



CITY OF ELKO

Planning Department

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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 25, 2018 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 19, 2018 2:10 p.m.

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

Date/Time Posted: January 19, 2018 2:05 p.m.

ELKO POLICE DEPARTMENT – 1448 Silver Street, Elko NV 89801

Date/Time Posted: January 19, 2018 2:15 p.m.

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

Date/Time Posted: January 19, 2018 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 19th day of January, 2018.

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 Wilkinson
Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
4:00 P.M., P.S.T., THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2018
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 26, 2017 – Regular Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

I. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review and consideration for a directional signage program for the Central Business District, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
- B. Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency on the upcoming budget cycle for 2018/19 regarding allocating funds, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
- C. Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency on Centennial Park final design concept and consideration of additional funding to complete Centennial Park expansion, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

II. REPORTS

- A. Storefront Improvement Program
- B. Budget – Cathy Laughlin

C. Other

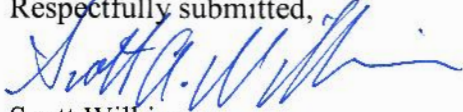
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NOTE: The Chairman or Vice Chairman reserves the right to change the order of the agenda and if the agenda is not completed, to recess the meeting and continue on another specified date and time. Additionally, the Redevelopment Advisory Council reserves 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,



Scott Wilkinson

Assistant City Manager

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
4:00 P.M., P.S.T., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2017
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.

NOTE: **The order of the Agenda has been changed to reflect the order business was conducted.**

ROLL CALL

Present: **Catherine Wines, ACAB**
 Jeff Dalling
 Jon Karr
 Lina Blohm

Absent: **Chris Johnson, RDA**
 Don Newman ECVA
 John Kingwell, Elko Co.
 Sonja Sibert, GBC
 Steve Bowers, Elko Co. School Dist

City Staff: **Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager**
 Cathy Laughlin, City Planner
 Jeremy Draper, Development Manager
 Shelby Archuleta, Planning Technician

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 24, 2017 – Special Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

***** A motion was made by Lina Blohm, seconded by Catherine Wines, ACAB to approve the August 24, 2017 meeting minutes as presented.**

****Motion passed unanimously. (4-0)***

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency to amend the storefront improvement reimbursement program application package, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

After the first year of the Storefront Improvement Grant Program, the program guidelines and application should be reviewed to consider any possible amendments.

Cathy Laughlin, City Planner, explained that she went through each document to make changes and only made changes to three of the five documents. We can go through each document and compare to the changes that the RAC would like to propose. In the Grant Guidelines on Page 1 she made a modification to change the "Grant Review Committee" to the "Redevelopment Agency", because the Redevelopment Agency makes the final decision, with a recommendation from the Grant Review Committee. On Page 2 she was proposing to eliminate the part called out as the Building Permit issued by the City of Elko, and replace it with the date of the signed Participation Agreement. All the Grant recipients had to sign a Participation Agreement, but not all of the Grants were required a building permit. On Page 3 she proposed to eliminate "or other non-taxed entities", since there was quite a bit of debate on that and we allowed Western Folklife Center to apply as it was. On Page 6, in the check list, add "if required" to obtain a Building Permit. Those were her proposed changes to the Grant Guidelines document.

Jeff Dalling asked if they were letting non-taxed in or removing them.

Ms. Laughlin explained if they delete that phrase out, we would be allowing them in, as we did with the Western Folklife this year.

Catherine Wines said she had an issue with that.

Mr. Dalling asked why they wanted to let them in. Let's strike it.

Jon Karr said they didn't follow it, so should they leave it in.

Ms. Laughlin suggested if they left it in they would need to define a non-taxed entity, because that's where it was lost was in the definition.

Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager, added that they had comments that since they paid payroll taxes they were taxed entity, even though they didn't contribute to the assessment.

Ms. Wines pointed out that there are grants available to non-profits for this very thing that are not available to for profit businesses. They are competitive and sometimes tricky to get. This is based on property tax and it should be available to people who pay into it.

Ms. Laughlin thought they needed to clarify the definition of non-taxed entities.

Lina Blohm thought that was one of the issues with the NV Energy Gear Museum, it was thought that they were waved from certain property taxes.

Ms. Laughlin explained that it was determined that they paid property taxes, it just goes directly to the State and to the County, not to the Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Dalling suggested they add into the definition, who pays property taxes to the RDA. He thought that would be a good definition, because now they would be paying into system and benefit. But if you don't pay into the system that doesn't do anybody any good.

Ms. Wines said all that is, is public utilities and both the utilities have moved out of the Downtown, so that's not going to be an issue going forward.

Ms. Blohm added that it could be so they could clarify regarding real property taxes is a cool way to identify.

Mr. Dalling thought that would be nice.

Ms. Wines added that there is not whole bunch of other grants available for for-profit businesses.

Mr. Karr asked if they wanted to make a motion on this part, or make a motion on the other parts and come back to this.

Ms. Wines asked for clarification on the change to when the agreement is signed. When does that agreement have to be signed? Can that be signed the day they get a permit?

Ms. Laughlin explained that it is signed within a couple of weeks of final approval from the RDA. We had everyone come in and all the agreements were signed the 20th and the 24th of May, so that was a week after the RDA Meeting. After they were signed the Notice of Agreement was recorded.

Ms. Wines asked if it took a little bit to get a permit after the Grant was awarded, why don't we say one or the other? Either when the Agreement is signed or a Building Permit is issued. Because if somebody doesn't apply for a permit based on whether they get this money or not.

Ms. Laughlin explained that the intention was to have them prepared in advanced. They know that they have to have the plans ready to get permitting to get the construction bids done on the project by the end of March. Our intent is to not have this drug out, so that if someone changes their mind and takes a year to get a permit and then were allowing them another 9 months. Now were two fiscal years down the road and we want to be able to complete this and allow this expenditure within that fiscal year. That doesn't mean that they couldn't reapply for next year. If they were able to get three bids, then they should be far enough along that they have their plans

ready to get permitting. They can even include the cost of the permitting and design in the reimbursement.

Ms. Wines thought that we should make it as easy as possible, not as difficult as possible. She was looking at this like a Business owner and a Design Professional. Sometimes these things are tricky and adding one more layer.

Mr. Karr asked if Ms. Wines wanted to get rid of it all together or add.

Ms. Wines thought they should have both. It's either when the agreement is signed or when a Building Permit is issued.

Mr. Dalling said they have 9 months and they can get an extension.

Ms. Laughlin asked if he meant an extension on the permit or an extension on the Grant. They can request an extension from the RDA.

Mr. Wilkinson thought they should have a specified time to enter into the agreement, because if you had multiple applicants, and you make a commitment to less than all of them, and then you have someone who doesn't follow through and doesn't sign the agreement that would be a missed opportunity. If someone is truly committed they should sign an agreement within 30 to 45 days of approval by the Agency.

Ms. Wines thought 30 to 45 days would be ok, but Ms. Laughlin was talking about a week.

Ms. Laughlin explained that was because the Agreement is part of the packet. All we had to do was add in the amount that the RDA approved at their meeting. It didn't take us but 30 seconds to fill in that amount and schedule a meeting for them to come in sign it.

Mr. Wilkinson thought that should be a relatively short period of time.

Ms. Wines said if a business owner is saying that they will go ahead with the project if they get the grant, then they might need a month or so to get a permit in place.

Mr. Dalling thought 9 months should be enough. It takes forever to do construction. He thought that if took two months to get the permit, then they would still have 7 months to finish, and they could always write in and get an extension with the RDA. It's easier language and gets them on the ball. If something happens and they hit a snag, then there's still the extension. He didn't think they needed to wait for the permit and then start it.

Ms. Wines said why not make it a little bit simpler.

Ms. Laughlin said that's what she was trying to do. She was trying to make it simple, so that we know this is the date that the Agreement starts, this is the date that the 9 months starts from.

Ms. Wines said they were making it easier for the City, not necessarily for the business owner. Sometimes these things are complicated and why make it even more complicated. Last year she wasn't sure that they got the exact projects that they were looking for, because it's a complicated process and it's a real short time period to get from drawings to complete bid packages by the end of March.

Ms. Blohm asked if Ms. Wines wanted a defined longer time period.

Ms. Wines said yes. She wanted it to not be so restrictive at every single step.

Mr. Karr asked for any other proposed changes.

Ms. Blohm said she had a suggested changes that she didn't think was discussed. It is regarding obtaining three bids.

Ms. Laughlin explained that it's a Nevada Revised Statute that anything in Chapter 279, of the Redevelopment, anything over \$10,000 needs to be competitively bid. If you look at their definition of competitively bid, there are a variety of items in that definition. She didn't think they could get around that. She thought it had to be competitively bid, and competitively bid is more than one.

Ms. Blohm asked if they could change it to say "two or more".

Ms. Laughlin said they could. They have to be careful, because its tax payer's money and they need to be sure to be fair to all applicants. Having to getting three bids is making it fair on the projects.

Ms. Wines thought three was an industry standard.

Ms. Blohm said she was referring to Henderson Bank Building and whatever that conversation was. Her issue was nobody else would bid on a low number project like hers was. She was trying to bring in a lot of worthwhile projects and it's a good time to discuss what might help business owners who don't want to spend \$20,000 or \$30,000.

Mr. Karr thought they still needed three, it is kind of a standard.

Ms. Blohm just thought they needed to have the discussion.

Mr. Karr said he would like to see motion for the recommended changes, except for, because of further discussion, (I)6 and E.

*****A Motion was made by Jeff Dalling to approve the Grant Guidelines as presented, except for G(6). None Seconded.**

****Motion Failed for lack of a Second.***

Ms. Laughlin asked for clarification on the timeline of approval. She asked if Ms. Wines wanted the 9 months to start on the Permit Date.

Ms. Wines said sure.

Ms. Blohm said but it all has to occur within the same calendar year.

Ms. Laughlin explained to Mr. Wilkinson that she took out permit date, because some of the jobs don't require permits.

Mr. Karr wanted to go over the changes that they all agreed on first.

*****A Motion was made by Jeff Dalling, seconded by Catherine Wines, ACAB to approve the Grant Guidelines as presented, except for G (6) and E.**

****Motion passed unanimously. (4-0)***

Mr. Karr asked to discuss E.

Mr. Dalling said he was comfortable with the language the way it is, because he thought the permit process could take a long time, he knew that first hand.

Ms. Wines asked why Mr. Dalling was wanting to restrict everyone else. She said he was a perfect example of why they should add that language.

Mr. Dalling said because you could be there forever.

Ms. Wines said if there are legitimate circumstances, like Ms. Laughlin said if it takes six months to get a permit, let's not punish people.

Mr. Dalling said they wouldn't be punishing them, because they could get a written extension. That's what he is going to have to do.

Ms. Wines asked why Mr. Dalling was so against it.

Mr. Dalling said he wasn't. He was going to put in an extension because he wasn't going to get it finished in time.

Ms. Wines said it's just another hoop that you have to jump through.

Mr. Dalling said he didn't want to string it out forever.

Mr. Karr asked where Ms. Laughlin wanted to put the changes.

Ms. Laughlin explained her proposed changes would read “all Storefront Improvements must be completed within 9 months of the date of the signed Participant Agreement.”

Ms. Wines said that happens a week after the RDA approves it.

Ms. Laughlin clarified that it happens whenever the applicant comes in to sign the agreement, this year it happened to be a week later.

Mr. Wilkinson suggested they add “or issuance of a Building Permit, whichever date is later.”

Mr. Dalling asked what would happen if it took two years to get the Building Permit.

Mr. Wilkinson said that would be a justification for an extension. He heard Mr. Dalling’s argument. We are trying to make our money go to work in the Downtown, and we don’t want commitments that sit out there for years on end that aren’t apparent in the Downtown so that were getting the advantages of putting that money to work. The whole idea is to have this be apparent in the Downtown and incentivize additional activity and development. You don’t want it to be strung out for years. We have two issues, we have some projects that don’t require a Building Permit, and so we need to change that. You could probably have some “and/or” type language and “whichever date is later” language, and still allow for an extension. Maybe you could put a limit on how long it takes to get a Building Permit. The Building Permit Application expires in 180 days so you could say something about if it expires you’re not eligible for extension. If you submit plans and they are inadequate and it sits over there and expires, because you can’t do your project, you’re done. He thought they would lose funding and suggested that they put it in the Guidelines that way.

Ms. Blohm said she liked that language.

Ms. Wines thought they should have both in there. It’s not the business owner’s fault if the Design Professional can’t get the permit. We’re just making it harder for the businesses.

Mr. Dalling said maybe they should take the expiration off.

Mr. Wilkinson thought they needed to tie it to either or, whichever date is later, and then Building Permits expire at 180 days. He thought if they gave Ms. Laughlin some time to craft language that might be more encompassing, it might be better. If we have enough time to hear this one more time.

Ms. Wines thought 9 months was too short last year.

Mr. Karr thought they were forgetting about the extension. He didn’t want to get too structured, so that the RDA loses their teeth to say no.

Ms. Laughlin pointed out that they needed to keep the budget in mind. Our budget, annually, includes this \$50,000 up to the 5 years. That’s all that we have approved up to this date. Four years from now we don’t want someone to come in three years later with a reimbursement

request, and then we don't have the funds because we're doing something else. We want to make sure that we have control of it. Ms. Laughlin believed that it's in the respect of the business owners and the property tax payers that they see a bang for their buck, and they see the difference that we are making in the downtown.

Mr. Wilkinson said those were good points. The nine months that is specified is more liberal than the 180 day expiration of the Building Permit.

Ms. Wines thought the friendlier they make it to businesses the better.

*****A motion was made by Catherine Wines, ACAB to add the language "Signed Participant Agreement, or the issuance of a Building Permit from the City of Elko."**

Before the Second Mr. Karr added that they have four options to look at. One is exactly how it is, without any changes, change it the way that Ms. Laughlin proposed, delay it and rework some wording, and the fourth is the motion that is currently on the floor.

Ms. Laughlin said she could change the wording with the motion.

Mr. Karr said those were the four options he saw.

Ms. Wines thought they only needed three options.

Ms. Blohm Seconded the Motion.

Ms. Wines restated the motion.

Mr. Wilkinson thought it would work the way the motion was presented.

Ms. Blohm repeated her Second.

Mr. Karr asked for final discussion of the motion.

Mr. Dalling said he liked it the way it was. He felt that someone could string this out for years and never get a written extension. He thought with the language how it is now, you could always go get the written extension if it takes longer.

Ms. Blohm pointed out that this wouldn't eliminate the request for a written extension.

Mr. Dalling didn't think that they need to keep carrying it out.

Ms. Blohm liked the clarification.

Mr. Karr thought the Participation Agreement was the better way to go, as presented by Ms. Laughlin.

The Council then Voted on the Motion.

****Motion passed (3-1, Mr. Dalling opposed).***

Mr. Karr asked for discussion on G (6). He asked if they were headed towards including property tax participants.

Ms. Wines stated that G was titled "Ineligible Properties", and Number 6 is "Government Offices and Agencies." She asked if they put "Non-Governmental tenants are eligible" in parenthesis because of the Folklife Center.

Ms. Laughlin said no. Let's say that the City of Elko owns a building downtown, they lease out a space to an attorney, and the attorney wants to do a Storefront Improvement to that building. The attorney would be the applicant, but he leases a space owned by a government office.

Mr. Dalling suggested they add a Number 7 that says "Anybody that doesn't pay their property taxes into the RDA." Then that would eliminate the other problems, so if you're not paying property taxes into the RDA then you're ineligible. He thought that might be easier than working on the verbiage on Number 6.

Ms. Blohm said they should probably still delete "Or other non-taxed entities."

Mr. Dalling thought that should stay, because they are ineligible.

Ms. Wines clarified that the list was things that were ineligible.

Ms. Blohm asked if the Folklife Center were to come back to us, or the Gear Museum at some point, they would then be considered as ineligible. She asked if that's what everyone was agreeing to. She thought that they had set a precedence with Western Folklife Center.

Ms. Wines stated that they didn't. She said this is just what they are recommending to the RDA.

Ms. Blohm said she was just trying to think this through, because they could come back in three years with another project, and they would then be ineligible.

Ms. Wines said she would recommend that they apply to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, or another entity.

Mr. Dalling pointed out that they don't control what the RDA does.

Ms. Wines said that there are a lot of grants available to non-profits, which aren't available to business owners.

*****A motion was made by Jeff Dalling to add to G a Number 7 that says "If you are not paying property taxes into the RDA you are ineligible."*****

Before the second Mr. Wilkinson suggested the board make a motion that the proposed changes are subject to legal review and approval of the documents. We can get the wording pretty close and then Mr. Stanton will take a look at it and make sure its legal.

Mr. Dalling repeated his motion.

Ms. Blohm suggested they think about that for a second. That would include the School District and utilities.

Ms. Wines Seconded the Motion.

**Motion passed unanimously. (4-0).*

*****A motion was made by Jeff Dalling, seconded by Catherine Wines, ACAB that all the changes are subject to legal review.**

**Motion passed unanimously. (4-0)*

Ms. Laughlin moved on to the Grant Application. The only proposed changes she had were on Page 5 in the Acknowledgment Checklist. On Number 2 she proposed they added "if required" to obtain a Building Permit, and added in "Recommendation to the Agency". She asked for any other changes from the Board.

Ms. Wines asked if January 1st to March 30th was too short of a time period. She thought it seemed like there was a few projects last year that couldn't make that time period.

Mr. Karr said it was human nature to procrastinate.

Ms. Blohm said it was the first year. People are more aware now and understand the procedures.

Mr. Dalling thought that the word was out now.

Ms. Laughlin added that the Planning Department sent out 440 postcards to property owners, and business owners, advertised in the Free Press in November and December, and put it on the City Website. We will start putting it out there on the 1st of November again. She has answered questions and calls throughout the year and let everyone know that this is the timeframe that they can submit. Every single applicant turned it in on the day it was due. The word is out. We can start some additional public service advertisements, get it on TV, and radio. She thought that if they gave them 6 months, they would turn it on June 30th.

Ms. Wines thought that NV Energy, which also had other issues, contacted 3 architects in town on the 2nd of January and asked them to submit for the project. Going through the process of selecting an architect, design, and bidding it wasn't ready until May 1st. It was a bigger project and it just took longer. Those are the ones we really want and they won't come along every year.

Ms. Laughlin said if they know about it today, then they should in the process of planning that ahead of time, and not starting on January 1st.

Ms. Blohm agreed. They were talking about large projects. We're limited to \$25,000 per business.

Ms. Wines pointed out that that doesn't limit size of the projects. If a project is \$200,000 they are still eligible for a \$25,000 grant.

Ms. Laughlin said it was a \$25,000 maximum.

Ms. Wines recommended starting right now to get the word out.

Ms. Laughlin said they looked at it as far as time frame for construction. We chose the end of March so that the review committee decides in April, it goes to the RDA right after that, and people are ready to start construction in May.

Mr. Wilkinson said this wouldn't be unlike applying for any other grant type opportunity. If you're planning on capitalizing on available funding you would be aware of that and start in advance to meet the deadlines.

*****A motion was made by Jeff Dalling, seconded by Lina Blohm to approve the Grant Application as presented.**

****Motion passed unanimously. (4-0)***

Ms. Laughlin went on to the Reimbursement Request Form. She had two proposed changes. For those who are a permitted project, and have a general contractor, "That the proof of payment for invoices must be from the General Contractor, if applicable." They are the ones that are providing us the liability insurance and certificate of insurance. Also the grant recipient is eligible for 50% of all invoices and proof of payment submitted up to the maximum amount of \$25,000, or grant amount determined by the Redevelopment Agency. She proposed adding those two sentences.

Ms. Wines asked if it mattered if it was a general contractor or a window installation.

Ms. Laughlin explained that was why she added "if applicable."

*****A motion was made by Catherine Wines, ACAB, seconded by Lina Blohm to accept the Reimbursement Request Form as presented.**

****Motion passed unanimously. (4-0)***

Ms. Laughlin stated that she had no revisions to the other two forms. She asked if anyone else had any proposed revisions.

Ms. Blohm asked if there were any comments, or concerns, about the program.

Ms. Laughlin said she would have an update in reports on the status of the projects.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency for amendments to the RDA Plan, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

RDA took action to approve the phasing of projects in the downtown corridor. The 30% approved plans and the projects are ready to be amended into the approved RDA Plan. RAC reviewed this agenda item at their July 27, 2017 and August 24, 2017 meetings and tabled the item. It was requested that the RAC come back with recommendations for amendments to the RDA Plan at this meeting.

Ms. Laughlin explained that she requested the members bring a list of additional changes that they would like to see made, before the next step, which would be sending it to legal counsel for review, and then taking it to the RDA for final approval.

Ms. Blohm asked if she wanted to go page by page.

Ms. Laughlin said they could do it that way.

Ms. Wines said she didn't have any other changes besides what she had turned in before.

Ms. Laughlin said that legal counsel would come back with quite a few other changes, and we can bring it back after that, if necessary. There aren't many changes in the Plan portion, most of the changes are in the Preliminary Plan.

*****A motion was made by Jon Karr, seconded by Jeff Dalling to approve the RDA Plan as presented.**

****Motion passed unanimously. (4-0)***

Before the vote Ms. Blohm asked Mr. Wilkinson if they permitted \$100,000 per year on the acquisition for UP Property. She didn't think it was per year.

Mr. Wilkinson said it was for that year only at that time.

Ms. Blohm asked if that was still in there as a change.

Mr. Wilkinson said he would have to look back at that. If it's not being budgeted each budget cycle, then it's not being planned.

There was further discussion about putting away money for a future project or land acquisition.

The Board then voted on the motion.

Ms. Laughlin explained that there were more proposed modifications in the Preliminary Plan. She then went over the proposed changes to the Preliminary Plan.

Ms. Blohm suggested they update Sierra Pacific Power to NV Energy.

Ms. Laughlin continued to go through the proposed changes.

Ms. Wines asked if they should add the Gear Museum.

Ms. Laughlin continued to go through the changes.

There was discussion about the Corridor Parking Survey.

Ms. Wines asked if this was the proper time to talk about allowing residential parking in the Corridor.

Mr. Wilkinson said it would be under code, and this plan doesn't supersede the Code.

Ms. Blohm thought it was important to update the Corridor Parking Survey. As long as they are updating the Preliminary Plan, she thought it would be useful, because she thought Corridor Parking was going to become a hot topic.

Ms. Laughlin explained that the consultant did the initial Corridor Survey. This wasn't something that was done by staff. The total parking spaces haven't changed, it's how many are used at what time.

Ms. Blohm asked how relevant it was.

Mr. Karr thought it was huge when they talked about a different plan of the whole corridor, but now with the new plans it's not as relevant.

Ms. Blohm said they don't want to pay a ton of money for a new survey.

Mr. Dalling thought they already knew that it's used more now.

Ms. Laughlin continued to go through the proposed changes.

There was discussion about the Cultural District.

Ms. Laughlin went through the remainder of the proposed changes to the Preliminary Plan.

Ms. Blohm said this was an excellent reminder that they are proceeding according to a plan that was developed 12 years ago. It's nice to know that they are slowly on track.

Ms. Laughlin added that they were working on a lot of things that are mentioned in the Plan.

***** A motion was made by Catherine Wines, ACAB, seconded by Lina Blohm to approve the Preliminary Plan as presented, and direct staff to send to legal counsel.**

****Motion passed unanimously. (4-0)***

II. REPORTS

A. Storefront Improvement Program

Ms. Laughlin showed a before and after picture of the Capriola's project, which is a requirement of the Storefront Program. Gerber Law's contractor was scheduled to install the awnings on October 18th, but postponed because they were behind of a few other jobs and said it will be a few more weeks before they can install the awnings. The awnings are finished and ready to install and the project has been permitted. Western Folklife Center gave an update earlier this week and they stated that they are still not finished because they encountered a stucco issue that is currently being resolved. Once the stucco is taken care of the windows can be finished.

Mr. Dalling reported that he got the Building Permit and have passed the 4-way inspection. Upstairs is fully sheet rocked. The brand new windows are in. He added exterior lights in back and up front. They are on track. He is going to try to get the second floor done first, so his renters can get in and have their studios.

B. Budget – Cathy Laughlin

Ms. Laughlin went over the updated budget.

C. Other

Ms. Laughlin showed before and after pictures of the Alley Project. She said she received a good email from Jerrod with Elko Sanitation, once the franchise agreement was completed and the new units were installed. He said how grateful he was for us doing this project and asked when we could start on the next alley.

Ms. Blohm brought up the Letter that they wanted to send out to the property and business owners in the downtown. They've been continually updating and changing the letter. She asked for the blessing of the board to continue to do that and get a final draft to present to the RDA.

Ms. Laughlin explained that they did take action at the last meeting, and they approved the letter with the few changes that were requested. It was a

recommendation to go to the RDA. What we need to do is have a request from Mr. Karr to put letter back on the next agenda for the RAC, if you would like to make additional changes. From there those changes can be made and a recommendation made to send it to the RDA.

Ms. Wines asked if there was major changes that needed to be made.

Ms. Blohm said no, they changed photos and Ms. Laughlin updated the numbers.

There was further discussion about updating the photo in the letter. They agreed the photo should be of the before and after of the alley project.

Ms. Wines said they talked last time about the lights in the Corridor. She was wondering where that was.

Ms. Laughlin said they met with NV Energy, and requested information on the lights themselves. The lights belong to NV Energy from 3rd to 7th Street and they are considered an asset of theirs. If we want to have any expenditure on those lights we would have to buy the material and they would have to install it. They would not allow us to install on their lights. But they were willing to sell us the lights.

Mr. Dalling asked if they would be new LED lights.

Ms. Laughlin clarified that they would sell us the whole pole lights. She requested the amount and asked them to get back to her on that. They were also looking at the legality of it, because those lights were funded by a grant. They are 20 years old and depreciated out. She wanted to know what the cost would be and hadn't heard back from NV Energy.

There was further discussion about the cost of the lights and how to go about updating them.

Ms. Wines asked if they were moving forward with the sidewalk improvement district.

Ms. Laughlin explained that they have to get the plan amendment, because the phasing has to be added into the plan. And project 3 in the phasing that was voted on is the block ends, prior to the 400 and 500 Block sidewalks. If we can work both projects at the same time, because we have the fund balance, that would be great. Until the plan gets amended, she hadn't reach out to any of the property owners to see if we can have the 75% come on board to have a special improvement district.

Ms. Wines brought up the Demolition Program. There is a franchise group that is going to rent out part of The Commercial and they want to do a complete

overhaul of the exterior façade, meaning taking most of the exterior façade off to get back to the original brick. She asked Ms. Laughlin if that could be included in the Demolition program

Ms. Laughlin said she looked through the Demolition Program, the way it is written today it would not qualify. It would qualify for the Storefront Improvement Program. The Demolition Program, the way it is written today, is it has to be demolished down to bare ground and rebuilt, and it is reimbursed at the end of development.

Ms. Wines asked if they can revisit Demolition Program at the next meeting.

Ms. Laughlin explained that that demolition would work under the Storefront Improvement Program.

Mr. Karr thought they needed to be careful of changing things for one place.

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this 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 and consideration for a directional signage program for the Central Business District, and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
2. Meeting Date: **January 25, 2018**
3. Agenda Category: **NEW BUSINESS**
4. Time Required: **10 minutes**
5. Background Information:
6. Budget Information:
Appropriation Required: **N/A**
Budget amount available: **N/A**
Fund name: **N/A**
7. Business Impact Statement: **Required / Not Required**
8. Supplemental Agenda Information: **Document from Catherine Wines**
9. Recommended Motion: **Pleasure of the RAC**
10. Prepared By: **Cathy Laughlin, City Planner**
11. Committee/Other Agency Review:
12. Agency Action:
13. Agenda Distribution:



The cost would be very minimal, It's basically two pieces of square pipe about 4' tall, maybe 6" to 8" square. One piece is a little bigger than the other so it slides down on top of the smaller one that is anchored to the sidewalk. Also, possibly a powder coat and some exterior vinyl printing. It's a good design because if something needs to be changed you just unbolt it, slip off the top pipe and change out the printing. You could have all four sides different, or probably better would be to have two sides of each sign the same.

I think it would be nice to have them on every corner in the central business district. We don't have to do them all at once. A person probably doesn't need this much 'direction' but they also act as a place maker, marking the district. We could even designate an area on each one of them for advertising, so businesses could help off set the cost. Also, they could be removed and reused if sidewalks change, or new concrete is put in.

I like the idea of each one giving direction to someplace close... ie Western Folklife Center, Post Office, Centennial Park; something mid distance... ie Great Basin College, Golf Course, Humboldt River; and something a ways away... ie Lamoille Canyon, California Trail Center, Angel Lake. And everyone is different with-in a block just to show diversity of the area and how much there is to look at and do.

Recommendation to RDA would be let us research the project, or maybe we research more before and send it to RDA later. Cost is really what we need to nail down. Design is pretty easy, you just need a consistent look and then you plug information in.

Thanks,
C

thank you,
catherine wiles, architect
i6studio
architectural planning
clm, nevada
9275 738 7810
9275 738 7811
www.i6studio.com

City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council
Agenda Action Sheet

1. Title: **Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency on the upcoming budget cycle for 2018/19 regarding allocating funds, and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
2. Meeting Date: **January 25, 2018**
3. Agenda Category: **NEW BUSINESS**
4. Time Required: **10 minutes**
5. Background Information: **Budget for the 2018/19 fiscal year will be completed within the next several months.**
6. Budget Information:
 Appropriation Required: **N/A**
 Budget amount available: **N/A**
 Fund name: **N/A**
7. Business Impact Statement: **Required / Not Required**
8. Supplemental Agenda Information: **Approved Phasing for Corridor Project, Projected revenues for life of RDA, 2017-18 budget**
9. Recommended Motion: **Pleasure of the RAC**
10. Prepared By: **Cathy Laughlin, City Planner**
11. Committee/Other Agency Review:
12. Agency Action:
13. Agenda Distribution:

Redevopment Agency 2017/2018 Budget

July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

Revenues		
	Approved Budget	As of 1/18/2018
Beginning Fund Balance	\$837,089	
Budget to beginning fund balance dif.	\$94,225	
Property Tax Revenues (anticipated)	\$277,650	\$156,170
Interest Revenues (anticipated)	\$4,000	\$2,826
Total Revenues	\$1,212,964	

Balance to date	\$809,072
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Expenditures		
	Approved Budget	As of 1/18/2018
Legal	\$25,000	\$1,320
Public Improvements		
Centennial Tower (pledged)	\$50,000	\$46,196
Misc. items	\$1,000	\$303
Storefront Program (pledged)	\$50,000	\$5,776
Alley work	\$40,000	\$24,451
Public-Private Partnerships	\$75,000	
7th St. Relocation of utilities+ C.O.	\$211,518	\$203,192
Balance towards savings	\$760,346	
Revolving Fund	\$100	
Total Expenses	\$1,212,964	\$281,238

RDA Revenue Projections ~ 2%			
Growth 0.02	Revenue	Cumulative	
2009	1	88,812.03	88,812.03
2010	2	95,417.64	184,229.67
2011	3	114,822.28	299,051.95
2012	4	155,026.85	454,078.80
2013	5	153,272.21	607,351.01
2014	6	176,496.18	783,847.19
2015	7	226,426.84	1,010,274.03
2016	8	252,423.13	1,262,697.16
2017	9	327,200.59	1,589,897.75
2018	10	333,744.60	1,923,642.35
2019	11	340,419.49	2,264,061.85
2020	12	347,227.88	2,611,289.73
2021	13	354,172.44	2,965,462.17
2022	14	361,255.89	3,326,718.06
2023	15	368,481.01	3,695,199.07
2024	16	375,850.63	4,071,049.70
2025	17	383,367.64	4,454,417.34
2026	18	391,034.99	4,845,452.33
2027	19	398,855.69	5,244,308.02
2028	20	406,832.81	5,651,140.83
2029	21	414,969.46	6,066,110.30
2030	22	423,268.85	6,489,379.15
2031	23	431,734.23	6,921,113.38
2032	24	440,368.91	7,361,482.29
2033	25	449,176.29	7,810,658.59
2034	26	458,159.82	8,268,818.40
2035	27	467,323.01	8,736,141.42
2036	28	476,669.48	9,212,810.89
2037	29	486,202.86	9,699,013.76
2038	30	495,926.92	10,194,940.68
Expenses to date			
633,822.93			
Phase 1 Corridor Project			
5,000,000.00			
Storefront Program			
250,000.00			
Alley between 4th and 5th			
20,000.00			
Centennial Tower			
50,000.00			
Total Expenses			
5,953,822.93			
Remaining Balance			
4,241,117.75			

If not actual

90,588.27
92,400.04
94,248.04
96,133.00
98,055.66
100,016.77
102,017.11
104,057.45
214% higher

RDA Revenue Projections ~ 3%			
Growth 0.03	Revenue	Cumulative	
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2021	13	368,267.15	2,999,849.53
2022	14	379,315.16	3,379,164.69
2023	15	390,694.62	3,769,859.31
2024	16	402,415.45	4,172,274.76
2025	17	414,487.92	4,586,762.68
2026	18	426,922.56	5,013,685.23
2027	19	439,730.23	5,453,415.47
2028	20	452,922.14	5,906,337.61
2029	21	466,509.80	6,372,847.41
2030	22	480,505.10	6,853,352.51
2031	23	494,920.25	7,348,272.76
2032	24	509,767.86	7,858,040.61
2033	25	525,060.89	8,383,101.51
2034	26	540,812.72	8,923,914.23
2035	27	557,037.10	9,480,951.33
2036	28	573,748.22	10,054,699.55
2037	29	590,960.66	10,645,660.21
2038	30	608,689.48	11,254,349.69
Expenses to date			
633,822.93			
Phase 1 Corridor Project			
5,000,000.00			
Storefront Program			
250,000.00			
Alley between 4th and 5th			
20,000.00			
Centennial Tower			
50,000.00			
Total Expenses			
5,953,822.93			
Remaining Balance			
5,300,526.76			

If not actual

\$91,476.39
\$94,220.68
\$97,047.30
\$99,958.72
\$102,957.48
\$106,046.21
\$109,227.59
\$112,504.42
190% higher

City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council
Agenda Action Sheet

1. Title: **Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency to approve the initiation of funding Project #2 Centennial Park West Block End, and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
2. Meeting Date: **January 25, 2018**
3. Agenda Category: **NEW BUSINESS**
4. Time Required: **10 minutes**
5. Background Information: **RDA allocated \$200,000 towards the relocation of the overhead utilities along 7th Street from Commercial to Railroad, \$50,000 towards the Chilton Centennial Tower and \$15,517.95 towards a change order for the electrical relocation. The Chilton Centennial Tower as well as the relocation of utilities projects are complete. This completes the Project #1 of the Phase 1 Corridor Project. The Park expansion into 7th Street connecting the Chilton Centennial Tower to the existing park area is approved as project #2 in the Phase 1 Corridor Project. Staff has completed the design for this area of the park. Staff previously recommended the project be funded at \$250,000 and the RAC recommended funding at \$138,000 which was approved by the RDA on 2/14/2017. Staff will explore the use of City resources to reduce the scope of the project but feels that the project initial funding recommendation of \$250,000 is accurate due to additional infrastructure, street closure, irrigation and landscaping that wasn't considered when the project funding was reduced to \$138,000. Staff is requesting the RAC reconsider its recommendation to the RDA limiting the funding to \$138,000 and to increase funding to the initial recommendation of \$250,000. As of January 18, 2018, there is \$809,000 available balance to fund the request.**
6. Budget Information:
 Appropriation Required: **N/A**
 Budget amount available: **N/A**
 Fund name: **N/A**
7. Business Impact Statement: **Required / Not Required**
8. Supplemental Agenda Information: **Memo from City Planner, Projected revenues, park design**
9. Recommended Motion: **Recommend to the RDA to approve the initiation of funding for Project #2 of the Phase 1 Corridor Project in the amount of \$250,000**
10. Prepared By: **Cathy Laughlin, City Planner**
11. Committee/Other Agency Review:



CITY OF ELKO

Planning Department

Website: www.elkocity.com
Email: planning@ci.elko.nv.us

1751 College Avenue • Elko, Nevada 89801 • (775) 777-7160 • Fax (775) 777-7119

Memorandum

To: Elko Redevelopment Agency
From: Cathy Laughlin –City Planner
Date: January 17, 2018

The Redevelopment Agency took action on February 14, 2017 to approve the projects and phasing sequence of the projects for the Phase 1 Corridor Project as follows:

APPROVED BY RDA 2-14-2017			Staff Recommended Cost
Project #			
1	7th Street Overhead Lines	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00
2	Centennial Park - West block end	\$138,000.00	\$250,000.00
3	Block Ends - 4th, 5th and 6th St.	\$415,000.00	\$415,000.00
4	Sidewalks- 400 & 500 blocks	\$515,000.00	\$515,000.00
5	Complete Blocks 800 -1000	\$1,000,000.00	\$2,330,000.00
6	Centennial Park - Expansion to East	\$900,000.00	\$900,000.00
Phase 1 total		\$3,168,000.00	\$4,610,000.00

Projects 1, 3, & 4 are 100% infrastructure. The majority of projects 2, 5 & 6 are infrastructure but also include a small portion of beautification with additional landscaping elements.

Project 1 is complete.

Project 2 was presented by staff at an estimated cost of \$250,000 and recommended by RAC and approved by RDA to be funded at \$138,000 on 2/14/2017. A summary of the RAC discussion on reducing the cost was based on project 3 block ends. Block ends cost of \$415,000 was divided by 3 as it included 3 blocks and that is how RAC determined the \$138,000. RAC did not consider the west end of Centennial Park would require irrigation, landscaping, street closure, and additional sidewalks when they were reducing the cost of the project. Staff continues to believe that the project will cost \$250,000 and is recommending the RDA approve the expenditure of \$250,000 for Project 2.

Included with this memo is the projected revenue over the life of the Redevelopment Area clearly showing that the funding of a full \$5 million for Phase 1 of the Corridor Project is feasible leaving a remaining \$4.2-\$5.3 million for additional projects. Revenue in 2017 was \$327,200.59 and if we had been increasing at the proposed 2%, we would have received

\$104,057.45 in revenues. The difference is 214% higher than the projected 2% growth identified in the RDA Plan.

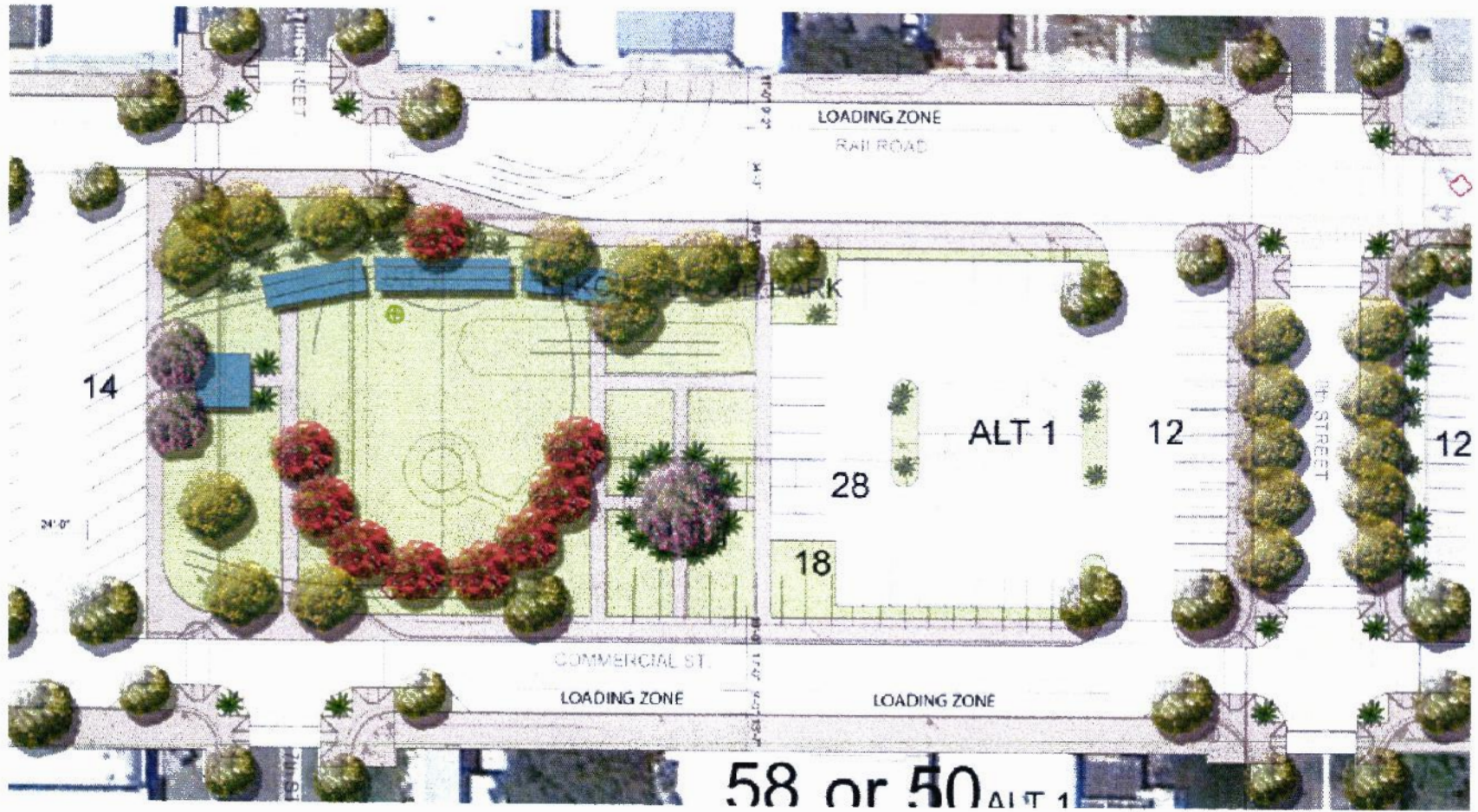
Exhibits:

RDA Funding projections, Centennial Park west end expansion plans

Recommendation:

Recommend to the RDA to approve the initiation of funding for Project #2 of the Phase 1 Corridor Project in the amount of \$250,000.00.





RDA Revenue Projections ~ 2%			
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Storefront Program			250,000.00
Alley between 4th and 5th			20,000.00
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\$112,504.42
190% higher

Corridor Project Phasing

APPROVED BY RDA 2-14-2017

Project #		
1	7th Street Overhead Lines	\$200,000.00
2	Centennial Park - West block end	\$138,000.00
3	Block Ends - 4th, 5th and 6th St.	\$415,000.00
4	Sidewalks- 400 & 500 blocks	\$515,000.00
5	Complete Blocks 800 -1000	\$1,000,000.00
6	Centennial Park - Expansion to East	\$900,000.00
Phase 1 total		\$3,168,000.00
7	Reconstruct 600 block	\$1,530,000.00
8	Reconstruct 500 block	\$1,600,000.00
9	Reconstruct 400 block	\$1,090,000.00
10	Reconstruct 300 block	\$1,470,000.00
Phase 2 total		\$5,690,000.00

**Staff
Recommended
Cost**

\$200,000.00
\$250,000.00
\$415,000.00
\$515,000.00
\$2,330,000.00
\$900,000.00
\$4,610,000.00
\$1,530,000.00
\$1,600,000.00
\$1,090,000.00
\$1,470,000.00
\$5,690,000.00

Phases 1 & 2 Total

\$8,858,000.00

\$10,300,000.00



Downtown Idea Exchange

Essential Information for Downtown Revitalization

Vol. 64, No. 11
November 2017

Inside this issue

Pop-up matches entrepreneurs with resources to spur business creation. Curated networking event fast tracks new business owners 2

Planning for a vibrant future. City waterfront reimagined to create better connection with downtown. 4

Older facilities become more user friendly with technology. Where to park, how to pay, and how to manage systems are evolving 5

Repurposed underpass provides connectivity and public gathering space. A dog park, a boardwalk, landscaping, and activation turn eyesore into asset 6

Community surveys help identify the needs of rapidly growing neighborhood. Guidance leads to businesses and events to fill the gaps 8

Green projects manage stormwater, improve aesthetics. Cities are soaking up environmentally friendly infrastructure 9

Idea Exchange. Festival street adds flexible event space, Pilot program streamlines permitting process, and more 11

Revitalization Projects

Using many tools builds investor confidence

Despite being a “stone’s throw” from one of the nation’s best beaches, downtown Clearwater, FL (est. pop. 107,685), is not the thriving city center it could be, says Seth Taylor, director of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). Downtown leaders are taking a number of short-term and long-term steps to bring more businesses, visitors, and energy to the area, including placemaking, public space activation, street and waterfront upgrades, and an incentive program which aims to attract anchor tenants.

“Downtown has a high [street-level] vacancy rate and hasn’t experienced the growth that our neighboring cities have, so we are very motivated to push forward a number of initiatives aimed at making our downtown the destination that we know it can become,” Taylor says.

The city has been active in promoting residential development to put more feet on the street. “Currently, there are about 400 units of housing that have gone online or are in construction,” Taylor says.

(Continued on page 3)

Design & Capital Improvement

Phased Complete Streets project improves safety, accessibility, and more

Millburn, NJ (est. pop. 20,149), adopted a Complete Streets program in 2014, outlining a series of goals and objectives to make the streets safer for pedestrians, improve traffic flow, address intersection congestion, and calm traffic where appropriate. Phase I of the three-phase project was just completed in September, yet the town is already seeing results and garnering awards.

The \$8.2 million Complete Streets program will update func-

tionally obsolete downtown infrastructure and make roadways and sidewalks safer for motorists and residents. Two years of extensive planning and engineering research went into the Complete Streets project with multi-disciplinary design experts.

Millburn’s project was recognized in October with the Complete Streets Excellence award at the 2017 New Jersey Complete Streets

(Continued on page 7)

Pop-up matches entrepreneurs with resources to spur business creation

The JumpStart StartUp is a free pop-up program offering entrepreneurs information and mentorship for every stage of business startup and growth. Launched in Philadelphia, PA (est. pop. 1,526,006), the program is unique, say organizers. The event is set up like a trade show, but instead of wandering aimlessly, attendees are escorted from station to station and introduced to service providers, including bookkeepers, legal advisors, a media trainer, a website developer, and several others, who for a few minutes will answer questions and offer advice.

"We essentially mentor them through the store," JumpStart StartUp founder Jen Groover tells *Inc. Magazine*. "Often, entrepreneurs miss opportunities because they don't know what they don't know. We explain why each person they are going to meet with is important."

Groover built several successful businesses of her own before launching a speaking, writing, and media career. Groover believes that staged, guided events that bring entrepreneurs together with a team of curated professionals will streamline the start-up process. She teamed up with Joseph Purifico, a pioneer on the Philadelphia pop-up scene for more than two decades, to launch JumpStart StartUp. The inaugural event took place last year, followed by events in New York City, Baltimore and Boston.

Events are free to entrepreneurs. Advisers pay Groover a sponsorship fee in hope that these business "speed dates will turn into marriages," says *Inc.* Some local consultants are featured at each event, while others are national corporations such as Comcast, UPS, and online banking services. The city of Philadelphia was also a sponsor of its local event, providing in-kind support and helping to promote the pop-up.

"Getting your business off the ground in one day is a wonderful new idea," Archana Sahay, director of entrepreneurial investment in the Philadelphia Department of Commerce, tells *Inc.* "Entrepreneurship is a major driver of

economic development and job creation in our city, so having an event like that being launched here makes a lot of sense."

Attendees include those preregistered after seeing traditional or digital publicity, as well as walk-ins attracted by pop-up staff handing flyers out on the sidewalk prior to the event. Newcomers are asked to fill out forms, providing company name, revenue, number of employees, profitability, and answering questions such as, 'Why aren't you twice as big as you are today?' Groover or one of her half-dozen helpers then leads attendees inside and introduces the professionals who could help make that growth happen, says *Inc. Magazine*.

The four-day event in Philadelphia attracted about 650 attendees. "Many already had sole proprietorships they've struggled to scale. Others were screwing up their courage to launch," says *Inc.* "Groover's pop-ups are meant — in an hour or two — to lay a foundation for nascent companies to grow."

While attendance fell short of Groover's goal to attract 1,000 attendees, those who did attend were pleased, says *Inc.* "I have Googled and Googled and it is impossible to try and find all these people online," one entrepreneur tells the magazine. "I know these people have all been vetted. I don't worry that I'll have to pay \$100 to talk to somebody and find out I didn't even need them. This has lit a little bit of a fire under me."

The final stop for most attendees at the Philadelphia event was Steve Harrison, host of the National Publicity Summit, a business that helps companies get media exposure. "We're giving them education, but affirmation, as well," Harrison tells *Inc.* "People realize when they are talking to the experts that their idea is better than they thought and what they're doing is better."

And finally, entrepreneurs who are unable to attend an event in person, and those who want more detailed information and a continuing connection with mentors, can register for JumpStart StartUp's online Academy. **DIX**



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To view JumpStart StartUp promotional videos, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Using many tools builds investor confidence — Continued from page 1

On the commercial side, the downtown's office district is nearly fully leased, says Taylor. "We also have a cluster of tech companies, and are seeing more millennials entering the workforce in downtown Clearwater, which is very promising for us. The CRA will also be funding a co-working incubator space. We expect this state-of-the-art facility to help us maintain our competitiveness in the Tampa Bay area, in respect to attracting new talent," he says.

Courting retail businesses is more complicated

Retail density for the downtown remains, "a tough nut to crack," says Taylor. "We've done all the streetscaping you can imagine downtown. It's gorgeous, with beautiful, human-scale storefronts and architecture, but one thing lacking right now is investor confidence."

Taylor attributes investor hesitancy to two main factors. One is the perception of downtown being dominated by institutional uses, since the Church of Scientology headquarters, as well as city and county government functions, are located in the city center. "That has deterred businesses from locating down here," he says.

"Secondly, we have been hearing that like many municipalities, zoning hasn't really matched up with market demand," says Taylor. "For example, we have parking requirements for new businesses that want to come downtown, and height restrictions. The good news is that we are now addressing both of those things." Downtown's redevelopment codes are being rewritten to "relax the regulations and restrictions. We will be doing away with parking requirements for businesses, allowing more uses, cutting a lot of red tape, and changing the zoning to better match the demands of the marketplace," he says.

Additionally, in June, the CRA rolled out its Anchor Tenant Incentive Program, with the goal of attracting five anchor food and beverage tenants through a \$250,000 loan-to-grant program.

"We already have a number of really nice restaurants downtown, and we want to build off of that momentum," says Taylor. "We are

targeting restaurants and breweries, specifically, looking to land about five great anchor businesses over the next 12 to 18 months. The way we will do that is to offer financial incentives to pay for 35 percent of the total project cost up to \$250,000."

Each year that a participating business remains open, one fifth of the loan amount is forgiven, so that, "after five years, the loan is entirely wiped away," Taylor says. Incentive funds can be used for furniture, fixtures, equipment, build-out costs, and to subsidize the rent.

Within two weeks of announcing the program, the CRA had received inquiries from about 70 businesses throughout the region. "This demonstrates the pent-up demand for downtown Clearwater, for businesses to locate here," says Taylor. "It also sends a strong message that the city of Clearwater is open for business and wants to work closely with business owners to help them locate and thrive here. That's why we are offering these very significant financial incentives."

Incentive funds are coming out of the CRA budget. "This program is not going to last forever," Taylor says. "This is about attracting great anchor tenants. Our hope is that it helps solve the investor confidence problem we have now, and then the program will phase out as the market strengthens to the point that we don't need to offer these types of incentives anymore."

Food and drink establishments are being targeted because, "that seems to be a good model to jumpstart a main street," Taylor says. "The thinking is that once you build up that critical mass, get some feet on the street, it will inspire confidence from retailers to come into the market, so we're really excited about this program, and we have some great leads already."

Topping the wish list is a craft brewery, because these businesses have both a manufacturing and retail component, and often choose to be active members of their chosen communities, Taylor says. "It's really not just about filling storefronts, but a major placemak-

Within two weeks of announcing the program, the CRA had received inquiries from about 70 businesses.

ing initiative to help rebrand our downtown. These places are often family friendly and become real social destinations for a neighborhood. We're excited about the potential we have here to foster a fun and exciting downtown environment."

Bringing in the fun

Several other efforts are underway to battle that "institutional" misperception. "We are launching a rebranding campaign with new websites, social media, and community events to rebrand downtown as a more fun destination," Taylor says.

The CRA hosted a celebration in February to kick off an ambitious activation program in a downtown park. Tables, chairs, and umbrellas have been installed to make the space more comfortable for taking in the live music and other programming.

"We're hosting craft beer festivals and doing summer sidewalk sales and all those sorts of things," Taylor says. Events hosted by other local organizations are helping to activate the downtown, as well.

The CRA is also working with Project for Public Spaces to develop a public market concept in an area of the downtown with a high number of Hispanic residents. "We wanted to work with that demographic and engage them through a sort of incubator space for new entrepreneurs who want to sell crafts, food, and other goods," says Taylor. "And this will become another social destination. We are thinking about how we can create these unique experiences downtown, that when taken together, will start fostering that dynamic and diverse downtown space."

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Planning for a vibrant future

Change is also coming to the downtown Clearwater, FL, waterfront, with input from a community visioning process. Imagine Clearwater, "re-engaged a large number of Clearwater citizens and civic groups and started them thinking about how to begin revitalizing one of our greatest assets, which is our waterfront," says Seth Taylor, director of the Community Redevelopment Agency. Nearly 700 people attended community workshops during the process.

In February, the Clearwater City Council approved the Imagine Clearwater Master Plan, a \$55 million redevelopment initiative which aims to transform underutilized oceanfront space from a convention center and paved parking into a, "premier park destination with active and passive uses."

If voters approve a referendum later this year, over the next eight years, the waterfront will be transformed to include:

- The Civic Gateway, a grand entry at the site of the existing convention center, which will invite pedestrians into the waterfront from downtown's main street.
- The Estuary, a "lush respite for visitors in search of a quiet waterfront experience a short walk from the

rest of downtown." The Estuary, which replaces a previous stormwater pond, will also provide an area for the enjoyment and study of nature.

- The Green, which will be lined with native shade trees and anchored by a "state-of-the-art new band shell that will dramatically improve the event-going experience at the park," say planners.

- Coachman Garden, featuring a playground designed in collaboration with local artists, and located, "steps from the Main Library, providing families with another reason to visit and spend time downtown."

- And, finally, the Bluff Walk, which ties these diverse experiences together via an active linear promenade which provides views over the water and connects the waterfront to the downtown.

"We're using a lot of tools and techniques to drive more interest in our downtown and to ultimately attract more people and businesses down here," Taylor says. "I truly believe we're turning a corner here. The response has been very promising. Now we just need to make sure it's the right fit for our downtown. We're looking to curate the right mix of downtown anchor tenants to foster a sustainable and eclectic downtown."

Older facilities become more user friendly with technology

The flood of new technologies available to manage parking systems is changing the way downtown leaders think about the parking experience for customers, tenants, and property owners.

"Specifically, these new technologies are transforming the way our tenants and customers find, access, and pay for parking," says parking consultant Andrew Vidor in a recent article for the *Colorado Real Estate Journal*. Organizations and city departments with parking oversight can now leverage new technologies capable of managing a parking system to its fullest potential, he says.

"One technology quickly taking hold in the industry — and rightfully so — is parking guidance systems," says Vidor. This technology no longer requires a driver to search up and down every aisle looking for an open space. "Today, wired and wireless sensors can monitor usage of individual parking spaces throughout the facility to determine where open parking is available. That information is then wirelessly communicated and displayed via LED signage at key locations prior to entering the facility, and then once again inside the facility." Signs direct drivers to open spaces, while red and green lights over each space also indicate availability.

"Mobile applications are being integrated with these systems to provide real-time parking availability information in advance of drivers arriving at their destination," Vidor says. "Imagine leaving for an event downtown and knowing which parking facilities have available parking, as well as the parking rate you can expect to pay. This provides a much more convenient experience for customers using your facility and provides [garage] owners with an opportunity to reach out directly to prospective customers before they arrive."

Parking access and payment strategies have also seen advances. "Today, property managers can utilize a variety of technological tools that permit them to operate more efficiently, effectively, and profitably, while providing better service," says Vidor.

One area of parking that has particularly benefited from technological innovation is access and revenue control, he says. Integration of mobile payment platforms has been added into digital parking access and revenue control systems over the last few years. "With other technology, parking operators can send customers a QR code, which can be used to enter and exit the parking system in advance of their arrival," says Vidor. "Another technology option is the ability to pay for parking with a version of a mobile wallet. These capabilities significantly reduce cash handling, staffing, and supply costs."

Selecting the appropriate technology

The many parking technologies on the market vary vastly in their intent, functionality, style, cost, and purpose, Vidor says. "The technology is evolving at a rapid pace — and that can be overwhelming, especially if your parking system needs an upgrade."

Upgrading parking technology is best broken down into three steps, he says.

- **Identifying the technology strategy** that is appropriate for each facility is the most important step in the process, says Vidor.

"Because there are so many technologies related to parking on the market, this can be a daunting task. Before a technology is selected, the property manager, owner, or operator needs to understand what problem needs to be solved and identify what opportunities can result from deploying a new parking technology." With that knowledge in hand, parking managers can then search available technologies for the best fit, Vidor says.

- **Design the system.** "Not all technologies are plug and play and made to fit your operation out of the box," he says. "You must determine and identify the specific interfaces with other key systems, such as employee identification, validation programs, and the various nuances of your operation."

- **Procurement and installation.** In many cases, there are multiple manufacturers and

vendors who can provide the solution. “It’s best to identify who they are and allow them to quote the project,” says Vidor. A technology upgrade also should include communication with end users — including education on the new technologies and their benefits and impacts — well in advance of installation

and implementation, he says.

“If completed properly, this three-step process will give your parking customers a more pleasant parking experience and make your day-to-day management of the parking system more efficient and effective,” Vidor says. **DIX**

Amenities & Activation

Repurposed underpass provides connectivity and public gathering space

A new park on eight acres beneath an Interstate 93 underpass now links two downtown neighborhoods in Boston, MA (est. pop. 617,594), while also providing an active urban space, cultural attraction, and parking amenity.

Landscaped pedestrian boardwalks and bicycle paths along the Fort Point Channel create new connections between communities previously separated by highway infrastructure. This new park adds to the transformation of the area known as Ink Block, a seven-building mixed-use community that has revitalized the New York Streets section of the South End.

Amenities at the park, known as Underground at Ink Block, include world-class street art, a dog park, curated retail, fitness, and food

and beverage experiences, as well as a bike storage facility, 24-hour security, and 175 commercial parking spots.

“The goal of the project was to activate a previously desolate area of the South End by making it an engaging, active park,” says Ted Tye, a managing partner at National Development, which operates the park. “Working with MassDOT, we embraced the art culture of the area while creating a space that could be used both passively and actively. The Underground at Ink Block provides a connection to our successful Ink Block project across the street, and also provides a connection between the South End and South Boston.”

Art is seen throughout the park in a collection that Tye says is, “already attracting national attention.” Prior to the opening in September, a cadre of nationally known artists transformed 150,000 square feet of walls within the park during the Underground Mural Project. Other artwork includes colorful ribbons painted on a sidewalk leading to the park.

It took five years of planning, permitting, design, construction and leasing led by MassDOT in cooperation with the community, the city, Boston Planning & Development Agency, and the Federal Highway Administration to bring the project to fruition. National Development, which also developed Ink Block, was selected to operate Underground via a public bid process.

Initial work was done by MassDOT, and involved “substantial community input,” says



A desolate highway underpass has been transformed into a walkable park that hosts events and public art.

Tye. “A sustainable design was created with landscaping and drainage that would work well in this unique urban setting. The \$8.5 million construction project was primarily funded by MassDOT, with the cost supported by a long-term lease to National Development.

“An active event schedule is planned for the spring,” Tye says. “Based on the success of our opening event, which drew approximately 4,000 people, future events will focus on art, food, music, and fitness.

“Reebok, which made a strong commitment to funding Underground as part of the

move of its headquarters to Boston, is the primary event sponsor,” says Tye. That company is sponsoring a series of fitness events at the park this fall.

Underground events are promoted via the park’s website and social media. “This area of Boston is booming with residents and new businesses,” says Tye. “Underground at Ink Block provides a new and much-needed adult ‘play area’ that supports those who live and work here.”

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(617) 527-9800. **DIX**

Phased Complete Streets project improves safety, accessibility, and more — Continued from page 1

Summit at Rutgers University. The township was selected because of the number of changes it has made in accordance with national Complete Streets policy, including parklets, streetscaping, and widened sidewalks.

“Millburn’s commitment to a comprehensive Complete Streets design and implementation is impressive,” says Charles Brown, chair of the 2017 Complete Streets Summit Planning Committee. “The township is not only investing in safety improvements, but creating a vibrant and active downtown for all to enjoy.”

A three-phase implementation plan was developed with a robust series of traffic calming and other improvements that include road-diets, curb bump-outs, bicycle parking, widened corners, high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, signage, and more.

Work on phase I began in July. A stretch of Main Street was converted into a downtown event space featuring widened sidewalks, a concrete roadbed, and overhead strands of lights. The adjacent Millburn Avenue was then improved to include wider sidewalks, fresh landscaping with more than 40 new street trees, corner bump-outs, and high-visibility crosswalks. Modern traffic signals and timing were also incorporated into the design to improve traffic flow.

A new road, Town Hall Plaza, was also created to serve as a connection between Millburn Avenue and another busy thoroughfare to help ease traffic and improve the shopping experience and commercial viability of the area.

“Creating walkable and vibrant downtowns is the trend across the country — and with this project, Millburn is ahead of the curve. While we recognize that it is still very early,



Phase I work includes creating additional space and amenities at downtown corners.



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To view Millburn's Complete Streets documents, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

we are very optimistic about the impact it is having already," says David Lustberg, CEO and Principal of Arterial, a New Jersey-based planning and design firm. "In addition to the pedestrian safety aspects, the project provides a canvas for the town and merchants to use to energize the downtown through creative placemaking, pedestrian activity, and events."

Easing construction woes

To address parking and other concerns expressed by residents and store owners, Millburn Township added new 15-minute free parking spaces on Millburn Avenue. The township also improved upon a Smart-phone app, MPay2Park, which allows motorists to easily pay for parking on their phones, eliminating time spent at parking meters. Convenience fees were removed from the app.

The timing of the final four-week project for Phase I was less than ideal due to two nearby schools resuming classes. To mitigate the inconvenience of having construction underway at the beginning of the school year, crews agreed to be cognizant of school traffic. Deliveries to contractors were limited to the hours after students arrived at school and before they were dismissed for the day. There were no lane closures, and traffic flow was not disrupted or detoured. Additionally, police officers were on hand during critical periods of construction to assist pedestrians crossing the street.

Despite the timing issues, positive impacts of the Phase I Complete Streets project were already being noted in September, including a reduction in average roadway speeds down to 29 mph, and a 23-percent reduction in motor vehicle and pedestrian accidents. **DIX**

Business Recruitment & Retention

Community surveys help identify needs of rapidly growing neighborhood

The NoMa Business Improvement District, north of Capital Hill and Union Station in Washington, D.C. (est. pop. 617,996), is rapidly transitioning from mostly office space to a popular mixed-use area. The BID now has close to 5,000 residential units, with another 1,595 under construction.

As the district transitioned, it became clear that retail and restaurant options were lacking. To enhance the district and create a more well-rounded live, work, play destination, the BID worked with landlords, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits to develop creative partnerships and launch new businesses.

Much of this work grows out of the BIDs bi-annual community survey, which helps identify the needs of the growing neighborhood, says Galin Brooks, NoMa BID's planning and economic development director. The BID saw pop-ups in vacant spaces as a way to test and nurture a range of new ventures.

• **Developing fitness options.** While most of the new office and residential buildings in the district offer private gyms, there weren't a lot of options available to the public. "We worked with a building owner to have a yoga studio built out in a small retail space that they were not using," says Brooks. "It wasn't ideal for other retail uses because it was a little bit hard to access. We did outreach to hire a manager and get the pop-up started."

The BID also helped incubate the yoga studio, assisting with startup costs and logistics. After the first year, the manager took NoMa Yoga over as her own business. "It's a wonderful success story. It filled a gap in the neighborhood and started a local independent business, as well," Brooks says.

• **Enhancing nightlife.** The BID worked with entrepreneurs and property owners to find temporary space for a new beer garden. When the first pop-up site was no longer

available, “we worked with them to find a new home in the neighborhood,” Brooks says. The three partners worked to establish a true garden atmosphere, with greenery surrounding the outdoor seating area. “They are doing very well, and it’s a lovely little respite in summer in D.C.,” she says.

• **Introducing food trucks.** An underutilized parking lot became the site of the NoMa Lunch Box food truck pod until that site went under construction. “Until that happened we were able to activate the space with music and games,” says Brooks. The site owners even sponsored a pop-up picnic area, which operated on Fridays at lunchtime and attracted 3,000 visitors during the two months that it was open.

• **Finding a home for a nonprofit.** The NoMa BID also brought Carpe Librum, a “gently-used bookstore” that is the fundraising arm of a local literacy group, to a vacant retail space in the neighborhood. The sale of inexpensive books, CDs, and DVDs filled a gap in the NoMa retail scene, and during its first season, raised over \$53,000 for the literacy nonprofit.

The BID also worked to fill some gaps that were outside of the commercial realm. The district transformed a former bus station into the NoMa Junction @ Storey Park outdoor event space. The BID partnered with hip-hop nonprofit Words, Beats & Life, which painted the largest piece of public art in the city at that time at the site. NoMa hosts dozens of events each season at this venue. During the first

season alone, NoMa Junction saw over 13,500 visitors at more than 20 events.

“We are now trying to get a farmers market into the neighborhood because that’s another high priority for folks,” says Brooks. “We also see public art and activation of unused spaces as a priority.”

Pop-up events and businesses are promoted via the NoMa BID’s newsletter, which goes out to nearly 11,000 people, as well as social media posts, press releases, and providing details to property managers throughout the district.

“Our team of ambassadors distributes postcards and information about new pop-ups,” Brooks says. “They have a kiosk where they give out information, along with lollipops, so that we get more engagement.”

Knowing what spaces are available and what types of ventures will succeed in those spaces is key, Brooks says, adding, “I would say we have been successful most of the time because of our ability to be opportunistic. It’s also useful to have a plan, goals, and an understanding of the demands in your community — but you have to be flexible in this arena. Otherwise, you won’t be able to make things work.”

Partnerships are also vital. “You can’t make this happen if you don’t have property owners and providers you can call on to try out some unusual new idea.”

Contact: Galin Brooks, NoMa BID, (202) 810-0087, gbrooks@nomabid.org. **DIX**



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For information about the NoMa BID’s successful pop-up, The Lobby Project, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Clean & Safe

Green projects manage stormwater, improve aesthetics

Increasingly, city centers are introducing green infrastructure that is both attractive and efficient at addressing federal and state stormwater runoff mandates. Projects include green roofs, street trees, rain gardens, and permeable pavement that captures and infiltrates rain as it falls.

Cedar Rapids, IA (est. pop. 124,417), saw its first green roof in 2010 during the conversion of a warehouse into condominiums. The 7,400-square-foot project includes low-growing, low-maintenance sedum and native plants. According to Jason Johnson, public affairs specialist for the Natural

Resources Conservation Service, the roof will reduce stormwater runoff from a 1.25-inch rain by 50 to 80 percent. Any water that does run off will be filtered, and thus cleaner. And more recently, the city's new library was constructed to include the first publicly accessible green roof, offering conservation-based education to visitors, as well as stormwater reduction. The 24,000 square-foot green roof features rainwater harvesting for irrigation, and the parking lot surrounding the building is constructed with pervious paving, and below-ground stormwater collection chambers.

The town of Franklin, MA (est. pop. 31,852), is addressing stormwater concerns through tree wells, road narrowing, and rain gardens. Since 2010, the town has incorporated rain gardens into infrastructure projects throughout the downtown as part of its Soak it Up Franklin initiative. And the Residential Rain Garden Project, a collaboration between the town's public works department and the Charles River Watershed Association, provides residents with opportunities to attend free rain garden training and supports building of rain gardens at participants' homes.

And Fayetteville, NC (est. pop. 200,564), built its first green street in 2014 along a two-block section of a downtown thoroughfare already slated for redevelopment.

"This is not a conventional streetscape project," says the city's Engineering & Infrastructure Department. "This is the first green street in the city. It incorporates stormwater management features along the road through an innovative design that provides great environmental and aesthetic rewards."

The two blocks were redeveloped as a Greenscape project, utilizing Low Impact Development (LID) technology. LID is an approach to land development that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. An impaired creek in the city will benefit from improved water quality.

The \$1.3 million project aimed to allow 85 percent of the rainfall to percolate into the surrounding soil. The city got a \$309,500 grant from the Clean Water Management

Trust Fund, a North Carolina nonprofit, to help pay for the project. Fayetteville's stormwater fund will pay for about \$110,000, with the rest of the money coming from the general fund.

Traffic lanes were reduced within the project area from five in one area and three in another down to two, based on traffic counts indicating that more were not needed. Seven-foot-wide sidewalks were converted to 10-foot-wide multi-use trails. Some parking areas now feature interlocking concrete pavers that allow water to be absorbed into the ground.

Other stormwater control measures include permeable pavement, with three levels of stones which filter the water as it drains through, as well as suspended pavement, which consists of a crate-like system filled with specialized soil. Trees planted in this area absorb the nutrients from the water, and have space for roots to grow, allowing the pavement above to remain stable.

The Green Street project also includes bio-infiltration bump-outs, which look like landscaped islands, but instead of a mound of dirt, feature holes filled with engineered soil that can filter water, and plants selected for their ability to tolerate both flood and drought. All of the measures work together in an innovative process so that if water bypasses one system, it is captured by the next, say city engineers.

"We hope this project will generate more economic development in the area for potential redevelopment, which eventually will increase the activity in the area ... and allow the city to expand the downtown district," says Fayetteville City Engineer Giselle Rodriguez, noting that this project is the city's opportunity to serve as a model for other municipalities and organizations that would like to implement similar efforts.

The project paid off last fall, when the new stormwater system handled 15 inches of rain dumped on the city center by Hurricane Matthew with no runoff issues. And this June, the city's Stormwater Division received the Walk the Walk Clean Water award from the local nonprofit Sustainable Sandhills. **DIX**



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To view a video and documents about the Fayetteville Green Street, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Idea Exchange

Festival street will add flexible event space

Earlier this year, the Issaquah, WA, council approved the city's Downtown Streetscape Plan. The plan seeks to increase pedestrian friendliness, support local businesses, create a consistent downtown character, and make Olde Town a place where people enjoy spending time.

The plan includes creation of a festival street — a street designated for recurring temporary closure for pedestrian activities. The festival street allows for gatherings, community building, and visitor attraction in a part of the city that doesn't have the need or land availability for a permanent public gathering space.

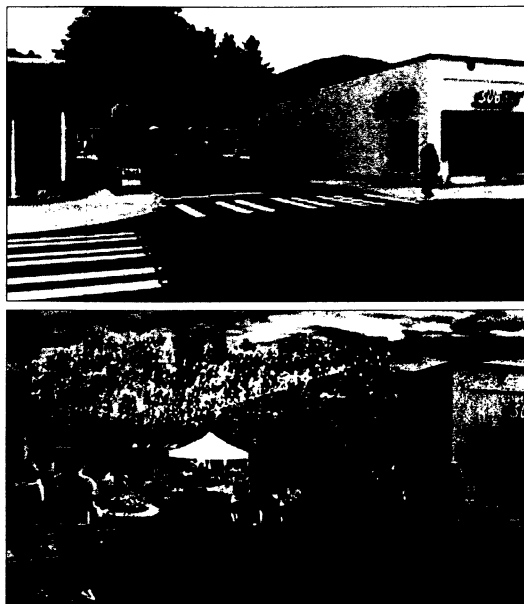
The plan notes that the Alder Street location (perpendicular to Front Street), is especially well suited to use as a festival street:

- It is a non-arterial within downtown that connects Front Street to surrounding parking and residential neighborhoods.

- It is part of the Front Street commercial area and, as a festival street, could reinforce adjacent commercial and cultural activities.

- As a festival street, Alder Street can enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment without conflicting with desired traffic circulation.

The creation of the festival street is currently considered part of Phase II of the overall project. But the report recommends low-cost improvements that could be implemented quickly and demonstrate



the value of the plan. These include street closure for events and implementation of special lighting.

More costly improvements will follow, including developing and implementing a festival street design and acquiring additional rights of way. The sidewalks on the proposed festival street are primarily on private property.

Pilot program streamlines permit process

To combat an increasing number of commercial vacancies in the State Street retail corridor, the Santa Barbara (CA) City Council has approved a six-month pilot program that aims to streamline the permit and review process. The enhanced services include:

- Dedicated staff and phone line for State-Street-related businesses.

- Dedicated staff to function as downtown liaisons. The Planning Division will designate two staff members to help guide downtown

ISSN 0012-5822

Downtown Idea Exchange

A publication of the
Downtown Development Center

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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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Idea Exchange

business owners and commercial real estate brokers through the discretionary review processes. Likewise, the Building & Safety Division will create a single point of contact for building permit processing.

- Applications within the pilot program area will receive priority placement on design review board agendas.

- Pre-Application review and expedited plan check of ADA, trash, maximum occupancy, and restroom fixture counts. With increasingly complex accessibility laws and the presence of three Certified Access Specialists (CASP) on staff, the Building & Safety Division staff will offer (for a fee) a code compliance assessment of existing tenant spaces, including a CASP review, to identify and inform potential tenants and building owners of improvements that will be required by law during the next tenant improvement permit process.

To make the most of federal buildings, partnership is essential

From post offices to court houses, federal offices can be hubs of activity that attract a steady flow of employees and visitors. To keep these government functions downtown and incorporate them into revitalization efforts requires strong partnerships between local community leaders and the federal government, says Denise Turner Roth, former head of the U.S. General Services Administration.

Writing in *Governing* magazine, Turner Roth stresses that cities

DIY wayfinding encourages walking

In an effort to encourage walking, new signs in downtown Wausau, WI, show just how convenient the city center is. The signs indicate the direction and provide a walking time to many activities and points of interest.

Elizabeth Brodek, executive director of the Wausau River District, tells *USA Today* that the signs can help people understand that they don't need to drive to get somewhere a few blocks away.

"It's literally just a couple minutes of walking to get to some of the places that they really want to be and some of the places that they might not even know about that they should check out," she says.

The organization Walk [Your City] has inspired similar campaigns in dozens of cities. The group provides background information, step-by-step planning tools, and signs for creating walking campaigns.

At its website, the organization explains some of the benefits of the program:

- encourages trip-swapping to decrease vehicle use;
- supports local businesses and commercial districts;
- boosts social connection and "eyes on the street";
- acts as a behavioral nudge to make healthier transportation choices;
- shows a community's commitment to walking and biking;
- kick starts bigger conversations around walkability.

To learn more, visit walkyourcity.org.



should be prepared to take the first steps in pursuing these relationships. "Communities that have federal property should assess the status and viability of those sites, and then engage federal officials in discussing the future of those properties, just as

they would partner with local developers and property owners. This is especially true for sites that are underutilized or sitting vacant," she says.



To read the full article, visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on Web Extras.

DIX



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

Vol. 64, No. 12
December 2017

Inside this issue

Pilot project transforms medians into programmed green spaces. Demonstration removes barrier, creates destination. 2

Interactive website, road show, and more aid public-engagement process. Clear, consistent communication eliminates surprises, builds buy-in. 5

Seven Shop Local tips. Capture more holiday shopping revenue. 6

Motivations and barriers to downtown visits. Market study reveals word of mouth most frequent information source. 9

Idea Exchange. Combating construction disruptions, Video series promotes small businesses, Ensuring convenient parking for customers 11

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Biscayne Green Full Project Presentation

Downtown Windsor Retail Recruitment Presentation & Prospectus

Downtown Scottsdale Brand Perceptions Presentation

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Ambitious retail recruitment program includes many facets

While working on its strategic plan about five years ago, the Downtown Windsor Business Improvement Association realized that its “very lively and thriving hospitality district” was lacking in retail options, says Executive Director Debi Croucher. Since then, a number of new retail attraction tools have been developed to entice merchants to downtown Windsor, ON, Canada (est. pop. 210,891).

“We approached the city, the chamber of commerce, the development corporation, and everybody

else we could think of for various materials that could be put together in a prospectus to go out championing our city center, but none of those bodies had materials that could be packaged,” Croucher says. Instead, the BIA, with input from these stakeholders, Statistics Canada, and Downtown Residents Association Windsor, developed its own retail marketing materials.

During the fall of 2015, the BIA began distributing its new Downtown Windsor Retail Prospectus,

(Continued on page 3)

PATHWAYS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Mural event draws crowds

Downtown Lynn, MA (est. pop. 90,329), is seeing a huge investment in revitalization via the arts. Recently, the 10-day Beyond Walls mural festival changed the face of downtown, with more than 2,700 visitors attending the Rock the Block grand finale event.

Beyond Walls founder Alfred Wilson says he is inspired by art-centric revitalization in cities like Miami, FL, Philadelphia, PA, and the King’s Cross neighborhood of London, England. He believes those results can be

replicated in smaller cities such as Lynn, to attract more visitors and bolster the local economy.

The mural festival and other Beyond Walls art projects are funded through a wide variety of sources. Beyond Walls met its goal of raising \$50,000 on the Patronicity civic crowdfunding platform within two weeks this spring. Those funds were matched by MassDevelopment’s Commonwealth Places

(Continued on page 7)

Pilot project transforms medians into programmed green space

One goal of the 2025 Downtown Miami Master Plan is to transform the downtown stretch of Biscayne Boulevard into an urban thoroughfare featuring a pedestrian promenade, an emphasis on public transit, and bicycle-friendly infrastructure.

"Eight lanes of traffic, median parking lots, and unsafe pedestrian crossings show the amounts of space dedicated to cars, creating visual and physical barriers through the heart of downtown," says the Miami Downtown Development Authority. The DDA's 20-day Biscayne Green project temporarily transformed medians currently used as parking lots into space for the community to meet and connect.

"An objective of Biscayne Green was to bring awareness of the barrier effect Biscayne Boulevard represents to the community and to showcase how these spaces can be turned around into a local destination for green space, entertainment, and community," says the DDA. Biscayne Green also aimed to build public support for more permanent changes to the boulevard, and allowed the DDA to gather input from users on-site during the 20-day intervention, which included not only green space, but 35 events which attracted 20,000 attendees.

"We were able to capture real-time input from residents and visitors, of which 97 percent recorded positive comments on our Visitor Survey," says the DDA. To reach as many

potential visitors as possible, the DDA conducted a media campaign promoting Biscayne Green as a community destination. "Throughout the three weeks, much enthusiasm was generated, and we encouraged conversations on social media to develop demand for the long-term project," says the organization. In addition to 243 survey participants, Biscayne Green also netted the organization strong media coverage, 17.7 million media impressions, and an award for Excellence in the Public Space category from the International Downtown Association.

Temporary projects require time and effort

Despite its temporary nature, Biscayne Green required a significant effort in order to effectively win over the public and municipal leaders. The DDA began assembling teams to address outreach, planning, design, execution, and programming early in 2016. "We then mobilized and reached out to community partners and other government agencies for the necessary support," says the organization. "The various spaces planned for this project were programmed following a series of community outreach efforts to gather people's input about the various design elements they wanted to see included."

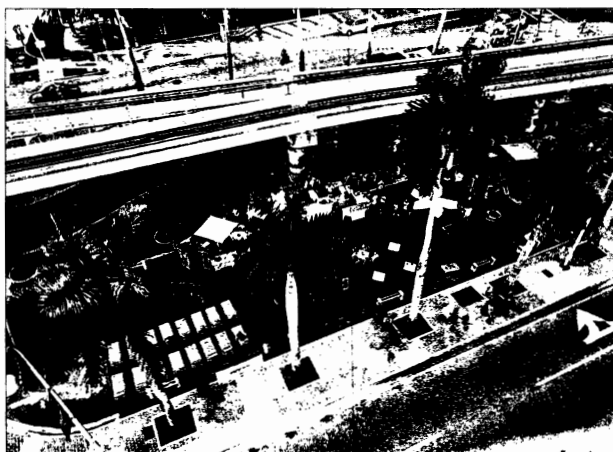
By November, 2016, the plan was finalized. After months of coordination to involve seven public agencies, acquire donations and more than 30 sponsors, and build a volunteer base, the build-out of the installation began on January 2, with the Grand Opening just four days later. Seed funding came from the Knight Foundation and The Miami Foundation.

Two parking lots were transformed into active, programmed public spaces. Design elements included flexible green space, a dog park, a children's Imagination Playground, exercise stations, games for all ages, a terraced seating area, entertainment space with a stage and seating, a food truck area with benches, ambiance lighting, on-street parking, a bikeshare station,



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To view the Biscayne Green Full Project presentation, visit our website and click on Web Extras.



car-share drop-off stations, space for relaxation, and enhanced pedestrian crossings.

"People utilized the park throughout the day, every day of the week, as they discovered the pop-up park and the oasis it represented in the center of downtown," says the DDA. "From live musical performances, happy hours, fitness classes, outdoor movies, and cultural events, these free community events invited people to take a sneak peek into the future of downtown Miami and inspired the community to stay engaged in order to keep this vision moving forward."

By prioritizing people over cars, the project elevated the conversation about transforming the boulevard from a barrier to a destination while also making downtown a more walkable, accessible, and connected place. "Streets define the downtown experience, as they are the public sphere that downtown residents, workers, and visitors see, share, and use every day," says the DDA. "Downtown's future success depends on providing a variety of transportation options and the supporting infrastructure to sustain a highly mobile, accessible, and connected urban core." **DIX**

Ambitious retail recruitment program includes many facets — *Continued from page 1*

which, "displays information in an engaging, easily digestible manner," says the organization. The document provides a wide range of demographic data, and paints the city center as a dynamic, livable area. The downtown's knowledge-based economy, quality of life, arts and culture, tourism, and other assets are also highlighted.

At the same time, the BIA launched a dedicated retail attraction website which mirrors the prospectus, and also includes listings of leasing opportunities and information on financial incentive programs.

To supplement these efforts, the BIA conducted a radio advertising campaign airing in southwestern Ontario and Detroit, digital media campaigns with placements in the Retail Merchants Association and Windsor Chamber of Commerce e-newsletters, and a Facebook campaign targeting audiences in southwestern Ontario and Michigan.

Municipal support is key

City support has also fed into Windsor's retail recruitment success. "In support of our initiative, the city has put into effect a number of other funding streams within the downtown to support retail in the city center,"

says Croucher. "One of these initiatives is the Commercial Rent Subsidy Program." This strategic funding tool is offered only to the types of retailers identified as most desirable in the downtown, she says. "We are very clear about what it is we are looking for, so applications are submitted to the BIA, reviewed, vetted, and discussed, and if they are found to be in compliance, applicants are awarded a 50-percent match for their rent, up to \$625 a month for a period of one year."

Eligible retail offerings include baked goods, pet supplies, apparel, groceries, home décor, hardware, toys, books, and more, as well as quality-of-life additions such as an independent movie theater and a boutique gym.

"That has been a really interesting catalyst for us in filling up vacant storefronts downtown, and it's the types of businesses that don't currently exist in the city center and meet the needs of people who already work or reside here, or are visiting the downtown," Croucher says, noting that a broader variety of retail supports guests and conference attendees drawn to the many hotels in the city center. While the downtown is still predominantly a hospitality district, "It has



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To view the Downtown Windsor BIA's retail recruitment presentation and prospectus, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

changed as a result of these efforts, as well as investments the municipality has made of late,” she says.

An influx of downtown college campuses is also adding feet to the street and making the area more dynamic. “We are starting to see a really positive transformation,” says Croucher.

In addition to the rent subsidy program, the BIA offers façade improvement grants to new businesses which meet the guidelines. “That really does help them in setting up shop in the downtown,” Croucher says. And the municipal government is now offering funding for interior renovation costs. “One of the things the BIA does not do is interiors, so it’s really great that the city has done that,” she says.

Another way the municipal government is supporting retail recruitment is its new Downtown Windsor Enhancement Strategy

and Community Improvement Plan, approved in October. The plan extends beyond the BIA boundaries, but the majority of merchants who will avail themselves of new funding opportunities provided by the plan will be located in the city center, Croucher says. “It’s going to be a huge catalyst. The plan has 39 recommendations and the city council has approved 37 of them.”

New offerings include incentives for developing second and third floor spaces above retail into residential units. Upper-story housing is another thing the downtown has been lacking. “It’s really exciting to see the city step up and take a lead on this, and it means so much more will be done,” says Croucher.

Some challenges remain

While most small retail spaces downtown are now occupied, “we have a number of very large vacant properties in excess of 5,000 square feet,” says Croucher. Some properties are viewed as investment opportunities by out-of-town owners. Until recently, a vacant property rebate, “had been almost an inducement to keep the building vacant until they could find a long-term, stable tenant,” says Croucher. And some owners are holding out to see what impact the expansion of local universities into the city center will have on property values, she says.

“They are opening a school of music and a school of creative arts by January, and there’s a huge push to bring the law school downtown, as well,” says Croucher. “Some of these large vacant buildings are in close proximity.”

More residents, and younger residents, will also drive the need for more new retail and service providers in the city center. The BIA would love to attract an Apple Store, says Croucher, and the area also needs walk-in medical care, suites for medical practices, and a specialty grocer offering fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats, as well as prepared foods.

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Look to other successful programs for advice

Before embarking on its ambitious retail attraction campaign, the Downtown Windsor Business Improvement Association in Windsor, ON, Canada, sought the advice of another downtown organization that had seen “tremendous success,” says Executive Director Debi Croucher.

The London (ON, Canada) Economic Development Corporation hired a retired mall manager to oversee its retail attraction efforts. That individual identified vacant space, worked with landlords and property owners to identify necessary improvements, and utilized his professional contacts to reach out to regional and national retailers.

“They also got tremendous media coverage,” says Croucher. “That’s what got the ball rolling for us. They were incredibly helpful and informative. And they had such success because they had gone with an individual with experience and connections.”

Following that lead, the BIA has joined the International Council of Shopping Centers and attends its events to build up its own retail connections and to share the new prospectus, providing prospective tenants with information about all that downtown has to offer.

Interactive website, road show, and more aid public engagement process

Recent population growth in Greeley, CO (from 92,889 during the 2010 U.S. Census to an estimated 103,990), has sparked an ambitious planning process. Transparency and broad public engagement efforts are credited with building strong public support.

The Imagine Greeley initiative was launched by the city this year to gather public input and explore what the future Greeley will look and feel like, and what steps are needed to maintain the current quality of life going forward. A dedicated, interactive Imagine Greeley website was launched last January, and an ambitious calendar of meetings, focus groups, and road show presentations, as well as an online survey, have taken place this year.

Two distinct but interrelated efforts are underway. First is an update to the city's 2060 Comprehensive Plan which will inform decisions about public and private growth and development over the next 10 to 20 years. As part of Imagine Greeley, the city is seeking input on what aspects of the plan are working well, or not, as well as any potential gaps that need to be addressed. Key focus areas for the Imagine Greeley process include housing access, growth and city form, economic health and diversification, livability, and public capital and operations planning.

Second, the city seeks to identify priority community improvements, a process last completed two decades ago, which culminated in construction of several downtown attractions, parks and trails, the police headquarters, a history museum, and expansion of a community center.

As part of Imagine Greeley, the city is asking residents to share their top priorities for Greeley's to-do list over the next 20 years. The information will guide capital improvement planning and public investment campaigns designed to fund major community improvement projects.

Keep planning collaborative and inclusive

The Imagine Greeley website introduces visitors to the initiative and its goals, while the Get Involved page invites participants to take a survey, explore the list of scheduled outreach events, and sign up for project updates. The survey remained open for several months, closing at the end of August and seeing more than 350 participants. The website also hosts links to project documents, background information, related studies, and outcomes of Imagine Greeley meetings.

"We started our outreach efforts with a kickoff meeting on March 3, which was an all-day event," says John Barnett, the city's long range planner. "We did a number of exercises, including a thought wall. We gave people subject areas and asked them to write down things that were challenges, things we needed to do, and also things that were going well. We also did mapping exercises."

Next came a series of themed focus group meetings in May and June that drew 50 to 60 participants to explore the five key topics: housing access, growth and city form, economic health and diversification, livability, and public capital and operations planning. "So we went through five meetings with those folks and really zeroed in on a number of things," says Barnett. "Once we got the focus group things done, we began to pull together ideas and goal statements and went back out to the public again on August 2 and 3 and did another round of community discussions."

Based on all of the public input gathered, a draft plan was developed. "We turned that loose for internal review among staff and departments likely to be partners in implementing the plan," Barnett says. "On October 26 and 30, we [had] two more public meetings to talk about the draft, get feedback, and make sure we are touching base and that things are okay."

"We have done our best not to surprise anybody."

A steady flow of information paves the way

"We have done our best not to surprise anybody," Barnett says. "The community outreach part is just as important as the technical part. Stakeholders include community members, staff, elected officials, and the same strategy won't work for all of them. You have to develop a strategy for each of these groups so that you are not constantly at their doorstep wanting input but that allows them to have opportunities for input."

The city used e-blasts, its social media platforms, and old-fashioned face-to-face communication to drive stakeholders to the Imagine Greeley website. "We created a road show, which we presented to 15 or 20 groups, steering them to the website," says Barnett. "We knew at the very beginning we needed to have an interactive website. We will keep it up, by the way. The plan is going to

live there. It will be 180 pages or so, including the goals, objectives and strategies. All of the background will be in separate appendices so that if someone wants to download the plan, it will be hefty, but reasonable. And if they want to get into the weeds, they are all there."

Greeley stakeholders are becoming comfortable with the city's planning process due to a recent bicycle master plan, a parks, trails, and open lands plan, and a strategic transit master plan. The city expects the same people who supported those initiatives to also support its move toward Smart Growth in the updated 2060 Comprehensive Plan. "Other communities have had much more controversy. We've worked really hard to avoid that through good customer service and being very transparent," Barnett says.

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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Seven Shop Local tips

Encouraging customers to shop small and shop local is critical to the economic wellbeing of city centers, and even more so during the winter holidays. Last year, National Retail Federation surveys estimated that the average American consumer would spend \$935.58

during the holidays on gifts, food, and other seasonal items. Unfortunately, the majority of respondents planned to shop at large department stores, discount shops, and online, with

only 23 percent planning to shop at local or small businesses.

There are several strategies that downtown leaders can implement to, "ensure local businesses are reaping the benefits of this season of gift-giving and celebrating," says Emily

Robbins, principal associate for economic development at the National League of Cities, in a recent Cities Speak blog.

Convene your local business owners and follow their creative lead. "Use your role as a convener to help local businesses connect, collaborate, and feel empowered to establish creative marketing tactics to attract holiday shoppers," writes Robbins. For example, small business owners in Edmond, OK, developed a small business passport that offers incentives and prizes to shoppers that receive a stamp at multiple stores.

Develop a "Made In" branding campaign. Shoppers are increasingly looking for unique, handmade items from their hometowns to purchase for themselves and as gifts, Robbins says. One way to indicate to shoppers that an item is made locally is to create a branding

"Help local businesses connect, collaborate, and feel empowered to establish creative marketing tactics."

campaign for locally-made goods. New Haven, CT, Mayor Toni Harp recently collaborated with local artists and businesses to develop a Made in New Haven logo, for example.

Host a holiday event with pop-up shops featuring local retailers. “A holiday-themed market or event in your city’s downtown area is a wonderful placemaking strategy, and also gives local retailers the chance to share their goods and services with the community,” writes Robbins. In Roanoke, VA, for example, The Dickens of a Christmas events on Friday evenings in December include a tree lighting, pet costume parade, and local vendors selling food and gifts.

Share resources for businesses about the holiday shopping season. The holiday season usually means a surge in new customers, and particularly for newer businesses, it’s important to make sure this isn’t a missed opportunity, Robbins says. To help local shops prepare for the season, New York City’s Small Business Services office shares holiday tips for business owners, including how to recruit and hire seasonal help and how to participate in holiday markets and events.

Market local businesses through an online store or social media. Join forces with other cities in your region or state to build an

online site where local businesses can advertise and sell their items, suggests Robbins. Celebrate Local is an organization and online shop for artisans and makers from all across Ohio. Customers have access to over 300 local shops selling everything from salsa to soap to stickers made with home grown products and ingredients. “Social media is also a great way to help market local businesses,” she writes. Shops in West Hollywood, CA, are encouraged to submit photos of their decorated storefronts to the local chamber of commerce’s Instagram account as a way to spread holiday cheer and attract customers, for example.

Donate items from local small businesses. During this season of giving, encourage customers to shop local for items they intend to donate to local charities. “Donating items from local stores is a win-win for the local economy and for helping neighbors in need,” writes Robbins.

Buy local, celebrate local. “What would the holidays be without an office holiday celebration? Organizations, and their members, can be encouraged to show support for local small businesses by, “serving your favorite local coffee and placing a catering order with a local food truck,” she says. **DIX**

Mural event draws crowds — Continued from page 1

program. Since that time, an additional \$30,000 has been raised via Patronicity, and several hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants and donations, both cash and in-kind, have been received from corporations, small businesses, labor unions, and civic organizations.

The mural festival struck a chord with artists as well as funders. An RFP for artists was issued in April, and, “we did some personal outreach to top local talent, just to make sure we were matching the cultural identity of Lynn,” says Wilson. The group had publicized

creation of 10 murals, but ultimately, of the 78 applications, 20 artists were selected to paint 15 murals, “so a couple of them were partnered up,” he says.

The artists received a compensation package which included both a stipend and some essential training. Because some of the murals would be very large, every artist received lift operator certification to meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. Each artist was provided with free travel and accommodations, and received

a \$1,000 stipend, and a \$450 prepaid Visa card. Downtown businesses would have been willing to donate gift certificates, Wilson says, but, “we didn’t want local parties giving away stuff to our artists. We wanted our artists spending money to benefit our local businesses.”

The “unsung heroes” of the festival are the building owners that gave permission to use their exterior walls as canvases, says Wilson, and the businesses housed in those buildings, which often had huge pieces of machinery in their parking lots during the process. “For those businesses, this really impacted their ability to function for 10 days, and they bought in in a big way, so that was their donation to the project,” Wilson says.

A series of events was scheduled throughout the 10-day festival. In addition to watching artists work, the public could attend yoga with the artists, meet the artists at museums, and attend presentations such as The History of American Graffiti. Events were heavily promoted on social media, and a PR firm was also hired, “as well as purchased advertising online in what we believed were strong entities for 20-somethings and 30-somethings,” says Wilson.

The Rock the Block grand finale featured four bands, including a marching band that led the crowd through the cultural district and past many of the murals before leading them back to the celebration where a different DJ performed every hour, live art installations were underway, and food trucks and a local brewer provided dining and drink options.

“It was a huge celebration,” says Wilson. “We got all of our federal, state, and local delegation up on stage. We had our other art institutions on stage. We had a key ceremony — every artist received a letter from the mayor and a city key.”

More art to come

In addition to the new murals, Beyond Walls is in the process of installing vintage neon business signs, dynamic LED lighting in underpasses, and a unique sculpture.

Before vintage neon business signs could be installed, city officials had to be convinced that these pieces, which had been in storage for 30 years, were art rather than violations of municipal signage ordinance. The collection represents former businesses from Lynn, from Boston, and from as far away as San Francisco. Three of the dozen signs were installed this summer, with the rest expected to be done before winter.

LED light installations will address concerns about three poorly lit and underutilized underpasses that cut through the city center, Wilson says. “The underpass lighting is going to be a pretty incredible install. This is a dynamic system. We can do color washes. We can do waves of green for St. Patrick’s Day or red, white, and blue for the Fourth of July. The lights can respond to a train going by, or for Central Square, which has a lot of live music, the lights can respond to the beat of the music. I don’t think there’s really anything like it in all of New England,” he says.

Beyond Walls anticipates completion of this project by the end of the year. “We will do lighting ceremonies and make it a big party,” says Wilson.

There is also an area downtown where a slab had been poured for a sculpture, “and then the city just never had the finances to commission artists,” says Wilson. “So we asked GE, who produced the first jet engine in Lynn in 1942, for a complete example of that engine.” The company agreed. The engine will be fitted for installation by local vocational high school students, and will be placed next spring.

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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Vertical development zone encourages mixed-use projects

In 2014, the city of Tigard, OR (est. pop. 48,035), introduced a new Vertical Housing Development Zone that it hoped, when bundled with other tools such as Tax Increment Financing, would encourage mixed-use development in targeted areas, including the downtown.

The Vertical Housing Development Zone offers qualified projects a 20 percent per floor tax exemption on new residential development for the first four residential floors, when that development is built above nonresidential space.

“Financial modeling shows that a vertical housing based tax exemption moves some multi-story mixed-use projects from the red to the black,” said former Economic Development Manager Lloyd Purdy when the program was announced.

The city believes that this mix of activity improves property values, the viability of local businesses, and the quality of life for residents while also diversifying housing options.

The new zoning is paying off. “Two mixed-use projects have received the VHDZ tax abatement in Tigard,” says Dylan Dekay-Bemis, the city’s economic development coordinator. The Adrian is a 12,000-square-foot mixed-use project featuring office space, eight high-end apartments, and a rooftop garden.

And Attwell Off Main adds 1,819 feet of commercial space and 165 market-rate apartments to the city center. Options range from a studio to one-to-three bedroom apartments to six two-story townhomes. The development, located close to retail and restaurants, the city library, and public transit, is expected to bring 300 new residents downtown. Additionally, the project should generate \$7.8 million in property taxes over 20 years, though some of those will be forgiven under the VHDZ program. The remainder of the taxes will be reinvested in additional downtown revitalization projects, says the city.

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ATTRACTION

Study reveals motivations and barriers to downtown visits

The city of Scottsdale, AZ (est. pop. 217,385), is exploring ways to grow specific areas of the downtown, drive more foot traffic, and better market the area overall. Marketing firm HAPI is creating a new campaign for the downtown that will include a new logo, website, color palette, ads, posters, and more.

The first step was a brand perception study which looked at how consumers learn

about downtown events and restaurants, what motivates them to come downtown, and what barriers prevent that from happening more frequently.

Feedback from residents of Scottsdale, as well as from Phoenix (roughly half an hour’s drive) and Tucson (roughly two and a half hour’s drive), revealed that people rely most heavily on word of mouth to learn about Scottsdale’s downtown events, followed



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closely by social media. Scottsdale residents rely more heavily on the local newspaper than on Internet search engines, while the reverse is true for those living in the other two cities. Lifestyle magazines, the city website, and downtown/tourism websites played a lesser, but still significant role in alerting residents of all three cities of Scottsdale's downtown events. And while still making the list, user review websites, email newsletters, and radio advertising were the least utilized modes of communication around downtown events.

The same did not hold true when it came to information about restaurants, however. While word of mouth still ranked first, consumer review site Yelp, Internet search engines, and restaurant websites are also information sources that these consumers rely on heavily. Social media was less important to locals than consumers from the other two cities, perhaps because they are more familiar with downtown's dining scene. Trip Advisor reviews were most heavily relied upon in Tucson while two regional newspapers held more sway in Phoenix. To a lesser degree, lifestyle magazines and downtown/tourism websites also informed prospective diners of their options.

Why visit downtown?

Motivations for visiting downtown were explored by age group. The variety of restaurants was most important to all respondents, but became increasingly so in older demographics. Walkability also gained in importance as ages increased, and the number of galleries was also slightly more important to older visitors.

Conversely, nightlife options and a "lively, energetic vibe" were more important to younger visitors than to seniors, as was the diversity of people. A safe environment and a variety of shopping opportunities were nearly equal in importance across age groups, while the number of major festivals and events motivated more people ages 40 to 65 than those younger or older.

Parking was seen as a barrier to visiting downtown across all age segments. About a third of respondents across all ages saw downtown as too expensive. Many also said it was too crowded, and some, especially younger respondents, perceived a "snooty or arrogant attitude in others." Yet very few respondents cited unfriendly workers in shops and restaurants as an issue. Other barriers mentioned to a lesser degree, and more by younger respondents than retirees, included a lack of diversity and public transportation in the city center. **DIX**

When thinking specifically of finding information about restaurants in Downtown Scottsdale, what sources of information do you rely upon most heavily?

	Phoenix	Scottsdale	Tucson
Word of mouth	40%	56%	34%
Yelp	23%	40%	27%
Search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.)	32%	23%	35%
Specific restaurant websites	17%	16%	16%
Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)	25%	15%	23%
TripAdvisor	15%	13%	23%
OpenTable	11%	13%	12%
Arizona Republic	17%	11%	8%
AzCentral.com	11%	10%	6%
Area websites (ExperienceScottsdale.com, DowntownScottsdale.com, etc.)	11%	8%	17%
Phoenix New Times	18%	8%	5%
Magazines (Trends, Scottsdale Lifestyle, Phoenix Magazine, etc.)	16%	13%	10%
Other	2%	1%	6%

Respondents were allowed to make multiple selections for this question; therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Idea Exchange

Transforming an austere plaza

A "concrete breaking ceremony" marked the beginning of renovations to Patriot Plaza in downtown Towson, MD. The concrete, pavers, and a central fountain will be replaced with 1.8 acres of green space. Additional improvements include seating walls, plantings, lighting, and new furnishings.

In addition to creating a more welcoming area, Nancy Hafford of the Towson Chamber of Commerce tells the *Baltimore Sun* that the redesigned plaza will also provide opportunities for more downtown events with fewer street closings.

Attracting and retaining government offices

In the Downtown Roanoke Inc. 2016 workplan, one of many strategic initiatives involves retaining existing government functions and attracting others to the Virginia city.

A three-step process guides the way:

- Maintain relationships with "decision makers" at various levels of government to secure future support for downtown locations/relocations of government offices.
- In cooperation with major regional partners, advocate for the optimal location of city and local divisions of state and federal governments within downtown.
- Continue monitoring a database of relevant government agencies and their lease status in order to position DRI as an advocate for their relocation or retention at the appropriate time.

Video series to promote downtown's small businesses

The Scottsdale Area Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the City of Scottsdale economic development department is embarking on a new program to, "bring more value and awareness of local small business in the community." The program will feature unique small businesses in brief 90-second videos which will be part of the Downtown Spotlight Video Series.

"The focus will be on the uniqueness of their businesses, the importance of shopping locally, and why they choose to call Scottsdale home," said Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, Mark Hiegel.

In order to participate, small businesses were asked to complete a brief online application form. They must also agree to participate in social media promotion of their video and of other Spotlight videos.



To see the proposed format for the video, featuring Sip Coffee & Beer, visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on Web Extras.

Development Authority works to keep best parking spots for customers

In October a new kind of Ambassador was on the streets of downtown Holland, MI. Shonett Davis is the Downtown Parking Ambassador. According to the Downtown Development Authority, Davis is responsible for, "educating all stakeholders about appropriate 'Customer First' parking, making

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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Idea Exchange

sure that downtown Holland's most convenient parking spaces remain available to customers, while directing employees to the closest available public parking lots."

While she does not issue tickets, Davis does patrol assigned areas and issue, "educational tickets for possible violations."

The *Holland Sentinel* notes that the position grew out of a 2016 parking study that found "employee abuse" of parking spaces intended for customers. In response, the city added some 15-minute parking spaces and new signage in addition to hiring Davis.

Collecting opinion data

As public and private groups seek to bring the voice of the community to critical decisions, the range of survey tools and techniques has blossomed. The National Research Center, a for-profit firm specializing in public sector research, outlines six useful techniques in a recent blog post. These include: Citizen survey panels, resident network apps such as NextDoor, Opt-in Web surveys, Recruited Web surveys, Texted surveys, and Matrix sampling. To learn more visit www.n-r-c.com/new-ways-collect-opinion-data-residents.

Sweet treats draw customers during holiday season

In Oak Park, IL, the annual cookie walk drew crowds into downtown stores this month. The cookie walk began as part of the annual Winterfest nearly a decade ago, but quickly became the signature event. Partici-

Construction sparks creative downtown marketing

When a three-month bridge construction project slowed traffic to and from downtown Glenwood Springs, CO, local businesses, the city, and the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association joined forces to draw visitors downtown.

The effort includes the "Detour to Relaxation," a traditional punch card promotion. After receiving punches from five participating businesses and restaurants, the card is good for a day pass to relax in the mineral waters of the Iron Mountain Hot Springs.

The local *Post Independent* notes that Detour to Relaxation is just one of several promotions being offered during construction:

"Soon after the detour went into effect in mid-August, Alpine Bank got on board sending its team of bank executives out to lunch at different places around Glenwood where they are picking up the tab for random customers.

"The chamber also has its Treasure Hunt 2017 — A Bridge to Riches campaign underway, where people follow weekly clues to locations around town for the chance to win a \$1,000 prize package after the detour is over.

"Individual businesses are also getting into the act with different discount deals, special promotions and, in some cases, more favorable hours."

The chamber promotes the special offers via weekly email blasts, as well as digital marketing on glenwoodchamber.com, and social media posts on Facebook.

pants purchase a souvenir cookie tin and a map of over 45 participating shops and restaurants. At each business participants receive a wrapped cookie, candy, or other specialty baked good to add to their tins.

Shannon Williams, executive director for Downtown Oak Park, says that she encourages merchants to have other things going on inside their businesses on the day of the cookie walk, and cautions them that this may not be a big sales day, but is great outreach to future customers.

Bike patrols offer a new perspective

In an effort to make police officers more visible and more mobile, the city of Loveland, CO, added bike patrols in early fall. The *Reporter Herald* says that the 14 newly trained officers will, "circulate the streets and alleyways of downtown, as well as the neighboring bike paths, in order to combat common criminal offenses including open drinking, loitering, vandalism, theft, threatening behavior, and drug use." **DIX**



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

Vol. 65, No. 1
January 2018

Inside this issue

Business competition attracts "second-location" retailers. Experienced merchants mean faster start-up, better chance of success . . . 2

Rooftop parks attract city center visitors. Provide amenities and event space 5

Program preserves in-town residential neighborhoods. A mix of rentals and single-family homes is essential . . . 6

Digital sign provides transit information, ad space, more. The new "community bulletin board" to be installed in several cities 9

Alley project cleaner, safer, and less costly. Consolidating trash collection is a win-win 10

Idea Exchange. Ten things residents want, Chefs and farmers team up, and more 11

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Full Forward Business
Competition documents

UniverCity Neighborhood
Partnership brochure

Discover Your Future e-book
and video

ATTRACTION

Multi-pronged approach puts more feet on a main street

To highlight its main thoroughfare, the Milwaukee Downtown BID #21 declared 2017 to be The Year of Wisconsin Avenue. Several public arts initiatives, a big media push, a walking tour, and more aim to bring pedestrians back to "the living room of our downtown, city, and region," says Beth Weirick, CEO.

"The goals, overall, were to enhance walkability and to create a sense of place along Wisconsin Avenue," says Weirick. "We have 16 major properties that have been heavily engaged in major infrastruc-

ture investment. There's already been over \$194 million invested since 2005, and right now we have another \$800 million recently completed or under construction. We felt it was time to implement some initiatives in the public right-of-way to draw people back to Wisconsin Avenue." The major initiatives include:

- Sculpture Milwaukee, a temporary outdoor exhibit of 22 sculptures by both internationally renowned and local artists, was on display along Wisconsin Avenue from June through

(Continued on page 3)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Event aims to attract talent and retain businesses

The new Discover Your Future Career & Lifestyle Day events go "far beyond the traditional workforce job fair," says David Leezer, director of economic development in St. Charles, MO (est. pop. 65,794). The strategy has both short- and long-term goals that include attracting new talent to live and work in the city, attracting new businesses, and retaining the area's existing businesses.

The events target young professionals from the neighboring state of Illinois, and provide not only job, but quality-of-life and housing information meant to lure new employees to St. Charles and its thriving downtown.

"It is an outreach program, yes, but as far as I'm concerned, it is first and foremost a business retention program," says Leezer. "St. Charles

(Continued on page 7)

Business contest attracts “second-location” retailers

The Full Forward Business Competition in Florence, SC (est. pop. 37,056), is attracting new retail to the city center. “We heard about a similar process in Hartsville [SC] where they held a Startsville competition to attract startups,” says Bob Sager, a retail recruitment consultant for the Florence Downtown Development Corporation. An outline of that competition was obtained in late March, but, “we didn’t have enough time, based on the timeframe of that event, to do it this year, and we wanted to get somebody in for the holiday season,” he says.

To realize a faster turnaround, the competition was adapted to attract already-successful business owners to open a second location or new business venture in the downtown. “We were pretty sure the startup time would be much shorter, and because contestants already had a business, they were more likely to be successful,” says Sager.

The contest, which launched in May, was

publicized heavily via social media, but 1,000 fliers were also mailed out to prospective business owners statewide. Contestants could enter online or mail applications to the DDC office.

One winning entry received \$20,000 in cash for expenses related to opening a new retail location, including renovation, fixture purchase, inventory, and marketing. Additionally, a \$30,000 Tenant Up-fit Grant was offered to help pay for electrical, plumbing, HVAC, floor covering, wall/ceiling improvements, permanent fixtures, lighting, and other qualifying building renovations.

Other assistance for the winner included a \$500 signage grant, a \$500 design grant, and a \$300 credit toward the first year’s business license from the city, as well as special lease incentives offered by the selected property owner.

In return, the winner was obligated to execute at least a three-year lease at a property of their own choosing in the Downtown Florence Historic District, and had to be open by November 1. The DDC provided a list of available properties and assisted with site selection.

“We thought 15 or 20 applications would be great,” says Sager. “We didn’t know what to expect. We got 36 applications.” A committee was formed to “whittle down” the list to five semi-finalists. In mid-July, notifications were mailed to those not selected as finalists, along with information about the city’s incentives and an invitation to meet with Sager to, “discuss these programs and further explain how these incentives may be the assistance you need to open your business downtown.”

“We think three to five of these other people are ultimately going to end up opening businesses down here,” says Sager. “That was the case in Hartsville, so we knew going into this it was as much about marketing as it was about filling one spot. But of the 1,000 letters we sent out, I don’t think we got one response. It was Facebook, the newspaper, and word of mouth.”

A panel of judges, including representa-



FULL FORWARD
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS CONTEST

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN EXPANDING OR RELOCATING YOUR BUSINESS TO BOOMING DOWNTOWN FLORENCE? IF SO, YOU COULD RECEIVE

\$50,000

IN CASH TOWARDS THE COST OF OPENING A NEW LOCATION IN DOWNTOWN FLORENCE

SUBMIT ONLINE AT WWW.FLORENCEDOWNTOWN.COM

THE DETAILS

- The Full Forward Downtown Business Contest (FFDBC) is designed to attract new compatible businesses to the booming Downtown Florence, SC historic district.
- FFDBC is open to all current retail business owners that have been continuously operating a business for at least 12 months.
- The contest winner will receive a \$20,000 cash prize, \$30,000 in grant money, in addition to other assistance to help get a business started in Downtown Florence, SC.
- For complete rules and regulations, and to submit a business for consideration, visit our website at www.florencedowntown.com.

YOU ARE INVITED TO BE A V.I.P.

Downtown Florence has seen more than \$100 million in investment over the past five years. Come see the progress and check out potential store-front locations on Friday, June 30 from 6-8 p.m. during our monthly Florence After Five event. RSVP with the number of attendees joining you for food, fun, live music, and more to progress@florencedowntown.com.

The Full Forward Downtown Business Contest is sponsored by the Florence Downtown Development Corporation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit whose purpose is to attract, develop and promote new businesses and residents to Downtown Florence, SC.

The Full Forward Downtown Business Contest supported expansion for two existing business owners while also broadcasting available incentives to others.

tives from the chamber of commerce, a local bank, and the business community was selected to choose one winner. Finalists did presentations before the panel, and provided business plans. Each was scored based on criteria that included the impact of the business on the downtown, the financial strength of the business plan, the job/revenue impact, and the applicant's level of investment.

"They voted, and we stayed out of it," says Sager. The winner already owns two successful women's clothing businesses with different concepts in other South Carolina locations. At the new downtown Florence location, both concepts will be blended, with one being displayed in each of the large storefront windows to either side of the entrance.

"We were really looking for retail because we had open storefronts," says Sager, noting that several service industry businesses also applied, including event planners and caterers. "We got just about anything you could imagine — a gift shop, a flower shop, ladies' wear — it was pretty varied."

And because the winner was not a local and several local business owners who have worked toward the betterment of downtown for years were entered into the competition, a second-place prize was created, awarding \$10,000 in cash and \$30,000 in grant money to the highest-scoring local business owner.

Contact: Bob Sager, Florence Downtown Development Corporation, (843) 407-1512, bob@florencedowntown.com. **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

To view the Full Forward Business Competition rules, participant disclaimer, mailer, application form, and score sheet, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Multi-pronged approach puts more feet on a main street — Continued from page 1

October. Milwaukee is one of only a handful of cities to host a free, urban installation of this magnitude, says the BID. Sculptures ranged in size, with some reaching 40 feet in height.

"Over 100 individuals participated in the committee structure for Sculpture Milwaukee," Weirick says. This included a steering committee, logistics committee, art selection committee, education committee, marketing and events committee, and a fund development committee.

"We had people from all spectrums," says Weirick. "Everyone played a role, which made it feel like a community-wide project. We reached out through art museum docents to area school teachers, and found funding to provide docent tours for school children, and to pay for their transportation. This needed to be an initiative for a cross section of the generations. The message to the rest of the world is that Milwaukee has an appreciation for the arts, and how significant the arts are to creating quality of life."

- Utility Box Murals along the avenue saw new artwork depicting the past, present, and

future. A Request for Creativity invited artists working in all media to submit concepts reflecting the avenue's history of commerce, diversity of architecture and people, and its "undoubtedly bright future."

Submissions were reviewed by a Downtown Placemaking Task Force which included property owners, representatives from the arts commission and public works departments, the local electricity provider, and more. "The team short-listed the responses and conducted interviews, then hired one artist to do all 10 utility boxes," says Weirick. The public was invited to watch some of the artwork being created, and a ribbon cutting also helped promote the new exhibit.

- The West Wisconsin Audio Walking Tour, which rolled out in May, focuses on public art and historical buildings, but also touches on the forward momentum of the area. Using the platform Otocast, the BID highlights 14 points of interest, each with its own distinct narrator. "It really talks more

Social media posts indicate a high level of public engagement.

about the character and the vibe and the stories of the buildings,” says Weirick. “We did a nice, deep dive, but it’s also succinct and to the point. It engages pedestrians to learn a bit more and be emotionally connected.”

While the intent is for this to be a walking tour, the free app can also be downloaded and heard from anywhere via iTunes and Google Play. “During the first three months, there were over 2,500 downloads,” Weirick says.

- To make Wisconsin Avenue more accessible, VISIT Milwaukee’s Trolley Loop introduced a new route and expanded hours. The reconfigured 30-minute Hop n’ Shop, Wine n’ Dine loop offered 15-minute headways, and traveled much of the avenue each Thursday through Sunday from June 1 through the end of August.

- In 2016, the BID and its project partners issued an RFP for its Lighting the Avenue initiative, which will bring experimental lighting to the main thoroughfare, to “add to the ambiance,” says Weirick. The group had hoped to have the lighting installed this year, but infrastructure issues first needed to be resolved. A vendor has been selected and several lighting concepts are currently under review.

Promoting quality of life for all

While most of the initiatives aim to increase foot traffic, the Key to Change initiative launched in late summer is intended to assist chronically homeless individuals. “To us, Key to Change is critical because we wanted to message, as we are going

through this process of enhancing and beautifying the area, that we believe in quality of life for all,” says Weirick. “Our intention is to reeducate the community on effective ways to help our citizens with mental health and substance abuse issues, and those struggling with chronic homelessness.”

Seven parking meters were retrofitted

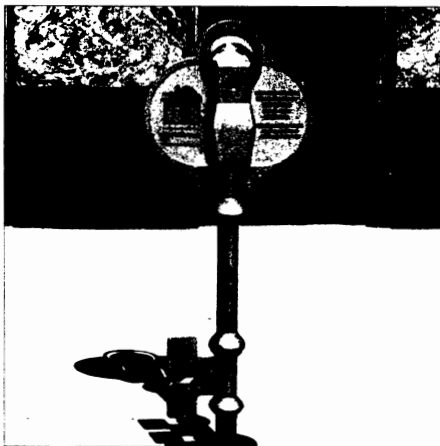
to resemble keys, both to raise awareness about the community’s quality-of-life programs and to collect donations. Online donations are also accepted. Additional Key to Change meters, capable of accepting both coins and bills, will be installed next year. Funds are used for a Downtown Homeless Outreach Coordinator to work on the front lines, canvassing the streets to help individuals find suitable housing, as well as for the Housing First Endowment Fund, which helps the chronically homeless find permanent supportive housing, and for Move-In Kits which include household essentials for new residents in the Housing First Program.

The Year of Wisconsin Avenue “has been a really successful campaign for us,” says Weirick. “We received over \$600,000 in PR from local media.” Additionally, social media posts indicate a high level of public engagement with the various public art initiatives, she says.

“Much of the success, and why we saw the levels of traffic that we did, was that there was something for everyone,” Weirick says. While the utility box project appeals on a grassroots level, art aficionados were drawn to the temporary sculpture display, and the walking tour has educational, healthful, and social components. “We learned through social media that there was a group of employees bringing their lunch, putting on their tennis shoes and walking the avenue to look at the sites on the audio tour,” she says. “It was a call to action to engage people in that space.”

Broad public engagement is a must for this type of initiative, Weirick says. “It has to be reflective of your community. Go through the work of engaging your property owners, the philanthropic community, the education community. We did this holistically, and everyone was proud to take ownership. They all felt they played a role and were an agent of change in bringing attention and love back to Milwaukee’s main street.”

Contact: Beth Weirick, Milwaukee Downtown BID #21, (414) 220-4705, bweirick@milwaukee downtown.com. **DIX**



Key to Change meters collect donations that support programs for the homeless.

Parks don't have to be at street level to attract city center visitors

Downtown leaders looking for more green space or more unique public space may want to look up. Recently completed and under-construction public space is being added to rooftops in several cities. Proponents say that additional space for events and relaxation, sky-high views, and programming will attract more visitors downtown while also enhancing quality of life for residents and employees.

The first elevated public park in Philadelphia, PA (est. pop. 1,526,006), opened in late 2015. Cira Green, in the University City district of the city, is located 95 feet above street level atop a parking garage. The 1.25-acre park affords visitors "pretty incredible views of Philadelphia's ever-evolving skyline in multiple directions," says website UWIS-HUNU. In addition to recreation space, the park has a built-in stormwater management system, and trees, shrubs, and grasses to help alleviate environmental impacts of nearby buildings.

Expansion of the Vancouver (BC, Canada, est. pop. 2,135,201) Public Library's Central branch, slated for completion next spring, includes a public rooftop garden. The two top floors of the building were former provincial government office space. The expansion is transforming 40,000 square feet into additional publicly accessible library and community spaces, and the rooftop garden, reports the *Daily Hive*.

The garden will feature two large outdoor terraces on the north and south sides. Some food vending services will be available on site, as well. Another 8,000 square feet will become space where people can read, work, or simply retreat from the busy city below, says the *Daily Hive*. Programmed events such as lectures, workshops, and community meetings will also attract visitors to the park.

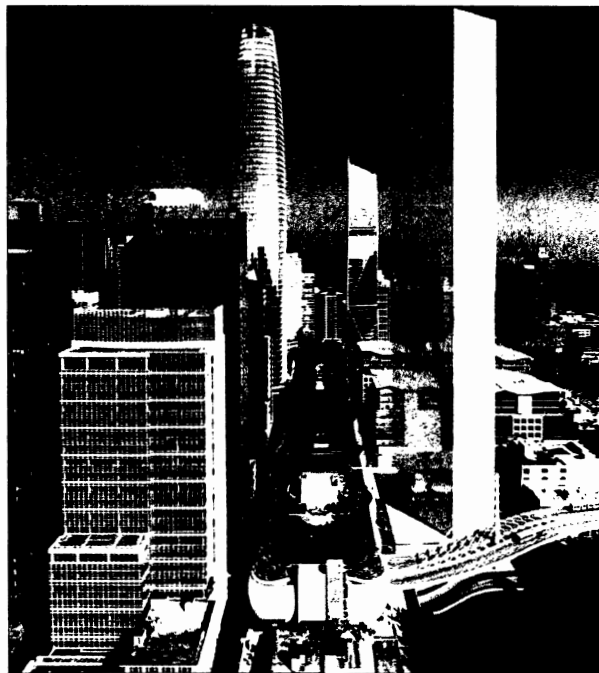
"People are very excited about the garden," Chief Librarian Sandra Singh tells the *Daily Hive*, adding that the library has

been hearing requests for the past 20 years for public access to green space on top of the building.

Retail heavyweight Macy's is considering the addition of public park space on the roof of its flagship Herald Square store in New York City, according to the *New York Post*.

"As part of a strategy to attract more shoppers and make its stores more exciting, Macy's brass are considering plans to develop the rooftop of its massive 2.2 million-square-foot 34th Street store, adding restaurants and open green space, including trees and benches," the *Post* reported in June.

"That store is getting more valuable by the day as the center of gravity in Manhattan shifts southwest to Hudson Yards," Doug Sessler, vice president of real estate for Macy's, tells the *Post*. The rooftop idea is meant to encourage people to meander through the store either on their way up or down from the attractions on the roof, he says.



The new transit station rooftop park will include a dozen gardens, hundreds of trees, and plazas and grassy areas for public enjoyment.

City planning code drives rooftop park development

In San Francisco, CA (est. pop. 805,235), where city planning codes have required public space in new downtown commercial buildings since the 1980s, rooftop parks are more plentiful. Local newspapers and websites often feature round-ups of the best rooftop hangouts, which offer panoramic views, and feature tables, benches, planters, public art, fountains, and more. One rooftop garden offers multiple water features and grassy areas atop a parking garage, for example.

Next spring, a new park will join the San Francisco skyline. Located atop the city's new transit hub, the 5.4-acre park is being billed as one of the city's larger and more spectacular rooftop spaces. The park will include 12 gardens and more than 400 trees, as

well as plazas and grassy areas located on top of the new Salesforce Transit Center, reports NextCity.com.

The park, owned by the Transbay Joint Powers Authority, will be programmed by Biederman Redevelopment Ventures, which has successfully created or revived several public parks, including Bryant Park and Triangle Park in New York City and Pioneer Park in Seattle. Other than food purchases, everything at the new park will be free. Programming will include everything from face painting booths and community festivals to free knitting classes, reports Next City.

"A lot of the attraction will be the horticulture," Dan Biederman tells the *San Francisco Chronicle*, praising the size of some of the more exotic trees that have been installed on the roof. The park is slated to open in March. **DIX**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Program preserves in-town residential neighborhoods

To preserve the integrity of historically residential neighborhoods, the city of Iowa City, IA (est. pop. 67,862), and the University of Iowa launched the UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership Affordable Housing Program. The goal of the program is to preserve and build upon the unique character of residential neighborhoods adjacent to the city center and the University, "by ensuring these neighborhoods remain vital, safe, affordable, and attractive places to live and work."

"Single-family duplex homes were being purchased by landlords and turned into student housing," says Tracy Hightshoe, the city's neighborhood services coordinator. "We started buying rental properties and rehabbing them to sell as owner-occupied."

While everyone loves the students, Hightshoe says, maintaining a balance between rental and owner-occupied homes is essential. In 2010, state grant funds were used to purchase and rehab the first 20 rental properties,

"but now we use the general fund," says Hightshoe. "We work with area lenders who offer us discounted rates, and use the lender's money to buy, and ours to do the rehab."

The city funds up to \$50,000 of renovation per house, and then puts the homes on the market for income-qualified buyers. Renovations are performed by local contractors through a bid process. Home buyers pay the original acquisition price for the home, plus loan and carrying costs such as utilities, mowing, and snow removal accrued during city ownership. Renovation costs are not passed on to homeowners as long as they retain ownership of the property as their primary residence for five years. Additionally, homes must be maintained as affordable, owner-occupied housing for 20 years. "When we get paid by the homeowner, we pay the bank back," says Hightshoe.

Over the past seven years, the city has purchased 63 homes, and rehabbed and sold 58 of those. "We only buy about five a year now,"

Hightshoe says. "The council gives us about \$250,000 to rehab the five homes."

Lessons learned along the way include that purchasing larger homes does not pay. "I would look at the price, because we've learned that with really large homes, you're losing money," she says. "You're paying a lot of money for that property that the homeowner wouldn't. And they are usually run down and cost a lot more than \$50,000 to rehab. I try to go smaller, though it can be hard to find smaller homes in this market. Ideally, our expenses are capped at \$200,000. If a house costs more than that to purchase and fix, we don't buy it."

It's also good to avoid homes which lack off-street parking, she advises. "And we did make one mistake — I don't know why we didn't check, but we bought one that didn't have

a washer/dryer hookup, so even though we'd spent \$50,000 on the rehab, we spent another \$15,000 [to install the appliance hookups]."

To create more impact with the program, the city tries to cluster their purchases, and also takes, "the wart of the neighborhood and turns it into a quaint historic home," Hightshoe says. "That gets us a lot of publicity, and we won a Preservation at its Best award."

Outcomes of the program have been promising. "We've had a lot more families move back in, and we've seen increased attendance at the elementary school," says Hightshoe. "We've also seen neighbors who are not part of the program start to upgrade their own homes, as well."

Contact: Tracy Hightshoe, City of Iowa City, (319) 356-5244, tracy-hightshoe@iowa-city.org. **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

To view the UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership brochure, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Event aims to attract talent and retain businesses — Continued from page 1

is part of suburban St. Louis, and is located in the fastest growing county in Missouri." Several large employers in the area, mainly in the tech, health, and aerospace industries, "all have the same problem — the lack of workforce. The great news about St. Charles County is that in September, we had a 2.7-percent unemployment rate. The bad news is also that we have a 2.7-percent unemployment rate," he says.

"My focus is retention, keeping my existing businesses happy and fulfilled and wanting to reinvest in the city," Leezer says. "If they are concerned about workforce, I need to figure out a way to help them out. It's no different than if they had a street or sewer problem. It's a problem that I have to address, so I am doing something different to help my businesses thrive and prosper in St. Charles."

Casting farther afield for new talent

There is a workforce development office in the city, "and they do great work," Leezer says. "They do job fairs in St. Louis. But with just our 2.7-percent and everybody experiencing low unemployment, all we are doing is stealing

from each other. Given that, I looked east to the state of Illinois."

While business recruitment is the more traditional role of an economic development staffer, instead, "I'm trying to recruit people to come to my town, to live here, work here, and prosper here," Leezer says. "I chose Illinois because, in the fall of 2016, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale released a report that said that over 50 percent of millennials and GenXers want to leave the state. Given that, I decided to go to Illinois and find those people who want to leave the state."

Two job fair/lifestyle events were held in towns with numerous colleges and universities this year. The first, last spring, was held in Effingham, IL, about 1.5 hours east of St. Charles. The second, in October, was held in Bloomington-Normal, IL, about three hours to the north. Representatives from eight businesses attended the first event; seven the second, and in each case, they paid \$500 to participate, with the balance of the event costs coming from the Department of Economic Development's budget.



DowntownDevelopment.com

To view the e-book, and an introductory video, as well as industry-specific videos from St. Charles, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Advertising, the venue, and refreshments for the first event cost about \$12,000, with the second running closer to \$15,000, Leezer says. “The reason I required \$500 was that if we gave it for free, it could be valued at nothing. It makes [participating businesses] commit emotionally to the program. If I didn’t make them commit, they could wake up that morning and decide there was so much on their desks that they would pass. But if they paid \$500, they are going,” he says.

Participating businesses were provided with a list of attendees, denoting when possible the types of jobs each was most interested in exploring. And companies with more than one business location were not required to push only their St. Charles jobs. While pre-registration was encouraged, walk-ins were also welcome. “You could walk in, sign in, and talk to the people you were interested in,” says Leezer. “We had one guy who spent four hours there, and we had some that stayed for 15 or 20 minutes, did their thing, and walked out.”

County workforce development representatives were also in attendance, providing additional job opportunities beyond those offered by the participating businesses. In addition, representatives from the county realtors association provided housing information, and the city’s economic development staff was on hand to tout the quality of life in person, through printed materials, and by directing visitors to the dedicated website, www.growstcharles.com/Live-Work.aspx.

“There was also a long-term strategy to this,” says Leezer. “If you talk to most industries, they will tell you their number one asset is their employees. If I can get the employees down here to St. Charles, eventually those companies will follow them to the city. When they see that we have the asset they are looking for, and are continuing to grow that asset, they will come here, also.”

Both events were marketed through Facebook (free posts and paid ads), Twitter, and LinkedIn. “We also had a contract with our local cable provider,” Leezer says. “It was kind of interesting, because when I called and said we wanted to do ads in Effingham, they said, ‘No, you don’t.’ They said that what I should

do was more of a Google-type ad campaign where we have banner ads on different websites such as Yahoo and Google, and when visitors see the banner and click on it for a few seconds and show interest, the ad follows them. So if they next go to MSNBC, they will see that banner. It keeps our program front and center in their minds.” A series of radio, television, and newspaper interviews were also part of the marketing strategy.

Direct outreach was also done to several local colleges and universities. “We sent staff to do local job fairs and to hand out information in cafeterias to promote what we were doing with these college kids,” says Leezer. And in Bloomington-Normal, “I personally emailed the department chairs of the universities.” Additionally, one university with strong law enforcement and fire fighter programs was targeted, and representatives of the St. Charles police and fire departments attended the event to chat with interested students.

Lessons learned for next time

Neither event was a home run, says Leezer, “but both were really solid singles. While we did not get the numbers I wanted, in Effingham we had about 15 people, and of the 15, three of my companies hired somebody. In Bloomington-Normal last week, I had 20 people, but of the seven companies that went, all but one are ready to make an offer to somebody, which includes my fire and police departments, so my attendees were very happy. I wish I had gotten more numbers, and we tried really hard to get that. The bottom line is that if my companies are happy with it, it doesn’t matter what I think. I just want them to feel they got a return on their investment.”

The economic development staff will be meeting with each company for feedback early in 2018, and more events will be scheduled. The banner ads, which worked really well, will be used again, as will direct outreach to colleges. “I’ll probably do a television ad of some type,” says Leezer. “While we are focusing on GenX and millennials, that’s not the only thing we’re looking at. If someone is 50 and wants to come down here, I’ll take them — and they are more likely to watch television ads than YouTube.”

Facebook ads tended to reach older audiences, as well. "That older audience would see the ads and contact their kids," says Leezer. Two of the attendees in Effingham had driven three hours to be there, at the urging of their mothers, who had learned about the event on Facebook, he says.

Advertising aimed at women may be more of a focus in 2018, as will targeted outreach to several military bases within a few hours' drive of St. Charles. The hours of each event

will be reduced, as well. The Effingham event, which was the "beta test" was from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in hopes of capturing first, second, and third shift workers. "That really didn't pan out well," says Leezer. "So in Bloomington-Normal, from 4 to 6 p.m. was networking, followed by a reception with beer and wine from 6 to 8 p.m. Honestly, next time, I will just do the reception and make it two hours total."

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COMMUNICATION

Digital sign provides transit information, ad space, and collects public engagement data

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority in Cambridge, MA (est. pop. 105,162), has teamed up with technology company Soofa to test what the partners say is the world's first digital community bulletin board. The new 42-inch Soofa Sign was installed this fall in Kendall Square, an area that sees more than 50,000 downtown employees daily. With thousands of tourists, students, and commuters also passing through the area each day, part of the CRA's mission is to provide clear messaging.

"Our team collaborates closely with the CRA to test new features, communication, and engagement strategies," says Ed Krafcik, Soofa's director of partnerships, noting that solar-powered "electronic paper" is an interesting new format that the CRA was eager to explore.

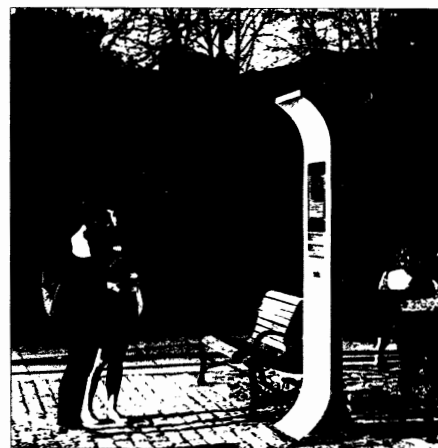
"The CRA was interested in piloting new community outreach tools for local organizations and businesses in the heart of Kendall Square, a global center of innovation for the technology and biotechnology industries," says CRA Executive Director Tom Evens. "We were especially interested in expanding our avenues for advertising public meetings and events related to our redevelopment projects and other city projects."

The cost of the signage was covered with a barter of sorts. An agreement between Soofa

and the CRA allows the company to utilize the sign location free of charge in exchange for a percentage of the advertising being devoted to CRA messages.

The sign in Kendall Square is strategically positioned in front of the outbound T-stop, and provides commuters with real-time transit information. "Along with train schedules, we are curating content featuring local artists, memes we love, and neighborhood happenings," says Krafcik, noting that the self-contained signs require only four bolts to install and provide wireless connectivity as well as public information. The sign functions as a single unit and as a network, linked together through the company's cloud-based content management system.

Since its installation, the Kendall Square sign has also been used to post help wanted ads, and to conduct public engagement experiments to see what passing pedestrians best respond to in terms of text and graphics.



Soofa signs are becoming the digital community bulletin board in Boston, Cambridge, Atlanta, and other U. S. cities.

"We're spending countless hours on site in Kendall testing different types of content and counting how many people stop, how many take action, and asking them why," says Krafcik. "Thus far, the Internet high five has been one of the most successful. Hundreds of people have given the sign a high five."

The company also hopes to attract more and different types of eye-catching advertising for the sign as people become more familiar with its capabilities.

Soofa has three more spaces available for communities wanting to participate in its early adopter program piloting the new signage technology. "Over the coming months, we will have dozens of signs across Boston, Cambridge, Atlanta, and others to be announced," Krafcik says.

Contact: Tom Evans, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, (617) 492-6800, tevans@cambridgeredevelopment.org; Ed Krafcik, Soofa, (908) 295-4210, edward@soofa.co. **DIX**

PATHWAYS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Alley project cleaner, safer, and less costly

Improvements to a cluttered, deteriorating alley in downtown Elko, NV (est. pop. 18,297), have not only made the area more safe, attractive, and walkable, but saved adjacent business owners money on trash collection rates, as well.

"Our downtown main central block has several bars, as well as small businesses," says Cathy Laughlin, city planner. "With those bars came several tipper cart containers for the trash collection from our local collection company, Elko Sanitation."

There was little room to resolve issues in the cluttered alley.

The alley was already congested, with several utility poles and gas meters protruding into the space. "Add 17 tipper carts and you have quite the obstacle course to drive through," Laughlin says. "The alley was always dirty with trash and weeds. The asphalt was deteriorating, as well."

With most properties within the block built to the property line, there was little room to resolve issues in the cluttered alley. Fortunately, one building near the center of the block varied from this practice, with a small vacant area facing the alley.

"I met with that property owner and discussed the option of the city engaging in a license agreement with him to occupy 10-feet deep by 25-feet wide of the rear of his property for a central trash collection area," says

Laughlin. The owner agreed, so the option was put before the city council. "We also surveyed the business and property owners within the block and received 100-percent positive feedback," she says.

"We then put out to bid the project of removing his old fence, adding a new fence and gate, concrete slab with curbing for the dumpster carts, and the addition of a solar street light for safety," says Laughlin. "We worked with the local trash collection company to come up with a fair fee schedule for the users of the block, and they all saw a reduction in their rates by going from the tipper carts to the consolidated collection area."

Fees are based on the square footage of a building, occupancy type, and number of days the business is open each week. "For example, a bar that is 1,500 square feet, open seven days a week is not charged the same as a bar of 1,500 square feet that is open only three days a week, as the latter would accumulate less trash," Laughlin says.

"With the removal of the tipper carts and the new consolidated trash collection area recessed off the alley, we were then able to do an asphalt overlay down the alley, as well," she says, which makes the area more walkable.

Contact: Cathy Laughlin, City of Elko, (775) 777-7160, claughlin@elkocitynv.gov. **DIX**

Idea Exchange

Ten things residents want

Safety, economic health, and education/enrichment opportunities are the top three things that residents nationwide want in their communities. That's according to the NRC's 2016 review of data from The National Citizen Survey which includes input from over 500 cities and 100,000 residents.

Next in order of importance are: opportunities to interact with the natural environment, strong image/reputation, overall appearance, strong sense of community, health and wellness opportunities, ease of physical mobility, and the quality of the built environment.



To view a report on the data with NRC Vice President Michelle Kobayashi, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Iconic department store finds new life

While the flagship Lord & Taylor department store in New York City has been an institution for over 100 years, Mark A. Cohen, the director of retail studies at Columbia Business School, tells the *New York Times* that, "The department store really is a dinosaur." Enter a creative arrangement for the landmark building.

The store's parent company will sell the building and will rent



out about a quarter of the space, where it will operate a smaller version of the original store.

New amenities enliven park

The focal point of an effort to activate downtown Atlanta's Woodruff Park is a new game cart. The brightly-colored mobile activity kiosk is filled with recreational supplies, from chess sets and board games to whiffle balls and Frisbees. Park staff, recreation interns, and local volunteers maintain the game cart's inventory and assist park visitors with checking out supplies to be used in the gaming area on the gazebo or on the park's main lawn.

"Thanks to Southwest's generous Heart of the Community grant, we were able to utilize community feedback to bring ideas to the park that can be enjoyed by everyone," says A.J. Robinson, president of Central Atlanta Progress. "We believe that these park improvements, including the

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

game cart, will generate a hub of positive activity that adds vibrancy to this iconic downtown greenspace.”

Chefs and farmers team up

The fifth annual FreshTaste event in downtown Anderson SC’s Wren Park saw more than 2,500 foodies descend on the city in October. The event pairs local farmers with chefs who showcase their talents by creating unique sample size items for the event. This year eight teams participated and vied for recognition in the people’s choice awards. Local artists, businesses, and musicians round out the festive atmosphere.

FreshTaste is produced by the city of Anderson and the Anderson Area Farm and Food Association.

Monthly event attracts women

Each month Downtown Deland, the main street program in Deland, FL, hosts a Wine, Women & Chocolate event. Like many “girls night out” events, the monthly gathering aims to provide a fun shopping experience downtown.

The event includes monthly themes such as Day of the Dead and ugly Christmas sweater. Women download a passport and visit participating businesses to have their

Experiences drive shopping

In an effort to increase consumer spending in Center City, the Center City District and Philadelphia Retail Marketing Alliance launched the Shop Center City campaign.

In the spring of 2017, the District conducted a customer survey to gather information on Center City shoppers, including their spending patterns and shopping preferences.

“It was clear this was not an either/or choice between online and in-store shopping. Survey respondents said that what they valued most about Center City are experiences you cannot find anywhere else in the region or online,” says Paul Levy, president & CEO of the District. “They liked our walkability, diversity of food, entertainment, cultural offerings, and the strong presence of local shops. Seventy-nine percent of respondents noted that while they shop online, 76 percent simultaneously shopped in Center City, with around 30 percent frequenting a regional mall.”



The new advertising campaign features Philadelphia-based “brand ambassadors” sharing their downtown stories and shopping experiences.

Ads appear in print media, bus shelters, car cards and digital screens on Regional Rail, and LED screens in downtown’s Dilworth Park. They are supplemented with content on social media and at ShopCenterCityPhilly.com, the website for the campaign.

At the site, Michele Waters, a downtown employee and one of the ambassadors, talks about her fashion style, favorite places to shop, eat, drink, and more.

passports stamped and entered in a prize drawing. Each location also provides wine and food samples. Desiree Freeland, the program coordinator, tells the *Orlando Sentinel*

that roughly 100 passports are turned in each month. “It puts feet on the street on a Wednesday night,” she says. “Everybody’s getting out and having a good time.” **DIX**