

To: Ridgefield EDC

From: Hilary Atzrott, Student Extern, Pace University Land Use Law Center

Re: Ridgefield DRAFT Final Report

Date: February 14, 2013

Downtown Ridgefield: Tools for Prosperity

This report presents the Land Use Law Center's findings for Ridgefield's Downtown growth and revitalization. To create this toolbox for downtown prosperity, we researched the demographics of Ridgefield and surrounding communities. After identifying several target areas of concern based on the 2010 Ridgefield Plan of Conservation and Development, best practices were researched throughout the United States and Canada. These best practices created this comprehensive toolbox for use in downtown Ridgefield.

It is important to note that Ridgefield already has the tools and entities to implement many of these best practices in the downtown area. Ridgefield is often named Connecticut's Number One Town.¹ Ridgefield had world-class amenities including museums, a community center, recreation center, fitness facility, two theaters, and an under-construction, state-of-the-art library.

Ridgefield is ready to launch a new website, many signature events exist, and multiple organizations focused on common goals. Yet the most successful downtowns have an increased focus on symbiosis among organizations - organizations working together towards common goals in a coordinated function. Ridgefield has lacked this ability. Ridgefield has four separate websites and commissions working to improve the downtown without any organizing entity for these activities.² These include:

- The Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce
- The Ridgefield Economic Development Commission
- Downtown Ridgefield, Inc.
- The Town of Ridgefield
- Ridgefield Patch

While these organizations all focus on a thriving downtown, increased coordination and cooperation will lead to a strengthened mission and ability to succeed. There is a lack of integration between activities and organizations, a missing link for downtown Ridgefield.

Ridgefield Demographics³

As a whole, Ridgefield is an affluent town with rural charm that has experienced steady

¹ Within its designated class.

² Ridgefield currently has the Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.ridgefieldchamber.org>), EDC (<http://www.ridgefielddevelopment.com>), Downtown Ridgefield, Inc., (http://downtownridgefield.com/?page_id=8) and the Town of Ridgefield (<http://www.ridgefieldct.org>) working on the downtown area. The Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Ridgefield, Inc., the Town of Ridgefield, and Ridgefield Patch (<http://ridgefield.patch.com>) all have separate websites.

³ Please see Appendix A. The statistics found in this section come from a variety of studies and data sets.

growth. Ridgefield's population has been consistently growing over the past 12 years. While Ridgefield's population is still forecasted to grow to 25,707 by 2016, this indicates a decline current growth of 3-6% per year. The Ridgefield population is primarily families, with 69% of the population being between 5 and 49. Of that group, only 10% is 18-24. 18% is people between the ages 50-65.⁴

Ridgefield's business landscape consist of smaller employers, but large-scale industry exists as well.⁵ The majority of Ridgefield residents commute outside of the town for employment. More than 2,000 residents travel to Stamford or New York City every day.⁶ Ridgefield had a 6.3% unemployment rate in 2011, lower than the county and state average.⁷ These statistics allow for Ridgefield residents to have a higher consumer spending rate than much of the state.⁸

Ridgefield's residents have a significantly higher college and advanced degree ratio than the rest of the state.⁹ This makes education a top priory for many families in Ridgefield, and contributes to an excellent public school system. Test scores in Ridgefield are all above the state average, and class sizes below the state average.¹⁰

Ridgefield has a strong real estate market. 84.3% of the market is single family homes, significantly higher than the 65% state and county averages.¹¹ The median home price is \$695,000, above the county average of \$495,000 and state average of \$265,000.¹² 77% of homes are owner occupied.¹³ There are 182 subsidized housing units.¹⁴ Of the 133 home sales in 2009, 125 were over \$400,000.¹⁵

⁴ Ridgefield CERC Town Profile Page 1 <http://www.cerc.com/TownProfiles/Custom-Images/ridgefield.pdf>

⁵ The largest employers in the community are Boehringer-Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Schlumberger Doll Research, the Town of Ridgefield, Adam Boderick Salon & Spa, and the Laurel Ridge Health Care Center.⁵ The top five employers on the Grand List are Boehringer-Ingelheim LTD, Boehringer-Ingelheim, Ridgefield Properties, Boehringer-Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals I, and Ridgefield Professional Office.

⁶ Ridgefield CERC Town Profile Page 2 <http://www.cerc.com/TownProfiles/Custom-Images/ridgefield.pdf>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Ridgefield Data Excel Sheet Consumer Spending Tab, Provided by CREC SiteFinder.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Ridgefield CERC Town Profile Page 1 <http://www.cerc.com/TownProfiles/Custom-Images/ridgefield.pdf>

¹¹ Ridgefield CERC Town Profile Page2 <http://www.cerc.com/TownProfiles/Custom-Images/ridgefield.pdf>

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

Target Area: Ridgefield Center

Ridgefield was designated a “Village District” in 2007.¹⁶ This toolbox specifically focuses on Downtown Ridgefield, the main street corridor of the town. In the Ridgefield Plan of Conservation and Development, residents have expressed a desire to continue existing zoning patterns to avoid an influx of “big-box” stores.¹⁷ The organization “Downtown Ridgefield” wants to maintain the historical character while also increasing parking and pedestrian areas.¹⁸ The best practices laid out in this paper allow for a Ridgefield that brings together the goals of residents, businesses, and the municipality.

Organizations Involved: Principle Stakeholders

As previously mentioned, multiple organizations are focused on the common goal of a revitalized downtown area. These key players involve both governmental and non-profit entities.

Parties involved include the Economic Development Commission, Zoning Board, Planning and Zoning Commission, Parking Authority, Ridgefield Arts Council, and Historic Council, Library Initiative, Destination Ridgefield, Ridgefield Playhouse, Ridgefield Arts Guild, the businesses in the downtown area, and the Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce. It is important to note that while these organizations have different functions, they are not meant to be mutually exclusive. Coordination of these entities is key to downtown success.

This study is broken down into four parts. Part one focuses on best practices for Ridgefield’s governmental entities. Part two focuses on best practices for Ridgefield’s businesses. Part three focuses on best practices for economic development. Part four focuses on combining the goals of all organizations and stakeholders to create a unified, prosperous downtown Ridgefield.

At the beginning of each best practice section, general information is stated about national and international best practices. After analysis of the national best practices, two towns – Greenville, SC and Simsbury, CT, were selected as case studies. These two towns may not embody each and every best practice discussed, but are excellent examples of communities which analyzed their downtown areas, chose what best practices were necessary for individual town success, and implemented the plans in a unified, successful way.

Greenville, SC was selected because Greenville has been celebrated by numerous

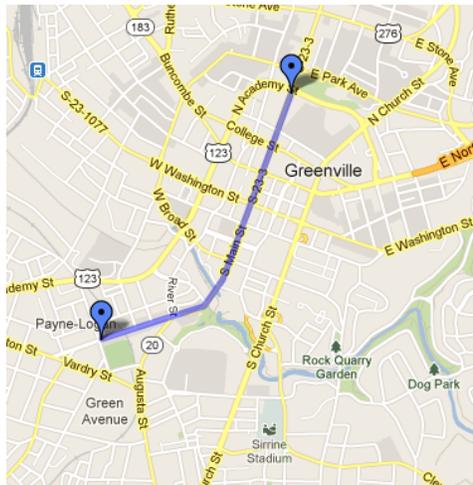
¹⁶ Ridgefield Plan of Conservation and Development Chapter 9: Community Structure http://www.ridgefieldct.org/filestorage/46/78/FINAL_Chapter_9_Community_Structure.pdf; Ridgefield Center became a Village District in 2007, ensuring that when development, redevelopment, or exterior building alterations occur, the Center’s character will be preserved and enhanced.

¹⁷ Ridgefield Plan of Conservation and Development Chapter 11: Business Development http://www.ridgefieldct.org/filestorage/46/78/FINAL_Chapter_11_Business_Development.pdf

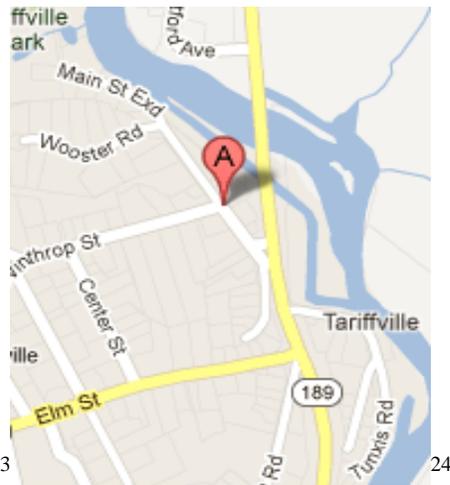
¹⁸ *Id.*

organizations as an exceptional Main Street.¹⁹ Greenville has a larger population than Ridgefield with 58,409 people. Greenville also has a lower median household income of \$37,383, lower average home price of \$189,868, and lower percentages of residents with higher education.²⁰ Yet Greenville has been able to create a highly successful downtown community without any large-scale transportation located in the downtown or the fiscal base which exists in Ridgefield.

Simsbury, CT was selected because of the striking similarities to Ridgefield. Simsbury has a population of 23,438 as of 2011, a median household income of \$114,670, and similar demographics and educational experiences.²¹ Simsbury does not have any central public transportation near the main street area, yet has created a thriving downtown community, added affordable housing in the surrounding areas, and has been continuously recognized for downtown excellence.²²



Map of Greenville, SC Main Street



Map of Simsbury, CT Main Street

Best Practices in Government

¹⁹ The American Planning Association celebrated Greenville, SC in 2009 <http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/streets/2009/>, while the National Trust for Historic Preservation recognized Greenville's success in 2003 <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-street-news/2003/06/greenville-s-c.html>.

²⁰ Education: 79% HS & above (34.2% BA & above)

²¹ Simsbury Town Profile <http://www.cerc.com/TownProfiles/Custom-Images/simsbury.pdf>

²² Simsbury is a Designated Connecticut Main Street. <http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/travel/main-street-communities/ct-simsbury.html>

²³ Map from

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=108110672100246365020.000470e38c7a886cc75c2&ll=34.850016,-82.40274&spn=0.019018,0.023174&z=14&source=embed>

²⁴ Map from

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=108110672100246365020.000470e38c7a886cc75c2&ll=34.850016,-82.40274&spn=0.019018,0.023174&z=14&source=embed>

Best Practices: Planning and Zoning

Currently, Ridgefield's Downtown Plan focuses on maintaining the same business zoning areas, while keeping business and residential zoning districts separate. The most active and prosperous downtowns have comprehensive zoning plans that involve a detailed analysis before rezoning, which usually lead to recommendations for industry and geographic specific zoning with increased pedestrian walkability to promote mixed use housing access in the business zone. Many of these downtown areas have used the National Historic Preservation "Main Street" zoning approach, which focuses on long-term zoning and strategic planning for long-term growth.²⁵

Planning and Zoning

Nationally, many planning and zoning techniques have been employed to improve downtowns. Washington, D.C. created a toolkit to plan for rezoning.²⁶ Pawtucket, RI created a downtown design plan and commission focused on street development and transportation development (specifically if a railroad should be brought to the area). Pawtucket has currently come up with a geographic zoning scheme, including a downtown district and separate commuter rail district.²⁷ Lowell, MA has created an artist overlay district, making it possible for artists to live and work in the same space above retail stores.²⁸ Vermont has increased density through affordable housing developed in older buildings repurposed into housing rather than new construction.²⁹

Downtown Density

Monmouth, NJ and Crozet, VA have focused on "all roads lead[ing] to downtown", creating zoning laws focused on downtown density.³⁰ Downtowns are best supported when there is housing density in the downtown area, because in town residents provide disproportionate economic support to downtown. Those who live in and near downtown spend upward of \$14,000 a year downtown, compared to employees in downtown who spend \$2,500 a year.³¹ A concentrated downtown center helps attract young professionals to the area and increase housing while reducing sprawl.³² Monmouth's zoning guidelines

²⁵North Battleford and Winnipeg, Canada have followed the Main Street (National Historic Preservation) zoning approach. See <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-center/>

²⁶ This toolkit was created after analyzing the planning and zoning methods of 60 US cities. Washington, D.C. has found that re-zoning goes best when a number of cities are researched and the 8 most similar cities are chosen to base the new zoning plan. https://www.communicationsmgr.com/projects/1355/docs/Zoning_BPs_whole.pdf

²⁷ Pawtucket Foundation Plan, available at <http://www.pawtucketfoundation.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/business-development-pdf.pdf>

²⁸ Preservation Nation Rebuilding: available at http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/housing/Rebuilding_Community.pdf

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ Crozet Master Plan, available at http://www.albemarle.org/upload/images/forms_center/departments/community_development/forms/crozet_master_plan/RecommendationPacket0719.pdf

³¹ <http://www.pvpc.org/resources/landuse/dwntow-zone-repair.pdf>

³² <http://www.stoc-ny.com/library/news-media/GBC%20-%20Best%20Practices%20in%20ED.pdf>

have focused on keeping the historic nature of the downtown while also creating a community attractive to local college alumni, and rezoning for affordable housing for young businesspeople and bikeability.³³

Transportation Planning

Currently, Ridgefield has several local transit opportunities in use. The Branchville train station is 3.5 miles away from the downtown Main Street area, while several shuttles go to other nearby towns from local churches.

There has been concern about the expansion of the Branchville area and the effect such expansion would have on the downtown region. While it would seem that expansion of Branchville would be a potential competition to already established downtown area, this is often not the case. Orlando, FL. has implemented a program between their central downtown SunRail train station and their LYMMO bus system. Unlike Ridgefield, Orlando's train station is central to their downtown area; however, their downtown covers much more space, and they have been creative in planning for a larger served area. Orlando uses the LYMMO bus system as a free local downtown transit line bringing people around downtown and specifically connecting them to the train station.³⁴ It follows a 3 mile circuit around the downtown area, drastically expanding the traditional area of service.³⁵ By using a supplementary bus system, or comparable local transit device, connectivity is created with more outlying areas, allowing economic benefit to all.

Parking and Pedestrian-Friendly Streets

Parking and pedestrian access are two key issues downtown Ridgefield faces. One of the most low-cost improvements Ridgefield can make is including digital maps of parking available downtown on the town's website. St. Charles, IL posts downtown parking maps on their town website.³⁶

Additionally, most of Ridgefield's municipal parking is consolidated into parking lots located around the downtown area. Having consolidated parking that is readily accessible in a pedestrian dominated area helps maintain cohesion in the community, as suburban drivers maintain access to an expanding downtown, while the streets remain pedestrian friendly. Countless communities have helped alleviate this problem with the Complete Streets approach. Complete Streets are planned areas designed to enable safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.³⁷ Complete Streets direct transportation planners to focus on safe access for users, and have been found to alleviate

³³ Monmouth Redevelopment Plan, *available at* <http://www.cityofmonmouth.com/attachments/article/524/PresentationHandout.pdf>

³⁴ <http://www.nctr.usf.edu/pdf/473-135.pdf>

³⁵ Lymmo Transportation Study, <http://www.lymmostudy.com/>

³⁶ <http://www.stcharlesil.gov/sites/default/files/documents/downtown-parking-map/map-downtown-parking0.pdf>

³⁷ <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-faq>

congestion by minimizing dependence on cars, while also creating economic development³⁸ by removing the high costs of parking and transportation.

While parking has been an issue for Ridgefield, studies have found that easily accessible parking is not a top draw for a downtown area.³⁹ Parking improvements must be undertaken with economic and quality-of-life improvements as well, or economic revitalization is not possible.⁴⁰ Parking patterns should support a plan that lessens downtown traffic – an element of downtown revitalization that *does* keep visitors away.⁴¹

Key focuses for downtown parking improvement do not need to be on creating additional spots, but rather relating the spots to the downtown area in a clearer way. Proper signs, connectivity, location, walkability, and aesthetics should be the key focuses.⁴² Studies have pointed out that parking in downtowns does not need to be directly in front of the store or restaurant visited – consumers walk more than a downtown block at many major malls.⁴³ The focus is on creating or improving parking that is easy to find (both to park in and to find the walkways to downtown), easily accessible from main roads, on safe walking paths, and aesthetically pleasing with proper landscaping.

Ridgefield’s parking regulations are codified in Chapter 340: Vehicles and Traffic.⁴⁴ §340-9 focuses on no-parking areas, many which are on Main Street.⁴⁵ Ridgefield should consider analyzing if these no-parking areas are beneficial to the community or should be designated as parking areas. While some may be no-parking areas due to easements, others could add additional spots to make downtown parking more convenient.

Ridgefield’s parks and rural spaces also supply excellent locations to plan and develop paths and trails for pedestrians and cyclists. Washington, Missouri has surveyed existing resources, decided what improvements are needed, and created riding and walking paths to increase tourism and local activism in the community.⁴⁶

Ridgefield also has local transit necessities which should be filled. Many small towns are turning to local shuttles and trolleys to give their citizens more transportation options around their own towns. This could be a great boon for Ridgefield and depending on what route taken, an extremely lucrative tourist draw as well. Greenville, SC uses trolleys and buses and allows their local transportation to act as part of their tourist draw.⁴⁷

³⁸ <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals/factsheets/economic-revitalization>

³⁹ Downtown Parking Myths, Realities, and Solutions, NY COM & The Laberge Group p. 5.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.* at 9.

⁴³ *Id.* at 4.

⁴⁴ Chapter 340: Vehicles and Traffic, <http://ecode360.com/12369443>.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at §340-9.

⁴⁶ http://www.ci.washington.mo.us/vertical/sites/%7B16AC081B-8831-40B4-BC22-1AAFE46CD04B%7D/uploads/Washington_Bicycle_and_Pedestrian_Plan_Draft_8-22-11_-_New2.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://www.greenvillesc.gov/publicworks/trolley.aspx>

Planning and Zoning in Greenville, SC

Greenville has established a fifteen-block Main Street area through the assistance of the local government and private advisory groups.⁴⁸ Greenville has carefully planned for a pedestrian-friendly community consisting of sidewalks, tree canopies, and a transportation-friendly trolley bus, which has increased visitor traffic while reducing car traffic. Greenville has also created numerous mixed-use developments along Main Street containing office space, apartments, and retail. These spaces are within walking distance of the local grocery stores and three parks. Further, one-fourth of downtown Greenville's 1,750 residential units are located on Main Street, which has increased demand for commercial activities in the area.⁴⁹

As Greenville has grown, congestion has grown as well. While the aforementioned pedestrian solutions helped alleviate some congestion, parking still remained a major issue. Greenville managed to alleviate the parking problem by moving parking off of Main Street. One-fourth of Greenville's 16,000 downtown parking spaces are one block east and one block west of Main Street, with the remaining spaces located even further out of the pedestrian areas.⁵⁰

Greenville also adopted the Complete Street approach in 2006,⁵¹ creating a Bike Master Plan⁵² that has been so successful Greenville has the nickname "Bikeville."⁵³ The plan was implemented by creating bike parking lots, designating certain businesses as "bike friendly businesses" and creating online maps of bike paths throughout the city and downtown area.⁵⁴

Greenville has committed itself to long-term planning to keep the downtown prosperity alive.⁵⁵ The overall revitalization of the downtown area has taken over thirty years, beginning in 1978 with their first comprehensive plan. Since that time, the city of Greenville has created guidelines or master plans for each of the nine distinct neighborhoods in the city.⁵⁶ Yet these individual master plans do not compete with each other, as they are unified under a general city-wide comprehensive plan.⁵⁷ Thus, while each neighborhood master plan focuses on improving the specific neighborhood, the plans do not compete thanks to the guidance of the city-wide plan.

⁴⁸ <http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/streets/2009/>

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ <http://www.greenville.sc.gov/ParksRec/trails/forms/CompleteStreetsResolution.pdf>

⁵² <http://www.greenville.sc.gov/ParksRec/trails/bikeville.aspx>

⁵³ <http://www.greenville.sc.gov/ParksRec/trails/bikeville.aspx>

⁵⁴

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=208405995372415643170.0004c34e9896c77effdbc&msa=0&ll=34.827614,-82.343903&spn=0.202068,0.307274>

⁵⁵ <http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/streets/2009/>

⁵⁶ <http://www.greenville.sc.gov/PlanningZoning/MasterPlans.aspx>

⁵⁷ *Id.*

Planning and Zoning in Simsbury, CT

Simsbury has conducted numerous studies on planning and zoning in the town. Specifically, Simsbury has a final town center report that was created in 2010, along with a guideline for community design and historic district commission handbook.⁵⁸ Beginning in 2009, Simsbury conducted analysis for site suitability regarding incentives housing.⁵⁹ This initial analysis, conducted in accordance with the Simsbury comprehensive plan, lead to an additional two-part report which explains the incentives housing logic and placement, which may be beneficial for Ridgefield.

Best Practices for Local Businesses

Best Practices: Marketing

Websites and Social Media

In today's digital age, social media and websites are key mediums for communication and advertising. This is true for businesses and downtowns. Ridgefield currently has many different websites that promote the town, such as DowntownRidgefield.com, the Patch site, Chamber of Commerce site, and municipal websites. There is not one "go-to" website that gives all downtown details. Downtown websites have become crucial to revitalization.

The most effective downtown websites engage the visitors and create a complete vision of the downtown area. They have pictures, complete business district profiles including breakdowns of what businesses are in the community, tourism resources, parking information, maps, directions to the community, and information about upcoming events, as well as links to the social media⁶⁰ pages for the area. Promotional events are prominent as well. Additionally, website design does not have to be expensive: classes in local high schools and colleges can help, and competitions can be held to see who creates the best website or social media campaign.

The Hyannis Main Street website⁶¹ for Cape Cod's Downtown extremely interactive and includes videos, maps, and testimonials. The "Connect" link that lets people connect with the site via Facebook and Twitter campaigns. The FOOD (Fabulous Owner Operated Dining) section promotes local restaurants on Main Street.

⁵⁸ All studies may be found at the Planning and Land Use website, <http://www.town.simsbury.ct.us/planning-and-land-use-department>.

⁵⁹ http://www.town.simsbury.ct.us/sites/simsburyct/files/file/file/090417_memo_-_initial_site_analysis.pdf

⁶⁰ Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Flickr are the key social media tools of downtowns. Simsbury, CT has such social media outlets.

⁶¹ <http://www.hyannismainstreet.com>



Cambridge, Maryland created a website⁶² that includes additional draws for visitors, such as competition. Cambridge currently has a Facebook cover picture competition going on for residents. There is also extensive theme marketing, such as a Christmas ornament sale.

Theme and Cultural Events

Downtowns that have cultural and themed events that draw residents and tourists are extremely successful, especially for revitalization purposes. While Ridgefield has several theme events each year and cultural events in the immediate downtown vicinity, a larger draw is always possible.

Beacon, NY revitalized the downtown by becoming an art center and transforming vacant buildings into art studios (a common trend in downtown revitalization)⁶³. Hudson, NY became a haven for antiques. Philadelphia drew people to the Center City area by establishing a restaurant week, which has now become a national event and has recently been used to draw foodies to the Hudson Valley⁶⁴. Concert Series have brought many to downtown Bronxville, NY⁶⁵ during the summer concert series, while Stamford, CT has the summertime “Alive at Five” series⁶⁶. West Harrison, NY began hosting antique car shows⁶⁷, while Ambler, PA has used charity events to draw new demographics to the

⁶² <http://www.cambridgemainstreet.com>

⁶³ <http://www.trendhunter.com/trends/reset-new-wings-for-architecture>

⁶⁴ A week to two-week long event where there is a fixed price menu for a three-course meal, alcohol not included. Usually, people buy drinks as well, allowing the restaurant to make a profit. Recently implemented in the Hudson Valley. <http://www.hudsonvalleyrestaurantweek.com/home.php>

⁶⁵ <http://bronxville.patch.com/articles/about-town-summer-concert-series>

⁶⁶ <http://www.stamfordaliveatfive.com>

⁶⁷ <http://harrison.patch.com/articles/viewfinder-west-harrison-hosts-classic-car-show - photo-7031934>

downtown area.⁶⁸ Athletic events can be a big draw to the downtown area, even in smaller towns. Manayunk, PA has created an annual bike race that draws thousands of people to the area, while many tri-state area towns host events for various foundations throughout the year.

Ardmore, PA has worked hard through the Ardmore Initiative⁶⁹ to increase its marketing reach through the use of intelligently planned and cohesive social media and overall community organization. Through the use of only one website, and well done Facebook and Twitter pages, Ardmore is able to reach the largest amount of its citizens in easy to find and modern manner. Additionally, Ardmore looks to the private business sector for help with its event marketing, selling sponsorship spots to different business for various events throughout the year. Through top down organization and communication, Ardmore has been able to not only create events but market them to the community.



Business Marketing and Event Planning in Greenville

Greenville has a bustling downtown area complete with sixty-four restaurants and cafes along Main Street. Additionally, Downtown Greenville averages more than 320 special event days a year including festivals, parades, and weekly music series during spring, summer and early fall.⁷⁰ The Main Street First Friday is a monthly event, and has been successful nationally in bringing more residents to the downtown area at least once a month.

⁶⁸ The event chooses an evening when downtown businesses give a percentage of proceeds to the charity, and brings people who may not otherwise shop downtown to the downtown. <http://www.amblergives.com>

⁶⁹ <http://www.ardmore-pa.org/>

⁷⁰ <http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/streets/2009/>

Greenville, like Ridgefield, has multiple organizations working on the downtown Main Street community. There are two Facebook pages⁷¹, one focused on Downtown Greenville and one focused on Main Street alone, and there are web pages for Main Street⁷², the Chamber of Commerce⁷³, and Downtown Greenville⁷⁴.

Greenville has managed to take the numerous stakeholders, social media outlets used for marketing and create a comprehensive message. While there are numerous pages about Greenville, each page is complete – and each page promotes the events of the other organizations. The annual “Fall for Greenville” event is promoted on each page, and the different organizations are each “friends” on Facebook. The Facebook pages also link with the Facebook pages of local businesses, creating a network of business and promotions. As seen below, websites that compliment each other can embody the support of multiple stakeholders.



Governmental and private websites create a unified message.



⁷¹ <http://www.facebook.com/mainstreetgreenville>;
<http://www.facebook.com/DowntownGreenvilleSC?fref=ts>

⁷² <http://downtowngreenville.org>

⁷³ <http://www.greenvillechamber.org>

⁷⁴ <http://www.greenvillesc.gov>

Facebook pages target different audiences, but are complementary rather than competing, allowing a larger target audience.

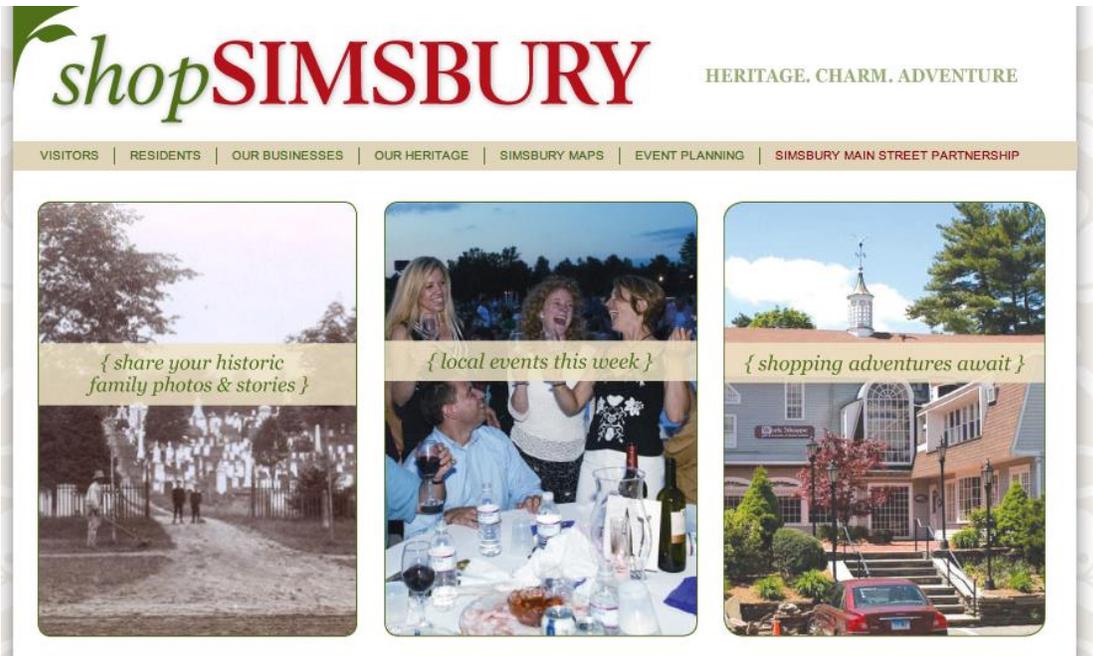


Business Marketing and Event Planning in Simsbury

Simsbury, CT has created a “Shop Simsbury” website⁷⁵ which highlights weekly events, shopping adventures, dining in town, and local photos. Visitors to the site can purchase the ShopSimsbury Card⁷⁶, research the heritage of the community, and search businesses in the comprehensive business directory. The “Map” section has a map of the downtown, outdoor areas, and heritage maps.

⁷⁵ <http://shopsimsbury.com>

⁷⁶ Card for discounts at local stores. Stores sign up for membership, and are then enrolled in the card program. Local residents purchase the card, which lasts for 12 months.



Simsbury does not have as many signature events as Ridgefield. The events advertised on the Simsbury websites focus on local private school open houses and workshops in the downtown, not the large-scale events that Ridgefield has. Yet, like Greensboro, Simsbury has managed to combine all of the local events onto all business pages, including the local government page as well as the shopping and chamber pages.

Best Practices for Economic Development

Business Development and Filling Vacancies

Spurring business development in a downtown area can be a daunting task, but many downtowns have successfully brought new businesses to the area, filling vacancies and repurposing downtowns to foster niche markets that cannot be satisfied at big-box stores. These downtowns have relied on economic indicators to find where improvement is needed, created business improvement districts or economic development commissions to focus on marketing and recruiting new businesses, and offered tax abatements to new, revitalized, or redeveloped businesses.

i. Business Development Through BIDs and Tax Incentives

Creations of business improvement districts can spur business development. Brandon, Manitoba (Canada) was struggling. A large mall several miles from the downtown was taking away from downtown business. A BID is created to focus on niche marketing and creating a successful downtown area.⁷⁷ Ladysmith, British Columbia (Canada) has also spurred business development through BID creation coupled with active recruitment by the local Chambers of Commerce and local government agencies. The BID offered tax

⁷⁷ http://www.cityofnb.ca/mrws/filedriver/City_NB_Best_Practices_in_Downtown_Final.pdf

abatements to new tenants while creating vacant building taxes to get landlords more actively involved in business recruitment.⁷⁸ Winnipeg has created an aggressive vacant building program which involves fees for vacancy, quick title transfers, and non-compliance with timelines for empty buildings.⁷⁹ Pawtucket, RI has also considered such a tax.

Boulder, CO used economic indicators to spur business development. After the economic indicators were collected, the already-existing BID and EDC used the data to come up with a comprehensive strategy to attract new businesses.⁸⁰

Public-private investments are also an excellent way to spur business development. Birmingham, AL and Philadelphia, PA have focused on public-private investments to allow for greater marketing abilities in the areas. These partnerships, while often difficult to get off the ground due to funding,⁸¹ can have dramatic outcomes and help keep cities afloat.⁸²

ii. Business Development Through Landlord/Tenant Relationships

The landlord tenant relationship is crucial to downtown business development as it is the basis to starting a business. The aforementioned taxes on vacant buildings promote landlords to actively seek out tenants rather than have tenants seek out vacant properties.

Additionally, municipalities can promote ease of leasing properties through community involvement and education. Norfolk, VA created a website that brings together all of the landlord and tenant resources through the Bureau of Community Enrichment. The commission hosts monthly conferences and meetings on improving relationships and maintaining properties to benefit all parties in the leasing process.⁸³ Montgomery County, MD has created an online landlord-tenant handbook that focuses on leasing issues, basics of leasing, and dispute resolution for those involved in a lease.⁸⁴

Economic Development in Greenville, SC

Greenville has developed the downtown area through both private and public partnerships. Greenville has utilized the local tourist attractions to gain visitors and tourists to the area. Greenville's downtown is a cultural center for the region, featuring a performing arts center, art museum, public library, and children's museum. The local minor-league baseball stadium has become a main source for tourism, just as the Ridgefield Playhouse could become a source for Downtown Ridgefield. The local government and chamber of commerce has managed to create foot traffic through relying

⁷⁸ Id.

⁷⁹ Id.

⁸⁰ [http://www.boulderdowntown.com/files/docs/economic_dev_report_\(jan_03\).pdf](http://www.boulderdowntown.com/files/docs/economic_dev_report_(jan_03).pdf)

⁸¹ Pawtucket, RI has created the Pawtucket Alliance for Downtown Success, but has had a difficult time getting funding for the organization.

⁸² <http://www.stoc-ny.com/library/news-media/GBC%20-%20Best%20Practices%20in%20ED.pdf>

⁸³ http://www.norfolk.gov/communityenrichment/landlord_tenant_resources.asp

⁸⁴ http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/DHCA/housing/landlord_T/pdf/1thandbook.pdf

on local attractions, which in turn bring businesses to the area.

Private partnerships have also been created in the region, such as the Greenville Area Development Corporation.⁸⁵ The Development Corporation is focused not only on the downtown, but on the county as a whole, and has brought large scale businesses to the areas around Greenville, adding residents and bringing money into the region. Businesses include bioscience and research and development companies, similar to local industry in Ridgefield.⁸⁶

Economic Development in Simsbury, CT

Simsbury has an economic development commission that was created by municipal ordinance.⁸⁷ It consists of 9 members who serve for 5 year terms.⁸⁸ As of January 2013, the EDC has been focused on updating their downtown marketing study and village district study, creating a new front page for the website, and bringing tax relief to downtown property owners by installing qualified energy updates.⁸⁹

A Unified Ridgefield for a Unified Downtown

Downtown Ridgefield does not currently have a comprehensive method of data and inventory collection for the businesses in the town – a necessary step for a unified downtown area. Data for existing businesses is scattered among various websites and is often incomplete. Comprehensive data for a downtown area is important because it allows both a short-term understanding of immediate need while creating long-term outlook for continued collection and tracking of trends. A first step in a unified Ridgefield is to find where improvement is needed.

Vermont recognized the importance of downtown data collection and researched the topic throughout the US and Canada. After implementing economic indicator creation and data and inventory collection in four towns, Vermont created their own best practice, using a hybrid approach of data collection.⁹⁰ This hybrid approach involves the stakeholders retaining ownership of the processes, which allows for accurate collection as well as increased awareness of downtown issues.

Vermont began by identifying indicators and what data was necessary to calculate such indicators. This process was governed by a diverse steering committee consisting of a wide range of interests. An expert or trained economic professional should be involved in the process. The indicators selected in Vermont were clear and goal oriented, link

⁸⁵ <http://www.greenvilleeconomicdevelopment.com/strategic-plan.php>

⁸⁶ <http://www.greenvilleeconomicdevelopment.com/biopharma.php>

⁸⁷ <http://www.town.simsbury.ct.us/economic-development-commission>

⁸⁸ *Id.*

⁸⁹ Simsbury Draft Meeting Minutes, January 2013 <http://www.town.simsbury.ct.us/economic-development-commission/minutes/economic-development-commission-minutes-01102013-draft>.

⁹⁰

http://www.smartgrowthvermont.org/fileadmin/files/publications/Indicators_of_Downtown_Health/Indicators_of_Downtown_Health_Handbook_01.pdf

indicators to action, and had the ability to be tracked over time. Examples of indicators used in Vermont include economic vitality, livability and cultural identification, to name a few.

Vermont then began data collection on a yearlong timeline, using volunteers to engage the business community and collect the data. First, readily available government data was collected via the US Census website. After collecting readily available data, the committee was able to identify which information still needed to be collected. Members of the committee went to local business and community members to collect the data by hand, allowing for continued community involvement.

Lastly, Vermont had to analyze the data. While towns in Vermont found outside assistance was necessary to analyze the indicators in the proper context, proper analysis allows for future collection of data and tracking. Through these steps, Vermont created a process that allowed for public involvement, thus advancing awareness of downtown issues while correcting the problems.

While Vermont's study did not focus on long-term data availability, in the short term, Vermont has found that using the data for marketing purposes and through their town websites was most effective. Yet other communities have had success at making data and inventory information more effective. Baltimore, MD has used data information to create a website on real estate market conditions.⁹¹ Cleveland, OH has used census data, crime data, and mortgage data to assess foreclosures in the area.⁹² Washington, D.C. has the Neighborhood Info DC database, which supports community organizations by supplying DC neighborhood race, population, education, housing, and crime info, along with neighborhood profiles and foreclosures.⁹³ Memphis provides data to citizens through the Center for Community Building and Neighborhood action, which links university research with community action, allowing multiple community members to have a stake in the data process.⁹⁴

This information can then be used to create a unified message for Ridgefield, show which stakeholders should combine resources to improve the impact and mutually support each organization's mission. The most successful downtowns combine the efforts of all stakeholders, as is evidenced by Greenville and Simsbury. Websites and social media overlap, the governmental resources are linked from other pages, and meetings are held that allow all to state their concerns. Ridgefield has the ability to take these tools and implement them in a streamlined process, taking the downtown community to a new level of success.

⁹¹ http://www.baltimorehousing.org/vacants_to_value.aspx

⁹² <http://necando.case.edu>

⁹³ <http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/Foreclosure/index.html>

⁹⁴ <http://cbana.memphis.edu/index.php>

Next Steps

As this study continues, additional details must be addressed. These include an analysis of Economic Development Commissions in similar towns including staffing needs, examples of communities which excel at attracting and retaining small business with real estate and governmental incentives, and research into grant processes and tracking in Ridgefield and similar communities.

Sources:

This appendix is a comprehensive listing of best practice websites from the past six months of research. While many are not included in the paper, they elaborate on concepts discussed and are listed by category.

Appendix 1: Ridgefield Documents and Demographics

- Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., GRANT PROPOSAL: BRANCHVILLE-GEORGETOWN TRANSIENT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT VILLAGE (Aug. 4, 2011).
- Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., ROUTE 7 TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE STUDY: RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE PLAN (June 2011).
- Garnet Consulting Services, Inc., RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN (Jan. 11, 2010).
- Harrall-Michalowski Associates, GREATER DANBURY, CT HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (Dec. 2008).
- Kevin F. Redman, Town Comptroller, COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD CONNECTICUT (June 30, 2011).
- Milone & MacBroom, Inc., RIDGEFIELD CENTER STUDY: RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT (June 22, 2009).
- NORTHERN METRO MULTIFAMILY AND MIXED-USE SUMMIT (2012) (PowerPoint Materials).
- RIDGEFIELD E-CODE, <http://www.ecode360.com/12368091> (last visited Oct. 10, 2012).
- RIDGEFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, <http://www.ridgefielddevelopment.com> (last visited Oct. 10, 2012).
- Ridgefield Retail Lease Availability Report
- Ridgefield Retail Leasing Activity
- Ridgefield Retail Net Absorption Ridgefield Retail Rent Rates
- Ridgefield Vacancy Report
- Ridgefield Sale Availability Report Downtown
- Ridgefield Zoning Map

Appendix 2: Analysis of National Best Practices

Data and Inventory Best Practices

Sources:

Downtown Market Analysis: Step-by-step plan of downtown market analysis and info collection.

Link: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/>

Data and Benchmarking Indicators: Gives examples of best economic indicators for a number of towns.

Link:

http://www.smartgrowthvermont.org/fileadmin/files/publications/Indicators_of_Downtown_Health/Indicators_of_Downtown_Health_Handbook_01.pdf

Community Data Tools: Includes American FactFinder, MSA and Micrometropolitan tools, ZIP Code Business Patterns, Location Quotient Calculators, Local Workforce Profiles, many of which are tools used to collect data.

Link: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/community-data-tools/category/downtownbusiness-district/>

Areas Chosen For Best Practice:

Vermont was chosen as a best practice because it had done the most comprehensive study of downtowns of diverse characteristics to create a best practice. The towns in Vermont were also the mostly closely linked in character and demographics to those of Ridgefield. We also considered:

Pickaway County, Ohio: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/example-studies/ohio-example-studies/>

Sampleton and Summer County, Minnesota: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/example-studies/minnesota-example-studies/>

Sauwk Prairie and LaCrosse, Wisconsin: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/example-studies/wisconsin-example-studies/>

Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/example-studies/wisconsin-example-studies/>

Cambridge, Maryland: Cambridge could be an interesting area to study as an example of an area that has begun and been successful in downtown redevelopment WITHOUT a data/inventory best practice example. There is currently no downtown business or retail inventory, but economic redevelopment has occurred through data collected on historical business trends and comparisons of these trends in surrounding areas. While it is beneficial to establish these practices, Cambridge shows that other areas of implementation, such as social media, can begin before the data inventory collection is complete OR can begin using other data when finances do not currently allow for such collection. <http://www.cambridgemainstreet.com/uploads/file/MarketAnalysisfinalsept09.pdf>

Planning and Zoning Best Practices

Sources:

US EPA: Examples of Codes that Promote Smart Growth Development: Includes transportation codes, zoning overlay, and unified development codes along with examples of cities that have implemented such codes.

Link: <http://www.epa.gov/dced/codeexamples.htm>

Downtown Zoning Repair: Tools to Promote Economic Development in Your Town Center: Steps to creating a downtown zoning district, including “A Checklist for Downtown Zoning”

Link: <http://www.pvpc.org/resources/landuse/dwntow-zone-repair.pdf>

Philadelphia “Zoning Matters” Best Practices: While focused on Philadelphia, has ideas for generalized downtown zoning and has a wealth of information on parking strategies.

Link:

<http://zoningmatters.org/sites/zoningmatters.org/files/Best%20Practices%20PowerPoint%20presentation.pdf>

IDA Successful Strategies: Subscription needed, shows plans for other small towns.

Link: <https://www.ida-downtown.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=strategiesshm>

APA Successful Strategies : Has an Economic Development Toolbox which has helpful business development and support examples.

Link: <http://www.planning.org/eda/>

Useful Community Development: Urban to Rural : Background info on zoning.

Link: <http://www.useful-community-development.org>

Economic Development Action Plan Yadkinville, NC: Plan shows overall structure of successful redevelopment goal setting. Has good information about infill.

Link: <http://www.yadkinville.org/vertical/sites/%7BD9F95938A-529B-4171-8CDA-1E318E56DDAE%7D/uploads/%7BA011747A-AE65-4AE3-98EA-FC579F84F4B8%7D.PDF>

Areas Chosen for Best Practice:

Washington, D.C.: created an excellent Excel sheet to help decide which types of zoning to use. After analyzing the issues D.C. faced, planners took 60 cities and compared the zoning in each city to the zoning in DC. Then narrowed the list of 60 down to 8 with the most similarities, and came up with a zoning plan.

Link: https://www.communicationsmgr.com/projects/1355/docs/Zoning_BPs_whole.pdf

North Battleford, Canada: follows the Main Street (National Historic Preservation) zoning approach. Focused on long-term zoning and planning. Also discusses business development with the main street approach, including increasing tax bases and using the Four Points of Real Estate to improve downtown development. Also stresses training in the area of zoning every year.

Link: http://www.cityofnb.ca/mrws/filedriver/City_NB_Best_Practices_in_Downtown_Final.pdf

City of Winnipeg: Aggressive vacant building program which involves increasing fees for vacancy, quick title transfers, and increased regulatory and compliance measures with short timelines for empty buildings. Consider industry-specific zoning laws that focus on downtown businesses.

Link: http://www.cityofnb.ca/mrws/filedriver/City_NB_Best_Practices_in_Downtown_Final.pdf

Pawtucket, RI: Created a commission to assess and design improvement to traffic and pedestrian circulation to recommend flow improvements and create a concentrated “Downtown Design Plan”. Also focusing on Mixed Use development to allow mixed use and TOD. Created District Planning with a Commuter Rail District, Downtown Retail District, Riverfront District, and Armory Arts District. Also has had tax on vacant building and underutilized buildings.

Link: <http://www.pawtucketfoundation.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/business-development-pdf.pdf>

Crozet, VA: “All roads lead to downtown”, looked at the zoning laws to transition from general zoning to a downtown zoning district meant to create a thriving area. Literally gives step-by-step description of each zoning process that went through, including parking, mixed use, retail and residential uses, and how to transition to the new zoning process. Stressed the importance of density near downtown and that the surrounding areas should be zoned in a way to support the downtown.

Link:

http://www.albemarle.org/upload/images/forms_center/departments/community_development/forms/crozet_master_plan/RecommendationPacket0719.pdf

Monmouth, NJ: zoning guidelines are meant to create historic preservation, rezone to encourage density and residential use for local college alumni, and require owners with a vacant property to submit a Vacant Property Plan that includes a timeline. Also focuses on making the area more bikeable.

Link: <http://www.cityofmonmouth.com/attachments/article/524/PresentationHandout.pdf>

Lowell, MA: Lowell Artist Overlay District, made it possible for artists to live and work in the same space above retail stores, which is a use not allowed by most municipal ordinances. Also stresses that a 24 hour downtown with density is best.

Link: http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/housing/Rebuilding_Community.pdf

Transportation Best Practices

Information about the Branchville Route: <http://www.routefriend.com/stations/metronorth/branchville>

TOD Housing in Collingswood, NJ:

<http://www.greenville.gov/publicworks/trolley.aspx>

Orlando's enlargement of TOD: <http://www.nctr.usf.edu/pdf/473-135.pdf>

Orlando LYMMO Study on TOD: <http://www.lymmostudy.com/>

Walking and Biking Plans: http://www.ci.washington.mo.us/vertical/sites/%7B16AC081B-8831-40B4-BC22-1AAFE46CD04B%7D/uploads/Washington_Bicycle_and_Pedestrian_Plan_Draft_8-22-11_-_New2.pdf

Affordable Housing Best Practices

Areas Chosen for Best Practice

Concord, NH: In town residents provide disproportionate economic support to downtown. Those who live in and near downtown spend upward of \$14,000 a year downtown, compared to employees in downtown who spend \$2,500 a year.

Link: <http://www.pvpc.org/resources/landuse/dwntow-zone-repair.pdf>

Chattanooga, TN and Birmingham, AL: The path to a successful downtown is having a concentrated center, which helps attract young professionals to the area.

Link: <http://www.stoc-ny.com/library/news-media/GBC%20-%20Best%20Practices%20in%20ED.pdf>

Monmouth, NJ: Idea of renting out artist space and having it be a live/work space in the downtown area.

Link: <http://www.cityofmonmouth.com/attachments/article/524/PresentationHandout.pdf>

Vermont Housing Policy: More than 80 percent of new affordable housing projects have been in old buildings and repurposing buildings in downtowns. GREAT IDEA FOR RIDGEFIELD!!! Rehabilitation instead of new construction.

Link: http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/housing/Rebuilding_Community.pdf

Business Development Best Practices

Areas Chosen for Best Practice

Boulder, CO: Focused on how indicators are a crucial first step in business development.

Link: [http://www.boulderdowntown.com/files/docs/economic_dev_report_\(jan_03\).pdf](http://www.boulderdowntown.com/files/docs/economic_dev_report_(jan_03).pdf)

Brandon, Manitoba (Canada): is an example that has a big mall in the area that took away from the downtown but created a BID in the downtown area and focused on a niche market to great a successful downtown.

Link: http://www.cityofnb.ca/mrws/filedriver/City_NB_Best_Practices_in_Downtown_Final.pdf

Ladysmith, British Columbia: Focused on actively recurring new businesses to the area via Chambers and other local government agencies. Canadian towns also use tax strategies and abatements to improve downtowns, as well as adding taxes to vacant buildings to try and get landlords to more actively recruit businesses.

Link: http://www.cityofnb.ca/mrws/filedriver/City_NB_Best_Practices_in_Downtown_Final.pdf

Birmingham, AL, Cities in TX, Philadelphia: Focuses on both public and private investment, and how EDC can be an excellent marketing tool by increasing taxes to allow for campaigns in the district. FANTATIC article for marketing as well (focuses on **Orlando, FL**).

Link: <http://www.stoc-ny.com/library/news-media/GBC%20-%20Best%20Practices%20in%20ED.pdf>

Pawtucket, RI: BID creation, wants to implement a management and marketing program.

North Battleford, Canada: commercial incentive policies, tax incentives for new businesses in downtown region., expansion, job creation.

Websites and Social Media

Sources:

Government and tourism media, including use of Facebook and Twitter:

Link: <http://pinterest.com/timothyhaines/social-media-cities-town-states/>

Top reasons social media campaigns fail:

Link: <http://mainstreetedge.com/top-reasons-social-media-advertising-campaigns-fail>

Top reasons social media campaigns succeed:

Link: <http://www.dreamgrow.com/what-makes-a-social-media-campaign-successful/>

Comprehensive Branding in Downtowns:

Link: <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/training/conference/2012baltimore/program-and-schedule/tuesday-200-315.html>

Connecticut Main Street Campaigns and Awards:

Link: <http://ctmainstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Final-Alves.pdf>

Website Maintenance:

Link: <http://www.boulderdowntown.com/business/marketing-resources>

Areas Chosen for Best Practice:

North Dakota: North Dakota as a state has come up with a great tourism media campaign. It consists of Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Yelp, and Travelocity. People write about experiences on the site, and prizes are awarded for the best pictures and stories. While this is a new campaign so we can't be sure of the results, Ridgefield could possibly do a multi-functional campaign featuring a website and social media, all linked.

Link: <http://www.dreamgrow.com/north-dakota-is-embracing-social-media/>

Decatur, Alabama: Decatur, Alabama, needed a website to keep downtown revitalized during a streetscape construction. The site shows how Decatur was branded, had a weekly \$100 drawing, Facebook promotions, and, beyond the website, billboards, print materials, and newspaper ads. There are also examples of the actual websites and social media pages used.

Link: <http://www.redsageonline.com/our-work/casestudies/item/decatur-digs-downtown>

Simsbury, CT: Extremely similar to Ridgefield, has an incredible "Shop Simsbury" website. Includes sections for visitors, residents, and businesses. Has links for upcoming weekly events, shopping adventures, and sharing family photos. The "Our Business" area includes a business directory, business membership

area, and a separate link where business owners can update the listings that are posted on the site. There is also a “Heritage” tab that shows the historical aspects of the community, and “map” section with the downtown, outdoor areas, and heritage maps.

Link: <http://shopsimsbury.com>

Cape Cod (Hyannis), MA: This site is more interactive than Simsbury’s and has videos as well as pictures, but has the same basic overall structure. The tabs include the Homepage, Dine, Shop, Stay, Play, and Directory. There are also links to the local videos and a Main Street video tour, a photo gallery of the area, and Connect link that lets people connect with the site via Facebook and Twitter. There is a link to a new program called FOOD (Fabulous Owner Operated Dining) which focuses on eating at local restaurants on Main Street.

Link: <http://www.hyannismainstreet.com>

Bethlehem, PA: This site is social media based, and includes links to many of the Facebook pages and events that are maintained by Bethlehem. There is extensive advertising on the website to help generate revenue and support local businesses, as well as an incredible map that shows where arts, dining, services, and shopping are in Bethlehem.

Link: <http://www.downtownbethlehemassociation.com>

Cambridge, MD: The Cambridge, Maryland website is similar to the other websites listed (comprehensive lists of downtown businesses, restaurants, events) and includes theme marketing as well, as they have many events each year and fundraise for downtown through annual events like a Christmas ornament sale. There is also a competition for Facebook cover photo pictures and detailed market analysis demographic information included with the site.

Link: <http://www.cambridgemainstreet.com>

Culture Marketing/Theme Marketing

Areas Chosen for Best Practice:

Washington State: “Art Huddles”, bring additional art and cultural activities to the region.

Link: <http://www.cultural-alliance.org/Arts20Huddles20Monograph.pdf>

Philadelphia, PA: Tourism campaign stressing the restaurants and museums in the area.

Link: <http://press.visitphilly.com/releases/new-marketing-campaign-with-art-philadelphia-launches-to-promote-the-visual-arts>

Austin, TX: Promotes music festivals and embracing the unique and diverse population.

Link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keep_Austin_Weird

CT is Revolutionary: Connecticut has a campaign known as “keep CT revolutionary”. As seen from the additional link on Florida Small Town Marketing, many towns in Florida have removed the focus of being near Disney or beach locations and rather focused on one or two historical events each year, which have greatly increased tourism revenues and put the towns on the map for something other than a beach vacation.

Link: <http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/ctnj.php/archives/entry/two-year-27m-marketing-campaign-seeks-to-capture-past-present/>

Link: <http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Best-Practices/State-Spotlight/Promoting-Florida-s-Cultural-Riches.php>

***Farmer’s Market:* Lewis, DE:** A popular new trend used in Lewis, DE is to invest the proceeds of the market back into the community.

Link: <http://travel.usatoday.com/destinations/10great/story/2012-05-04/10-great-places-to-shop-at-a-farmers-market/54739312/1>

Restaurant Week: Hudson Valley, NY: Restaurant Week is a week to two-week long event where there is a fixed price menu (usually \$35) for a three-course meal, alcohol not included. The great part of restaurant week is that it allows people who may not usually come to an area to try out the area, as well as giving a downtown business a try. Usually, people buy drinks as well, allowing the restaurant to make a profit.

Link: <http://www.hudsonvalleyrestaurantweek.com/home.php>

Concert Series: Bronxville, NY; Stamford, CT: Concert Series are a great downtown event in the fall, spring, and summer. Bronxville, a town quite similar to Ridgefield, has a great summer concert series that occurs in the downtown area. Connecticut towns have done this as well, most notably (albeit much larger than Ridgefield) in Stamford during the summertime “Alive at Five” series.

Link: <http://bronxville.patch.com/articles/about-town-summer-concert-series>

Link: <http://www.stamfordaliveatfive.com>

Art series in any vacant buildings: Beacon, NY; Manayunk, PA: Many communities don’t want the look of a vacant building on a main street or in a downtown area. One popular solution is to take buildings that historically have had high vacancy rates and creating an art gallery that rotates to show different community or local school artists. Even if this is not something a town wants to do permanently with a building, the vacant building can temporarily display local art in the windows to attract people to look at the space in a more positive light and bring additional culture to the area.

Link: <http://www.trendhunter.com/trends/reset-new-wings-for-architecture>

Antiquing events: Hudson, NY revitalized their entire downtown by becoming a mecca for antiquing. Manayunk, PA has the most furniture shops on one street in all of North America. West Harrison, NY hosts antique car shows.

Link: <http://harrison.patch.com/articles/viewfinder-west-harrison-hosts-classic-car-show - photo-7031934>

“Fashion for a Cause” Fundraiser: Ambler, PA: Charity event for a local community. The event primarily focuses on businesses in the downtown area, and helps promote shopping at local stores and dining at local restaurants with a percentage of proceeds going to the charitable organization.

Link: <http://www.amblergives.com>

5k/bike race/other athletic events: Manayunk, PA: Hosts an annual bike race that draws thousands of people to the area.

Landlord/Tenant Relations Best Practice

Sources:

Managing Landlord-Tenant Relationships

Link: <http://ohioline.osu.edu/fr-fact/0004.html>

Green Provisions in Commercial Leases

Link: <http://www.pillsburylaw.com/index.cfm?pageid=34&itemid=40462>

Basics of Commercial Leasing

Link:

http://womeninbusiness.about.com/od/leasingcommercialspace/Leasing_Commercial_Office_Retail_and_Industrial_Spaces.htm

Areas Chosen for Best Practice:

Norfolk, VA: created a website that brings together all of the landlord and tenant resources through the Bureau of Community Enrichment. There are also monthly conferences and meetings on improving relationships and maintaining properties to benefit all parties.

Link: http://www.norfolk.gov/communityenrichment/landlord_tenant_resources.asp

Montgomery County, MD: Landlord-tenant handbook that focuses mainly on residential leasing issues.

Link: http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/DHCA/housing/landlord_T/pdf/lthandbook.pdf

Greensboro, NC: Landlord-tenant dispute program. It is a voluntary program that involves the local college's dispute resolution program to provide an alternate to court action. The city of Ft. Collins, TX has also created a mediation program.

Link: <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=725>

Link: <http://www.fcgov.com/neighborhoodservices/pdf/lthandbook.pdf>