

Chapter 3: Human & Financial Resources

Solid organization is crucial to any complex and long-term endeavor, and the desire to help bring Downtown Sylvania to its full potential is no exception. As explained in Chapter 2, Organization is one of the Four Points in the Main Street Approach. Typically downtown management organizations create four standing committees for each of the four points and divide workload accordingly. This not only helps frame and organize the work elements, but also allows volunteers and committee members to align their participation and involvement with their own natural gifts, skills and inclinations.

This Chapter focuses on issues generally addressed by the Organization Committee of a downtown management organization. However, before delving into the specifics of an Organization Committee it is important to first consider the appropriate home for Downtown management in Sylvania. Developing a solid and effective downtown management organization is quite possibly the single most important thing Sylvania can do to secure sustained progress toward revitalization. Without such an organization, the “voice” of Downtown Sylvania becomes muffled, obscure and unfocused. Further, the need for an organization dedicated exclusively to downtown revitalization can easily be seen by making a comparison with a typical suburban mall. Like downtowns, malls are a collection of independent businesses that occupy defined spaces and share common

amenities. However, malls are generally well managed by professional staff that oversee efforts to fill empty storefronts, work to improve the retail mix, design and conduct promotional events, set hours, maintain buildings, and constantly monitor the market and economic trends affecting the mall’s tenants. In many downtowns, there is an absence of such professional management and this fact manifests itself in many ways. High performing downtowns are generally driven by highly-charged and effective organizations that support downtown needs. In Sylvania, there is a strong need to create an equivalent management structure for downtown.

There are many aspects to developing a solid Downtown Management Organization. In most communities it is recognized that an effective downtown organization is one that includes a broad range of community supporters, including civic groups, merchants, bankers, property owners, citizens, public officials and business association(s). Such a broad-based organization provides stability and credibility and speaks to the fact that there are many stakeholders in the success of a long-term revitalization effort.

Another aspect to developing an effective Downtown Management Organization relates to understanding the function and roles of existing organizations and the space they occupy in advancing related goals. For example, merchants in Downtown Sylvania have been active for decades, forming the Sylvania Downtown Business

Association (SDBA) in 1970s. They found however, that running an all volunteer organization is quite difficult, and while many individuals were still supportive, momentum slowed. The SDBA still exists, now known as the Downtown Sylvania Association or DSA, but with limited resources. The DSA partners with the Sylvania Area Chamber of Commerce to jointly sponsor events such as “Taking it to the Streets – Downtown Sylvania.” This family-friendly street festival includes a car show, waiter’s race, children’s activities and other attractions.

Enthusiasm for downtown was also apparent in 1997 when community efforts resulted in the formation of a Special Improvement District (SID) under Ohio law. A SID is a defined area (often in Downtown) that is made up of property owners who voluntarily agree to property tax assessments to fund a wide range of services in common areas. This can include cleaning and maintenance, safety and security, outreach, marketing and promotions, and special events. Property owners determine the plan for services, including the types of services offered and length of term. A SID assessment is essentially an extra tax that requires legislative authorization by the local government. Unfortunately, miscommunications and misunderstandings ultimately led to the recent dissolution of the SID in Sylvania.

At other levels, community leaders have shown remarkable resolve and ability to provide ongoing support

Just because something doesn’t do what you planned
it to do doesn’t mean it’s useless.”

- Thomas Alva Edison





“Plans are only good intentions
unless they immediately degenerate
into hard work.”

- Peter Drucker

for economic development in many forms. The Chamber has been reinvigorated with new staff, and has grown both in capacity and reputation. With more than 500 members, the Sylvania Chamber continues to expand and focus on the broad mission of promoting progress, expansion, well-being and improvement of the Sylvania area business, professional and civic community.

Nearly 40 years ago, community leaders created the Sylvania Area Community Improvement Corporation (SACIC) to assist new businesses to locate and grow in the Sylvania area. SACIC has been instrumental in providing business development support such as financial programs and assistance, community development projects, tax incentives and related activities. Further, in 2010, proactive City leaders also took bold steps to support economic development efforts by creating a new staff position to support economic development, including a strong emphasis on downtown revitalization.

Along with these efforts, the Sylvania Historical Village (in Downtown) was established to collect, conserve, research, exhibit and interpret material and artifacts that relate to the history and development of Northwest Ohio. It is home to the oldest train depot in the state and an 1840's log home representing the types of houses inhabited by the first Sylvania settlers. Guests find costumed interpreters roaming the grounds to demonstrate settlers' daily lives and give historical lectures.

Steps Forward

With stakeholders recently assembled into a Steering Committee to develop this plan, the issue of who would lead downtown redevelopment efforts took center stage. The focus of this Steering Committee was to help develop an outstanding long term vision for Downtown Sylvania and to define the necessary steps to achieve that vision. Consequently, early in the planning process, meetings with members of the Steering Committee and various downtown stakeholders focused on roles, and capabilities of existing organizations like the DSA, SACIC, Historical Village, Chamber in the context of the needs of Downtown Sylvania. All recognized the foundational importance of this topic and the need to either redefine the role of an existing organization, or create a new organization.

In terms of the SACIC, most have recognized that it is a very strong and capable community group, but its focus is on economic assistance for a wide range of businesses and its target area includes both the City and Sylvania Township. The importance this mission is well understood and recognized at a time of recession and high unemployment. Undoubtedly, the SACIC supports efforts to revitalize the Downtown and is a willing and strong partner.

The Sylvania Historical Village is located in Downtown Sylvania and its wonderful living history education programs are a tremendous community and regional asset. This organization's orientations toward Downtown issues are obvious, as are a laser-like focus on education and history.

Consequently, the Village's mission may be more tangential to Downtown revitalization as they have a narrow and specific educational focus. Introduction of other objectives such as targeted business recruitment, general promotional activities and event planning do not always directly align with history and education.

The Chamber has a strong events calendar, understands the need to recruit new businesses and support existing businesses. Its mission and culture most closely aligns with Main Street's recommended balance. However, like the SACIC, the constituency of the Chamber is broad and includes both the City and Township. Like most Chambers, it is focused on business development and support in general. This broad focus could lead to internal issues over the allocation of staff time and financial resources on one comparatively small geographical area. It is anticipated that questions such as "why is the chamber so focused on Downtown and not on other businesses" could surface and become problematic. Further, preservation of historical resources may be only a secondary focus of the Chamber's mission.

Finally, the DSA was considered to be a candidate to become the downtown management organization. There was some initial appeal toward this option as there has been renewed interest in this organization along with evidence of more merchants collaborating on increasing the number of Downtown events. During the planning process, it was recognized by key stakeholders (the Chamber, Historical Village and CIC) that the DSA should be the coordinating

entity of Downtown revitalization activities. However, it was also recognized that the DSA's current capacity was not at a level that would allow them to operate effectively without some help. To their credit, as soon as they were given the opportunity to focus on organizational development, DSA leaders immediately "dug in." Members recognized that this journey would not be easy or quick however. For that reason, and because their mission most closely overlaps with the Chamber's, it is suggested that they team with the Chamber for a short period, one to two years, to allow them to function as an organization receiving limited staff and operational support while they build the DSA's capacity to function as a completely independent, yet strongly collaborative organization. This time will allow the DSA to reactivate lapsed IRS and State of Ohio paperwork identifying them as a non-profit organization, and will give them the time needed to build up their committee structure to operational levels. In addition, it will give them opportunity to survey Downtown merchants and property owners so they can build membership and incentive programs that directly meet stakeholder needs, thus building credibility and trust with their constituents.

It is expected that the DSA will ultimately become the new downtown management organization for Sylvania. In that role, it will embark on a journey toward developing into the high-performance downtown organization that is urgently needed. This journey will include addressing many essential elements described below. Some elements naturally

overlap with material described in subsequent Chapters. Within the downtown management organization it is the Organization Committee that will be assigned many critical roles and responsibilities that will help this organization reach high levels of effectiveness. These elements include the following:

- General Organizational Development
- Membership Development
- Financing
- General Marketing

General Organizational Development

The creation of a high-performing downtown management organization depends largely on a complex blend of beliefs, attitudes, values, structure and balance. As described in Chapter 2, the Main Street methodology allocates certain administrative issues under the "Organization" heading. These elements are more specifically defined below and are geared to support many facets of revitalization activities:

Vision and Mission

It is imperative that the DSA continue to develop and articulate a vision and mission for Downtown revitalization, for both internal and external clarity of purpose. This may require an initial strategic planning retreat for the group's leaders, and will almost certainly require regular work

planning sessions with stakeholders to review the goals at the board level and assign tasks designed to achieve those goals at the committee level.

Structure

- Four standing committees should be organized, each with a designated Chairperson, and each with at least one board member. This will help ensure that the committees' work will be in line with the board's vision and direction. The four standing committees should correspond to the Four Points. Board members sit on each of the committees, with no board or committee member acting in more than two roles at a time. Each committee should then elect a Chairperson and designate someone to take notes during each meeting. The committees should then begin developing projects to meet the objectives established by the Board. Committee workplans (and supporting budgets) should be reviewed and ratified by the board.
- The DSA should document and refine roles and responsibilities for each position within its structure, making each committee and its members accountable for activities promised, but allowing for "life" to happen. Each committee meeting should begin by "checking-in" with the work plan, noting achievements, challenges, and needed resources to accomplish next steps. Subcommittee chairs (and eventually staff dedicated to Downtown revitalization activities) should monitor progress closely, following up with committee members on activities that are not completed on schedule. Individuals can fail, but the team cannot.

"When planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary."

- Thomas Paine





“You don’t need fancy highbrow traditions or money to really learn. You just need people with a desire to better themselves.”

- Adam Cooper & Bill Collage

Staffing

- The National Main Street Center recommends that communities with populations under 5,000 have at least a part-time manager to coordinate that community’s downtown revitalization program; those with populations higher than 5,000 are advised to consider hiring full-time staff support. This is conventional wisdom built over 30 years of advising programs across the nation. They also recommend that the manager spend approximately 20% of his/her time interacting directly with the merchants; that’s one day out of five making “face-time” a priority.
- The DSA should work toward hiring paid staff to coordinate volunteer activities and avoid duplication of effort. New urbanist shopping centers like Easton Towne Center in Columbus have staffs that manage the shopping environment; so should Downtown Sylvania. Typically, a Downtown Manager would coordinate the activities of the four Main Street committees, and also should serve as the primary liaison with other civic and social organizations, and other Downtown stakeholders.
- Although the DSA may not begin with paid staff, hiring downtown staff is a long-term goal. Included at the end of this Chapter is a sample job description for a Main Street manager that might assist the DSA as they develop a “wish list” of qualities and traits for a manager. Having staff will not necessarily take away work from the DSA board or committee members. In fact, truly successful non-profit organizations all have one thing in common, and that is an engaged, working board. Staff should be hired to help the organization move more quickly toward its goals, a role which can initially be filled by a designated volunteer as the DSA continues to build the budget to accommodate salaries

for paid staff.

- While future staff can and should work closely with all of the committees, only one person, either the board president or another designated person, should directly supervise staff in order to avoid a potential “tug of war.” Every organization will find its own niche and its own optimal patterns for functioning, but the common denominators for every successful organization is solid and regular communication, well defined roles and responsibilities, and solid implementation of established, commonly held goals and objectives.
- The Downtown Manager should report to one person on the Board of Directors, typically the President. It is imperative that the Manager receive direction principally from one person to avoid confusion in terms of job direction. Too many “bosses” will frustrate employees and can cause unnecessary and frequent turnover which will ultimately harm the organization and thus the Downtown.

Work Plan & Strategic Planning

- Lack of written goals is somewhat dangerous, and could lead to disconnected or overlapping activities. To increase efficiency, and credibility, the DSA should meet at least once a year to articulate and re-state goals. Work plans are essentially the organization’s business plan. At the end of the year, the DSA can look back at their list and calculate the measure of success.
- Many of the DSA’s initial work plan goals may come directly from this document. Each of the committees should be tasked with identifying activities to reach these goals and putting together action plans to meet these goals. Each activity in the work plan should have evaluation criteria and

measurable outcomes. For instance, “purchase, distribute and maintain flower boxes for all merchants throughout Downtown” is quantifiable, whereas “make the Downtown more attractive” is not. The latter is an organizational goal; the former is a committee activity designed to achieve that goal.

- In broad strokes, the work plan should be fairly well structured to guide activities, but constructed loosely enough to allow for the organization to capitalize on unexpected opportunities or deal with crises as they arise. Not only will a well-structured work plan allow the group to allocate time and resources effectively throughout the year, but an orderly work plan can also help keep the organization from being innocently derailed by the well-meaning “what you really ought to do” finger-waggers who would re-direct the organization based on morning “coffee-shop” discussions. These conversations tend to focus on small, comparatively inconsequential obstacles rather than large, systemic issues facing Downtown Sylvania.
- The work plan should be organized to evenly distribute the workload among each of the Four Points (organization, design, economic restructuring and promotions). Not only does this ensure a balanced approach (which in turn builds momentum through success), but it also engages a wide variety of people in projects, instilling broader ownership in the Downtown revitalization movement and making a broad cross section of the community responsible for the movement’s success.

Talent Management

- A matrix should be developed to identify all the skill sets currently available on the board. This will help the

organization better understand what specialties are currently “in house” and what empty spaces exist that need attention. This will allow board members, specifically those on the Organization Committee tasked with keeping the organization healthy, to contact people who not only believe in the Downtown revitalization process, but are able to commit the time and energy necessary to carry out the collective vision. Further, each board and committee member should be financial contributors to the organization, and engaging his or her employer in discussion to philosophically and financially support the movement as well.

- Develop an organizational chart. A sample chart is provided in the appendix, and by no means should this be adopted without further discussion. This chart was constructed in the interests of providing direction to this emerging organization. In general, the DSA needs to take input from a wide variety of sources in the community, because (as reinforced elsewhere in this Plan), Downtown may technically belong to individual property owners, but emotionally, it belongs to the entire community. Downtown functions differently than any other commercial space because it has historically been the civic, social, and cultural epicenter for the entire town. Therefore, many people have a vested interest in any changes involving Downtown.

Web Site and Related Internet Presence

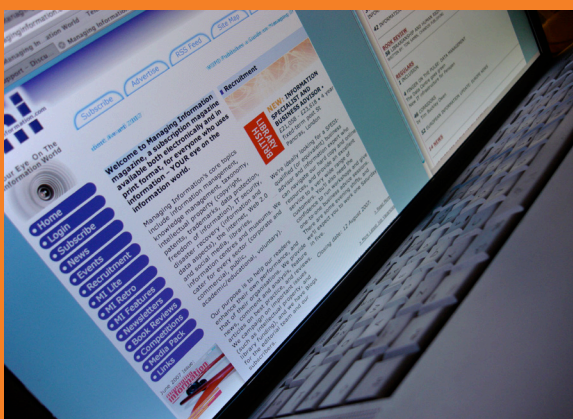
- The creation of a dedicated Downtown Sylvania website would greatly facilitate communication among and between stakeholders. Not only will this help the DSA be better organized internally, but the site could also be used to solicit volunteers to help implement the work plan.

- In addition to the website, developing and maintaining a monthly or yearly calendar of events featuring fundraising drives, organizational meetings, festivals or other public events, etc. that happen in Downtown is important. Naturally, this information should be shared with related groups. Fundraising in the non-profit sector is difficult enough in the current economy, so groups could use this document to plan requests, or even coordinate “cooperative” efforts between several groups so local donors are tapped less frequently.
- At a minimum, community members and organizational representatives should be able to log onto the website, Facebook, a blog, or sign up for an e-news update service so they can receive regular updates about new things in the Downtown, sign up as a volunteer, or get an update on current events in Downtown. Since Downtown belongs to everyone, the idea is that all groups can use the Downtown as a “stage” for events. The DSA should coordinate all activities, but should not be charged with sponsoring or running every Downtown event.
- The website would greatly help members stay in contact and up to date on activities in Downtown and within the organization. At a minimum, e-mail lists for board and committee members, as well as general stakeholders, should be developed. Volunteers should be strongly encouraged to sign up for e-news alerts. Those who do not have e-mail addresses or are not familiar with electronic mail systems could be offered training as a volunteer benefit. In addition, electronic message boards, Facebook and/or blogs could be used. All of these would require regular maintenance and monitoring by a webmaster

(potentially a volunteer), as well as the development of participation rules to keep comments productive and polite. In the short-term, these services might be donated as an in-kind contribution (that should be tracked for reinvestment statistics) that should gradually be assumed “in-house” as the organization generates a larger operating budget.

Volunteer Management

- The term “volunteer” can be widely applied to anyone who donates time and energy to Downtown revitalization cause, and can include groups such as student interns and people working for community service credit, as well as local residents, property owners and others generally interested in improving Downtown. Volunteers need to have clear instruction regarding work activities. The more the DSA depends on volunteer staff, and formalizes the roles and responsibilities of all volunteers, the better it will be at utilizing volunteers’ time and assets. The DSA should set up a comprehensive volunteer management system, including orientation, training, benefits, recognition, and termination policies and procedures. Not only will this keep expectations clear, but it will also heighten the perception of the organization as a professional entity. Because the Main Street Approach relies heavily on volunteers for its success, it is absolutely imperative that a proactive and positive volunteer management system be in place. It doesn’t necessarily have to be formal (i.e. personnel files for each volunteer employee), but it does have to be consistent and clear. The reward of time invested in setting up a good management system is a popular and vital volunteer program that people enjoy (a





Progress is the product of human agency. Things get better because we make them better. Things go wrong because we get to comfortable, when we fail to take risks or seize opportunities.”

- Susan Rice

powerful motivator for continued participation).

- When recruiting volunteers, national trends strongly indicate that one of the biggest reasons people agree to join is because someone they know asked them to. The potential for social interaction, with friends who are already part of the organization, or as a potential place where families can spend time working together, is an important key to keep in mind when recruiting. Equally important, people tend to respond more quickly when they are given specific duties and timelines for things they are asked to do. It seems simple, but it is incredibly important for each member of the DSA to talk with people personally when asking for time or financial commitments.
- The DSA should take care not to ask people to wear more than two “hats” in the organization. Organizations that depend heavily on their volunteers need to put protections in place to assure that they do not “burn out” their most hearty supporters. It is tempting to have the same people recycle themselves through the organization, particularly those who have the biggest hearts and strongest commitment. Institutional memory is a tremendously valuable asset. This is simultaneously a blessing and curse. Certainly, every organization wants committed volunteers, but over-using them will lead to a high turnover rate, which is not good in the long run.
- Families have precious little time, and it seems everyone, especially in small towns, wears a number of “hats.” If they choose to spend it with the DSA, they should be welcomed and their time treated with respect. Because many events and projects are undertaken in Downtown or at the gateways to Downtown by a wide variety of organizations, the DSA should carefully coordinate with each of these

groups, noting their activities and projects on a yearly calendar. Not only will this help identify crunch times for each of the individual organizations, but it will help the DSA notify Downtown merchants so they can prepare for crowds, and it will help everyone organize volunteers more efficiently and effectively.

- Recognize that each person who contributes to the organization, or any partner that works alongside the organization, has motivations for whatever they are doing. Some may be self-serving, others may be altruistic. The key is to understand these motivations and make sure that everyone’s needs are met, mutual backs are scratched, and everyone comes out feeling like they “won.” Understanding the motivations of volunteers, employees, partners, sponsors, and members - each of which comes from different generational and socio-economic strata - will go a long way towards maximizing this human resource.
- Ideally as part of a long-term volunteer management system, the DSA should develop a volunteer handbook that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities for its board members, committee chairs, committee members and other volunteers. The DSA can use Heritage Ohio’s resource library to research other community handbook examples. For example: board members are responsible for setting and implementing the DSA’s vision and mission, and the policies and procedures, as well as raising funds and promoting community awareness of the organization. Committee chairs and members are responsible for making sure tasks are developed, assigned, and carried out to achieve organizational goals. In general, volunteers (at all levels) are responsible for the DSA’s image, and for effectively communicating the group’s message to the general public.

- In volunteer management, one of the fundamental properties is the “seven no’s.” It holds that a volunteer manager should ask (politely) for something at least seven times before accepting a negative response. That’s not saying that a manager should badger people for time or money, but it is saying that the manager should persevere and ask the question differently to make sure that they aren’t simply asking the wrong person at the wrong time for the wrong thing. Requests should be specific about time commitments, work involved, and any perks that might be included. Volunteers should know when the timing is flexible, and if they’ll be needed regularly or just for a single event. Volunteer opportunities should be made as fun as possible.

Membership Development

Membership management and development is similar in many ways to volunteer management and development. Members, like volunteers, are a critical element to a success, not only in terms of raising funds, but also in terms of philosophical “buy-in.” The National Main Street Center recommends downtown programs balance their funding sources, with 1/3 coming from private sources (i.e. memberships), 1/3 coming from government (hence the emphasis on public-private partnership), and 1/3 coming from “other” sources (i.e. festivals, grants, etc.).

To build a loyal membership base that financially and philosophically supports the Downtown revitalization vision, the following suggestions are offered:

- When developing a membership benefits list, the organization asking for people to join should always be able to answer two basic questions, “What’s in it for me?” and “So what?” All membership materials and presentations should be geared to answer this simple, yet all-important sentiment that each stakeholder will express, in one way or another, when they are asked for money (volunteers ask similar questions when asked to donate time). In return for their dues, each person and/or business should receive something of value to them. Regardless of the size of benefits list, if few of the things listed are meaningful to the stakeholders, they will not perceive membership as valuable. Membership benefits can include things like continuing education units (CEUs) for professional certifications, a newsletter announcing upcoming events, entry into monthly giveaway drawings, and/or recognition at an annual volunteer event or annual meeting. The list will ultimately be distinct to Sylvania, reflecting programs designed to meet the specific needs of constituents.
- Linking memberships with other organizations such as the Chamber (organizations where membership interests overlap to a large degree) is a good strategy. Linked memberships and cooperative arrangements are worth considering. Not only can it reduce volunteer time needed to man membership drives for each cooperating organization, but it clearly demonstrates efficiency and goodwill to the general public. The more people (and oftentimes funders) see collaboration, the more confidence they have in the partnering organizations. Each will be all the more credible when they ask for increased donations, participate in capital campaigns, or other fundraisers because people will already know they are being as efficient

as possible, and that they have a good chance of seeing a relatively high return on their investment.

- The DSA may consider offering free one year trial memberships as an incentive to bring more people in. This should not be undertaken however, until there is a very good idea of what its stakeholders will consider valuable, and can effectively deliver on those promises.
- All board and committee members should be members of the DSA, and should also approach their employers to enquire about their companies joining as well. This is very important for the overall credibility of the organization. If leaders are not organizational members, it will make it very difficult for other people to take the organization seriously when it asks for money or time.
- In addition, all volunteers should be asked to join the DSA. Sometimes all it takes is someone asking the question. It doesn’t have to be a high pressure sale. Generally speaking, if someone is willing to give their time to an organization, they are equally willing to contribute financially.
- The website should be developed that offers visitors the opportunity to join the DSA on-line. The website should include a member list thanking people for joining. (Other website “wish list” items are discussed in other areas of this Chapter.)
- “Thank you’s” should also be extended. Volunteers can be recruited to hand write notes to new members, thanking them for their donation and inviting them to join in upcoming activities (committee and/or board meetings if they’re open to the public, volunteer opportunities, festivals and other events, etc.). They can also be thanked in newsletters, at annual meetings, over the radio, in

local newspapers, and at public events. April is National Volunteer Month, and is a great time to hold celebrations honoring volunteers. November, with its “Thanks-for-giving” motif, is another popular choice.

- Both the City and the DSA should maintain membership in Heritage Ohio and utilize that organization’s technical expertise whenever possible. Networking opportunities and the ability to brainstorm with other downtown revitalization professionals and volunteers online are probably among the biggest asset for the DSA and the City. In addition, Heritage Ohio has a lending library for printed and video materials, and partnerships with other state-wide organizations such as the OSU Extension Service’s First Impressions program (a “secret shopper” program designed to strengthen Downtown services, appearance, and overall atmosphere).

Financing Options

For any downtown program to succeed, financial assistance, incentives, and tools must be available to encourage and entice property owners to invest further in their properties, and for merchants to continue to locate in the downtown. There are several financial programs that Sylvania could publicize to merchants and property owners as they investigate improvement projects. The DSA, the Chamber, CIC, and local United Way office should work with the City to identify philanthropic organizations that fund the kinds of programs and projects recommended in this Plan, and then seek out partnerships based on shared agendas between funders and Downtown Sylvania



“When planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary.”

- Thomas Paine



Ohio Department of Development
Ted Strickland, Governor



stakeholders (rather than adapting the work plan to serve funders' interests). Ultimately, the DSA should become a clearinghouse for information on downtown programs and project development, matching available resources with current needs. The primary focus for many people will be project financing. Options for project financing and incentives programs include:

- While the State has discontinued funding for the State's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Tier II Downtown (DT) Revitalization Grant Program for FY2012, the City should continue to stay informed about the program, engage in community input sessions to support the program, and follow State-level Consolidated Planning efforts to determine what level (if any) it returns in FY2013. Though program guidelines may change, FY2011 guidelines are offered here to assist the City as it plans for future applications.
- Per previous guidelines, the City could request up to \$400,000 by leveraging other private and public funds to complete public infrastructure projects, and/or support private facade and building improvements that address code issues. Almost all public improvements would be eligible, and it can also provide funding for administrative support. Should the DSA consider shouldering some of the administrative responsibilities, the grant could provide funding for staff to administer this program. Some requirements of the program are:
 - A Downtown Plan must be completed and adopted by the City within the last 5 years.
 - Design Review Standards must be adopted and a Design Review Board appointed.

- A lead downtown organization must exist and be at least two years old.
- A downtown market study must be completed within the last 5 years.
- A local person must be designated to manage the downtown program.
- A minimum of a \$1:\$1 local match of other funds must be committed. (Note, this will make the City eligible, but not necessarily competitive. Funded programs in the past have had \$4:\$1 and higher leverage ratios.)
- The City must commit to a minimum of 10% of the CDBG matching amount in cash.
- A promotional strategy for the downtown must be prepared and adopted.
- A minimum of 20% of the buildings in the target area must commit to physical improvements. (Once again, this makes the City eligible, but not competitive. Between 30 and 40% should be committed.)
- Targeted activities must be within the downtown, and can be limited to a designated portion to maximize participation ratios and available leverage.
- A Threshold Application must be prepared and submitted in spring of a given year, in order for the City to be eligible to submit an application in the fall of that year. This is a very complex application to prepare and submit. If the City desires to apply for these funds, the sooner it agrees to submit, the sooner the process can be started.
- The City should also continue to pursue grants from the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT), in particular its Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP). ODOT also has other programs such as the Gateway Enhancement

Program that could assist Sylvania with Downtown improvement projects.

- The Ohio Department of Natural Resource's (ODNR) Division of Forestry has a grant program for the purchase and planting of trees, which may or may not be funded in any given year. This is a 50% matching program on a reimbursable basis. The grant application should stress the community's past involvement in tree plantings and maintenance. Grants range from \$2,000 to \$20,000, and the City can use force account labor as a match. Sylvania currently participates with ODNR in the Tree City USA program, and could investigate funding opportunities through this agency for greenery.
- The City could request Issue 1 funds from the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) to improve infrastructure in Downtown Sylvania. Projects can include replacement and/or upgrading of waterlines, sanitary sewers, and storm drainage. This is a very competitive program with annual deadlines.
- Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP) funds, which are also administered through OPWC and the State Issue 1 program, can be used for street improvements, including replacement of pavement, reconstruction of streets, and associated drainage improvements.
- The City is committed to offering incentive programs to spur reinvestment in the Downtown and wider Sylvania community. There are several separate CRA districts in the City of Sylvania and CRA #1 includes Downtown boundaries. CRAs offer property owners real property tax abatement for improvements to their buildings. The Downtown Management Organization should work with the SACIC, Chamber and City to produce an informational brochure

outlining the advantages of this program. This could be used as an effective tool and incentive to boost reinvestment in Downtown properties, specifically targeting new building owners and those who own buildings in extreme disrepair.

- All of the City of Sylvania is included within the Lucas County Enterprise Zone and therefore tax abatements are available in the Downtown area for certain types of projects. Typically, eligible projects would be larger projects with substantial capital investments. Enterprise Zones provide ten-year real and personal tax exemptions to businesses making investment within the Enterprise Zone. These businesses are required to create or retain employment. The SACIC can provide specific information and is ready to offer assistance to any business owner interested in this program.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, while often geared more toward large scale development, could be used to promote investment in Downtown. Large scale mixed-use development proposals including office and commercial uses might be approved based on the number of jobs created and/or private investment made. While it would not be a primary development incentive, it should not be left out of the toolbox as a possible resource to call upon. Re-developing the SOMO area is a key community project and a TIF mechanism may be a way to help provide funding for supportive infrastructure. This strategy has been successfully used by other communities to fund Downtown infrastructure and decorative streetscape improvements.
- The DSA should work with local banks to establish a Lender Commitment Program, whereby the banks would loan funds to property owners and businesses in Downtown

to renovate or expand their facilities, provided that they meet the requirements of the Downtown program set up to govern activities. The banks are able to meet some of their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requirements through programs such as these. In some cities, the banks write down 1% interest for its CRA requirements and the City pays the bank 1% of the interest, so that the property owners receive a 2% net reduction in the interest amount.

- Job Creation Grants are available for businesses that locate in the City of Sylvania. Any new business that is non-retail may receive a payment of one-third of the income tax the City of Sylvania receives from that new business for a period of up to ten years. This payment is made to the owner of the business that locates in the City of Sylvania and meets job creation/retention goals.
- For larger projects in Downtown Sylvania, such as new retail stores, businesses, or restaurants, that are going to create new jobs, the Small Business Administration (SBA) may be able to provide low-interest loans through its 504 direct loan program. SBA will finance up to 50% of the total fixed asset cost, but no more than \$35,000 per new job to be created as a result of the project, provided that other SBA requirements are met.
- The CDBG-Economic Development (ED) program should be investigated for any specific project in Downtown Sylvania that will result in 10 or more new jobs being created. The City can request up to \$500,000 in grant funds for infrastructure or up to \$500,000 to loan to a business. Up to \$25,000/new job can be requested for loans, or \$10,000 per job created for grants; 51% of those jobs must be targeted to persons from low and moderate

income households. A major benefit of an ED grant is that repayments or “program income” can be used as seed money to start a local revolving loan fund.

- The DSA could work with the CIC, Chamber and City to create a non-CDBG funded Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for Downtown projects to encourage reinvestment by property owners. The City and County’s CDBG-RLFs are also a source of funding for specific projects, and the DSA could serve as a liaison between Downtown property owners and City or County officials should a potential project surface.
- The DSA could work with the CIC and City to pursue designation as a Microenterprise Zone. This program could require that businesses be located within the Downtown boundaries, and make at least 51% of new jobs created available to low- and moderate- income populations. Financing would be based on financial analysis and determination of risk. Eligible projects might include improvements to buildings, and/or off-site infrastructure that is essential to the project development. Funds could be used to expand inventory and/or working capital funds.
- The DSA could work in partnership with the Chamber to recruit corporate sponsors for individual programs, special events, or even for operation/overhead support. This kind of contribution is, of course, wonderful, and should be carefully coordinated so that sponsors are asked once with an a la carte menu of possible levels and benefits rather than many times for individual donations. Should these corporate sponsors give funds in the future, the DSA might consider structuring a “challenge grant” program, asking Downtown property owners to match funds given by those

“If money is your hope for independence, you will never have it. The only real security that a man will have in this world is a reserve of knowledge, experience, and ability.”

- Henry Ford



from outside Downtown's borders.

- As described previously, the creation of a Special Improvement District (SID) enables property owners within the district boundaries to assess themselves for funding to construct public improvements, or provide collective services, maintenance, marketing and promotions, and other activities that benefit the SID area as a whole. While the City of Sylvania has experience with SIDs, it may be possible that a reorganized SID boundary, new service plan, new assessment level, or some other change may make a new SID attractive and desirable. Past concerns among property owners and merchants should be documented and analyzed to determine what changes would alleviate concerns or issues. If issues can be worked out, the idea of a new SID could be presented to stakeholders again.
- The DSA could undertake a Request for Proposals process to obtain proposals from local, state, and/or national developers to undertake a specific project identified and explained in detail by the community. An RFP packet, including all existing information on the site, building, and/or project, would be prepared by the community and distributed to potential developers. Information required by the community from each developer would be identified clearly in the RFP, so that responses can be specifically compared to each other. The community would select the top two or three proposals and conduct interviews, prior to selecting the developer that best suits their needs.
- A private for-profit investment group, such as a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), could be created, composed of individuals with vested interests in the Downtown, to purchase, renovate, lease and/or sell properties within

Downtown should the DSA choose not to participate in those kinds of projects.

- The City, CIC, Chamber and the DSA should become familiar with the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program, to help educate owners of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places or located within a National Register Historic District about this program. This program provides a 20% reimbursement on the cost of the rehabilitation to the property owner. Even if the property is not listed on the Register or located in a National Register historic district, but was built before 1936, it could be eligible for a 10% rehabilitation tax credit. For more information, please see the "quick facts" sheet located at the end of this Chapter, or contact the Ohio Historic Preservation office at www.ohiohistory.org.
- In December 2006, both Ohio's House and Senate passed legislation creating a State Investment Tax Credit that allowed a 25% tax credit for the restoration and rehabilitation of Ohio's vacant and underutilized buildings. This tax credit was a dollar-for-dollar reduction in taxes owed. Owners of buildings listed on the National Register, certified as contributing to a registered historic district, or designated by a Certified Local Government, were deemed eligible for this credit. Unfortunately, the Ohio legislature has repealed this incentive. The state rehabilitation tax credit program has the potential to generate millions of dollars for reinvestment in Ohio's downtowns, and Sylvania's Downtown stakeholders are encouraged to contact their state representatives to request its reinstatement. For on-going updates, please contact the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at www.ohiohistory.org or visit Heritage Ohio at www.heritageohio.org.

- The City, CIC, Chamber and the DSA could investigate use of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) as an equity source for rehabilitating upper floors (syndicated tax credits can be used as project leverage). Use of this tax credit can result in substantial leverage for owners looking at innovative ways to fill gaps in building rehabilitation programs.
- The DSA could assist individual property owners in investigating donation of a preservation easement to an accredited receiver such as Heritage Ohio. The property owner could either take the loss of development value as a tax deduction (in the Heritage Ohio example, owners would show the value as a donation to a non-profit organization), or syndicate the credit and reinvest those dollars back into the property. This can be especially powerful on large rehabilitation projects, but owners should work with accountants and lawyers familiar and experienced with this kind of financing tool. A "quick facts" sheet on Heritage Ohio's program is included at the end of this Chapter.
- The City can also investigate becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG). The CLG program is administered by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and rewards communities who have instituted local preservation legislation with the ability to apply for grant funds for a wide variety of initiatives including bricks and mortar projects, advertising/promotional materials, educational programs, and staff support. While this fund is typically not large, applicants are limited to those communities certified as CLGs by the State.
- The DSA should investigate partnerships with the Ohio Arts Council. They are a primary resource for arts programming dollars in Ohio, and can be helpful in creating local public and interpretive arts programs and pieces. They can also

be a very helpful resource in identifying other philanthropic opportunities both for projects in which they are partners and those which fall outside their scope. Involving them in project and program development early will give the City and the DSA maximum exposure to OAC's resources, expertise, and referrals. Find more information at www.oac.state.oh.us.

- Sylvania has had success in the past raising funds through specific capital campaigns. There is every reason to expect that undertaking a Downtown-oriented program could be successful if properly organized and focused. A slow economy is an obvious issue, however, it is generally agreed that Sylvania residents and organizations are a generous when causes are deemed worthwhile. In addition, local private foundations can be approached.
- In addition to developing financing incentives for property owners looking to rehabilitate their buildings, stable funding for Downtown revitalization activities must be maintained in order for a long-term revitalization program to succeed. The DSA should diversify funding sources. The National Main Street Center's recommendation is that 1/3 of the funding originate from governmental sources, 1/3 from memberships, and 1/3 from other sources such as fundraising events, festival proceeds, or grants. This division of income provides ownership, balance and long-term stability that is crucial to the organization. This approach also prevents the organization from becoming too dependant on one funding source. Downtown stakeholders should not be tempted to distort the organization's focus to incorporate activities or programs that do not serve Downtown Sylvania and the mission of the DSA in a meaningful way. Further, for obvious reasons, the DSA

should strive to remain politically neutral and refrain from any kind of political activity.

- While it is a small source of income, Board member contributions are psychologically very important to the organization. Other individuals, organizations, and businesses will be much more likely to respect requests from a board that literally puts its "money where its mouth is." The same is true for committee members. At a minimum, Downtown stakeholders should be members individually, and (when possible) also through corporate sponsorships.
- Memberships are an important source of operational funds for the Chamber and its Downtown constituents. Corporate memberships, or sponsorships, can also be an integral source of income.

Marketing Assistance

Marketing Downtown Sylvania as a destination is crucial to the redevelopment process, and marketing the Downtown revitalization organization is no less critical. This can only be accomplished by a patient and methodical marketing of the Downtown movement's goals to the general public. To better market itself as the lead Downtown revitalization organization, the following suggestions are offered to the City and all Downtown stakeholders and groups:

- Document existing collaborations and regularly reinforce relationships. The DSA board and committee members are no different than their counterparts in other Ohio communities with Downtown revitalization organizations:

they wear many hats in a variety of different organizations. All volunteers should consistently deliver the message at every possible opportunity that the DSA's Downtown revitalization initiative is cooperative, not competitive. Only through consistent and steady delivery will this message come across.

- The DSA should develop "elevator speeches," to clearly communicate mission and purpose. Elevator speeches are labeled this way because the topic should be effectively explained or promoted in the time it typically takes for an elevator ride. These very succinct, positive messages can highlight new or recently completed projects, programmatic successes, or upcoming events. Each board member, as a Downtown revitalization leader and primary advocate, should be ready to talk about these things as he goes about his daily business.
- For obvious reasons, the DSA should establish, develop and use partnerships with other organizations. Especially on topics where missions overlap, partnerships can very significant and can be another way to leverage local talent and resources. For example, sending one (or more) newsletters as combined editions, or writing articles for similar publications and websites can help create more significant impact. Joint presentations for speaker bureau engagements and the use of Downtown as a "stage" for civic and social events can help demonstrate partnerships and collaboration, rather than simply talking about it.
- The DSA should develop a detailed internal tracking system to document volunteer time and in-kind donations. According to Independent Sector (a national non-profit that tracks volunteer trends) "un-specified" volunteer time

"Empty pockets never held anyone back. Only empty heads and empty hearts can do that."

- Norman Vincent Peale





“A mind once stretched by a new idea never returns to its original dimensions.”

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

in 2009 is valued at \$20.85 per hour. Certainly, professional services may be valued higher and donations should be calculated based on appropriate hourly rates. However, the value of volunteers can and should be documented as general information and as potential in-kind match for future grant applications.

- In order to effectively communicate success, the DSA (and especially board and committee members) should track and be able to quote Downtown reinvestment statistics. Aside from the emotional desire to revitalize Downtown, board and committee members should be prepared to make the financial and economic case for Downtown revitalization. Successful downtowns can be significant economic engines producing local jobs, tax revenue and economic stability, along with other intangible benefits. Generally speaking, downtown economic development is more “place-dependant” and can be more stable and less subject to drastic business cycles, outsourcing and external competitive threats. A critical thing the DSA can do for the community (and for itself) is to be able to make the “business case” for Downtown revitalization and share truthful and compelling statistics for various dimensions of new investment and economic activity.
- Maintaining the strong relationships with City staff and elected officials is an important part of the Organization subcommittee’s function. Include activities in future work plans to provide updates to City Council. The DSA should ask to be included on key public meeting agendas, and should be able to deliver a concise update on progress to let the general public know what has been done as well as what is upcoming.
- The City should coordinate with the DSA to provide current

and related information on proposed City projects that affect the Downtown. Regular, consistent coordination and communication help minimize “down-time” for businesses during projects that block roads or sidewalks. It can also allow for specialized marketing campaigns to involve the general public in the process, and change otherwise negative perceptions of construction into reasons to celebrate progress. In any case, this kind of regular and open communication will go a long way toward reducing potential misunderstandings between Downtown stakeholders and “City Hall.”

- Systematically feature articles in local media. The DSA should consider publishing its annual work plan in a special newspaper edition insert. This lets the community know what the goals are and could potentially recruit volunteers to help accomplish the individual tasks. To promote the DSA’s educational programs (once developed), it could submit regular public service announcements (PSAs) to the local cable channel and radio stations. This will not only keep the DSA and Downtown Sylvania in front of the public, but it will begin to link the organization with quality programming, thus building its credibility.
- The DSA will need to develop specialized, targeted membership and volunteer recruitment materials. Place these materials in every possible public venue throughout the City of Sylvania. Each should include a benefits list, the organization’s mission and vision statements, as well as contact information for the DSA. It is absolutely critical that each piece be well designed and portray a quality image of the organization. It is equally important that members and volunteers understand exactly what is being asked of them in terms of monetary or time donations and benefits received in exchange.

- The DSA should give a report highlighting Downtown accomplishments and goals, possibly/initially at well attended events such as the Chamber’s annual meeting. In time, the DSA should schedule its own annual meeting, possibly in partnership with other organizations to maximize attendance and resources. Not only is this a time to celebrate successes, but it is a wonderful opportunity to recruit new volunteers and members. Inviting the press enables people outside the immediate stakeholder group to hear about all the positive momentum and retail and promotional events planned for the upcoming year.
- A newsletter is a great way to keep Downtown stakeholders informed and literally “on the same page.” It should announce upcoming events, report progress, highlight volunteers, Downtown business grand openings, and other success stories. Other fun items to possibly include might be a “rehab corner” where property owners are offered helpful tips on appropriate and sensitive rehab, or merchandising tips to assist merchants in creating new window displays. Each committee can and should contribute one article of interest, report their progress, and/or ask for assistance on upcoming projects.
- Whether the newsletter is electronic or paper, it should be well done and include items that are relevant to Downtown. Even if such a newsletter is brief, it should not fill empty space with “fluff.” People would generally rather read one page of good information than sift through a dozen pages on irrelevant topics. Newsletters communicate the program’s accomplishments and are one tool to reach potential volunteers, members, and sponsors, and help demonstrate the Four Point Approach. Once the DSA decides on a publishing schedule (monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, etc.), newsletter preparation can also be a tool

to double-check that activities among the committees are balanced.

- The DSA can develop several e-mail lists, and use “broadcast” e-mails to rapidly reach the Downtown’s constituency. Advocacy for the organization and Downtown, historic preservation, topics useful for certain business clusters: all of these are potential e-mail lists that can be developed and used effectively to build membership value as well as credibility for the Downtown Management Organization. The vmight recruit “expert” volunteers to do a regular release (either over e-mail or for the newsletter). Caution: over-use of this tool can result in cynical readers who are just as likely to delete as to read the e-mail.
- As mentioned previously, development of a website for Downtown Sylvania is extremely important. In terms of marketing the DSA, there are few more efficient ways than publishing information via the internet. Everything from real estate to volunteer opportunities, and press releases on upcoming activities to the ability to purchase products from all Downtown merchants. Investing in a good website is probably one of the most efficient investments the DSA and the greater Sylvania community can make in the Downtown revitalization movement.

Training Opportunities

All people involved in the Downtown revitalization effort should have training made available to them. In order to mount a successful, professional revitalization effort, is it imperative that each person have a firm understanding

of his role and responsibility in the revitalization process, and be able to effectively carry out that role. Training is critical to job performance, and specialized training is often considered a “perk” or benefit to those volunteering their time.

Technical assistance and incentives must also be available to encourage stakeholders to participate fully in the Downtown revitalization program. The DSA should work in partnership with the Chamber, Village and CIC to develop a series of training programs for Downtown merchants and property owners, as well as volunteers and board members to cover locally significant topics. Recommendations include:

- Architects could be retained to assist building owners or merchants with the design of facade improvements or building renovations. Often, individuals cannot visualize how a building could look, or what it might look like if it were converted back to its original design. Providing architectural services at low or no cost to the property owner can help entice individuals to upgrade buildings while remaining sensitive to the buildings’ historic significance. The City can propose to use CDBG-DT Tier II grant funds to pay for these architectural services should it apply for this grant. The DSA might consider working with the Historical Village to host this given both organizations are interested in historic preservation.
- Technical assistance can be organized as an all-volunteer effort in which all local architects participate for a selected number of hours per month on a rotating basis. Each property owner applying for assistance would be assigned

the next building on the list, with each architectural firm understanding that this may or may not produce a “job.” They would be making an in-kind contribution to a tax exempt organization (i.e. they would take a tax deduction for valued amount calculated by the DSA and reported on a 990 form). It might also be funded by interested local philanthropic partners. In any case, purchased or donated, these services would elevate the architectural character of Downtown building improvement projects, and would offer Downtown property owners a reason to continue supporting the Downtown organization. It could also be marketed as an incentive to purchase property in Downtown Sylvania. Similar programs could be organized tapping the creativity of local design, engineering, landscape architecture, interior design students, though the quality of work may vary from professionally produced work.

- Design seminars could be organized by the DSA to assist property and building owners with understanding how to work with zoning and building codes, as well as architectural design standards. Explaining the processes and requirements to property owners up-front can make compliance with the regulations less strenuous and formidable. Especially helpful would be an explanation of the zoning and permitting process, which is often something property owners and merchants do not have time to investigate on their own. By providing information in a “user-friendly” format, the DSA will develop a reputation as the “go-to” organization for Downtown building and business owners who need help, again





HERITAGE OHIO



building the organization's credibility and image within the community.

- Similarly, the DSA and/or the Chamber could offer merchandising workshops for Downtown merchants, assisting them with storefront window display ideas, promotional literature development, or website development and updating services.
- Pro forma analysis or business plan workshops could also be developed to assist busy merchants with updating their own business plans or coming up with budgets for rehabilitation projects. The DSA could work in partnership with the Chamber and/or SACIC, or the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to host these workshops.
- Succession planning is key to keeping businesses in Downtown, so the DSA should begin to assess the potential for turnover in Downtown businesses. This kind of information is shared when merchants have a high level of trust in the organization, so it is important that confidences are kept to build the organization's reputation. The DSA might also consider working with high school students and/or local residents to educate them about the possibilities of owning their own businesses, either by beginning their own or purchasing a book of business from a merchant wishing to sell.
- Additional workshops can be developed based on feedback from Downtown merchants and other stakeholders to directly answer questions these stakeholders have regarding implementation of the revitalization program. The DSA might consider purchasing a domain such as "sylvaniasurvey.com" and making it a permanent fixture on either the DSA

or City's website so that regular surveys can be posted on a variety of topics

A variety of training opportunities exist for all stakeholders, volunteers and staff members involved in the Downtown revitalization process. These include:

- Quarterly workshops sponsored by Heritage Ohio, Inc. (HOI). These are hosted by Ohio Main Street communities around the State. Each workshop centers on one of the trademarked Four Points of Main Street Revitalization, and are open to the general public, although Ohio Main Street Programs are eligible for a discounted registration fee. All members to Heritage Ohio are invited to attend trainings. Committee members can receive in-depth instruction on different aspects of their work, and overall ownership of the program is enhanced the more each stakeholder commits to the process. It is a valuable opportunity to meet other volunteers and downtown management professionals, share ideas, and workshop challenges.
- Heritage Ohio and the Ohio State University Extension Office have combined forces to offer the First Impressions Program. This is a program designed around the "secret shopper" concept that pairs two communities together, selects teams of people from each community, and then sends each team to the others community on an unknown day to assess the community on criteria such as merchant friendliness, wayfinding signage and ease of circulation in the Downtown, overall atmosphere in the Downtown, and other environmental aspects. This offers each community an unbiased and unvarnished viewpoint, giving constructive thoughts about how to solve potential problems as well as praising well-done efforts.

- HOI hosts a state-wide annual conference each year which provides several tracts of programming in revitalization and preservation. This year's conference will be in nearby Bowling Green, Ohio, close enough for stakeholders to access sessions of interest. Specialized trainings such as Design 101 and 201 are also available.
- Should Sylvania pursue designation as an Ohio Main Street Community, Heritage Ohio offers these communities new manager training each year, as well as Main Street Institute/101 Basic Training. These in-depth sessions offer tailored information specific to each of the Four Points to managers, and board and committee members about their specific roles and responsibilities in implementing the Main Street Approach. For more information about these and other programs and services offered by Heritage Ohio and its partners, please visit www.heritageohio.org.
- The DSA, Chamber and/or CIC should work with Ohio's SBDC (Small Business Development Center) through its locally designated partner to develop assistance programs for all phases of business development. The SBDC can provide a wide variety of direct assistance to budding entrepreneurs and seasoned merchants alike, including marketing assistance, business plan development, project financing assistance, and networking opportunities. Business owners can get direct access to local, state and federal resources, including the federal Small Business Administration (SBA) and all its programs, resources, advocacy information, and lending opportunities. For more information on these programs, please visit these websites: the state SBDC at www.odod.state.oh.us/edd/osb/sbdc, and the SBA at www.sba.gov.
- The Ohio Department of Development's Office of Housing

and Community Partnerships (ODOD/OHCP) also hosts periodic trainings regarding their programs such as micro-enterprise loans and Downtown revitalization programs. These trainings are fairly specific and usually related to grant cycles. For more information, check their website at www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/ohcp.

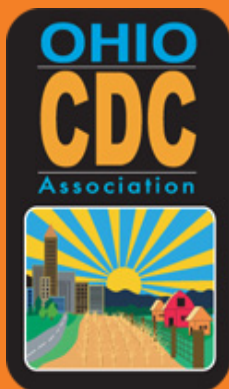
- The Ohio Community Development Corporation Association (OCDCA) is another resource for housing, economic development and micro-enterprise lending programs. For additional information about OCDCA and their programs, visit www.ohiocdc.org.
- The Ohio Conference of Community Development, Inc. (OCCD) is also a state-wide association of community and economic development professionals dedicated to providing professional networking and training opportunities. For additional information about OCCD and their programs, please visit www.occd.org.
- The DSA, City and/or Historical Village could request assistance from the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) and its Building Doctor Program to educate building owners on the proper methods of renovating historic structures. Once again, understanding the concepts behind the regulations can make compliance with them much less onerous. These workshops are hosted by communities around the state, bringing experts in building investigation and restoration to talk about building rehabilitation and sensitive alterations. In addition, OHPO has an extensive collection of reference and resource materials, both for reading at their library and purchase for home/community use. Their website is www.ohiohistory.org.
- Sharing a website address with OHPO is the Ohio Historic

Society (OHS). They also have a host of experts on staff, and can offer expertise on a wide variety of topics from interpreting local history sites to managing cultural resource collections. They also have internship programs available should the DSA decide it needs an extra pair of hands in a particular area.

- The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) hosts multiple preservation-related trainings throughout the year, most notably their annual conference which is held in a different city each year. They also sponsor several awards programs to help spotlight preservation, from the Most Endangered List to the Dozen Distinctive Destinations. For more information about awards and other workshops available through the Trust (as well as their funding programs), please visit their website www.nationaltrust.org.
- The National Main Street Center (NMSC) offers workshops and seminars centered around comprehensive downtown revitalization. National Town Meeting, NMSC's annual conference, boasts several days' worth of targeted trainings in each of the four points. In addition, members can access members' only areas to network with other programs across the nation or enter the NMSC's database to research topics of interest to the community. Members receive discounts for publications, products, and attendance at seminars and conferences. For more information, please visit the National Main Street Center at www.mainstreet.org.
- The National Preservation Institute offers professional seminars in Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management. Topics include historic structure analysis, photo documentation of historic sites and properties, Section 106 compliance, and application of the Secretary

of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. For more information, please visit www.npi.org.

- The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) offers a variety of workshops, publications, and other learning opportunities for those interested in learning more about how to tap their local history as a resource for education programs, tourism, marketing, and a host of other things. For more information, visit them on the web at www.aaslh.org.
- Partners for Sacred Places is an organization that focuses specifically on rehabilitating or adaptively reusing religious properties. As with most of the other organizations listed above and below, they offer publications, conferences and technical information through their website and via personal contact with office staff. Visit www.sacredplaces.org for more information on this organization, its mission and available training opportunities.
- Fundraising is often listed as one of the hardest tasks assigned to a revitalization organization. For this reason, there are a few suggestions in regards to grant writing, otherwise known as grantsmanship. In addition to using an internet search engine to find sites dedicated to grantsmanship, here are two resources that Sylvania may find helpful: The Grantsmanship Center and Institute (www.tgci.com) and the Foundation Center (www.foundationcenter.org) offer training designed to improve fundraising efforts, as well as developing new programs and ventures to raise money for non-profit organizations.
- Volunteer management and development is a broad field in which there are many practicing experts who can offer volumes of advice and assistance. Two such experts



“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”

- Albert Einstein



are Susan Ellis and Steve McCurley, both of whom have decades of experience in the field. In addition to using a search engine to find other volunteer management and development sites and training opportunities, readers can visit www.energizinc.com and www.casanet.org to get a taste of Ellis' and McCurley's styles.

- Local chapters of American Institute of Architects (AIA), American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), and American Planning Association (APA) are wonderful professional resources to consider when researching available educational opportunities.
- SCORE, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, is another valuable resource in which locally retired people can assist with projects, offering their expertise in various fields to help spur the revitalization effort in Downtown Sylvania.
- The Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, MO has information and advice by and for entrepreneurs. The Foundation's FastTrac business development is offered across the country for aspiring and established entrepreneurs. For more information, stakeholders can visit www.kauffman.org.
- The National Park Service (NPS) offers a very helpful website, www.nps.gov, that, in addition to parks and recreation, offers a staggering amount of professional expertise on celebrating local history and culture and preserving both the built and natural environments. They also have a section specifically designed to help educators develop and implement programs celebrating local history, architecture and culture. In addition, the National Park Service is the keeper of the National Register of Historic Places; they offer many resources, oftentimes for free, to assist with the listing process. Another feature on their

website is called the "Bookshop" where visitors can find a listing of all publications produced and/or written by NPS professionals. NPS has also recently developed the Historic Preservation Learning Portal (www.historicpreservation.gov) that provides easy access to literally hundreds of preservation websites, and offers a wide variety of research capabilities for lay persons and professional preservationist alike.

- Sylvania is fortunate to have several educational institutions nearby, and can therefore coordinate with students, classes, and professors from these schools for project assistance. These institutions include Lourdes University in Sylvania itself; University of Toledo, Stautezenberger and Herzing Universities and Owens Community College in Toledo; Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green; Northwest State Community College; Defiance College; OSU-Lima; and the University of Findlay. Working with colleges and universities presents many possibilities to integrate local efforts with class projects; individual study projects, internships, and practicums; and cap-stone projects and documents - all building local ownership in and around the community. These all encourage the use of Downtown Sylvania as a living laboratory, potentially bringing new people and new ideas into the mix. In addition, Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI, Belmont Technical College in St. Clairsville, OH; Kent State University in Kent, OH; Youngstown State University in Youngstown, OH; and Ball State University in Muncie, IN are five relatively close educational institutions offering advanced degree programs in preservation-related fields.
- Much the same as with recycling programs or "Say No to Drugs" campaigns, creating a curriculum for school children celebrating local history will reinforce the value of Sylvania's "roots" with its youngest citizens. Using the

built environment as an outdoor classroom will have the long-term effect of creating a population that will honor and respect Sylvania's historic assets. Those who value something are much more likely to preserve, invest, and enhance than to tear down, move away, or otherwise destroy. For more information about using the built environment as a teaching tool, Sylvania can begin with the following two websites in addition to using a search engine to locate more resources. Both CUBE (Center for Understanding the Built Environment, www.cubekc.org) and T.H.E.N. (The Heritage Education Network, (<http://frank.mtsu.edu/~chankins/THEN/page2.html>)) are wonderful sites for educators and lay people alike.