

ECONOMIC VITALITY



Creating Jobs. Keeping Character.

RESOURCE TEAM

Wetumpka, Alabama

September 20 – 22, 2016



Introduction

Main Street Economic Vitality Committees are charged with strengthening the downtown district's economic base:

- ▶ Economic Vitality is economic development within the context of historic preservation. Wetumpka's historic, cultural and natural resources are significant assets which set it apart and help to distinguish Downtown Wetumpka in the market.
- ▶ Unlike "textbook" economic development, downtowns have an existing infrastructure and economy to work within. Economic Vitality strategies seek to capitalize on prior investments made by the private and public sectors in the downtown's built environment, maximize space, and accommodate contemporary, market-driven uses and businesses.
- ▶ Effective Economic Vitality initiatives for Main Street include strategies and actions for business retention, expansion and recruitment. Working with existing businesses to identify opportunities, grow and capture an increased market share is among the very best economic development strategies, and sets the stage for long-term business recruitment success.
- ▶ Economic Vitality plans and strategies should consider the full range of uses that make for a vibrant downtown. Business development and clustering strategies must extend beyond retail and promote the many different types of commercial, civic, residential and recreational uses that are part of a healthy, sustainable and vibrant downtown community and economy.

The key to improving the economic performance and prosperity of Downtown Wetumpka ultimately lies in the development and implementation of market-driven development and marketing strategies that capitalize on the community's assets and emerging opportunities. Identifying trends, capitalizing on assets and promoting business and investment opportunities within an ever-changing and evolving economy will be critical to the success of Wetumpka's Main Street program and the community's downtown revitalization initiative.



Observations

- The Wetumpka Main Street organization is effectively engaging community leaders, organizations and individuals from throughout the community on the ground floor of the organization's development and planning activities, including stakeholders who will be important partners in downtown economic vitality initiatives.
- The downtown business mix includes a strong representation of office and service uses, and, to lesser extent, retail and eating establishments that cater to the local and county market, visitors, downtown area employees, and activity revolving around the Elmore County Courthouse.
- The 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan provides a strong framework for economic development initiatives and should be used to help set the agenda for the Main Street organization's economic vitality committee and work plan.
- A number of ground level spaces and storefronts in the downtown are vacant. Local leaders indicate that few properties are move-in ready, and that many, or even most, require some degree of work or staging to become show-ready or move-in ready.
- The upper levels of downtown buildings are largely unoccupied; the community's application to Main Street Alabama estimated 80% of upper level space in downtown buildings is unoccupied. Opportunities for infill and mixed-use redevelopment also exist.
- Impending construction for the downtown streetscape project will disrupt the downtown way of life, and could potentially result in adverse impacts to downtown businesses. The project offers an opportunity for the new Main Street organization to play a value-added role in effort to mitigate disruptions.
- Business development strategies and proposed incentives should continue to consider how Wetumpka's setting on the banks of the Coosa River, its historic assets, institutional anchors and surrounding attractions might be better capitalized upon to more fully develop the downtown's retail and eating & drinking sectors.
- The City of Wetumpka's recent establishment of the Downtown Redevelopment Authority, along with powers extended by Amendment 772, could potentially provide the structure and tools needed to play a more pro-active role in efforts to advance development and redevelopment proposals, including concepts and strategies outlined in the 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan.
- The 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan recommends the B-3 Zoning be revised, and the specific provisions and area be amended. These changes should work to ensure compatibility with development, business types and uses targeted for, and appropriate to, the downtown area.
- Current concerns and issues revolving around parking in the downtown area appear, in most cases, to revolve around the management of the parking supply, as opposed to the supply of parking. The 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan recommends a three-step approach to parking management, and offers longer-term solutions to meet growing parking demand in the future.



Over-arching Themes

- **Plan Your Work, Work Your Plan.** The 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan provides a sound framework for the Economic Vitality Committee’s agenda and work plan. The work plan will be among the committee’s most valuable management and economic development tools as it works to implement strategies and actions consistent with broader economic development goals. Early work plan projects and activities should focus on essential groundwork which will be necessary to understand the market, and on efforts to more fully engage stakeholders and partners, in order to position the Main Street organization for the long-term as an effective resource, a one-stop clearinghouse for information on downtown, and as a facilitator, partner and catalyst for economic development.
- **Build Team Leadership.** Distribute responsibility for work plan projects to team leaders, and tasks to team members. Include in the work plan only those projects that are supported by the team, which have assigned project team leaders, and team members (volunteers) committed to performing assigned tasks.
- **Quality over Quantity.** It is better to select a smaller number of projects for implementation which team leaders and members are fully committed to – and to follow-through on implementation – than to create a laundry list of projects with inadequate commitments and resources. The latter approach too often sets up organizations and committees to fail. Make sure that each project selected for implementation addresses a clear need, goal and objective – and include a way to measure results and success.
- **Become The Downtown Expert.** The Wetumpka Main Street organization should work to position itself as the expert and authority on all things downtown. This should not be taken to suggest that the Main Street organization should be “the keeper” of all things downtown, but rather to serve as the primary source and one-stop shop for information, resources and referrals on all things related to the downtown.
- **Build and Maintain Relationships.** Relationship-building with property owners, business owners and community & economic development partners will be critical to achieving success. Relationships with property and business owners, in particular, will require a commitment of time and the ability to listen, and to respond accordingly, to concerns, needs and opportunities.



Strategies and Actions

Planning and Programming

Getting in Position

Position Wetumpka's Main Street organization as the authority on all things Downtown Wetumpka, as a hub for downtown information, resources and communications, and as a partner and initiator for downtown-focused, community-driven economic development initiatives.

- Work in the capacity of liaison and facilitator to build relationships and promote partnerships. These ongoing efforts will be among the most important and critical activities undertaken by the Wetumpka Main Street organization, and potentially the most influential in efforts to:
 - Bring city and county officials, economic development partners and downtown property and business owners together to streamline development and permitting processes; to craft viable solutions to address development-related issues, such as parking, building maintenance, regulatory enforcement, etc.; to promote a user-friendly, business-friendly environment that supports investors and entrepreneurs; and to heighten awareness for downtown opportunities.
 - Involve community & economic development partners, major employers, local industries and other players and stakeholders in redevelopment, investment and business development initiatives that: address issues related to a lack of move-in ready space or turn-key opportunities to accommodate new and expanding business ventures; strengthen connections to surrounding visitor and community attractions; improve the community's quality of life; and to advance broader community & economic development goals.
- Create and maintain a current downtown property and business inventory. Use information to profile and match prospects or opportunities to available properties, spaces and sites, and to maintain a current business directory.
- Track and maintain data benchmarking and measuring economic conditions, activity, changes and progress in the downtown area, including data and statistics reported monthly to Main Street Alabama, traffic counts available from Alabama Department of Transportation, and other locally determined tracking measures that might be more unique to the Wetumpka downtown district and local initiatives.
- Work with the City of Wetumpka to review and revise or amend zoning to implement the 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan to ensure compatibility with goals for targeted business types and uses; upper level housing rehabilitation and adaptive reuse; infill development; mixed-use and higher-density housing development; and other uses, including recreational uses, that are central to achieving the community's vision for Downtown Wetumpka.



Business Development

Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment

Work with program partners and existing businesses to identify opportunities to grow, to capture an increased market share, and to lay a solid foundation for long-term business recruitment success.

- Organize and implement an ongoing Economic Vitality Committee volunteer-led business visitation program to engage businesses, share information, identify needs, and promote opportunities for expansion, collaboration, etc.
- Work with the City of Wetumpka, Elmore County, and downtown property and business owners to manage downtown parking, and to overcome negative perceptions and misconceptions revolving around downtown parking.
 - Consider preemptive parking management measures for implementation in advance of and during streetscape construction including:
 - Identification and improvement of temporary parking areas to help alleviate pressure on the parking system during the streetscape construction project.
 - Identification and mapping of preferred downtown business owners and employees parking areas.
 - Promotion of “Good Business Neighbor” and “Customer First” parking policies and a peer-driven enforcement campaign that encourages business owners and employees to park in designated areas, and makes the most convenient parking spaces available for downtown customers.
 - The clean-up and enhancement of properties in the view shed of public parking areas, including temporary parking areas that might be created.
 - Temporary signage to identify public parking areas, to direct motorists to available parking, and to help pedestrians navigate the downtown area during streetscape construction.
 - Revisit parking program management strategies outlined in the 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan and implement selected strategies, as may be revised or adapted based on current conditions and patterns. The parking management program will require continuous monitoring, and the City should be prepared to make adjustments based on changing demand and patterns, with additional consideration for shared parking opportunities to accommodate the downtown’s various users during different days and times. Special consideration may be required to address the needs of current and new eating & drinking establishments and entertainment venues that operate into the nighttime hours, and the need to accommodate downtown residents as new housing options are developed in the downtown area.
 - Examine and pursue, when and where appropriate, long-term parking supply and management options, including potential sites for additional parking identified in the 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan, as redevelopment and development occurs in the downtown area.

- Complete the Main Street Alabama-commissioned market analysis process scheduled for 2017 and assess findings and implications for the Wetumpka Main Street organization, program partners, and the downtown business community. Incorporate appropriate strategies and projects in the Economic Vitality Committee’s work plan, and use the results to qualify and refine the starter list of “top prospects” for expansion and recruitment that, based on input collected during the Resource Team Visit, could include:
 - Outfitters
 - Restaurants and eateries
 - Small market/grocery store
 - Specialty retail
 - Unique shops with local artisans
 - Wine shop
- Distill and condense market analysis information and findings in fact sheets or summary collateral materials for widespread distribution and promotion.
- Share market information, including results from the 2017 market study, with existing businesses, economic development partners, etc. to enhance awareness and promote expansion opportunities in the downtown district. Use the proposed committee-led business visitation program to share information and findings with downtown business and property owners on a one-on-one basis. Utilize social media to release “Survey Says!” or “Did you know?” market analysis snippets, facts and findings as a means to generating awareness and interest.
- Identify and inventory business assistance resources, technical assistance providers, incentives, etc. and create fact sheets for distribution to existing businesses and prospects. Use concise descriptions of programs and include contact information.
- Develop an online “Business Tool Kit” as part of the Wetumpka Main Street organization’s website. Materials could include:
 - Business resources and assistance directory
 - Market study summary
 - Information on available properties and spaces
 - Information and downloadable fact sheets briefly describing special business development programs, incentives (i.e., historic reinvestment tax credits, property tax abatements or sales tax rebates, façade or façade component grants, etc.) and other financial-related programs and technical assistance
 - Tracking data demonstrating investment, business activity and positive changes
 - “How to Start a Business in Downtown Wetumpka” step-by-step guide, checklist or process map and downloadable brochure
 - Testimonials and success stories
 - A list of “Top Reasons to Invest or Do Business in Downtown Wetumpka”



- Use an annual or biennial downtown business survey, along with ongoing business visitation and networking programs, to identify areas of need and interest for workshops, seminars, and continuing education opportunities that will help businesses compete in today's marketplace. Work with existing organizations (i.e., Wetumpka Area Chamber of Commerce, Wetumpka Business & Innovation Center, area colleges, universities and extension offices, etc.) to develop and promote programming. As a starting point, topics identified in the 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan include:
 - Merchandising
 - Customer Service
 - Advertising and Joint Advertising
 - Storefront Window Displays
- Assess the need to augment certain market study data and findings with additional data and primary research yielding qualitative information to more closely examine opportunities in the marketplace. Examples include:
 - Consumer focus groups or Internet-based polls to more fully profile business types that might be targeted for expansion and recruitment.
 - Downtown employee and consumer intercept surveys to capture input from the current downtown users group; questionnaires should be brief and focused on one or two specific topics.
 - Visitor intercept surveys designed to assess the effectiveness of marketing strategies and communications channels; and to identify opportunities for business types, products, services, amenities, facilities, events and attractions that might strengthen connections to surrounding tourism assets and enhance the visitor experience in the downtown area.
 - Housing study activities specifically designed to gauge demand for housing of various styles and price points that could be developed within or in close proximity to the downtown district.
- Update and maintain base maps from the 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan to graphically display and highlight available properties and opportunity sites in relation to surrounding attractions and businesses.



Development and Redevelopment
Catalyzing Investments and Intensifying Uses

Work in partnership with the City of Wetumpka, the newly formed Wetumpka Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA), downtown property owners, investors and developers to identify, promote and catalyze opportunities for investment and redevelopment in downtown Wetumpka.

- Work with the City of Wetumpka, Wetumpka Area Chamber of Commerce and other partners to develop and implement a public relations campaign to promote the downtown as a business-friendly place that welcomes and encourages development, business, investment and entrepreneurial activities.
- Work with willing property owners, brokers and agents to clean-up and stage properties and spaces currently available for sale or lease. A number of unoccupied properties in Downtown Wetumpka suffer from a lack of curb appeal and could benefit from simple clean-up activities. Others require interior clean-up, work and staging assistance to make them “show ready” for potential tenants, and could benefit from a proposed “show ready” incentive program.
- Use window treatments (i.e., “This space is not empty, it’s full of opportunity!” posters, backdrops and poster clings, etc.) to market opportunities on the street and to identify the Wetumpka Main Street organization as a resource. In addition to posters and other temporary storefront treatments (see Design section of this report), display windows could also be used to display products from other downtown businesses, to showcase Wetumpka area attractions, and to promote upcoming events, Main Street activities and volunteer opportunities.
- Using information from the property inventory, along with information provided by property owners, brokers and agents, maintain a current “Hotlist” on the Wetumpka Main Street website’s proposed “Business Tool Kit” feature, and in print-on-demand format to identify, profile and promote properties and spaces available for sale or lease.
- Work in partnership with downtown property and business owners, City of Wetumpka, Wetumpka Business & Innovation Center and other potential program partners to develop and promote small business and entrepreneurial opportunities in the downtown district. Examples include:
 - Working with the Promotion Committee to organize and promote “Pop-up Shops” as special event components, and/or as an ongoing feature in select downtown spaces.
 - Working with property and business owners to identify “shared space” opportunities that might make smaller portions of larger storefront spaces, or spaces otherwise underutilized by current tenants, available to “Pop-up Shops,” smaller-scale outlets or display areas for visitor attractions, and for other specialty retailers, artists, makers and entrepreneurs on a limited-time or test market basis.
 - Working with Wetumpka Business & Innovation Center, downtown property owners and other program partners to produce a business plan contest that awards contest winners with free or substantially reduced rent during the initial term of a lease agreement, along with additional marketing and operations support from program participants and sponsors.



- Work with the City of Wetumpka and the newly formed DRA to fully explore options to catalyze or play a more active role in development and redevelopment processes, including opportunities provided by the DRA’s enabling legislation that might enhance the ability to, and offer alternatives for: dealing with problem/dilapidated properties; promoting and investing in quality infill and mixed-use development projects; partnering on Community Initiated Development projects; and in other site preparation, business expansion and development activities.
- Using the 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan as a starting point and guide, work with the City, DRA, downtown property owners and other partners to identify key historic buildings (i.e., former hotel and former theatre) and opportunity sites, and to develop and promote concepts to accommodate new commercial and housing uses in the downtown area.
- Promote housing opportunities in the downtown and immediate surrounding area. Housing rehabilitation and development opportunities could include apartment, loft, extended stay and alternative lodging styles and models, and could offer chances to partner with other community development partners. Activities and programs to promote upper level rehabilitation and reuse might include a fire & safety incentive program, including incentives or other assistance to install, upgrade or stub connections for water feeds adequate to support fire suppression systems during the downtown streetscape project.
- Work with the City of Wetumpka, local financial institutions and other partners on business development, building improvement and property redevelopment efforts targeting opportunity sites in the Main Street district and surrounding area. Work together to research and assess the potential feasibility of, and applications for:
 - The packaging of technical and financial assistance for existing businesses, property owners, new businesses and investors (i.e., property “show ready” grants, façade grant and/or low-interest loan program, signage and awning grants program, design consultation services, rent rebate program, sales and/or property tax abatement program, utility connection fee waivers and utility expense rebates, etc.).
 - Alabama Property Tax Incentive (Wallace Property Tax Relief Act).
 - Tax credits, including federal historic reinvestment tax credits.
 - US Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields technical assistance and grants to help assess and address contaminated sites.
 - Tax Increment Financing.
 - Refer to the Main Street Alabama Development Guide for information on programs listed above along with additional examples and resources.
 - www.mainstreetalabama.org/pdf/Main-Street-Development-Guide.pdf
- Celebrate successes and progress (i.e., new business openings and business expansions, public and private sector improvements, business anniversaries, new product unveilings, etc.) and use testimonials to promote opportunities and positive changes occurring in the Downtown Wetumpka business district.

Streetscape Management and Communications ***Surviving and Thriving During Construction***

Wetumpka’s new Main Street organization should seize upon the opportunity – and challenges – inherent in the streetscape construction project to demonstrate its “business retention is priority one” commitment and its value-added role as a new member of Wetumpka’s community & economic development team.

- Work with the City to set expectations high, and make expectations clear, for the selected contractor with respect to business access provisions, contractor and subcontractor parking and staging areas, scheduling and notices of utility disruptions, provisions for vendor deliveries to downtown businesses, and other work methods and staging impacting the downtown way of life. Consider, too, possible contract provisions (i.e., no-work periods, milestones, etc.) to accommodate traditional events staged in the downtown area during the construction period.
- Designate a primary point of contact for all project-related communications. A single person, or a telephone number routed to a small management team, should be established and heavily promoted as **the** person or number for all project-related concerns, inquiries and information. The person(s) staffing the “project hotline” should be well-versed with the project, and able to get answers or route inquiries to appropriate project personnel and resources. A “project hotline” could also provide a great sponsorship opportunity for a local wireless provider.
- Communicate information to businesses as final decisions, plans and other construction project logistics are determined and formalized. The “unknown” is among the greatest fears and challenges facing downtown Wetumpka business owners. Decisions and details regarding the project’s schedule, staging, work methods, etc., along with challenges and progress made as the project proceeds, must be promptly and effectively communicated to business owners. These communications should employ a high-touch/high-tech approach. Examples include:
 - Email blasts or text alerts
 - Social media posts and updates
 - Business visits (re: Economic Vitality Committee volunteer-led business visitation program)
 - Construction Coffee events for businesses held periodically (i.e., weekly, bi-weekly, monthly) involving the Main Street organization’s leaders, City of Wetumpka, Wetumpka Area Chamber of Commerce and Contractor representatives)
- Work with the City and downtown property owners to explore and assess opportunities for upgraded utility services and connections to downtown properties that could be completed as part of the project. For example, a larger water service feed, connection or stub might be installed as part of the construction project to facilitate the installation of a sprinkler system as part of a future building rehabilitation or adaptive reuse projects. Accomplishing these upgrades during the streetscapes reconstruction would help to dramatically reduce costs to building owners at a later date, and would help to eliminate the need for “patchwork” sections of the new streetscape that might otherwise be necessitated if upgrades are made at a later date. Options to accomplishing this work might include the introduction of a cost-sharing incentive program, as previously mentioned in this document, or a City-driven loan program offering a no- or very low-interest loan to property owners with generous payback period, secured by a lien on the property.

- Work with building owners and the contractor to identify unique building elements that may require special measures of protection in advance of the project. Offer suggestions and assistance to building and business owners, where appropriate, to cover, remove or otherwise protect unique building elements and features that could potentially be damaged during construction.
- Encourage building owners, in advance of construction, to:
 - Review property insurance policies and coverage with insurance carriers to ensure proper protections are in place even in a worst-case scenario.
 - Perform an inspection of their basements, sublevels or foundations to identify possible needs for tuck-pointing or other foundation work in advance of the project.
 - Elevate or move any stock or equipment off the floors of building areas that may be susceptible to seepage during the construction project.
 - Photograph or video buildings – interior and exterior – just prior to the commencement of construction so that a record of pre-construction conditions is established.
- Develop a project theme and graphics to be used consistently in all construction-related communications and promotional activities. The theme and graphic might relate to, and essentially be used to “brand,” the 2014 Downtown & Riverfront Revitalization Plan to continuously promote progress being made as a result of the 2014 planning initiative.
- Inform and keep the community updated on the project, project changes, and progress. Design a communications system and plan that manages content, and that incorporates a variety of media and communications channels including:
 - Website feature, hosted and/or linked on the City of Wetumpka’s website
 - Social media, with an emphasis on Facebook
 - Local media, including the local newspaper and area radio and television stations
 - Presentations to community groups and civic organizations
 - Newsletters and internal communications systems maintained by area schools, large employers, etc.
 - Project posters and brochures placed at high-profile and higher-traffic generating locations both within and outside the downtown district
- Engage businesses in the communications system and in themed promotion and marketing activities. Themed activities and events, like a “Hard Hat Thursdays” retail event and a “Touch-a-Truck” youth-oriented activity, can help to continuously communicate the fact that “downtown is open” and inject fun and intrigue into the project.
- Encourage businesses to work together, and to create and promote cross-marketing opportunities that leverage traffic generated by key businesses that will continue to draw patrons, in many cases, regardless of the construction. Certain convenience, personal care and service-oriented businesses, such as financial institutions, personal services providers, barbershops and salons, tend to have a loyal clientele that will not be deterred by construction.
- Work with businesses and the contractor to identify needs for temporary signage. Possibilities include additional signage to direct motorists to available parking, and pedestrian-oriented signage to help visitors navigate the downtown area. Temporary signage should be adaptable and portable to changing conditions as the project proceeds through its various phases.



Exhibit: Economic Vitality Committee Checklist Example

ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE

ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST



Downtown Assessment

- ▶ Base data collection
 - past surveys
 - past studies and economic data
 - benchmark data
- ▶ Building inventory
 - partner with Design Committee
 - assessor's information (owner/date/value/square footage)
 - photographs
 - current use and availability
 - local contact (property manager)
- ▶ Business inventory
 - list all businesses
 - categorize by type
- ▶ Develop position statement
 - partner with Promotion Committee (statement identifying downtown's market, available goods and services, consumer's attitudes)
- ▶ Conduct market analysis
 - summarize secondary information
 - determine primary market area
 - select survey format (mail, online, intercept, etc.)
 - gather, tabulate and evaluate surveys
 - present findings

Business Retention

- ▶ Business directory
- ▶ Block captain program
- ▶ Educational seminars and workshops
- ▶ Newsletter articles
- ▶ Business transition support packets
- ▶ Enterprise team
- ▶ Incentives
- ▶ Business call program
- ▶ Incentives

Business Expansion

- ▶ Focus groups
 - business
 - customer
- ▶ Sales gap data
- ▶ Market feasibility studies
- ▶ Business plans and projections

Business Recruitment

- ▶ Assemble recruitment packet
 - market data
 - available building information
 - community data
- ▶ Create recruitment teams
- ▶ Develop incentive package
 - local grants
 - local governmental incentives
 - low-interest loans
 - state incentives

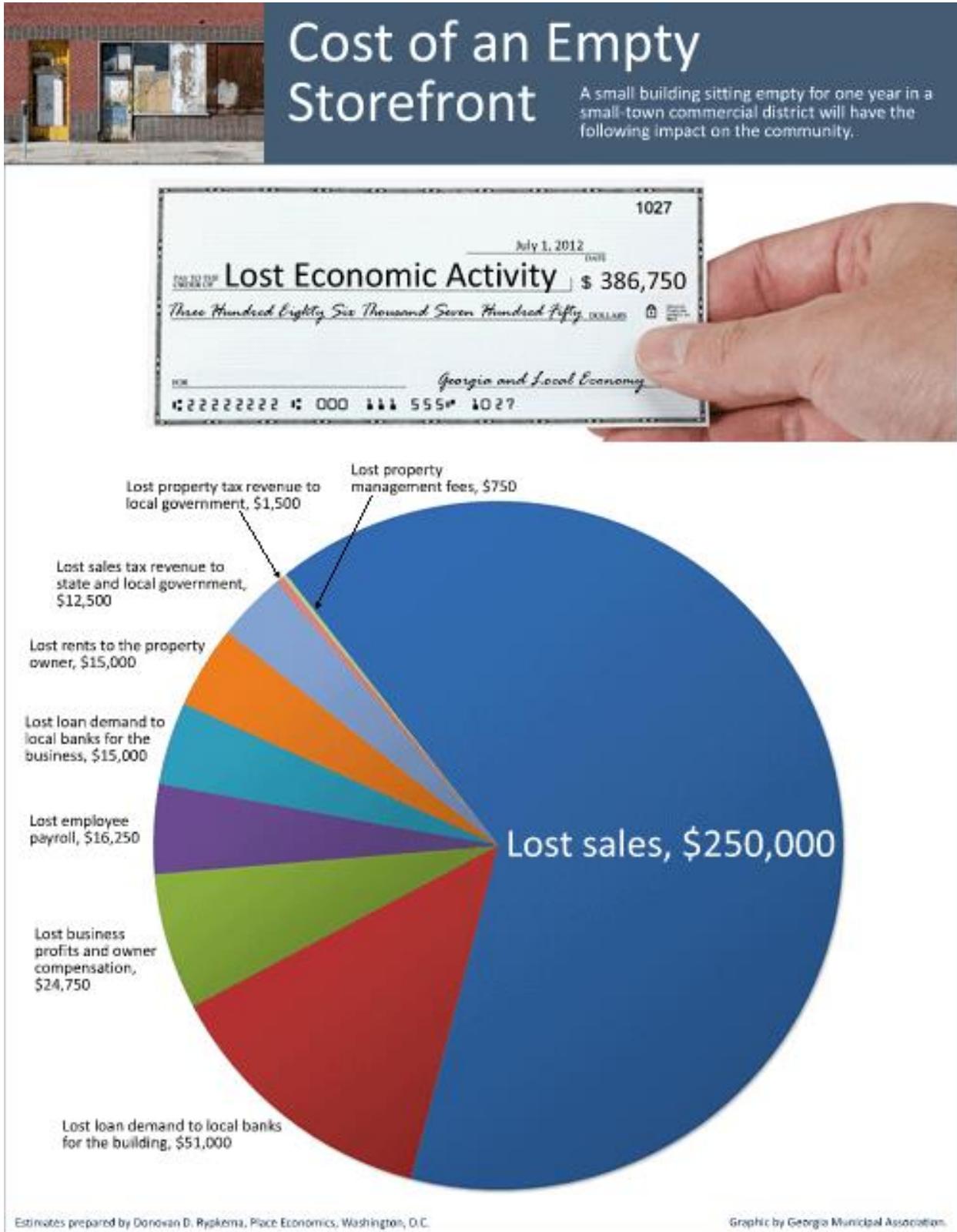
Real Estate Development

- ▶ Clustering strategies
 - determine existing clusters
 - create list of complimentary businesses
- ▶ Proforma analysis
- ▶ Adaptive reuse studies
- ▶ Incentives (see above)
- ▶ Community Initiated Development (CID)
 - form group of local investors
 - identify properties
 - develop proposals

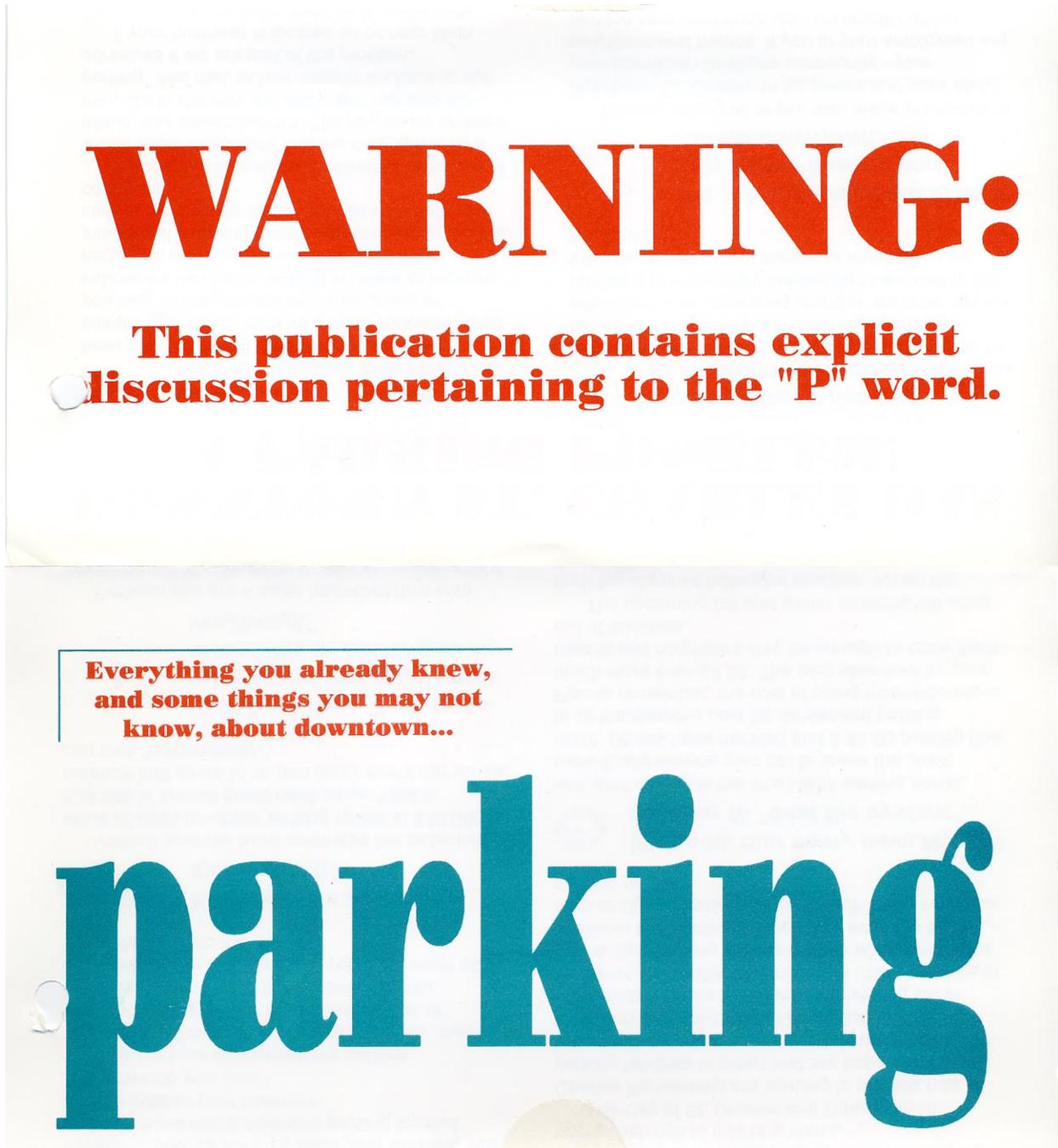
Adapted from Main Street Iowa



Exhibit: Cost of an Empty Storefront



Example: Parking Management Promotional Flyer for Downtown Businesses (1)



Example: Parking Management Promotional Flyer for Downtown Businesses (2)

DOWNTOWN ST. CHARLES HAS A PARKING PROBLEM!



What, you are not surprised?

Yes, this is a problem that many of us have been aware of, and some have even complained about, for a long time. However, what you may not realize is that a core group of volunteers has been working on ways to improve parking in downtown. While we have been successful in making some improvements, the real cure to our parking woes requires your help and cooperation.

A survey of downtown St. Charles aerial maps would seem to indicate that the downtown, as a whole, has ample parking. The key to our problem then lies in the way we utilize and manage our parking. And that, in turn, means we have to ask ourselves if we are part of the problem.

If your business is located on or near Main Street, then the parking problem is particularly severe for you. Depending upon your location, you probably have some customer parking located directly outside your business.

But where do **you** park?

If you or your employees are parking "conveniently" near your place of business, then you are parking in your customers' space. In essence, you are making it inconvenient for customers to do business with you. You won't miss them, they just do not come.



How much is a Parking space worth?

Various sources have estimated the potential value of each on-street parking space at \$20,000 to \$30,000 in annual gross retail sales. That is revenue that some of us turn away every day so we can park "conveniently."



"But," you say, "I am not a retailer and lost retail sales mean little or nothing to my livelihood."

Perhaps you are a sales representative who travels frequently, stopping in your downtown office only periodically to retrieve your messages or confirm your appointments. You do not rely on "customer traffic" and, therefore, are not parking in your customers' space.

So, then, why do you maintain your office in downtown St. Charles? It may be because you like its central location, being part of the downtown office network and close to your favorite lunch spot, coffee shop or office supply store.

The ideal downtown business mix includes a variety of retail, restaurant, office, entertainment and residential uses. If we are unable to maintain the retail and restaurant trade, the professional office and service sectors will also suffer or even go away. That can only lead to an overall decline in reinvestment. As a result, buildings fall into disrepair and the downtown's tax base decreases.



So who picks up the tab?

If the downtown's value, sales tax collections and tax base decrease, we, as taxpayers, will all be forced to "pick up the tab." You will realize the affects through escalating property tax levies on our homes and investment properties or escalating tax bills passed on in rent increases charged by our landlords.



The truth is, we all stand to gain from a healthy and vibrant downtown.

We are asking all of you who make your living in downtown St. Charles to **be aware** and **care** about your downtown business community - your neighbors and friends. If you or your employees are parking near your door, you are literally taking dollars out of someone's pocket. Chances are, the pocket belongs to you or a friend.

The City of St. Charles and Downtown St. Charles Partnership are working to provide new parking facilities in areas that are especially "tight." We are also designing and producing maps and improved signage to direct customers and downtown workers to appropriate parking areas. However, if downtown workers are utilizing the most convenient parking spaces - those which should be available to downtown shoppers - even the best map or signage program will do nothing to solve our parking problem.



We know that many have figured out how to "beat the system"...

and park all day in the short-term parking zones, periodically moving your car to erase the chalk mark. Others have decided that a \$2.00 parking fine is an inexpensive cost for convenient parking. Please remember, the cost of being inconsiderate is much more than \$2.00. The cost absorbed by your friends and neighbors may be enough to force them out of business.

The upcoming fall and winter seasons will bring their fair share of inclement weather. When the weather is wet or cold, you don't want to walk a block to your door. Neither do downtown customers. You do not have a choice, but potential downtown customers do.



Downtown St. Charles has a "Good Problem."

We should all be proud and pleased that business is prospering and downtown St. Charles is truly being revitalized.

Let's not be victims of our own success. The next time you are about to pull into that most "convenient" parking space, stop to think about its real value. Then show you **care** about your downtown business community by locating and parking in a little less "convenient" space. The short walk will do us all a world of good!



This publication was produced and distributed by the Downtown St. Charles Partnership, Inc., Parking & Traffic Committee. Your comments and suggestions are appreciated. Call us at 513-5386.

Example: Opportunities Hotlist

Mount Vernon–Lisbon Opportunities Hotlist

FOR LEASE



Address: 123 Main Street | Mount Vernon, Iowa
Square Feet: 1,800
List Price: \$12 per square foot
Comments: Excellent retail storefront opportunity in the historic Smith building in downtown Mount Vernon. Energy efficient upgrades and owner will contribute to build-out. Two-year lease required.
Contact: Jane Realtor | (712) 555-1234

FOR LEASE



Address: 321 Main Street | Lisbon, Iowa
Square Feet: 2,400
List Price: Negotiable
Comments: Excellent retail storefront opportunity in the historic Gates building in downtown Lisbon. Energy efficient upgrades and owner will contribute to build-out. Three-year lease required.
Contact: Joe Realtor | (712) 555-4321

FOR SALE



Address: 100 Industrial Way | Mount Vernon, Iowa
Square Feet: 28,000
List Price: \$3,600,000
Comments: Outstanding light manufacturing, distribution and/or retail opportunity in this state-of-the-art facility. Open floor plan ready for build-out. Large overhead doors, loading docks, and green technology features.
Contact: Kim Realtor | (712) 555-9878

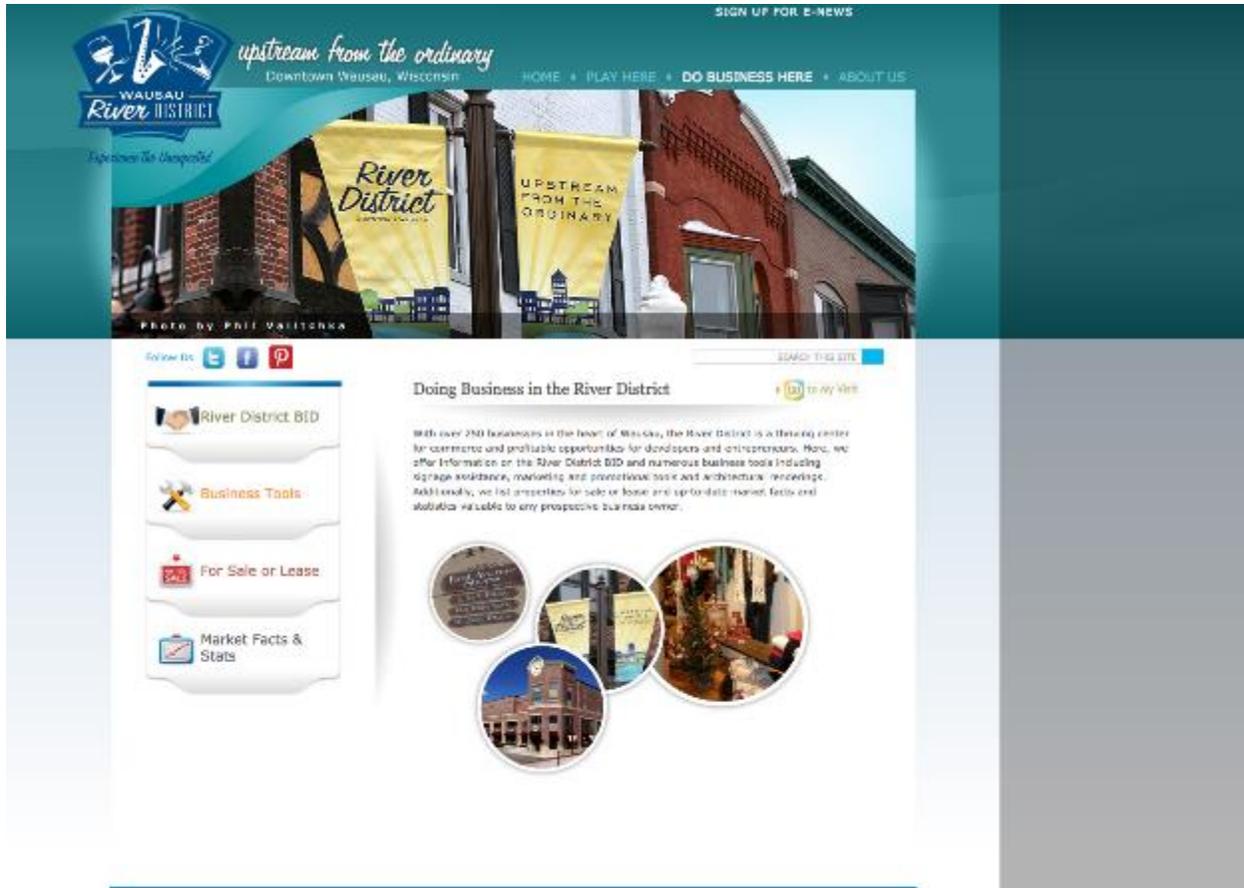
Mount Vernon LISBON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Opportunities Grow Here
Contact Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Group for more information on business and investment opportunities

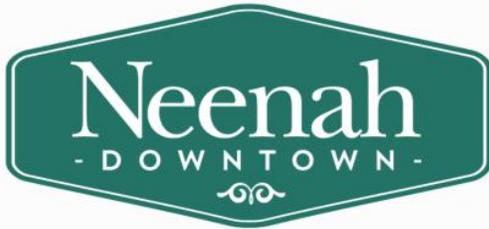
(319) 210-9935 | www.visitmvl.com

Example: Online Business Tool Kit and Property “Hotlist”

Visit: <http://www.wausauriverdistrict.com/files/DoingBusiness.php>



Example: Market Analysis Fact Sheet (Side A)



BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES



Retail Power

Nielsen Claritas RMP Opportunity Gap reports show supply and demand dollar estimates and the sales opportunity gaps (leakage or surplus) by retail category for a specific market. Overall retail sales estimates, largely driven by the Downtown Neenah Workplace market and daytime population, show opportunities for expansion.

| Neenah Downtown Market Profile | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Workplace Market—2013 | 0.5 Miles | 1.0 Miles | 2.0 Miles |
| Daytime Population | 4,030 | 14,681 | 38,383 |
| Employees | 4,336 | 9,216 | 18,627 |
| Establishments | 208 | 427 | 1,064 |
| Retail Performance—2012 | | | |
| Retail Sales (\$MM) | \$40.0 | \$121.6 | \$398.9 |
| Sales Surplus/(Leakage) (\$MM) | (\$2.5) | (\$38.5) | (\$94.8) |
| Sources: Nielsen Claritas and Experian | | | |
| Retail figures shown for all Retail categories (NAICS 441—454) and Foodservice and Drinking Places (NAICS 722). | | | |

Retail expansion and recruitment strategies build on existing market strengths and untapped potential. Categories showing a sales surplus—an indication of retail sector strength—in the Neenah Downtown five minute drive time area include:

- Other General Merchandise
- Hardware Stores
- Limited-Service Eating Places
- Health and Personal Care Stores
- Jewelry Stores
- Musical Instruments & Supplies
- Used Merchandise Stores
- Drinking Places—Alcoholic Bevs
- Office Supplies and Stationery
- Florists
- Other Clothing Stores
- Women’s Clothing Stores

Examples of retail categories showing sales leakage and which might, on the surface, offer some of the most immediate opportunities for expansion in the Neenah Downtown drive time market include:

- Food and Beverage Stores
- Full-Service Restaurants
- Clothing Stores
- Furniture & Home Furnishings
- Electronics & Appliance Stores



Future Neenah, Incorporated

(920) 722-1920

www.neenah.org



Example: Market Analysis Fact Sheet (Side B)



Retail Targets

Market research findings provide direction for various retail business types and merchandise lines that could be prime candidates and appropriate for expansion and recruitment in the Downtown Neenah area. Retail expansion and recruitment targets capitalize and expand upon the downtown area’s retail sector strengths, targeted market segments, and traffic generated by existing businesses. Examples of business types and merchandise lines showing some of the best potential for expansion and recruitment in Downtown Neenah include:

- ▶ **Food Services and Drinking Places**
 - Full-Service Restaurants
 - Limited-Service Eating Places
 - Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)
- ▶ **Food & Beverage Stores**
 - Specialty Food Stores
 - Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores
- ▶ **Miscellaneous Store Retailers**
 - Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores
 - Used Merchandise Stores (Boutiques)
 - Other Miscellaneous (Specialty) Store Retailers

Neenah Demographic Snapshot | Drive Time Market

Fast Facts

| Population | 5 Minutes | 10 Minutes | 20 Minutes |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2000 Census | 24,430 | 61,641 | 254,782 |
| 2010 Census | 23,878 | 66,482 | 281,215 |
| 2013 Estimate | 23,809 | 67,271 | 285,492 |
| 2018 Projection | 23,738 | 68,497 | 291,922 |
| Change 2013—2018 | -0.3% | +1.8% | +2.3% |
| Age | | | |
| | 5 Minutes | 10 Minutes | 20 Minutes |
| 2013 Est. Median Age | 37.8 | 38.4 | 36.9 |
| 2013 Est. Average Age | 38.5 | 38.7 | 37.9 |
| Households | | | |
| | 5 Minutes | 10 Minutes | 20 Minutes |
| 2000 Census | 10,177 | 24,903 | 97,872 |
| 2010 Census | 10,215 | 28,021 | 112,448 |
| 2013 Estimate | 10,323 | 28,586 | 114,887 |
| 2018 Estimate | 10,430 | 29,330 | 118,157 |
| Change 2013—2018 | +1.0% | +2.6% | +2.8% |
| 2013 Est. Income | | | |
| | 5 Minutes | 10 Minutes | 20 Minutes |
| Average Household | \$56,837 | \$61,227 | \$61,111 |
| Median Household | \$43,391 | \$47,755 | \$48,655 |

Source: Nielsen Claritas

Opportunities.



Unequaled.

[Biz Alt 2-A]

Future Neenah, Incorporated

(920) 722-1920

www.neenah.org



Example: Business Assistance Promotion



We want to help your business bloom!

Resources for Savvy River District Business Owners

The River District is part of a state and national effort to revitalize and strengthen downtown communities. An important part of our mission is helping existing downtown businesses reach their goals.

As a River District business, you have access to FREE powerful tools:

- **Small business consultation from experienced consultants, including:**
 - Business plan development
 - Inventory management
 - Operations
 - Budgeting
- **Sign grants**
- **Facade renovation, design assistance, and funding**
- **Group marketing tools**

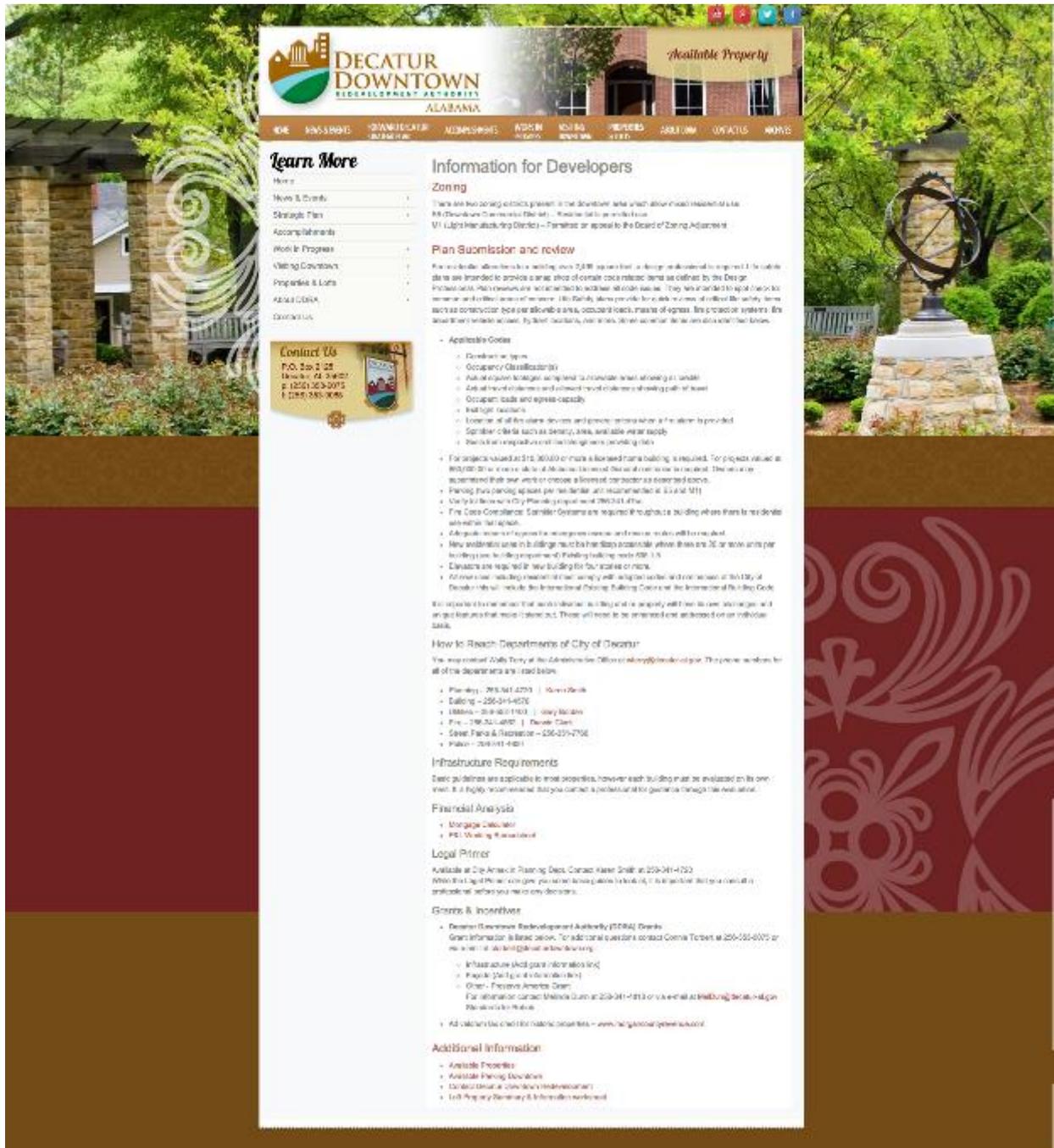
You also have a say in what we do! We want to hear from you, and we value your experience and input.



To find out more about these resources or to share your thoughts about Wausau's downtown, please stop by the River District office at our new location: 316 Scott Street, call Leah Alters at 845-1328, drop a line to leah@wausauareeevents.org, or visit www.WausauRiverDistrict.com.

Example: “Information for Developers” Online Content – Decatur, Alabama

Visit: <http://www.decaturdowntown.org/properties-lofts/developer-info>



Example: "Starting a Business" Guide/Resources Directory – Biddeford, ME (Panel 1)

How do I find a space?
What are the steps I need to follow?
How much time should I allow for the process?
Where do I find help?

A GUIDE TO Starting your Business in BIDDEFORD



HOB
heart of biddeford
www.heartofbiddeford.org • (207) 450 6233

Example: “Starting a Business” Guide/Resources Directory – Biddeford, ME (Panel 2)

Downtown Biddeford is in the midst of an economic resurgence. In recent months, our beautiful, historic downtown area has attracted significant new investment in the form of old buildings being purchased and re-purposed. The market for new business continues to improve every day.

For an individual or entrepreneur, starting a new business can present a major challenge. You need to locate a space to lease. Or possibly buy a building. You need access to funding and technical assistance. You need to obtain city permits and approvals. The process can seem overwhelming to some.

The Heart of Biddeford has created this guide in an effort to make the process of starting your business as simple as possible by outlining the recommended steps and addressing some FAQs we’ve encountered:

1 LOCATING YOUR BUSINESS:

Where does it make sense for your business to be? Is it a retail or service business? Does your business rely on high visibility? Or do you need an office setting?

2 FINDING SPACE:

For businesses wanting to locate within the downtown or mill district, the Heart of Biddeford is here to help. Downtown Biddeford is home to a variety of property types: storefronts, office space, residential buildings and historic mills. We maintain a database of space available for lease and buildings for sale in downtown Biddeford. Our database includes square footage, rental rates/listing prices, available parking and other important building data. If you’re interested in business parks or outlying areas, contact the office of Economic & Community Development at (207) 282-7119.

3 RESEARCH FINANCING OPTIONS & ECONOMIC INCENTIVES:

A number of loan programs and other economic incentives are available for prospective businesses in downtown Biddeford. These include:

- **Downtown Revolving Loan Fund (RLF):** The Biddeford Saco Area Economic Development Corporation (BSAEDC) administers a low-interest loan fund for businesses locating in downtown Biddeford. Call BSAEDC at (207) 282-1748 or visit bsaedc.org.
- **Downtown TIF District:** Biddeford is working to establish a Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) district for the purpose of infrastructure improvements in the downtown and mill district area. Contact Bob Dodge, Economic Development Director, 282-7119 or bdodge@biddefordmaine.org
- **Facade Improvement Program:** The City of Biddeford has established a grant fund for downtown merchants and property owners seeking to improve their street front facades. The program offers up to \$5000 in matching funds for qualifying improvements. (207) 284-9105 or email lhardacker@biddefordmaine.org.
- **New Markets Tax Credits:** Downtown Biddeford is designated as an eligible district for federal New Markets Tax Credits. These credits are primarily administered in Maine by Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI). (207) 882-7552 or visit ceimaine.org.
- **Pine Tree Zones:** Available to new “qualified business activity” by offering manufacturers, financial

Example: “Starting a Business” Guide/Resources Directory – Biddeford, ME (Panel 3)

service businesses and targeted technology companies the chance to greatly reduce, or in some cases, virtually eliminate state taxes for a period of time that may be up to ten years. **Contact ECD Office at (207) 282 7119.**

- **Finance Authority of Maine (FAME):** FAME offers a variety of financial assistance options for businesses of all sizes. **(207) 623-3263 or visit famemaine.com.**
- **Maine Small Business Development Center (SBDC):** Free business counseling, business planning and funding assistance services are available through SBDC. An SBDC counselor has weekly office hours in Saco. **(207) 324-0316 or visit mainesbdc.org.**
- **Financing by Local Lenders:** Several local lenders have offered to help the Heart of Biddeford by sponsoring our business recruitment efforts. These lenders are very much interested in providing financing for qualifying small businesses that seek to locate in downtown Biddeford, and include:

Biddeford Savings
(207) 284-5906

KeyBank
(207) 283-0062

Pepperell Bank & Trust
(207) 282-4121

Saco Biddeford Savings Institution
(207) 284-4591

4 PERMITS, LICENSES & APPROVALS: Opening a business will require permits, licenses and other approvals from the City of Biddeford. The particular approvals needed for your business will depend on the nature of your business and the scope of needed improvements to real estate. The Heart of Biddeford will provide assistance to you in determining which City approvals you will need to open your business. The following City departments are the first points of contact for issuing approvals:

- **Code Enforcement Office (207) 284-9236:** Building Permit, Certificate of Occupancy, Sign Permit, Conditional Use Permit, Shoreland Zoning Permit, Site Plan, Home Occupation Permit, Private Septic Permit, Historic Preservation Permit
- **Engineering Department (207) 284-9118:** Public Sewer Discharge Permit
- **Public Works Department (207) 283-3577:** Driveway Permit/Opening
- **City Clerk’s Office (207) 284-9307:** Business License, Special Amusement Permit

All listed offices are located at City Hall at 205 Main Street, with the exception of Public Works, which is housed in the Public Works Garage at 371 Hill Street.

The City of Biddeford’s Guide for Business Starts, Expansions and Relocations contains details about what approvals you may need. This publication is available at both the Code Enforcement Office and the Economic Development Department. A PDF is also available online by clicking on **City Departments** then **Economic Development** then **Development Process** from the City’s home page at biddefordmaine.org or at heartofbiddeford.org.

5 WELCOME! YOU’RE ON YOUR WAY TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS IN BEAUTIFUL, HISTORIC DOWNTOWN BIDDEFORD.

Example: “Starting a Business” Guide/Resources Directory – Biddeford, ME (Panel 4)



Q. I simply need to get a “Doing Business As” (DBA) license. Where do I go?

A. City Clerks Office. A DBA is required for all sole proprietors and general partnerships. All business entities that are corporations (LLC, LLP, C and S Corps) must first file the appropriate paperwork with the State of Maine in order to get a business license from the City of Biddeford.

Q. I need a sign for my business. What do I do first?

A. Signage must comply with City ordinances. Download the signage guidelines at heartofbiddeford.org. Then, bring your sign design to the Codes Office to be sure it complies with local ordinances. Then schedule review with the Historic Preservation Commission. Once the Commission reviews your signs, they will either make recommendations or approve your design on an advisory basis. The Codes office is the final authority regarding signage and will either issue a sign permit or ask for modifications to the signage. Allow yourself approximately 6-8 weeks once you’ve got your sign designed to get it produced and installed. Time varies with complexity of production and vendors’ schedules.

Q. I’m opening a restaurant. How do I apply for a victualer’s and/or liquor license?

A. Complete a form provided by the City Clerk’s office. Your application will be reviewed by City Council and approved or rejected if your space has not passed appropriate inspections or does not meet City ordinances.

Biddeford Profile

Biddeford, along with its neighboring city, Saco, forms the largest urban center in York County, Maine. The two cities have a year-round population of 40,000 and are experiencing strong growth in population, housing and income. The area’s population booms in the summer months as well. The Biddeford-Saco area also has a strong economy, with about 20,000 people employed in the two cities.

“It’s the Heart of Biddeford’s intention to assist potential business owners and entrepreneurs in starting businesses here in Biddeford. We want to make the process as easy as possible because we want you here.”

—Rachael Weyand, Executive Director

Biddeford is located along the Maine Turnpike, just 20 minutes from Portland, Maine’s largest city, and 45 minutes from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The Amtrak Downeaster rail line serves the city; Boston is just two hours away by train. Biddeford is also located on the Atlantic Coast and offers miles of sand beaches.



205 Main Street • PO Box 993 • Biddeford, ME 04005
Tel (207) 450.6233 • heartofbiddeford@gmail.com
heartofbiddeford.org

Case Study: Entrepreneurial Development – Project Bright Idea | Mount Vernon-Lisbon, Iowa



Background:

The Mt Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Group (CDG) was approached by a building owner who had used a TIF grant to rehab a building, taking it from an eyesore to a very attractive space. The ground floor had initially been occupied by a coffeehouse, but there had not been enough traffic in the local market to sustain it. The building had then been occupied by the owner’s own tech company, which had proved very successful and had then needed to move to a larger space. The building owner wished to “give back” to the community and offered the space at no charge, including free utility support, for a two-year period. A committee was formed and came up with the “Project Bright Idea” space giveaway. An application process, including a timeline, with the committee acting as judges, and the building owner given ultimate veto power, was developed.

Incentives:

- ▶ Free rent, up to two years
- ▶ Free utilities, up to \$200/month, two years

Results/Conclusions:

Project Bright Start was kicked off with a press conference, teased by informing press that they had a “big announcement,” that was kept under wraps until the actual date of the announcement. The press conference was conducted in the actual space available, and was attended by three TV crews, as well as print and radio journalists. The effort to get the word out was also supported by a Facebook presence.

Thirty initial applicants were narrowed down to seven, who the committee worked with until they ultimately chose one winner. That winner is still occupying the space, but is nearing the end of her two-year term. Her business has proved to be successful, and they hope to find her another space, as staying in the space is not a long-term option of this prize. The building owner, and the committee, hope to repeat the process, and will use the same space to do so, in effect using the space as an incubator to attract new businesses on a rotating basis.

The CDG Executive Director indicated that if they do one thing differently it may be to do more of one thing they did the first round, but had not perhaps foreseen to be as essential as it proved: open houses in the actual space. These were done each Friday evening and proved invaluable in narrowing the field, as potential occupants who seemed like viable candidates would sometimes review the space and realize it was not a viable option for the use they intended. Additionally, the open houses kept interest high and helped build momentum.

The CDG Executive Director indicated that while they would not have excluded an arts-based business, they never considered targeting this niche, and probably would not do so lacking multiple spaces, and the ability to open multiple art-based businesses simultaneously.

Case Study: Entrepreneurial Development – Business Plan Contest | Duluth, MN



Background:

The Greater Downtown Council of Duluth conducted the “Go Downtown, Grow Downtown Great Space Giveaway” in 2011. In advance of the giveaway nine vacant spaces were secured as potential sites for winners to occupy. The contest consisted of an initial round, requiring a brief (no more than two page) concept plan. The second round invited a narrowed field of applicants to submit detailed business plans, and finalists were provided with access to professional assistance in developing their second-round formal business plans.

The object of the program was to select three winners to occupy spaces in the district, and great care was taken to develop a deep and rich prize package, to ensure winners not only located a business in the district, but had the best possible chance to succeed. The total package value was estimated to be more than \$55,000.

Incentives:

- ▶ Free rent for the first twelve months of a three-year lease term, excluding common area maintenance expenses, utilities and taxes, in a prime retail space along Superior Street.
- ▶ One-year free advertising package with the Duluth News Tribune
- ▶ Free marketing service provided by Out There Advertising
- ▶ Free start-up business consulting and a \$5,000 loan at 3% interest for 3 years from the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund
- ▶ Free monthly retail mentoring services provided by Maurice’s
- ▶ Free one-year membership in the Greater Downtown Council
- ▶ Exposure to various media outlets during announcement of the winning submissions

Results/Conclusions:

The first round, brief business concept, phase of the contest attracted 56 submissions. These were narrowed to 15 finalists, who worked to develop detailed business plans. Three winners were selected and, of those, two opened a business in the downtown district. The third winner dropped out before opening her business, due to sudden unanticipated health issues. The two businesses that did open are still operating successfully. The Greater Downtown Council Director indicated they found the contest method of recruitment to be ideal, especially because they garnered not just local, but also national, notice to a degree they never anticipated. The Greater Downtown Council Director further recommended having multiple spaces available for winners to choose from, noting that even with the nine they had initially offered, one of the winners found none of them suitable for their use, and the program had to find a tenth space, in a location with a business mix that was more suitable to that use.

Example: Entrepreneurial Development – Business Plan Contest | Red Wing, MN

Visit: <http://downtownredwing.org/retail-challenge>

The screenshot shows the website for the Red Wing, Minn. Retail Challenge. At the top is the 'Red Wing DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET' logo. Below it is a navigation menu with links for 'About Us', 'Support Downtown', 'Events & Seminars', 'Success Stories', and 'Contact Us'. A large red banner contains the text 'RED WING, MINN. RETAIL CHALLENGE' and 'We want you to open up shop in Red Wing!'. Below this is a 'Download Retail Challenge Packet' button, followed by four buttons for 'Application', 'Incentives', 'Rules', and 'FAQ'. A grey box contains the challenge details: 'Red Wing's Retail Challenge is a contest to support one lucky winner in opening a retail store in Red Wing's historic downtown business district. The prize package for the winner is valued at up to \$40,000 to help launch a new business. Applications due no later than April 15, 2016, 5:00 PM.' At the bottom are two grey boxes with promotional text: 'Red Wing is a great place for your retail shop.' and 'Don't let this amazing opportunity get away!'.

Sample Template: Promoting Progress and Results

5 Million Reasons to Invest in Woodbine. And Counting...

Insert text talking about investments, planned improvements, business opportunities, etc.

Insert more text talking about investments, planned improvements, business opportunities, etc.

The time is now. Check out Woodbine. Get inspired.

| Woodbine Economic Indicators 1998—2010 | |
|--|-------------|
| Private Investment | \$1,400,000 |
| Public Investment | \$3,745,000 |
| New Business Starts | 6 |
| New Jobs Created (Net) | 21 |
| Other Data | 12 |
| Other Data | 140 |

Source: Woodbine Main Street—Chamber, August 2010.

Learn more about Woodbine, Iowa business opportunities you can bank on.

☎ 712.647.3434 | 🌐 www.rediscoverwoodbine.com

Example: Window Treatments and On Street Opportunities Marketing

A large black rectangular graphic with a blue border, containing white and red text and a logo. The text reads "This Space is Not Empty." in white, "It's Full Of Opportunity!" in red, and "Logo website.com" at the bottom with a mouse cursor icon pointing to the text.

This Space is
Not Empty.

It's Full Of
Opportunity!


Logo
website.com

Example: Testimonial-driven Economic Vitality Campaign



Doing business here has its special perks.

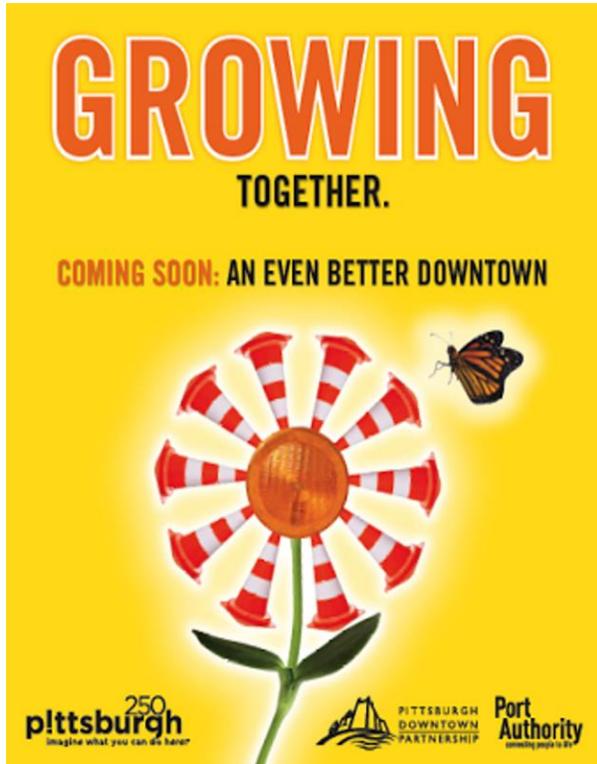
The community has been good to us, and it's just one of the things we love about doing business in Downtown Wetumpka.

-- Johnny Oates, River Perk

**Downtown Wetumpka
Wetumpka, Alabama**

 website.com

Examples: Construction Campaign Themes and Graphics (1)



Examples: Construction Campaign Themes and Graphics (2)

