



CITY OF ELKO

Planning Department

Website: www.elkocitynv.gov
Email: planning@elkocitynv.gov

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

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

The City of Elko Redevelopment Agency will meet in a regular session on Tuesday, February 26, 2019 in the Council Chambers at Elko City Hall, 1751 College Avenue, Elko, Nevada, beginning at 3:00 P.M., P.S.T.

Attached with this notice is the agenda for said meeting of the Redevelopment Agency. 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: February 20, 2019 2:10 p.m.

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

Date/Time Posted: February 20, 2019 2:05 p.m.

ELKO POLICE DEPARTMENT – 1448 Silver Street, Elko NV 89801

Date/Time Posted: February 20, 2019 2:15 p.m.

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

Date/Time Posted: February 20, 2019 2:00 p.m.

Posted by: Shelby Archuleta, Planning Technician

Name

Title

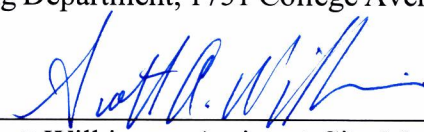
Signature

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, or on the City website at <http://www.elkocitynv.gov/>.

Dated this 20th day of February 2019.

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, Assistant City Manager

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
3:00 P.M., P.S.T., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2019
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

The agenda for this meeting of the City of Elko Redevelopment Agency (RDA) 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

November 13, 2018 – Regular Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

I. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Presentation by Cathy Laughlin, City Planner on the Redevelopment Activities from 2008 to Present. **INFORMATION ONLY – NON ACTION ITEM**

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review, consideration, and possible action to accept the 2018 Redevelopment Agency Annual Report, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

Pursuant to the provisions of NRS 279.586, the agency shall submit to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, for transmittal to the Legislature, and to the legislative body an annual report on a form prescribed by the Committee on Local Government Finance.

III. REPORTS

- A. Budget
- B. Other

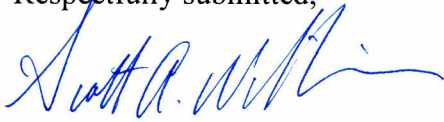
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NOTE: The Chairman or Vice Chairman reserves the right to change the order of the agenda and if the agenda is not completed, to recess the meeting and continue on another specified date and time. Additionally, the Redevelopment Agency reserves the 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 AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
3:30 P.M., P.S.T., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2018
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chris Johnson, Chairman of the City of Elko Redevelopment Agency (RDA).

ROLL CALL

Present: **John Rice**
 Reece Keener
 Robert Schmittlein
 Mayor Chris Johnson

Excused: **Mandy Simons**

City Staff Present: **Curtis Calder, City Manager**
 Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager
 Bob Thibault, Civil Engineer
 Cathy Laughlin, City Planner
 Dennis Strickland, Public Works Director
 Shelby Archuleta, Planning Technician

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 11, 2018 – Regular Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

***** A motion was made by Reece Keener, seconded by Robert Schmittlein to approve the minutes with a correction of the spelling of the CEO of Nevada Casino Holdings, Dave Zornes' last name.**

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

I. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review, consideration and possible acceptance of the Centennial Park Expansion Project and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

At the May 15, 2018 Elko Redevelopment Agency meeting, the RDA awarded a contract to Element Construction for the Centennial Park Expansion Project. The project has been completed and staff recommends final acceptance of the project.

Dennis Strickland, Public Works Director, explained that the project was completed in conformance with the plans and specifications. He thought there was one small change order for \$1,900.63 for a new sprinkler valve box configuration, and the relocation.

Cathy Laughlin, City Planner, explained that there was \$250,000 budgeted for the project and it was completed at \$173,714.

***** A motion was made by Robert Schmittlein, seconded by John Rice to have final acceptance of the Centennial Park Expansion Project.**

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

Lina Blohm said that she attended the DBA meeting earlier. She thanked the City and everyone involved for providing a great venue. They are looking for the concert to come to Elko in the summer. The upcoming Snowflake Festival will be centered between 5th Street and the Tower.

B. Review, consideration, and possible action regarding replacing the existing lights in the corridor area with new LED lamps and ballast, and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

The RAC considered this agenda item at their October 25, 2018 meeting and recommended to the RDA to approve the replacement of the lights for a total expenditure of \$10,000 and to submit a letter to NV Energy to request a flat rate reduction or metered rate for the new LED lighting.

Ms. Laughlin explained that they have had this discussion at the RAC meeting several times, in regards to safety in the downtown corridor as well as the lighting. They felt that it could be an NV Energy issue, where those lights have never been cleaned. They reached out to NV Energy last year and asked what it would take for the City of Elko to take on the lights. NV Energy owns the lights from 3rd Street to 7th Street and they were paid for by a grant that funded all of the downtown corridor area. The reply Ms. Laughlin received from NV Energy last year was extremely high, for the amount of money that they wanted for the City to buy the lights from them. They are fully depreciated. Jon Karr reached out to Robert Lino and asked him for a quote on what it would take to retro fit them to an LED. While they do the retro fit, the lens would have to come down, and at that time, we would have someone there to help clean the lenses. Robert Lino gave an estimate of \$10,000 for the replacement. Ms. Laughlin met with NV Energy this morning. They told her that the \$10,000 would just cover their labor cost, and not the material cost. She stated that if the City was willing to agree to this, approve it, and give them \$10,000 that they need to do a partnership with City of Elko. We are a very large user and they have LED retrofit programs available within NV Energy. They said they would get back to Ms.

Laughlin within 3 to 4 weeks. This approval would just be allocating \$10,000 towards that, and hope that they would partner for the additional costs. They also had discussion at the RAC meeting about doing an adjustment to the flat rate for a reduced cost, or a meter on the lights.

Mr. Keener asked if the polls were paid for by a grant and if NV Energy owns the ballasts and the light fixtures.

Ms. Laughlin explained that NV Energy owns the whole thing.

Mr. Keener asked if that was why facilities couldn't touch them. (Yes)

Ms. Laughlin said that the City has offered to buy the LED light and ballast and replace them, like what was done from 7th Street to 11th Street. However, the lights belong to NV Energy and they will not allow our facilities to work on them.

Mr. Keener asked if they were a globe at the top. (Yes). He thought it would be good for the security in the downtown to have more light.

Ms. Blohm explained that security was the number one reason that RAC was concerned about getting this lighting system going. Time is of the essence. They have noticed increased aggravations between 4th Street and 5th Street and Railroad and Commercial. It is of optimum importance.

Mayor Chris Johnson said that he has always wanted to have more light in that area. He asked if this was a first request to NV Energy.

Ms. Laughlin explained that the first request was to have them convey all of the lights over to the City.

Mayor Johnson asked how long ago that was.

Ms. Laughlin said it was a year ago. They came back with a ridiculous amount of money. Then, the next option was to see if the City could work with them on a retrofit.

Robert Schmittlein asked if this would be a one-time cost. The City will pay for the initial cost of the material and the installation. He assumed that NV Energy would continue to maintain them. He asked how much was projected for the additional luminary lighting that these will enhance.

Ms. Laughlin said it was in NV Energy's franchise agreement to maintain the lights, and that she hadn't seen the projections for how much additional luminary the lights would be enhanced.

Mr. Strickland said they needed to be careful that with light pollution. They don't want them to be too bright. He thought they would be increased by 20 to 30%. They met the standards when they measured them, so any improvement will bring it up.

*****A motion was made by Reece Keener, seconded by Robert Schmittlein to approve the expenditure of \$10,000 to retrofit the lighting in the downtown corridor between 3rd Street**

and 7th Street and that will include submission of a letter to NV Energy to request a flat rate reduction or metered rate for the new LED lighting.

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

II. REPORTS

A. Budget

Ms. Laughlin gave a report on the budget.

B. Other

Ms. Laughlin reported that she was working together with Stockmen's Hotel, as well as the DBA, on the parking lot on Silver between 4th Street and 5th Street. We have asked Stockmen's to hire an engineer and get the design done on it. The City provided them the survey of the parking lot. They have come back with a couple different designs so far. What they plan on doing is proposing to the DBA, and the DBA possibly contribute some funds to that, and then get an agreement with the DBA that allows the DBA to use it for their downtown events. Then they will give the City an engineer's estimate and we can put on an RDA agenda for consideration on a public private partnership. The design calls out a lot of lighting and landscaping. Ms. Laughlin thought it would be a huge improvement for the area. She met with NV Energy on what it would take to underground those power lines. They are going to throw out some preliminary numbers on that.

Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager, asked if the Stockmen's participation would be contingent on the restaurant going into the Stockmen's. (Yes)

Mr. Keener asked if it would be a flat asphalt slab. He asked if there were any sort of landscaping or curb.

Ms. Laughlin explained that there was a lot of landscaping proposed. It's splitting the parking lot into two sections, with a row of landscaping in the middle.

There was further discussion on details of the parking lot.

Mr. Keener asked if there had been any change in status on the DuPont building, or any inquiries.

Ms. Laughlin said no. She added that the RAC approved the recognition program. We will be working on that. They decided to do that annually.

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Chris J. Johnson, Chairman
Redevelopment Agency

DRAFT

**City of Elko Redevelopment Agency
Agenda Action Sheet**

1. Title: **Review, consideration, and possible action to accept the 2018 Redevelopment Agency Annual Report, and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
2. Meeting Date: **February 26, 2019**
3. Agenda Category: **NEW BUSINESS**
4. Time Required: **10 minutes**
5. Background Information: **Pursuant to the provisions of NRS 279.586, the agency shall submit to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, for transmittal to the Legislature, and to the legislative body an annual report on a form prescribed by the Committee on Local Government Finance. CL**
6. Budget Information:
 Appropriation Required: **N/A**
 Budget amount available: **N/A**
 Fund name: **N/A**
7. Business Impact Statement: **Not Required**
8. Supplemental Agenda Information: **2018 Redevelopment Agency Annual Report**
9. Recommended Motion: **Accept the 2018 Redevelopment Agency Annual Report**
10. Prepared By: **Cathy Laughlin, City Planner**
11. Committee/Other Agency Review:
12. Agency Action:
13. Agenda Distribution:



City of Elko
1751 College Avenue
Elko, NV 89801
(775) 777-7100 (775) 777-7106 Fax

January 7, 2019

**Rick Combs, Director
Legislative Counsel Bureau
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701-4747**

RE: Redevelopment Agency Annual Report per NRS 279-6025

Dear Mr. Combs;

Pursuant to NRS 279-6025, the City of Elko Redevelopment Agency “shall submit to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, for transmittal to the Legislature, and to the legislative body a report on a form prescribed by the Committee on Local Government Finance that includes, without limitation, the following information for the redevelopment area for the previous fiscal year”.

Please find enclosed the City of Elko Redevelopment Agency Annual Report for 2018.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Cathy Laughlin, City Planner, at (775)777-7160.

Sincerely,

**Reece Keener, Chairman
City of Elko Redevelopment Agency**

Redevelopment Agency Annual Report

For Redevelopment Areas Established Before 7/1/2011

PURSUANT TO NRS 279.6025

Agency Name: City of Elko Redevelopment Agency

Project Area Name: Redevelopment Area

Tax District Number(s) 11.5

Please Provide the Following Information:

Fiscal Year covered by this report: 2018

1. Property tax revenue received from any tax increment area, as defined in NRS 278C.130: \$292,341.79 ^a
2. Combined overlapping tax rate of the redevelopment area: 3.4823 ^b
3. Effective property tax rate of the redevelopment area: 2.7168 ^c (overlapping rate minus carve-out rate)
4. Total sum of the assessed value of the taxable property in the redevelopment area: 45,647,508 ^d
5. Is the amount in #4 (above) less than the total sum of the assessed value of the taxable property in the redevelopment area for any other previous fiscal year?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If Yes, please explain the reason for the difference (attach additional pages if necessary): ^e _____

6. Attach a copy of any memoranda of understanding (MOU) into which the agency enters.

Detailed MOU attached:

☐ Yes

☒ No

7. Attach a detailed amortization schedule for any debt incurred for the redevelopment area and the reason for incurring the debt.

Detailed amortization schedule attached:

☐ Yes

☒ No

8. Has there been any change to the boundary of the redevelopment area?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If Yes, please explain the reason for the change (attach additional pages if necessary): _____

This report prepared by:

Catalina Laughlin

City Planner/Redevelopment Mgr.

1/7/2019

Name (please print)

Title

Date

Catalina Laughlin
Signature

a Source:

b Source:

c Source:

d Source:

e Source:

Redevelopment Agency 2018/2019 Budget

July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

Revenues		
	Approved Budget	As of 2/20/2019
Beginning Fund Balance	\$803,514	
Budget to beginning fund balance dif.	\$47,208	
Property Tax Revenues (anticipated)	\$338,608	\$248,472
Interest Revenues (anticipated)	\$4,750	\$6,843
Transfer in from General Fund		
Total Revenues	\$1,194,080	\$255,316

Balance to date	\$955,793
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Expenditures		
	Approved Budget	As of 2/20/2019
Legal	\$20,000	\$290
Public Improvements		
Misc. items	\$1,000	\$237
Storefront Program (pledged 2017/18)	\$25,000	
Storefront Program (pledged 2018/19)	\$55,105	
Public-Private Partnerships	\$75,000	
Expn. of Centennial Park 7th Street	\$215,631	\$149,718
Balance towards savings	\$802,244	
Revolving Fund	\$100	
Total Expenses	\$1,194,080	\$150,245

Elko Redevelopment Agency
Analysis of Revenues & Expenditures

Year Ending	Description	Revenues	Expenditures	Balance
Jun-09	Ad Valorem Taxes	88,641.09	-	88,641.09
	Interest Revenue	170.94		88,812.03
	Total FY 2009	88,812.03	-	88,812.03
Jun-10	Ad Valorem Taxes	93,922.62	-	182,734.65
	Interest Revenue	1,495.02	-	184,229.67
	Acct Analysis Fees	-	91.27	184,138.40
	Total FY 2010	95,417.64	91.27	184,138.40
Jun-11	Ad Valorem Taxes	114,283.91	-	298,422.31
	Interest Revenue	538.37	-	298,960.68
	Acct Analysis Fees		-	298,960.68
	CRSA Inc.		47,500.00	251,460.68
	Acct Analysis Fees		204.21	251,256.47
	Total FY 2011	114,822.28	47,704.21	251,256.47
Jun-12	Ad Valorem Taxes	154,710.95	-	405,967.42
	Interest Revenue	315.90	-	406,283.32
	Tranfers In	8,000.00	-	414,283.32
	Print n Copy Center		963.60	413,319.72
	Seasonal Labor		1,127.50	412,192.22
	Benefits		135.87	412,056.35
	CRSA Inc.		2,500.00	409,556.35
	Progressive Plants		3,792.17	405,764.18
	Acct Analysis Fees		74.62	405,689.56
	Total FY 2012	163,026.85	8,593.76	405,689.56
Jun-13	Ad Valorem Taxes	152,714.47	-	558,404.03
	Interest Revenue	407.74	-	558,811.77
	Misc Revenue - Bids	150.00		558,961.77
	Tranfers In	178,222.00	-	737,183.77
	Print n Copy Center		921.27	736,262.50
	Seasonal Labor		6,787.50	729,475.00
	Benefits		817.90	728,657.10
	Elko Chamber of Commerce		1,000.00	727,657.10
	IFA - Fertilizer		278.30	727,378.80
	Acct Analysis Fees		91.29	727,287.51
	Summit Engineering		14,370.00	712,917.51
	Elko Daily Free Press		108.66	712,808.85
	Total FY 2013	331,494.21	24,374.92	712,808.85
Jun-14	Ad Valorem Taxes	176,245.51	-	889,054.36
	Interest Revenue	250.67	-	889,305.03
	Tranfers In	-	-	889,305.03
	CRSA Inc.		7,500.00	881,805.03
	MKD Construction Inc.		454,117.82	427,687.21
	Summit Engineering		12,742.50	414,944.71
	City of Elko		1,036.00	413,908.71
	Total FY 2014	176,496.18	475,396.32	413,908.71
Jun-15	Ad Valorem Taxes	225,509.42	-	639,418.13
	Interest Revenue	917.42	-	640,335.55
	Tranfers In	-	-	640,335.55
	Goicoechea & DiGrazia LTD		1,945.00	638,390.55
	CRSA Inc		17,500.00	620,890.55
	Leland Consulting, Inc.		93,774.37	527,116.18
	Logan Simpson Design Inc.		102,538.38	424,577.80
	General Supplies		53.34	424,524.46
	Elko Daily Free Press		57.17	424,520.63
	Total FY 2015	226,426.84	215,868.26	424,520.63
Jun-16	Ad Valorem Taxes	250,442.35	-	674,962.98
	Interest Revenue	1,980.78	-	676,943.76
	Tranfers In	-	-	676,943.76
	Elko Daily Free Press		1,089.06	675,854.70

Goicoechea & DiGrazia LTD	8,867.62	666,987.08
General Supplies	114.40	666,872.68
Logan Simpson Design Inc.	38,059.51	628,927.57
Total FY 2016	252,423.13	48,130.59
Jun-17 Ad Valorem Taxes	322,484.25	-
Interest Revenue	4,716.34	-
Tranfers In	-	-
Goicoechea & DiGrazia LTD	8,440.00	947,688.16
General Supplies	255.00	947,433.16
Chilton Centennial Tower	4,742.94	942,690.22
Underground Util. 7th St.	11,206.18	931,484.04
Total FY 2017	327,200.59	24,644.12
Jun-18 Ad Valorem Taxes	292,341.79	-
Interest Revenue	7,750.82	-
Tranfers In	50,000.00	-
Donations	85,020.00	1,366,596.65
Goicoechea & DiGrazia LTD	3,705.90	1,362,890.75
General Supplies	302.90	1,362,587.85
Alley Project	31,254.58	1,331,333.27
Underground Util. 7th St.	215,686.64	1,115,646.63
Storefront Program	41,175.49	1,074,471.14
Park Expansion Project 3	36,168.18	1,038,302.96
Chilton Centennial Tower	187,412.62	850,890.34
Total FY 2018	435,112.61	515,706.31
Life to Date		
Ad Valorem Taxes	1,871,296.36	1,871,296.36
Interest Revenue	18,544.00	1,889,840.36
Miscellaneous Revenues	85,170.00	1,975,010.36
Tranfers In	236,222.00	2,211,232.36
Print n Copy Center	1,884.87	2,209,347.49
Seasonal Labor & Benefits	8,868.77	2,200,478.72
IFA - Fertilizer	278.30	2,200,200.42
Progressive Plants	3,792.17	2,196,408.25
Account Analysis Fees	461.39	2,195,946.86
Elko Daily Free Press	1,254.89	2,194,691.97
Elko Chamber of Commerce	1,000.00	2,193,691.97
Summit Engineering	27,112.50	2,166,579.47
MKD Construction Inc.	454,117.82	1,712,461.65
General Supplies	725.64	1,711,736.01
City of Elko	1,036.00	1,710,700.01
Goicoechea & DiGrazia LTD	22,958.52	1,687,741.49
CRSA Inc	75,000.00	1,612,741.49
Leland Consulting, Inc.	93,774.37	1,518,967.12
Logan Simpson Design Inc.	140,597.89	1,378,369.23
Alley Project	31,254.58	1,347,114.65
Underground Util. 7th St	226,892.82	1,120,221.83
Park Expansion Project	36,168.18	1,084,053.65
Storefront Program	41,175.49	1,042,878.16
Chilton Centennial Tower	192,155.56	850,722.60



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

Vol. 65, No. 12
December 2018

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@DowntownDevelopment.com

Becoming a Trail Town: Guide
Opportunity Zones: Overview

Preservation of Historic
Signs: NPS brief

Invisible Art: Archive article

ATTRACTION

Open Streets programs bring pedestrians, cyclists to downtowns

Downtown leaders everywhere know that festivals and events can bring visitors pouring in.

But what about closing streets to cars without the added attraction of a special event? Proponents of the Open Streets movement say regularly repurposing streets can act as an attraction of its own.

"It's a phenomenal way to build community," says Mike Lydon, principal at Brooklyn-based Street Plans and creator of The Open Streets Project. "You get tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of people out in the streets and out of their cars.

This is a way to slow people down and get them excited about living in a city."

Open Streets projects trace their roots to Bogota, Colombia, in the 1970s. Today, Open Streets initiatives take place in more than 400 municipalities, ranging from major cities such as Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles to smaller cities such as Macon, GA (est. pop. 152,862), and Grenta, LA (est. pop. 17,935).

Gretna recently hosted a modest Open Streets event that closed three-quarters of a mile of streets and

(Continued on page 2)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Village updates zoning, land-use rules to encourage new generation of retail

South Orange, NJ, (est. pop. 16,198), had a business-recruitment problem. There was no shortage of tenants interested in setting up shop in South Orange's downtown — but the village's rules didn't allow for many of the types of experience-based tenants that are taking space in downtowns nationwide.

The municipality's rules were "very, very restrictive," says Bob

Zuckerman, executive director of the South Orange Village Center Alliance. So Zuckerman embarked on a three-year project that took a comprehensive look at South Orange's ability to recruit businesses.

Perhaps the biggest achievement was to remove barriers for businesses hoping to locate in South Orange.

The village's zoning and land-use

(Continued on page 7)

ATTRACTION

Downtowns pool resources to market retail space nationally

Michigan's Oakland County, home to 25 historic downtowns, long has focused its economic development efforts on recruiting corporate headquarters.

Now, Oakland County has shifted its focus to recruiting retailers to its Main Streets.

In 2017, the county hired a retail consultant to help the Main Street Oakland County communities market to retailers. The consultant pitched Oakland County at RECon, the International Council of Shopping Centers' annual conference and trade show that brings together retailers and real estate professionals.

The consultant came back from the May event with more than 20 promising leads, says Irene Spanos, Oakland County's director of economic development and community affairs. While no leases had been signed as of early October, Spanos says she expects deals to close in the near future.

Spanos says there's no particular crisis in Oakland County's downtowns, but she simply aims to create a pipeline of projects.

"We want to be more proactive," she says.

One selling point: Retail space in Oakland County's downtowns can lease for as little as \$6 a square foot, a fraction of the price of retail space in the nation's coastal markets.

"West Coasters and East Coasters are like, 'Oh, my God — that's so cheap,'" Spanos says.

"A lot of retailers bypass the middle of the country," she says. "But our residents have a lot of disposable income. They have money to spend, and they want to shop. We want them to spend it here rather than going somewhere else."

Oakland County is a region of 1.2 million people just north of Detroit. The downtowns participating in the retail program include Farmington (est. pop. 10,578) and Pontiac (est. pop. 59,792) — communities that typically lack the financial heft to market themselves nationally.

Other downtowns in the retail program include Berkley, Clawson, Ferndale, Franklin, Highland, Holly, Lake Orion, Ortonville, Oxford, Rochester, and Royal Oak.

For many smaller communities it can be difficult to develop these same retail attraction campaigns due to budget and time constraints. Spanos says she thought a plan focused on retail attraction would be a great service to offer these communities.

Spanos said working to recruit nationally, or hiring a consultant, isn't within the typical budget of a downtown district.

Contact: Irene Spanos, Oakland County,
248-858-9099. **DIX**

Open Streets programs bring pedestrians, cyclists to downtowns — Continued from page 1

cost just \$1,500 to organize. At the opposite end of the cost spectrum, Los Angeles spends upwards of \$500,000 to close long stretches of major roads.

The upside is that hundreds of thousands of people turn out for Open Streets events in LA. And the stores that market to Open Streets participants report a 57 percent jump

in sales, Lydon says.

A typical Open Streets event costs about \$20,000 to \$30,000 to stage, Lydon says, mostly for the cost of hiring police to patrol intersections and make certain motorists stay clear.

"The biggest cost is always traffic control," he says.

Building a sponsorship proposal for an Open Streets event

Hosting an Open Streets initiative typically doesn't require a huge investment, but it does cost money to close streets and market an event. The Open Streets Project offers this advice for approaching potential sponsors:

Part One: Crafting the pitch. Before you ask organizations for money, you first need to polish a pitch that will appeal to them. Areas to consider:

1. What kind of support are you looking for from different sponsors — money, services in-kind, programming, media exposure, equipment, labor?
2. What does a sponsor get in exchange for what you're requesting? Describe the bump in exposure or increase in sales they can expect.
3. What industries will you target and why?
4. What's your Open Streets marketing plan?
5. How will your Open Streets program align with sponsors brand goals?

Part Two: Making the pitch. When you visit potential sponsors, keep things clear and brief,

and make sure to hit these six points:

1. The problem you are trying to solve. Why does your community need Open Streets?
2. Connect the sponsor's business, whether it's store locations or target audience, with the people you'll attract.
3. Explain why the potential sponsor is a good fit. And describe what you want from the sponsor.
4. Communicate the values and beliefs of Open Streets, and show a map or rendering of the event in your city.
5. Demonstrate Open Streets' successes elsewhere. Explain how events have attracted participants in other cities, and the potential for press coverage and community support in your town.
6. Say thank you. Leave your contact information along with a one-page information sheet about Open Streets, a budget overview, a timeline for the event, and a formal letter requesting sponsorship.

Tip sheets on marketing, logistics, and other topics are available at openstreetsproject.org.

Open Streets elements

While cities can use their own discretion about how to organize Open Streets events, Lydon says there are a few common themes that drive this pedestrian-friendly movement:

- Events should happen regularly. Lydon suggests closing streets on a monthly or quarterly basis. The Open Streets events typically are planned on weekends.
- The longer the distance, the better. Lydon urges downtowns to close at least three miles of streets to traffic. Of course, that rule isn't hard and fast — smaller cities might not have the geographic reach to close that much roadway.
- Keep it free. While many downtown events offset costs by charging admission, the Open Streets ethos calls for treating traffic-free streets as public parks. Lydon says organizers tend not to charge vendors, either.

• Create programming. While Open Streets events don't revolve around music or food, those types of attractions should be part of the event. "You've got to give them things along the way to walk to," Lydon says. Possibilities include exercise classes or dance demonstrations, music and art, and places for relaxation.

• Connect the event to the big picture. "We really want to see cities making links to larger priorities — air quality, public health, business development," Lydon says.

In Macon, the annual Open Streets event attracts 1,200 to 1,500 people, organizer Rachel Hollar says. Bike Walk Macon closes two miles of downtown streets for four hours on a Sunday in October. The free event attracts visitors with such offerings as yoga and Zumba classes, a bike-safety clinic,

"This is a way to slow people down and get them excited about living in a city."

a skateboard exhibition, and a Pokemon Go scavenger hunt.

The Pokemon Go feature was especially popular in 2018, Hollar says — some 300 to 400 people showed up specifically to find virtual treasures on their phones.

“Getting it off the ground can be challenging, because funders or city leaders don’t really understand it until they actually see it.”

Macon’s Open Streets event typically costs \$6,000 to \$7,000 to host, Hollar says. Much of that expense is devoted to marketing, graphic design, and public relations, Hollar says. Bike Walk Macon also paid a DJ to play music and a chalk artist to decorate the street.

Traffic control cost just \$1,500 in 2018 — Bike Walk Macon paid 10 police officers \$150 apiece to patrol intersections. Getting police to embrace the Open Streets concept took a bit of coaching, Hollar says.

Typically, when officers accept traffic control assignments, they sit in their vehicles to direct motorists around construction areas. At Macon’s first Open Streets event in 2016, officers assumed the traffic detail was similar to a typical construction assignment, and they stayed in their squad cars.

For the 2018 event, however, officers chatted with visitors, creating what Hollar describes as a more welcoming vibe.

Other municipal agencies also seized the opportunity to get in front of participants. The library took applications for library cards, the transit agency demonstrated how to load bikes on buses, and the health department distributed bike helmets.

Hollar says the Open Streets project offers a way to showcase a downtown that’s seeing

an influx of new residents moving into loft apartments.

“Our downtown is definitely going through a renaissance,” she says.

Organizers of the Open Streets event take pains to attract a racially mixed crowd, and to reflect the reality that Macon is home to a large population of people too poor to own cars. Hollar calls the Open Streets event a way to give Macon residents a deeper connection with their city.

“Our ultimate goal is to give people a space to reimagine how we’re using our streets,” Hollar says.

Overcoming skepticism

While Macon has embraced the concept, the somewhat nebulous nature of Open Streets events can make them a hard sell, Lydon acknowledges.

“They’re a little hard to explain to people because they’re not about a festival or a concert or a street fair,” he says. “Getting it off the ground can be challenging, because funders or city leaders don’t really understand it until they actually see it.”

That was the case in Boston, where Open Newbury Street originally met with skepticism from merchants.

“It was quite controversial,” Jacob Wessel, who works for the mayor and launched the Open Streets event, told the Urban Land Institute magazine. “There were concerns about their customers who drive in from the suburbs and utilize street parking. Others worried it would bring in people to hang out but not shop.”

Wessel worked to turn the street closing in favor of store owners. Unlike a typical street fair with dozens of vendors, Open Newbury Street limited its event to existing merchants and eateries.

During the first street closing in 2016, Newbury Street businesses reported increased walk-in business and more robust sales. Open Newbury Street continued in 2017 and 2018, when the roadway was closed for three summertime Sundays.

Contacts: Mike Lydon, Street Plans, 917-767-9850; Rachel Hollar, Bike Walk Macon, 478-335-1236. **DIX**



ATTRACTION

Downtown walking trail aims to lure, keep visitors

In an effort to bring more pedestrians downtown, York, PA (est. pop. 43,848), launched a mile-long walking trail that passes various points of interest.

York's Downtown Inc. created the pedestrian path based on a template from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health Center for Public Practice.

Those organizations have developed WalkWorks, a network of community-based walking routes that has been adopted by 16 counties in Pennsylvania.

While the walking routes are designed to tackle the obesity epidemic and spur physical activity, York's downtown leaders also see the pathway as an opportunity to attract visitors to restaurants and stores.

"The hope is, as people are walking, even though it was plotted for public health reasons, people will patronize or come back and patronize (downtown businesses)," Silas Chamberlin, chief executive officer of Downtown Inc., tells the *Central Penn Business Journal*.

York's route, marked with green and yellow signs and arrows, was designed by a community health specialist in the city. The path directs pedestrians past The Heritage Rail Trail Park, Penn Market, The Appell Center, Central Market, and the Colonial Courthouse.

WalkWorks isn't York's only health-oriented project. The city also helped with the launch of the Zagster Bike Share Program, and Downtown Inc. installed metal art sculptures that double as bike racks.

"If people are coming downtown on any scale that's different than driving downtown, they have more time to stop and look at businesses and window shop and be drawn in with window displays," Chamberlin says. "We're making a broad effort to make the downtown better. In the 21st century, to have a competitive downtown you need to have an accessible city. People won't want to work, shop or live here if you don't."

Contact: Silas Chamberlin, Downtown Inc., 717-849-2331. **DIX**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

City uses shipping containers for downtown pop-up space

A Michigan city is combining three hot trends — recycled shipping containers, pop-up shops, and business incubators — to create an unusual destination designed to entice visitors to its downtown.

Battle Creek (est. pop. 51,286) in May 2018 launched BC Cargo, a mini-mall made up of seven shipping containers on a city-owned parking lot downtown. The blue-and-yellow containers are just 160 square feet each; the

city provides heat, air conditioning, and electricity.

"We see it as an economic development strategy, and as a fun and exciting way to attract people to our downtown," says Valerie Byrnes, Battle Creek's business development and retention manager.

BC Cargo is a project of the city's Small Business Development Fund. For the initial seven-month trial, BC Cargo charged



Wide doors and outdoor seating expand the footprint of BC Cargo units.

tenants rent of just \$1,645 for seven months, or \$235 a month. The idea, Byrnes says, was to give entrepreneurs a low-cost way to test their business plans and to learn how the market would respond to their offerings.

The first crop of seven merchants included a coffee shop, a barbecue place, a vegetarian café, and several retail boutiques.

The city opens the spaces only to retail and restaurant uses. Prospective tenants must submit a business plan.

To create opportunities for African-American entrepreneurs, the city worked with the Urban League to recruit black-owned pop-up shops, Byrnes says.

Battle Creek hopes that some of the pop-up retailers will graduate from containers to permanent space elsewhere in the city. In the meantime, Battle Creek cross-promotes the container mall with events such as its farmer's market, Food Truck Fridays, and other downtown festivals.

Byrnes says she visited Muskegon, MI (est. pop 38,131), another small city that has invested in pop-up space for merchants in its downtown. Instead of using shipping containers, Muskegon built low-cost "chalets," or pre-fab garden sheds, on a vacant strip of land in the downtown and rented them to local entrepreneurs.

Inspired by the success of its popular farmers market nearby, the city of Muskegon decided to use a similar small-scale approach to create more long-term opportunities for local businesses, StrongTowns.org reports. The

city hired a builder to manage the construction of 12 wooden buildings ranging in size from 90 to 150 square feet at a cost of just \$5,000 to 6,000 per chalet. The Spartan design — a portable wooden structure with windows and doors but no running water — kept prices down.

In May 2017, these buildings opened for business, and they were successful enough that the city in 2018 built five more chalets. Demand for the space outstrips supply, as evidenced by the waiting list of tenants for the spaces.

To build the first 12 structures, the city secured donations from the local chamber of commerce, a community foundation, and other area organizations. But after that success, the value has been clear enough to residents that it makes sense to use city money to build additional chalets, says Muskegon City Manager Frank Peterson.

Muskegon merchants have been reluctant to make a long-term investment in space in a downtown with little commercial activity, Peterson says. The chalets let businesses test the market on a small scale before renting a permanent storefront.

Peterson's tips for making a pop-up project work:

- **Find unique tenants.** In reviewing the applications of businesses that want to rent the chalets, Muskegon's application committee chose a diversity of businesses that would offer unique items — not the goods readily available online or at big-box stores.

- **Build unity among businesses.** As part of their rental terms, the businesses that occupy the chalets agree to maintain regular hours consistent with their neighbors. This keeps the downtown active at times when it might otherwise empty out and it also creates a lively street where shoppers can check out several stores in one visit. Peterson says that the city really wanted business owners to feel that "they sink or swim together." Business owners now feel comfortable asking a neighbor to mind their shop if they need to step away briefly.

• **Grow slowly.** Starting with a few simple, affordable chalets meant a low risk for the city and the chance to scale up as the project succeeds. The portability of the chalets also means that if they're no longer needed or the space is

transformed for another use, they can easily be sold off or moved to another location that could use a small business boost.

Contact: Valerie Byrnes, City of Battle Creek, 269-966-3355. **DIX**

Village updates zoning, land-use rules to encourage new generation of retail — Continued from page 1

codes hadn't been updated in decades, and were written for an era when South Orange's downtown was filled with traditional retailers.

However, department stores and five-and-dimes weren't clamoring to lease space in South Orange. Instead, tenants such as video game arcades, tattoo studios, pet groomers, children's play areas, and vape stores wanted to open up shop — but village rules prohibited them from doing so.

"South Orange was viewed as a difficult place to open a business, and as a difficult place to do business," says Zuckerman, who's also vice president of Downtown New Jersey.

To be sure, nearly every municipality in the nation gets complaints about onerous processes for opening new businesses. But in South Orange, the reputation seemed rooted in reality.

In one instance, an art-and-wine establishment — Zuckerman calls the business model "paint and sip," where patrons create their own artwork while drinking wine — hoped to open a location in South Orange. But village rules prohibited such a seemingly benign tenant.

"Under our code, it was considered a place of general assembly," Zuckerman says.

Tattoo parlors and arcades were illegal, and kids gyms were allowed only on side streets. Rather than navigate South Orange's strict rules, entrepreneurs simply went to neighboring towns that were more welcoming.

In another example, gaming arcades — those nostalgic spots filled with pinball

machines and vintage video games — were banned in South Orange. Zuckerman assumes the prohibition dated to the days when arcades were associated with pool halls and their unsavory activities.

Zuckerman decided to take on a modernization of South Orange's rules. He spearheaded a task force that began work in 2015, and he figured the project would last six months or so. Instead, the process took three years.

Zuckerman says that's just the nature of tackling a comprehensive overhaul of zoning rules in a village where most of the decision-makers are volunteers.

"South Orange is a place where we seek a lot of input from a lot of different people," he says.

The overhaul went through four phases:

• **A full inventory of ordinances.**

The task force started by looking at all of the village's rules related to businesses, many of them decades old. The group determined what sorts of establishments were banned in town, or which types of tenants were allowed only on certain streets based on zoning rules.

• **Conduct research.** Next, the task force took field trips to nearby downtowns, including Montclair, Morristown, and Summit, to see how they had created thriving downtowns. Zuckerman wanted the task force to get a look at what those towns were doing right and see what types of businesses could comprise the retail mix of a dynamic downtown.

• **Make a list.** Next, the task force created a catalog of businesses it would like to see in South Orange. The list included some obvious candidates, such as paint-and-sip shops, tattoo parlors, and arcades. The task force looked beyond the borders of New Jersey to find hot concepts that might emerge in the future.

• **Transform the data into an ordinance.** Once it had gathered information, the task force needed to translate the data into written rules. The task force worked with South Orange's planning firm, Topology. They divided the business district into three corridor categories: the main thoroughfare (South Orange Avenue), the side streets, and the secondary prominent thoroughfare (Valley Street). The task force then determined which of those three corridors were appropriate for each use and on which floors — first floor and above, or upper floors only.

For example, the task force decided co-working spaces were ideal for the first floor on side streets and on Valley Street. But because storefronts are scarce on South Orange Avenue, the group aimed to preserve those spots for retailers and restaurants. So

co-working is allowed everywhere but on the first floor on South Orange Avenue.

In one challenge, South Orange's zoning districts did not match the three corridors identified by the task force. So the village needed to apply land use differently within each of the business zones based on individual streets and floors.

A final challenge came when one of the village trustees (the equivalent of commissioners or council members) objected to allowing vape lounges and hookah lounges in South Orange. The revamped ordinance passed anyway, but the debate meant that the media coverage focused not on South Orange's historic updating of its zoning rules but on a small slice of the initiative.

"If I had to do it over again, I'd say, 'Let's take this controversial thing and punt,'" Zuckerman says.

South Orange passed the new rules in mid-August, and Zuckerman says the downtown now is positioned to welcome nontraditional retail uses, rather than losing them to neighboring towns.

Contact: Bob Zuckerman, South Orange Village Center Alliance, 973-763-6899. **DIX**

PATHWAYS AND PUBLIC SPACES

A five-step plan for taking advantage of a nearby trail

Hiking and biking trails can provide a spark of activity for nearby downtowns — but only if local leaders make a concerted effort to market themselves to the people using the trails.

The North Country Trail Association, a nonprofit that promotes the 4,600-mile North Country National Scenic Trail connecting upstate New York to North Dakota, says you can turn your community into a "trail town."

The association says attracting hikers and bikers takes some work, but the task can be simplified with a five-step process:

Step One: Introduce the concept and kick off the master planning process. This might be accomplished through a large public meeting, a small meeting with invited stakeholders, or both. During this stage, discuss and identify which community stakeholders need to be part of the process and who

Three types of cyclists

It might be tempting to lump trail users into one sociodemographic category, but the reality is more nuanced. Some of the outdoor enthusiasts passing your downtown might boast \$5,000 bicycles and unlimited budgets. Others might roll through with used bikes and thin wallets.

The National Main Street Center breaks down the users of trails into three categories:

Shoestring cyclist. These riders are young and budget-conscious. They camp rather than stay in

hotels, and they limit their spending to \$30 a day.

Economy cyclist. These riders are willing to camp or stay in a motel, depending on the weather, but they prefer budget lodging. These cyclists spend about \$50 a day.

Comfort cyclist. Typically 50 and older, these riders rarely camp and much prefer motels or hotels. They tend to combine shopping or museum visits with their cycling, and they typically spend more than \$100 a day.

might be interested in sitting on a Trail Town Advisory Committee. The first meeting also presents an opportunity to review the Trail Town elements such as the community's recreation plan, municipal master plan, and downtown plan.

Step Two: Assess your trail-to-town connection. Imagine that you're a hiker or biker visiting your town for the first time. Walk or bike the routes that connect the trail to your downtown. Take notes and pictures. Are there clear and well-placed signs directing traffic to your downtown? Is there a map directing hikers and bikers to restrooms, eating places, and lodging? Is there a safe and convenient connection from the trail to your central business district?

Step Three: Catalog trail-serving businesses. Identify the businesses that might be useful to hikers and bikers — not just restaurants, grocery stores, microbreweries, and hotels, but also public amenities such as benches, water fountains, and even showers. Create an online map aimed at trail users.

Step Four: Get your promotional materials together. Review and assess all promotional materials, including web and print materials. Identify opportunities to promote the trail.

Step Five: Make a master plan. Now it's time for the advisory committee to review

and synthesize the results. Develop a list of recommendations and actions. Identify what person, organization, or city department will take the lead on each action step — and how each action step might be funded. **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see the North Country Trail Association's guide to creating a Trail Town, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."



Colorful wayfinding signage along Florida's Pinellas Trail directs visitors to shops and restaurants.



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see a brief overview of Opportunity Zones, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Opportunity Zones promise to spur development in low-income areas

Opportunity Zones were one of the little-noticed pieces of the tax reform of 2017. The new designation promises to spur billions of dollars of new investment in low-income areas nationally.

While details remain murky nearly a year after the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed, some of the particulars are clear. The new program designates more than 8,700 areas as Opportunity Zones in both rural and urban areas.

Investors are still studying the tax ramifications of Opportunity Zones, but in general, the designation seeks to incentivize long-term development in downtrodden areas by offering breaks on capital-gains taxes. Some states are sweetening the pot with tax reductions of their own.

Huge sums could flow into these areas. The U.S. Joint Committee on Taxation expects \$86 billion of investments in qualified opportunity zones, according to a report by CoStar, the commercial property website.

For investors to take full advantage of the tax benefits, money would have to be put in play by the end of 2019. Opportunity zones are designed to spur economic development by allowing investors to defer tax on gains through 2026, so long as gains are reinvested in a "Qualified Opportunity Fund." What's more, if the investor holds the investment in an opportunity fund for at least 10 years, there would be no tax on any new gain from the investment in the opportunity fund.

While the federal government has primed the pump for a wave of development in struggling neighborhoods, it's up to state and local leaders to execute the program, argue John Lettieri and Steve Glickman, co-founders of the Economic Innovation Group, a bipartisan research and advocacy organization in Washington, DC.

How can downtown leaders use Opportunity Zones to spur development in their communities? Lettieri and Glickman offer the following guiding principles:

Be strategic. Private investment is crucial, but attracting capital alone is not a strategy. "It takes more than simply designating a struggling community as an Opportunity Zone to ensure real, sustainable progress is made," Lettieri and Glickman write in *The Hill*. "That's where state and local leadership comes in."

While tax breaks can give a boost to an economic development strategy, they're just part of the puzzle. Local officials must examine zoning, permitting, and licensing rules, not to mention workforce development programs.

Focus on entrepreneurship. A thriving startup scene is a key ingredient to a robust economy. The launch of a new business can set off what Lettieri and Glickman call a chain reaction of economic benefits. Alas, the benefits are mostly confined to startup hubs such as Silicon Valley, New York City, and Boston.

"The Opportunity Zones can help stop the brain drain by incentivizing entrepreneurs to start — and scale — their companies in places that desperately need them," Lettieri and Glickman write.

Convene and collaborate. Investors flock to locales with strong support networks. Sustaining successful Opportunity Zones will require long-term cooperation amongst the public, private, and philanthropic sectors.

Everyone will have a role — including schools, nonprofits, major employers, and small business support centers.

Open a data platform. State and local governments must make data about their Opportunity Zones readily available to investors and researchers. Investors will need to know about local market opportunities and additional state and local incentives. And researchers will need to track the inflows of investments so they can understand which local models work the best. **DIX**

Idea Exchange

Wooing a grocery store

Despite the efforts of the city and the economic development authority, the downtown neighborhood of Freemason in Norfolk, VA, does not have a grocery store.

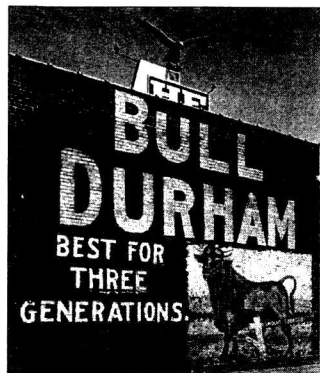
Enter two neighbors who are determined to turn things around. The “grocery girls” as they call themselves have started a grassroots movement to attract an urban grocer. One of their first steps is to add 7,000 followers to their Facebook group, “Wanted Urban Grocer in Downtown Norfolk, VA.” The Facebook page notes that it is, “a call to action for all citizens. Join us and make your voices heard.”

Rather than approaching traditional grocers, *The Virginian-Pilot* notes that the grocery girls are looking specifically at what they call “urban grocers,” these businesses “tend to focus on supplying smaller quantities in their packaged goods, fresh produce, and on-the-go meals. Their customers buy less in bulk but shop more often.”

Vintage signs have broad appeal

A restored ghost sign, promoting Coca-Cola, was recently unveiled in downtown Elkins, WV.

Ghost signs are faded remains of hand-painted advertising signs on the exterior walls of buildings. In its online brief, *The Preservation of Historic Signs*, the



National Park Service notes that, “ghost signs are garnering renewed appreciation in historic preservation and downtown revitalization circles. Not only do they give residents and visitors a sense of local history, they serve as landmarks and add visual interest as public art created by painters devoted to their craft.”

While ghost signs typically promote long-gone businesses, a local Coca-Cola Bottling Company was a prime supporter of the project. “This is a difference maker for downtown Elkins,” Mayor Van Broughton told WBOY.



The NPS brief is available at DowntownDevelopment.com, click on “Web Extras.”

Debating the role of billboards

A twenty-year ban on new billboards in San Jose, CA, was lifted in September. The City Council voted to allow billboards to be placed on city owned property downtown and near the airport.

The Mercury News notes that some residents opposed the addition of large-scale

advertising in the city center. “Billboards, proponents of the ban argued, created visual blight and were targets for graffiti.” Meanwhile proponents see the large-scale ads as, “an opportunity to generate new revenue and promote public art.”

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Idea Exchange

Encouraging entrepreneurial activity

Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, welcomed a special new business downtown this fall. Starlotte Satine Vintage was the winner in the Business Improvement Area's second annual Win This Space competition.

The goals of the competition are broad and include:

- To promote the filling of vacancies and new entrepreneurial activity in downtown Sudbury.
- To inspire someone to become an entrepreneur in downtown Sudbury and to offer them support to do so.
- To revitalize the downtown core by attracting new investment to the area.
- To develop training opportunities and a business mentoring network.

The winner receives a year's lease on appropriate retail space, business/financial planning assistance, and a range of donated services such as a brand identity package, printing services, chamber of commerce membership, etc.

To learn more visit the contest website at winthisspace.ca.

More lights and cameras downtown

In an effort to reduce petty crimes such as larceny, vandalism, and loitering, the Downtown Spokane Partnership, a business improvement district in the heart of Spokane, WA, is considering adding more lights and video cameras downtown.

Home-grown promotion resonates with downtown shoppers

In Greenwood, MS, a lost dog and a savvy social marketing campaign drove visitors downtown for a one-of-a-kind retail event.

The dog, a stray called #HowardStreetHoward, was well known as he evaded capture for nearly six months downtown. In August, with a new home, and a signature T-shirt bearing his image, he became the inspiration for a shopping event called the Sit, Stay, Play Sweepstakes. During this typically slow month, shoppers were entered into a drawing for prizes from downtown merchants.

The event helped Main Street Greenwood grow its marketing database and increase its twitter followers, as well as boosting retail sales. The event also garnered the group an award for outstanding retail promotion from the Mississippi Main Street Association.



The Spokesman-Review reports that the cost for the increased security would be shared between individual business owners and the Partnership. "The district is promising to match 50 percent of the cost through a \$25,000 grant program, with an estimated \$3,000 cap per property, based on needs and interest."

CEO Mark Richard tells the *Review* that the BID is focused on minor crimes. The intent, he says, is to "shine more light on dark alleyways and focus cameras on areas that tend to see more property crimes."

Invisible art

Jefferson, IA, is one of many cities to embrace a unique super-hydrophobic coating that is invisible on dry concrete, but reveals itself

when it rains. The resulting, "invisible art" projects provide a rainy-day enticement to visit downtown.

The Jefferson Matters' public art team adorned city streets with butterflies, birds, flowers, fairies, and inspirational quotes. Particular attention was paid to downtown storefronts and crosswalks.

Main Street Iowa notes that the project was small, "but the goodwill created for the businesses and Jefferson Matters returned in spades, proving that small activities on a rainy day are as important as large projects on a sunny one."



For more on bringing invisible art downtown go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras." **DIX**



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

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Creating a Makerspace:
Business model

Dots & Dashes:
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Grant packet

COMMUNICATION

Engaging the public smooths planning process

Soliciting community input about new projects is democracy at its most fundamental, says David Edgell, principal planner for Delaware's Office of State Planning Coordination.

"The planning process is a very democratic process," Edgell says. "It's not a group of planners and engineers and technocrats designing what cities should be. It's really the communities themselves that are able to, in a democratic fashion, define what they want their community to be, and how they want to get there."

While courting the public can be time-consuming and even frustrating, the payoff can be a big one.

When it comes time to adopt a well-vetted proposal, Edgell says, "There's not a lot of dissent, because the community will hopefully have ownership of the plan."

A community engagement process is underway in Royal Oak, MI (est. pop. 59,112), as the city embarks on a project to build a new City Hall, police station, downtown park, private office building, and parking deck.

(Continued on page 3)

ATTRACTION

Arts district's edgy murals bring attention, criticism

Melbourne, FL (est. pop. 82,011), is a mid-sized city with an unusually provocative public art project that has generated no shortage of controversy. Downtown leaders embrace the praise and accept the criticism generated by the outdoor gallery.

Once blighted but now rejuvenated, the Eau Gallie Arts District is home to an art museum, numerous

galleries, a brewpub, performance venues, and other independent businesses.

To spur interest in the area, the nonprofit Eau Gallie Arts District Main Street Inc. has commissioned dozens of murals in recent years. The idea, says Lisa Packard, executive director of the Eau Gallie Arts District, was to take advantage of

(Continued on page 7)

Makerspace gives fresh spark to downtown

Downtown Lexington, VA (est. pop. 7,106), is home to an ambitious business incubator and makerspace that's drawing interest from entrepreneurs in surrounding areas.

"There's a lot of interest in making things."

Lexington Collaboratory & Makerspace is a 1,300-square-foot lab that lets startups tinker with their products. The Collaboratory also provides a team of mentors willing to dispense advice about legal matters, marketing, real estate, finance, and professional development.

The Lexington Collaboratory & Makerspace is the brainchild of Jamie Goodin, a graduate of Washington & Lee University, one of two small colleges in Lexington.

"There's a lot of interest in making things," Goodin says.

He launched the Lexington Collaboratory & Makerspace in 2017 with \$40,000 in grants from the state of Virginia and Washington & Lee. The space is in an old brick build-

ing downtown that's located across the street from a bar that serves Virginia craft beers.

Goodin says he spent much of the grant money on equipment — including a laser printer, a 3-D printer,

computers, and a press for printing stationary and posters.

The Lexington Collaboratory & Makerspace runs as a nonprofit operating under Main Street Lexington. The lab sells \$35-a-month memberships that offer unlimited access to the equipment.

Among the startups that have emerged from the incubator are a maker of kombucha, the trendy drink.

The makerspace is part of Main Street Lexington's focus on an economic development strategy of "small-scale artisanal manufacturing." The goal is to give would-be inventors and artisans support to build their businesses, and to make "Lexington-Made" a regional brand for locally produced wares.

Unproven startups are unlikely to have the cash for expensive equipment, and the Lexington Collaboratory aims to fill a gap. Next up, Goodin says, is a \$5,000 microloan fund to help startups finance their ventures.

Business models

While the vision of a large, rambling makerspace is common, smaller spaces that can be knitted into the fabric of a downtown are often possible. Gui Cavalcanti a co-founder of Artisan's Asylum, a maker space in the Boston suburb of Somerville, MA (est. pop. 81,360), suggests that successful spaces can be as small as 500 square feet.

The size of a maker space depends on your ambitions, and the size of the community you'll serve, says Cavalcanti. Artisan's Asylum encompasses 40,000 square feet, placing it on the large end of the makerspace spectrum — but it's located in a thriving tech hub in a large metro area, so it can realistically operate a large space.

In a small town like Lexington, VA, the ideal size is smaller.

Cavalcanti points to the following common maker space models:





DowntownDevelopment.com

To learn more about maker space business models, visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

- A small, teaching-only space (500 to 3,000 square feet) with one to 10 instructors. This model requires little infrastructure or full-time staff.

- A small, volunteer-run community of 10 to 80 active members with 1,000 to 8,000 square feet. Modest membership fees can cover the rent.

- Shared plots in a large building (4,000 to 25,000 square feet) where many individuals and small businesses band together to rent a large warehouse space at low per-square-foot cost. In this co-working model, equipment can be shared informally, with a small leadership group of one to three people taking charge.

- Large community workshop (8,000 to 40,000 square feet) with educational programs, membership access to shared tools and space. This model can include storage or studio rental space.

- Very large community development facility (40,000 to 150,000 square feet). This type of incubator leases space to startups, provides a mentorship network, hires a paid staff of full-time administrators and part-time instructors, and sometimes features shared tools and workspace.

Contacts: Jamie Goodin, Main Street Lexington, 434-944-5446; Gui Cavalcanti, Artisan's Asylum, 617-284-6878. **DIX**

Engaging the public smooths planning process — *Continued from page 1*

Focused on the new 2-acre downtown park, the work began with a visual preference survey in which participants chose their three favorite parks from among 10 options. Next, the community weighed in on specific elements such as water features, plantings, play elements, seating, art forms, shade structures, pavement, and lighting. A final step in the process will focus on price.

In addition, the city held five stakeholder meetings and conducted an online survey.

Overall the process has been positive and includes many of the elements which Leslie Wright of the Orton Family Foundation recommends for community engagement. These include:

- 1. Know the community and how it gets information.** This knowledge is the foundation for how you will design community engagement activities and communicate about your project. Keep in mind that there is no such thing as the "general public."

- 2. Keep your promise to community members.** Be clear about how resident input

will be used and show how that information shaped project results.

- 3. Go to the people.** Consider how you gather community input. Go to where people hang out — whether it's a physical gathering space, like a coffee shop or community center, or a virtual space like Facebook or online neighborhood forums.

- 4. Spread the word.** To effectively convey the goals of your project, create a communications strategy that includes project branding, messaging, and tactics for talking about your project. And communicate clearly. Don't expect the public to understand technical jargon. You might know terms like charrette, visioning, and comp plan, but that doesn't mean residents understand them.

- 5. Ask for personal stories.** Encourage people to express their experiences and opinions in their own words first. In Biddeford, ME, the process of removing a downtown incinerator included high school students soliciting stories about the town from their parents.



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see Delaware's Dots & Dashes game, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."

6. Understand local power dynamics.

Design project activities in a way that provides dignity to everyone and offers a safe space to air concerns.

7. Engage around interests. Sometimes you have to participate in community issues that matter to others before making a connection to your own project.

8. Think about the details. When you host a community event, think through how you can make it more inclusive and convenient. This includes such details as the time of events, the location, the availability of child care, transportation, and food. Depending on the demographic mix of your community, translators or facilitators might be necessary.

9. Use technology. There are great high-tech and low-tech ways to engage people. Pick strategies that are a good fit for your community. The best outreach programs are both "high-tech and high-touch," planners say.

10. Make it fun. When you bring people together to discuss a project, think about how you can make it a social opportunity, or engaging. In Delaware, planners have used video games and board games to engage residents in the planning process. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Dots & Dashes game let residents participate in complex transportation planning.

Contacts: David Edgell, Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination, 302-739-3090; Leslie Wright, Orton Family Foundation, 802-495-0864. **DIX**

ATTRACTION

Quirky rounds of mini-golf replace big, disruptive events

A few years ago, the Downtown Association of Santa Cruz decided to eliminate big events that attracted large numbers of visitors but also blocked traffic and disrupted business.



Downtown leaders in the California city of 65,000 still wanted to bring visitors to the business district, however, so they shifted their focus to smaller gatherings centered around wine and beer. Those events worked well at attracting the over-21 crowd, but they excluded under-21 visitors.

So the Downtown Association needed another brainstorm. The city's proximity to the annual Pro-Am golf tournament at Pebble Beach inspired the 2018 Downtown Santa Cruz Pre-Am Mini Golf/Art Festival.

"We put our own Santa Cruz flair on it," says the Downtown Association's executive director, who goes only by the first name Chip.

The February event — after the holiday shopping season, and before Santa Cruz's summer beach season — lets visitors play

nine mini-golf holes designed by local artists, engineers, and tinkerers. A skate shop hosted a skate-themed hole. The breezeway outside a brewpub hosted a hole inspired by the gopher in the movie *Caddyshack*. A clothing boutique was the site of a hole based on Alice in Wonderland.

One hole included a replica of the iconic wooden roller coaster on Santa Cruz's ocean-front boardwalk. Another featured a cardboard caricature of Donald Trump that required golfers to make a shot through the president's open mouth.

"We give the artists free rein to have fun," Chip says.

The inaugural event kicked off on a Friday afternoon with an official opening by the mayor and a four-hour window for artists to erect their holes. Unfortunately, one artist couldn't finish setting up in the allotted time and was still assembling on Saturday morning.

Play was open on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets cost \$20 for adults and \$10 for golfers younger than 12, and golfers could play any time throughout the weekend.

A couple hundred golfers paid to play, but Chip says the modest number didn't discourage him. The Downtown Association plans to host its event again in 2019.

"It clicks all the boxes in terms of attracting families downtown at a relatively slow time of year," Chip says. "We're always trying to figure out what we can do to keep people engaged and get them downtown."

One advantage to the mini-golf event was that it encouraged visitors to go inside stores they might not visit otherwise. And, unlike a major street festival, it answered this conundrum that Chip poses: "How do you bring people downtown without killing the businesses that are paying you to bring people downtown?"

"How do you bring people downtown without killing the businesses that are paying you to bring people downtown?"

In its first year, the mini-golf event was a bit of a tough sell — artists and merchants couldn't quite envision the concept. Now that artists and business owners have seen the idea in action, they're keen to participate. Chip says the 2019 version might expand from nine holes to 18.

Meanwhile, Chip is hoping the quirky event can lure some celebrity visitors. *Caddyshack* star Bill Murray is a regular at the Pro-Am in Pebble Beach, while Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry plays up the coast. Chip says he's courting both.

Contact: Chip, Downtown Association of Santa Cruz, 831-332-7422. **DIX**

PATHWAYS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Benches, bike repair stations among livability projects to win grants

Bike-repair stations, public benches, and cornhole boards are among the downtown projects being funded by the second annual AARP Community Challenge.

The AARP awarded a total of \$1.3 million to 129 "quick action" projects throughout the United States. The challenge aims to help, "communities make immediate improvements

and jumpstart long-term progress to support residents of all ages."

Competition was fierce. More than 1,600 nonprofits and government entities applied for the funding in 2018, the AARP says.

Among many of the winning downtowns, the focus was clearly on bicycle access and

infrastructure. Two cities in Wisconsin won grants for “bike fixation stations” — repair facilities that include air pumps and tools tethered to a fixed base.

Ashland, WI, will use the grant for bike repair stations along its 11-mile rails-to-trails pathway. Alas, the stations arrived just in time for a cold snap, and the ground was too hard to dig holes and pour concrete. The stations will be installed in the spring, says Megan McBride, Ashland’s interim director of planning.

The \$10,000 grant will cover the cost of the repair stations, which are priced at roughly \$2,000 apiece, McBride says. The stations include a QR code that leads cyclists to a website that helps them diagnose problems and make repairs.

Jacksonville, FL, and Sioux Falls, SD, went a step farther — they plan repair stations not just for bicycles but also for wheelchairs.

More than 20 of the grant winners planned to install public benches. Oxford, AL, plans 10 benches and bike racks along its Main Street. Colorado Springs, CO, will install benches along its Sand Creek Trail.

And New Milford, CT, proposed benches and game tables.

Two of the winners took note of the rising popularity of cornhole, the beanbag-tossing game that has risen from obscurity to become a staple of microbreweries, food halls, and hipster hangouts everywhere. Caldwell, ID, and Vermillion, SD, both included public cornhole boards as part of their applications.

Murals were another popular winning concept. Rock Springs, WY, won a grant for a mural paying tribute to miners and railroad workers. Danville, KY, said it would enlist contributions from 1,000 residents for its mural, while Binghamton, NY, proposed a 48-foot mural showing a topographical map of central New York.

Other winning proposals included improvements to fitness trails and features to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

AARP notes that its grants focus on making communities “livable for people of all ages.”

*Contact: Megan McBride, City of Ashland, 715-682-7041. AARP Community Challenge, www.aarp.org. **DIX***

ATTRACTION

Mini-events draw business travelers downtown

The annual Wine Downtown event in Tupelo, MS (est. pop. 38,114), is a hit: Some 300 people pay \$30 apiece to taste 13 types of wine and appetizers, stopping at a different merchant for each variety.

The event is sponsored by financial firm Trustmark, and it generates enough of a surplus to help fund downtown’s marketing efforts, says Debbie Brangenberg, executive director of the Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association.

Encouraged by the success of the wine tasting, downtown leaders decided to branch out. Downtown Tupelo is home to a 158-room hotel and a conference center, which Brangenberg calls unusual assets for a downtown in a city of less than 40,000. Those properties generate a steady stream of small conferences and meetings in Tupelo.

So in 2017, Downtown Tupelo Main Street partnered with the Tupelo Convention and Visitors’ Bureau to offer conference

attendees a smaller version of the wine event. The city, perhaps best known as the birthplace of Elvis Presley, now serves up an event known as Mini Wine Downtown and Shopping Tournament — as in competitive consumption.

Participants can win prizes in such categories as most money spent, best deal, and most unique item purchased. In one case, the winner of the biggest-bill category spent about \$300 downtown, Brangenberg says.

For the Mini Wine Downtown event, visitors pay \$20 a ticket and get to taste six wines.

“We want to cover our costs, and we want to expose our visitors to our downtown,” Brangenberg says.

The event was so successful in that mission that the Mississippi Main Street

Association honored it with an award for “outstanding creative event.” In the first two Mini Wine Downtown events, Tupelo Main Street saw a combined four hours of shopping time and spending of more than \$6,500.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau continues to market the event to meeting organizers as a nighttime diversion, Brangenberg says. And the 2019 version of the main event, Wine Downtown, is scheduled for April.

People who participate in the event sample appetizers prepared specifically to pair with each wine. They receive commemorative wine glasses, and the evening ends with art and live music at a downtown museum.

Contact: Debbie Brangenberg, Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association, 662-841-6598. **DIX**

Arts district's edgy murals bring attention, criticism — Continued from page 1

the 20,000 vehicles that speed through downtown every day on their way to and from the beach.

“We had to figure out a way to make people stop,” she says.

Recruiting artists to paint eye-catching murals seemed to be the most cost-effective way to spur interest in Eau Gallie’s historic district.

“You can make an immediate impact with paint,” Packard says.

In one installation, completed in 2015, an artist known as Shark Toof painted a large, menacing shark in attack mode.

The mural, on a blood-red background, greets motorists as they cross the Eau Gallie Causeway from the Atlantic Ocean. It’s an edgy image for a region where the beach is the linchpin of the tourist economy.

“When the shark went up, the Space

Coast Office of Tourism said, ‘Don’t do that — you’re going to kill tourism,’” Packard says.

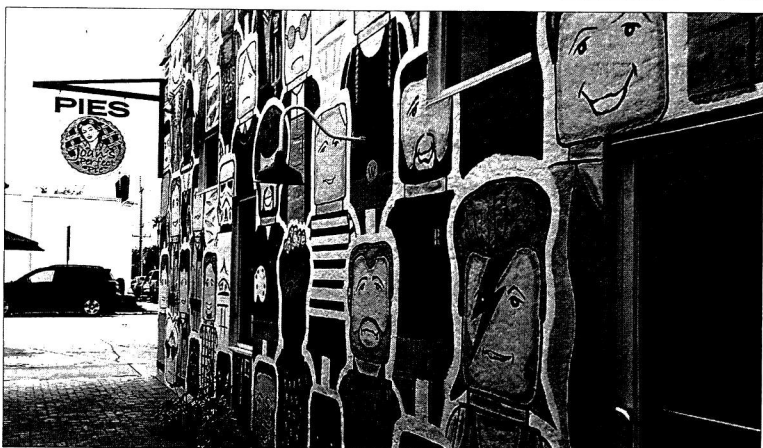
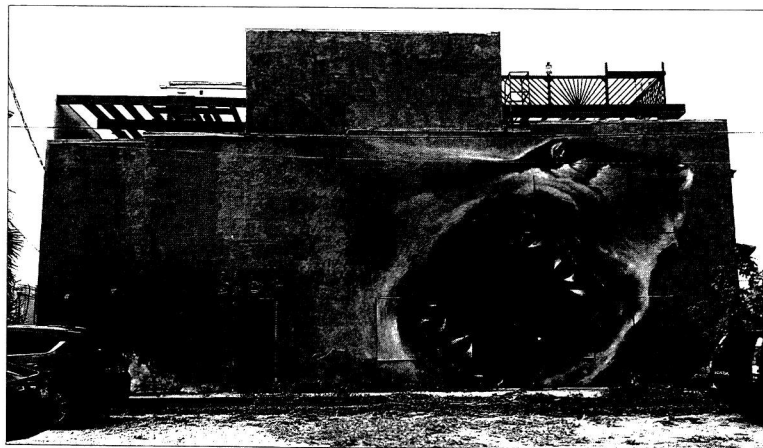
Instead, the opposite has been the case. A steady stream of visitors braves the unpaved parking lot in front of the mural for photos. She calls the shark one of the most-photographed venues in the Space Coast region. It serves as a backdrop for graduation pictures and wedding announcements. And tourists from as far away as China have visited.

Shock, then acceptance

So much for the argument that an image of a sharp-toothed shark would scare away tourists.

“Things can be shocking in the beginning,” Packard says.

“You can make an immediate impact with paint.”



As for tourism officials' angst, she says, "They got over it real quick."

Not all of the murals are so contentious. The installation on a public bandshell, for instance, is a montage showing a sea turtle, a cruise ship, and a vintage station wagon carrying a surfboard.

A wall outside a pie shop shows Lego figures, and the wall facing the Housing Authority parking lot features a figure in a raincoat, a Native American in a flowing head-dress, fish, and birds in flight.

One of the newest installations proved especially controversial. The "exploding cartoon" mural, by artist Matt Gondek, covers the wall of a CrossFit gym. It's an 80-foot-long homage to Pablo Picasso's landmark mural *Guernica*, and it includes images of Homer Simpson, Wile E. Coyote, Hello Kitty, and Felix the Cat.

The former owner of the furniture store across the street hated the mural's bright

colors and cartoon violence so much that she installed bamboo blinds to block the view — and she lobbied the city to take the mural down.

In the face of criticism, Eau Gallie Arts District boosters have stood their ground, and they say an edgy public arts project is just the sort of thing to entice well-educated young workers into the area.

"We want it to be interesting, thought-provoking," Packard says. "You don't have to like every mural. You don't go into an art museum and say, 'I don't like that — take it down.'"

Main Street gains new relevance

When the Eau Gallie Arts District launched in 2010, the Space Coast was in the depths of the Great Recession. The region had been hit hard both by the real estate crash and by the federal government's decision to wind down the Space Shuttle program, which cost Brevard County thousands of high-paying aerospace jobs.

Meanwhile, vacancy rates in the Eau Gallie Arts District approached 40 percent.

"Eau Gallie Boulevard used to be a wasteland," Packard says. "Other than Ace Hardware, there was nothing here."

The arts district's brainstorm was to encourage public art. The group started out small, with the mural on the bandshell.

But Packard and her group's board decided that really putting their area on the map required something more provocative.

"We didn't just want to put up pictures of manatees," Packard says.

So the Eau Gallie Arts District commissioned prominent Los Angeles artists to decorate two large walls. Packard won't say how much the organization has spent on murals, but she arranged with both Shark Toof and Gondek to paint their installations as part of visits to Art Basel, the event that takes place in Miami each December.

That meant the Eau Gallie Arts District didn't have to pay the artists' airfare. Most of the murals have been completed by

local artists and funded through private donations.

In recent years, the Space Coast economy has rebounded. Florida tourism has set records, the real estate market has bounced back, and private rocket launches have replaced the Space Shuttle. Packard says it's hard to calculate the payoff from Eau Gallie's public art.

But she says the murals have put Eau Gallie on the map, and she has no regrets about ruffling feathers — and no particular interest in guessing which works might offend some viewers.

She does have one regret: The Eau Gallie Arts District commissioned 21 murals at once in late 2017, a project that proved to be a bit too financially ambitious. That meant the nonprofit needed to lean heavily on donors to pay the bills.

"It hurt our fundraising for a while, because we maxed it out on one thing," Packard says. It's important to combine the

sensibilities of both artists and businesspeople, she adds. Unleash artists on a mural project, and they'll spend way too much, she says. Leave all the decisions up to business boosters, and the artwork will be saccharine and uninteresting.

She also says it's crucial to learn the details of the local mural ordinance. Because the controversial exploding cartoon mural changed from the original sketches to the final work on the wall, the piece needed multiple approvals from a city board.

Packard notes that the murals aren't permanent. In the three years since the Shark Toof mural went up, for instance, the work has faded significantly in the Florida sun. And the building that houses the painting is in poor repair and destined for demolition.

"They will disappear in time," she says of the murals. "It's a living museum."

Contact: Lisa Packard, Eau Gallie Arts District Main Street Inc., 321-428-5040. **DIX**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

"Collision space" as a business attractor

Chattanooga, TN (est. pop. 179,139), is home to a thriving startup scene. The city's burgeoning innovation district includes a business incubator and a coworking space, and firms from New York and San Francisco have opened satellite offices in the midsized city.

The concept of "collision space" is one focus of the economic development strategy in Chattanooga, says Mary Stargel of The Enterprise Center. These coffee shops, microbreweries, and other locations offer entrepreneurs, investors, and workers a place to get away from their desks and interact with one another.

The idea is that chance encounters and serendipitous conversations will lead to brainstorming and collaboration. Urban strategist

Boyd Cohen explained the idea in *Fast Company* magazine.

"When artists, designers, technologists, investors, community activists, engineers, and entrepreneurs mix together, more innovative ideas are likely to emerge than just a group of engineers discussing the potential for blockchain, peer-to-peer models, distributed renewable energy, and so on," Cohen writes.

Large, knowledge-based organizations like Google, Yahoo, the Mayo Clinic and the Scripps Research Institute long have designed gathering spots such as cafeterias and lounges as ways to encourage engineers or scientists to mingle and exchange ideas. In many downtowns, coffee shops and brewpubs have taken on that role. While others

have gone a step further, focusing redevelopment and downtown marketing around the concept and positioning downtown as a creative campus.

The Downtown Memphis Commission launched its MY HQ marketing campaign in 2017. The campaign aims to position the city center as, “a place to collaborate. A place that inspires. A place to work like no other.” The

campaign includes a dedicated website, customized new-business incentives, and events in the heart of the city.

And in downtown Las Vegas, Zappos’ innovative Downtown Project has created a new metric — “collisionable hours,” or the number of probable interactions per hour per acre.

Contact: Mary Stargel, *The Enterprise Center*, 423-661-3300. **DIX**

PATHWAYS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Abandoned railroad transformed into park, drainage feature

In Birmingham, AL (est. pop. 210,710), a low-lying railway cut festered for years as an eyesore.

The abandoned track harkened to Birmingham’s distant past as a center of steel manufacturing. Occupying one of the lowest points downtown, the rail bed for years was flooded with runoff from city streets.

After a dramatic repurposing, the long-ignored tracks are now a four-block linear park known as the Birmingham Rotary Trail. The name is a nod to the renovation which was spearheaded by The Rotary Club of Birmingham.

The Rotary Club raised \$3.5 million for capital improvements including landscaping, furnishings, ramps, stairwells, railings, and

more. The City of Birmingham used TIGER grant money to fund drainage work. And grant-matching funds were donated by the Fresh Water Land Trust, the health department, the City of Birmingham, and a variety of other public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

Wendy Jackson, executive director of the Freshwater Land Trust, says the hefty investment paid off.

“They made sure that this was done to the highest standards so it would be a gift that would keep giving to the city of Birmingham,” Jackson told the *Birmingham News*. “People can do projects and get something nice, or people can do projects and they can be transformational.”

Birmingham Rotary Trail includes pavers, landscaping, a small amphitheater, and solar-powered charging stations for laptops and phones.

The new design diverts stormwater, and the project has won accolades for water conservation. It also ties into the city’s broader network of walking and cycling trails.

While the High Line project in Manhattan shows that a big city can reclaim an old railway in a dramatic way, proponents say the Rotary Trail shows that such projects are possible in smaller cities. **DIX**

Photos courtesy of: Goodwyn Mills Cawood



Idea Exchange

Talking trash downtown

Dumpsters are creating an uninviting atmosphere in downtown Aurora, IL. In an effort to reduce the number of dumpsters and potentially the cost of commercial waste removal, the city is proposing placing shared compactors in two or more downtown locations.

As a first step, city officials say they will have downtown business and property owners fill out a questionnaire that will assess how much waste businesses generate, how much they pay for removal, and other relevant information.

'Tis the season for holiday pop-ups

The main street program in Linden, TX, launched a pop-up shopping week on Small Business Saturday 2017. The inaugural event included seven pop-up shops housed in four vacant storefronts around the city's historic Courthouse Square. The shops were open for just one week with the last day coinciding with the annual Christmas on the Square Festival.

Main Street Manager Allie Anderson put together a package of incentives to attract business owners to test their businesses downtown. She explains, "We put together a big, juicy prize package for the first business to sign a permanent lease after the week was over. It included six months of free city utilities, fiber optic internet service, and a few business improvement tools courtesy of our Chamber of Commerce and the local Small Business Development Center."

One unexpected benefit of the pop-up program was the opportunity for business owners to network. Anderson notes that the event is, "a valuable opportunity for our shop owners to meet others who understand the challenges of starting a small business. We discovered during Pop-Up Week last year that this actually ended up being the most important component of the event — the network-building that occurred between shops."

Giving historic call boxes a new lease on life

Six historic call boxes will be transformed into public art in downtown Washington, D.C. They join 145 re-purposed boxes that are part of the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities' Art on Call project.

While many cities have removed their police and fire call boxes, the commission sees them as another opportunity to add art to the public realm. Artist Charles Bergen, who will decorate the six new boxes tells WAMU, "The call boxes place the art in the middle of the everyday," adding, "They're never closed. You can see them 24/7."



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Idea Exchange

Eliminating parking fees and sales tax on Small Business Saturday

As in many downtowns, Santa Fe businesses participated in Small Business Saturday on November 24th. Special attractions for the event in New Mexico's capital city included free on-street parking and a sales tax holiday.

The free parking is part of a larger program, which provides two hours of free parking at any meter on Saturdays from Thanksgiving to Christmas day.

The program is funded in part by support from downtown business owners who organize an annual fundraising drive.

Mayor Alan Webber says that, "This initiative is a small gesture that we hope will have a large impact — boosting local business and easing the stress that is so common this time of year."

Connecting downtowns

A new multi-purpose trail is in the works with support from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. When completed, the trail will provide a direct, hiking, biking, walking, and jogging connection between downtown Solon and downtown Chagrin Falls and will also tie into the larger Cleveland Metroparks trail system.

The trail will consist of a 10 foot wide, paved, fully ADA accessible pathway with amenities such as benches, rest areas, bike racks, and pet stations. In announcing the ODNR award, Salon Mayor Ed Kraus

Cutting street clutter

Jersey City, NJ, is attacking street clutter with new regulations for newspaper boxes. The proposed rules require publishers to apply for a newsrack permit, keep the boxes clean and stock them regularly. NJ.com reports that, "Newspaper boxes would also be barred from all historic districts, which would keep publishers from placing them in four downtown Jersey City neighborhoods and in a swath of the west side. They also would not be allowed close to fire hydrants, parking meters, benches, bus stops, or 'any area of flowers or shrubs.'"

While such rules may seem straight forward, they are often complicated by the needs of publishers and issues related to First Amendment rights. As Ed Zimmer, historic preservation planner for the City of Lincoln, NE, told *Downtown Idea Exchange*, "make sure you provide opportunities, so you're not using an ordinance to keep racks out, but rather that you're honestly providing opportunities within an acceptable range. That's essential, both in terms of good public purpose and to meet the First Amendment requirements."



noted the health and economic development benefits of the new trail, "A major goal of this administration is to create a more walkable and connected city. This includes more opportunities to access multi-purpose paths for our residents and to draw more people to our commercial retail areas."

Stimulating residential development

The city of Elgin, IL, has awarded its first grant to install a sprinkler system in a downtown building. The Fire Sprinkler Assistance for Residential Conversion Grant Program was launched in March 2018 to

encourage redevelopment of upper stories into residential units.

The *Chicago Tribune* reports that \$27,891 will be awarded to one building owner who is developing two second floor apartments downtown.

In initial discussions of the grant program, city staff said that there are, "40 downtown buildings that either have had, or appear to be able to hold upper-story units. Those units could be developed as 110 dwellings."



To see the complete grant program information packet, visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras." **DIX**



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

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ECONOMIC GROWTH

To preserve small businesses and local flavor, cities limit chain stores

Recruiting retailers is a delicate balancing act. Chain stores are reliable profit makers, and they're coveted by landlords. Yet too many cookie-cutter establishments can make a downtown feel something less than unique.

A handful of cities are passing rules to limit the number of national retailers that can set up shop downtown. San Francisco is the largest city to establish such a rule, although Boston officials have also explored the possibility.

Restrictions are mostly being enacted in smaller cities such as McCall, ID (est. pop. 3,278), Sausalito, CA (est. pop. 7,125), and Bristol, RI (est. pop. 22,305).

Some downtown leaders and the nonprofit Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) say cities can boost their home-grown businesses by enacting limits on so called "formula businesses" — chains with identical locations, such as Dunkin' Doughnuts or Dominos.

(Continued on page 3)

ATTRACTION

Downtown uses temporary dog parks to satisfy demand, test sites

A building boom has brought thousands of new residents to apartments in downtown Raleigh, NC (est. pop. 467,758). That trend toward greater density is colliding with another reality of urban life — downtown residents love their dogs, even if they don't have backyards that give their pooches plenty of space to play.

The obvious answer is to build more dog parks, but that solution is a

tricky one in a downtown where land is scarce and parks vie for space with other priorities.

"There's not a lot of great opportunities," says T.J. McCourt, planning supervisor in Raleigh's Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department.

In the absence of a palatial new dog park, Raleigh has embraced a stopgap solution: The city operates

(Continued on page 8)

Electric cabs, other ride sharing, part of new “microtransit” trends

Nighttime visitors to downtown Chandler, AZ (est. pop. 253,458), have a new way to travel between restaurants and stores without using their cars.

The Chandler City Council in August approved an agreement with Electric Cab North America to offer free rides in its unusual-looking vehicles. The shuttle service, which began in September, traverses downtown from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

The launch of Chandler’s new electric cab service corresponded with the opening of a 350-space city parking garage. The Phoenix suburb’s “microtransit” service aims to address the last-mile challenge faced by Chandler and

many other downtowns: Cities aim to ease parking congestion by encouraging workers and visitors to park at outlying lots and then use local transit for the last leg of their journey.

Microtransit initiatives not only seek to ease traffic congestion. They also aim to reduce the need for public investment in parking garages and parking lots, not to mention bus service.

In the case of Chandler, the last-mile challenge is particularly pressing during the summer, when temperatures routinely top 100 degrees — a sweaty situation that might make someone think twice about walking the half-mile trek from the new parking garage to The Perch Brewery or another downtown destination.

In other cities, winter chill might make commuters and visitors reluctant to park far from their destinations.

Chandler isn’t the only city to test Electric Cab North America’s services. The boxy cabs — which look like the love child of a Nissan Cube and a golf cart — are available to visitors in downtown Dallas (est. pop. 1,341,075) and Kirkwood, MO (est. pop. 27,653).

St. Louis (est. pop. 308,626) also experimented with the electric cabs for a few months in 2018. From February through June, the shuttle service gave 14,000 rides, Missy Kelley, president and CEO of Downtown STL, told the *St. Louis Business Journal*. The Downtown Community Improvement District budgeted \$115,000 for the program.

Other cities have tapped other providers for microtransit. In 2016, Kansas City, MO, hired Bridj to operate a downtown van fleet, a service that no longer is available. Arlington, TX, is among the cities that have contracted with Via for short rides.

Some downtown leaders have encouraged bike-share and scooter-share services. And, of course, Uber and

Despite the hype, cars are still king

For all the attention given to ride sharing, bike sharing, and other alternatives to transit, cars remain the dominant form of commuting, according to a report by CBRE Research.

Fully 86 percent of workers in the U.S. and 79 percent in Canada get to work by car, truck, or van, the commercial real estate firm concludes in its *U.S. & Canadian Mobility 2018* report.

However, transit preferences differ by city. In sprawling areas such as Houston, Dallas, and Atlanta, some 90 percent of workers still commute by car. But in Toronto, San Francisco, and New York, less than 70 percent of workers take their cars.

“In markets with existing, extensive public-transit infrastructure and dense downtowns, transportation preferences are shifting,” CBRE Research says.

Many office buildings are adding pick-up and drop-off zones for Uber drivers now and in anticipation of autonomous vehicles in the future. But with fully autonomous vehicles perhaps a decade away, most office landlords are sticking with traditional parking garages.



The low-speed eCab seats five passengers.

Lyft have revolutionized the concept of on-demand transport.

In Summit, NJ (est. pop. 22,323), the city has partnered with Lyft to offer rides to and from the New Jersey Transit station, which is suffering a parking crunch. Passengers with prepaid parking permits can ride Lyft for free. Those without parking permits pay \$2 each way, equal to the \$4 charge to park at the station.

Summit originally used Uber to offer rides to and from the train station but switched to Lyft in 2017. The free or reduced Lyft rides are available between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, according to the city's website.

Monrovia, CA, has a similar arrangement with Lyft. It offers rides for 50 cents to \$3, not including tip. And San Clemente, CA, turned to ride sharing to fill in for dwindling bus routes. Users traveling between bus stops pay the first \$2 while the city covers the remaining cost, up to \$9.

Some downtowns use microtransit for temporary solutions. In bustling Boulder, CO, downtown leaders responded to a holiday parking crunch by subsidizing the first \$5 of shoppers' ride-sharing fees on trips to downtown. To help shoppers get home, a number of downtown businesses offered an additional \$5 ride credit to customers spending more than \$50 in their stores or restaurants.

In Chandler, meanwhile, visitors and residents can catch an electric cab at any downtown parking garage. Commuters in need of a short ride will be able to travel between downtown businesses by either calling for an electric cab or waving down a passing shuttle.

Chandler was compelled to offer the electric cab service in part because a free parking lot near City Hall no longer is available.

Chandler's contract with Electric Cab North America runs through June 2019 and is expected to cost up to \$120,000. The city could extend the deal for up to two years.

The electric shuttles on Chandler's streets hold up to five passengers and one driver and can reach speeds of 25 mph.

While the independent contractors who drive for Uber and Lyft prefer not to give half-mile rides, Electric Cab North America specializes in short journeys.

"Our mission is to provide urban mobility that's seamless when it's paired with mass-transit providers," Steve Perkinson, director of project development for Electric Cab North America, told the *East Valley Tribune*.

He says Electric Cab North America trains the drivers and provides vehicles, staff, and insurance. The shuttles are equipped with seatbelts, high-back seats, and other safety features.

Electric cabs and other microtransit services can offer a nimbler alternative to traditional mass-transit services, with their set schedules and inflexible routes.

"This model stresses malleable routes, on-demand service, smaller vehicles, and minimal brick-and-mortar infrastructure," writes Scott Beyer of MarketUrbanismReport.com. "Their flexibility lets them locate where demand exists, rather than counting on populations to come to them." **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see a report about cities partnering with Lyft and Uber prepared by the Chadwick Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul University, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."

To preserve small businesses and local flavor, cities limit chain stores — Continued from page 1

"It's really important to have a diverse mix of businesses — businesses that meet local needs, that are operated locally, that have a unique feel," says Stacy Mitchell, co-director of ILSR.

Mitchell says about three dozen cities

have enacted formula business rules. For such an ordinance to pass legal muster, it must avoid discriminating against business operators.

So a town or city can forbid Starbucks from opening a cookie-cutter Starbucks store,

but it can't stop Starbucks from opening a custom concept with a different name and selling products not immediately recognizable as Starbucks products.

Legal challenges are a concern for municipalities that pass formula business rules. Mitchell says officials should only enact such rules in pursuit of a purely defined public purpose.

Approaches vary from location to location

In Jersey City, NJ (est. pop. 270,753), a zoning ordinance prevents formula businesses from taking more than 30 percent of ground-floor space in commercial buildings. The city council enacted the rule in 2015.

"You don't want small business owners who've stuck with the city through the bad and the good to get squeezed out," Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop tells *Bloomberg Businessweek*. "There's a real risk to the long-term health of the city when you look at where retail is going."

In the ski resort of McCall, ID (est. pop. 3,278), formula business rules are even stricter. The town limits formula businesses to no more than 10 percent of all restaurants and retail establishments.

In San Francisco, chains are allowed downtown and at Fisherman's Wharf but limited in neighborhood business districts.

Mitchell says formula business restrictions use public policy to address an inherent unfairness in commercial real estate markets. Because they're considered creditworthy and therefore more bankable by lenders, national chains are coveted by landlords. As a result, landlords often dangle better deals on rents to chains than to independent retailers.

"There isn't always a level playing field," Mitchell says.

In Jersey City, Fulop says the needs of landlords and residents aren't always the same.

"I do understand the landlord's standpoint," he says. "They view chains as the best, most stable long-term renter, but from a city standpoint, that's not creating the best urban environment to live in."

Meanwhile, Mitchell disputes the suggestion that limiting chain stores hurts consumers by limiting the presence of large retailers who use supply-chain efficiencies to lower prices.

"We have this overwhelming idea that chains are always cheaper, and that isn't always true," Mitchell says.

Contact: Stacy Mitchell, *Institute for Local Self-Reliance*, 207-232-3681. **DIX**

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

City acts as developer by renovating downtown landmarks

Rock Springs, WY (est. pop. 23,350), has breathed new life into its downtown by renovating two long-empty buildings. Next up: Revitalizing a third vacant historic structure that could be the biggest challenge of all.

Rock Springs completed its first big project in 2012, when it reopened the Broadway Theater, a 370-seat cinema built in 1948 but long abandoned. The city owns the

building and hosts community events such as Christmastime screenings of the film *Polar Express*.

Rock Springs was settled in 1888 as a coal-mining town, and the local economy has endured energy-driven booms and busts ever since. The old cinema evokes strong memories from longtime Rock Springs residents.

“People will come in and tell us about their having their first kiss or their first date in that theater,” says Chad Banks, manager of Rock Springs’ Urban Renewal Agency. “They’re excited because now they can take their own kids there.”

Next up was the redevelopment of an old railroad building built in 1917. The city completed that project in 2015 and operates the rechristened Freight Station as a visitor center and events venue.

“We host everything from the senior prom to craft fairs and weddings in that facility,” Banks says. “It brings a lot of people downtown.”

Each redevelopment project cost about \$2 million, and each was paid for mostly with state grants to refurbish historic buildings owned by municipalities. The projects also were supported by private donations.

The two projects have sparked new interest in Rock Springs’ downtown, which was decimated by the development of a mall that drew tenants to the edge of town. There’s still one empty department store downtown, although other spaces have been occupied.

Banks sees a revival in the downtown of his small city, which is situated along Interstate 80. More than 200 buildings downtown have gotten some sort of investment, including new roofs, new windows, and other upgrades. Rock Springs’ Façade Improvement Grant provides matching funds to encourage the upgrades. Public art projects have created excitement, and downtown is home to a new wine bar and a tap room. Downtown Rock Springs now boasts 15 bars and restaurants and 30 independent merchants.

“As those things open, there’s more and more excitement. We’ve reached the tipping point where more and more things are happening,” Banks says.

More than 50 businesses have opened downtown over the past decade, and the city’s success led Main Street America to name Rock Springs one of the winners of the 2018 Great American Main Street Award.

Banks says downtown’s renaissance proves that saving old buildings is a worthy endeavor.

“There’s always that hesitation. People say, ‘They’re old buildings — just tear them down,’” he says.

Rock Springs still has one notable vacant building downtown: The First Security Bank building, built in 1919, needs an investment of \$4 million. The three-story structure’s appraised value is just \$115,000.

“Some in the community will say, ‘It’s crazy to spend that kind of money. Just tear the building down,’” Banks says.

The city owns the building, but Banks is reluctant to spearhead a redevelopment of an office building that will compete with private landowners for tenants.

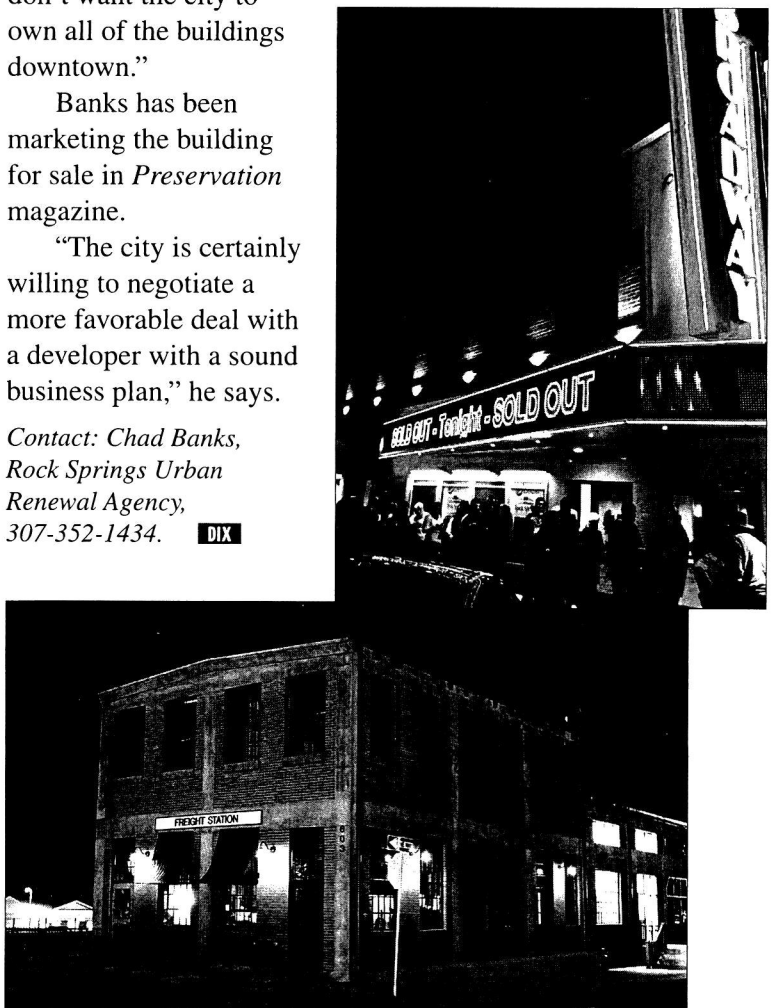
“The city owns it and doesn’t want to be in the business of development,” Banks says. “We’re trying to find some sort of partnership where we can redevelop it without the city being responsible for finding tenants. We don’t want the city to own all of the buildings downtown.”

Banks has been marketing the building for sale in *Preservation* magazine.

“The city is certainly willing to negotiate a more favorable deal with a developer with a sound business plan,” he says.

Contact: Chad Banks,
Rock Springs Urban
Renewal Agency,
307-352-1434. **DIX**

“People say, ‘They’re old buildings — just tear them down.’”



Proponents of linear park kick off \$1 million fundraising campaign

Two nonprofits in Atlanta have launched a capital campaign to jump-start a decades-old plan for a 12-acre linear park that would connect downtown with other neighborhoods.

Proponents promise the expanded Memorial Park Greenway will be “transformative” for downtown and nearby neighborhoods, and indeed it’s a project that tackles many challenges faced by Atlanta (est. pop. 486,290), a sprawling city that has struggled to adapt to new demands for walkability. Among the themes: reconnecting the downtown to nearby neighborhoods, creating gathering spaces in a car-centric metropolis, crossing a freeway that divides neighborhoods, and forming viable public-private partnerships.

Another theme: perseverance. The Memorial Drive Greenway has been discussed for decades.

“This idea for creating a park between the Capitol and Oakland Cemetery has been kicking around for as long as I’ve been involved in the community,” says John Reagan, an architect and developer since 1971. “We’re finally at the point where public and private investment are coming together to make this park happen, and it’s exciting.”

The two nonprofits leading the fundraising campaign are Friends of Memorial Drive Greenway, a group of community advocates working to expand the existing public space into a more ambitious linear park, and Park Pride, a nonprofit that promotes public green spaces.

In early September, Memorial Drive Greenway kicked off an initiative to raise money in support of the proposed park. The capital campaign seeks support from private and corporate donors to reach a goal of \$200,000 by December 2018 and \$1 million by January 2021.

Andrew White of Park Pride says soaring land values have hampered plans to complete

the park, and the city has declined to use eminent domain to take important parcels.

“For any park project, you need the land, you need the money to build it, and you need the political will,” White says. “When any of those three things aren’t in alignment, you get delays.”

Atlanta’s Department of Parks and Recreation owns and manages less than a third of the parcels within the proposed Greenway. Funds from the Eastside Tax Allocation District are committed to acquire more park land, while the proposed cap over Interstate 85 requires state and federal support.

Even so, White says, the city owns enough of the land it needs to make significant progress on the park.

If it’s completed, the park would connect five Atlanta neighborhoods, including Downtown, Capitol Gateway, Grant Park, Old Fourth Ward, and Cabbagetown.

In addition to land acquisition, the capital campaign would pay for short-term improvements on existing park land, along with programming to bring new activity to those spaces.

Memorial Drive Greenway already attracts visitors with events such as the Movies on Memorial outdoor film series.

“Our measure of success for a great park is whether it becomes well-used and well-loved, and Memorial Drive Greenway certainly has the potential to serve as a town square that connects and strengthens all of these neighborhoods,” White says.

The Memorial Drive Greenway has broad support from local business, nonprofit, government and community organizations, including Central Atlanta Progress, Invest Atlanta, Historic Oakland Cemetery, the Grant Park Neighborhood Association, and the Capitol Gateway community.

Even so, progress has been slow. To spur the expansion of Memorial Drive Greenway,

Atlanta created the SPI-22 zoning district — in 2006.

Supporters of the project continue to push for it because they see nothing short of a historic opportunity.

“The Memorial Drive Greenway proposes one of the most significant structural and economic changes to the historic core of an American city in the modern era,” says Jeff Gordon, an urban designer who lives

in Grant Park. “The linear park addresses issues of mobility, connectivity, unity, history, and civic engagement in and around downtown. Taken together, these transformations of Atlanta’s center will increase the quality of life for its residents and make Atlanta more attractive to visitors and business relocation.”

Contact: Andrew White, Park Pride, 404-546-7965. **DIX**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Seeking alternative to vacant storefronts, downtowns offer space for pop-up businesses

Santa Barbara, CA, (est. pop. 91,930), has struggled with an abundance of empty commercial space in its 10-block State Street shopping district.

To take up some of the slack, the city is encouraging budding entrepreneurs to operate pop-up businesses. In a September matchmaking event at the city library, Santa Barbara brought together downtown landlords and real estate brokers to listen to pitches from merchants and restaurateurs.

Dubbing its event “State Street Match,” the city stressed its pop-up program as a way for would-be business operators to inexpensively test their concepts for as little as a weekend.

Benefits include no city permit fees and discounted rent. However, applicants must have a city of Santa Barbara business license.

The city opened its pop-up program only to restaurants and retailers. Wine and beer tasting rooms aren’t allowed.

While State Street is home to such retail plums as an Apple store, REI sporting goods, and Marshalls, a mid-2017 survey by the city counted 33 empty storefronts and an 11 percent vacancy rate. Perhaps the biggest

blow was the closing of a 138,000-square-foot Macy’s location.

Nationally, a difficult retail environment has left many merchants to struggle — and to seek out ways to operate more nimbly, and without long-term leases and other fixed costs. Amid those commercial trends, Santa Barbara isn’t the only city where downtown leaders are acting as matchmakers with temporary businesses.

In Dayton, OH (est. pop. 141,143), the Downtown Dayton Partnership runs Activated Spaces, a program that offers lease lengths of three to six months. The spaces are leased for below-market rates.

Landlords help with tenant improvements, and Downtown Dayton Partnership promotes the pop-ups during events such as First Friday and Summer In the City.

Merchants who have taken advantage of Dayton’s programs include Twist Cupcakery, Hicks’ Barbershop, Vintage Barbershop, and Soccer Shots, a program that teaches soccer skills to children. In some cases, the city has courted merchants who sell their wares on the online craft site Etsy.

“Walking past a storefront that’s active feels a lot more lively than walking past an empty space.”

Since it launched in 2011, 26 small businesses have opened through Dayton's pop-up program, and 13 of them remain in business, says Jen Cadieux, business development manager at Downtown Dayton Partnership. Those companies have filled 25,000 square feet of vacant space and created 42 jobs.

Cadieux says the program launched with the simple notion of creating more activity downtown.

"Walking past a storefront that's active feels a lot more lively than walking past an empty space," Cadieux says.

Dayton's program focuses on retailers with modest start-up costs. The city doesn't finance major construction. Improvements to empty space are limited to cosmetic touches such as painting and cleaning.

For that reason, Dayton's pop-up program doesn't cater to restaurants and other businesses with hefty initial expenses.

Landlords have agreed to discount rents to short-term tenants, and Cadieux says the program relies on volunteers to help spread the word.

As a result, she says, Downtown Dayton Partnership has spent just \$5,000 over the life of its pop-up business program.

"It's a very inexpensive program to run," Cadieux says. "The benefits of bringing new businesses downtown far outweigh the costs."

In Colorado Springs, CO (est. pop. 464,474), Downtown Colorado Springs has run a holiday pop-up program every year since 2014. The initiative opens downtown spaces to merchants who want to capitalize on Christmas shopping.

Retailers must sign a two-month lease for November and December, and they must agree to market their stores. During the Holiday Pop Up Shop program's first four years, a combined 50 retailers took advantage of short-term leases, Downtown Colorado Springs says.

Portland, OR (est. pop. 647,805), offers a similar pop-up program for the holidays. PDX Pop-Up Shops take downtown space from Nov. 16 to Dec. 24. Portland debuted its program in 2009. Some entrepreneurs who tested the market found so much success that they opened permanent locations.

In Concord, NC (est. pop. 92,067), Pop UP DOWNtown offers temporary space to merchants during the annual Summer Sidewalk Sale.

Contact: Jen Cadieux, Downtown Dayton Partnership, 973-224-1518. **DIX**

Downtown uses temporary dog parks to satisfy demand, test sites — Continued from page 1

pop-up dog parks downtown that give dogs a place to play for a day or two.

"Dog parks are the type of place that you regularly see complete strangers having conversation with each other and really building up a sense of community."

In the two most ambitious examples, Raleigh created pop-up dog parks at Dorothea Dix Park. The events included vendors of such items as pet treats and beer (for the dogs' owners, not the dogs). Dingo Dog Brewing Co. ran the beer truck with a promise of donating profits to a no-kill animal shelter.

Food truck operators also showed up, and each event drew about 2,000 people, McCourt says. The city didn't charge admission or collect vendor fees.

Meanwhile, Raleigh has tested less elaborate pop-up parks that involve little more than erecting and taking down temporary fences and letting downtown residents know about the event. The city ultimately hopes to build a permanent dog park downtown, and the pop-up events let parks officials gauge the pros and cons of various locations.

"It gives us a chance to test out these sites," McCourt says.

For now, the temporary solution is an inexpensive one. Setting up the fence takes about an hour, McCourt says, and the pop-up parks cost a fraction of the tab for building a permanent dog park.

Raleigh isn't alone in promoting temporary places for dogs to play. Among the cities that have experimented with pop-up dog parks are Austin, TX, Sacramento, CA, West Hartford, CT, and Rome, GA.

Dog population on the rise

The City of Raleigh has engaged in a concerted effort to find a place for dogs downtown. About a third of Raleigh residents own dogs, and the city expects its dog population to explode to more than 100,000 by 2023.

As part of the effort, the city has published a comprehensive study and has been surveying residents about their dog-park preferences.

"Raleigh has experienced many of the same social and demographic trends that are driving dog park demand throughout the country," the study says. "In rapidly urban-

izing areas where growing numbers of people are choosing to live in apartments and townhomes with limited access to private yards, dog owners increasingly rely on public open space to walk, exercise, and socialize with their canine companions."

More than half of Raleigh's residents live in multifamily or attached housing, and more than 60 percent of all new housing units built since 2010 have been apartments.

Meanwhile, both baby boomers and millennials own pets in record numbers, and pet ownership has accelerated over the past decade. And dog owners are willing to spend more than ever to pamper their pets.

Dog parks are about more than just providing a place for pets to frolic. The amenities also give downtown residents a place to socialize, and dog parks can create the sense of community that downtown leaders crave.

"Dog parks are the type of place that you regularly see complete strangers having conversation with each other and really building up a sense of community," McCourt told the *Raleigh News & Observer*.

Contact: T.J. McCourt, City of Raleigh,
919-996-6079. **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see Raleigh's report on dog ownership and dog parks, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."

ATTRACTION

Compact downtowns healthier than sprawling 'burbs, researchers find

Downtown leaders have long espoused the benefits of walkable communities. A new study adds to the growing research which suggests that suburban sprawl is bad for Americans' health, while downtown living improves wellness.

The study, published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, concludes that Americans who reside in compact metropolitan counties

live nearly three years longer on average than those who reside in sprawling, car-centric areas.

For years, American life spans have been falling compared with other developed nations, and sociologists seeking answers have studied a variety of factors — including income, race, gender, education levels, population, environment, and behavior.

The study, led by Shima Hamidi, the director of the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Texas at Arlington, identified four areas where sprawl seems to hamper public health:

Obesity is higher in sprawling counties than in compact counties. Perhaps less walking and more time behind the wheel are responsible. More urban counties also offer more access to healthy food, Hamidi says.

Traffic fatality rates are higher in sprawling than in compact counties because of increased exposure to driving and crashes. Hamidi says that's because cars tend to travel more slowly in denser areas — and medical care is closer to the site of the crash.

Several studies have linked sprawl with poor air quality. Metro areas with lower levels of sprawl exhibit lower concentrations of ozone and fine particulates, pollutants known to shorten life spans. With more people walking, biking, or taking mass transit, air quality improves, Hamidi says.

Violent crime rate may be lower in compact areas because of increased policing that accompanies concentrated populations. Factors such as close-knit communities, economic opportunities, and higher education and income levels of residents also play into better health.

"It isn't an easy fix," Hamidi says. "But if we can get started thinking about quality-of-life aspects of sprawl now, perhaps we can prioritize enacting zoning codes that encourage what we call smart growth: mixed-use developments, downtown residency, and investment around transit stations."

Hamidi favors what she terms a "poly-center" urban model, characterized by a dense urban core linked to dense subcenters by an efficient transit system. Portland, OR, is one such example.

"We can make our cities more dense, walkable, and accessible, and less car-dependent, and ultimately improve our overall health," Hamidi says.

*Contact: Shima Hamidi, University of Texas at Arlington, 817-272-2801. **DIX***

ECONOMIC GROWTH

JPMorgan Chase to give \$500 million in economic development grants

One of the world's largest banks says it will invest \$500 million over five years to help towns and cities with economic initiatives addressing such issues as job training and neighborhood blight.

JPMorgan Chase announced its AdvancingCities in September. Applicants must be nonprofits, the bank says.

"The AdvancingCities Challenge will make investments of up to \$3 million in cities to support creative, collaborative and sustainable solutions that address cross-cutting

challenges that help more people benefit from a growing economy," JPMorgan Chase says on its site soliciting proposals. "Successful proposals will support existing local coalitions of elected, business, and nonprofit leaders working together to address major social and economic challenges such as employment barriers, financial insecurity, and neighborhood disinvestment."

The deadline for applications is Nov. 30. JPMorgan Chase will announce winners in April 2019. **DIX**

Idea Exchange

Change to Make a Change program launches

Merchants in downtown Bloomington, IN, are encouraging people to forgo giving money to panhandlers and instead to place change in collection boxes at their businesses. Donations to the Change to Make a Change program will be distributed among local service providers. Participating stores will be identified with window clings which read in part, "Give your change to make a change in the lives of those in need on our streets."

The program, which is sponsored by the Downtown Bloomington Association and the city also seeks to direct the homeless to practical resources. An attractive brochure lists emergency shelters, free meal sites, and other resources along with a map.

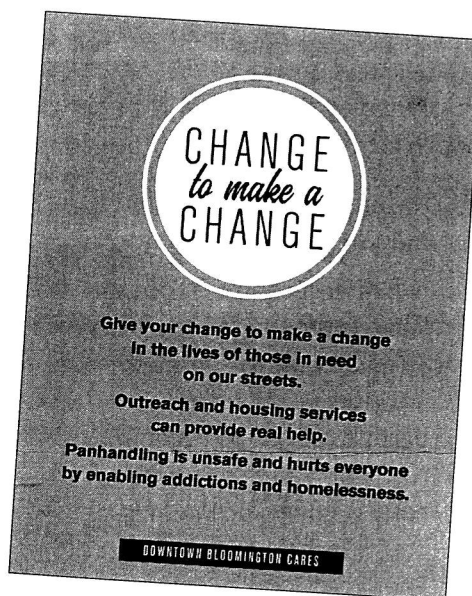


To see the Change to Make a Change brochure and map visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

Downtown welcomes new students

In Athens, GA, home to the University of Georgia, first-year and transfer students received a warm welcome from the Athens Downtown Development Authority and the university's Office of Community Relations. During a scavenger-hunt style event, students solved clues, discovered local businesses, received swag bags filled gifts and special offers, and were entered into a prize drawing.

"It was nice that we could go and look around all of these different



Window clings indicate participating businesses.

businesses in Athens," a first-year student told *UGA Today*. "Now we know where the shops are, and I know we will go back to them."

Valet parking pilot program

This summer visitors to downtown Traverse City, MI, had an alternative to searching for a parking spot. The Downtown Development Authority launched an 11-week valet program to test the service before expanding it to year-round.

A valet podium was located on the sidewalk near downtown's State Theatre, a refurbished 1916 movie house. One loading zone space and one metered space were used for the service which was available Wednesday to Saturday from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.

The pilot program was funded by a group of restaurant owners and supplemented with user fees.

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Idea Exchange

Wayfinding encourages multi-destination trips

A recently approved wayfinding system in Burien, WA, encourages residents and visitors to “park once — shop twice.” The system will include 25 vehicle directional signs, 12 public parking signs, and a retrofit of two pedestrian information kiosks.

Community outreach was conducted in April 2017 during the design phase of the project. The process included two open houses, a seven-person stakeholder advisory group, an online survey, online project updates, and presentations to the city council.

“The new wayfinding system will direct travelers to the great amenities we have here in Burien and will not only help them find their destination, but discover new ones,” said Andrea Snyder, economic development manager for the city. “Our small businesses tell us they want to attract more airport users. These signs will guide more customers to Burien businesses.”



To view the Wayfinding Signage Plan go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on “Web Extras.”

Parking for nighttime workers

The Affordable Parking Program in Austin, TX, aims to make parking less expensive for those working in the city’s nighttime service and entertainment sector. Reduced rates are available at 12 garages and lots from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Paying buskers keeps downtown lively

In Minneapolis, MN, the Downtown Improvement District thinks that the area will be more vibrant if it encourages street performers rather than shooing them away.

After testing the concept last fall, the DID launched Street Show this summer. Sidewalk entertainers perform during lunch hour, rush hour, and sometimes early evenings on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays on Nicollet Mall, the downtown’s shopping and entertainment hub.



The Street Show wagon marks official performances.

The official Street Show wagon, a retrofitted Radio Flyer wagon, marks the spot for live performances.

Street Show performers make \$50 an hour (more if they are a duo or trio) in addition to whatever they receive in tips. When it wrapped up at the end of September, the program had provided about 550 hours of live entertainment.

The issue has been a topic of discussion for years, says the *Austin Monitor*, “employees at bars and nightclubs faced difficulty finding parking for their shifts and faced high prices that cut heavily into their earnings.”

Grant to improve downtown housing stock

The City of Newton, IA, has approved the Newton Downtown Housing Grant Program. The program provides a one-to-one match of up to \$20,000 to building owners

who create or rehabilitate rental or owner-occupied housing in a downtown commercial building.

Planning and Zoning Director Erin Chambers told the *Newton Daily News* that the grant program aligns well with the city’s comprehensive plan. “A variety of housing types plays into growing our population,” Chambers said. “We want to focus on young families and housing styles that support young families, but we also don’t want to ignore different housing styles. Downtown living is a specific niche market that we want to tap into.” **DIX**