



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

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

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

ELKO POLICE DEPARTMENT– 1448 Silver Street, Elko NV 89801

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

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

Date/Time Posted: October 19, 2018 2:00 p.m.

Posted by: Shelby Archuleta, Planning Technician
Name Title

Shelby Archuleta
Signature

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

Dated this 19th day of October, 2018.

NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

Cathy Laughlin
Cathy Laughlin, City Planner

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
4:00 P.M., P.D.S.T., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2018
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 26, 2018 – Regular Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

I. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency regarding a recognition program for local businesses, developers and property owners within the Redevelopment Area by recognizing efforts to enhance the area with visual improvements or economic development, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

The RDA at their September 11, 2018 meeting approved the initiation of the recognition program with an annual expenditure not to exceed \$1,000 per year and referred the program and details to the RAC for further development.

- B. Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency regarding replacing the existing lights in the corridor area with new LED lamps and ballast, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

II. REPORTS

- A. Centennial Park Expansion
- B. Storefront Improvement Program
- C. Budget – Cathy Laughlin
- D. Other

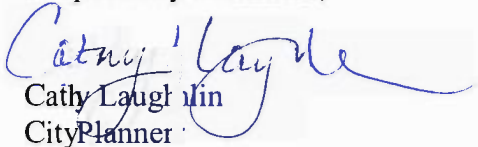
COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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,


Cathy Laughlin
City Planner

CITY OF ELKO
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
4:00 P.M., P.D.S.T., THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2018
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

Roll Call. Roll Call.

Present: Catherine Wines, ACAB
Jon Karr
Lina Blohm
Chris Johnson, RDA (*arrived at 4:04 p.m.*)

Absent: Don Newman ECVA
Jeff Dailing
John Kingwell, Elko Co.
Sonja Sibert, GBC
Steve Bowers, Elko Co. School Dist.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 26, 2018 – Regular Meeting **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

***** A motion was made by Lina Blohm, seconded by Catherine Wines to approve the April 26, 2018 minutes as presented.**

**Motion passed unanimously. (3-0)*

I. NEW BUSINESS

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

This is a special election due to the elections not being held in January. In January 2019, general elections of officers will be held.

***** A motion was made by Lina Blohm, seconded by Catherine Wines to accept the slate as has been seated for the last six months.**

****Motion passed unanimously. (3-0)***

B. Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency regarding changes to the approved design of Centennial Park, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

Chairman Jon Karr explained that part of this was stemming from the DBA and part of it was stemming from the tower and getting another look at what was there.

Ms. Wines said a splash pad sounded wonderful, but she thought it was too close to a parking lot and a busy street. She thought they would want to put in some benches and seating around the splash pad. She was concerned about the proposed location. She was also concerned about the number of trees, or lack thereof. She suggested putting in some more trees.

Bob Thibault, Civil Engineer, gave an update on the current construction. The project included four trees. Adding more trees could be done at a later date. There are utility lines running through that the City doesn't want trees on top of. It is crowded underground, which is something to keep in mind. The reason Mr. Thibault put the splash pad where he did was because it was out of the way of the existing fountain, there is light pole nearby, and it works with the current and future parking lots. It is not part of the current project.

Lina Blohm asked what the key element was for the other splash pad in town. She said the key element was the family that brought child, and the fact that they were sitting in the shade. It could be a simple structure, like what is at the park. She thought that needed to come into the scheme of things. She thought they needed to have a well thought out strategic plan as to how the entire area was going to unfold.

Ms. Laughlin said to keep in mind that in the 30% plans there is a vertical sidewalk, which is splitting the parking from the existing to the new design. If the parking was left as is, and save some cost, there is another grassy area where there are already benches and trees, which would be a good location for a splash pad. It would be out of the concert location and there aren't any utilities over there. You could also put in a canopy. Staff didn't look at that area because of the 30% Plans. She also wanted to talk about a proposed restroom facility. When talk started of a splash pad one of the first thoughts was that a splash pad couldn't be provided without having some type of restroom facility in the park. It's going to be hard for

this to be a good, usable park without a restroom facility. There was about \$75,000 in savings from the Park Expansion Project. Ms. Laughlin started talking with the Parks Director, James Wiley, and he suggested a company, and staff looked at the website and looked at a basic design. They are prefabricated restroom facilities. There are several different options for the designs. They come completely manufactured. They are 100% concrete. They are delivered, set on top of the stubbed utilities, and they connect them and they are fully operational in one day. Staff looked at it as an option and showed it on the plan. The location has everything that is needed to install it and it would work with the current design of the park and with the redesign of the parking lot. That was something else that staff wanted to discuss about the expansion of the park, how usable is the park going to be. Another element that staff wants to have discussion about is the large stone that needs to be etched, which was donated to the City of Elko. The location of the stone needs to be decided.

Ms. Wines said redesigning the parking lot had always seemed ludicrous to her, because no parking would be gained. She was in favor of not doing the redesign of the parking lot and putting the splash pad where Ms. Laughlin suggested. She asked how big of a diameter the splash pad would have.

Mr. Thibault said it was shown with a 30-foot diameter.

Ms. Blohm said the tower had become the focal point. She asked how the tower was being used going forward. She understood that the base of the tower was going to become a stage for concerts. The people would be sitting on the east side of the tower looking west at the concerts. Concerts are typically in the evening and in the summer. That would leave everyone looking into the sun at 6 o'clock in the evening. She also wanted to know where 100 people would park. She asked if the urgency for creating more parking was more important to consider how they want to use what they are building on in the park, before they start adding things.

Ms. Wines didn't think they could do anything until they decided on whether to move the train or not.

Ms. Blohm asked if the train was going to become a functional piece of equipment, where it could be opened up during concerts and sell snacks, or it becomes something useable.

Chairman Karr said he liked the idea of moving the splash pad over by the proposed restrooms.

Ms. Wines said she had contacted three different eagle scouts to try to redo the existing fountain that is located in the park.

Chairman Karr said if they moved the splash pad the fountain would go away.

Ms. Wines thought there would be a lot of resistance.

There was further discussion regarding the existing fountain.

Scott Wilkinson, Assistant City Manager, said if you take a look at the 30% plans, the reason the parking lot was being adjusted was not to gain parking. It was designed not as an amphitheater but that type of layout. The train was planned to be pushed back and you would be facing northwest for events. As the tower was developed it started being looked at as a back drop for events. This is what was approved by the RDA to consider going forward and then it just evolved.

Chairman Karr said in the 30% Plan the fountain was no longer there.

Ms. Wines pointed out that it just moved.

Mr. Thibault explained that they moved it so that it could be built now without having to redo the parking lot first.

Ms. Blohm asked what the reason was for preserving the fountain.

Ms. Wines said that Sarah Sweetwater designed the fountain.

Ms. Blohm asked if it was still working as a fountain. (No)

Ms. Wines said she wanted to see it preserved because it was public art.

Ms. Laughlin mentioned that different Cities had different elements in their splash pads that water shoots out of. She thought that the fountain could be revamped and made part of the splash pad.

Chairman Karr said that made sense to him.

Ms. Wines said there were grants available to refurbish art like that.

Ms. Blohm said it made sense to her to utilize two elements together. She asked if it was a huge issue to create more parking with "Plan A" or not. She asked where the focus should be. She thought they were all over the place, and they needed to focus on what was really important about the park and how to get there.

Mr. Wilkinson explained that they layout was intended to create a larger greenspace. There is plenty of parking in and around the corridor.

Chairman Karr thought moving the splash pad and making the fountain part of the splash pad made more green space.

Ms. Blohm asked if a stage was going to be built around the tower, or if a temporary stage was going to be brought in for events.

Chairman Karr envisioned that the base of the tower would get bigger and become the stage.

Ms. Wines thought the stage would be temporary.

Mr. Thibault explained that with the current project the base would be getting a little bigger. There would be an extra 6 feet of sidewalk on each side and then the reader boards.

Ms. Blohm asked if it was elevated concrete.

Mr. Thibault said it was all flush with the tower, nothing would be elevated. He asked if a stage needed to be elevated. He wanted to know if they would need to bring in temporary elevated staging to put on a show.

Chairman Karr thought the bigger events would need an elevated stage, but the smaller events wouldn't.

Ms. Laughlin said by making the changes they've discussed it would make more grassy area for seating for a concert.

Ms. Wines thought they would save around \$1 million not redoing the parking lot.

Chairman Karr didn't think they needed to move the train. He didn't think it would be worth the money.

Ms. Wines suggested they use it for a season to see how it worked.

Chairman Karr liked the ideas they had discussed regarding the fountain and the splash pad. He thought maybe they could have another tree where the splash pad was originally proposed.

Ms. Wines suggested they add trees like what was presented in the 30% Plans.

Mr. Thibault pointed out some of the existing trees.

Mr. Wilkinson thought the intent would be to put more in.

Ms. Wines said there were trees that had a single root that would be good for this area.

Mr. Thibault said they wouldn't want those over a sewer line. There are some concerns.

Chairman Karr said as a preliminary design they could add a couple trees. He liked the idea of where the foot print was headed.

Ms. Laughlin asked how everyone felt about the restroom, the location of the restroom, and looking at something of that nature for moving into that as a project. They also needed to discuss the location of the stone that was donated to the City.

Mr. Thibault mentioned that there were donor plaques in all the sidewalks of donors that contributed to the original park construction. They wanted to set up a reader board with all those donors next to the stone.

Ms. Blohm asked what was envisioned for the reader board.

Mr. Thibault said they would be a story board on a post. It hasn't been designed yet.

Ms. Wines thought the big stone would look nice by the new location for the splash pad, on the upper curve.

Mr. Thibault mentioned that it would have to be relocated if they ever rebuilt the parking lot.

Mr. Wilkinson thought the decisions they were making today, would make sense. That would open up some green space. At this point in time, if the RDA decided that those would be appropriate revisions, all of that fits within the RDA Plan, which is to transform this into a usable downtown park.

Chairman Karr thought they should proceed with further design of what their ideas would look like.

Ms. Wines asked if anyone had any idea of how much it would cost to move the train closer to the street.

Mr. Wilkinson thought they would need to set new tracks. They would need to talk to a crane company, get some weights and see what size crane they would need, and how involved it would be. It would be nice and make the space more open.

Chairman Karr didn't see the benefit of moving the train, when the focal point was now the tower.

It was decided to have a few events down there before deciding if the train needed to be moved.

***** A motion was made by Catherine Wines, seconded by Chris Johnson to ask staff to rework the design of the Centennial Park to include elimination of the parking rework from the 30% Drawings, relocation of the existing schematic area for the splash pad and the fountain, and incorporate the fountain into the splash pad, look at costs for a bathroom building, moving the big rock, and relocating the train.**

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

After the motion, but before the vote Ms. Blohm said she was more concerned with what was happening around the tower than moving a splash pad. She felt they needed to focus on the tower, because that was going to be the basis of what they were generating activity with. She thought a lot more thought needed to go into that area.

Ms. Wines said that the Arts and Culture Advisory Board wanted to assist with moving the fountain, because it is art and culturally sensitive.

Chris Johnson thought the motion was a great start, and they would just have to see what it looked like with the new drawings. He thought they were on the right track.

***The Board then voted on the motion.**

II. REPORTS

A. Storefront Improvement Program

Ms. Laughlin reported that the 2017 Storefront Improvement Grants had all been allocated and funded with the exception of Jeff Dalling. He has submitted his to staff, but was lacking information. Mr. Wilkinson had been working with him on getting the information so he can be reimbursed. The 2018 Storefront Grants, we have signed and recorded an agreement with Patray Assets, LLC for the Commercial Street property, and that has been permitted. The Commercial Hotel Application is going to go to the RDA in August for a request for an amendment to their Storefront Grant Program. They are not doing Chicago Pizza at that location, but they are still willing to do some improvements to exterior of the Commercial. The Pat Laughlin Family Trust is going to be getting started next month. Staff has been trying to get the word out for next year.

B. Budget– Cathy Laughlin

Ms. Laughlin reported that there were two budget spreadsheets in the packet, the 2017/2018 budget was wrapping up. She then went over the 2017/2018 budget spreadsheet and went over the 2018/2019 budget spreadsheet.

Ms. Blohm said the ending fund balance would carry forward, so they could begin the drawings for the block ends. She asked if that would be an upcoming agenda item.

Ms. Laughlin said that was a project that they dedicated to do in house. She explained that Mr. Thibault was busy with the Sports Complex, so she wasn't going to throw the block ends at him right now.

C. Other

Ms. Blohm wanted to have a discussion about what was happening at 5th and Idaho. She wanted to go over some thinking points about what the general public could expect to see after a demolition project in the downtown. From what she understood there was nothing in code, or enforceable, to say it shall have certain requirements. There's nothing out there that talks about the owner's responsibility to leave a decent looking space. Moving forward, how should they be talking about this and thinking

about it. She wanted to know how long they should wait for the market to give them an answer. What are they going to be left with? She understood they were going to be left with a 6ft fence that has heavy mesh on it. She wasn't sure if it was going to be worse than what was there before.

Chairman Karr thought everyone was wondering what they were going to do with the lot. He didn't think anyone really knew what was going to happen.

Ms. Blohm said her point was if it was a function of Redevelopment to have a discussion and address this kind of situation. She wanted this to become an item on the agenda, so they could have a discussion about how other areas deal with these situations.

There was further discussion regarding demolitions downtown.

Ms. Wines wanted to know about the lights in the corridor.

Chairman Karr said he would forward Ms. Wines the emails from NV Energy regarding the light poles downtown.

Ms. Wines requested an agenda item to talk about safety. Last week she had to go to her office early in the morning, and it was like a third world country. It is no place that anyone would want to be or have a business.

COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no public comments made at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jon Karr, Chairman

Lina Blohm, Secretary

City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council
Agenda Action Sheet

1. Title: **Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency regarding a recognition program for local businesses, developers and property owners within the Redevelopment Area by recognizing efforts to enhance the area with visual improvements or economic development, and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
2. Meeting Date: **October 25, 2018**
3. Agenda Category: **NEW BUSINESS**
4. Time Required: **5 minutes**
5. Background Information: **The RDA at their September 11, 2018 meeting approved the initiation of the recognition program with an annual expenditure not to exceed \$1,000 per year and referred the program and details to the RAC for further development.**
6. Budget Information:
 Appropriation Required: **N/A**
 Budget amount available: **\$1,000**
 Fund name: **Redevelopment Fund**
7. Business Impact Statement: **Not Required**
8. Supplemental Agenda Information: **Proposed draft program**
9. Recommended Motion: **Pleasure of the RAC**
10. Prepared By: **Cathy Laughlin, Redevelopment Manager/City Planner**
11. Committee/Other Agency Review:
12. Agency Action:
13. Agenda Distribution:

RAC Recognition Program

WHAT: A recognition program ranging from the simplest improvement to the largest improvement to show appreciation for their investment in the Redevelopment Area. This will not be tiered on levels, as our goal will be to show the recipients that even the smallest improvement is just as important as the largest.

WHEN: At the beginning of each quarterly meeting of the RAC, 1-10 recognition certificates will be presented. We will add a "Presentations" to the agenda after meeting minutes.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE: Property owners, tenants, business owners, or developers who have qualified improvements within the Redevelopment Area.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS: From the simplest improvement of a new sign or cleaned up landscaping to a new structure, development, renovation or demolition. It simply needs to be an improvement. This improvement could also meet the definition of blight as per NRS 279.388 and be something that is not necessarily visual such as undergrounding utility lines.

NOMINATIONS: All nominations would go to the Chairman of the RAC 3 weeks prior to the meeting and the Chairman will sort the nominations and present them to the City Planner/Redevelopment Manager. RAC members as well as City Staff are eligible to make nominations.

REDEVELOPMENT MANAGERS ROLE: The Redevelopment Manager will send out an invitation to attend the quarterly RAC meeting to the award recipients. The Redevelopment Manager will order the award certificate or other selected gift of appreciation.

LIMITED NUMBER OF AWARDS RECEIVED: Each parcel, tenant, business owner can receive up to 2 award certificates per year.

IDEAS FOR AWARDS: Certificate, window sticker, plaque,

COST FOR AWARDS: Up to \$15 per award (could amount to \$600 per year). This expenditure would need to be approved by the RDA. Possibly a maximum amount per year amount.

PHOTOS: Photos will be provided at the RAC meeting to show the before and after for each award unless they are not available.

RECOGNITION: City of Elko website will recognize the quarterly award recipients as well as Elko Daily Free Press will be notified.

Agenda Item# **I.B.**

**City of Elko Redevelopment Advisory Council
Agenda Action Sheet**

1. **Title: Review, consideration, and possible recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency regarding replacing the existing lights in the corridor area with new LED lamps and ballast, and matters related thereto. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**
2. **Meeting Date: October 25, 2018**
3. **Agenda Category: NEW BUSINESS**
4. **Time Required: 5 minutes**
5. **Background Information:**
6. **Budget Information:**
 - Appropriation Required: \$10,000**
 - Budget amount available:**
 - Fund name: Redevelopment Fund**
7. **Business Impact Statement: Not Required**
8. **Supplemental Agenda Information: Communication from NV Energy**
9. **Recommended Motion: Pleasure of the RAC**
10. **Prepared By: Cathy Laughlin, Redevelopment Manager/City Planner**
11. **Committee/Other Agency Review:**
12. **Agency Action:**
13. **Agenda Distribution:**

Cathy Laughlin

From: Telescope Lanes <telescopelanes@frontiernet.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 3:09 PM
To: Cathy Laughlin
Subject: FW: Corridor Lights

From: Jon Karr [mailto:jkarr@elkocountynv.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 3:06 PM
To: Jonathan Karr <telescopelanes@frontiernet.net>
Subject: FW: Corridor Lights

From: Lino, Robert [RLino@nvenergy.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2018 2:58 PM
To: Jon Karr
Subject: FW: Corridor Lights

From: Lino, Robert
Sent: Thursday, September 27, 2018 3:45 PM
To: 'Jon Karr' <jkarr@elkocountynv.net>
Subject: RE: Corridor Lights

Hi Jon,

So this is what I know, I was told 2 personal about 2 hours per light to change out the lamp and ballast. There is 48 lights down there if I counted correctly. You mentioned changing out the glass yesterday that may take a little longer, also some may change out easier than others. The two personal is due to the weight of the lights. That's roughly about \$10,000. Let me know what you all come up with.

Thank You

Robert Lino
Sr. Utility Design Administrator
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Visit our website at <https://www.nvenergy.com/account-services/building-and-new-construction>

Redevelopment Agency 2018/2019 Budget

July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

Revenues		
	Approved Budget	As of 10/16/2018
Beginning Fund Balance	\$803,514	
Budget to beginning fund balance dif.		
Property Tax Revenues (anticipated)	\$338,608	\$150,337
Interest Revenues (anticipated)	\$4,750	\$2,984
Transfer-in from General Fund		
Total Revenues	\$1,146,872	\$153,321

Balance to date	\$837,655
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Expenditures		
	Approved Budget	As of 10/16/2018
Legal	\$20,000	\$256
Public Improvements		
Misc. items	\$1,000	\$237
Storefront Program (pledged 2017/18)	\$25,000	
Storefront Program (pledged 2018/19)	\$55,105	
Public-Private Partnerships	\$75,000	
Expn. of Centennial Park 7th Street	\$215,631	\$118,688
Balance towards savings	\$755,036	
Revolving Fund	\$100	
Total Expenses	\$1,146,872	\$119,180



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

Vol. 65, No. 8
August 2018

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@DowntownDevelopment.com

Busting Downtown Graffiti:
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Food Halls of North
America: Report

Connecting to regional trails.
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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Marijuana dispensaries create demand for space — and regulatory concerns

As a wave of marijuana legalization sweeps North America, some downtowns are taking advantage of the trend by welcoming — or at least cautiously allowing — pot shops in long-vacant spaces.

In Springfield, IL (est. pop. 115,715), a dispensary set up shop in 2016 in a downtown building left empty after the state Department of Children and Family Services ended its lease. The tenant, HCI Alternatives, spent \$1.9 million renovating its ground-floor space in a building near state capitol and the

Abraham Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

In Lake Worth, FL (est. pop. 37,812), a medical marijuana dispensary opened in 2017 in an empty bank branch across the street from City Hall. The 3,100-square-foot building had been vacant for years before Knox Medical signed a lease for the space.

And in Manitou Springs, CO (est. pop. 5,317), the quaint tourist town at the foot of Pike's Peak, taxes from two dispensaries are

(Continued on page 2)

ATTRACTION

Food halls draw diners and restaurateurs, serve up creative cuisine

Downtown Birmingham, AL (est. pop. 210,710), shows all the telltale signs of an urban renaissance. There's a minor-league ballpark in the city center, an influx of downtown housing, and a new supermarket.

But the most telling addition might be the new food hall. Birmingham is home to an 18,000-square-foot collection of gourmet eateries that has set up shop on the ground floor

of the long-vacant Pizitz department store.

"It's the only place in town where you can get a poke bowl, the Hawaiian street food," says David Fleming, head of RevBirmingham. "When people want something unique, the food hall is an option for them."

Other choices include tacos, Middle Eastern fare, ramen, and

(Continued on page 6)

Marijuana dispensaries create demand for space — and regulatory concerns — *Continued from page 1*

paying for bike paths, decorative sidewalks, and lights. Business is booming in part because the city next door, Colorado Springs (est. pop. 465,101), hasn't allowed marijuana dispensaries.

In an era of shrinking retailers and shuttered big-box locations, marijuana dispensaries represent a rare category of merchant that's growing.

Some states, including California, Colorado, Nevada, and Washington, have legalized weed entirely, allowing any adult to buy pot. Other states, including Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, allow sales of medical marijuana to patients who get permission from a physician.

And Texas has approved the sale of cannabidiol, or CBD, a cannabis ingredient that doesn't get users high but seems to ease seizures, migraines, and inflammation. Canada has pushed even farther and is poised to legalize weed nationally.

While voters in many U.S. states have overwhelmingly approved marijuana decriminalization, downtowns wrestle with a regulatory wrinkle: Even as pot shops multiply, marijuana remains federally illegal.

That reality limits the number of storefronts available to marijuana dispensaries. Many institutional landlords — including pub-

licly traded real estate investment trusts and large insurance carriers — decline to rent space to marijuana businesses. Those companies don't want to run afoul of federal regulators.

Even smaller landlords who might be willing to lease space to cannabis companies can find themselves hamstrung. Mortgages often include loan covenants that forbid illegal activity.

"A very lucrative business"

In Boulder, CO (est. pop. 108,090), where six dispensaries have set up shop in the city's 49-block downtown district, some pot shops have gotten around real estate obstacles by simply buying buildings outright, says Sean Maher, chief executive officer of the Downtown Boulder Partnership.

The dispensaries' deep pockets reflect an obvious reality: "It's a very lucrative business," Maher says.

Local zoning rules present another challenge. With marijuana legalization still a novel concept, cities and towns have proven reluctant to allow pot shops.

Lake Worth landed a dispensary in part because it was the first municipality in Palm Beach County to permit cannabis stores to operate. While 75 percent of Palm Beach County voters said yes to the statewide referendum in 2016 that legalized medical marijuana, the county's municipalities remain skittish.

Farther south, Miami Beach (est. pop. 91,917) saw its first dispensary open in April. Surterra Wellness operates a medical marijuana treatment center, as the pot shops are known in Florida, near Lincoln Road Mall in South Beach's Art Deco District, an area known for lively nightlife.

Local rules vary

Even cities that allow dispensaries are circumspect. Boulder has a reputation as a weed-friendly city, but local officials weren't keen to disrupt a thriving downtown, one that has attracted many national retailers.

Cities have wide latitude

As cannabis dispensaries open around the country, here's what you need to know:

Marijuana remains federally illegal, a reality that affects how the businesses handle banking and other routine tasks.

Regulatory schemes and tax collections vary widely by state. For example, Colorado and California have more permissive systems. Florida is more heavily regulated.

Local jurisdictions still maintain control. Even in states where marijuana is legal, municipalities have wide leeway over allowing pot shops.

"We were just nervous that we were going to have too many dispensaries," Maher says. "We didn't want to have two or three on every block, just like we wouldn't want two or three liquor stores on every block."

So Boulder passed ordinances limiting the number of pot shops and prohibiting storefront dispensaries. Cannabis stores can occupy basements or spots inside office buildings, but they can't operate in spaces facing the pedestrian mall on Pearl Street.

What's more, Boulder's cannabis companies must lock up their cash and their stash every night. An early spate of dumpster diving was stopped when dispensaries secured their trash bins, Maher says.

A rule barring dispensaries within 1,000 feet of a school means there are no pot shops in the restaurant district near the University of Colorado's campus. Boulder also prohibited garish signs, nixing the Cheech-and-Chong vibe that permeates some of Colorado's pot-friendly areas.

"It's very easy to walk by dispensaries and not even know what they are, unlike in Denver, where the signs are very gaudy," Maher says.

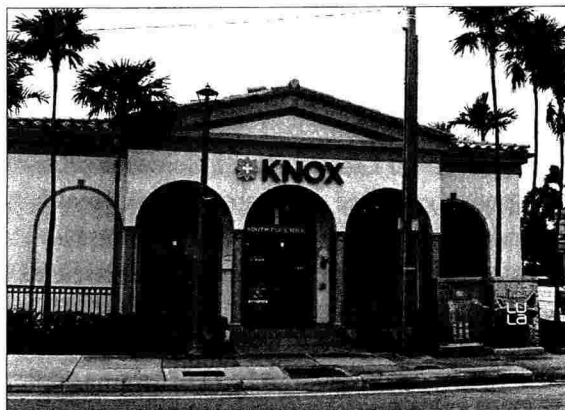
The vibe is similarly subdued in Lake Worth, where a discreet green cross is Knox Medical's only tell, and in Springfield where the dispensary is unassuming.

"HCI has high-level security doors and windows that you cannot see through," says Lisa Clemmons Stott, executive director of Downtown Springfield Inc. "The only way you know what it is is by the signage, which is very corporate and medical sounding, so I'm not sure the thousands of tourists who visit Lincoln sites every year even know what it is."

The dispensary has created no problems or challenges, Clemmons Stott says.

For Springfield and Lake Worth, dispensary operators brought welcome investment. In both cities, the pot shops strive to convey a professional image.

"It's really got a high-end doctor's office, high-end spa-type of feel," Christopher McCloud, a spokesman for HCI Alternatives, said during an open house for elected officials and the news media, according to the *State Journal-Register*.



With an unassuming façade, the dispensary in Lake Worth, FL, blends with the downtown.

Concerns for neighbors

Federal prohibition means cannabis is an all-cash business. Armed guards are stationed prominently at the entrance of many dispensaries. Pot shops are unable to accept credit cards and checks, all that cash poses a tempting target for criminals.

Smell presents another issue. Neighbors sometimes complain of the pungent aroma emanating from weed businesses.

In Florida, which allows only the sale of oils and extracts but not marijuana flowers, scent isn't an issue. In Boulder, odors have been a problem at grow operations but not at the retail locations that operate downtown, Maher says.

For some municipalities, pot produces much-needed revenue. Manitou Springs' two dispensaries generate more than \$1 million in annual tax revenue, an economic boon for a small city.

"It's brought new life to this town," Farley McDonough, president of the Manitou Springs Urban Renewal Authority, told the *Los Angeles Times*. "In many ways, it's good Colorado Springs does not have sales."

Pot shops, for their part, have grown accustomed to dealing with local bans and a hodgepodge of zoning rules.

"There are so many cities that have moratoriums in place, so we have to navigate around that," says Lindsay Jones, president of Curaleaf, a Florida marijuana company that has been opening locations throughout the

"We didn't want to have two or three on every block, just like we wouldn't want two or three liquor stores on every block."

state. "It's not like building a hamburger joint. We can only go where municipalities will allow us to be."

George Scorsis, chief executive officer of Toronto-based Liberty Health Sciences, says the pot shop image dies hard. Liberty Health Sciences is opening dispensaries in Massachusetts and Florida, and while he stresses his company's professionalism, many local officials remain skeptical.

"There still is a large level of stigma," Scorsis says. "Cannabis is a polarizing form of medicine, and we can't expect the stigma to be removed immediately."

While the public overwhelmingly supports marijuana legalization, there's still a strong not in my back yard sentiment when it comes to local approval, Scorsis says.

Properly managed, pot shops can be a benefit to downtowns, Maher says.

"It's very popular with tourists," he adds. "It's not kids in their 20s and 30s looking to get high. It's people in their 50s and 60s, very affluent people saying, 'Hey, I haven't tried this since college.'"

Contacts: Sean Maher, Downtown Boulder Partnership, 303-449-3774; Lisa Clemmons Stott, Downtown Springfield Inc., 217-544-1723. **DIX**

ACCESS AND MOBILITY

To reduce the risk of vehicle attacks, small cities shop for bollards

Major cities such as New York, New Orleans, and Las Vegas are spending millions to install bollards, steel posts designed to block vehicles from pedestrian areas.

But smaller downtowns need not be priced out of the bollard market. For instance, Hannibal, MO, (est. pop 17,808) received an estimate of \$12,000 to install bollards in its downtown, according to the *Hannibal Courier-Post*.

"We're really bridging the gap between do nothing and doing the most robust solution available."

Sophisticated bollards, those designed to block heavy trucks, can cost as much as \$60,000 apiece. But Stephanie Tankersley, president of Bollards Plus in Houston, says her company can supply bollards for as little as \$500 each.

She says Roanoke, TX (est. pop. 7,804) recently spent about \$8,000 on bollards meant to protect pedestrians at an annual street festival. While the lower-grade bollards might not be suitable for protecting a high-value target such as the White House, they're effective for smaller cities that are unlikely to be targeted by terrorists but simply want some peace of mind.

"If you have a big box truck going 50 mph in a ram raid, the inexpensive bollards aren't

going to stop it," Tankersley says. "But it is a very good deterrent, and it is a very good preventative measure."

In Ladysmith, BC (est. pop. 8,537), the city council agreed in May to spend \$30,000 a year on bollards until 160 of the barriers have been deployed. However, the investment is a response not to terrorism but to less-than-skilled drivers.

On several occasions over a period of decades, motorists attempting to navigate angled parking spots pulled onto the doorsteps of downtown businesses, according to the *Ladysmith Chronicle*.

Mayor Aaron Stone said the threat of a vehicle striking a storefront creates anxiety for visitors and business owners.

"It causes people stress that they feel uncomfortable in their jobs if they sit at the front window and do that work every day, and they don't want to sit there because they're afraid," Stone says.

For now, municipalities must find their own funding for bollards. While a Stopping Threats on Pedestrians (STOP) bill has been proposed in the U.S. Senate and House, Congress hasn't

acted on the measure. It would provide grants of \$50 million a year for 10 years to cities seeking to install bollards.

Tankersley says her company's custom-made bollards can offer a cost-effective solution. Bollards Plus' posts are typically six to eight inches in diameter. They reach three to

four feet above ground and are sunk as far as four feet below ground.

"We're really bridging the gap between do nothing and doing the most robust solution available," she says.

Contact: Stephanie Tankersley, Bollards Plus, 713-396-6166. **DIX**

PATHWAYS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Graffiti removal program engages public and troubled teens

Picturesque Portland, ME (est. pop. 66,937), fits no one's stereotype of a dangerous urban area. Gritty or not, Portland property owners are vexed by graffiti, a problem that mushroomed in 2016.

So downtown managers responded with renewed attention to their graffiti policing. As a result, the city resumed its practice of quickly removing unwanted graffiti, and the effort won an award from the International Downtown Association.

Portland long has addressed graffiti through an innovative program that uses the labor of troubled teens. Downtown pedestrians can take photos of graffiti and alert downtown managers through the SeeClick-Fix app.

The system had worked well until 2016, when Portland suddenly was deluged with 236 complaints (an 84 percent increase from 2015) and a 66 percent increase in average response times.

The culprit wasn't anything as sinister as rising gang activity or an accelerating urban decline, says Amy Geren, downtown experience liaison at Portland Downtown. Instead, the reason was entirely mundane: Management changes at three key organizations left the program adrift.

Portland hired a new city manager, and the two nonprofits involved in the graffiti program hired new directors at about the same time.

"The program sort of fell apart," Geren says.

Amid the change, Geren says, downtown managers forgot about the graffiti program. The rising complaints quickly reminded them of its importance.

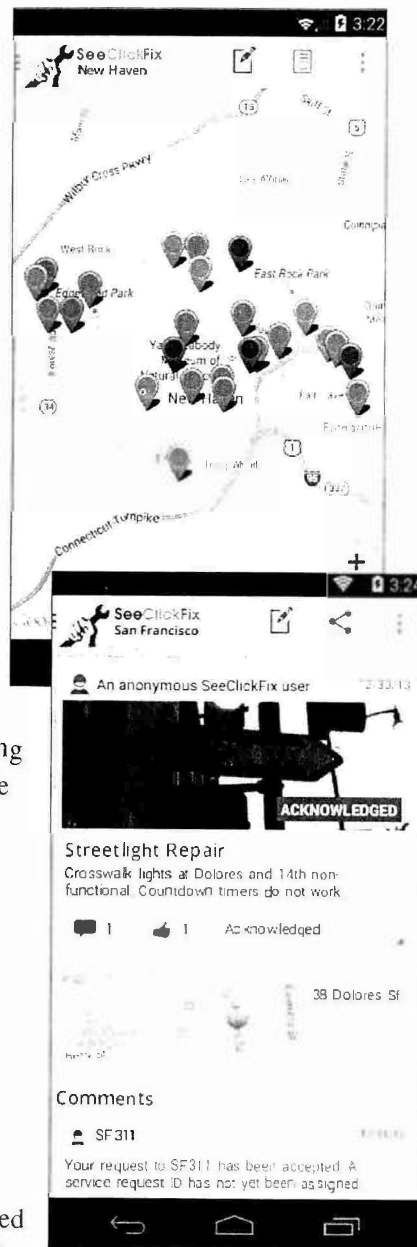
"That proved to everyone how effective the program had been," Geren says.

Aside from its basic service of removing eyesores, the graffiti program has a feel-good angle, too: The labor is completed by young adults who have been in trouble with the law and are learning work skills.

They're trained to set up and tear down work sites and to use a pressure washer. With the experience they've gained removing graffiti, some of the workers have landed jobs in property maintenance, Geren says.

Over the years, Portland's anti-graffiti program has removed some 75,000 square feet of graffiti from Portland buildings.

Portland's program has its limits, however: In Maine,



SeeClickFix and similar apps collect and report information about non-emergency issues and maintenance needs.



DowntownDevelopment.com

To learn more about Portland's graffiti removal program, visit our website and click on "Web Extras."

graffiti removal is impossible for months at a time. Temperatures must be above freezing for seven consecutive days before crews tackle removal.

Geren says it's not clear exactly how much the graffiti program costs. It's part of a \$50,000-a-year expense that includes not just graffiti removal but other services, too.

The crews can immediately tackle graffiti on public property. If a private property is van-

dalized, the crews must gain permission.

Prompt removal alone can deter vandals, Geren says, so staying atop the problem can keep graffiti in check. However, she acknowledges that defeating graffiti entirely is impossible.

"Ancient Rome had a graffiti problem," Geren says. "It's just what people do."

Contact: Amy Geren, Portland Downtown, 207-772-6828. **DIX**

Food halls draw diners and restaurateurs, serve up creative cuisine — Continued from page 1

Ethiopian cuisine. While the hipster fare appeals to affluent diners, some wonder if low-income residents of downtown will be able to afford entrees that go for \$10 or more.

No matter: Food halls are growing in popularity nationwide. Commercial real estate brokerage Cushman & Wakefield calls food halls "one of the hottest trends right now in the restaurant business, and retail in general."

"Food halls are popping up around the United States at a breakneck pace," Cushman & Wakefield says in its *Food Halls of North America 2018* report. "At the current rate, by

2020 the marketplace will have tripled in size in the span of just five years."

For landlords, developers, and downtown leaders, food halls bring a strong appeal. By combining half a dozen or more eateries under one roof, food halls attract consumers and drive foot traffic.

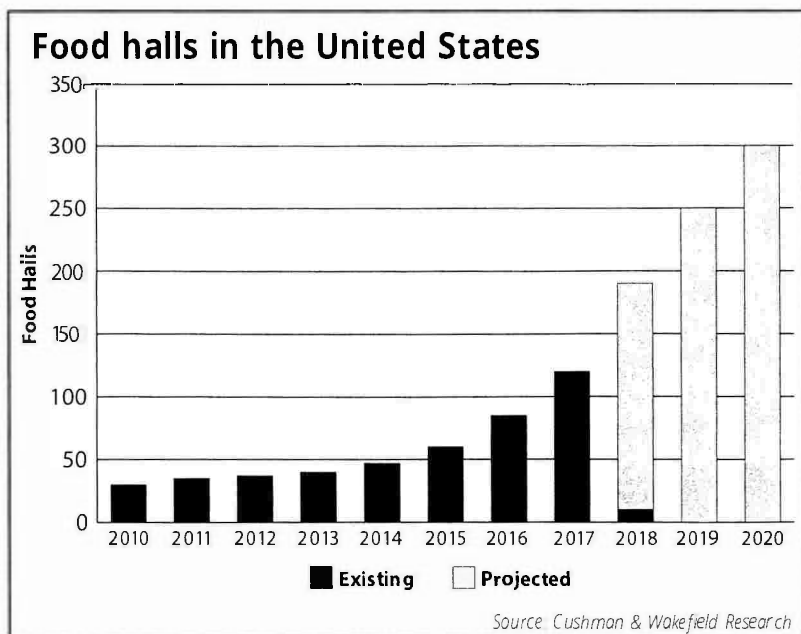
A typical food hall might combine a taco place, a gourmet burger joint, a noodle shop, a cold-brewed coffee roaster, and a bar serving microbrews under one roof. It's the sort of experience that can't be replicated on Amazon.

New York City is the nation's most developed food hall market. Cushman & Wakefield counts more than 25 food halls in the city, with 10 more in some stage of development.

But if you fear a food hall bubble, consider this: No food hall has failed in New York City, an impressive track record given restaurants' notoriously short lifespans. In a food hall, even if one tenant flops, others are likely to succeed.

The food hall concept takes a page from the food courts at shopping malls and airports. But at food halls, the cuisine is the main attraction. As a result, food hall tenants stress quality over convenience.

Food halls started as an urban trend, with Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago leading the way. Next came midsized cities, and now, food halls are spreading to cities as small as Wilmington, DE (est. pop. 71,442), Duluth,



MN (est. pop. 86,293), and West Palm Beach, FL (est. pop. 108,161).

In Pittsburgh, PA (est. pop. 303,625), a new 12,000-square-foot food hall opened in one of the city's downtown office towers. Diners can order via app and pay electronically.

In Austin, TX (est. pop. 947,890), a new downtown food hall offers choices from seven of the city's top chefs.

And in Nashville, TN (est. pop. 660,388), a 100,000-square-foot food hall is planned to open in 2020 as part of a downtown development project.

Such ambitious plans raise inevitable concerns about froth in the food hall market.

"Will we eventually overbuild?" Cushman & Wakefield asks. "Of course! There will be a tipping point eventually — but that point is far off."

Attracting restaurateurs

For now, food halls are attractive to restaurateurs in spite of their high rental rates. As one entrepreneur told Cushman & Wakefield, the rent at a San Francisco food hall is about \$120 per square foot, compared to \$60 a foot for typical restaurant space.

However, the food hall allows for the eatery to take a fraction of the space it would require for a full-sized eatery. So the business's overall occupancy cost falls, and the restaurateur can tap into the robust traffic generated by the food hall.

Birmingham's food hall was the brain-child of Bayer Properties, a developer that had struggled to find a tenant for the ground-floor space of the Pizitz store. The 275,000-square-foot space was built in 1925, but had sat empty since the 1980s.

Other space in the building is devoted to office tenants. The food hall is just one more sign of a rich dining scene in a city Fleming calls "a culinary hotbed."

Hoping to keep the momentum alive, RevBirmingham leases a small stall at the Pizitz food hall and makes the space available as an incubator for would-be restaurateurs. A Puerto Rican chef occupied the space for a time before graduating to a free-standing eatery, Fleming says.

He argues that a food hall can play an especially important role in validating an up-and-coming downtown.

For a downtown that's serious about recruiting employers in technology and other high-paying industries, a food hall serves as one more sign that Birmingham offers a competitive quality of life.

"What the food hall does for us is to help us attract and retain talent," Fleming says.

Contact: David Fleming, RevBirmingham, 205-623-0622. **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see Cushman & Wakefield's report on food halls, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."

ATTRACTION

To stand out from the competition, stress what makes your city unique

Downtown development expert Quint Studer says he could only scratch his head when he saw the billboard in Janesville, WI, (est. pop. 64,159) advertising development-ready land.

"Almost any town can say that nowadays," Studer says. "Meanwhile, Janesville was overlooking their school system's

astounding 93 percent high school graduation rate. I told them, 'If I were you guys, I'd change my billboards to say Janesville is a talent-ready community.'"

Studer is founder of the Studer Community Institute and author of the newly published book *Building a Vibrant Community: How Citizen-Powered Change Is Reshaping America*.

Small business lender sees mom-and-pop shops as key to local flavor

Mountain BizWorks is a nonprofit lender that supports restaurants, grocers, galleries, and other independent small businesses in western North Carolina.

Executive Director Patrick Fitzsimmons says small businesses form the backbone of what he hopes will be a resurgent economy for Appalachia. Big corporations are unlikely to move massive headquarters to North Carolina's mountain region.

"We're trying to build a new economy," Fitzsimmons says. "It is a very small-business driven economy."

And he says quaint, boutique-style retailers help downtowns create a unique flavor.

"If you have a Starbucks, you look like every other city," he says.

Contact: Patrick Fitzsimmons, Mountain BizWorks, 828-253-2834.

"Figuring out what you have to offer is both a science and an art," he says. "You need data and you need a compelling story built around the data. The key is to focus on what your community already has going for it. Build on those qualities and strengthen your culture and you'll find you're on the road to vibrancy. From there, you'll naturally attract the right investors. He offers 10 tips for positioning a commercial district to attract investment.

"Pay attention to the companies that are already doing well in the community and keep them there."

- **Figure out your unique selling point.** By stressing something that wasn't unique, Janesville made a common

mistake. "When trying to attract businesses to your community, make sure you're not focusing on the wrong selling point," Studer says.

- **Create a dashboard showing important metrics.** Update it regularly, and keep it in front of citizens, businesses, and investors. The goal of this scoreboard is to provide concise information about such factors as economic performance, well-being of the population, high school graduation rates, and status of local employers. These metrics will help attract investment. They'll also keep

citizens and decision makers mindful of where improvements are needed. Studer suggests paying close attention to the data you report and how you present it.

- **Use the data to create a compelling story.** Once your dashboard is in place, figure out what you can use to impress investors? Does your community boast a high graduation rate? Are there a lot of millennials? These are the kinds of data points that can be used to showcase a community's advantages. And don't forget about the other factors that don't show up on a dashboard. Is there a great university? Is the community known for its art and culture? Is the cost of living affordable?

- **Know your community's culture.** How is the city or community described by people on the outside looking in? How do residents feel about themselves? Figure out how to sum up this culture and create an "elevator speech" around it. Repeat this message again and again. Managing the messaging around culture is an important part of showcasing a community to investors.

- **Keep young talent from leaving.** Businesses want to invest in cities with a young workforce. Studer says this is why it's so crucial to create a vibrant downtown. Young people want to be able to work, live, and play in the same location. They like lots of great restaurants, a dynamic nightlife, and cool places to live.

- **Don't tolerate "shadow deals."** A shadow deal is a transaction that doesn't provide all players a fair chance to participate, or that is impelled by hidden motivations. Public officials should never push for deals in secret, Studer says.

- **Make workforce development a priority.** Do everything possible to offer training and support for the business community. When trying to attract new business to the city, be sure to provide resources for workforce development.

- **Encourage a university presence.** Universities are a major part of creating a skilled population, which tends to be important to investors. Even if there isn't currently a university in town, you can still partner

with colleges or universities to create a local branch, so students can seek higher education closer to home.

- **Help start-ups get access to capital.**

Studer points to Asheville, NC, (est. pop. 89,121) as a city that excels at investing in small businesses and startups. For example, the nonprofit Mountain BizWorks is a one-stop shop for small businesses. Its “lending and learning” model matches qualifying candidates with the resources they need to make their ventures successful. Mountain BizWorks also helps tenants negotiate with landlords

to structure lease payments that move up and down based on revenue.

- **Focus on local growth and reinvestment.**

It’s easier to keep the employers you’ve already got than to woo a new prize. “Pay attention to the companies that are already doing well in the community and keep them there,” Studer says. “Especially nurture those companies that get revenue from outside the community. Ask what their needs are and do everything possible to meet them.”

Contact: Quint Studer, Studer Group,
850-439-5839. **DIX**

PATHWAYS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Small city connects with regional trail to draw visitors downtown

With half its commercial space vacant, downtown Powder Springs, GA, (est. pop. 14,956) has fallen on hard times.

But the small city has an ambitious plan to revive its struggling historic district. Powder Springs plans to break ground in late 2018 on a \$5.75 million park that will serve as a trailhead to the Silver Comet Trail, a 62-mile paved path that stretches from Atlanta’s northwestern suburbs all the way to Alabama.

The Silver Comet Trail attracts more than a million visitors a year, but there’s little to entice them to stop in Powder Springs, a quaint town with buildings that date to the late 1800s.

“We’re creating a place where you can come on or off the Silver Comet Trail and visit our historic downtown,” says Stephanie Aylworth, the city’s economic development director.

The park is slated to include not just a trailhead but also a water park for families with children and a bandshell and lawn for live entertainment. The city already has issued a \$4.2 million bond to pay for the bulk of the development.

The park is just one of the city’s plans to breathe new life into downtown. Powder

Springs also has assembled five properties totaling about 10 acres. To increase density downtown, the city hopes to find a developer to build townhouses, Aylworth says.

Powder Springs also aims to recruit a restaurant and a microbrewery.

Aylworth says recalcitrant property owners pose one of the downtown’s biggest challenges.

“People sit on these properties, they think they’re worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, and they don’t do anything,” she says.

But she argues that investing in downtown is a worthy cause. Residents and visitors are fascinated by historic structures, and she says a successful redevelopment of downtown Powder Springs will allow the city to share its unique historic character with larger numbers of people.

“These buildings have been here for more than 100 years, and they’ll be here for 100 more years,” she says. “People want a connection to their town. You don’t get connection through a strip mall.”

Contact: Stephanie Aylworth, City of Powder Springs, 770-943-1666. **DIX**



DowntownDevelopment.com

For information on downtowns building trail connections in Carbondale, PA, and Akron, OH, visit our website and click on “Web Extras.”

To boost downtown occupancies, city spends more on planning

Talk about paradoxes. Santa Barbara, CA, (est. pop. 91,930) boasts stunning beauty, a University of California campus, and some of the priciest homes in the nation.

The 10-block State Street shopping district is home to such retail plums as an Apple store, REI sporting goods, and Marshalls — and yet, downtown Santa Barbara struggles with an abundance of empty commercial space. A mid-2017 survey by the city counted 33 empty storefronts and an 11 percent vacancy rate.

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

The city acknowledges one challenge is an overworked, understaffed city planning department. So in 2017, Santa Barbara approved a pilot program to make it faster and easier for merchants to occupy space on State Street.

The city's Accelerate Program includes:

- Dedicated staff and a separate phone line for State Street business. The city set up a phone line for queries about commercial space in the downtown shopping district. The city also named a staff member to track and monitor projects, complaints, and other issues.

- New "downtown liaisons." The city appointed two staff members to guide downtown merchants and commercial real estate brokers through the city's review processes. Santa Barbara's Building & Safety Division created a single point of contact for building permit processing. The city made these staffers available to talk to owners, tenants, prospective tenants, and design professionals over the phone, by email, and at the city's public counter. The city expected to spend \$52,000 to hire a part-time contract planner to cover other duties of the two staff members for six months.

- Priority on Design Review Board agendas. The city assigned top priority to applications from tenants seeking space on State Street.

- Pre-application review and expedited plan check. Navigating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) isn't easy. Neither is figuring out the thicket of state and city rules. So Santa Barbara offered — for a fee — staff review of issues such as ADA compliance and rules covering trash, maximum occupancy, and restroom fixture counts.

In the initiative's first six months, the city says, the Accelerate Program resulted in some notable improvements. The number of vacant storefronts fell from 33 to 27, and the vacancy rate dipped to 9.1 percent.

Turnaround times for design review and building permits improved, the city says. However, the city notes, the 9.1 percent vacancy rate remains above its target of 5 percent.

So Santa Barbara decided to continue the Accelerate Program. The city also expanded the program to another commercial strip struggling with vacancies.

Not everyone sees the program making progress, though. However well-intentioned the city proposal was, it has yielded no results so far, says Henry Dubroff, publisher of *Pacific Coast Business Times*, a publication headquartered in downtown Santa Barbara.

"Last year's pilot program had minimal effect, and the December-January fires and mudslides caused much more disruption on State Street," Dubroff says. "So the city has basically gone back to square one."

Downtown's foot traffic largely relies on tourists, Dubroff says, and when tourism falters, so does demand for the products being sold by downtown merchants.

"Unfortunately, Santa Barbara's inability to embrace a new economic development perspective for the downtown has left the city hostage to the ebbs and flows of the tourism industry," Dubroff says.

Contacts: George Buell, City of Santa Barbara, 805-564-5503; Henry Dubroff, Pacific Coast Business Times, (805) 560-6950. DIX

Idea Exchange

Open flags enhance streetscape

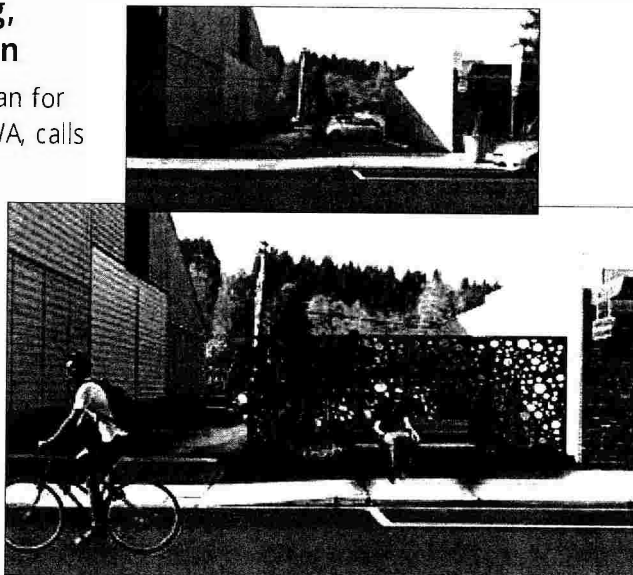
In an effort to remove sandwich board signs from sidewalks and to create a consistent look on the city's main street, Concord, NC, has adopted a new downtown flag ordinance.

The Concord Downtown Development Corporation will administer the ordinance, providing flags and monitoring their use. All businesses that encourage walk-in traffic are eligible to display the flags.

CDDC Executive Director Diane Young tells the *Independent Tribune* that she saw many benefits to a similar program in nearby Shelby, NC, "The consistent open flag put out by each of the retail and restaurant establishments provided a strong visual of a vibrant district with a large number of businesses as well as the practical benefit of looking down a street and seeing who is actually open."

Screening parking, an artistic solution

The streetscape plan for downtown Issaquah, WA, calls for wider sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, additional trees and landscaping, more outdoor seating, creation of a festival street, and more. Another important element of the plan is screening parking lots from view.



The Downtown Streetscape Concept Plan notes that parking lots detract from the overall streetscape, "Throughout downtown, most of the surface parking lots do not have any screening. This condition detracts from the pedestrian usability of Front Street and has a negative impact on the overall aesthetic quality of downtown."

The screening will be accomplished through plantings, fences, screens, or a combination of these such as in the example below which shows artwork laser cut into a "weathered" steel panel, along with low-profile plantings and a bench.

Walking tour highlights commercial properties

This spring the Main Street program in Palestine, TX, hosted its second annual Imagine the Possibilities Tour showcasing downtown properties and highlighting potential development opportunities.

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Idea Exchange

In addition to the tour, city staff and downtown stakeholders provide information on downtown development and city resources including grant funding for façade improvements and interior renovations.

The city notes that last year five of the downtown properties that were showcased were either leased or sold.

Imagine the Possibilities tours take place across Texas as part of National Historic Preservation Month.

Residential tour showcases living options

Since 2015 the annual Explore Downtown Living tour in Minneapolis, MN, has opened the doors of downtown properties to nearly 18,000 visitors. The tour, sponsored by the Minneapolis Downtown Council allows participants to visit approximately 20 properties in five downtown neighborhoods. While on the tour, guests may take advantage of deals and specials from local businesses and travel between properties via Metro Transit at no cost.

A property guide, partner offers guide, and free-ride pass are all available at the event website www.exploredtliving.com.

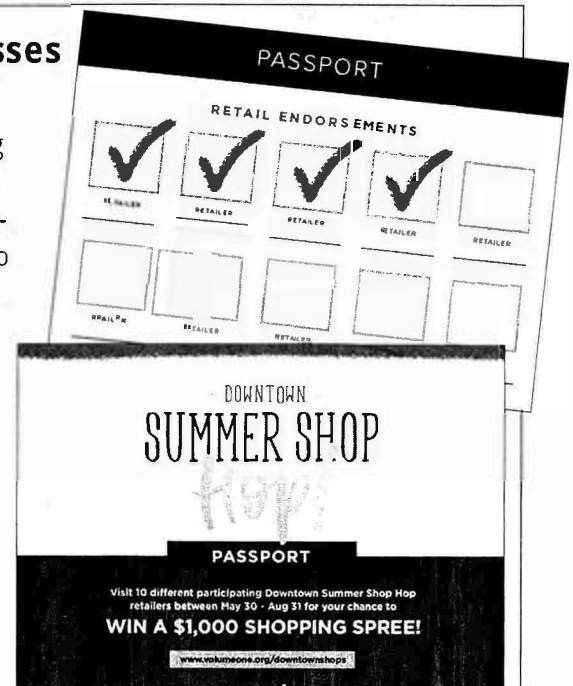
Easing transportation with golf cars

While some cities grapple with issues surrounding dockless bikes and electric scooters, the City of Augusta, GA, is looking

Welcome new businesses

Eau Claire, WI, was in the enviable position of welcoming 25 new businesses downtown last year. To celebrate that success and introduce shoppers to the new businesses, the local tourism agency and VolumeOne publications sponsored the Downtown Eau Claire Summer Shop Hop, a classic passport promotion. Anyone visiting 10 participating businesses was entered into a drawing to win \$700 in gift cards as well as \$300 in Buy Local Bucks from the chamber of commerce.

The promotion is supported by a dedicated web page at www.volumeone.org/downtownshops.



to allow golf cars on downtown streets.

The proposal grew out of the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau's long-range Destination Blueprint plan, which aims to make the city's long and narrow downtown more attractive to visitors and residents. The golf cars would be used for shuttling tourists and workers throughout the central business district.

In addition to providing a practical transportation option, the CVB notes that golf cars provide a signature form of transportation, which is especially appropriate. Eighty-five percent of the world's golf cars are manufactured in the city.

Multiple communication channels keep everyone informed

The Superior Street Reconstruction project will see this thoroughfare in downtown Duluth, MN, undergo major improvements in three- to four- block stretches over the course of three construction seasons.

To support a project of this scale, the city has created a dedicated website; eNewsletter; Facebook page; television, radio and print ads; as well as hosting weekly information sessions and providing pedestrian access route maps in kiosks near the work area. And just in case that's not enough information, there is a live feed of the construction site at www.superiorstreet.org/livefeed. **DIX**



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

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ATTRACTION

To woo brewpubs, downtowns offer incentives, change rules

After years of begging brewpubs to open in downtown Marlborough, MA (est. pop. 39,697), the city's marketing effort is showing results.

In Fresno, CA (est. pop. 522,053), brewpubs have brought much-needed life downtown after 5 p.m.

And in Asheville, NC (est. pop. 89,121), microbreweries have helped create a climate where entrepreneurs can thrive.

Microbreweries have become a must-have amenity for downtowns. Many a moribund entertainment

district has been resurrected by a brewpub or two — and amid the rising importance of micro-breweries, downtown leaders are taking pains to create more lenient zoning.

Marlborough, a central Massachusetts town hoping to emulate the success of other downtowns, is wooing microbreweries with financial incentives. As a result, two new brewpubs were scheduled to open downtown in 2018.

(Continued on page 2)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Zoning rules often block the housing market's "missing middle"

As a nationwide housing shortage intensifies, downtowns face a conundrum. Many millennials want to live in walkable urban areas, yet zoning rules often preclude the development of affordable housing on the fringes of downtowns.

For fans of the concept of "missing middle" housing, the answer is obvious: Change codes to welcome the duplexes, triplexes, and bungalows where millennials' great-grandparents raised families back in the 1940s.

"There's a tremendous gap between the demand for these types of housing and the supply," says Daniel Parolek, an urban designer in Berkeley, CA.

In most cities throughout the U.S., he says, zoning codes pose "tremendous barriers" to building affordable housing. This type of development demands higher densities and fewer parking spaces per unit, and Parolek is working

(Continued on page 9)

To woo brewpubs, downtowns offer incentives, change rules —Continued from page 1

The Marlborough Economic Development Corp. (MEDC) began targeting microbreweries in 2014, says executive director Meredith Harris.

It was only after the city began dangling incentives — and advertised them in *Beer Advocate* magazine — that brewers came calling.

Harris says her conversations with microbrewers convinced her that startup costs were a significant obstacle.

A federal permitting process requires brewpubs to sign a lease

before they can win permission to operate, she says, a regulatory obstacle that can create six months of rent expenses without revenue.

So the MEDC created a program that covers a year of rent for brewpub owners, up to \$15,000. The city also covers half of equipment expenses, up to \$10,000.

The first brewpub, Walden Woods, took a 2,000-square-foot space in downtown Marlborough and was slated to open this summer. A second brewpub, Lost Shoe, also planned to launch.

“Certainly, it’s going to bring more folks to downtown — and a different crowd,” Harris says. “Brewing and craft beer is becoming a bit of a phenomenon nationwide, and the brewpubs are going to bring more customers to the restaurants and shops downtown.”

City will own equipment

Marlborough’s incentives are beer money compared to those being offered by North Miami Beach, FL (est. pop. 44,124). The city’s Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is offering grants totaling up to \$500,000 to help brewpubs with startup costs.

That money is broken down into separate grants of \$200,000, \$200,000 and \$100,000 for distillers, refrigerators or boilers. The city will buy the equipment and lease it to microbrewery operators for just \$1 a year, the *South Florida SunSentinel* reports.

If the brewery fails within five years, the city keeps the equipment. But if the brewpub stays afloat for half a decade, it gets to keep the publicly provided asset. To manage the risk associated with giving six-figure sums to startup businesses, North Miami Beach will ask a committee of faculty at the Florida International University’s hospitality school to grade the applicants.

The generous grants follow an earlier move by the CRA, which changed zoning in North Miami Beach’s downtown. Instead of pushing brewpubs into areas zoned for industrial, the city now views them as mainstream retailers.

“Microbreweries are the new cafés,” Patrick Brett, administrator of the North Miami Beach CRA, tells the *SunSentinel*.

“If you get a coffee shop and a microbrewery, millennials will bring their laptops, and pretty soon they’ll start businesses.”

LET'S GET BREWING... TOGETHER

- ✔ Liquor licenses available
- ✔ Downtown possibilities
- ✔ Financial incentives
- ✔ Space available

The City of Marlborough, MA is a former industrial town experiencing an economic rebirth with an influx of new businesses, real estate, and retail. Located just 35 minutes from Boston, Marlborough is quickly becoming a hot spot for the young and trendy, who are living, working and looking for entertainment in the city. With the downtown recently being re-zoned to include brewpubs by right, we are looking for a serious brewer who is ready to move in. We can assist with everything from financial incentives to permitting and more. All you have to do is get in touch!

WANTED:
A motivated brewer who is ready to serve the thirsty patrons of Marlborough, Massachusetts.

INTERESTED?
Visit marlboroughedc.com/brewpub or call us at 508-229-2010 for more info.

Marlborough
Economic Development Corp.

Marlborough, MA, advertised for brewers in *Beer Advocate* magazine.

"These are incredible attractors. It's a great experience."

Brewery bubble?

A wave of excitement, hefty public subsidies, sudden agreement that brewpubs are the key to downtown development — what could go wrong? One knotty question looms over the brewery boom: How many brewpubs are too many, and how many can be built before a hangover sets in?

For now, many downtowns tout success with brewpubs. In Fresno, where streets often were empty after 5 p.m., popular brewery Tioga Sequoia has brought new life.

Jimmy Cerracchio, president and chief executive officer of Downtown Fresno Partnership, says he often sees beer lovers with neon-lit bikes cruising downtown after dark.

"When you see groups of millennials on their bikes going from brewery to brewery,

As brewpubs proliferate, one downtown loosens public-drinking rule

Microbreweries increasingly are becoming synonymous with downtowns. But most cities frown upon public consumption of alcohol.

Some cities, including Hamilton, OH (est. pop. 62,092), are now easing their rules on public drinking. Hamilton officials say they began to explore a new ordinance after potential tenants started asking about public imbibing.

In May, Hamilton established new rules that allow visitors to walk the streets with their drinks between noon and midnight in certain areas.

Among the guidelines for Hamilton's Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA):

- Your to-go alcoholic beverage must be in the Official DORA Cup that specifies the name of the business before you leave the participating establishment.
- You cannot take an alcoholic beverage purchased at one liquor-serving establishment into another liquor establishment.
- You cannot take an alcoholic beverage purchased at a liquor-serving establishment into any special event area where alcohol is also sold.
- You can take a purchased alcoholic drink into a non-liquor serving establishment if the owner allows. Every business that does not sell alcohol has the right to decide if they will allow patrons to bring in DORA beverages.
- You cannot bring your own alcoholic beverage into the district.

The city says nine establishments — including brewpubs Municipal Brew Works and Quarter Barrel Brewery & Pub — are participating in the program.

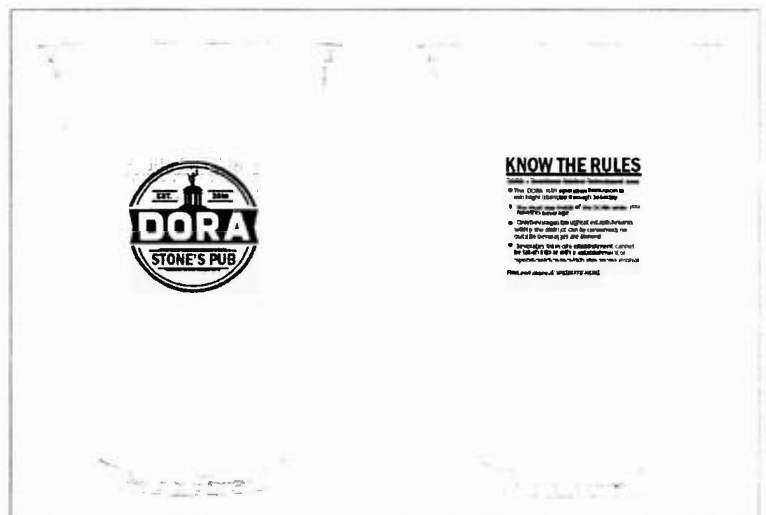
Downtown merchants report additional foot traffic since the DORA rules took place, says Jacob Stone, administrative specialist at the city.

"It's been an overall win," Stone says.

Downtown establishments are selling an average of 600 cups a weekend, he says. The city sells the cups to bars and restaurants for 90 cents apiece, and bars sell them to customers for \$1. The 10-cent markup covers sales tax and credit card interchange fees, Stone says.

The only cost to the city, Stone says, was the tab for installing eight new trash cans to collect the cups.

Contact: Jacob Stone, City of Hamilton, 513-785-7072.



The DORA logo and rules for the refreshment area are on every cup.

that really tells you a lot about the importance of craft brewers,” Cerracchio says. “They definitely bring activity and nightlife.”

Cerracchio calls microbreweries a “third place” where entrepreneurs and creative types can congregate and cooperate. Patrick Fitzsimmons, executive director of nonprofit lender Mountain BizWorks in Asheville, NC, agrees.

Microbreweries are about more than just porters and pale ales. They can drive business development and act as informal business incubators, he says.

“If you get a coffee shop and a micro-brewery, millennials will bring their laptops, and pretty soon they’ll start businesses,” he says.

Enhancing local trade

If brewpubs are a hub of startup culture, they also create their own ecosystems. Entrepreneurs operate brewery tours or supply yeast and other ingredients.

What’s more, thriving brewpubs can support impressive payrolls. Fitzsimmons says one of his clients, Hi-Wire Brewery in Asheville, has 50 employees.

Meanwhile, Asheville has turned microbreweries into a new tourist attraction. While out-of-town visitors are so much a part of the local economy that the minor league baseball team is nicknamed the Asheville Tourists, microbreweries have turned into an attraction of their own.

“People used to come to Asheville for mountains and the Biltmore Resort,” Fitzsimmons says. “Now, they come to go to breweries.”

As a result, Asheville has experienced an explosion of microbreweries, a boom that outpaces the growth of the local population.

“It’s not Ashevilleans who are drinking all that beer,” Fitzsimmons says.

In Fresno, Tioga Sequoia helps build community spirit by naming its brews after local landmarks, says Jenna Chilingierian, program manager at the Downtown Fresno Partnership.

The pioneering brewery’s success sparked another brewpub to open downtown, and

Chilingierian says the businesses are so crucial to downtown’s success that she makes the brewpubs’ needs a priority.

“We’re constantly checking in on the two breweries and trying to keep the process going,” Chilingierian says.

Breweries as business incubators

Like Fitzsimmons in Asheville, Chilingierian notes the symbiotic relationship microbreweries create with other local entrepreneurs.

“A lot of the breweries don’t necessarily have kitchens, so food trucks and our breweries really go hand in hand,” Chilingierian says.

Just south of Fresno, Visalia (est. pop. 131,074) is pursuing brewpubs, too. The city has seen an explosion of microbreweries after the city council unanimously approved a district for microbreweries and microwineries in Visalia’s eastern downtown.

New rules mean that brewpubs no longer need special permits. The district was born of gripes that opening a microbrewery in Visalia was simply too cumbersome.

Visalia’s previous zoning rules required brewpubs to be attached to eateries, or to locate in industrial districts far from downtown.

Visalia Councilman Bob Link told the *Fresno Bee* that, without looser rules for microbreweries, he feared losing entrepreneurs and diners to nearby towns.

Visalia’s experience underscores the new conventional wisdom in downtown development: The very existence of brewpubs is a proxy for a thriving urban experience. *The Atlantic*’s James Fallows wrote that craft breweries are “perhaps the most reliable” indicator that a city is on the upswing.

“You may think I’m joking,” Fallows wrote, “but just try to find an exception.”

Contacts: Jimmy Cerracchio, Downtown Fresno Partnership, 559-490-9966; Meredith Harris, Marlborough Economic Development Corp., 508-229-2010; Patrick Fitzsimmons, Mountain BizWorks, 828-253-2834; Patrick Brett, North Miami Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, 305-787-6053. DIX

Let there be light: Cities turn to lighting to draw visitors

Cities large and small are using public light displays to spark interest in downtowns.

In one of the splashiest and most expensive new displays, Memphis, TN (est. pop. 652,236), is in the midst of a \$14 million project to re-light the Hernando DeSoto Bridge across the Mississippi River.

At the more affordable end of the spectrum, Melbourne, FL (est. pop. 82,011), spent \$9,000 to illuminate the large oak tree near the Historic Downtown Melbourne arch, the landmark that serves as the entry to the city's New Haven Avenue commercial corridor.

Other downtowns throughout the U.S. are experimenting with similar projects.

In Memphis, installation of the privately funded project began in June and was scheduled for completion in late August, according to Memphis Bridge Lighting Inc., the nonprofit organizing Memphis' Mighty Lights project.

Memphis already projects a light show on the Harahan Bridge and Big River Crossing, a span south of the Hernando DeSoto Bridge. Nightly light shows take place every hour from dark until 11 p.m., and the color schemes can change with the seasons or coordinate with Fourth of July fireworks shows.

The new project means visitors will see light shows on two bridges leading into downtown Memphis.

The light shows are about more than just pretty colors. They also aim to give people another reason to come downtown. Memphis officials say some 300,000 visitors a year watch the light shows.

"The bridge lighting has given people a new reason to get down to the waterfront and enjoy the animation from the lights and the colors," says Kevin Kane, president of the Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Indeed, proponents of public lighting installations say the projects are significant economic drivers. According to an economic impact study commissioned by Phillips Lighting (with the obvious caveat that the company selling lights is touting their hard-to-measure economic benefits), four projects around the country cost a combined \$15 million to install and yielded economic activity of \$22 million.

The four projects in the study are:

- **The River Lights Project in Little Rock, AR.** The \$2.4 million installation illuminates three bridges across the Arkansas River. Installed in 2013, the lights are visible from various locations in downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock (est. pop. 65,911).

- **The Bay Lights in San Francisco.** This \$12 million installation decorates the bridge connecting San Francisco and Oakland.

- **Gateway Community College Faces.** The \$734,000 display in New Haven, CT, shows photos of 350 students, faculty, and staff.

- **District Hall in Boston.** This project cost just \$25,000, but it helps draw attention to the city's public innovation center.

The economic impact study, conducted by Boyette Strategic Advisors, acknowledges that measuring the economic impact of public art is an inexact science. After all, unlike at a museum or sports stadium, there's no turnstile counting the number of visitors.

Even so, downtown boosters see lights as a way to project confidence and attract interest. Melbourne Main Street Executive Director Jarin Eisenberg calls that city's lighting project a way to bolster downtown.

"The bridge lighting has given people a new reason to get down to the waterfront and enjoy the animation from the lights and the colors."



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see Phillips Lighting's study of the economic impact of public light installations, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."

The city paid for the project with proceeds from the inaugural 2016 Downtown Melbourne Food & Wine Festival. One expense: Crews had to install underground electrical lines to reach the tree.

In one bit of good news for downtown

leaders, the high-tech fixtures tend to be energy-efficient. Little Rock's annual bill to light three bridges is just \$7,200.

Contacts: Kevin Kane, Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau, 901-543-5300; Jarin Eisenberg, Melbourne Main Street, 321-724-1741. **DIX**

PATHWAYS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Downtown under construction? Use this checklist to ease the pain

When Waverly, IA (est. pop. 10,126), embarked on an infrastructure project, the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Iowa, and Downtown Professionals Network issued an extensive guide to help downtown businesses cope with the disruptions.

As the city enters the final stages of the project this summer, much of that advice has been put to use educating the public and business owners about schedules, access, and disruptions, as well as celebrating local businesses and construction milestones.

The project, branded the Bremer Avenue Redo, boasts a website, Facebook page, multiple levels of communication, and a mascot named Denny the Detour Dog. Denny makes appearances downtown and hosted a block party to celebrate the completion of phases 1 and 2.

The guide's authors note that, "While there is probably no realistic means of completely avoiding disruptions and inconveniences caused by a major reconstruction and enhancement project, there are ways to mitigate a project's adverse impacts." Recommendations from the guide fall into four broad categories:

Logistics and awareness

- Stay abreast of decision-making processes and progress meetings. Share information with the business community.
- Learn about the contract for the project. Work with the project engineer to provide input

about work methods, scheduling, staging, and special provisions. For example, to minimize down time for businesses, suggest evening or weekend work for sidewalk construction or water line installations. To maintain access for cars and pedestrians, explore adjustments to the traffic management plan.

- When schedules and staging plans are final, create a poster for display at high-traffic locations to publicize plans and show available access routes and parking areas. Remind everyone that downtown remains open for business.

- Communicate information to property owners and business operators as plans and schedules are considered and finalized.

- Work with schools, police, and other organizations to monitor safety, security, traffic patterns, and pedestrian routes.

Parking and access

- Promote "Good Neighbor, Good Business" practices. Promote "Customer First" parking policies and provisions.

- Identify parking areas and spaces to be reserved for customer parking, with special consideration for additional handicap accessible spaces that may be needed.

- Find parking spaces for employees. Make sure they're well-lit and in a reasonable walking distance.

- Don't forget parking for construction workers — and remember that, as different trades come on and off the site, you'll need to

continue to communicate about parking for workers.

- Create a map clearly identifying parking lots and spaces designated for customers, employees, and downtown residents. Visit each and every downtown business to distribute the map and encourage business owners and managers to follow the “Customer First” policy.

- To replace streetlights removed during the construction, encourage building owners and business owners to keep storefront display windows and exterior lighting on at night.

Communications

- Appoint a Project Ombudsman who is the go-to person for all communications.

- Issue news releases that relate technical details and also include information about improvements and progress being made. Stress that businesses will remain open during the project.

- Schedule a regular, periodic “Construction Coffee.” During these weekly or biweekly gatherings, project officials provide updates to downtown businesses as the project progresses.

- Organize a “Block Captains” network. These community leaders can check in with their neighbors to communicate progress and to report any problems.

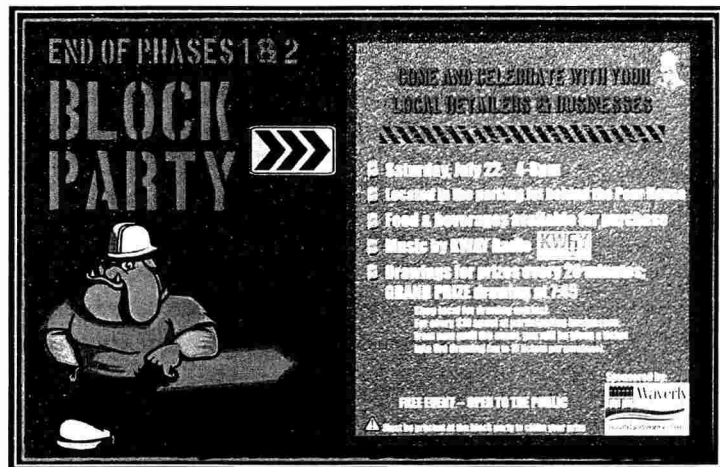
- Distribute a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) flyer or brochure that includes a map of the project area and responses to questions that businesses and residents are most likely to ask. Consider creating two versions — one for businesses and one for residents and visitors.

Marketing and promotion

- Strive to keep annual events at their traditional locations, or as close to those traditional locations as possible. This helps create a sense of normalcy in the midst of construction.

- Develop an identity, brand, or theme for all project-related marketing and promotional materials, activities, and events. Reinforce a positive message and attitude.

- Incorporate the campaign theme in marketing materials, advertising, special



Denny the Detour Dog celebrates construction milestones with food and drink, music, and prizes.

promotional products, and novelty giveaway items. Encourage businesses and other project partners to use the theme and messaging in their own communications, advertising, and marketing.

- Make it fun. Work with restaurants and bars to create construction-themed drinks or entrees.

- Involve families. Host a “Touch-A-Truck” event that lets kids get up close to construction equipment and emergency vehicles. Create kids’ viewing and interactive areas, which could include a giant sandbox. Publish a construction-themed coloring book and make novelty hard hats for kids as promotional giveaway items.

Buildings and business owners

- Before shovels hit dirt, work with building owners, the project engineer, and the contractor to identify unique building elements that may require special protection.

- Help property owners and merchants cover, remove, or otherwise protect unique building elements and features that could be damaged during construction.

- Talk to building owners about upgrade options, such as water service. Encourage upgrades to enhance the potential for the future adaptive reuse of structures in the downtown area.

- Before construction, urge building owners to review property insurance policies and inspect their basements and sublevels.



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see Waverly's pre-construction technical assistance guide, go to our website and click on “Web Extras.”

- Make a list of small business technical assistance and business counseling resources available through area university extension offices, small business development centers, and others.

- Encourage businesses to create and promote cross-marketing opportunities

that leverage traffic generated by key businesses that will continue to draw patrons during construction. Destination retailers, financial institutions, and personal services providers tend to have a loyal clientele that will largely be unaffected by construction. **DIX**

CLEAN AND SAFE

Two downtowns take different paths to increase police presence

Seeking to combat crime in long-troubled parts of their cities, city officials in Pittsburgh, PA (est. pop. 302,407), and Atlanta, GA (est. pop. 486,290), have partnered with philanthropists to boost police presence.

The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership gave \$20,000 to help fund a Pittsburgh police mounted patrol unit and a new police substation downtown, the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* reports.

The city created the substation and mounted patrol after violence and crime increased downtown.

"The police substation provides a highly visible police presence in the central business district and provides downtown stakeholders with easy access to the police and has already proven to be a valuable asset to the downtown environment," said Jeremy Waldrup, the partnership's president and CEO.

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust provided a downtown building for the police substation, and PNC Bank donated office furniture. The city is renting the space for just \$1 a year.

In Atlanta, meanwhile, the Atlanta Police Foundation and a group of charities have been moving police officers into the city's Westside neighborhoods.

The Atlanta Police Foundation partnered with Pulte Homes, one of the nation's largest homebuilders, to build up to 25 homes that will be sold at cost to police officers.

"Through this Secure Neighborhood Initiative, we are building homes that get officers living there 24/7 as homeowners and engaged residents," Atlanta Police Foundation President Dave Wilkinson told the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*.

In addition to low-cost housing, the officers get patrol cars to drive home, plus monthly stipends. In return, police must patrol the neighborhood, participate in activities such as youth mentoring, and promise to live in the home for at least five years.

The results, organizers say, are striking: In just the first year, crime fell 38.6 percent.

Housing for officers is just part of the project. The plan's first phase, Operation Shield, installed more than 100 surveillance cameras at a cost of \$1.8 million throughout the Westside's Vine City and English Avenue communities.

The next step, Westside Blue, paid off-duty Atlanta police officers to patrol dangerous areas in marked patrol cars. Wages are paid by the Atlanta Police Foundation with help from the Arthur M. Blank Foundation.

"We have a shortage of police officers in the city and too often our officers spend their time on duty responding to 911 calls and that means there are no officers actively patrolling the neighborhoods, deterring crime," Wilkinson said. **DIX**

Zoning rules often block the housing market's "missing middle" — Continued from page 1

with cities such as Flagstaff, AZ (est. pop. 71,975), Iowa City, IA (est. pop. 75,798), and Livermore, CA (est. pop. 90,295), to adapt their codes to meet these new needs.

"Our zoning and planning systems are now what I call out-of-date operating systems," Parolek says.

For cities looking to embrace the missing middle, the process starts with adopting a form-based code, an urban-friendly approach that stresses walking over driving. Parolek helped Mesa, AZ (est. pop. 496,401) through the process, and he says it's already paying dividends.

"In Mesa, it's been tremendously successful," Parolek says. "There's been hundreds of thousands of dollars of private-sector investment."

Jeff McVay, Mesa's manager of downtown transformation, isn't quite as bullish — but he's hopeful.

"It has not really accomplished a whole lot," McVay says. "We are on the precipice of things happening."

Mesa started its process of welcoming missing-middle housing in 2010, when Valley Metro Rail said it would extend light-rail service to Mesa's downtown. That service launched in 2015, and it raised hopes in Mesa that the city's core might once again become a commercial hub.

"A long time ago, we were the downtown for everything east of Phoenix," McVay says. "Trying to regain our prominence is important to us."

At the center of Mesa's missing middle housing hopes is a 27-acre tract of city-owned land. It's less than a mile from the train station, and Mesa wants the site to draw developers and, ultimately, residents who add to downtown's population of just 3,600.

"We do a lot of importing of activity to our downtown right now," McVay says. "We have an amazing downtown — wide side-

walks with a lot of shade, historic buildings with a lot of character. But we just don't have the people living here to keep the streets alive 18 hours a day."

He hopes the public approval process for the city-owned site changes that reality.

Parking is an issue

In Mesa and elsewhere, one challenge is to persuade cities to reduce parking requirements. Missing middle housing works best with parking ratios of just one spot per unit, which is well below the typical requirement.

"That's never an easy conversation," Parolek says. "We've done a better job of providing spaces for cars than we've done providing spaces for people."

As part of its form-based code, Mesa reduced its parking requirements and allowed existing spots to count towards development requirements,

McVay says. However, long-time business owners aren't keen on the notion that their customers might have to park farther away once the neighborhood fills in with new residential units.

"Parking is a challenge, but it is because we have way too much public parking and businesses and property owners have a sense of entitlement to abundant and convenient parking," McVay says.

Parolek acknowledges that parking is just one of many issues likely to rile residents.

"How many neighborhoods are going to say, 'Yes, we want higher density?'" he asks.

To be clear, the missing-middle concept doesn't focus on high-rise condos or institutional-style apartment complexes. Instead, Parolek and others focus on townhouses, live-work housing, and other types of residences in between a tower and a suburban home on a quarter-acre lot.

"We've done a better job of providing spaces for cars than we've done providing spaces for people."



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see Daniel Parolek's illustrated explanation of missing middle housing, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."

Even so, debates about density loom for any downtown that hopes to add missing-middle housing, says Yolanda Cole, senior principal at Hickok Cole in Washington, DC.

"It sounds easy — we just change the zoning," Cole says. "The process of changing the zoning, however, is very wrought. A whole public process is involved, and as soon as there's talk about squeezing in more housing and increasing density, the neighbors start to come out of the woodwork and try to oppose it."

However, Cole says downtown leaders would be wise to pursue the concept, perhaps by stressing missing-middle housing in lower-rise construction.

"The missing middle is a great way to solve our housing problems, and also to house young families and seniors," she says. "We've got the millennials, and beyond the millennials we have Gen Z, which is even a bigger generation. These people are going to grow up, and they're going to need to live somewhere."

Missing middle homes are designed both for rent and for sale. Aside from zoning challenges, another huge question looms: Will buyers really be willing to trade hefty homes for smaller units in duplexes or row houses?

Parolek sees 1,100 square feet as the sweet spot, but units can be as small as 550 square

feet and as large as 1,800 square feet. That's a home size that's far below the typical footprint of today's new homes. The median size of a single-family home completed in 2017 was 2,426 square feet, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"People will make a choice to live smaller based on affordability and where they want to live," Parolek says.

Builders say smaller homes aren't out of the question.

"Millennials want more walkability than previous generations," says Rob Dietz, chief economist at the National Association of Home Builders.

Meanwhile, economic reality means millennials are compelled to accept the smaller homes created by Missing Middle housing. Revathi Greenwood, head of Americas research at commercial real estate brokerage Cushman & Wakefield notes that millennials' incomes remain constrained, even as their student debt has exploded.

"Millennials are cash-strapped," Greenwood says. "They don't earn as much, and they have a lot of debt."

Contacts: Dan Parolek, Opticos Design, 510-558-6957; Jeff McVay, Mesa, AZ, 480-644-5379; Yolanda Cole, Hickok Cole, 202-667-9776. **DIX**

ATTRACTION

Urban population growth closes gap with suburbs

The population of urban neighborhoods in many metropolitan areas is growing as quickly as that of suburban neighborhoods, the Urban Land Institute says.

The trend reflects consumer demand — particularly among younger households — for walkable neighborhoods that are convenient to jobs, transit, and urban amenities.

The *New Geography of Urban Neighborhoods* finds that — for the first time in decades — population growth rates in urban neighbor-

hoods of the nation's 50 largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are approaching suburban growth rates. Between 2010 and 2015, the growth rate of urban neighborhoods was 3.4 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for suburban neighborhoods. This is in sharp contrast to 2000 to 2015, when the growth rate for urban neighborhoods was one percent, compared to 13 percent for the suburbs.

Contact: Trisha Riggs, Urban Land Institute, 202-679-4557. **DIX**

Idea Exchange

Pedestrian counts reveal opportunities

In an effort to better understand pedestrian activity, the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District has embarked on a sophisticated program of pedestrian counts.

The program uses a series of video cameras and related technology to track pedestrian numbers, habits, and behavior. The goal is to develop the data needed to attract new businesses and expand opportunities for existing ones.

One surprise for BID President Rosemarie Sansone was the amount of nighttime foot traffic. Higher traffic than expected, suggests opportunities for businesses to remain open late and for lunch-only restaurants to expand their hours.

"They've thought about staying open for dinner ... but they really don't know what the foot traffic is like," Sansone tells the *Boston Globe*. "Now we can show them."

City tackles retail vacancies

The lively city of San Francisco has not been immune to a decline in retail sales. A recent report for the city's Office of Economic and Workforce Development notes that many commercial corridors in the city reported flattening sales, and a third of the city's Neighborhood Commercial Districts reported an increase in vacancies.

The report recommends a number of strategies to tackle vacancy. These include: reducing the lengthy and often costly permitting process; creating concentrated

nodes of retail activity and reducing retail requirements in other areas; and allowing for combined uses, such as serving food or alcohol at stores and galleries.



To read the executive summary of the *State of the Retail Sector* report, visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

Stamping out cigarette litter

Cigarette butts are the most frequently littered item in the U.S. according to Keep America Beautiful. To address that litter, the Downtown Fredrick Partnership has installed 30 cigarette butt receptacles on trash cans and sign poles along two major streets in the Maryland city.

The Partnership introduced the receptacles at an awareness event during the city's First Saturday celebration in August.

Twenty-eight thousand cigarette butts that were picked up by volunteers were on display along with informational signage about the problems cigarette litter creates for downtown Frederick.



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Idea Exchange

The receptacles are supplied by TerraCycle of Trenton, NJ, which also recycles the cigarette butts.

Plaza emerges from parking lot

This spring, the Downtown Akron Partnership, carved out a pedestrian plaza from an off-street parking area. By reconfiguring the parking, the Partnership was able to add the plaza without reducing the number of parking spots.

The new Northside Green, is located in the emerging Northside District a mixed-use neighborhood on the northern edge of downtown.

The Green features a street mural along with benches and planters. The work of painting the mural was accomplished by a team of 80 volunteers over a two day period says the *Akron Beacon Journal*.

New downtown connector seeks active tenants

Redevelopment of the vacant Woolworth Building in downtown Middletown, NY, will include a covered corridor that will connect the downtown to the city's transportation center and the Heritage Trail Downtown spur. To capitalize on the site's unique position as a gateway to the downtown, the city is prioritizing the spaces for active, pedestrian-oriented uses, including new business start ups.

The city has launched Race 4 Space, a Shark Tank style business competition. The city will award a maximum matching grant of up to \$20,000 to each of four winning pro-

Public art captures the imagination

Big, bold and fun, public art in Yaletown, a Vancouver improvement district, is attracting visitors, delighting locals, and proving a hit on social media.

The piece consists of a grid made from aircraft cable which is suspended from trees 15 feet above Bill Curtis Square. Brightly colored umbrellas hang from the grid filtering sunlight into the space below.

The Business Improvement Association is hoping to keep interest high by creating a series of rotating exhibits featuring different items suspended from the grid. To do that, the BIA has called on the public for suggestions. Items must be lightweight, weatherproof, vandal proof, and affordable. Complete guidelines are available at yaletowninfo.com/suspend-at-bill-curtis-square.



posals. The grant must be matched dollar-for-dollar by the business and funds must be used to fit-out/build-out the interior space to accommodate the needs of the new tenant.



To see the Race 4 Space program guidelines visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."

Kiosks guide visitors, monitor streets

Just prior to the Kentucky Derby, new digital kiosks began popping up across downtown Louisville, KY. The kiosks helped guide visitors during derby celebrations and will inform locals throughout the year.

The kiosks have been described as "giant iPads" which provide a downtown business directory, res-

taurant and hotel information, visitor attraction and museum listings, as well as contact information for Louisville Metro Government services.

The Louisville Downtown Partnership is working with the city and Smart City Media, which manages the kiosks.

Users can view the information in multiple languages including Spanish, Hindi, and Swahili, as well as email or text information provided by the kiosk to themselves or others. A representative with Smart City Media told *Insider Louisville* that the contact information will not be retained but that Smart City will collect analytical data on what users are viewing most and when.

The kiosks are also equipped with video cameras which will feed into the city's Real Time Crime Center. **DIX**



Downtown Idea Exchange

Improving physical, social, and economic conditions downtown

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ACCESS & MOBILITY

Kissing contests and ambassadors make parking "forgettable"

Chapel Hill, NC (est. pop. 59,862), deals with the usual parking hassles that plague a bustling downtown. But the college town has taken an unusual approach to addressing parking.

With a \$400,000 investment in new parking meters, a slick new website, and a social media campaign that includes people posting photos of themselves kissing, Chapel Hill aims to "change the narrative" about parking downtown, says Meg McGurk, the town's community safety planner.

"We had the realization that we needed to do a better job of educating the community about parking," McGurk says. "We know that parking is an economic development tool, and it should be treated as such."

If visitors begin to associate a downtown with parking hassles and hefty tickets, they might decide to go somewhere else, so managing perceptions can be an important task.

Even so, McGurk likes to say that Chapel Hill — with its downtown

(Continued on page 2)

ATTRACTION

Food truck festival draws crowds, supports local restaurants

The first time Little Rock, AR (est. pop. 198,606), hosted a downtown food truck festival, the U.S. economy was in the tank, Main Street was bereft of restaurants, and downtown leaders were willing to try an offbeat event to lure visitors.

"There was not a single restaurant along this stretch of Main Street in Little Rock," says Gabe Holmstrom, executive director of Downtown Little Rock Partnership. "There were a lot of vacant build-

ings. We said, 'What's something we can do to get people to show up here on weekends?'"

The first Main Street Food Truck Festival, hosted on a Saturday in 2011, started off modestly. About 2,500 people came out to sample fare from 15 food trucks. Despite the small numbers for the inaugural event, organizers knew they had a winner.

"By mid-afternoon, all the trucks had sold out of food," Holmstrom says.

(Continued on page 7)

Kissing contests and parking ambassadors make parking “forgettable” —Continued from page 1

bars and restaurants that attract a steady stream of evening customers — doesn’t have a parking problem. A problem would be a sea of empty spots.

Instead, McGurk says, the city has challenges in figuring out how to fit all the cars coming into a downtown that’s near the University of North Carolina campus.

“We know that parking is an economic development tool, and it should be treated as such.”

“The campus and the downtown business district are right next to each other, so that is certainly a challenge,” McGurk says. “We have a campus of 25,000 students-plus, and there’s always pressure on college campuses for parking.”

Parking by app only: Efficient, or discriminatory?

The city of Miami (est. pop. 463,347) has wholeheartedly embraced app-only parking. The city recorded more than 5 million parking transactions on PayByPhone in 2017, which parking officials say reflects the convenience of using an app rather than cash or credit cards to pay the meters.

“Customers who patronize the Wynwood businesses like the convenience and ease of use of PayByPhone because they can relax while they shop knowing that they will be notified via text message when the meter time is about to expire and will be able to extend the parking session remotely without having to walk back to their vehicles to feed the meter,” says Manny Gonzalez, executive director of the Wynwood Business Improvement District.

Alas, the lack of payment options in certain areas has led to drivers being ticketed when they could not access the app. Eric Gonzalez, a student at Florida International University, told WLRN that he received two tickets after he was kicked off of the app because his phone software became outdated.

“Parking traditionally with cash, it would be \$1.50 an hour. But with the PayByPhone app it basically makes parking \$1.50 an hour, plus a \$350 phone,” says Gonzalez. “It really ties the hands of a lot of people, including people like myself. I’m young, I don’t have too much money to spend on things like phones, but I essentially had to.”

Chapel Hill’s other issues include the linear layout of its downtown, and the mostly private ownership of its downtown parking spaces. The town controls just a third of the downtown spots, about half the normal amount, McGurk says.

The town’s new approach is different from the punitive, bureaucratic approach employed by many municipalities. Convenience and customer service are McGurk’s watchwords.

“You want parking to be completely forgettable,” McGurk says. “You want people to remember the great meal they had, the great show they saw at a concert venue or an art gallery.”

A centerpiece of the program is the town’s parkonthehill.com website, which maps the 1,000 or so spots available downtown. The site recently was redesigned so that it looks like something from a high-end marketing firm rather than a mid-sized city.

“Folks just did not know where the available parking was, so the map was really the key piece,” says Sarah Owens, creative director at the Rivers Agency, a Chapel Hill firm the town hired to market its parking program.

The Rivers Agency also launched a kissing contest that ties into Chapel Hill’s campaign known as “Lots to Love” — as in parking lots. Visitors post Instagram photos of themselves kissing their dates, their kids, or their dogs. Once a month, the subject of a winning photo gets a \$50 gift card for downtown businesses.

“We just thought it would be a fun way for people to document their time downtown,” Owens says.

Gentler enforcement

The light-hearted approach also aims to put a new face on Chapel Hill’s parking division.

“The agency had a bit of a reputational problem,” Owens says. “People think their whole goal is to give tickets.”

While ignoring enforcement isn't an option, McGurk says, Chapel Hill's parking enforcement officers now try to make compromises.

"We have changed the culture of enforcement," McGurk says. "If somebody is walking up while you're writing a ticket, don't write the ticket — it's OK. Just tell them not to let the meter expire next time."

Meters and permits play a role

Chapel Hill spent \$400,000 to install 50 new meters downtown. The meters accept cash, credit cards, and the ParkMobile app. Chapel Hill chose the ParkMobile app in large part because the nearby cities of Raleigh and Durham were already using it.

Chapel Hill paid for the meters in part by selling a parcel of land to a private investor.

The new meters mean the city no longer needs attendants at parking booths. So those part-time workers transitioned to new jobs as downtown ambassadors. In their new roles, these workers explain how to use the meters, how to download the ParkMobile app, and where to park.

Chapel Hill faces another familiar issue: Downtown employees compete with patrons for parking. So Chapel Hill issues parking permits for bartenders, cooks, servers, and others who work at bars and restaurants. The workers can park in garages a short walk from their jobs.



Participating businesses feature Lots of Love window clings.

Businesses were willing to pay \$30 for annual permits for their workers, but when the town raised that cost, businesses stopped buying them. In January, McGurk says, the town offered free parking permits to downtown businesses. Those free permits proved popular, if not financially sustainable for the town.

So the town surveyed businesses about how much they'd be willing to pay, and the current price is \$30. Downtown businesses have bought 125 of the permits, clearing out prime spots for customers.

Meanwhile, the town's Parking Working Group, formed in January, brings together town officials and business owners for biweekly discussions about parking issues.

Contacts: Meg McGurk, Town of Chapel Hill, 919-968-2835; Sarah Owens, Rivers Agency, 919-932-9985.

DIX

ATTRACTION

Murals brighten Ottawa's electrical boxes

Downtown leaders have turned an eyesore into an eye-catching feature in Ottawa, Ont. (est. pop. 938,523), Canada.

The city has covered 25 electrical boxes with murals created by a local artist. While many communities have developed public-art programs that decorate fire hydrants, utility boxes, or dumpsters, the initiative by Ottawa's Downtown Rideau Business Improvement

Area makes the most of the project both as a low-cost beautification effort and as a marketing tool.

The murals are included in downtown's walking tour. Pedestrians can scan QR codes for more information about the public art and to see site-specific historic facts.

The project's initial 17 murals won an award from the International Downtown



Information and QR codes on the sides of boxes engage viewers.

Association, and the city has added eight more murals since then, says artist Drew Mandigo. He says he was glad to participate in an effort to beautify the utility boxes that control stoplights.

"They're these ugly gray boxes that are on practically every street corner in downtown Ottawa," Mandigo says. "They're ubiquitous, and they tend to get covered with graffiti."

The murals are printed on vinyl that resists spray paint, so they solve the graffiti

issue. Even so, Mandigo says the murals occasionally are defaced with stickers (which are

easily removed) or by vandals with knives (which requires the entire artwork to be replaced).

Mandigo says he adapted the murals from a series he made based on the book, play, and 1958 movie *Auntie Mame*. The main character was a 1920s socialite who ostentatiously smoked and drank, a trait reflected in Mandigo's artwork.

In one misstep for the project, Downtown Rideau printed the utility box covers showing Auntie Mame's vices. Reprinting the vinyl decals without cigarettes and cocktails cost \$2,000.

The total cost of the project was \$16,230. Line items included \$3,500 to pay Mandigo for the right to use the 17 works of art, \$1,000 to update the city's culture walk app, and \$1,000 for a launch party.

The murals reinforce Downtown Rideau's brand as Ottawa's Arts, Fashion & Theatre District.

Contact: Drew Mandigo, 613-824-3241; Peggy DuCharme, Downtown Rideau Business Improvement Area, 613-241-6211. **DIX**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Shifting demographics lead to demand for coworking space

A former police station is now a coworking space in the fast-growing town of Holly Springs, NC (est. pop. 35,223).

The creative reuse came about because of a population boom in the small town in the Research Triangle. In 1990, Holly Springs counted fewer than 1,000 residents. Now, says Town Manager Chuck Simmons, "We're a rapidly growing, dynamic community with an influx of young professionals that are moving into the area."

Irena Krstanovic, economic development director in Holly Springs, suspected that the population boom had led to changes in the small business population as well.

To better understand the issues, the town purchased an inventory of home-based businesses in the area and snail-mailed letters to more than 500 entrepreneurs, asking them what challenges they faced growing a business in Holly Springs.

"There was a resounding response that they needed a place where they could congregate and network," she says. "In economic development, we focus on the recruitment of large and small companies, and in light of that, we wanted to look at it from a local perspective and try to find people that were in their bonus rooms, their attics, their garages. They're the backbone of

your community, they're the people that you want to engage with."

When the old police station became available, the town invested almost \$30,000 to transform it into a coworking space.

The town also put out a request for proposal (RFP), and a local businessman submitted a bid to run the property. The initial plan is for the building to be used for coworking for three years and then to serve as offices for the growing town.

While coworking providers such as WeWork are common in major cities, the concept remains more novel in smaller towns. Holly Springs calls itself one of the first small cities in North Carolina to partner with the private sector for coworking space.

"We did it at a time when conventional wisdom would have suggested that we weren't large enough to support a coworking space," Simmons says. "We are a suburban community, we're not what you would call a traditional, urban community. But we felt like if we strategically made some policy decisions that it would position us well to support that particular type of growth."

The coworking space has spurred more downtown activity.

"It was strategically located in downtown to try and attract small businesses to the area," Krstanovic says. "We wanted to create a vibrant, village district concept."

The space, Coworking Station, opened in 2016 and provides 3,500 square feet of flexible office space

to 31 tenants. Holly Springs markets the space as ideal for entrepreneurs who don't want to sign a long-term lease, people who need to scale their businesses up or down, those who only want to work a certain number of days per week, or remote workers who prefer to get out of their homes.

Prices start at \$80 for a five-day pass. A shared office suite costs \$399 a month, while private office space goes for \$1,075 a month.

Tenants get access to coffee, beer, high-speed Internet, and community events such as "coffee with a cop."

Contact: Irena Krstanovic, Town of Holly Springs, 919-557-3923. **DIX**

"It was strategically located in downtown to try and attract small businesses."

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Public libraries act as partners in downtown development

For downtown leaders looking to create an economic spark, it's easy to dismiss libraries. After all, they don't pay property taxes or steep rents, they don't generate sales taxes, and they don't bring sexy tech jobs.

But a study by the Urban Institute and the Urban Libraries Council argues that libraries bring overlooked benefits to downtowns. Libraries have long been viewed as contributing to "stability, safety, and quality of life," says the report. More

recently they have been recognized for their ability to, "attract tremendous foot traffic, provide long-term tenancy, and complement neighboring retail and cultural destinations."

The two nonprofits say they hope to change perceptions about the economic importance of libraries as part of an overall tenant mix. In recent years, libraries have played an important role in downtowns such as those in Seattle, Des Moines IA,



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see the full report on libraries as economic development engines, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, and Jacksonville, FL, the study says.

Libraries fill a well-known role in providing books and computers to low- and middle-income students. In a more recent trend, libraries also fill an important role in providing free education for entrepreneurs and workers. In Ohio, the Columbus Public Library works with a regional agency to provide business plan development seminars. In Brooklyn, NY, the library hosts a business plan competition with a seed money prize.

In Phoenix, the public library is part of a statewide network of business, economic development, and library professionals who are seeking to expand and diversify the economic base by promoting more synergy among clusters of enterprises.

In California, the Fresno Public Library runs a career center that posts job openings and offers workshops on resume writing and job interviews. And in Memphis, the library operates JobLINC, a bus that travels the city to deliver workplace education. **DIX**

ACCESS & MOBILITY

Dockless bike rentals bring new shoppers — but also congestion headaches

Dockless rental bikes — an alternative type of bike-sharing program — have sparked both hope and frustration.

The station-less rides free users from picking up or returning rentals to a fixed location, yet they have sparked debate as companies report stolen or damaged bikes and pedestrians complain about “clutter” on sidewalks.

In California, the San Diego communities of Little Italy and La Jolla say sidewalks are clogged with the unmoored bikes. Other neighborhoods see the bikes as a way to boost traffic and business.

Pastry shop manager Maria Rodriguez tells KPBS the bikes let more shoppers traverse the area.

“We live in a (high) poverty area, which means that a lot of people can’t afford a bus pass or getting from one place to another in a car or even just owning a bike,” she told KPBS.

Her bakery is part of a push by the El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association to promote dockless bikes along the commercial corridor. Community members are encouraged to rent the \$1-a-ride bikes and then visit shops in the business improvement district.

Enrique Gandarilla, executive director of the City Heights Business Association says

he’s noticed some dockless bike riders in the area and is open to more.

“We’re glad that there are more options for people in City Heights to travel and we definitely support bike-friendly business districts,” Gandarilla says.

However, he acknowledges frustrations in neighborhoods experiencing a high volume of the bikes.

Gandarilla says he has heard from a few people that the rentals brought them to the neighborhood for the first time because the destination was too far to walk and a low availability of parking made it difficult to drive.

On the other hand, the City of Coronado (est. pop. 24,417) denied permits to dockless companies — and it’s playing hardball. Bike-sharing company Lime paid nearly \$9,300 to pick up 94 of its bicycles from Coronado’s impound lot, *The San Diego Union-Tribune* reported in early August.

Coronado compelled the company to pay a \$45-per-bike impound fee and a \$1-per-day storage fee for leaving its property in the quaint island community.

Lime, which currently operates in eight cities including three in California, says its app includes details on proper parking procedures. The company also dispatches patrols to ensure bikes are correctly stored. **DIX**

Food truck festival draws crowds, supports local restaurants —Continued from page 1

Organizers hosted the event again in 2012, and the second annual event brought in 6,000 people and 30 trucks. By 2016, the event was a bona fide hit, drawing 40,000 people to visit 60 food trucks. Indeed, the event is so successful that some who remember the early days gripe about the new era of big crowds and long lines.

Now Little Rock's Food Truck Festival is a signature event for downtown. Holmstrom and his staff begin planning eight or nine months in advance, and the festival has signed up sponsors such as the local Budweiser distributorship, Sprint, and Centennial Bank.

"It is a major production — 300 volunteers, 60 food trucks, and 40,000 of our closest friends come out," Holmstrom says.

Event spurs revival

Just 5,000 people live in downtown Little Rock, leaving the business district with a familiar problem: How to make the city feel vibrant at night and on weekends, when the commuters have left for the day?

While the Food Truck Festival takes place just one day a year, it has helped spur a revival along Main Street, which now has more than half a dozen restaurants.

The food truck festival's popularity, Holmstrom says, proved to restaurateurs "that people would come downtown and would spend money downtown."

Food truck operators pay \$300 for a spot at the Food Truck Festival, a fee that helps offset the cost of closing streets and bringing in extra security. The total tab for the event is about \$50,000.

Patrons pay nothing to get in, and Holmstrom encourages food truck vendors to drum up more business by adding low-priced items to their menus.

"If somebody has already spent \$10 on a burger, they're not going to buy another \$10 burger, but they might buy a \$5 slider," Holmstrom says.

As part of the festivities, Downtown Little Rock Partnership obtains a permit from the state to allow public consumption of alcohol during the event.

Little Rock also hires buskers to perform during the Food Truck Fest.

"We work really hard to produce an event that feels unproduced," Holmstrom says. "It has the feel that these are street performers. The reality is that they're scheduled in two-hour increments."

Weather and other challenges

Temperatures can range well into the 90s in late summer and early fall, and Holmstrom says pushing the Food Truck Festival into October isn't always an option.

"At this time of year, you have to schedule Saturday events around Arkansas Razorbacks



Corporate teams and individual volunteers use SignUp.com to select their spots. All volunteers must be 18 or older, volunteers participating in alcohol sales must be 21 or older, and all volunteers must attend one pre-event training meeting.



DowntownDevelopment.com

To see an overview of the growth of the Main Street Food Truck Festival, go to our website and click on "Web Extras."

football," Holmstrom says. That's why the 2018 event took place in early September, on a day when the Razorbacks played a night game on the road.

Weather is also a consideration. The heat has proven a burden for patrons waiting in long lines, but a blessing for Main Street's new crop of restaurants.

"We in essence bring 60 competitors onto their doorstep — and those restaurants do record business during Food Truck Fest," Holmstrom says. "They have the one thing the food trucks would never have — which is air conditioning."

Meanwhile, attendees at Food Truck Fest have proven willing to weather withering temperatures. One burger truck is so popular that no matter how hot the weather gets, no matter how early or late the hour is, the truck has a 45-minute wait.

"It is uncanny. It is amazing," Holmstrom says. "It's 95 degrees, and his line will be 45 minutes long."

The long queues seem to underscore that even in an age of instant gratification and seamless customer service, people still crave personal contact.

"It's definitely authentic, and it's a shared experience," Holmstrom says. "You talk to

your neighbor, or at least your neighbor for the next 45 minutes."

Encouraged by the success of Food Truck Festival, Downtown Little Rock Partnership attempted to replicate the event with a springtime festival at the Clinton Presidential Library. While 20 food trucks turned out, just 3,500 to 4,000 people showed up.

"It was a record heat day, and people didn't want to come out in that blistering heat," Holmstrom says.

The explanation goes beyond mere heat, Holmstrom acknowledges. The main festival has spent years building a brand, and the new event lacks that history.

He plans to try the springtime event again, but he'll move it to the evening when temperatures are cooler — and he'll also rein in expectations. Indeed, that's the advice Holmstrom offers other downtown leaders hoping to build their own attraction magnets from scratch.

"Start small and build from there," he says. "You can always make it bigger and more complicated later."

*Contact: Gabe Holmstrom, Downtown Little Rock Partnership, 501-375-0121. **DIX***

ACCESS & MOBILITY

Roundabouts help slow traffic, ease congestion

In Florida, a state known for sprawl and car-friendly development, some downtowns are turning to roundabouts to slow traffic and ease congestion.

In an article published by the Congress for the New Urbanism, traffic engineer Ken Sides and attorney Rick Geller say the conventional solution to gridlock is to build wider roads. But that's the wrong approach, they argue.

They point to Windermere (est. pop. 3,402), a town that took a different approach to addressing back-ups that stretched half a mile along its quaint Main Street. Widening the street to four lanes would have ruined downtown's feel, Sides and Geller argue.

Instead, Windermere built a pair of single-lane roundabouts that motorists navigate at speeds of just 12 to 14 mph.

"To everyone's amazement, the traffic congestion disappeared," they write. "In the low-speed environment, motorists stop for pedestrians and wave them across the street."

What's more, the narrower streets are easier to navigate for pedestrians and cyclists. Roundabout proponents argue that the traffic features also reduce fatalities and serious accidents. Intersections converted to one-lane roundabouts experience a 76 percent

reduction in injuries and a more than 90 percent reduction in fatalities, Sides and Geller say.

Windermere isn't the only Florida downtown to find success with roundabouts. In Sarasota (est. pop. 56,994), the Main Street roundabout — at the junction of five streets — creates a low-speed environment for sidewalk café patrons who wouldn't enjoy sitting near a traditional intersection. **DIX**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

"Grow your own" approach to jobs offers alternative to bidding wars

The nationwide competition for Amazon's second headquarters has grabbed headlines and spurred bids worth billions. The ecommerce giant has narrowed the finalists to a list of 20 metro areas, and just one will emerge as a winner.

While competing for jobs with subsidies is one way to grow a downtown's economy, there's a less splashy but perhaps more sustainable way to spur economic expansion. The "grow your own" model of business development focuses on nurturing entrepreneurs and small businesses.

According to the Kansas City Federal Reserve, this concept of "economic gardening" differs from the subsidy model in important ways. Instead of wooing out-of-town headquarters and manufacturing facilities, the grow-your-own concept focuses on local strengths and building local businesses.

The traditional model aims for a few splashy projects that bring large numbers of jobs in exchange for hefty incentive packages. Economic gardening instead focuses on creating many small victories. While no single project will make or break a downtown economy, the combined employment of many small businesses adds up over time.

"The grow-your-own approach may not be as flashy as the traditional economic

development model," the Kansas City Fed says. "When successful, the traditional model can provide vivid and public victories, such as during a ribbon cutting at a major factory or a news announcement of hundreds of new jobs for the community. Local officials and stakeholders must understand and be committed to the model for the long haul."

In the traditional model, hometown entrepreneurs can feel neglected by an approach that focuses on marketing to and recruiting out-of-state firms. In the economic gardening approach, economic developers focus on supporting existing employers often with technical, management, and marketing assistance.

Grow-your-own economic developers find success in focusing on businesses with fewer than 100 employees. Businesses with 10 to 99 employees can provide especially fertile ground: Companies of this size represent 8 percent of all businesses and provide close to 35 percent of jobs nationally, the Kansas City Fed says.

Economic gardening is not a new concept, but it continues to find favor in downtowns and commercial corridors. The Kansas City Fed suggests six steps to a successful grow your own strategy.



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To see the Kansas City Fed's Grow-Your-Own Guide, visit our website and click on Web Extras.

Get support from local leaders. Local officials must embrace patience and commit to economic gardening for the long haul. Boosting small businesses within the community will take time, but the strategy can yield long-term economic growth. Key stakeholders include local economic development board members, policy makers, philanthropic leaders, existing key business owners, and others of influence in the community.

Figure out where your economy stands. Perform a comprehensive assessment of the local community's economic condition to uncover opportunities and challenges. Evaluate the number, size, and types of businesses in the community, key local business clusters, workforce data, availability of retail or office space, community demographics, and local amenities.

Identify your targets. Because of their growth potential, companies with 10 to 99 workers are the most popular targets of grow-your-own strategies. These companies typically generate \$1 million to \$50 million in annual revenue.

Market your program. You can succeed only if targeted employers know they're being targeted.

Make the service delivery process seamless. Develop one-stop shops, referral systems, and easy access to data, resources, and training.

Measure your progress. Is your strategy working? You'll know only if you regularly assess your returns. The measurement process can justify the strategy. It can also point out problems and areas where you need to change tactics. **DIX**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

To stop brain drain, small city looks to enhance amenities

In one way, Bentonville, AR, (est. pop. 49,298) is the envy of economic developers everywhere. The small city is known internationally as the headquarters of retail giant Walmart.

Despite a trophy home office, Bentonville also struggled to keep ambitious workers. Many come to Bentonville for a few years and, after building their resumes, move on to a more sophisticated metro area.

So, in 2005–6, the city gathered with Walmart officials and other employers and civic leaders to address Bentonville's brain drain.

One of Bentonville's first steps was to overhaul its comprehensive plan, mapping firm ESRI reports in its *WhereNext* magazine.

"We are a small city that is doing its dead level best to create an environment where it can recruit and retain top-notch talent, understanding fully that it really is a global competition for that talent now," says Troy Galloway,

Bentonville's community and economic development director.

Among those attracted to the evolving Bentonville was Rob Apple, managing director of the Ropeswing Hospitality Group, which operates restaurants, lounges, and meeting space downtown.

"There wasn't much going on when we first moved to the downtown area," Apple told *WhereNext*.

The restaurant caught on, and Ropeswing added a cocktail bar and farm-to-table restaurants. As the new Bentonville began emerging, the city and its lead consultant, Houseal Lavigne Associates of Chicago, combined high-tech GIS applications with old-fashioned strategies such as charrettes with business owners, residents, and other stakeholders to continue the redevelopment of downtown.

Contact: Troy Galloway, Bentonville, 479-271-3122; Rob Apple, Ropeswing, 479-268-4157. **DIX**

Idea Exchange

Program aims to reduce drunk driving downtown

Visitors to Tulsa's vibrant dining and entertainment districts will soon be able to leave their cars downtown overnight without the risk of a parking ticket. The goal is to encourage people to find the safest route home.

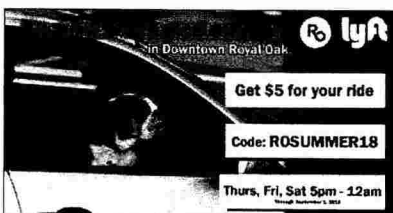
Under the new ordinance, people may present proof of a ride via bus, taxi, or rideshare company for dismissal of an overtime parking ticket if they pick up their car before noon the next day.

Councilor Blake Ewing tells FOX23 that the program will curb drinking and driving in the city center.

Reducing congestion with subsidized ride-share

A large civic center project in Royal Oak, MI, is making downtown parking difficult to find. Part of the project is being built on two former surface parking lots in front of City Hall and the adjacent Royal Oak Public Library.

Judy Davids, Royal Oak's community engagement specialist, tells the *Royal Oak Tribune* that those lots were popular with many downtown visitors going to bars, restaurants, and other business on Main Street.



Online ads promote discounts, encourage leaving the car at home.

To help mitigate the problem, the city has distributed parking maps at downtown bars and restaurants, City Hall, and the library, says Davids. And new signs encourage people to use the city's parking decks.

The Downtown Development Authority is also providing a \$5 discount to people who leave their cars at home and take Lyft downtown. Customers simply enter a savings code when requesting a ride.

This is the DDA's second time working with Lyft. DDA Manager Sean Kammer, tells the *Tribune* that earlier results were positive, but could be better. "We paid for about 50 rides using the program the first time," he says, "that was a good start, but we know we can get this to catch on more if it goes on for a longer time and the word gets out." The discounts were available for the month of August from 5 p.m. to midnight on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

Residential incentives target remote workers

A new grant is being used to attract residents to Vermont. Beginning in January 2019 the state will pay \$10,000 to attract people who work remotely for employers not located in the state.

The grant is part of a plan to revitalize Vermont's aging workforce. As the *Burlington Free Press* notes, the state is aging faster than the rest of the U.S., and has the third highest median age in the country.

Learn more at ThinkVermont.com/relocate.

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Idea Exchange

Welcoming new employees

In early 2018, Cape Cod Healthcare relocated 225 employees to the west end of downtown Hyannis, MA. From the new location in the charming "Capital of the Cape," staff can walk to Main Street and adjoining areas for shopping and dining.

Nothing was left to chance. To welcome the CCHC staff to the area, members of the Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District put together gift bags featuring coupons and small gifts from some of the many downtown businesses.

Also included in each bag was a map of the Hyannis Main Street and waterfront district, an events calendar, a business directory, and details on activities in the district as well as walking distances around the downtown.

Shifting focus for improved attraction

In the aptly titled, *Design Downtown for Women (Men Will Follow)*, editor and downtown consultant David Feehan, discusses the importance of women as an economic engine for downtown revitalization and the need to design both physical spaces and experiences with them in mind.

"This is not about painting the bathrooms pink," says Feehan, "although color is important. This is about changing the way architects, urban planners, developers, brokers, lenders, and in particular, downtown managers design an experience that serves the needs of

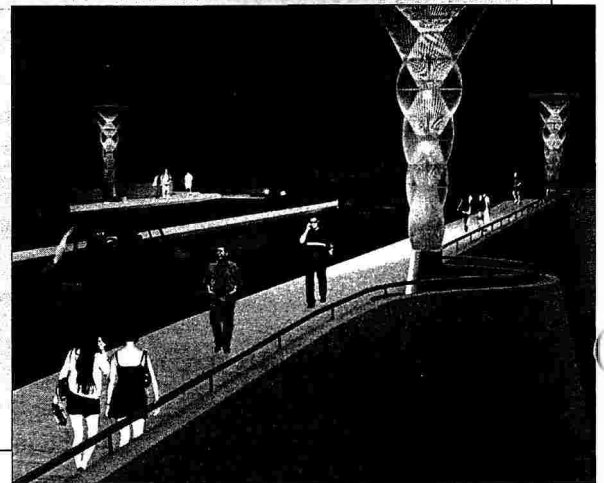
City illuminates downtown gateways and gathering spaces

New artwork is providing an ever-changing display of color in Rosslyn, VA's, Central Place plaza. The 150-foot-wide, 15-foot-tall LED artwork, titled Gravity and Grace, is located on the top two floors of the parking garage at the plaza.

The installation marks the first phase of the city's Corridor of Light project. When completed in 2022-23, the city's downtown corridor and gateways will be connected through illuminated art including 21-foot tall towers of light.



To see an artist's talk about the design process and a PowerPoint presentation on the current proposal for the Corridor of Light visit DowntownDevelopment.com and click on "Web Extras."



Brick and mortar stores continue to open

In a surprise to many, more of the retailers surveyed for The State of Retailing Online 2018 will be opening stores in 2018 versus closing them.

The survey is conducted annually by the National Retail Federation and Forrester. Forrester Vice President and Principal Analyst Sucharita Kodali comments on the findings, "It proves that the physical retail store is not doomed as many think it is."

The full report is available for download at nrf.com (registration is required). **DIX**

a group of users who make more than 80 percent of retail decisions and residential decisions, and who are increasingly well-educated and wealthy. This is about attracting entrepreneurs, shoppers, visitors and residents to a place that is truly clean, safe, attractive, friendly, and exciting."

Recommendations for change fall into several broad categories including branding and marketing, improving access and parking, streetscape design, and programming downtown with women in mind.

The book is available at Amazon.com.