

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Downtown Sylvania is a wonderful place that is simply in need of some attention and direction. Both the public and private sectors have proven themselves interested, able, and willing to make improvements, so there seems to be little doubt that they will achieve success. The key to this however, is remembering to undertake activities in each of the Four Points (i.e., selecting projects and following up on recommendations from Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6) simultaneously. The Main Street methodology absolutely works; it has been proven over nearly thirty years in more than 2000 communities nationwide.

An old children's joke asks "how do you eat an elephant?" The answer is "one bite at a time." This philosophy must underscore Sylvania's Downtown revitalization efforts. This is a long term process, during which people may want to, but cannot, give up. Downtown did not deteriorate overnight, nor will it be revived overnight. Sylvania has the tools, the energy, the critical mass, and the attitude to make good things happen. This Plan was organized to provide a "road map" for stakeholders to follow on this revitalization journey, pointing out resources, defining concepts, offering suggestions for improvements, and distilling data so that new interpretations can be made as new situations emerge. Each year the DSA, Historical Village, Chamber, SACIC, the City, and other stakeholders involved in revitalization leadership should revisit the Plan, evaluate the past year's activities, check in with organizational goals to assure that the direction is still appropriate, select new activities, and

get back to work. Revitalization is a process, not a product; a journey, not a destination.

This Plan is intended to be a "living" document, not a static one. Ideas represented here are allowed to change with time, and in fact should change. Some of the best ideas are often the ones that are selected, debated, and then discarded in favor of another route because it made more sense after stakeholders sat down to map out its implementation. Good, regular communication is the heart of all successful downtown revitalization movements.

As a next phase, we suggest the DSA work with the City and other stakeholders to create a "priority matrix" to help sift through the seemingly overwhelming number of projects contained in this document. Stakeholders (particularly the DSA, who can use the results of this effort as their work plan) should rank each project according to three variables: time, impact, and cost. Projects can then plotted on a

graph to visually separate the "low hanging fruit," those high impact projects that can be accomplished in a short time with a reasonably small budget, from the long-term efforts that will require quite a long time for planning or designing and fundraising. Ideally stakeholders will be working on projects from both "low cost/impact" and "high cost/impact" quadrants simultaneously, picking up momentum by completing highly visible projects while they are concurrently working toward long-term goals.

Though Downtown revitalization has long been a goal, this document represents the first effort to formally express, in a comprehensive planning document, specific strategies to do so. If Sylvania continues with the Main Street Approach, the community will see amazing things happening.



"The best way to predict the future is to invent it." - Alan Kay