

POTENTIAL DOWNTOWN PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS

**GOLDEN URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY
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1) RETAIL INCENTIVES

Hampton, VA (pop. 10,300)

<http://www.downtownhampton.com/economicdevelopment/>

The Downtown Hampton Development Partnership (DHDP) provides a **commercial property database** and applicable **demographic and business statistics** on its Web site to inform and attract potential businesses. Additionally, DHDP offers a variety of financial assistance to attract retail and restaurant users into 1st-floor spaces within its district.

Beginning in July 2007, DHDP began offering **rent assistance and property improvement grants**. The rent assistance program provides cash grants (up to \$5,000/yr) to property owners to buy down lease rates to better attract retail tenants. The DHDP's property improvement incentive promotes retail and restaurant recruitment and retention by offering financial assistance to property owners for façade improvements, renovations, new signage, landscaping, and build outs.

Many of Hampton's incentives are directed at encouraging 1st-floor retail and restaurant use, and curbing the proliferation of 1st-floor office space. Consequently, the DHDP works actively with property owners of both vacant and occupied (through lease renewal) buildings to encourage conformity and aid in the business recruitment process.

DHDP also offers a **leasing incentive** or finder's fee of up to \$1,200 to local real estate agents for each new retail or office tenant they recruit into the district. To qualify, the recruited business must be included DHDP's list qualified business types and must have a successful track record. In four years, the program has recruited eight businesses.

DHDP's **advertising grant program** will pay 25% per advertising project per quarter (up to \$500) to each business in the district, helping both the advertising placements and direct mail efforts of small businesses.

Yet another incentive is in the works: a **forgivable loan program** for new businesses. This loan, which would be forgiven after five years of occupancy, would help generate start-up capital so that new businesses can renovate, buy equipment and establish their customer base. Loans for this program are based on the number of jobs created, the capital investment involved, and the perceived value of the business to the district.

Gauging success:

DHDP's Executive Director Sherry Springs related that the advertising grant program has been very successful. See attached forms she provided.

Georgetown, TX (est. pop. 47,380)

<http://www.georgetown.org/news/publications.downtownincentives.php>

The city of Georgetown, TX, which has seen its population increase from 28,339 to 47,280 since 2000, has implemented a number of incentives for downtown businesses, including property tax abatements, historic property tax exemption, tax increment financing, a special downtown utility rate class, fee waivers, sales tax refunds, façade improvement grants as well as 4A and 4B Sales Tax programs.

Eligibility for these incentives businesses generally entails that businesses locate within the downtown area, be compatible with Georgetown’s Downtown Master Plan, provide an ensured return on investment, and adhere to **regulated hours of operation**.

Property tax abatements allow Georgetown to encourage investment within the downtown district by abating portions of property taxes. This incentive allows the City to abate a certain percentage of property taxes within the designated area for no more than ten years.

Georgetown’s **historic property tax exemption** allows the City to implement a partial property tax exemption for properties that meet the following qualifications: registered as a historic landmark; comply with historic property maintenance program; and adopt regulated hours of operation (retail, restaurant, or entertainment business only).

Tax increment financing provides funding for improvements to infrastructure within a designated area. This initiative helps to improve the downtown Georgetown’s appearance in order to allow current businesses to continue to progress while attracting prospective businesses. This incentive entails the City of Georgetown taking the amount of increased revenue from the pre-determined base year in district taxes and reinvesting it in the district in order to make improvements.

Georgetown’s **downtown utility rate class** provides downtown businesses with a special utility rate to aid current businesses and attract future ones. The City also reserves the right to **waive certain fees** for both residential and commercial developments including: fire services review, site plan review, demolition fees, construction permit, plan reviews, water meters, engineering & inspection, impact fees, sewer taps, electrical, regional detention/water quality facility, HARC certificate of design compliance, sign permit, inspection fees.

The city’s **sales tax refund** allows for the return of a portion of the sales tax revenue within the district in order to encourage businesses to make needed improvements. This incentive entails refunding a percentage of the sales tax revenue brought in within the designated area.

The **4A sales tax** is an economic development tax that uses tax revenue to help finance land and building acquisition, equipment, facilities, expenditures, and targeted infrastructure improvement.

The **4B sales tax** is an economic development tax that uses tax revenue to help finance improvements directly related to transportation issues (including, but not limited to, streets, drainage improvements, etc.)

Gauging success: (contacted 3/5)

Greeley, CO (pop. 84,519 in 2003)

<http://www.greeleydowntown.com>

Greeley's Downtown Development Authority (GDDA) offers an array of business opportunities and incentives to encourage investment. Their Web site features a Request for Proposal link that lists properties available for redevelopment and associated data, photos, and maps. The GDDA also offers low-interest loans for approved exterior maintenance and/or rehabilitation on individually designated properties or those contributing properties in an historic district on the city's historic register. Rebates for building permit fees on exterior or interior projects on historically designated buildings are also available.

The Greeley/Weld County operates an Enterprise Zone administered by Upstate Colorado Economic Development, which offers income tax credits for locating, expanding, investing or creating jobs within the zone.

Greeley also capitalizes on several opportunities available at the state level, including

- Colorado Historic Preservation Tax Credits of 20% for qualified "hard" construction costs of approved exterior and interior rehab;
- Historic Structures Assessment Grants, which offer up to \$10,000 for architectural assessments of designated or non-designated historic structures; and
- State Historical Fund Grants, which require a certified non-profit organization or the City of Greeley to act as the applicant. Matching funds are often required.

A Federal Historic Tax Credit of 20% of qualified projects costs, interior or exterior (\$5,000 minimum total qualified project) on historic rehab or 10% tax credit on certain other buildings is also available.

Professional architectural services are available via the Colorado Community Revitalization Association and its Main Street Program, providing downtown Greeley with access to the services of an historic preservation architect for consultations and, in some cases, provide property owners with façade renderings free of charge.

Gauging success: (Spoke to Tricia with GDDA)

Most of the development that has been done downtown has been achieved through benefactor contributions. Incentives have not typically been needed to carry these projects out. Tricia is considering waiving fees entirely for infill or new projects. The City of Greeley currently extends credit on all existing taps- water, sewer, etc, paying

essentially for replacements but not for required updates. Tricia's hoping to change this as well so that no expense is placed on business owner.

Tricia also related that the requests for proposals (RFP) site has been successful. It sounded like the GRA recently took over that responsibility from the city, but the city had a lot success with it. Tricia has plans to model it more closely after the Pueblo site and exert more focus/control the development projects. That is, GDDA will conduct the research for available sites, determine either one or a few redevelopment options, and develop more specific RFPs.

In general, she said that she was hoping to get the city to provide more incentives, including waiving all fees for a certain number of years. She also said that most, if not all, of GRA incentives will come as reimbursements, allow GRA to sidestep some of the normal loan issues and problems with projects not meeting deadlines.

Village of Lisle (pop. 21,180 in 2000)

<http://www.vil.lisle.il.us/home/index.asp?page=436>

The Village of Lisle has created downtown zoning districts to foster the attraction of retail shops and quality restaurants to the downtown. The city's central retail core district requires first floor stores to be either retail or restaurants while a perimeter district was created to accommodate retail, office, service and residential users who wish to be located in close proximity to the downtown. The Village of Lisle also devised a 2006 Claritas Retail Gap Opportunity based on demand data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey and supply data from Census of Retail Trade to illustrate sales gap opportunity (the difference between supply and demand) for each retail outlet within a five-mile radius of downtown.

Additionally, the Village of Lisle's produces a **Downtown Design Work Book** of images to guide façade improvements and new construction products. It also has a **“Highly Desirable Demographics” link** on its Web site that relates the following:

Strong demographics make downtown Lisle a desirable location for businesses. 2006 Claritas research estimates approximately 261,667 people live within a 5-mile radius of the downtown. This includes 100,102 households with an estimated income of \$97,290. During the day, Lisle's population increases by thousands as employees commute to our business districts and visitors travel to our many community treasures such as the Morton Arboretum. Businesses appreciate the benefits of having thousands of potential customers delivered to their door daily via our strong transportation network.

Gauging success: (spoke with Catherine Schuster)

Currently revising the city's Web site, adopting nature-based theme. Economic Development Commission's façade improvement was initially not very successful, so it was expanded to include demolition. The Village of Lisle must address issue of being located in a floodplain; rebuilding provides the opportunity to meet current building codes. Commission now willing to pay 50% of costs (up to a cap); and the inclusion of the demolition has made the program more successful. City's Master Plan identified Prairie as design theme, so that type of architecture is encouraged through both commission reviews and the Design Book, which helps illustrate the desired style. The city also offers orientation meetings to introduce principles of design. The city requests an architectural rendering for each site proposal and attempts to help/guide process as much. Proposals require two quotes, as well as approval by ECD and Village Board. Monies are reimbursement after a project is complete rather than granted in advance of construction. The city also offers a retail grant program for internal business improvements, and intends to unveil new streetscape plans in coming months.

City of Corning, NY (pop. 10,842)

<http://www.gafferdistrict.com>; <http://corningrestoration.com>

The City of Corning, NY, has both a **Gaffer District BID** and a **Market Street Restoration Agency** geared toward downtown business recruitment and retention. The Gaffer District Web site offers a 10-page "**Quick Facts for Prospective Retail Businesses**" (see attachment) that highlights the area's attractions. The Web site emphasizes **district-wide branding**, detailing the city's location, access to population (using concentric population data at 5-, 10-, and 20-mile radii), physical features, pedestrian amenities, shopping/dining/entertainment offerings, "feeder anchors" (such as banks, hotels, and supermarkets) located within walking distance of downtown, and a range of business and marketing opportunities and incentives. The Gaffer District site also offers business and area maps, as well as an interactive "**Business Link and List**" page to which businesses can link their private Web sites. The Market Street Restoration Agency provides free design services for signs and buildings, obtains bids, oversees actual work and supplies information on, proper restoration, repairs and construction.

2) GOOGLE 3-D MAPPING

McMinnville, TN (pop. 12,750)

<http://www.mainstreetmcminnville.org/index.php>

The City of McMinnville, TN, recently created a **3-D model of its entire downtown** with the help of local volunteers and a little training by professionals from Google. The City, which relied on a state-funded “Main Street Innovation” grant to administer the project, now has an affordable and useful tool for local economic development activities relating to retail, residential, office and visitor development.

SketchUp, Google’s 3-D software, is free and features online tutorials. The McMinnville project, which recruited volunteers equipped with either a laptop or digital camera, involved taking photos of all the downtown buildings, from each visible side. The Google trainers then illustrated how to bring a map from Google Earth into SketchUp and create 3-D buildings based on the maps outlines. The trainers then showed participants how to place their photos of the building’s facades onto each side of the corresponding 3-D structure.

Three-dimensional modeling allows both planners and the public to better visualize how proposed developments, façade improvements, streetscaping, etc., will look in advance to better determine impact and compatibility. Additionally, McMinnville is entering its **downtown business directory** into **Google Base**, an online business directory that interfaces with Google’s main search engine. Google Base can also be used for real estate listings, which, in conjunction with a 3-D model of the area, can serve as an excellent business recruitment tool.

3) INTERACTIVE MAPS

Highland Park, NJ (pop. 14,000)

<http://www.mainstreethp.org/index.cfm>; <http://shophighlandpark.com/index2.php>

Community leaders of Highland Park worked with Geocentric, a special software and map services company, to launch **ShopHighlandPark.com** in the summer of 2007. The goal of the Web site, which compliments Highland Park's traditional downtown Web site, was to provide more customer- and visitor-oriented information regarding the area's shopping, dining, and service amenities.

The main feature on ShopHighlandPark.com is **interactive map** of the district that allows users to "Scroll along the Avenue." Clicking on particular map locations will reveal business hours, addresses, phone numbers, menus, etc. The maps not only provide users with a sense of direction, but also detail distances between places and nearby parking.

The Web site divides Highland Park's downtown businesses into eight primary categories: shopping, dining and food, services, health professionals, professional services, arts and entertainment, parking, and commercial properties available. Businesses are relied upon to provide their own informational content and encouraged to post stickers advertising the Web site in their store windows to encourage use.

The program is credited for its inclusiveness. For instance, people who visit downtown Highland Park for its health-related services are now more likely to recognize the area's other amenities. This heightened geographic awareness is particularly beneficial for business uses that are above the ground level.

Gauging success: (contacted 3/5)

Raleigh, NC (pop. 276,100)

<http://www.downtownraleigh.com/>

Downtown's Raleigh's Web site is quite advanced. Building on the popular "Live, Work, Play" theme, Raleigh's site also offers the respective subgroups-dwell, shop, explore; work, stay, services; and dine, dance, drink. The Web site is simple and clean, featuring a predominantly white background with catchy animations. A column on the right features the downtown events of the week. The main page also features new and popular businesses, and week restaurant and retail specials. Granted, Raleigh is over 10 times the size of Golden, but having such a current web page really highlights the vitality of the town and is itself a draw for both business and visitors.

The Web site also features a both a sponsor and media center tab. The former links to what appears to be a SketchUp video, highlighting a new luxury apartments in the area. The latter features three different videos: a testimonial of why someone relocated to the area, and two commercial-like ads—one for residential living and another for a local bar.

The site also features a link, highlighting the schedule of the local hockey team. In addition to the schedule, it features a list of local restaurants and bars you can catch the game on TV at, if you are unable to attend in person.

Raleigh's main interactive map features pushpin flags that locate Raleigh's Live, Work, and Play businesses. The Flags are color-coded to reflect this theme, but when businesses occur in bunches it is difficult to determine which flag you want to click on. The Web site also features 3 sub maps, divided into Dining/Club, Entertainment/Shopping/Gallery, and Residential. These maps use alpha-numeric grids and corresponding lists of establishments, but are not interactive.

Gauging success: (contacted 3/7)

4) DOWNTOWN MARKET ANALYSIS

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/downtowns/innovative/>

The University of Wisconsin-Extension's (UWEX) informative Web site details both the potential of **market analysis** and **innovative business ideas** to revitalizing downtowns.

Downtown market analyses provide both existing and prospective businesses with a better understanding of the market area, its consumers, and potential needs. Broad analyses can bring downtown businesses together and encourage collaboration, and the exchange of information can improve the business environment. A comprehensive analysis should reflect the demand and supply of all business sectors—retail, service, restaurant, office, residential, etc. These categories in turn need to be broken down into more specific groups (e.g., apparel, home furnishings, gift shops) in order to provide the most detailed analysis. The study should also help identify the economic potential of the district.

Vibrant downtowns often have a few innovative businesses that are attracting people back to the heart of town. These businesses often build on downtown's sense of place and offer products and services not found in the big box stores. The UWEX Web site features a database of successful downtown businesses that is searchable via business type or town size. Brief case studies are provided that include the products sold, niche developed, market segments served, and synergy created downtown. The site is intended to:

1. provide existing and prospective entrepreneurs with innovative ideas for their downtowns
2. provide local economic development leaders with innovative ideas for their business expansion and recruitment efforts.

UWEX's market analyses resources and innovative business database are intended to work in tandem. Once a market analysis has identified a need for a certain type of store, the business database can be searched for successful, innovative examples in towns of comparable size. Additionally, existing businesses can search the site for similar stores to identify strategies for finding niche markets.

5) DOWNTOWN GIFT CARDS

Boulder, CO (pop. 101,547)

http://www.boulderdowntown.com/gift_cards

Downtown Boulder Inc.'s webpage sells gift cards that range from \$5 to \$500. Over 160 of Boulder's downtown merchants accept these cards. The cards are good for one year; then they begin to depreciate in value at a rate of \$2.50 a month until they are spent or the balance zeros. They provide great and flexible gift, while also ensuring that money goes back to the community. In addition to the gift card, Downtown Boulder Inc. arranges a monthly community exchange that is hosted by a participating business. The social/mixer has been well attended. The coalition also offers a joint ad promotion that it runs in the *Daily Camera*, publishes a newsletter highlighting businesses, sends out print mailings, offers business growing advice, and provides discounts for parking.

Gauging success: (Spoke with Eli, the web tech, at Boulder Downtown Inc.)

Gift card program has been huge success. They recently switched to e-gift card program to reduce waste. The gift card also works as an incentive for businesses to join the downtown Boulder business coalition. Survey was recently conducted on site, which discovered that people primarily used the Web site to obtain information about events, shopping and dining, or to get directions. Again, Geocentric was used for the Web site design. The Boulder site is information/text laden because that is what its users are primarily looking for. The number of links and the number of times the Web site itself is updated (which occurs daily) has also boosted the site to the top of internet search results for downtown Boulder.

6) YOUTUBE CHANNEL

www.youtube.com/nonprofits

YouTube now offers a **YouTube Nonprofit Program** channel for organizations with 501c3 tax filing status. The channel allows qualifying organizations the opportunity to showcase their work, public service announcements, and the ability to collect donations with no processing costs using the new Google Checkout for Nonprofits. The Web site also includes tips on how to use YouTube effectively for advocacy and fundraising.

The site advertises:

- Premium branding capabilities and increased uploading capacity
- Rotation of videos in the "Promoted Videos" areas throughout the site
- The option to drive fundraising through a Google Checkout "Donate" button

Redevelopment efforts for Boston's City Hall have used YouTube to **visually portray potential infill solutions** for the area. Most of the non-profits, however, seem to use YouTube to advocate their cause at national levels. YouTube serves as the host site for video and has the potential to garner some national attention. Its potential use with the Golden demographic is less certain. Perhaps it would be a good venue to showcase completed projects for which GURA earned honors, preserved a historic façade, or implemented a new initiative such as its energy efficiency program. YouTube can also be used a source for media ideas such as the Boston video, which used various iterations of a map to illustrate an infill proposal.

7) WIKIS

www.wetpaint.com

Wetpaint is a Web site that allows users to create their own **wiki**, a collection of Web pages that are updatable to a variety of users. Wetpaint wikis can allow anyone to edit them or can be limited to certain users.

Eatonville, WA, used the site to establish a downtown revitalization home page. Wetpaint's service is free and easy to use. GURA could establish a Wetpaint wiki exclusively for its board members or it could establish one for every business within its district. The service allows for Click-and-Type Page Editing, Easy Photo/Video, Integration, and Page Level Discussion Threads. Consequently, it may be possible to conduct planning-oriented public forums or surveys via a Wetpaint wiki as well.

The potential drawback of a wiki is the need to monitor the site's content. A user agreement could be drafted among businesses, but opening up discussions forums to the public could be problematic. It does, however, seem like a great and inexpensive way to create a comprehensive downtown Web site where individual businesses could be responsible for updating their own content, while GURA or the City could maintain the site's homepage.

8) PEDSAFE

www.walkinginfo.org/pedsafe

PEDSAFE, a Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System, is an online resource dedicated to providing information on improving the safety and mobility of pedestrians. The Web site offers both resources and tools that communities can use based on their individual location information.

One of the PEDSAFE selection tool features requests that users enter a specific trouble area and then answer a list of questions regarding the conditions of that street or intersection. Once the survey is completed, a list of potential countermeasures is produced along with illustrations. The site also features a host of case studies that illustrate and discuss the success of various measures, including Pedestrian Facility Design, Roadway Design, Intersection Design, Traffic Calming, Traffic Management, and Signals and Signs.