette Litter Prevention Program from Keep America Beautiful, now in its 18th year, is working to reduce cigarette litter. The key, says the organization, includes four field tested strategies:

- Encourage enforcement of litter laws, including cigarette litter
- Raise awareness about the issue using public service messages
- Place ash receptacles at transition points such as entrances to public buildings
- Distribute pocket or portable ashtrays to adult smokers.

Corpus Christi, TX, is one of the latest cities to embrace cigarette litter prevention

downtown. In July, the Downtown Management District installed 16 Sidewalk Buttlers in areas where cigarette butts were typically found. The aluminum receptacles can collect hundreds or even thousands of cigarette butts and can be mounted on light polls or utility polls, says company co-owner Mike Roylos.

The local *Caller Times* notes that grant funds were used to obtain the new receptacles, "The Sidewalk Buttlers were paid for through a grant from the Council of Governments and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality." They will be maintained by the district's clean team.

While some smokers have quit and others have switched to vaping, Roylos says there are still millions of American smokers leaving behind many millions of butts. **DIX**

Idea Exchange

Thanksgiving: Shop early or sleep in

Just hours after celebrating Thanksgiving Day, shoppers line up at big-box stores to grab one-of-a-kind deals. The chamber of commerce in Glen Arbor, MI, thinks things should be a little different, so the group hosts an annual Better than Black Friday event.

Participating retailers offer early morning specials from 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. Participants are encouraged to embrace the relaxed small town atmosphere and come dressed in comfy and festive pajamas.

And for those who prefer to sleep in on Black Friday, the chamber hosts an afternoon bed parade. Individuals and teams decorate a bed, add sturdy wheels, and parade through the downtown.



Volunteer management best practices

Volunteers provide a powerful economic benefit to communities across the nation. For downtown organizations, developing a professional team of volunteers for everything from serving on the board of directors, to updating the

organization's databases, to blowing up balloons can multiply the impact of paid staff.

To run a successful volunteer program, the Michigan Main Street Association recommends the following best practices:

- Annually evaluate the efficiency of your organization's volunteer management program.
- Annually assess your organization's volunteer needs.
- Provide a simple interest form online and at events to allow prospective volunteers to contact your organization about volunteer opportunities.
- Create a readily available inquiry response email that can be sent quickly after receiving an inquiry from a prospective volunteer.



To see the full volunteer tool kit, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

Murals double as fundraisers

A unique public art project is raising funds and drawing visitors to West Point, MS. Four separate murals have been painted based on the work of Cassius Marcellus Coolidge, whose paintings of dogs in human situations, were popular in the early 1900s.

The first of the four murals re-imagines the iconic *Dogs Playing Poker*. It features local dogs whose owners paid \$350 each to have them included in the artwork.

ISSN 0012-5822

Downtown Idea Exchange

A publication of the
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Downtown Idea Exchange® is published monthly by the Downtown Development Center. The Center provides news, information and data for successful downtown revitalization through its newsletters, books, reports, and website.



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Based on the success of the first mural, three additional murals were added depicting more than 40 dogs and cats in all. West Point Main Street shared the proceeds equally with a local animal shelter.

Zombies invade downtown

On the Friday before Halloween, Downtown Campbell, CA, is taken over by the undead as the annual Zombie Crawl/Thriller Dance Mob hits the streets.

The Zombie Crawl runs from roughly 7 to 10 p.m. The group wanders through downtown and performs the *Thriller* dance at 10 designated spots, typically in front of restaurants and bars. Downtown Campbell notes that the event draws both dancers and spectators downtown for the night, "Some people reserve tables on the patio at restaurants in advance to get a prime viewing spot and others line up on the street to watch."

The entire community is invited to learn the *Thriller* dance and join the flash mob. A local dance studio holds weekly workshops to teach the moves.

The following day, the dancers gathered again in attempt to break the Guinness World Record for largest *Thriller* dance group.

The value of special events

Toronto's Open Streets program has drawn hundreds of thousands of people in recent years. In the final Open Streets event of 2019, the city closed two

Holiday shopping starts with a party

The Downtown Lincoln Association started the holiday shopping season early with the 12th Annual Shop the Blocks promotion on Thursday, November 21 from 4:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Shop the Blocks is a ticketed event. Guests pay \$7 in advance or \$10 on the day of the event. An "all access pass" includes:

- In-store discounts at over 15 downtown shops
- Pedal Pusher chauffeur service
- Appetizers from local restaurants and caterers
- Shopping prizes and raffles
- Entry into the after party at a dining and live music venue.

To boost awareness on social media, participants are encouraged to "post for prizes." To enter, participants share photos of themselves with the festive window displays, riding in pedicabs, enjoying appetizers, and more. Four participants won \$25 downtown gift cards.

New to the event this year was the children's activity center, which allows parents to shop unencumbered by little ones. The event was hosted by the Lincoln Children's Museum. For \$20, kids participated in planned activities, museum play time, and watched a movie.



main thoroughfares to vehicles. In place of cars, drag queens offered face painting and organizers set up a skate park and a scooter park.

Toronto isn't alone in occasionally shutting down streets and replacing them with temporary parks, festivals, and events.

One of the most common objections to Open Streets events and others is, the loss of on-street parking.

The answer says the Open Streets Project is to communicate the benefit of events on downtown revitalization and to encourage business owners to actively engage with event organizers and attendees to promote their businesses. Los Angeles offers one example. The city saw a 57 percent increase in sales for stores that engaged with participants in the city's Open Streets program. **DIX**