



# South Carolina Council of Governments

© Ed McMahon

Urban Land Institute

November 21, 2022

# South Carolina is a Special Place!







**No Place  
Will Stay Special  
By Accident!**





**CHANGES  
AHEAD**



# What is Changing?

- National and global economy
- Technology
- Demographics
- Consumer attitudes & market trends
- Health care
- Travel and Tourism
- Energy sources & transportation options
- The weather

# There are two kinds of change:

- **Planned change**
- **Unplanned change**





# A Global Pandemic



# Pandemic is transforming how & where people live, work, shop & travel.



Working at Home



Small Town Living



Shopping Online



Bicycle Commuting



# Opportunity for Small Town Revival

## REAL ESTATE

### A small-town boom

Development is matched by high demand.

That is a relatively new phenomenon in the real estate industry.

For many years, real estate has been a quiet market, with few people moving to small towns. But now, as the coronavirus pandemic has taken hold, many people are looking for a change of scenery.

Small towns are becoming more popular than ever before. In fact, some small towns are experiencing a boom in real estate sales.



EXPANDED COVERAGE INSIDE



### Rural real estate prices rise as people consider leaving cities

The virus is impacting how we spend money, how we shop and, perhaps, even where we want to live.



## THE HILL

Just In...

Watch live: Memorial service for John Lewis in Alabama  
NEWS — 5M 6S AGO

Starbucks barista punched over face mask policy, authorities say  
BLOG BRIEFING ROOM — 6M 33S AGO

Cuomo wishes good day to 'everyone wearing a mask'  
BLOG BRIEFING ROOM — 11M 28S AGO

Our democracy could be in peril from within —

### Americans leave large cities for suburban areas and rural towns

BY KRISTIN TATE, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 07/06/20 07:00 PM EDT  
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

4,327 COMMENTS

8,343 SHARES

f SHARE t TWEET



A combination of the coronavirus pandemic, economic uncertainty, and social unrest is prompting waves of Americans to move from large cities and permanently relocate to more sparsely populated areas. The trend



**“The best way to predict the future is to create it yourself”**

Abraham Lincoln



# Growth is About Choices



Should we invest downtown?  
Should we design for people?  
Should we grow on greyfields?



Should we invest on the strip?  
Should we design for cars?  
Should we grow in greenfields?

# Economic Development is About Choices



Should we recruit new businesses?  
**Should we subsidize big businesses?**  
Should we invest in one big project?

Should we expand existing businesses?  
**Should we support small businesses?**  
Should we diversify our economy?



# Business Recruitment



- There are 3141 counties in the US, 46 counties in South Carolina.
- There are 19,495 towns in the US, 271 cities & towns in South Carolina.
- They are all competing for a small number of new plants, factories or distribution centers.

# Site Selection Criteria

- Corporate Tax Rate
- Labor Costs
- Occupancy or Construction Costs
- Energy Availability & Costs
- Proximity to Major Markets
- State and Local Incentives
- Quality of Community
- Highway Accessibility
- Access to Talent

# What Matters Most?



- “**Access to talent** has eclipsed all other site location factors to become the single most important factor.
- Companies are now driven to locate where they have confidence, they can attract talent.”
- The **quality of the community** is the top factor affecting where job seekers want to live.”



Source: Ady Advantage, Inc. 2021



“Communities and regions are in a global competition to attract and retain a talented workforce. Increasingly these talented workers are choosing where they want to live first and figuring out their job situations later.”

CEO's for Cities, Segmentation Study, 2006

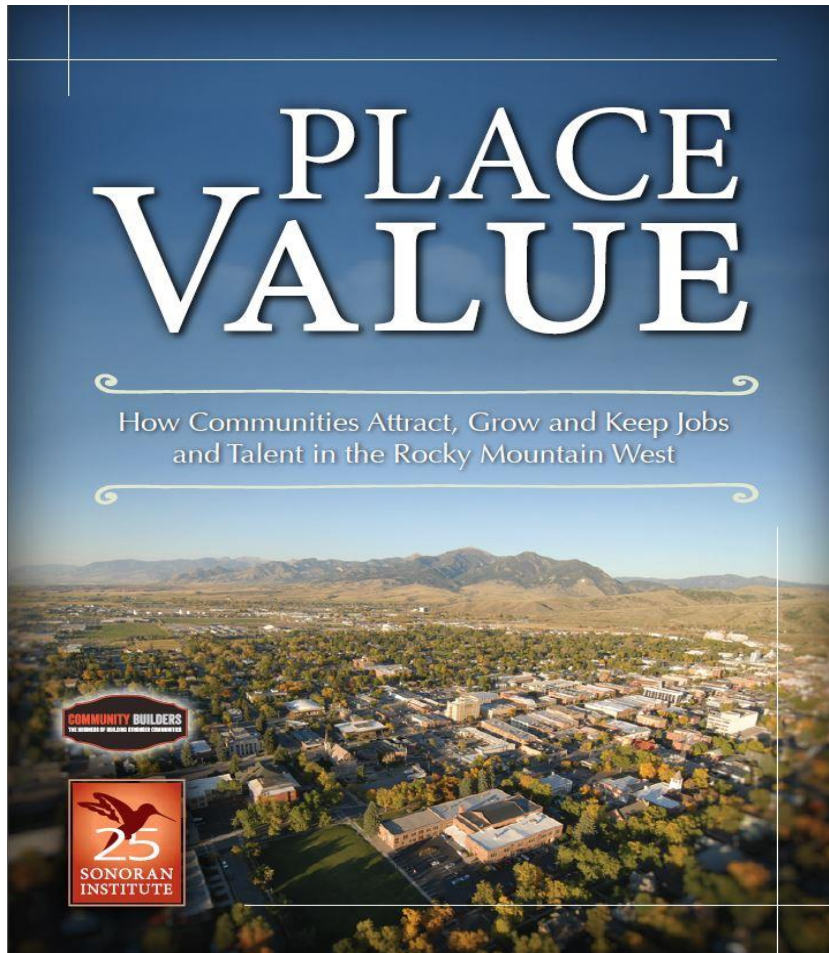
# Place Matters!

- “New investment is increasingly seeking locations based on ***quality of place*** rather than *utility of location*”.

Steve McKnight, Vice President Fourth Economy Consultants



# Place Value Survey



- **“People are willing to sacrifice salary for the ideal community”**
- Jobs follow people
- Community quality is a top priority for businesses & residents
- **People on the move are looking for great places**

Survey of 1000 business owners in Rocky Mtn. states by non-profit Sonoran Institute, October 2015



# Economic Development

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Model

- Public sector leadership
- Shotgun recruitment strategy
- Low cost positioning
- Cheap labor
- Focus on what you don't have
- Quality of life unimportant
- Driven by transactions
- Key Infrastructure = Roads

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Model

- Public/Private Partnerships
- Laser recruitment strategy
- High value positioning
- Highly trained talent
- Focus on what you do have
- Quality of life critical
- Driven by an overall vision
- Key Infrastructure = Education

# The One Big Thing Rarely Works?



**Convention centers**



**Big Box Stores**



**Casinos**



**Aquariums**

# What works today?

## CITIES

BACK FROM THE EDGE  
new life for downtown

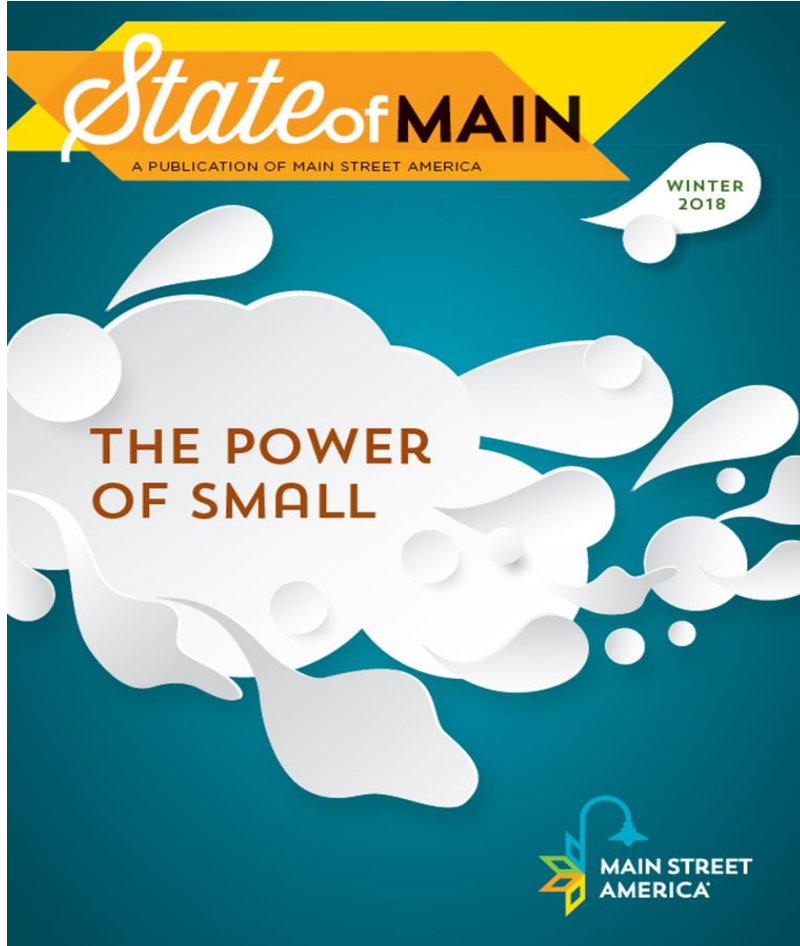


“ Successful cities  
and towns think  
small in a big way.”

Roberta Brandes Gratz



# Why Small Matters!



- Small Steps
- Small Businesses
- Small Deals
- Small Developments
- Can add up to  
**BIG IMPACT!**

# Small Projects Can Make a Big Difference!



**ASHEVILLE  
WALMART**



**DOWNTOWN  
MIXED-USE**

Land Consumed (acres):	<b>34.0</b>	<b>00.2</b>
Total Property Taxes per Acre:	<b>\$6,500</b>	<b>\$634,000</b>
Retail Taxes* per Acre to City:	<b>\$47,500</b>	<b>\$ 83,600</b>
Residents per Acre:	<b>0.0</b>	<b>90.0</b>
Jobs per Acre:	<b>5.9</b>	<b>73.7</b>

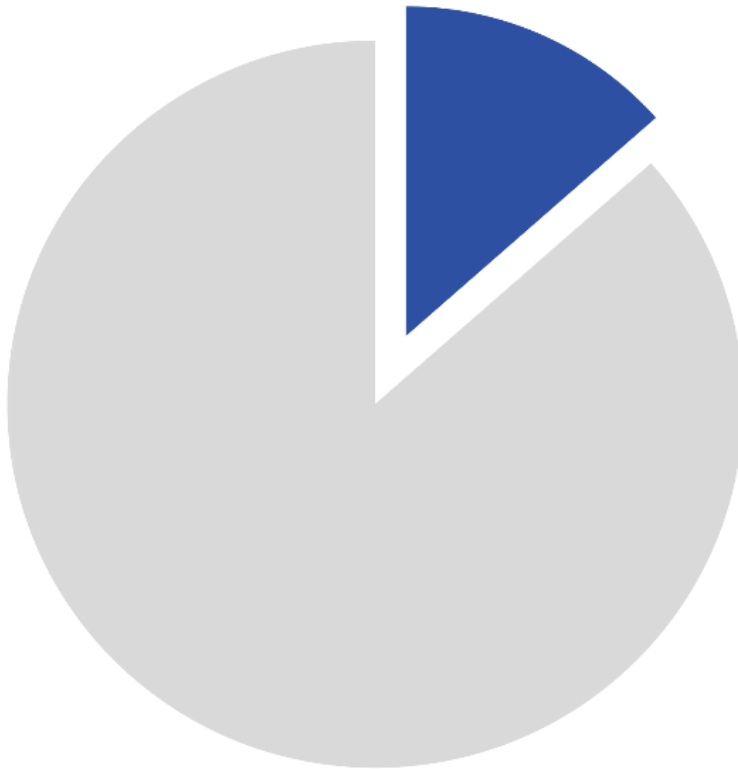
\*Estimated from public reports of annual sales per sq.ft..

**Urban<sup>3</sup>**

Joseph Minicuzzi, AICP  
joe@urban-three.com

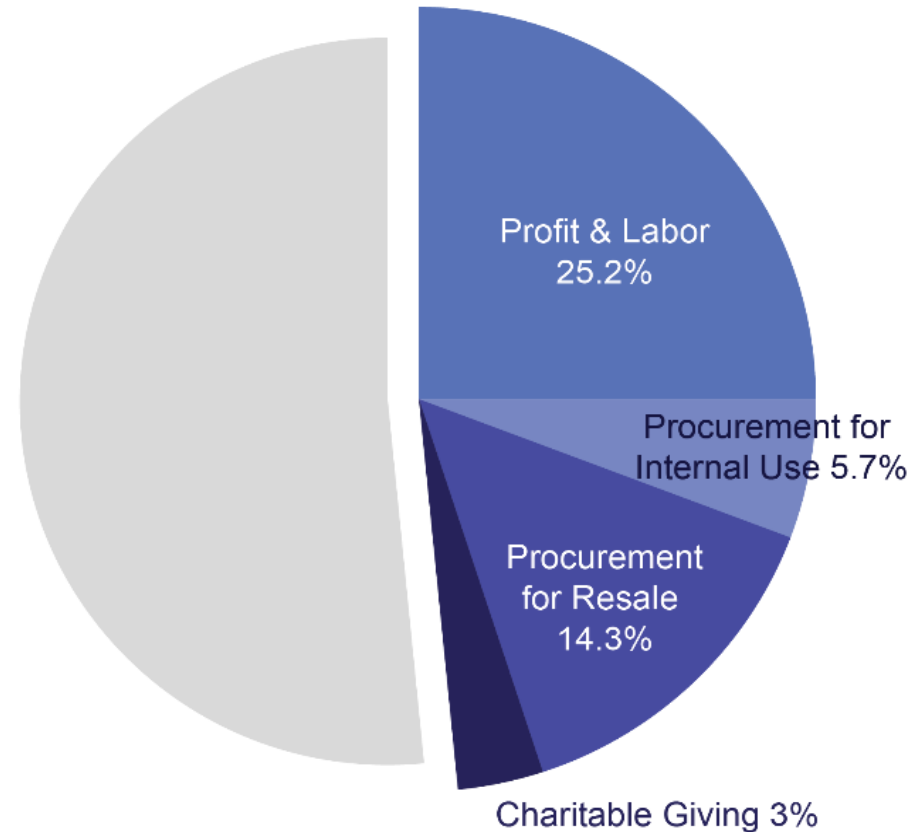
# Local Economic Return of Indies v. Chains

Chain Retailers



**Local Recirculation of Revenue: 13.6%**

Independents



**Local Recirculation of Revenue: 48%**

\*Compiled results from nine studies by Civic Economics, 2012: [www.civiceconomics.com](http://www.civiceconomics.com)  
Graph by American Independent Business Alliance: AMIBA.net



# Most New Jobs in Small Businesses



HQ, Viking Range Co. – Greenville, MS



Research Triangle Park, Raleigh, NC

- US Small Business Administration says “small business generated 64% of new jobs over 15 year period”.
- Middle market companies produce 3 out of 5 new jobs in growth industries.
- Even in high tech centers like the Research Triangle most jobs are in small businesses. **71% have 50 employees or fewer; 42% have 20 employees or fewer**

# Most Incentives Go to Big Business

SECTIONS

SEARCH

THE BALTIMORE SUN

SALE OFFER  
\$1 for 12 weeks

TUESDAY AUG. 28, 2018

LATEST ENEWSPAPER SPORTS OBITS ADVERTISING POPULAR BEST REVIEWS MD POLITICS

## Maryland OKs \$8.5 billion in incentives to lure Amazon, biggest offer in nation



Ad close  
Stop s  
Why

BUSINESS NEWS NOVEMBER 8, 2017 / 8:23 PM / 10 MONTHS AGO

## Wisconsin board clears way for \$3 billion Foxconn deal

Reuters Staff



(Reuters) - Wisconsin's economic development agency on Wednesday approved a \$3 billion incentives package for Taiwan-based Foxconn to build a massive liquid-crystal

# What Makes More Sense?

## Subsidies for Big Business

- Pits one community against another
- Moves economic activity around
- Businesses leave or threaten to leave after subsidies run out
- Puts all the eggs in one or two baskets
- Taxpayers subsidize big business



"YEAH, YEAH, THIS IS JUST TEMPORARY... THE FREE MARKET WORKS BEST WHEN THERE'S NO GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION... GET IN LINE, BUDDY!!!"

## Investing in a Great Place

- Creates lasting assets that will pay dividends long after initial investment
- Helps existing businesses
- Creates diverse, durable local economies
- Communities invest in themselves
- A more realistic strategy for smaller cities and towns





# What Does Investment in Place Look Like?



**In the 1990's, Frederick, MD was struggling. It had suffered flood damage and disinvestment.**



# Carroll Creek – Eyesore to Asset



In 1991, the city invested \$11 million  
in the Carroll Creek Linear Park.



# Small Town Turnaround

- This led to over \$300 million in private investment along the Creek.
- Downtown Frederick now has 5000 residents and 800 businesses, including 200 retailers & restaurants.
- Frederick is now the fastest growing city in Maryland.





# Caldwell, ID - Before



- “Downtown was spiraling downwards. It was like a ghost town.”
- It had a vacancy rate of 60%
- We knew something had to be done.”
  - Mayor Garrett Nancolas,

# Caldwell, ID - After



- The City invested \$7.5 million to **turn a vacant parking lot into Indian Creek Plaza.**
- The plaza includes seating, shade trees, water features, a splash pad, fire pits, a performance stage and a winter ice rink.
- The plaza hosted 250 events & activities in 2021. The events attracted 137,000 people in the first year alone.
- Downtown foot traffic grew by 50% and a dozen new businesses opened.

# Downtown Statesville, NC



**Statesville, NC - Before**

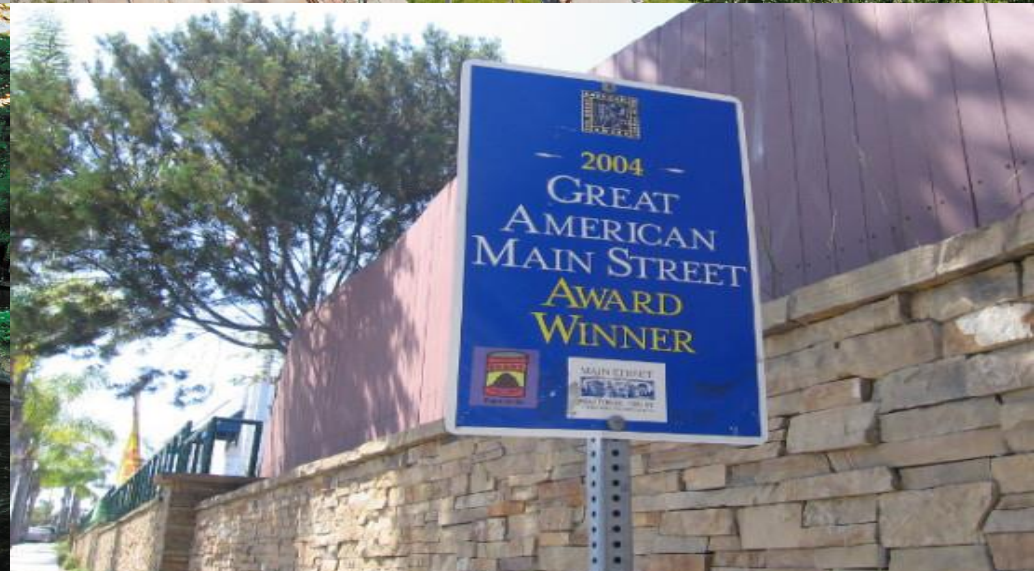


**Statesville, NC - After**

- In 2008, the Town of Statesville, NC devoted \$5.5 million to a streetscape improvement project.
- The project included new sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, outdoor seating and public art.
- Within 18 months the city had seen 9 new businesses, reduced vacancy rates increased visitation & tourism and improved quality of life.
- **The project illustrates the role of the public sector, which is to “set the table for the private sector”.**

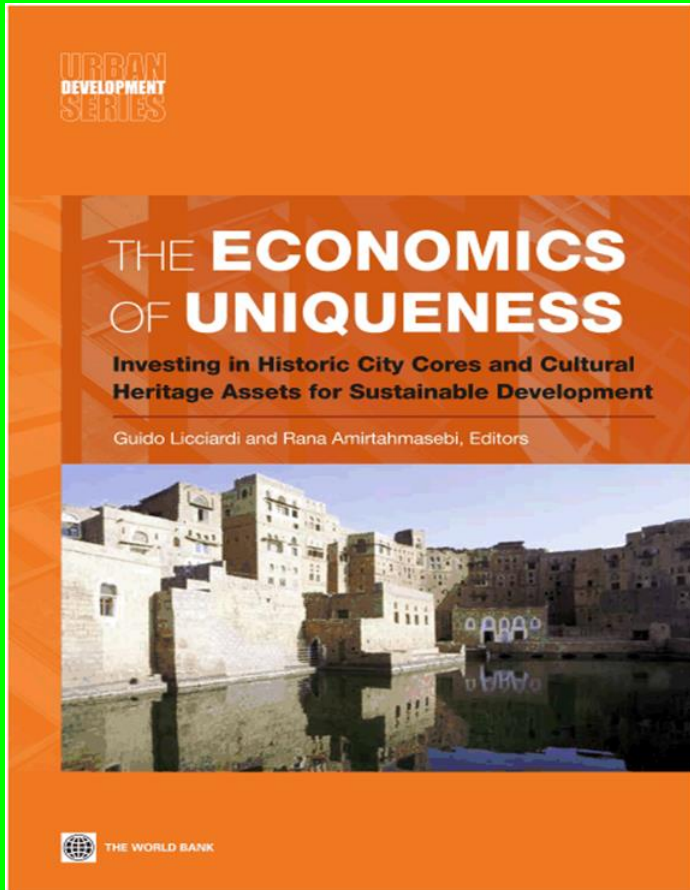


# Successful Communities Are Distinctive Communities





# Distinctiveness has value!



- “If you can’t differentiate your community, you will have no competitive advantage.”
- “Sameness is a *minus*, not a plus, in today’s world.”

# Build an Authentic Sense of Place

- The link between quality of place and the ability to attract and retain residents & talent is increasingly clear.
- A strong sense of place must be rooted in **authenticity**.
- South Carolina has world class natural landscape, great small towns, beautiful architecture
- Trying to copy other places is a mistake.







# The Distinctive Community

“The unique characteristics of place may be the only truly defensible source of competitive advantage for cities & towns.”

Joe Cortright, CEO's for Cities



# Community Character Matters!



- “We take stock of a city like we take stock of a man. The clothes or appearance are the externals by which we judge.”
- Mark Twain





Welcome to  
the City of  
**FRANKLIN**





MIDFIELD  
CITY LIMIT

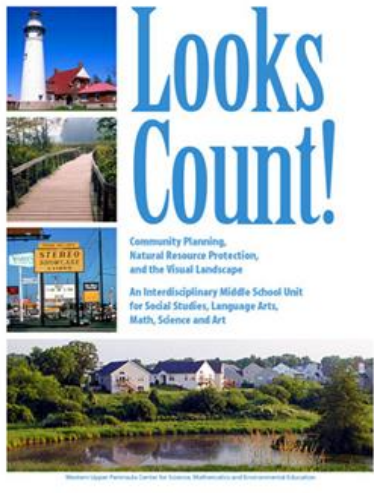
Loveland's  
FLOWERS  
Marlboro  
\$1.10

S P E E D  
E N

Marlboro  
AND OTHER CIGARETTES  
SOLD HERE  
\$1.10

Phone





**COMMUNITY IMAGE  
IS CRITICAL  
TO ECONOMIC VITALITY  
AND QUALITY OF LIFE**



The Official 2000 Travel Guide

# Oregon

Oregon: Things Look Different Here



# In Today's Economy – Place Matters

## Traditional Economy

- Product Driven
- Cost Sensitive
- **Market Driven**



- Making the sneakers



## Today's Economy

- Knowledge Driven
- Value Sensitive
- **Place Driven**



- Designing the sneakers





“The *place* is becoming more important than the *product*” - NAHB





# Placemaking = Economic Development



Town Square - Wausau, WI

**“Economic development is really the result of creating places where people want to be.”**



**Mick Cornett, Mayor,  
Oklahoma City, OK**

Bricktown – Oklahoma City, OK



# The Placemaking Dividend



- People stay longer, come back more often, and spend more money in places that attract their affection.



# Assets You Can Build On

- A healthy downtown
- Historic buildings
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Parks and green space
- Outdoor Recreation
- Arts and Culture
- **Local** shops and restaurants

# Healthy Downtowns

- Downtowns plays a decisive role as an icon.
- They are critical as a connecting point and nerve center for a region.
- A key asset for regional prosperity





**ANNUAL DIRECTORY EDITION**

**Corporate and Industrial Sites in the World's Third-Largest Economy**

# SOUTHERN BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT

FALL 2002

**The Perception  
Buster:  
First Annual  
Southern State  
Business Climate  
Index**

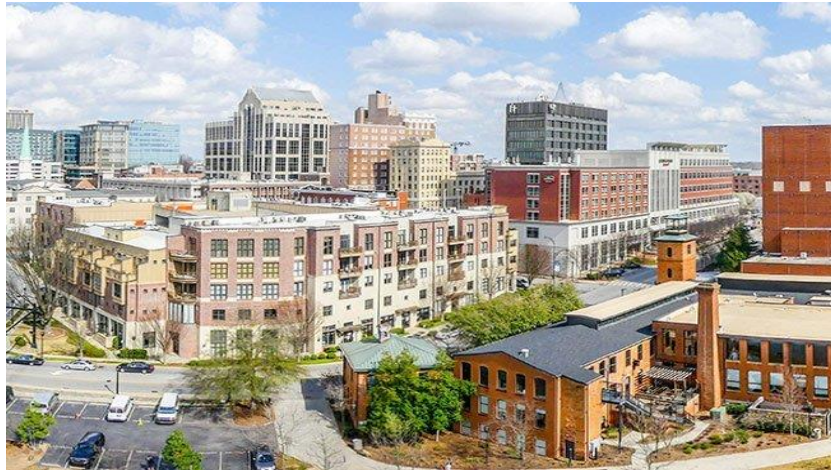
**When Site  
Searching the  
South, Make Sure  
You Inspect a Community's  
Downtown First!**

**Shreveport**

Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Quincy, FL  
Permit No. 632

[www.sb-d.com](http://www.sb-d.com)

# Why Do Downtowns Matter?



**Greenville, SC**

- Downtowns are the heart and soul of a community.
- If you don't have a healthy downtown, you don't have a healthy town.



**Fort Mill, SC**

- The apple rots from the inside out.
- It is hard to be a suburb of nothing.



# Downtowns & Tourism

## Top Activities of Interest To SC Visitors

Shopping

Historic Places

Beaches & Outdoor Activities

Cultural Activities

Culinary Experiences

Beer & Wine Tours/Tasting

- Tourism is South Carolina's largest industry ahead of aerospace and agriculture.
- Downtowns are a key to attracting tourists.
- Investing in downtowns is just as important as investing in roads, sewers, or attracting manufacturing, etc.



# Companies Moving Downtown

- A study by Smart Growth America and Cushman Wakefield reports that 500 American companies have either relocated to, expanded, or opened new offices in “**walkable downtown locations**” in the past 5 years.
- 247 companies moved from suburban office locations to downtowns.
- The average Walk Score of old locations was 52. The average Walk Score of new locations was 88
- Fortune 500 companies that recently moved from suburban sites to downtowns include **Motorola, McDonald’s, Marriott, Caterpillar, Walgreen’s and GE.**



## Core Values

Why American Companies are Moving Downtown



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Center for Real Estate  
and Urban Analysis  
THE VICTORIA HARRINGTON PARTNERSHIP

# Why Move?



**SPARK**  
A Knowledge Leader Publication

High-Tech Firms are  
Trending **#Downtown**

High-tech companies are strategically locating  
to create buzz and attract talent.

**Colliers**  
INTERNATIONAL  
Accelerating success.

- To attract & retain talented workers
- To build brand identity & corporate culture
- To support creative collaboration
- To be closer to customers & business partners
- To centralize operations

# Amazon moved 7000 employees into downtown Seattle



They moved into 9 new buildings and 2 historic renovations, all in a mixed-use neighborhood accessible by car, train, bus, boat, bike or on foot.



# Durham, NC - Before





# Durham, NC - After





# Wheeling, WV- Old Approach



- Wheeling, WV has one of the largest collections of historic architecture in the US.
- However, as a former manufacturing center, Wheeling, had suffered decades of population loss and disinvestment.
- In 2004, the State of West Virginia gave Cabela's a \$35 million grant to build a store, 10 miles outside of Wheeling.
- The State also paid to build a new interchange to provide access to the store from I-70.
- Despite the state's investment, Wheeling's population dropped by 15% in the next 10 years.





# Wheeling, WV – New Approach



- A new focus on downtown revitalization & historic preservation finally helped turn the city around.
- Since 2015, Wheeling has added 2000 jobs, cut its vacancy rate in half, seen \$100 million in downtown investment and attracted hundreds of new residents.



- It did this by promoting the use of older buildings, creating an entrepreneur training program, developing an Artisan Market and holding weekly events like Cinema Under the Stars.
- In 2019, Wheeling, WV won a “Great American Main Street Award”.



# Before

Vacant Warehouse  
Wheeling, WV

# After

Boury Lofts Apartments  
Wheeling, WV







## Before

Vacant Department Store  
Wheeling, WV

## After

Stone Center Apartments  
Wheeling, WV





## Before

Former Industrial Building  
Wheeling, WV

## After

Global Operations Center  
Orrick, Harrington & Sutcliffe  
Wheeling, WV  
300 employees





# The Power of Historic Assets



- Historic building stock is often a community's greatest asset.
- The value of historic buildings is psychological, as well as economic and environmental.
- Historic buildings shape our memories and our identities.
- Savvy communities leverage the value of historic buildings



THOMAS CLAYTON WOLFE

A GREAT AMERICAN WRITER

BORN ON THIS SITE

92 WOODFIN STREET

OCTOBER 3, 1900





# Economics of Preservation

“Dozens of studies document that historic preservation is good for the economy”.

It positively effects:

- 1. Jobs**
- 2. Property values**
- 3. Tourism**
- 4. Downtown Revitalization**
- 5. Affordable Housing**
- 6. Environmental Impacts**



Source: *Measuring the Economics of Preservation: Recent Findings*, ACHP, 2011



# Bay City, MI - Before

A Bank & Storage Space





# Bay City, MI - After

26 Apartments, a  
Restaurant & Office Space





# What Difference Does this Make?



- Improved Image
- More foot traffic
- More tax revenue
- More residents
- More liveliness
- More eyes on the street
- More activity after 5pm



# Historic Preservation & Tourism



New Orleans - French Quarter



San Antonio - Riverwalk



Seattle - Pike Place Market



Williamsburg, VA





“Among cities and towns with no particular recreational appeal, those that preserve the past continue to enjoy tourism. Those that haven’t receive almost no tourism at all.

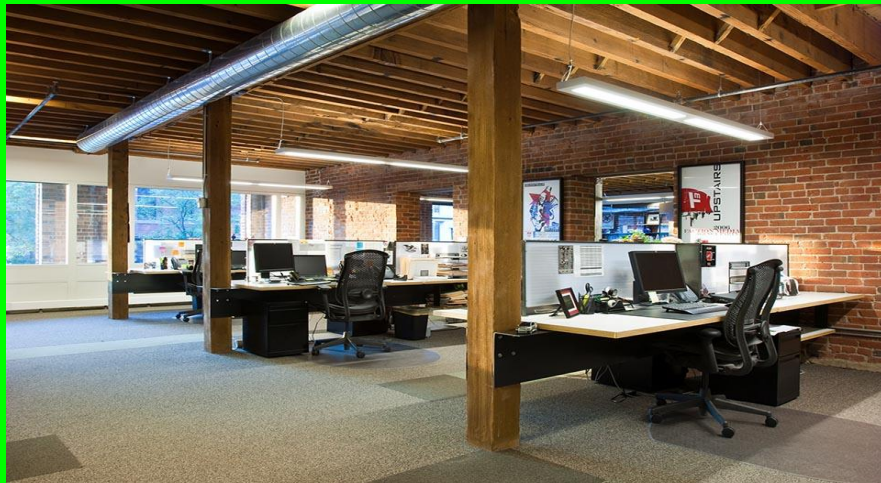
Tourists simply won’t go to a city or town that has lost its soul.”

Arthur Frommer

# Old is New Again



Boiler House Offices, Ambler, PA



Faction Media, Denver, CO

- “Renovation & Redevelopment are not new, but the market is embracing older space with new fervor.”
- **“Office space in rehabbed industrial buildings is now demanding rents above new Class A product.”**

Source: Emerging Trends in Real Estate, 2016



# Corporate Offices - Anywhere USA



# Corporate Offices – Minneapolis, MN

**Higher rents**  
**Faster Lease-up**  
**Less Turnover**







# Before

Derelict Wharf  
Boston, MA

# After

Converse HQ's  
Boston, MA





**Before**

Sears Warehouse  
Seattle, WA

**After**

Starbucks HQ's  
Seattle, WA







**Before**

Vacant Post Office  
Chicago, IL

**After**

Walgreens HQ's  
Chicago, IL







# Before

Navy Yard  
Philadelphia, PA

# After

Urban Outfitters HQ's  
Philadelphia, PA







# Before

Detergent Factory  
Baltimore, MD

# After

Under Armour HQ's  
Baltimore, MD







# Before

Vacant Buildings  
Jefferson, IA

# After

Tech Company Offices  
Jefferson, IA







# Before

Textile Mill  
Gastonia, NC

# After

Housing & Shops  
Gastonia, NC







**Before**

Elementary School  
Provo, UT

**After**

Senior Housing  
Provo, UT







**Before**

State Mental Hospital  
Buffalo, NY

**After**

Henry Hotel  
Buffalo, NY





# Before

Bexar County Jail  
San Antonio, TX

# After

Holiday Inn Express  
San Antonio, TX







# Before

John Deere Tractor Factory  
Waterloo, IA

# After

Marriott Courtyard Hotel  
Waterloo, IA





# Before

Department Store  
Staunton, VA

# After

City Hall  
Staunton, VA







# Before

Amoco Station  
Princeton, NJ

# After

Pizza Restaurant  
Princeton, NJ





## Historic Buildings: An Underutilized Asset



With Enormous  
Economic Potential





# Parks & Green Spaces Create Real Estate Value

## THE CASE FOR OPEN SPACE

WHY THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY SHOULD INVEST IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



- “The relationship between rising property values and green spaces is well documented.”
- “Some studies find as much as a 15 to 30 % increase in the value of properties adjacent to parks and open space.”

# Parks Create Value and Vitality



Parks are a key to community revitalization in both big cities & small towns.



# Abandoned Rail Line – New York





# Highline Park – New York





# Greenville, SC - Before





# Greenville, SC - After





# Sulphur Springs, TX - Before





# Sulphur Springs, TX - After





# Arts and Culture



- Museums
- Theatres & Playhouses
- Concert Halls
- Art Galleries
- Festivals
- Murals and public art
- Public squares
- Taverns & coffee houses



# Use Public Art



Dolly Parton Statue, Sevierville, TN



Thurgood Marshall Statue, Annapolis, MD



# Public Art Can Enliven a Town



Mural, Franklin, OH

- The story of your town & region is an asset.
- Make the story of your town visible in the landscape.
- Public art can attract visitors, publicity & attention.
- It can add fun, interest and value to a city or town.

# Celebrate Famous People



Babe Ruth



Eleanor Roosevelt

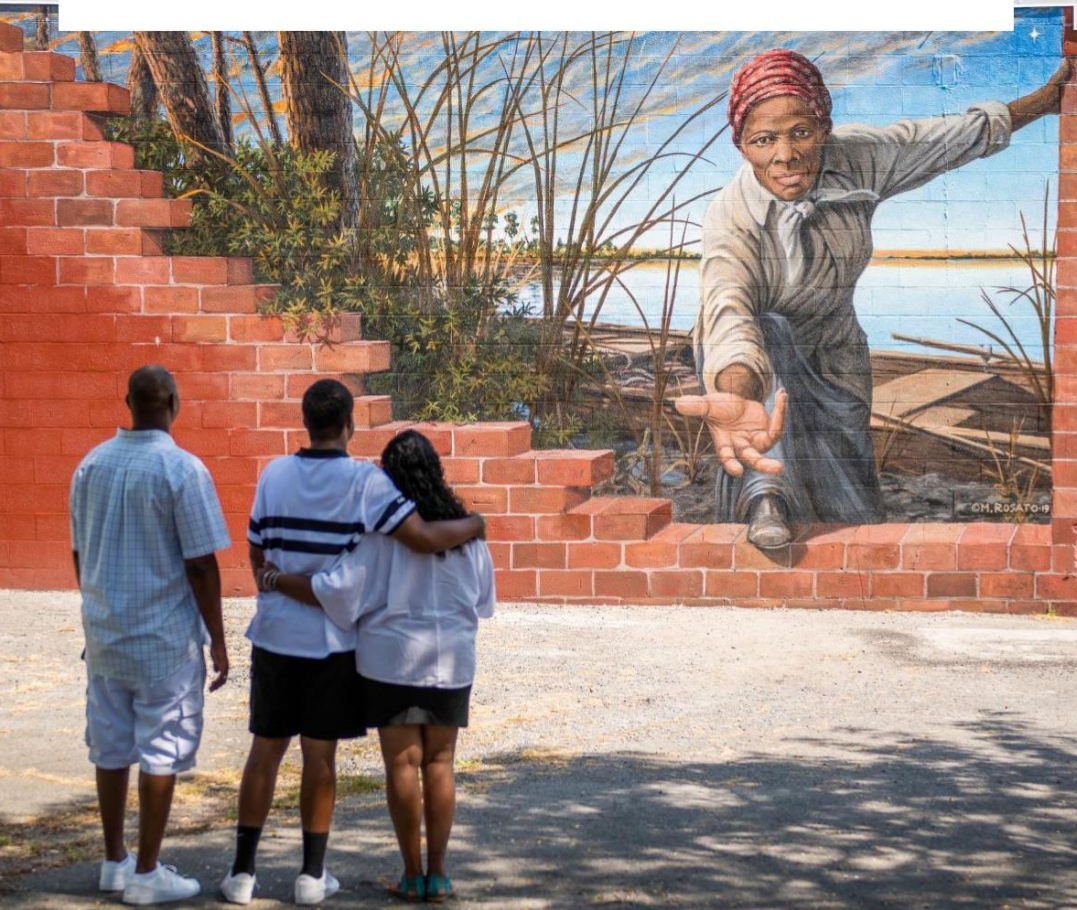


Buddy Holly



DESTINATION  
**MARYLAND**

THE OFFICIAL MARYLAND TRAVEL MAGAZINE



The Harriet  
Tubman Mural &  
Driving Guide  
increased tourism  
to Maryland's  
Eastern Shore

**OPEN TO HONOR**

The 200th birthday of  
American hero Harriet Tubman.



**OPEN FOR A ROADTRIP**

Explore America's Byways on a  
memorable Maryland road trip.

# Celebrate Famous Events



Great Depression – Washington, DC



Lunch Counter Sit-In's – Greensboro, NC



# Celebrate Ordinary People



Waterman – Massachusetts



Ranchers – Wyoming



Coal Miners – Pennsylvania



Lumberjacks - Wisconsin



# Tell Your Story!



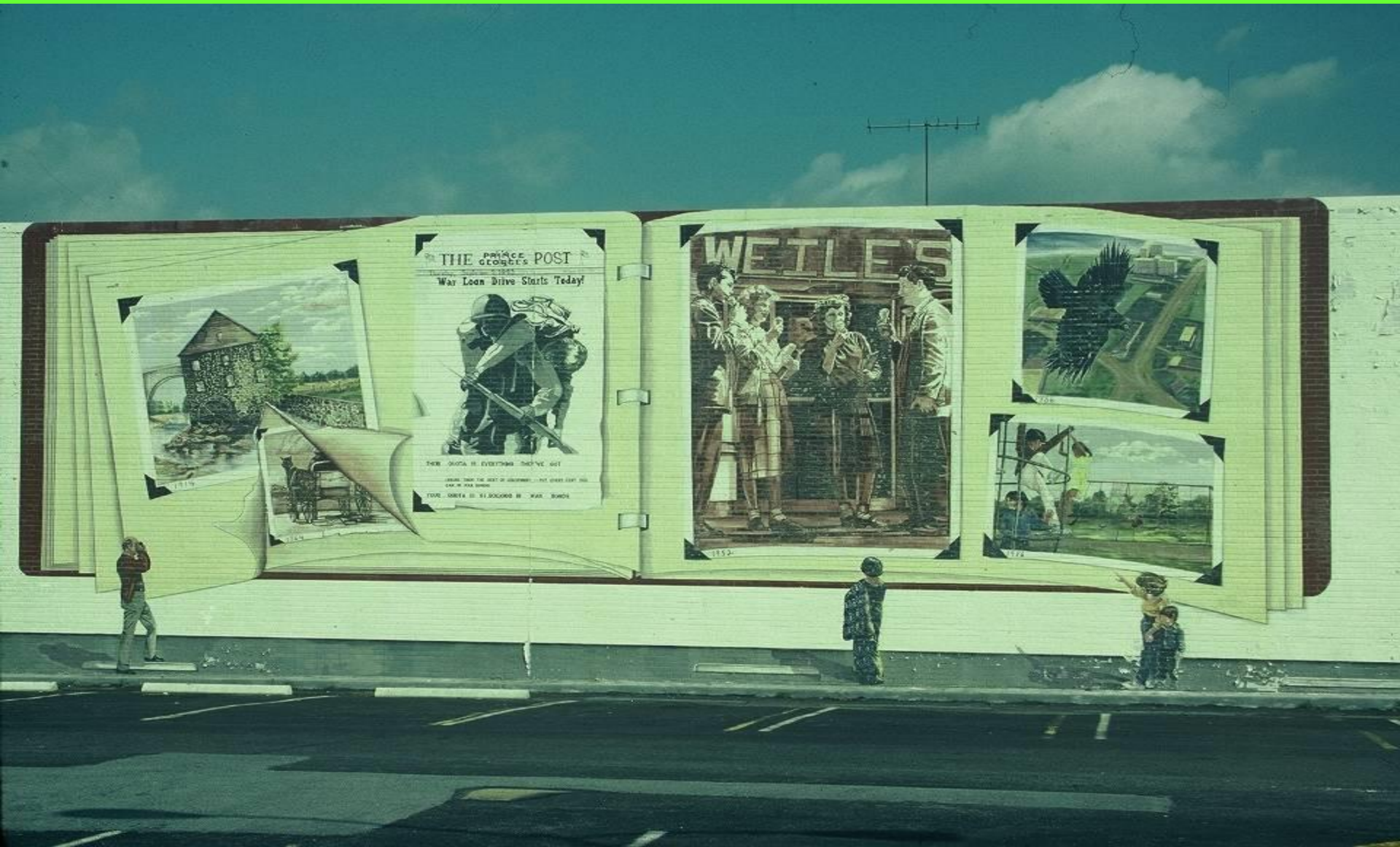


# Tupelo, MS





# Takoma Park, MD





# Nashua, NH





# Louisville Slugger Museum





# Big Postcard Orlando, FL







HERSHEY





**Public Art  
Can Attract Tourists  
&  
Add Fun and Value  
to a Community**















# Lake City, SC





# Secrets of Successful Communities

1. Develop a shared vision for the future
2. Inventory local and regional assets
3. Build plans around the enhancement of assets
4. Use education, incentives, partnerships, and voluntary initiatives, not just regulation
5. Pick & choose among development proposals
6. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit
7. Protect community character & foster an authentic sense of place
8. Have strong leaders & committed citizens

# Most Polluted City

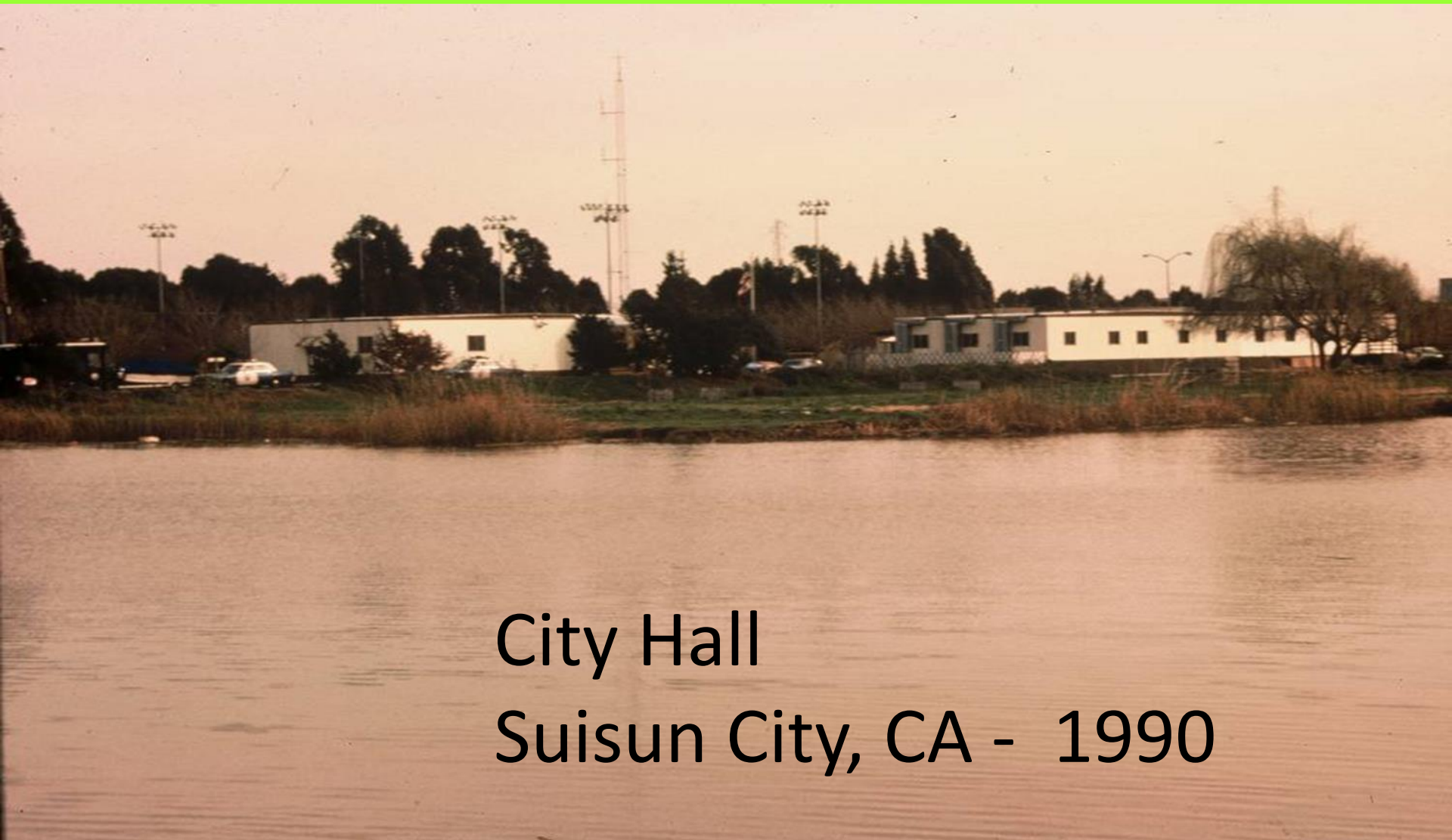




# Model for Community Revitalization



# One of the Worst Places to Live



City Hall

Suisun City, CA - 1990



# One of the Best Places to Live



City Hall  
Suisan City, CA - 2000

# Inventory Assets

- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Human Resources
- Economic Resources
- Educational Resources
- Recreational Assets



# Sometimes the Assets are Obvious



Jackson, WY



# Annapolis, MD





# Sometimes They Are Not Obvious



Lowell, MA - Before





**Lowell, MA - After**



# Columbus, GA Riverfront - Before



# Columbus, GA Riverfront - After





# WWII Torpedo Factory



# Torpedo Factory Arts Center





# Paducah, KY Flood Wall – Before



# Paducah, KY Flood Wall - After





# Akron Grain Elevators - Before



# Akron Grain Elevators - After





# Rapid City, SD - Before



EXISTING CONDITIONS

# Rapid City, SD - After





# Poughkeepsie Rail Bridge - Before



# Poughkeepsie Rail Bridge - After





# Explore Beyond Regulation

- Education
- Incentives
- Partnerships
- Voluntary Initiatives

# Why Do We Educate?





# Why Should We Use Incentives?



"IT'S THE LATEST TREND IN REAL ESTATE... A LITTLE INCENTIVE TO SWEETEN THE DEAL."

# Development Incentives

- Expedited Permit Review
- Reduced Fees
- Property Tax Credits
- Form Based Codes
- Transferable Development Rights
- By Right Conservation Development
- Buffer Averaging
- Off-Site Mitigation
- Stormwater Credits
- Code Flexibility
- Grants and Awards



# Incentives



- **Grand Forks, ND** reduced the cost of Liquor Licenses to encourage more downtown restaurants.



- **Staunton, VA** provided free Design Assistance to building owners who would restore their building facades.

# Voluntary Initiatives



**Conservation Easements**



**Community Beautification**



# Gettysburg, PA - Before



# Gettysburg, PA - After





# Yazoo City, MS - Before



# Yazoo City, MS - After





**SUCCESSFUL  
COMMUNITIES PICK  
AND CHOOSE AMONG  
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

# Davidson, NC - CVS Proposed





# Davidson, NC - CVS Built



# You Have a Choice!

“When a chain store developer comes to town they generally have three designs (A, B, or C) ranging from Anywhere USA to Unique (sensitive to local character).”

“Which one gets built depends heavily upon how much push back the company gets from local residents and officials about design & its importance.”

Source: Bob Gibbs, Retail Consultant, Birmingham, MI



# Walgreens – Plan A



# Walgreens – Plan B





# Walgreens – Plan C



# Walgreens – Plan C





# Walgreens – Plan C





# Retailers Change the Rules



Mixed use projects



Smaller Footprints



Multi-story buildings



Restored Historic Buildings



# Lexington, VA - Before





# Lexington, VA - After





# Leadership is important!

## But often unappreciated



“Apart from sanitation, medicine, education, wine, public order, roads, irrigation, public health and a freshwater system, what have the Romans ever done for us?”

Monty Python's, Life of Brian

# Hometown Heroes

“Never doubt that a small group of committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”

-Margaret Mead



Ben & Erin Napier – Laurel, MS

40 houses restored  
60,000 SF of commercial space  
renovated  
25 new businesses  
Main Street Thriving

It didn't happen overnight!



# It's Not Always Easy



*Welcome to*  
**Buena Vista**  
**6002 HAPPY CITIZENS**  
**AND 3 OLD GROUCHES**  
J.H. DICKINSON JR. 1971

# A Final Thought

Vision counts, but  
implementation is priceless!



# Thank You!

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