



City of
Golden

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Council Memorandum

To: City Council, Golden Chamber of Commerce, Other Interested Folks
From: Jacob Smith, Mayor
Date: June 1, 2009
Re: Summit on Sustaining Golden's Retail Economy

On April 27, representatives of the Golden Chamber of Commerce, Golden's Economic Development Commission, the Jefferson County Business Resource Center, and other organizations working to promote a healthy retail economy in Golden convened a Summit on Sustaining Golden's Retail Economy. The Summit was aimed at assessing the community's current efforts and exploring new ideas for sustaining the health of our retail merchants.

We did some brainstorming on issues affecting our retail economy and evaluating what we are doing well and what we aren't doing as well. All the brainstorm lists are included at the end of this memo. The group took no formal action, so the brainstorm lists are just that.

The key outcome of the meeting was a list of ideas for improvements and new approaches that seemed potentially promising. This list was produced by a loose consensus of the group and not through any sort of formal process. We identified several areas that might be worth additional effort and focus by the community. Those were:

- Increase our coordination and focus with the Jefferson County Business Resource Center (JCBRC) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) on pre-packaged information for entrepreneurs and start-ups. The City should provide more specifics to JCBRC about existing city and GURA grant, incentive, and retention programs (which JCBRC can add to their web site and other resources).
- Keep improving current marketing efforts like Golden Tickets and improve promotion of programs like First Fridays.
- Develop community profile and information packages to be used to assist retail leasing efforts that do not rely solely on traditional demographics on number of households within a certain distance, but rather tell the real story of Golden. These packages need to explain all of the varied markets that work together to support local retail outlets. We may want these packages to also include better information about existing city, GURA, and other incentive, grant, and support programs.

- Develop better tools for assessing the economic impact of recreational visitors to Golden and for increasing their economic impact. Expand the use of the Golden Ticket program to include the various recreational groups was one concrete idea.
- Focus on improving our business retention programs.
- Continue working to develop a local movie theater program (which GURA is already heavily involved in).
- In collaboration with the Jefferson County Business Resource Center, explore improved advertising strategies for the joint effort among Jefferson County agencies and jurisdictions known as “BEST.” This effort has proved to be the most effective way to present business training information to existing retailers but needs to be promoted more widely.
- Continue developing our Shop Local program.
- Understand what Point of Sale tools merchants are currently using, figure out what data we can collect and use from these systems, and consider helping merchants to improve POS tools.
- Improve cross-marketing programs among the retailers, and between the retail community and the cultural and recreation attractions. Identify ways that these businesses and groups will implement sustainable cross marketing programs that are primarily driven by the individual business (e.g., look at what other cities like Littleton have done, think about to market to and engage “culturals”).

We also identified several immediate next steps:

- 1) Mark H. will continue to pursue the cinema idea.
- 2) Mark H. will conduct a survey of merchants to determine what POS systems they are using.
- 3) Everyone will present the ideas generated at the Summit to their groups and colleagues for feedback and additional ideas.
- 4) This same group of people will meet again in late May or June to refine the lists, discuss new ideas, and generate a more definitive list of areas to focus on. The group may refine the list down to several top items.
- 5) The group will consider the idea of subsequently having a larger Summit to explore additional efforts and ideas.

Additional Notes From the Summit

The participants:

- Chris Ball, Fuller and Company and Golden Economic Development Commission
- Kim Buck, Guaranty Bank and Trust

- Kelley Jackson Condon, Table Mountain Vision Clinic and Golden Area Chamber of Commerce
- Steve Glueck, City of Golden Planning and Development Director
- Mark Heller, Golden Urban Renewal Authority
- Bob List, Golden Sweets
- Reilly Sanborn, Foothills Arts Center and Golden Cultural Alliance
- Jacob Smith, Mayor of Golden
- Denise Stephens, Jefferson County Business Resource Center
- Roger Tapia, Creekside Jewelry and Downtown Merchants Association

Stacy Hussey of the Golden Planning Department provided staff support.

Some trends impacting our retail economy in Golden:

- Trend toward town halls
- Trend toward independent business
- Trend away from “mall”
- Competitive creative tension between independent and national credit tenant
- Continued need for convenience
- Growth of on-line sales
- Trend away from “spec” development and financing
- Market cycles
- FasTracks arrival
- Trend in the business failure rate in Golden (don’t know if it is up or down)
- Demographic changes (age, HH, \$)
- Fewer or shorter vehicle trips

Some other factors that currently shape and probably will continue to shape our retail economy:

- CSM & their long-term expansion (student body growth and new buildings).
- NREL & their expansion (staff size and new buildings).
- Likely increases in urban & multi-family residential development.
- Coors tours and other tourists.
- Golden Cultural Alliance – attractions.
- Golden Vision 2030.
- Jeffco workforce.
- Community events.

Some things that are working:

- JCBRC – custom and training classes
- BEST – co-op training
- Lakewood – store open houses
- 2hourvacation – Community marketing fund (in place until 2012)
- Community events.
- Farmer’s Market – supports regular visits to downtown and fosters community character.

- TIF and redevelopment.
- Active merchant groups.
- Golden Cultural Alliance – improving marketing.
- Recreational amenities.
- Community Infrastructure.
- Retention programs (supported with dollars).
- Visitor’s Center.

Some of the problems and challenges:

- Community entry features and identity signs, especially from the north on State Highway 93. While there are a number of signs, there is a feeling that there are not inviting enough to be effective at drawing people into the community.
- Influencing leasing decisions both on the part of tenants and owners. Owners may choose to lease to tenants that do not necessarily support the critical mass. Also, encouraging desired tenants to locate here faces challenges with market data.
- The lack of non-GURA incentives.
- Lease rates, especially in new buildings (most businesses can’t afford \$30/sq.ft. rates except for large restaurants). There is a significant difference in the cost of occupancy between new and old buildings. The City has no or very limited control over this.
- Property taxes are too high (but City has no control over this).
- Not enough rooftops in Golden for many potential retail businesses, and no tool for mitigating by demonstrating a high loyalty factor.
- Some businesses don’t tend to have the ability to track repeat customers.
 - We could survey businesses to find out what sort of Point of Service software and software data they have.
- Golden’s aging population could be an advantage since many may prefer staying close to home. We will need to figure out how to meet their needs and market to them.
- Creating a loyal community of customers.
- Drawing in more non-Golden clientele.
 - We could provide Golden Tickets at museum openings.
- The younger generations not as invested in the community. We might want to more effectively reach out.
- Our signage probably needs to be refurbished and possibly rebranded, but the cost is probably in excess of \$200,000.

Some additional ideas:

- Close Washington Avenue for First Fridays and the subsequent Saturday from 11th to 13th to create a walking mall. This idea received considerable support from downtown merchants (see the Summit Packet).
- Pay more attention to current customers.
- Pay more attention to current businesses.
- Help explore creative financing opportunities.
- Prepare people before they open a business with a Retail 101 class.
- Educate about availability of build-out funds.

- Answer the question for prospective new business owners “What is Golden?”
- Do a better job of leveraging the beauty of what we have in Golden (e.g., arts, recreation).
- Seek out best practices from other communities (e.g., Mark Delandry and Beau Martinez with Denver Business Development).
- Require grant and incentive applicants to meet minimum training standards prior to application for assistance.
- Hire outside experts to consult with local businesses (e.g., JCBRC has a contact in Golden).
- Encourage the Golden Transcript to begin a “Business of the Week” series.
- Sponsor a prize for best restaurant concept to come into a space.
- We could also apply this to retail businesses.
- Organize some sort of Green Expo with CSM and NREL.
- Tours of the wind turbines.
- A year-round indoor farmer’s market.
- A restaurant incubator space.
- A retail incubator space.
- Information open houses like those sponsored by Lakewood to help new businesses, retain existing businesses, and attract potential new businesses.
- Sell advertising on Channel 8, limited to commercials by and for locals and tied to the Buy Local campaign.
- We could be more proactive in working with developers to secure tenants.
- Consider shifting to Second Saturdays instead of First Fridays (to avoid competing with other First Fridays in the Denver region, unless our goal for First Fridays is local residents).
- Periodically close Washington Avenue to create a pedestrian mall.
- Focus on locals rather than metro area.
- Have street entertainers (e.g., First Fridays, Farmer’s Market, other busy times downtown).
- Highlight and focus on being family friendly.
- Improve the design of the recycling bins.
- Create merchant promotions and offer a prize for reach a predetermined goal of being the Greenest Place in Colorado – have a cool contest regarding sustainable businesses to generate interest and PR.
- Market Golden as a place for filmmakers to work.