



CITY OF ELKO

Planning Department

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

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

The City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council will meet in a regular session on Thursday, October 24, 2019 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1751 College Avenue, Elko, Nevada, beginning at 4:00 P.M., P.D.S.T.

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

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

Date/Time Posted: October 18, 2019 2:10 p.m.

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

Date/Time Posted: October 18, 2019 2:05 p.m.

ELKO POLICE DEPARTMENT – 1448 Silver Street, Elko NV 89801

Date/Time Posted: October 18, 2019 2:15 p.m.

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

Date/Time Posted: October 18, 2019 2:00 p.m.

Posted by: Shelby Archuleta, Planning Technician
Name Title

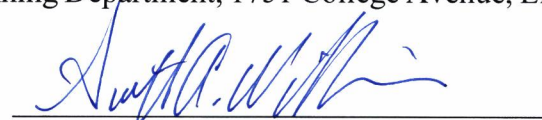

Signature

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.

Dated this 18th day of October, 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 ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
4:00 P.M., P.D.S.T., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2019
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

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

I. PRESENTATION

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

II. REPORTS

- A. Budget
- B. Storefront Improvement Program
- C. Other

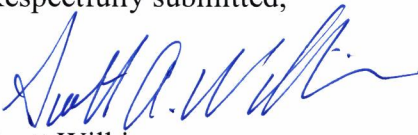
COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Wilkinson
Assistant City Manager

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
4:00 P.M., P.D.S.T., THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Bill Hance, RDA
Catherine Wines, ACAB
Jeff Dalling
Jon Karr

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

Staff Present: Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager
Cathy Laughlin, City Planner
Michele Rambo, Development Manager
Dennis Strickland, Public Works Director
James Wiley, Parks and Recreation 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

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

***** A Motion was made by Jeff Dalling, seconded by Catherine Wines, ACAB, to approve the January 24, 2019 minutes.**

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

I. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency regarding the design of Phase 1, Project 3; Block Ends, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

The RAC, at their January 24, 2019 meeting had discussion regarding the block end design and suggested that two of the RAC members have a meeting with the City Staff to continue discussion of the block end design. That meeting was held on March 6, 2019. James Wiley, City of Elko Parks Director, attended that meeting and provided input on his knowledge of tree design and maintenance requirements to the meeting attendees. It was decided to design with large shade trees and center them in the block ends so that it doesn't obstruct with traffic on the street, providing room for tree growth and less impact on long term maintenance such as sidewalk replacement and underground utilities. There was a significant increase in cost for an all concrete surface rather than grass, so the decision was to stay with the design consistent with the 30% Plans. Power and irrigation to each block end was also discussed at the March 6, 2019 meeting. The proposed design is consistent with the 30% approved plans in which the RDA approved on May 10, 2016.

Bob Thibault, Civil Engineer, showed the latest design for the block ends. He explained that he met with Jeff Dalling, Cathy Laughlin, and James Wiley. Catherine Wines was not able to make it to the meeting. They discussed the block ends. They have about 20' and then 6' of sidewalk, so about 26' to 28' total. With that width of a landscaped strip, it was the group's consensus that it would be best to go with large shade trees. They are shown as 30' diameter trees, so they would go from the curb, overhang the sidewalk, and would fit well without interfering with traffic lanes on the street, or traffic within the parking lot. Mr. Thibault showed the proposed design of 4th Street compared with the 30% Plans. If we ever redo the parking lots, we would have to take out a landscape strip, rearrange the drive isles, reduce the number of drive isles, and space things out for more room. There will be a little more room for landscaping and more trees in the future. At 5th Street there is brand new curb, gutter, and sidewalk that was provided by NDOT 2 years ago. It is a 5 foot wide sidewalk and we would maintain the 24' wide drive isle. There would only be a 9' wide landscape strip there. Some smaller trees could fit in there, with about 15' diameters. Mr. Thibault asked Mr. Wiley to attend the meeting, but he was running late. Mr. Wiley had some trees in mind that grow tall and 30' wide, and some others that would be suitable for a narrower landscape strip. Both sewer and water lines are going through the area, and we don't want to have trees on top of the utilities. Mr. Thibault pointed out that he had tried to space the trees appropriately, so that there weren't odd gaps. With the bigger trees, four fills the space well, even with avoiding the water and sewer lines. The smaller trees will have some gaps between them. With the 30% plans for 5th Street the landscape strip could be widened. 6th Street is similar to 4th Street, except there are some extra utilities. There is some storm drain infrastructure. The trees on 6th Street would be the 30' diameter trees. The 30% also shows more room for additional landscaping in the future. This is where Mr. Thibault was at with the 30% design, following the lead of the direction he was given and the 30% Plans.

Catherine Wines asked if they could see a whole block on the 30% drawings.

Cathy Laughlin, City Planner, added that another thing that was discussed at the meeting was how to bring water to each block end, power, and how to run the irrigation. Will each block have its own irrigation, or will there be one main control center? They also discussed if there would be a need for any type of power source at any of the block ends, and if so how to bring power to those block ends. We had talked about having this project built this summer; going out to bid this spring and starting construction this summer, but it might be too late now.

Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager, said Mr. Strickland and himself were just talking about some of the issues. As we get into a more detailed design we will be dealing with Elko Heat infrastructure and some storm drain infrastructure. All of those issues are going to further complicate the completion of the design. Depending on how that progresses, this may be something that takes quite some time to get through all the issues.

Ms. Laughlin added that there is also lighting, fire hydrants, and other things to look at.

Dennis Strickland, Public Works Director, explained that in the 400 Block there is a pretty significant storm drain trunk line that runs right where the trees are shown. There is also a lot of geothermal. He thought construction this summer was highly unlikely. There might be something by fall if all that stuff can be identified, but just off cuff he thought there would have to be something done with storm drain infrastructure on 4th. It is so old that the tree roots could grow right through it. There might be a way that the storm drain could daylight in the corridor, run through the trees and help irrigate them, and then go back under ground and continue back down. They will definitely have to consider the impact of big trees and dilapidated storm drain in that area.

Ms. Wines asked if the storm drain went down 4th Street or perpendicular to 4th Street.

Mr. Strickland he said through.

Mr. Wilkinson said some of the things they would look at would be if that could be an open swale and if they could pull out the degraded pipe. These are some of the things that will complicate being able to come up with a comprehensive design. Keep in mind that we are doing this in house to save money, and Mr. Thibault is going to be very busy with the Sports Complex. This is not a priority for Mr. Thibault over and above the Sports Complex.

Ms. Wines explained that the reasons she asked to see the whole block was because there seemed to be talk about redoing the blocks, the entrances, and the parking. That has always seemed to her like a waste of money. You are just shifting the parking, and not really gaining anything. She thought they needed to take some time and make sure that this is what they want to do. She had asked to talk about the 30% Drawings and maybe taking the part out about redoing the entire parking area. She asked for that to be on the agenda, but it didn't make it on there. She thought they needed to talk about that before they did a little chunk of it and it messes up something later on. Ms. Wines said she was in favor of waiting on this to make sure that it gets done right.

Mr. Wilkinson wanted to refresh the RAC. The 30% Plans have been adopted by the RDA and they spent months, if not a year or longer, going through that process. The RAC was involved and the RDA made decisions that those are the plans that they were going to pursue. In addition to that, there was a lot of conversation about breaking the block ends off. Staff expressed reservations at the time. The RAC broke the Project, which is the corridor, into separate tasks and prioritized those tasks. The RAC recommended that the RDA adopt that schedule and those estimated costs, which included separating the block ends. We have been executing on all of those decisions, which have to do with everything that has been done on 7th Street and everything we are trying to do here. To back up and try to reevaluate the 30% Plans, and reevaluate all of the decisions that have been made, seems to not move the Redevelopment efforts forward.

Jeff Dalling said he went to the meeting. The problem is that they only have a certain amount of money. He felt that there was a lot of compromise. They have been working on this awhile, and Mr. Dalling said he would love to see it move forward. It sounds like there is more work to do, but he thought they should move forward with it. It is always better to have something tangible. The trees with the big canopies will be nice.

Councilman Bill Hance said he would like to see an entire block section get done at once, to have more impact. If staff is overwhelmed with adding this onto the work load, then they could push it off until next year.

Ms. Wines said what they have as the design doesn't match the 30% Drawings. The sidewalks are not in the same place, so the parking wouldn't be located in the same place when it gets redone. That's where her hesitation was. We are saying that we need to stick with the 30% Drawings, but were not.

Mr. Wilkinson explained that what staff was tasked with was a decision to bifurcate block projects by doing the block ends first, and not having a huge impact on all the parking downtown. This is generally in conformance with the 30% Plans and he explained why. The 30% Plans show the sidewalk set back a little more, which is the final design for the entire block. The important things that we are doing that are in conformance with the 30% Plans are providing the pedestrian access on the block ends, narrowing the streets, providing for pedestrian friendly intersections, and putting in trees. He wanted to bring up a comment from John Patrick Rice that he heard while they were going through 30% Plans. Mr. Rice had a very basic observation that the Corridor needs shade. We can shift that sidewalk over, Mr. Wilkinson didn't think it would impact the design that much. We can live without some rows of parking in the downtown area on all these block ends until we get enough money to complete the midblock components. He thought what Mr. Thibault came up with was the least disruptive of trying to accomplish construction of block ends based on the decisions that have been made by the RAC and adopted by the RDA to try to move this project forward.

Ms. Wines said what they were saying with this was that they are redoing every single one of the landscape islands and moving and shifting the parking later on.

Mr. Thibault explained that the way they would function now, is they would function fine with the existing parking.

Ms. Laughlin said later on they would move everything.

Mr. Thibault explained that the 30% Plans that have been approved show them moving everything at some point. Mr. Thibault said his intention was to work well with they have now, and to allow for them to modify everything later and not to have to redo them.

Ms. Wines said that was what Mr. Karr and she had talked about was if that was the best use of those dollars, later on, to just shift everything just for the sake of shifting it. It doesn't seem to benefit anything.

Chairman Jon Karr said he asked the question of how much different the design would be if they were doing the whole thing. It doesn't really change that much.

Ms. Wines said it changed the entire thing.

Chairman Karr said the block ends would still function if they did the middles, or decided not to do them. He said he agreed with Catherine that eventually doing the interior would be a waste.

Ms. Laughlin said if they did the block ends the way they are designed right now, it works with the parking the way it functions today. If we decide to change it later on and redo the interior of the block, we will be adding to the block ends, but it won't change what we're putting in for the block ends.

Mr. Wilkinson thought when he talked with Mr. Thibault about how this might tie into the interior block development, they thought they would be adding some landscape strips behind the proposed sidewalk. There would be a little bit of grass on both sides of the sidewalk.

Ms. Wines said they were locked in to doing the 30%, and moving everything in the parking areas.

Mr. Wilkinson said here is the way RDA works. Under the NRS you have to identify a project, which the RDA did, and the corridor was the main project. You have to identify the anticipated, or estimated, revenues to show that you can afford to do your proposed project. That is what the NRS requires to be done to create a Redevelopment District. All of that has been done. We then hired a consultant for around \$100,000 and attempted to come up with a better design for the main project, which was the Corridor Project in the RDA Plan. The RDA has adopted the 30% Plan. When they did that they also demonstrated that they could afford to build that. That is the plan that we are working off of. If we want to change that we need to go back to square one and start over again. We've adopted those and the RAC has been involved the whole process. They were also involved in prioritizing the elements of that project over time, based on the projected revenues. We have been executing on that, rather than hiring consultants. What we're trying to do now is continue to move the execution of the project, with the next phase, forward, which has been voted on and adopted. The RAC can have a recommendation that we don't do this, and that we reevaluate everything we have done to date, and we will take this to the RDA to see if they

want to do that, or if they want to continue to move forward with all the decisions that have been made to date.

Chairman Karr asked what the board wanted to do.

Ms. Wines said there didn't seem to be a place to put art or kiosks. She asked if they needed to show that now if that was something they were interested in including.

Mr. Thibault pulled up the 30% Plan for 6th street and pointed out something that was on the mid-block. He thought there was still plenty of room to come back in the future and do something between the trees. He thought the money was going to be tight on the budget as it is now, and he didn't know if they would have the funding for additional work, and all of the details still needed to be worked out.

Chairman Karr said the grass would be easy to dig up to put something in.

Ms. Wines said as long as the irrigation lines aren't in the way.

Mr. Wilkinson thought if they were going to move it forward they could state in the motion that they want to include those elements in the final design, and they could be added as add alternates. That way, when it gets designed the irrigation would work around any of those features. That would be the smart thing to do. Basically, we are looking at a concrete, hard surfaced area. That is pretty easy to put in. Mr. Wilkinson thought if they made a motion to move this forward to the RDA, part of that could be to include those elements now, rather than later.

Ms. Wines said a lady that is one of the founders and Vice President of Burning Man, wants to know when Elko is going to be ready for art.

Mr. Wilkinson said that made sense. He said if they wanted to add that into the motion they could say mid, or center, block to design a hard surface area to the maximum extent practical, right off the sidewalk. Staff could dimension that out and it could be an add alt. If revenues come in higher than expected and we can afford to do it, we should.

Ms. Wines said that was something that could be a large element while the trees are small.

*****A motion was made by Jeff Dalling to move the conceptual drawings and the 30% on to the RDA as presented.**

After the motion and before a second or vote, Mr. Dalling stated that he didn't want to include to make room for art, because it will be grass and it will be easy to add those elements in later on.

**** Bill Hance seconded the motion.**

Susan Wright, 500 Commercial Street, said this has been a process that she has watched from the outside for many years. The RAC has spent a lot of money on redesigning and sending this out to a design company. Nothing has happened for a very long time. She thought it was fantastic. You

want to entice people to come downtown and nothing has happened. There has been a lot of money spent on these plans and the redesigning of these plans. As a business owner, Ms. Wright thought this was swept under the rug and that there wouldn't be a continuation. Coming to this meeting opened her eyes and she thought it was fantastic. She thought they should move forward with it. If there is art, it is an easy remedy to remove sod and put a platform down for future art work. She thought they should do this and get something done, and stop spending money on the redesign process.

**Motion passed (3-1, Ms. Wines voted no).*

- B.** Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency for the 2019 Storefront Improvement Grant Recipients and amount allocated for each grant, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

2019 Storefront Improvement Grant applications were accepted from January 1, 2019 to March 30, 2019. Two applications were received for a total requested funding of \$24,443.14. Redevelopment Agency allocated \$50,000 to the 2019 Storefront Grant Program.

Ms. Laughlin explained that there were two applications in the packet. One of the applications was from Catherine Wines, and the other was from Susan Wright for JM Capriola Co. for a sign. The total requested funding is \$24,443.14. We have \$50,000 allocated for the Storefront Program this year, so the funding is available. As we've done in the past, we go through the rating sheets and score them if you choose to. It doesn't appear that we have more funding requests than we have available, so you can make that decision.

Chairman Karr asked if all the applications met the requirements.

Ms. Laughlin said yes

Ms. Wines disclosed that she was one of the applicants.

Chairman Karr said they could either make a motion to approve them, or go through and score them. He thought they could make a motion to approve them both, because they both looked fine to him.

*****A motion was made by Jeff Dalling, seconded by Bill Hance, RDA to approve both the Taber Building for \$7,445.64 and J.M. Capriola's for \$16,997.50, as presented.**

After the motion and before the vote, Ms. Wines asked which sign Capriola's was going with.

Susan Wright explained that the bid process was very difficult, especially coming down to the wire with Nevada Advertising. Ultimately, she wanted to go with Nevada Advertising, because she wanted to keep the business local and general the tax dollars locally. The design process is

not set in stone. This is not the design that she's in love with, but it was what she was given at the tail end of the application process.

Ms. Wines asked if the design shown wasn't necessarily what the sign would look like.

Ms. Wright said on the front end of the store, yes. The pictures that Steve has given are not a great depiction. The back sign and the side signs, she doesn't like the side signs. She liked the more traditional design.

Mr. Wilkinson thought that if they didn't have a final design on that, it would need some type of condition. That condition would be, either the final design is approved by Ms. Laughlin as the RDA Manager, or that the final design of the expenditure that we are approving is approved by the RAC or the RDA. He thought that was important. He thought the Agency would be ok with a condition that Ms. Laughlin approve the final design. He thought that should be addressed in the motion.

Ms. Laughlin said to keep in mind that what they are approving is a maximum of \$16,997, so if Susan only spends \$24,000 on a sign she will only be reimbursed \$12,000. If the sign changes in the design and it changes in the cost, you are approving it up to a maximum of this amount.

Ms. Wines said Steve wasn't the low bid. She asked Ms. Wright if she was still going to use him.

Ms. Wright explained that Steve included signs that she didn't ask for.

Mr. Dalling thought they were all in the right ball park. There is only a certain amount of money that Ms. Wright is going to receive.

***Mr. Dalling amended the motion to include that JM Capriola's gets prior approval from Ms. Laughlin on the final design.**

***Mr. Hance seconded the amendment.**

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

II. REPORTS

A. Recognition Program

Ms. Laughlin reported that we have the awards. Steve dropped them off on Monday. We did the approval of the proposal. There is also a sticker that goes with the award. The awards will be presented at a joint meeting with the RDA and the RAC on May 14th.

B. Budget

Ms. Laughlin went over the budget report.

C. Other

Ms. Laughlin wanted to discuss the Storefront Program from last year. The \$55,105 was approved and pledged for those. Patray Assets is under construction. Ms. Laughlin was expecting them to be submitting a reimbursement request soon. She also talked to Steve Tenney in regards to The Commercial. That project is still somewhat up in the air. He is supposed to be taking care of the bears for sure, but the rest of project he doesn't have confirmation on. The Laughlin Family Trust has had some issues with materials ordering and a supplier, but they are hoping to get started next week and be done within 6 weeks.

Ms. Wines asked why they weren't hearing, or talking, about the lights with NV Energy.

Ms. Laughlin said because she couldn't get anything back from NV Energy. They sent the information on how much money they wanted for those lights. She then met with Mr. Carson, and he said there was new management and he was going to see if they could convey the lights over the City of Elko. She has sent Mr. Carson two emails since and received no emails back.

Ms. Wines said in the last month she has had two businesses tell her that they don't want to locate their business downtown because it's not safe.

Chairman Karr thought that was a bit of an exaggeration, but it is dark.

Ms. Laughlin suggested that they invite NV Energy to the next meeting and put it on the agenda. Mr. Carson seemed to think that he was going to get further with the new management than what he was getting with the previous management. When we approved the \$15,000 expenditure towards the replacement of the bulbs. NV Energy came back after we approved it and said that would only do one or two lights. They weren't willing to spend the rest of the money to upgrade them.

Mr. Wilkinson asked if the lights were grant funded. (Yes) There are legacy issues any time grant money is received. It may just be that because they were grant funded they can't convey them. In reality if you had the maintenance obligation that they have it would make sense to convey them to the City.

Ms. Laughlin said they sent an email with an amount for how much they would sell them to the City for. That came from Carson City office, and they did the research on the funding. The lights are completely depreciated out.

It was decided to try to get a representative from NV Energy to attend the next meeting.

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this time.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jon Karr, Chairman

Lina Blohm, Secretary

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING MINTUES
4:00 P.M., P.D.S.T., TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2019
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

RDA Members Present: Councilman Bill Hance (*also RAC Member*)
Councilman Chip Stone
Councilman Robert Schmidlein
Councilwoman Mandy Simons
Mayor Reece Keener.

RAC Members Present: Bill Hance, RDA
Catherine Wines, ACAB
Jeff Dalling.

RAC Members Absent: John Kingwell, Elko Co.
Jon Karr
Katie Neddenriep, ECVA
Lina Blohm
Sonja Sibert, GBC
Steve Bowers, Elko Co. School Dist.

City Staff Present: Curtis Calder, City Manager
Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager
Cathy Laughlin, City Planner
Bob Thibault, Civil Engineer
Michele Rambo, Development Manager
Shelby Archuleta, Planning Technician

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this time.

I. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Presentation of the 2019 Redevelopment Recognition Awards. INFORMATION ONLY
– NON ACTION ITEM**

Mayor Reece Keener said this was fun event for them to be able to do. They don't do them very often and he hoped they would be able to do another one within the next 18 to 24 months. It is a great way to recognize people that have made significant investments in the downtown. He thanked everyone for that. It's not easy remodeling an old building. He knew that there was a lot of blood, sweat, tears, and cash that goes into it. He thought that for everyone that had undertaken that the perseverance was well worth it. Mayor Keener started by recognizing the Cowboy Arts & Gear Museum. Cowboy Arts and Gear Museum was granted the property from NV Energy in December 2017. They did an extensive remodel of the storefront as well as interior remodel. The Museum is a destination point for many visitors to our community, as well as a gathering place for local events. Jan Petersen, museum director, spends numerous hours each week in the museum telling the history of Elko. We are extremely fortunate to have such a resource in our downtown, Thank you!

Jan Peterson, Cowboy Arts & Gear Museum, said that the credit goes to NV Energy for having the vision to extend the life of the building and recognizing their legacy of the saddle crafting business. It's an honor to be downtown, not have an empty building, to be open, and not surviving but thriving. John Wright, Board President, was with Ms. Peterson. They have a hard working board and it is a team effort. They are happy to be there and happy to be a part of downtown and the revitalization.

Mayor Keener then presented Ogi Deli with their award. Ana Marie and Mikel Lopatequi started Ogi Deli in April 2010. In 2016, the business owners saw an opportunity to relocate to the heart of the downtown. After a complete transformation of the interior and exterior of the previous Donut's and More, they opened in their current location. The move has been a great decision for the business owners as the business is very successful. The business owners are hosts of several special events, which bring additional business to the downtown area and we thank you for your continued efforts in making our downtown great. He also presented to GFL Properties and Lipparelli Eye Care.

GFL Properties – GFL Properties managing partners, Pat and Cathy Laughlin and Glen and Casey Guttry, purchased the vacant building in March 2014. They did a complete interior remodel. 2,500 sq. ft. of the upper floor was converted into three new apartments and 5,000 square feet on the main floor was remodeled into two long-term business rentals. Future plans for the building include a complete storefront remodel as well as the exterior side along the alley. Redevelopment is about mixed uses, adding that live, work, play aspect to the downtown and this is a prime example of a successful property transformation of mixed use. Thank you for your investment and confidence in our downtown.

Lipparelli Eye Care – Dr. Matthew and Teresa Lipparelli have owned this property since March of 1991. Matthew has had his successful optometry business located in the building since the beginning. In May of 2018, The Lipparelli's did a complete storefront transformation including stucco and a new sign. The sign is creative and is certainly an "eye" catcher. We thank you for your 28 years of business in the heart of downtown and your investment into your property.

Matthew Lipparelli stated that he was happy to be contributing to his hometown and he loved the fact that the other business were doing that as well.

Mayor Keener presented Dalling Hall with their award. Jeff Dalling purchased Dalling Hall in June of 2016. Numerous hours and thousands of dollars later, Jeff has created an amazing gathering space in downtown Elko. He has business rentals on the upper floor and a full calendar of rentals for the event hall. Jeff has kept many of the historical aspects of the property while bringing the building up to current building and fire codes. The long hours Jeff spent transforming the Hesson Hardware building has not gone unnoticed. We thank you for your investment in Elko and providing Elko another great historical restoration.

Jeff Dalling said as you all know and have gotten to watch the progress on the property, it has been a lot of work. All he has left is a little paint on the front. Today was a big day for the building. It was rented out again. The bottom was rented by Barrick. The amount of people that parked in 600 Block of the corridor, which is usually empty, was amazing. It was nice to see the parking lot full, and all the people downtown. Mr. Dalling stated that he was glad the project was done and that he was glad to be a part of downtown.

There were not representatives present to accept awards for Gerber Law Office or the Hannington Building, but Mayor Keener gave an explanation for each project.

Gerber Law Office – This property has been in the Gerber family since 1997. Zach and Travis Gerber were the recipients of the 2017 RDA Storefront Grant in which they did a new sign, awnings over the windows and doors, added lighting and architectural details. The property has several office rentals in addition to Gerber Law Office and provides that small commercial rental space desired by many small businesses and non-profit organizations. We thank you for your continued investment in our downtown as well as providing commercial rental space to businesses as well as non-profit organizations.

Hannington Building - Gary, Joseph and Peter Hannington, managing members of Shigamo Development Inc., purchased the property in August 2009. They immediately started on a complete remodel of the building, which includes an apartment upstairs and Coffee Mug and Modz Arcade on the street level. Their remodel included the interior and exterior of the building. The exterior remodel was the first on the block and set a great precedent. Thank you for investing in the downtown, relocating businesses to the downtown, leasing to new start-up businesses, and showing us another great example of a mixed-use building.

Mayor Keener presented John Wright with Capriola's their award. J.M. Capriola Co. opened in 1929 in the current location, J.M. Capriola's is known around the world for this iconic store in downtown Elko. Current business owners, Doug, John and Susan Wright were the recipients of a 2017 RDA Storefront Grant for the replacement of the windows and doors. The owners later, did a transformation of the 5th Street storefront. They are now looking at new signage as well as the restoration of the ever so famous "red horse". We thank you for the 90 years of retail services and history you have provided our community and your continued investment in the downtown.

John Wright thanked everyone that allows the downtown to have these programs to improve the downtown and give it new life. That is something that is needed downtown. There have been a lot of good starts down there. There is some incentive going and he wanted to see a lot more projects happen for other businesses downtown.

There were not representatives present to accept awards for Maverik, Jet Coin Laundry, or Dreez, but Mayor Keener gave an explanation for each project

Maverik – Maverick built a gas station and small convenience store in 1978 at their current location. In April 2000, they purchased the residence next door with the intention of expanding their business. In 2015, Maverick demolished their store and the residence next door and built a new building and gas station. Many years ago, it seemed as if Elko had a gas station on every block corner along Idaho Street. Maverick is now the only gas station within our Central Business District. The business is extremely successful and it is very important to have the diversity within our downtown. Thank you for your investment in the new facility and your loyalty to the Central Business District.

Jet Coin Laundry – Owners Michael and La Rene Moschetti purchased the property in June 2009. In 2014, they completed a full storefront renovation as well as a new sign. The transformation was amazing. The property was built in 1965 and has been a very successful business ever since. Jet Coin Laundry is a distinguished business in the heart of the downtown and we thank you for your continued investment.

Dreez – Jon and Audrey Karr started the very successful restaurant and bar, Dreez, in March of 2017. They have completed a full remodel of the interior and are currently working on a remodel of the attached patio area to provide outdoor dining as well as a gathering space for small events. Audrey's great design and style has created a unique dining atmosphere in the downtown. Jon and Audrey's continued efforts of redevelopment with the numerous properties they own, is very much appreciated.

Mayor Keener asked Mr. Thibault and Ms. Laughlin if they had anything to say, since they had been involved in so many of these projects

Cathy Laughlin, City Planner, explained that this is a new program that was started in 2019 with the Redevelopment Advisory Committee. This will be continuing. We plan on recognizing projects annually, or every other year, depending on how many projects are within the year. We feel that it is important to recognize these projects, to recognize when there is private investment into the downtown area, and incentivize others to invest in their properties as well.

Mayor Keener thought it was a great program with the Storefront Improvement. It gives property owners an incentive when they can share the cost with the Agency for making an investment. It helps them do more than they could have afforded to do otherwise. He hoped to see more great results in the future. Mayor Keener thanked everyone that was present for their investment.

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this time.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Reece Keener, Chairman
Redevelopment Agency

Catherine Wines, Vice-Chairman

Lina Blohm, Secretary

DRAFT

City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council
Agenda Action Sheet

1. Title: **Presentation of NV Energy Underground Management Plan to be implemented January 1, 2020 and how it relates to Redevelopment, and matters related thereto. INFORMATIONAL ONLY**
2. Meeting Date: **October 24, 2019**
3. Agenda Category: **NEW BUSINESS**
4. Time Required: **10 minutes**
5. Background Information:
6. Budget Information:
Appropriation Required: **N/A**
Budget amount available: **N/A**
Fund name: **Redevelopment Agency**
7. Business Impact Statement: Required **Not Required**
8. Supplemental Agenda Information: **Handout from NV Energy**
9. Recommended Motion: **N/A**
10. Prepared By: **Cathy Laughlin, City Planner / Redevelopment Manager**
11. Committee/Other Agency Review:
12. Agency Action:
13. Agenda Distribution:



Underground Management Plan (UMP)

Underground Management Plan (UMP)

The UMP is a process to address requests for undergrounding existing overhead distribution lines by local governments in areas of redevelopment

Eligibility and Criteria

- ☐ Existing 4kV to 25kV overhead distribution
- ☐ Physical conflict with approved redevelopment plan
- ☐ Not addressed under an existing franchise agreement or ordinance
- ☐ Adjacent to arterial planned for major reconstruction, rehabilitation or improvement
- ☐ Adjacent to major arterial or collector roadway
- ☐ Scheduled construction during the three-year plan period

The 'Plan'

Methodology

- ❑ Existing miles of three-phase overhead distribution within government entity boundaries was used to determine pro-rata share of the three-year budget

Funding

- ❑ Three year budget cycle, begin 2020
- ❑ SPPC \$5M
- ❑ 50/50 cost sharing to underground
- ❑ Recovery through base tariff general rates ("BTGR")

Limitation

- ❑ Pole ownership and joint attachments with communication carriers
 - ❑ ILEC and CLEC
 - ❑ Communication carriers can elect to remain on poles/portion of pole they own

Stipulation

Approved Per Stipulation

- ☐ 15% variance for approved three- year budget
- ☐ NV Energy to seek prior approval for each successive three-year budget
- ☐ Projects will not be considered eligible for funding without agreement with communication owner to underground co-located facilities within 12 months of NV Energy scheduled undergrounding
- ☐ NV Energy will seek participation from rural entities
- ☐ prudence review of expenditures in subsequent general rate cases
- ☐ NV Energy will screen new overhead distribution proposals to determine if they're candidates for the UMP



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

Vol. 66, No. 9
September 2019

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Paducah Renaissance: The Story of LowerTown video

LowerTown
Neighborhood Plan

Play Like a Parking Pro
campaign videos

Millennial SWAT Team Final
Report and Recommendations

ATTRACTION

To create a compelling brand for your downtown, avoid these common mistakes

Cities, business districts, and commercial corridors of all sizes are embracing place branding to attract visitors, new residents, businesses, and investors. Still, many city centers have saddled themselves with words and images that are outdated and generic.

Branding expert Bill Baker travels the world's downtowns, and he sees many downtown leaders making common branding mistakes.

In his new book *Place Branding for Small Cities, Regions & Downtowns*, Baker, place branding lead

at Axia Creative, spells out some standard missteps. Among the errors you should avoid:

- **Calling yourself "the best place to live, work, and play."**

Chances are your downtown stakeholders would be perfectly happy to use this phrase in your marketing and branding. Indeed, the moniker has become so popular that Baker hears it at nearly every workshop he conducts. Just how common is the cliché? When

(Continued on page 4)

ACCESS AND MOBILITY

City scrutinizes parking patterns, adjusts rates based on findings

Many cities set downtown parking rates and then forget about them for years. A few of the largest cities have embarked on ambitious parking plans that rely on wireless sensors and real-time data to adjust prices throughout the day.

Seattle (est. pop. 724,764) chose a middle route. The city carefully studies parking patterns and then updates rates once a year, but it hasn't taken the additional step of

gathering instant data from its 12,000 paid parking spots.

"It's a good model for cities, because it's low-tech and relatively low-cost," says Mary Catherine Snyder, parking strategist at the Seattle Department of Transportation. The city pays a consultant \$250,000 to conduct an in-depth audit of parking patterns. Snyder acknowledges that might sound like a hefty sum — but

(Continued on page 7)

Small city uses arts to drive decades-long renaissance

In the annals of cultural assets, a quilting museum and a public mural project might sound like an unremarkable pair of advantages. But Paducah, KY (est. pop. 24,879), has combined those two resources with local pride and a relentless place-building campaign to turn itself into a widely recognized arts hub.

"Authentic culture is what differentiates us, is what sets us apart."

In perhaps its biggest coup, Paducah was named a UNESCO Creative City, a designation that brought international attention. Paducah also runs an artist-in-residence program that lures creative types from across the country.

"The city really sees the value of creativity and culture," says Laura Oswald, director of marketing at the Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Authentic culture is what differentiates us, is what sets us apart."

Downtown Paducah could be forgiven for following other rural city centers into decline. When Interstate 24 was built, many retailers moved to the outskirts of town.

In a postmodern economy where the biggest rewards accrue to a few major cities, Paducah possesses few natural advantages. Paducah was developed as a river town at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers. The nearest big city, Nashville, TN, is 140 miles away. Paducah has a median household income of just \$35,581. Nearly a quarter of residents live below the poverty line.

Even so, Paducah has won kudos and attention for capitalizing on the assets it does have. Its first building block was the National Quilt Museum, which opened in 1991.

While the nonprofit's annual revenue of less than \$1 million is modest by big-city standards, the institution has an outsized impact in Paducah. For instance, it hosts QuiltWeek festivities.

"The National Quilt Museum is downtown's anchor attraction," Oswald says.

The gallery isn't just a collection of hobbyists' work, Paducah boosters stress. It's a legitimate exhibition of bona fide folk art.

"People think we have taken quilts their grandma would have made as a hobby and stuck them on the wall," Frank Bennett, the museum's head, tells the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. "This is an art museum just like any other art museum. Some people make their art in paint; some make it in wood and some make it in marble. These are professional artists who just happen to make their work out of fabric."

Rosemarie Steele of the Paducah Arts Alliance agrees. Much of the quilting happening in Paducah is being done by contemporary artists who see their craft as similar to painting or sculpting.

"It's like modern art with fabric," she says.

A *Chicago Tribune* reporter visited and declared that the collection was worth a visit.

"These are not your grandma's bedspreads," Lori Rackl wrote. "They're intricate, modern works of fiber artistry that will leave you with a new appreciation for what's possible with a needle and thread."

A second turning point for Paducah came in the late 1990s, when an unsightly floodwall was turned into a public mural project. The floodwall was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers after a devastating flood in 1937.

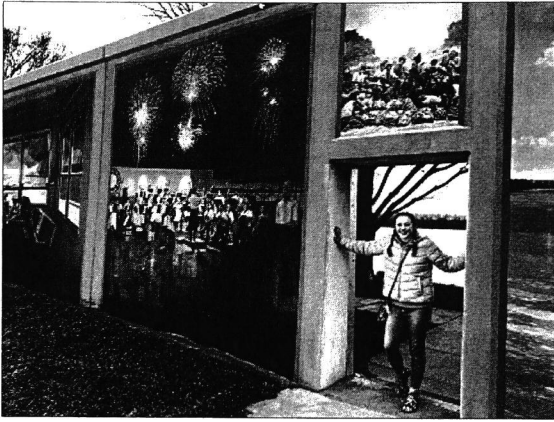
While the infrastructure was necessary to keep downtown dry, it didn't do much on the place-making front. Instead of water views of the Ohio River, downtown was marked by a utilitarian, 14-foot-high concrete wall.

The city adapted, creating Paducah Wall to Wall, a collection of 52 murals by artist Robert Dafford. The paintings show Native American villages, Civil War scenes, steamboats, and other depictions of the city's past.



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see a video about Paducah's renaissance, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."



Visitors pose for photos along the path of the floodwall murals.

Steele recalls going to Santa Fe, NM, to learn about the potential for arts-driven development. The research trip opened her eyes to the assets Paducah already possessed.

"We didn't have to create anything," Steele says. "It was already there. We were really authentic."

Building on that base, Paducah in 2013 was named a UNESCO Creative City, a designation that recognized the town's deep roots in folk art. Other towns to be recognized by UNESCO included Iowa City and Santa Fe.

"To receive that designation, you have to have a really deep heritage," Oswald says.

Attracting new artists, moving forward

The city is not resting on its laurels. A \$30 million financing program from Paducah Bank helped fund an artist-relocation program that fueled the redevelopment of the LowerTown Arts District. The program was so successful that dozens of artists moved to Paducah, and the properties available for creative types sold out.

In another sign of growth, the local community college opened the Paducah School of Art and Design, which offers associate degrees in fine arts.

Keeping the momentum going, the city and the Paducah Arts Alliance created an Artist-in-Residence Program that's partly

funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Artists chosen for the program live in LowerTown Paducah, a historic neighborhood that's being revived. Visiting artists receive a \$500 monthly stipend and have the opportunity to exhibit their work at the Yeiser Art Center.

"They're bringing in artists from around the country and around the world to really share that creative energy," Oswald says.

The creative energy has extended to downtown redevelopment. While chain stores are absent from downtown and LowerTown, Paducah has seen an influx of microbreweries, distilleries, and high-end restaurants.

Paducah Beer Works opened in a refurbished Greyhound Bus terminal. Dry Ground Brewing is in a former Coca Cola bottling plant — and named because it was the first dry spot the city's Coke bottler found amid the flood of 1937.

The story behind Dry Ground's name is just the sort of historical nugget that Oswald loves.

"We want to be able to differentiate ourselves, and what does that is stories," she says. "At the heart of it all is keeping a focus on who you are and where you come from."

In another entrepreneurial coup, prominent chef Sara Bradley opened a new restaurant in an old railroad depot. Bradley is a Paducah native who made her name in New York City.

"You're constantly seeing new visionaries taking interest in preserving Paducah's heritage," Oswald says.

Paducah Arts Alliance's Steele says the small city is attracting artists from all over the world even as it keeps its ambitions realistic.

"We're not trying to be the big city," Steele says. "You don't have the hurry and the hustle and bustle of the big city. It's very comfortable."

Contact: Laura Oswald, Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau, 270-443-8783; Rosemarie Steele, Paducah Arts Alliance, 270-331-5588.

DIX



DowntownDevelopment.com

To read the *LowerTown Neighborhood Plan*, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

To create a compelling brand for your downtown, avoid these common mistakes — Continued from page 1

Baker Googled the phrase and similar slogans, he got an avalanche of results — some 4 million. Embracing the phrase “the best place to live, work, and play” means you’re blending in with thousands of other cities. You want to stand out.

- **Using “cheerleader” slogans.** Keep in mind the target market for your branding campaign. It’s not the members of your board or other downtown leaders. They’re already sold on your city, so they have a hard time being objective. The true audience for your branding campaign is the consuming public, and they’ve been conditioned to tune out messages that are fluffy, self-flattering, and ultimately meaningless. Don’t promise too much. Instead of calling yourself “the best of everything,” pick a brand that your downtown can deliver.

- **Expecting instant results.** Brands take years to build, or to rebuild. So don’t expect a brief marketing campaign to change perceptions of your downtown overnight. Building

awareness and refreshing your image ultimately will be the result of years of consistent effort. “Branding requires a long-term strategic

“Branding requires a long-term strategic mindset, not just a short-term promotional outlook.”

mindset, not just a short-term promotional outlook,” Baker writes. Nashville, for instance, built its Music City brand through decades of focus. The same is true for Austin’s Live Music Capital motto.

- **Anticipating immediate kudos.** Change is hard, and snarky responses are part of the territory when it comes to rebranding. Wendy Hielsberg, former head of the convention and visitors bureau in Oshkosh, WI (est. pop. 66,668), learned that lesson the hard way. “The one aspect I was not prepared for after the brand launch was some of the negative comments,” Hielsberg tells Baker. She stuck with the program, and eventually the

criticism was replaced by praise. But Hielsberg says it’s important to gird yourself for blowback, and to be confident that a well-designed branding campaign eventually will win over the naysayers.

- **Looking like everywhere else.** Downtown leaders often echo successes from elsewhere. While this is a smart strategy to an extent, it can be overdone. Baker laments the rise of “clone towns.” “So many believe that they are only a few coffee shops, trendy restaurants, a micro-brew, and a bike trail short of becoming a cool city,” Baker writes. “For this reason, there’s a sameness that is starting to permeate the appearance of many small towns.” He notes that New Orleans is an international destination not because it’s clean and safe but because it’s so unique. To avoid clone town syndrome, some downtowns have embraced formula business rules that restrict the proliferation of national retailers. You don’t necessarily need to go that far, Baker says. But keep in mind: Developers generally have templates that range from geographically generic to unique to a specific place. If you accept a cookie-cutter design, the developer is happy to build it. But by pushing back a bit, you can urge developers to design projects that reflect your local character.

- **Sounding like a corporation.** Corporate brands, when applied to small cities, tend to sound fake. You want to be authentic. Rather than settling for sounding like a promotional organization, your branding voice should strive to seem like it was spoken by a living, breathing person. And, as a segue into the next mistake, keep in mind that place marketers no longer call the shots when it comes to messaging and brand communication.

- **Ignoring the importance of technology.** “While the fundamentals of brands haven’t changed in the digital age, marketing as we have known it is largely obsolete,”

Seven steps to building a brand with power

Now that you know which brand-building mis-steps to avoid, here is Bill Baker's seven-step process for building an authentic brand that resonates:

- **Research the current climate.** Market research is the starting point for any brand-building endeavor. Look at what competitors are doing, determine what consumers think, and interview stakeholders. It's important to remain objective during this phase.

- **Analyze your findings.** After doing your market research, you next need to analyze the needs of your target customers, your downtown's strengths, and the strengths of your competitors.

- **Understand "brand architecture."** This phrase refers to the overall context of your brand. It takes into account tangible factors such as your geographic location and the size of your city, and softer matters such as name recognition and brand image. The brand architecture also includes the network of attractions, assets, and organizations that your downtown interacts with.

- **Articulate the brand.** Steps 1 through 3 involve the left-brain tasks of analyzing and planning. Now, it's time to engage the creative right side of the brain through words and images that evoke a compelling description of your downtown.

- **Activate the brand.** Once you've settled on a brand, it's time to announce it to the world. Social and mobile apps, Google maps, and travel-booking engines are just some of the places where you'll need to reveal the new image.

- **Adopt the brand.** A vital brand requires the cooperation and support of people. Many a brand has withered and died without this crucial step. Once supporters and the public have accepted a brand, its path to success becomes much easier.

- **Nurture the brand.** Creating and launching a brand is only the start. Long-term success demands sustained effort and attention. Keep in mind that consumers won't change their minds simply because you tell them to. They'll decide on their own whether your brand resonates.

Baker writes. "The most profound change arising is how technology has transformed the ways people behave." Visitors to your downtown are constantly staring at their screens. They're using Google Maps to find their way, Yelp to compare dining options, Foursquare to meet up, TripAdvisor to post reviews, and Facebook and Instagram to tell the world what they're doing. Perhaps most crucially, this new marketing ecosystem takes away the power of marketers to deliver one-way messages. Savvy downtown leaders are embracing the two-way nature of marketing and using innovative ways to tell their stories and distribute content.

- **Forgetting about the CEO.** For any branding effort to succeed, it needs buy-in from the top. "The president, executive director, or CEO of the lead organization

must be actively engaged in every aspect of the brand planning and development and breathe vitality into the assignment," Baker writes. If the CEO is indifferent, the branding campaign is doomed to failure.

- **Overreaching with your tagline.** A few places have taglines that have ascended into marketing legend. Among them are "I Love NY" and "Virginia Is For Lovers." Some are spot-on in their simplicity, such as Innsbruck's "Capital of the Alps" and Nashville's "Music City." Alas, many placemakers try to do too much with their taglines and end up with slogans that are vague or meaningless. The truly bold have realized that no tagline is better than a bad tagline. That doesn't mean you have to ditch a tagline altogether. Baker gives a thumbs-up to artsy Fairfield, IA (est. pop. 10,125). Its tagline: "Tune into our vibe."

Contact: Bill Baker, Axia Creative, 561-282-6205. **DIX**

Historic city reimagines its past to move forward

Once thriving, then struggling, High Point, NC (est. pop. 111,213), is on the rise again.

Tens of millions of dollars of new investment are flowing into the city's downtown.

Among the new projects are a 4,000-seat ballpark for the Rockers, a team that plays in baseball's independent Atlantic League.

Other downtown projects include a condominium, an office and retail building, a hotel, a children's museum, and an events center.

High Point has long been synonymous with furniture manufacturing. In the boom years after World War II, more than half of furniture manufactured in the U.S. came from High Point and its surroundings.

But the rise of globalization pushed furniture manufacturing to China and hollowed out High Point's furniture sector. High Point adapted by focusing on furnishings trade shows, and it's a go-to place for buyers, sellers, and other furniture professionals.

The massive High Point Market is an economic engine that brings in 75,000 furniture professionals twice a year, says Patrick Chapin, president and chief executive of Business High Point — Chamber of Commerce. However, because the downtown's 12 million square feet of showrooms are closed to the public, the economic engine does little to create the sort of steady activity required for a thriving downtown.

"The biggest challenge has been our High Point Market," Chapin says. "It's a blessing and a curse. Twice a year, it attracts 75,000 people, and it feels like New York City for those two weeks. But then it, in effect, goes dark."

As the city shepherds a downtown development boom, it has forbidden new furniture showrooms in the downtown district.

"That was critical," Chapin says.

Also crucial is the funding behind the wave of development. Nido Qubein, the president of High Point University, has raised some \$100 million from private donors.

High Point University's campus is near downtown, and Qubein says a thriving city

center would give students more access to internships and other experience.

"We wanted downtown to be more vibrant because that is good for us," Qubein told the *New York Times*.

Another important backer has been David Congdon, the executive chairman of trucking firm Old Dominion Freight Line, who steered funds to the baseball stadium through his family's Earl and Kathryn Congdon Family Foundation.

Congdon has also focused on individual buildings. He bought a Depression-era hosiery mill that will be Plant Seven, a co-working and maker space run by Business High Point — Chamber of Commerce. The chamber will pay just \$1 a year to lease the facility, which will be funded in part by a \$1.5 million state grant.

Plant Seven will have views of the ballpark's outfield, and Chapin says he aims for the space to act as an entrepreneurial incubator. Plans call for Plant Seven to build on High Point's most-established industry.

"We're definitely sticking to our DNA, which is furnishings," Chapin says.

Chapin acknowledges that High Point's turnaround is progressing rapidly. In 2016, downtown leaders created a plan to buy land near the established downtown.

Getting political leaders on the same page was an important part of the plan, Chapin says. The chamber heavily supported city council candidates who supported the vision of buying land and redeveloping it.

"Had we not captured all those seats, the momentum could have been lost," Chapin says.

High Point hopes to mirror the success of Greenville, SC, another regional city that has redeveloped its downtown.

"They sort of did it organically over 20 or 25 years," Chapin says. "I think this major investment of dollars is going to speed up our revitalization. I'm not saying we're going to become Greenville overnight, but what took them 20 years might take us

seven to 10 years, just because we've been so purposeful."

Even so, Chapin is counseling patience.

"You start having success, and people expect a lot very quickly," he says. "This does take time."

And with the downtown redeveloping at breakneck speed, Chapin notes that his next

priority is to make certain that the new projects benefit not just High Point's affluent.

"We're building a great new downtown, but we have to make sure the entire community is engaged and excited about it," Chapin says.

Contact: Patrick Chapin, Business High Point — Chamber of Commerce, 336-882-5000. **DIX**

City scrutinizes parking patterns, adjusts rates based on findings — Continued from page 1

with the caveat that the city parking department conducts a million transactions a month. A smaller city likely could pay for a similar study at a fraction of Seattle's cost, Snyder says.

Each spring, Seattle's consulting firm dispatches researchers to count cars in every block, every hour from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Based on those results, Seattle adjusts hourly parking rates. Seattle's fees range from 50 cents to \$5 an hour.

Prices are based on neighborhood and on time of day. While Seattle doesn't collect \$5 an hour before noon, rates for many downtown spots rise to \$5 an hour. And at night, some business districts with popular restaurants or bars see \$5 rates.

Working to maximize occupancy

The idea isn't to gouge people who pay for on-street parking. "We're not set up to maximize revenue," Snyder says. "We have lowered rates just as often as we have raised rates."

Instead, Snyder says, the goal is to maximize occupancy. City officials in 2010 set a goal of maintaining one or two empty spots per block, meaning that no given block is too full or too empty. The Seattle Department of Transportation considers 80 percent occupancy to be the sweet spot. Any higher, and it considers raising rates. If a block is routinely 70 percent empty, it might be time to lower rates.

After the city's consultant makes its annual count, the city adjusts parking rates once a

year. That's followed by a program of public education designed to teach motorists about the new prices.

The campaign includes postcards mailed to residents, postings on parking pay stations, and ads on Facebook and Google. The city has even bought ads during the introductions to movies, Snyder says.

The city's outreach also includes instructional videos on YouTube that include the slogan "Play Like a Parking Pro."

With Seattle growing denser, parking spaces have become more precious. The city is trying to encourage motorists to plan ahead, and to use the Pay By Phone app.

"Most people head to their destination and then search for parking from there," Snyder says. "But in many of our business districts, you can't park in front of the store any more."

Seattle also has merged its parking program with public health priorities. A color-coded map on the city's website lets motorists zoom in on parking rates by block and by time of day.

"People can find lower parking rates if they're willing to walk farther," Snyder says.

Unlike cities that have invested in high-tech parking systems, Seattle for now is sticking with its middle option. On the other hand, San Francisco has installed parking sensors in 8,200 on-street spaces to monitor use.

Contact: Mary Catherine Snyder, Seattle Department of Transportation, 206-684-8110. **DIX**

"We have lowered rates just as often as we have raised rates."



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see the Seattle Department of Transportation's educational videos, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

Millennial SWAT team identifies downtown assets and needs

Springfield, MO (est. pop. 167,376), is working to attract millennials to live and work in the city center. Its secret weapon? A Millennial SWAT team.

The city organized millennial residents into small teams and sent them into a variety of downtowns that boast features that Springfield might want to emulate.

The team's final report identifies three overarching values for the city — empower the next generation, embrace inclusivity, and speak with a unified voice — as well as nine large-scale projects. These are:

- **Create a focal point attraction or venue that appeals to visitors and locals.** Springfield's plan calls for an expanded convention center that can host a wider array of meetings and sporting events. The city's SWAT team visited Chattanooga, TN, and Lincoln, NE, to study those cities' convention centers.

- **Build an outdoor amenity with multiple benefits.** In Chattanooga, the SWAT team admired the redesigned riverfront, which was engineered to fix historic flooding issues. It also created an outdoor amenity with art installations, water features, trails, and areas to gather and recreate. In combination with the development of the Tennessee Aquarium, this project served as a catalyst for major business and residential development. In Lincoln, the city teamed up with the Army Corps of Engineers in a flood control, economic development, transportation, and community revitalization project known as Antelope Valley. The project created a belt of greenspace running through downtown.

- **Enhance connections and corridors into downtown.** The SWAT team wasn't gentle in analyzing Springfield's walking and cycling pathways to downtown. The millennials called it "boring" and "non-inviting." The

team noted that there is, "Very little green space, virtually no signage, nothing pleasing to the eye, and certainly no Instagram-worthy points of interest along the way." They suggested Springfield follow the lead of Des Moines, IA, which has added bike sharing and other features.

- **Create a hub for technology and innovation.** The SWAT team lauded Chattanooga, known as "Gig City" for a high-speed Internet connection that drew tech companies downtown. And it commended an initiative backed by the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce, called Geek Move, which encouraged tech professionals to relocate by awarding up to \$11,250 toward buying a home in the downtown area. Lincoln likewise incentivized businesses and professionals to relocate to the downtown area or open satellite offices downtown.

- **Engage university students.** Downtown should be a place not just for work but for play, the SWAT team concluded. It advises creating incentive programs that target new and incoming university students. For many students, their first experience downtown may be at a bar, movie, or restaurant. Downtown Springfield also should play up activities such as First Friday Art Walk, a monthly celebration of original art, live music, hands-on activities and live art demonstrations, as well as its sporting events, and running events, says the team.

- **Incorporate all forms of art into the culture of downtown.** The SWAT team liked the art gallery alleyways in Chattanooga and Lincoln. Those initiatives used lighting and art to turn dark, utilitarian pathways into inviting walkways.

- **Promote housing options for young professionals and families.** The SWAT team suggests boosting downtown Springfield's housing market through a combination of

tax incentives and marketing efforts. Tax incentives would entice builders to boost the housing choices downtown, while ad campaigns would increase awareness of downtown as a residential area.

- **Develop a strategic plan for encouraging economic growth.** Downtown Springfield needs a clearer delineation among its downtown development organizations, the SWAT team argues. “We believe our marketing

needs a bit more ‘oomph’ because there is considerable confusion about their roles and responsibilities,” the team writes.

- **Expand the perception of downtown and reinforce its emerging character.** The SWAT team lauded Austin’s “Keep Austin Weird” ethos and suggested a similar strategy in Springfield, based on the downtown’s charm, art and music, and entrepreneurial climate. **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

To read the Millennial SWAT team’s full report, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on “Web Extras.”

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Opportunity Zones present potential, risk

Billions of dollars have flowed into funds focusing on opportunity zones, a new type of tax designation that waives capital gains taxes on investments in blighted areas nationwide.

In April, the U.S. Treasury Department clarified some of the guidelines around opportunity zone investments, and the new regulations sparked optimism from tax experts.

“These rules could lead to a very significant wave of investment,” says David Shapiro, chairman of the tax practice at law firm Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr.

The excitement around opportunity zones could bring much-needed new projects to struggling cities. But if the tax break creates an irrational frenzy of real estate investment, blighted downtowns could be saddled with failed projects.

With real estate investors gearing up to take advantage of the tax breaks, many experts warn that bad deals will abound.

“Fifty percent of these investments are going to fail and fail miserably,” says John Patrick McElwee, a real estate investor in the Philadelphia area and South Florida.

But the other half of opportunity zones

could prove lucrative, McElwee says. That’s in part because opportunity zone tax breaks can be combined with other credits, grants, and incentives from the public sector.

Opportunity zones are expected to lure billions of dollars in new investments and potentially save investors trillions in taxes, presuming that the value of new developments in opportunity zones rises enough that investors will enjoy hefty gains.

Some are skeptical. Casey Cummings, head of real estate investor Ram Realty Services in Palm Beach Gardens, FL, tells *The Real Deal* that opportunity zones are overrated.

“I don’t see the potential that other buyers are seeing,” Cummings says.

Opportunity zones dangle a tempting tax break before investors: Those who hold properties in opportunity zones for at least 10 years are not obliged to pay capital gains taxes. Investors who sell before 10 years will receive a less lavish tax benefit.

Proponents of opportunity zones hope the generous tax benefit will create a flood of capital into distressed towns and neighbor-

“Fifty percent of these investments are going to fail and fail miserably.”

hoods that have continued to struggle despite a strong U.S. economy.

Congress designated 8,700 areas as opportunity zones, and the locations are a mixed bag. Some are struggling inner-city

neighborhoods in Detroit and Gary, IN. Other opportunity zones are in less-obvious places, such as downtown Las Vegas and sections of Long Island City, the area of Queens where Amazon had planned a large campus. **DIX**

CLEAN AND SAFE

Cities test “smart” garbage cans

A few cities are testing a high-tech innovation in a decidedly low-tech corner of urban placemaking.

San Francisco (est. pop. 884,363) and Pittsburgh (est. pop. 302,414) are among the cities that are relying on “smart” trash bins that use sensors to alert garbage collectors as the receptacles reach capacity.

While no downtown benefits from overflowing garbage cans, the cities that are testing the tech-enabled bins point to a rationale behind the ick factor. Overflowing bins are costly.

Dispatching with the trash in a less-than-full garbage can might take a worker just 30 seconds, but cleaning up an overflowing bin might require several minutes, Manuel Maestrini tells the *Wall Street Journal*. And people who run across a full can might leave their trash on the street.

On the flip side, emptying a trash can that’s mostly empty is a waste of a city worker’s time. Better to skip it and attend to fuller garbage bins.

Maestrini is founder and chief technology officer of Nordsense Inc., a startup that makes smart sensors for garbage bins. San Francisco is paying Nordsense \$294,000 to place sensors in more than 1,000 bins and use the company’s monitoring software for three years.

Pittsburgh likewise is banking on big savings from smart garbage bins. That city is paying \$580,000 in a four-year deal with Victor Stanley Inc. The vendor will provide and service about 1,200 smart lids for the city’s bins.

City officials say the smart bins can cut trash collection time in half. In addition to showing how much trash is in a bin, the containers deployed in Pittsburgh can reveal whether the can has been knocked over and whether there is movement inside, a telltale sign of rodents.

The latest sensors aren’t smart enough to smell, but Victor Stanley says it’s developing sensors that will be able to detect pungent aromas in mostly empty garbage cans.

Installing smart bins isn’t entirely a financial issue, of course. There are also aesthetic concerns. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reports that city’s trash cans are targets for homeless people seeking aluminum cans or food. City officials hope smarter, more frequent collection will cut down on the attraction.

Should your city invest in smart technology? Some are skeptical. Shoshanna Saxe, an engineering professor at the University of Toronto, argues that any cost savings ultimately will be lost to hidden expenses.

“Managing all the sensors and data will require a brand-new municipal bureaucracy staffed by tech, data-science, and machine-learning experts,” Saxe writes in the *New York Times*. “Cities will either need to raise the funds required to pay a tech staff or outsource much of their smart city to private companies.”

Pay for tech workers far outpaces wages for public employees, so a new bureaucracy to manage cities full of sensors will prove expensive, Saxe says. **DIX**

Idea Exchange

Rewarding downtown workers

Downtown Employee Appreciation Week in Wausau, WI, includes an adult ball pit, the world's largest coffee break, DIY workshops, an ice cream social, and a succulent bar.

The event, now in its fourth year, is dedicated to thanking downtown employees and introducing them to downtown amenities that they may not be familiar with.

"This week is organized by and for downtown employees as a way of saying 'thank you' for making the Wausau River District your second home," says Wausau River District executive director Blake Opal-Wahoske. "Our downtown would simply not have the vibrancy it does without these folks choosing to work here."

In addition to all of the activities, participants receive a downtown passport which provides access to specials and discounts exclusively for downtown employees.

Artistic seating serves many purposes

As summer rolled around, legions of beautifully decorated fiberglass dogs, cats, cows, and more were placed on temporary display in downtowns across North America.

In Athens, GA, animals were replaced with comfortable rocking chairs painted by local art students and members of an artist cooperative. The goals of the project were to beautify and to encourage people to linger longer downtown.

Because the chairs are mobile, they were moved to special events and other areas as needed. Funds for the project were raised through a local crowdfunding site.

Belfast, ME, also embraced artist-decorated seating, but with the goal of encouraging people to explore the downtown. The Please, Be Seated art bench program placed benches on the periphery of the main retail corridor and along the route to a waterfront area in the final stages of redevelopment as a pedestrian friendly green space. A self guided tour showed the way to all of the benches.

Passport program encourages local shopping

After a tough winter, with weather that prevented many downtown merchants from opening their doors, businesses were hoping to bounce back with the Downtown Cedar Rapids Summer Passport program.

Jesse Thoeming, Cedar Rapids Downtown District executive director, said in a news release that he



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Idea Exchange

hopes people look at this program as a sort of scavenger hunt to explore their community and go to places they may have never been before.

Many businesses offered individual discounts and specials to compliment the program's prize drawing. To enter, participants must have their passports stamped at 12 businesses and two community events such as the downtown farmers market, public library activities, and Food Truck Fridays.

The grand prize, a Cedar Rapids Staycation package was valued at \$1,000. It included a four course dinner for up to six people at a downtown restaurant and a one night's stay in the presidential suite at a downtown hotel.

Business attraction utility rate

Downtown Mesa, AZ, offers new businesses, a vibrant downtown filled with murals, art installations, and placemaking projects. It also offers small businesses something a little less artistic: The Downtown Small Business Attraction Utility Rate Program.

The program provides a 25 percent reduction in energy and water bills for three years for new businesses that fit the U.S. Small Business Administration's definition of a small business.

Details on the program are available at mesaaz.gov/attraction.

Beach volleyball comes downtown

Four sand volleyball courts drew players and spectators to an under-used section of downtown Akron, OH, this summer.

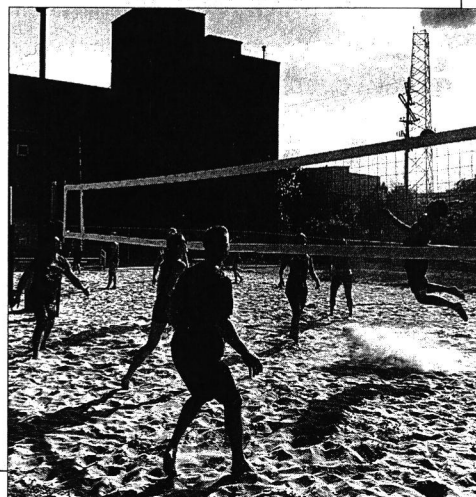
The project brings together the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, and Summit Sports & Social, which runs volleyball and other sports leagues downtown.

The foundation and canalway coalition have been working on projects to promote economic and social activity downtown, particularly along the canal towpath, reports ohio.com.

"This is a really big piece that will invite more people to come downtown on the trail," says Kyle Kutuchief, Akron program director for the Knight Foundation.

The volleyball courts feature permanent nets, lighting, and about 800 tons of sand. There are also bleachers and picnic tables set up for spectators.

A brewery, located in the same complex, is sponsoring the league and has seen more foot traffic in the area. "It's bringing good business into us," co-founder Will Myers tells ohio.com.



Go out to lunch

In May and June, the Greater Des Moines Partnership lures workers away from their desks and onto city streets with the weekly Out to Lunch event. Events are held in a series of rotating locations every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. They feature food trucks and vendors, as well as live music.

Downtown Events Director Colleen Murphy explains the appeal of the event, "It's just a great way to get people out of the office and enjoy the outdoor weather Each of the six events are in a different location so you can discover different areas of downtown that you might not have been familiar with." **DIX**



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

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Calling all Dreamers
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Fire Suppression Incentive
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ATTRACTION

Small cities woo residents, workers with student loan assistance

With many small cities struggling to lure skilled workers, a few downtowns are trying something new: They're offering to help people pay down their college loans if they move to town.

Hamilton, OH (est. pop. 62,216), last year launched a Talent Attraction Program that offers up to \$10,000 to workers who earned college degrees within the past seven years and have at least \$5,000 in student debt.

The program is funded by a foundation that for decades has given scholarships to promising pupils from

Hamilton's high schools, only to see those students leave for college and never return.

"We're giving away a lot of scholarships, and our students are going away to school," says Katie Braswell, vice president of the Hamilton Community Foundation. "Nobody is really trying to bring them back. A lot of young people are moving to big cities, and it's hard to bring them back."

The Hamilton Community Foundation's program is designed
(Continued on page 3)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Business plan competition offers support, spurs growth

Valerie Marmone once ran a clothing boutique in Sacramento, so she knows firsthand how hard it is to operate a retail business in an era of tight margins and online shopping.

In her post-entrepreneurial career, Marmone works as vice president of business development at the Downtown Sacramento Partnership. In that role, she runs the annual contest that solicits business plans from would-be retailers.

The contest, Calling All Dreamers, gives one promising retailer a grand prize of \$10,000 in cash plus more than \$100,000 in services. It's part of a nationwide push by downtown leaders to incubate new businesses by providing advice and support.

Since the contest began in 2013, the competition has drawn a steady stream of entrants who submit

(Continued on page 8)

Cities embrace land banks as blight-fighting tool

In Dublin, GA (est. pop. 15,889), the city is using a land bank to take control of long-abandoned buildings downtown.

In Newburgh, NY (est. pop. 28,444), a land bank has rehabilitated dozens of dilapidated structures, many of which dated to the 1800s. And in Flint, MI (est. pop. 96,439), a land bank has demolished or rehabilitated thousands of homes after the city was hollowed out.

Legislatures in more than a dozen states have passed land-bank legislation, and about 200 cities and towns have created the entities, says Frank Alexander, co-founder of the Center for Community Progress and a prominent expert on the development tool.

"The overall success has been quite significant."

"The overall success has been quite significant," Alexander says.

A land bank's main goal is forcing ownership changes of buildings that have sat vacant for years or even decades, especially those held by owners who have died or disappeared. Dublin's downtown development was hampered by a couple of pieces of real estate that had been all but abandoned by their corporate owners.

Even if an investor wanted to buy and renovate the buildings, a thicket of unpaid tax bills, code-enforcement liens, and title questions would make a purchase difficult. Dublin leaders saw a land bank as a way for the public to take over the buildings.

"They realized they needed a land bank because these were properties nobody could buy," Alexander says.

In cities with declining economies, such as Flint and Huntington, WV, land banks are tools for clearing out long-abandoned structures and turning them to green space.

In growing cities such as Atlanta, Houston, and Miami, they're used to repurpose blighted property into affordable housing. Atlanta's land bank can receive properties seized by law enforcement in drug cases.

Alexander cautions that a land bank is a tool with a limited use. The main purpose is to

take control of long-vacant properties whose owners have stopped paying taxes and conducting routine maintenance.

After the land bank gets control of the property, it then turns over the parcel to an entity that specializes in economic development or affordable housing.

"In each city we've done them in, we've learned more about how they work," Alexander says.

Developer ready properties

In Newburgh, the land bank used millions in state grants to repair roofs and remove asbestos, making it more affordable for housing nonprofits and developers to fix up old buildings.

"We spent a lot of money rehabbing these places and getting them to a place where a private investor could be in the black," says Lisa Daily, chairwoman of Newburgh's planning board and head of the Newburgh Community Land Bank. "Without the land bank taking care of some of the basic restoration, these properties would have just sat there."

The Newburgh Community Land Bank says it has rehabbed 61 buildings and several vacant lots in the city's historic district, where buildings date to the 1850s. Many of the redeveloped properties are affordable rental housing. The program is funded through a state settlement with mortgage lenders stemming from the housing crash.

Initially, neighbors were skeptical that this program would be different than any of the redevelopment projects that have come over the years.

"The people who surround these properties have been poor and have remained poor," Daily says. "The urban renewal of the 1960s left our downtown just devastated, and there was a lot of pushback from the neighbors."

Demolition and rehabilitation

A land bank in Flint — which saw large-scale abandonment of properties amid the

manufacturing downturn — has achieved even more dramatic results, Alexander says. The Genesee County Land Bank Authority formed in 2004 and became what Alexander calls “the most active land bank in the country.”

Flint’s land bank took on thousands of foreclosed properties, demolished more than 1,000 vacant and abandoned houses, and transferred ownership of vacant “side lots” to adjacent homeowners.

Flint’s Land Bank also rehabilitated hundreds of homes.

Alexander cautions that downtown leaders

shouldn’t expect too much from land banks — they are a very specific type of tool, one that can free up properties locked up by owners who are long gone. However, claiming ownership of abandoned properties is just one step in a broader process.

“It’s not a silver bullet,” he says. “It’s not a redevelopment authority. If your expectations are that a land bank will solve economic development, that’s a mistake.”

*Contacts: Frank Alexander, Center for Community Progress, 404-727-6982; Lisa Daily, Newburgh Community Land Bank, 845-565-5360. **DIX***



DowntownDevelopment.com

To read Frank Alexander’s report on land banks, visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on “Web Extras.”

Small cities woo residents, workers with student loan assistance — Continued from page 1

to lure young residents into one of five “urban core” areas, including downtown and four other historic communities with central business districts, such as German Village and Riverview.

The program was capped at \$5,000 for its first year. In a nod to the growing financial burden carried by many recent graduates, the foundation increased the limit to \$10,000 in its second year.

“So many students have \$100,000 in debt, and we wanted to make a bigger dent,” Braswell says.

Since the program launched in 2018, seven recipients have won “reverse scholarships.” Recipients receive monthly payments of \$300 for as long as they live downtown and work in the area.

Giving incentives to employers is a tried-and-true practice in economic development. That traditional approach reached a crescendo last year, when Amazon sought — and received — hefty subsidies for its second headquarters. Appealing directly to workers is a new approach, one that is gaining momentum in cities and states with declining populations.

The programs underscore a growing gap in the economic fortunes of downtowns. Boom-

towns such as Austin, Denver, and San Jose don’t need to dangle incentives to attract educated workers, but many cities in the Rust Belt and rural areas struggle with shrinking populations and a brain drain of skilled employees.

In Hamilton, the economy isn’t exactly thriving — incomes are below the national average — but employers need workers. Butler County’s jobless rate was just 3 percent in May, although unemployment jumped to 4 percent in June.

Hamilton based its program on a similar reverse scholarship initiative in Port Huron, MI (est. pop. 29,285). Like Hamilton, Port Huron’s economic fortunes are hampered by a lack of workers, although Port Huron’s jobless rate is a bit higher, at 4.8 percent.

While Port Huron’s program requires recipients to live only in the surrounding county, many of the winners have settled in the new condos and apartments that have been built recently in downtown Port Huron, says Randy Maiers, head of the Community Foundation of St. Clair County.

Port Huron’s recruiting initiative started in 2016 and had awarded 17 scholarships by mid-2019.

"We actually have more applications than we can fund," Maiers says. "Demand has exceeded supply so far."

Strong interest in the program has been a shot in the arm for Port Huron's self-image, Maiers says. The exodus of young people from small cities can cast a pall over the residents and employers who remain, but a flood of applications for the incentives served as a bit of a mood booster.

"One of the best unintended ripple effects of us doing this is people started to realize that educated young professionals do want to move back to Small Town America," Maiers says. "That was a real eye-opener."

Another wake-up call came in the form of the hefty student-loan balances many workers are carrying. Port Huron originally offered scholarships of \$10,000, then boosted the amount to \$15,000.

"City Champs" program helps new arrivals navigate city living

With a prominent university and a thriving job market, Louisville, KY (est. pop. 602,000), has been performing well economically.

New arrivals face a daunting task of learning to navigate the school district and other everyday issues. That's why the Chamber of Commerce Greater Louisville Inc. launched City Champs, which allows people considering a move to Louisville and new residents to reach out to current residents who serve as guides.

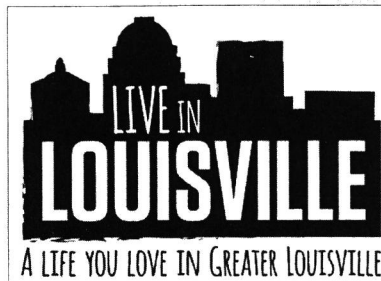
These liaisons to the city share their insights about cultural activities, the job market, and other topics.

City Champs is part of the chamber's \$5 million Live in Lou program.

The goal is to attract new talent to Louisville by giving those applying for jobs locally a chance to understand what it's like to live in the city, *Insider Louisville* reports.

Population growth and talent attraction remain obstacles for employers in Louisville, the chamber says.

City Champs act as "wingmen" and "wingwomen" to prospective and new residents who have questions about neighborhoods, safety, local schools, and what life in Louisville has to offer.



"We had to bump up the amount just because of the staggering amount of debt," Maiers says.

Students earning bachelor's degrees typically take on \$40,000 in debt, while doctors and lawyers routinely run up six-figure sums.

"We were shocked not just by the sheer dollar amount of the student debt but the length of time people are taking to pay it back," Maiers says. "We're seeing people with 10- to 20-year repayment schedules. The debt load is just crushing."

That financial reality creates something of a paradox. Workers saddled with student debt opt to move to thriving cities where job opportunities are plentiful and wages are generous, even if those cities carry the disadvantage of high costs of living.

Port Huron's reverse scholarship program is open to applicants of any age who completed a degree at any level within the previous decade. While the primary target is workers in their 20s and 30s, older workers who went back to school are eligible, too.

Port Huron's scholarship award committee prefers applicants who plan to buy homes rather than rent, and it gives points to people with ties to the community. However, Maiers says, the Community Foundation wants recipients to start households. Someone who simply moves in with their parents wouldn't get a scholarship.

Complex and time-consuming

While the program seems simple enough, Maiers says there are income-tax implications to consider. Maiers checked in with federal officials to make sure everything was legal with the program — and he found there were significant questions about whether repaying old education costs really qualified as a charitable activity.

"It turns out it was much more complicated than it seemed on the

surface,” Maiers says. “We all have to be very careful doing it.”

Recipients must report the scholarships as taxable income, he says.

The community foundations giving the scholarships say the incentives act as a modest sweetener — enough to nudge someone toward a job and a home in a small city, but not enough in and of themselves to persuade someone to pick up and move across country.

“We’re under no false impression that our program is the only reason people move here,” Maiers says.

Echoing the theme of luring young workers to areas with shrinking population, the state of Vermont has taken a different approach to luring working people. The state this year launched a program to give up to \$10,000 apiece to out-of-state residents who work remotely and move to the state.

The grants are worth up to \$5,000 a year for two years and cover such items as moving expenses and fees for co-working space. Through the first half of 2019, the state awarded an average of \$3,800 to 33 people who moved to the state, says Elaine Haney, project manager for the state’s Think Vermont program.

Workers have come from as far away as California. Many work in tech or finance, Haney says. To qualify, a worker must be a full-time employee receiving an IRS Form W-2, and not an independent contractor whose income is reported on a 1099. And the new arrival needs to get a Vermont driver’s license.

“We’re going after people who are already thinking of moving to Vermont and need a reason to come here,” Haney says.

One caution for downtown leaders who implement this recruiting tool: Vetting applications is a time-consuming process.

“It’s a program that requires a great deal of work for the staff,” Haney says.

The payoff so far? The program boosted Vermont’s population by 89 people, including the 33 remote workers and their families. However, that’s just a rounding error in a state with a population of 623,657.

Economic developers might argue that Vermont could achieve better results by addressing the competitiveness of the state’s tax structure.

Vermont has higher-than-average taxes, according to the Tax Foundation. The state’s property taxes are among the highest in the nation, and personal income taxes are higher than most states.

Cutting taxes isn’t easy, but approving incentives is a more politically achievable goal. The state’s program was popular enough that Vermont legislators expanded it for 2020. Workers who move to the state for full-time jobs with Vermont-based employers could receive up to \$7,500.

Contact: Katie Braswell, Hamilton Community Foundation, 513-863-1389; Randy Maiers, Community Foundation of St. Clair County, 810-984-4761; Elaine Haney, State of Vermont, 802-505-1795. **DIX**

“We’re under no false impression that our program is the only reason people move here.”

ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Downtown shuttle service adjusts, adapts

A free microtransit service in downtown Tampa, FL (est. pop. 385,423), moves 500 passengers a day, making it a marked success.

The Downtowner is an Uber-style service that lets commuters summon rides with their phones. The average wait is 15 minutes, but so

many commuters use the Downtowner at peak times that waits can be as long as 45 minutes.

“When people call to complain, I remind them that it’s free,” jokes Karen Kress, director of transportation and planning at the Tampa Downtown Partnership.

The three-year-old program also has gone through a number of changes, including swapping open-air electric shuttles for Chevy Bolts.

Meanwhile, operation of The Downtowner is moving from the downtown organization that launched it to the local transit authority.

About 23,000 people have taken more than half a million rides in the past three years. In June, the service delivered more than 13,000 free rides.

But leaders at the Tampa Downtown Partnership, which created the service, said they can't continue to operate it. They asked the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority to take over the cost, with help from the Florida Department of Transportation.

The transit authority approved spending \$568,000 for eight months of service through March 2020. That body hopes to find a way to

operate the service long term, Kress says.

"We were hoping to get it started and incubate it, but that's not really what we do," she says.

The Downtowner's new approach could include creating set pick-up and drop-off locations, with the service operating more like a fixed-route bus service than the on-demand service akin to those offered by Uber and Lyft.

One potential change could be charging a fee to riders to be dropped off or picked up at destinations of their choosing.

The transit authority aims to cut its average cost per rider to less than \$4.50.

Each trip a rider takes currently costs about \$5.50, the *Tampa Bay Times* reports. That's about 60 cents less than the average cost per rider on one of the county's bus

Downtown abruptly loses microtransit service

For a year and a half, visitors to downtown Sarasota, FL (est. pop. 55,103), could travel the district via black-and-teal electric cars. But the third-party operator of the microtransit service pulled the plug so quickly that its sleek little vehicles are still stored in a downtown garage.

The microtransit service's departure underscored the reality that the concept isn't always a sustainable one.

Sarasota's service debuted as i-Ride and offered free trips. The ride-share program, a partnership between the city and Gotcha Group of Charleston, SC, carried 50,000 passengers in its first year.

The system generated revenue through advertising on the vehicles. Drivers weren't paid by the company but worked for tips.

After the city ended its participation in a one-year pilot program and left Gotcha to go it alone, Gotcha switched to charging passengers and paying drivers. Gotcha introduced a fee of \$3 per ride, and its black-and-teal vehicles traveled the city until 10 p.m. on weekdays and until 11 p.m. on weekends.

The cars boasted Bluetooth connections and charging ports. Gotcha Chief Executive Sean Flood was bullish on Sarasota's microtransit potential.

"Sarasota is a great market," Flood told *Sarasota magazine*. "You've got a dense city of people who live here, and a large tourist group as well. You've got a lot of people in a small, confined area who are historically using their cars to make short trips. Since day one, we knew that there was a demand. We just needed to find the right business model for this community."

However, ridership fell after the \$3 fee was introduced, says John Moran, operations manager at the city's Downtown Improvement District. Gotcha had bid on the contract for downtown Sarasota's bike-share program but didn't win.

After that setback, the service abruptly ceased in July. Moran says Gotcha's distinctive electric vehicles remain in storage in a Sarasota garage.

Gotcha, for its part, touts an ambitious plan to expand bikes, scooters, and ride-shares elsewhere. The fast-growing company aims to debut in college towns across the U.S.

Contact: John Moran, Sarasota Downtown Improvement District, 941-365-2200.

routes, according to a presentation from the agency's staff.

Popular stops for the service include a supermarket, a hotel, a university campus, and one of Tampa's primary bus hubs.

On-demand micro-transit has gained popularity in downtowns nationwide, and Kress says the service illustrates quirks of rider behavior.

"We have people who will wait 40 minutes to ride three blocks," Kress says. "It's kind of crazy."

While some downtowns outsource to private drivers who work for tips, Tampa decided to offer a more formal arrangement that would make the service consistently reliable.

"We didn't want drivers to just come out and cherry-pick the business hours when they thought they'd get the biggest tips," Kress says.

*Contact: Karen Kress, Downtown Tampa Partnership, 813-221-3686. **DIX***

ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Chalking tires of parked cars? You might be violating motorists' rights

The age-old parking practice of using chalk to mark the tires of parked cars faces legal scrutiny — and it just might be unconstitutional.

A federal appellate court has sided with a motorist who sued Saginaw, MI (est. pop. 49,366), for violating her Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable search. The motorist, Alison Taylor, sued after receiving 15 parking tickets for \$15 apiece from 2014 to 2017.

Like many cities, Saginaw instructed parking enforcement officers to chalk the tires of vehicles parked in spots without meters. If the officer returns two hours later and the vehicle is still there, a parking ticket ensues.

For cities, chalk is a cheap, low-tech way to enforce parking rules, and to encourage motorists not to clog up prime spaces. There's no need for meters or pay stations, and certainly not for more advanced measures such as electronic surveillance systems that recognize license plates.

Taylor made a federal case of her parking tickets, arguing that the chalk markings qualified as an unwarranted search. A district court judge sided with the city, saying Saginaw was

within its rights to mark tires and then dole out fines.

Taylor appealed, and the appellate judges ruled that chalking is in fact a search.

"There has been a trespass in this case because the city made intentional physical contact with Taylor's vehicle," they wrote.

What's more, the appellate judges disagreed with Saginaw's argument that a lower level of privacy applies to vehicles than to homes.

"We reject the city's contention that searching Taylor's vehicle was reasonable based solely on its reduced expectation of privacy," the judges wrote in their ruling.

Saginaw also argued that it didn't need a warrant to mark cars because it was acting as a "community caretaker" to protect public safety. The appellate court disputed that argument, too.

"The city does not demonstrate, in law or logic, that the need to deter drivers from exceeding the time permitted for parking — before they have even done so — is sufficient to justify a warrantless search under the community caretaker rationale," the appellate court ruled.



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see a federal appeals court's ruling against tire chalking, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

For now, the ruling applies to the appellate court's territory of Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee. Legal experts say downtown leaders would be wise to start planning for alternate methods of parking enforcement.

Meanwhile, civil rights activists, including the American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Frontier Foundation, fear a chalk ban would lead cities to adopt more intrusive forms of parking surveillance.

Orin Kerr, a law professor at the University of California-Berkeley, offered a different solution: Have parking enforcement officers photograph vehicles.

"That way parking enforcement can learn the placement of the car without physically marking it," Kerr says.

Of course, that tactic would require a parking enforcement officer to capture and then manage hundreds or thousands of images a day. Enter Silicon Valley: Enforcement vehicles can be equipped with scanners that detect license plate numbers, and traffic cameras can be similarly configured to monitor cars.

"Parking enforcement is going increasingly digital," C.J. Gabbe, an urban planning professor at Santa Clara University in California, tells *Governing* magazine. "Cities are increasingly trying to use technology in the on-street parking game."

Contacts: Orin Kerr, University of California-Berkeley, 510-664-5257; C.J. Gabbe, Santa Clara University, 408-551-3618. **DIX**

Business plan competition offers support, spurs growth — Continued from page 1

detailed business plans and video pitches. In fact, Marmone is surprised by the steady flow of ideas from budding entrepreneurs.

"I keep thinking the well is going to run dry," Marmone says.

Instead, there's a fierce competition for the top spot. Marmone says contest organizers pick the top 10 or 11 entrants each year and pair them with mentors from the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).

The competitors work with their mentors to polish their packages, and then the entrepreneurs

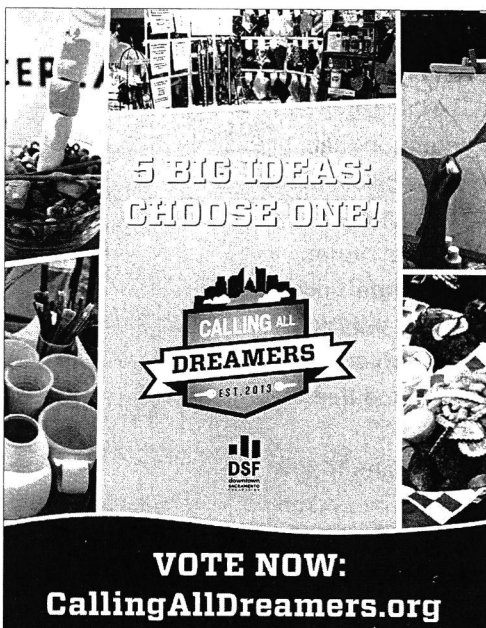
submit revised plans and new videos. From there, the entrants are scrutinized by SCORE judges, who question the entrants and poke holes in their plans.

The intense questioning can feel grueling, but Marmone says there's a point. If an entrepreneur isn't really ready to quit a steady job and devote long hours to a low-margin enterprise, it's better to learn that hard truth during the course of the contest than six months into a three-year lease.

"Part of the competition is preparing people to own a business," she says.

After the field is winnowed to five finalists, the contestants make their pitches in a Shark Tank-style round of presentations. Winners have included a candy store, a combination comics store and café, and a milkshake maker.

In a testament to the quality of the contest's vetting, the contest's first six winners went on to operate lasting businesses, Marmone says. Part of the reason, she



Storefront signs encourage the public to participate in the final round of voting.

acknowledges, is that the judging can be as ruthless as the free market.

While the overall winner gets the cash prize, there are consolation prizes such as a people's choice award, which is decided by popular vote.

Through the first six years of the contest, finalists and winners launched 22 businesses, creating 100 jobs and filling 25,000 square feet of downtown retail space.

At times, judges will side with an entrant who has the money to make a retail concept work. In some instances, judges have ruled against strong candidates that didn't quite

fit downtown. Marmone points to a high-end kitchen store that has gone on to thrive a few miles from downtown. Their rationale? Downtown Sacramento lacked the housing density the business needed to succeed.

Marmone drums up sponsorships for the event, with hospital operator Kaiser Permanente funding the cash prizes. Marmone solicits in-kind donations such as legal services from a Sacramento law firm, a digital marketing package from a local television station, and accounting, interior design, and branding services.

Contact: Valerie Marmone, *Downtown Sacramento Partnership*, 916-287-9970. **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see program guidelines and finalist videos from Sacramento's business plan contest, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Here's how one city paid for its downtown Wi-Fi network

Johnson City, TN (est. pop. 65,598), just launched free Wi-Fi service in its historic downtown.

The Appalachian Regional Commission approved a \$27,500 grant to the Johnson City Developmental Authority that paved the way for the Downtown Johnson City Free Wi-Fi Program, the *News & Neighbor* reports. The developmental authority will provide additional funds over two years. BrightRidge Broadband is providing in-kind support.

Dianna Cantler, director of downtown development for the Johnson City Developmental Authority, says free Wi-Fi will entice people to stay downtown longer.

BrightRidge CEO Jeff Dykes said the free public Wi-Fi at TVA Credit Union Ballpark was part of the company's pilot program when it launched a broadband division, and he believes visitors to downtown events — such as the Blue Plum Festival or Meet the Mountains — will use the new system.

"This is designed for visitors, for people coming downtown for festivals," Dykes says. "It's designed as a great draw to bring people into town, to enhance what the festivals already bring to the community. Also, when you have a festival and you have someone that has a booth and they need to run credit cards, instead of them having to plug into their phone and use the data on their phones, they'll be able to tie into this Wi-Fi system."

Wi-Fi is partly about luring visitors to stay longer and smoothing transactions for merchants. But perhaps more importantly in the future, Wi-Fi will enable smart city technology, according to a report by International Data Corp.

The report lays out three common ways for cities to pay for public Wi-Fi:

- **City-Funded.** The city pays to build the Wi-Fi network by adding a new budget line item. Funds might come from a larger infrastructure bond or by landing state, federal, or nonprofit grant money — or a combination of

all of the above. This approach has been used in San Jose, CA, Lincoln, NE, and Council Bluffs, IA.

- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP).** In this formal contractual relationship, the city provides defined assets and a private entity deploys and operates the public Wi-Fi. Examples include LinkNYC and LinkUK.

- **Operator-delivered.** In this privatized model, service providers deploy Wi-Fi, with

city approval, and earn back their investment via advertising, charges for premium access, and business services. Boingo in airports is a common example. Manhattan's Downtown Alliance offers free Wi-Fi funded by advertising on an app promoting local merchants. It provides useful information for tourists and visitors.

*Contact: Dianna Cantler, Johnson City Developmental Authority, 423-202-3510. **DIX***

ATTRACTION

Downtown music fest uses free admission to lure big crowds

Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest has turned into a genuine sensation. The three-decade-old festival brings more than 100,000 music lovers to downtown Fort Collins, CO (est. pop. 165,089).

One unusual feature: All concerts are free, which the Downtown Fort Collins Business Association calls "nationally unique." While many large music festivals fund themselves with ticket sales, Bohemian Nights instead relies on sponsorships to pay the bills.

"Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest is free in order to support Bohemian Nights' goals — to showcase new, emerging and established Colorado music, reveal Fort Collins as a music city, and share the gift of music," says Mary Trimby, communications program manager at Bohemian Foundation.

The festival also relies on an army of volunteers — some 1,200 people donate their time to make the yearly event happen.

Dozens of bands perform at the three-day festival, which draws one or two big-name acts. In 2019, Bonnie Raitt was the Saturday night headliner. Past featured acts have included The Steve Miller Band, Blondie, and Allison Krauss and Union Station.

Bohemian Nights takes pains to be family-friendly. There are a number of kids activities, and there's even a breastfeeding station that boasts private areas.

However, the festival isn't pet-friendly. The Downtown Business Association urges attendees not to bring pets.

Over the decades, the music festival has grown to a major event for downtown. There are six outdoor stages, and sidewalks, alleyways, and storefronts become entertainment spaces.

With mass shooters and terrorists targeting concerts, the Downtown Business Association has collaborated with the Department of Homeland Security and the Colorado Information Analysis Center to boost security at the event.

Parking is a challenge, but organizers market public transit, and they say there's plenty of parking for bikes, skateboards, and strollers. The event is an opportunity to showcase downtown businesses and cultural attractions, organizers say.

"Because of the festival's success, Downtown Fort Collins is consistently recognized as the cultural center of Northern Colorado," the Downtown Business Association says.

*Contact: Mary Trimby, Bohemian Foundation, 970-221-2636. **DIX***

Idea Exchange

City tests parcel delivery lockers, aims to ease traffic congestion

In January, Seattle's Urban Freight Lab will install delivery lockers next to transit stops in the city center. The pilot program expands on an earlier project which demonstrated more efficient delivery after similar lockers were installed in high-rise buildings.

The program is part of the Urban Freight Lab's Final 50 Feet Research Program which seeks to improve the final 50 feet of a delivery — from the load/unload space located at a curb, in an alley, or a private loading bay to when the customer receives their packages.

Fire suppression incentives

The Frederick Historic District in Maryland encompasses the core of the city and contains residential, commercial, and religious buildings dating as far back as the late 18th century.

Given the construction methods, materials, and density downtown, fire safety is a concern. To encourage property owners to install sprinklers, the city offers a Fire Suppression Incentive Program. The city notes that the program's goals are to, "improve personal safety while helping to preserve the historic fabric of downtown Frederick." In addition, "The program also will have an economic benefit by increasing utilization

of buildings as well as stabilizing or improving property values."

The grant provides up to \$15,000 to make the connection between an interior sprinkler system and the city's water main.



To see the details and application, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

Public art encourages citizen involvement

In June, volunteers from PFLAG Lafayette, an LGBTQ advocacy group in Lafayette, LA, painted the iconic Lafayette sign in downtown's Park San Souci as part of Pride Month activities.

The Lafayette sign was erected in 2017 as an interactive public art installation. Local nonprofit groups are encouraged to paint its letters to promote community events and awareness.

Over the years, the sign's nearly 6-foot high letters have promoted healthy choices, Independence Day, Black History Month, and more. With each change the sign receives attention in print and social media.



To see the art guidelines, visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."



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Idea Exchange

Parking rate structure encourages turnover

The City of Spokane *Downtown Parking Study* presents a comprehensive package of recommendations designed to “facilitate growth and activity downtown, while making parking more convenient and user-friendly for residents, businesses, employees, and visitors.”

The document, offers a set of coordinated strategies focused on better utilizing existing parking spaces, updating permit programs and event management policies, improving the customer experience, and enhancing parking operations.

One recommendation is creation of a “progressive-tiered rate” system that allows for longer stays but also encourages regular turnover of spaces. The study notes that a similar system in Sacramento charges parkers \$1.75 per hour for the first two hours, but the third and fourth hour rates jump to \$3 and \$3.75, respectively. “This allows for parkers to stay past the desired duration, but still incentivises turnover,” says the study.



To see the full study, go to DowntownDevelopment.com and click on “Web Extras.”

Short term rentals and enforcement

Like many cities, Burlington, VT, is struggling with how to handle an increase in the number of individual rooms, apartments, and houses offered for rent by the night.

While the city enjoyed a 100 percent increase in taxes from these

Local food specialty adds authentic appeal

Festivals centered around local produce (Georgia Peach Festival, Kennett Square Mushroom Festival, Vermont Maple Festival) or a prepared specialty (Maine Whoopie Pie Festival, Picklefest, or the Livermush Festival) have great regional appeal.

This summer saw the first sno-ball festival in Downtown Lafayette, LA. The event showcases a local Louisiana specialty made from shaved ice and flavored syrup.

For downtown leaders, the event was an opportunity for a locally authentic, family event downtown. “We’ve been looking for more ways throughout the year to bring family-friendly events downtown,” said Anita Begnaud, CEO of the Downtown Development Authority. “We’re just trying to create a more family-friendly environment for people who might not normally come downtown on a Saturday afternoon.”

Despite the family focus, vendors were on hand to offer traditional and “cocktail” sno-balls. Sno-ball tastings and a competition for the best sno-ball, music, and more rounded out the event.



rentals during the first half of the year, neighbors question the impact on quality of life and availability of affordable housing, says local newspaper, *Seven Days*.

The city requires a bed-and-breakfast permit for rentals of less than a month, but acknowledges that there are “a number of unpermitted short-term rentals out there.”

“Current regulations for B&Bs are fairly light,” notes *Seven Days*. “They must meet parking require-

ments (generally one additional off-street spot per rented room), and conditions of approval can dictate hours of check-in, to reduce noise. As short-term rentals, they aren’t subject to minimum code inspections that include tests of smoke detectors and other safety equipment. The homeowner must live at the property, though, which means some of the Airbnbs currently listed might not be allowed, even if owners seek permits.” **DIX**