

Getting Started in Downtown Revitalization **Sample Tasks for Downtown Network** **Committees and Communities Getting Started!**

For more ideas, visit mdf.org – Maine Downtown Center
or contact Anne G. Ball, Program Director at
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Organization

Establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships and getting everyone working toward the goals for downtown

- Passion, dedication, commitment to downtown
- Broad participation by community (downtown business sector, property owners, residents, municipality, schools, organizations, everyone! “All Hands on Deck for Downtown!”)
- Understand Community Values!
- Collaborate and partner with all other organizations – think deep
- Mission statement/Vision Statement
- Long range Strategic Plan / Annual Work Plans
- Financial/Fundraising/Development Planning
- Committee / Project structure , Understanding of the Four-Point Approach®
- Continual volunteer recruitment/retention and recognition
- Create your Organization, apply for 501(c)3; Bylaws; Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Staff & Volunteer management/direction provided by Board/ Steering Committee
- “Road Show” to share the vision with groups in your community

Design

Getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating a safe, walkable inviting atmosphere. Design takes advantage of the visual opportunities, using your assets and historic character for downtown revitalization

- Historic preservation, façade restoration, building maintenance
- Historic building education and training for property owners and developers
- Design Guidelines for downtown buildings developed for property and business owners
- Commercial Signage – quality is essential. Understand sign ordinances
- Window Displays and in store merchandising/layout/aesthetics
- Public Art, fountains and informational kiosks
- Green Spaces, trees, flowers, benches, shade
- Free Wi-Fi throughout or Hot Spots – let people know!
- Parking and traffic flow studies, friendly enforcement
- Wayfinding Signage : clear directional signage for free public parking
- Sidewalks and Trails, easy to find and access connections to harbor walks, rail and river trails
- Lighting – street, store, and holiday
- Trash and Recycling Containers – think green!
- Historic walking tour guides (self-guided, virtual, hard copy, interpretive signs, museum in the street)
- Snow removal; property owner/merchant, municipality role, timing and guidelines

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295 Water Street, Suite 5 | Augusta, Maine 04330

Promotions

Community Building to create a positive image that will promote community pride.

Improve consumer and investor confidence and spending in your downtown district.

- Organization and Downtown image. What is your brand, logo, tag line
- Buttons, T-shirts, tote bags
- Social events; art and history walks, block parties, concerts, wine tastings
- Retail events; early-bird sales, holiday open houses, cross-marketing with community events
- Community building, heritage/history events; tie downtown into partner community events
- Downtown brochure, map, business directory
- Press kits with everything the press and media need to TELL YOUR STORY
- Website/Facebook/E-blasts/Social Marketing

Economic Vitality

Strengthens your downtowns existing economic assets and businesses while building and diversifying the economic base of your community.

- Build on local assets and identity
- Target a specific market niche, balance your business offerings, identify key needs
- Make existing businesses the priority, embrace Shop Local!
- Be community designed and driven
- Compile a complete building inventory: Ownership, size, use, condition, code compliance, potential, zoning, current and historic photos, historic status (National Register?)
- Surveys of all kinds; Customer intercept, downtown employee, residents, regional market
- Business opening celebrations – ribbon cuttings, press, people, cheering
- Business recruitment packages
- Upper floor use (housing, office, performance space, other)
- Training for business owners (merchandising, advertising, customer relations, retailing)
- Financial incentives (grants and loan programs)
- Understanding and promoting incentives for development:
 - ✓ Community Development Block Grants
 - ✓ Federal and State Historic Tax Credits
 - ✓ Tax Increment Financing districts
 - ✓ Affordable Housing Credits
 - ✓ Transportation Enhancement (DOT) grants
 - ✓ Brownfields revolving loans/grants
 - ✓ USDA grants / SBA assistance
 - ✓ For nonprofits: Foundation grants, intervention and planning grants, technical assistance

Eight Principles for Success

1. Comprehensive
2. Incremental
3. Self-help, If not you who?
4. Public & private partnerships, Collaborations

Apply Liberally and Often!

5. Build on existing assets
6. Quality in everything
7. Embrace Change
8. Action-oriented steps

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