

Identity Dossier

presented to
Canby, OR



CIVILIS CONSULTANTS
PO Box 28502
Portland, OR 97228
503.867.8465
civilisconsultants.com



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2019, the City of Canby contacted Civilis Consultants about embarking on a scope of work to assist the City with economic development efforts in the downtown. The goals of this work were several fold: a) engage property owners and business owners in a discussion about how downtown is operating; b) quantify how downtown functions as a commercial district; and, c) develop recommendations that can be implemented in the short- and medium- term for reasonable sums of money using resources and reflecting market conditions present in Canby.

To inform these recommendations and to engage the community, Civilis Consultants utilized the Identity Framework method for quantifying the characteristics, performance and brand status of downtown. This framework is intended to provide the aforementioned goal identification, as well as brand scaffolding which can inform Canby's efforts to improve visitation, increase sales per square foot, and build wealth in the community.



Downtown Canby Circa 2016

The culmination of the project is a two-step deliverable. This Civic Dossier is the first, which lays out findings from the Identity Framework and offers toolkits for the top three stakeholders in commercial districts: property owners, business owners, and the public sector/agencies. This dossier is presented in a narrative format. The second deliverable is the Civic Identity Findings and Toolkits presentation, which serves as the bulleted “to do” list for downtown stakeholders, focused on short-term interventions.

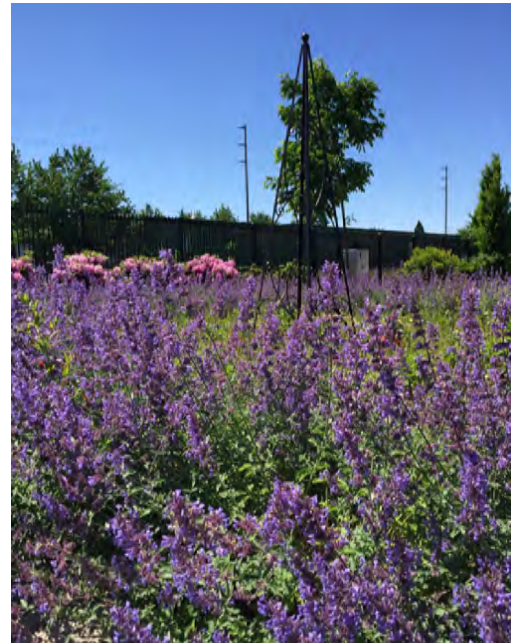
Assessments of downtown Canby in 2019 included:

- **Story Framework Workshop.** Provided training on how the framework impacts economics, followed by an exercise to apply the framework to Canby with downtown stakeholders.
- **Interviews.** Conducted interviews with the Chamber of Commerce, City Staff, and a mix of business owners and property owners in the downtown.
- **Survey.** A survey was released to the broader community to populate the story framework for Canby.
- **District Secret Shopper.** Civilis toured the city, businesses, and the downtown with a “visitor hat” on — recording what enticed, what drew attention, and where there were areas for improvement.
- **District Documentation.** Photographic and mapping quantification of downtown Canby

IDENTITY FINDINGS

Places are telling stories, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, whether they mean to or not. If a commercial district is not intentionally considering and actively telling its own story, one is emerging anyway, and it's often not a good one. In all aspects of marketing, economic development, and public policy, story should inform how cities and towns answer these sorts of questions:

- Why would a company locate to your town?
- Who might visit your commercial district?
- How do you become a local hangout?
- Would a lender be willing to risk investment in a project located in your downtown?
- Does your city provide opportunity for a wide cross section of residents?



Growing/Gardening Is a Part of Canby's Identity

To build a sustainable, resilient commercial district, stakeholders should have a shared understanding of its identity—which means they should understand *all* of the elements of the story that are communicated through buildings, roads, signs, traffic, businesses, events, priorities, relationships, and a place's context.

One of the most effective ways to quantify the wide array of identity attributes is to use the CORE Story Framework—the same building blocks that improvisation artists and screenwriters use to create compelling stories. This framework is a helpful way to understand both the tangible and intangible elements of a district's brand, so it can be leveraged in new and interesting ways.

CORE STORY FRAMEWORK

The Story Framework is made up of four components: Characterization, Objective, Relationship, and Environment. These are the essential ingredients to developing a complete story, whether you are doing an improv show or branding a commercial district.

STORY FRAMEWORK

Characterization

Objective

Relationship

Environment

This section of the Identity Dossier will break down the four elements of the story framework for downtown Canby.

Characterization

In fiction, characterization refers to the part of a story that is told through the physical presence of a character, such as voice, attitude, energy, race, haircut, clothing, walk, etc. In animation, there is a saying that if you nail the walk, you nail the character, because a character's walk communicates so much about them. When we first encounter a character in life, or through a story, we go through our address book of stereotypes and pull out the stereotype that most closely matches this new character. If the character matches our stereotype, we are satisfied and then no longer need to engage. But, if there is some aspect of the character that is unexpected, that is where we engage, that's where story happens, the tension between the expected and the reality that is in front of us.

For a city, characterization is everything that your city presents to the world physically, such as streets, buildings, signage, lighting, homes, yards, parks, and natural environment. Physical communications also contribute to this element of story through brochures, websites, billboards, print ads, and TV advertising. All of these things play a role in how a district represents itself. Characterization can tell us whether a city is dense, rural, blue-collar, wealthy, suburban, elite, safe, economically successful, or financially stressed.

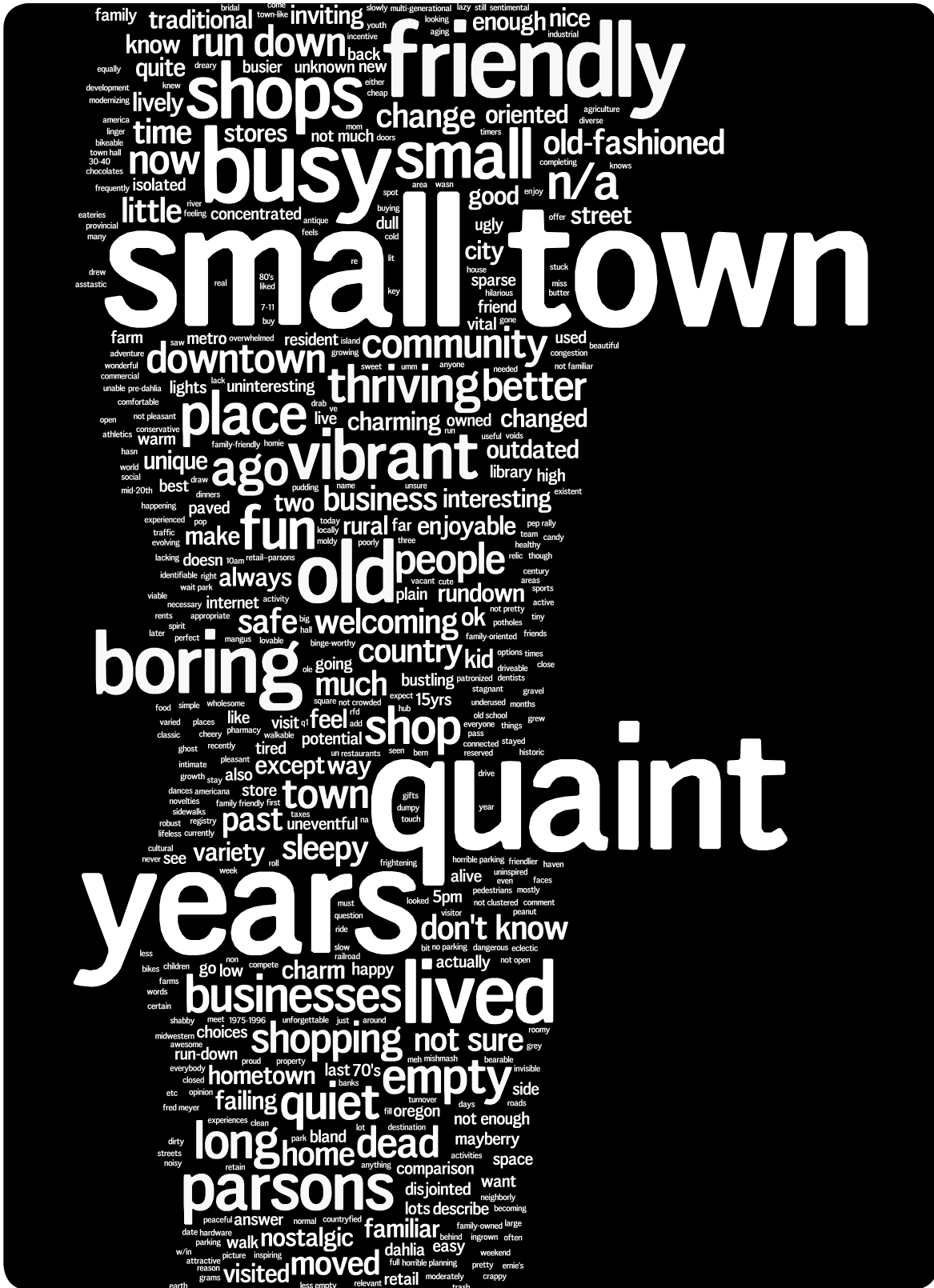
Consider the new library, shown below. The exterior mural and the interior buildout tell a great story. The entrance, however, looks like an antiseptic hospital entry! There's opportunity to heal this physical story.

CHARACTERIZATION: LIBRARY EXAMPLE IN CANBY



Because the physical portion of a place's story is broadcasting itself 365 days a year and cannot really be "turned off" —it's the most important part of story for a place. Given its importance, it's fitting that the CORE framework starts with characterization. On the following pages see the community's perceptions of characterization in Canby.

WHAT WORDS DESCRIBE DOWNTOWN CANBY IN THE PAST?



The story represented on the previous page in the word cloud about the past includes some very good words: **vibrant, friendly, fun, busy, thriving**. Its buildings and general atmosphere were described as **quaint** and **small-town**. And in terms of things to do, **shops** and **shopping** were both mentioned, which implies a reasonable level of economic activity.

There are some opposing perspectives, as well. Some felt that in the past downtown Canby seemed **old, boring, dead** and **sleepy**. And, its infrastructure was described as **run-down** by some.

In total though, the weight of the positive words outweighs those of the negative words, so I would conclude that people's perceptions of downtown Canby in the past are that it was generally an active place, which people frequented for shopping and to hang out with their community.

Also important to note is the role of **Parson's** in the word cloud, which is a recently closed pharmacy and gift shop that was a long-time beloved institution in the community.

See images from Parson's below.

Word Cloud Reminder!

The bigger the word, the more frequently it was said, the smaller the word, the less often it was mentioned.

Parson's Merchandise

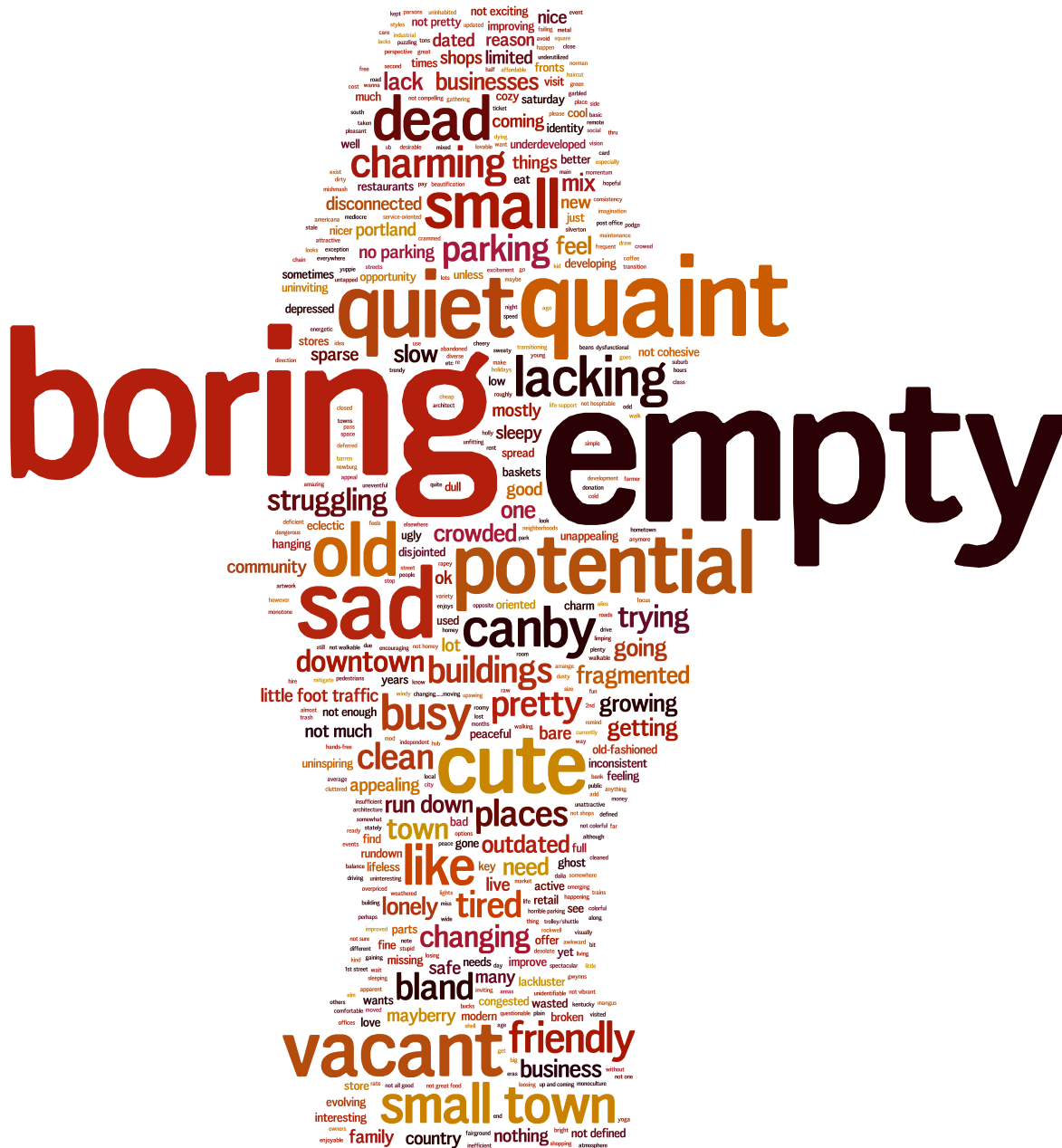


Parson's Greeting Cards



The next question in terms of the physical story was about Canby's present. The results are shown in the word cloud on the next page.

WHAT WORDS DESCRIBE DOWNTOWN CANBY TODAY?



Today, downtown still has a bit of that **small-town, quaint, busy, friendly, and charming** thing going on! It is also described as **cute**.

But, there are also very large differences between the past and the present in these downtown answers, almost all of which seem to relate to lack of people and things to

do, as well as the quality of the downtown experience because by far the two most common words used to describe downtown are **boring** and **empty**.

Other mentions include: **vacant, bland, tired, sad, old, quiet,** and **dead**. In general, this indicates that Canby residents believe that downtown has become less active and less attractive over time.

Examples of these contrasting viewpoints in downtown are shown below:

Canby Can Feel Quaint...



... and also Quiet



Canby Can Feel Friendly...



... and also Bland



There are many areas of physical story that have an impact on economic performance in districts, but four of the most important for Canby's story are roads, the railroad, businesses, and buildings. Let's look at those in more detail.

Roads

Roads are the fundamental circulatory system for a district and they have a large influence over commerce in several ways:

- *Speed.* Faster traffic is detrimental to small businesses, downtowns, and Main St environments because it does not allow drivers to interact with the commercial offerings. When speed is paramount, you are creating a pass through place, not a drive around and circulate place. Also, higher speed roads are noisy and unsafe, discouraging outdoor dining and pedestrian circulation, all of which impacts brand and sales per square foot. The downtown is doing a great job of this. Highway 99 E, as the gateway to downtown still has room for improvement.
- *Connectivity.* A circulatory system for a commercial district is most efficient when it is part of a grid, and downtown has good connectivity. Again, the biggest challenge is cross traffic over the highway.
- *Appearance.* The brick & mortar experience happens long before someone sets foot in an individual business. If the road is unappealing looking, then it makes the entire district less appealing, which colors people's perceptions of the business offerings. Right now, downtown roads are fantastic in terms of scale and finish. Highway 99 E on the other hand, does not physically tell the story of Canby.

The Highway Is a Gateway & Tells a Story...



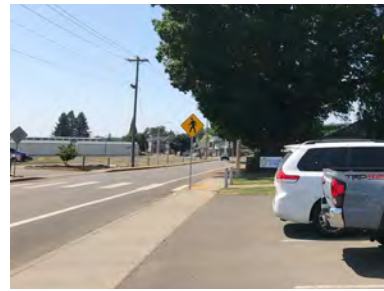
... Opposite of Downtown's Story



The three roads to consider from a “state of the streets” perspective are:

1. *Downtown Streets*. What do roads look like in the grid of downtown?
2. *Highway 99 E*. The state highway adjacent to downtown serves as a gateway to downtown; essentially, it is a major front door.
3. *NE 4th Ave*. The fairgrounds are a “best selling product” for Canby, and how all of these visitors connect to downtown is critical.

DOWNTOWN, HWY 99 E, & NE 4TH AVE (left to right)



Downtown Streets

The state of the downtown grid is solid, the streets have a lovely scale, the block size is reasonable, there is off-street parking, and some of the best streetscape work of any small town in Oregon.

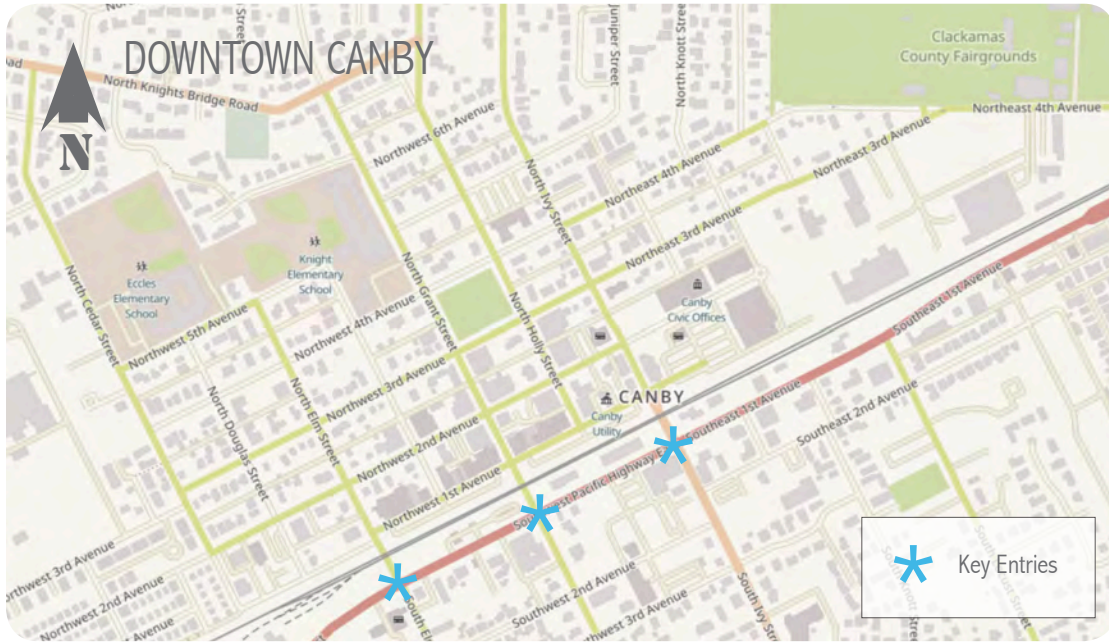
Highway 99 E

The highway as a whole is not doing much to dovetail with the downtown brand in either of two key ways:

- *Garden Spot*. The brand of Canby as being the garden spot is not in any way reflected on the State Highway, which is a sea of asphalt. It is largely a place that, as a driver, you just want to get through.
- *Historic Downtown*. Downtown Canby is an historic downtown with a central park and a charming array of buildings. The downtown is largely invisible from the highway, and the buildings on the highway do little to reinforce the notion that there is an historic town center nearby.

In terms of healing this brand relationship between the highway and downtown, it would be valuable to focus first on the key entries to downtown, marked below with the light blue star on N Elm St, N Grant St, and N Ivy St.

HIGHWAY 99 E KEY ENTRIES TO DOWNTOWN CANBY



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N Elm St. This important gateway is the western-most intersection with the highway. This corner consists of empty lots, a bank and a real estate office.

N Ivy St. The eastern-most downtown intersection with the highway is at N Ivy St. This intersection is more active, but very auto-centric. It is home to an auto lube store, a convenience store, an auto body shop, a glass store, and a parking lot. This does not tell the story of “Garden Spot” nor does it tell the story of quaint downtown. Having said that, the historic building that is home to the auto body shop and glass store is an older building and would be a great candidate for a dramatic and attention-getting paint improvement project to highlight the historic nature of the district people are driving through.



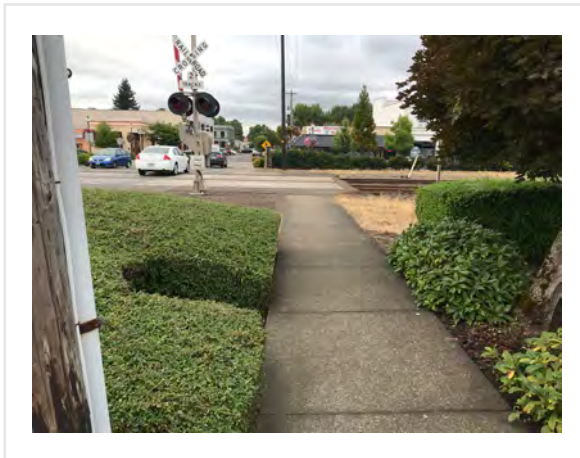
The Garden Spot Signs are Invisible

N Grant St. The middle cross street with the state highway is N Grant St. This intersection is home to a drive-through coffee kiosk, an auto mechanic, a gas station, and a retail outlet for previously used Legos—Bricks & Minifigs.

A Lego store is a fantastic venture to have in Canby. It is not only a draw that brings people to the city from around the region and the country, but it is the most important building to highlight on that corner. It could be repainted in a style inspired by the Legoland Resorts, with bands of color on the horizontal siding reminiscent of Lego colors.

It would also be great to feature a Lego sculpture walking into town along the walkway from Bricks & Minifigs to downtown Canby, shown below.

Walkway to Downtown



Build a Public Art Lego Statue!



N Grant Is the Best Cross St

A last observation about N Grant St: it has the best collection of traditional “Main St” infrastructure of any of the roads that cross the highway.

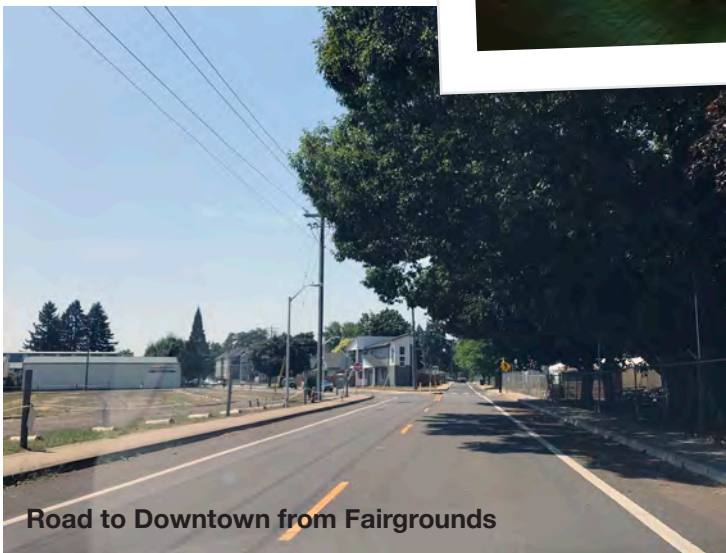
It has the scale and concentration of historic buildings that tell the physical story of being in an historic downtown: buildings built right next to each other, right up to the sidewalk, on both sides of the street. This is the cross street that should receive improvement assistance first.

NE 4th Ave.

The Clackamas County Fairgrounds are a huge draw throughout the year to Canby with the myriad events hosted there that bring people from around the greater Pacific Northwest. In trying to lure people from the fairgrounds to downtown, it's important to consider how much the road serves as an enticement. As you can see from the photograph below left, it looks like a road to an industrial district.

MAKE THE FAIRGROUND TO DOWNTOWN TRANSIT BE THE STORY

The physical story of **how** you are transported should be great, because the story the road from the fairgrounds tells is not enticing! So, get imaginative, like the pictures to the right.



Railroads

The railroad running parallel to the state highway and downtown's NW 1st Ave is having a big impact on the physical story of downtown by introducing blanks in the built environment by:

- Disrupting the street grid.
- Removing the possibility of having typical scaled buildings on the south side of NW 1st Ave.
- Generally creating a buffer with no activity around the railroad.

Also, the sound of the train whistle can be disruptive to various uses in the downtown. Achieving a quiet zone through town would be beneficial for all.



Railroad Have a Big Impact Downtown

Buildings

In a store, it's essential to create a compelling exchange between fixtures and products. Products are what a store sells, and fixtures are the equipment that cradle, display, house, and show off the products. These display devices can be utilitarian, or they can actually help create ambience and mood, showcasing merchandise in a compelling and meaningful fashion which also drive sales.

In the picture to the right, you can see the importance of fixtures. These pears feel very "farm fresh" because they are sitting on a country-inspired fixture. If these were sitting on a plastic table surrounded by Styrofoam, the produce would not appear to be nearly as fresh.

In a store, the interplay between products and fixtures is essential for driving sales and creating brand connection. In a downtown, the same is true. Only this time, the fixtures are the buildings and the products are the businesses.



Fixture Makes Pears "Farm Fresh"

And when it comes to a building's role in telling a story for a successful downtown or Main Street, it's about both quality and quantity.

Quantity. Is there a sufficient concentration of buildings built right up to the sidewalk, right next to each other, without parking lot interruption?

Density of offerings are important in both a store or a downtown. Shoppers in a store do not want to see big blank spots with no fixtures or merchandise. Similarly, walkers in a downtown do not want to see blanks in the physical environment, such as inward-facing buildings, ugly buildings, or vacant lots. A store with a lot of blanks makes shoppers leave, and so does a downtown with a lot of blanks.

A critical mass of interconnected buildings tells a physical story of vibrancy and excitement, a story that can be broadcast by the district 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's a story that is enticing to pedestrians, which is important because it is the cross-pollination between businesses that happens by people on foot that drives economic success in a downtown.

Quality. Does each building contribute to or detract from downtown's brand? If each building isn't doing its level best to create a positive district experience and get customer attention, then money is being left on the table.

Commercial districts should be asking themselves: is every individual building contributing to the overall brand of a place, and are those buildings creating a framework for tenant success? Great buildings can make a downtown district, and ugly buildings can break a Main St district. The blunt way to say it is: "*How fixtures look really matters.*"

A quick review of some of the physical stories being told by buildings in downtown Canby:

- **No Strong Architectural Theme.** There is no real unifying design theme or era for the buildings in downtown Canby. Pretty much every era of building is represented, from turn-of-the-century, to mid-century, to brand new. Honestly, this is a huge plus, because it means you can have fun! My favorite kind of building is what I call the "Ugly Box" — they are a blank canvas upon which a community can express all of its funky and eclectic spirit. So celebrate the fact that Canby has been able to build new buildings for the last 100 years, and make them the best they can be for what they are.
- **Whole Lotta Beige!** It is the job of commercial district structures to get our attention. A Main St edifice should be highlighted to draw the eye to interesting architectural features. Commercial buildings must set a dramatic stage for success for the business tenants that call them home. If everything is

some vague, tasteful, and/or forgettable shade of beige, then none of those things is being accomplished. Currently Canby is using the blandest of color palates. This is a particular problem for grabbing the attention of people from the highway. Every building visible from 99 E should be particularly eye catching.

DOWNTOWN CANBY IS AN HOMAGE TO BEIGE!



- ***If I Can See It, It's a Front.*** A by-product of being a commercial district with a lot of mid-century buildings is that they tend to feature more stand-alone structures and parking lots. This creates a situation where the backs and sides of buildings are visible. (As opposed to traditional downtown zero lot-line development where structures are built next to one another, ensuring that the sides and back walls are not visible.) In a commercial district, if a customer can see any part of a building, then it is contributing to, or detracting from, the experience of being in your district. Everything visible needs to be treated as a “front.”
- ***Interiors with Bad Lighting.*** Lighting is the secret sauce for a great brick and mortar experience. The vast majority of retail spaces in downtown feature drop ceilings with dated fluorescent tube lighting. These spaces are not creating a framework for tenant success. This lighting is a) not creating a great mood while businesses are open; and, b) not showcasing businesses and the building at night when establishments are closed.



If I Can See It, It's a Front

Businesses

A downtown takes its identity from ground-floor businesses, which are essentially the products in downtown's store. What types of businesses contribute to identity? Generally, those that are local, active, and visually engaging are the key to building economic success.

As a shortcut, we are going to call these businesses "active." Ideally, active uses are businesses that are a) open to the public; b) have dynamic and interesting windows; c) create multi-sensory experiences; d) are something a pedestrian might frequent; e) use the sidewalk as an extension of their business; f) collaborate and cross-pollinate with other businesses; and, g) are ever-evolving. An economically successful downtown or Main St district is one that always gives customers a new experience!

Active means that I can look at the business from the street, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and get a sense of what the business sells, who its target market is, and what sort of experience it will offer a consumer on the interior. I should get this impression in a few seconds.

There are four key characteristics that are impacting identity and economics in downtown Canby, listed below. These are the four main reasons people described Canby as being vacant, empty, and boring.

- The preponderance of inactive service businesses in ground-floor spaces.
- The lack of well-lit, transparent, well-merchandised storefront windows.
- A general lack of people visible throughout the downtown.
- A lack of activity on the sidewalk.



Downtown Has a Lot of Medical Use

Lack of Active Businesses

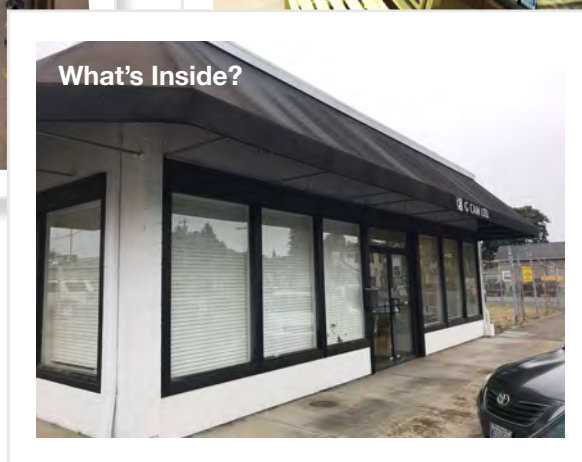
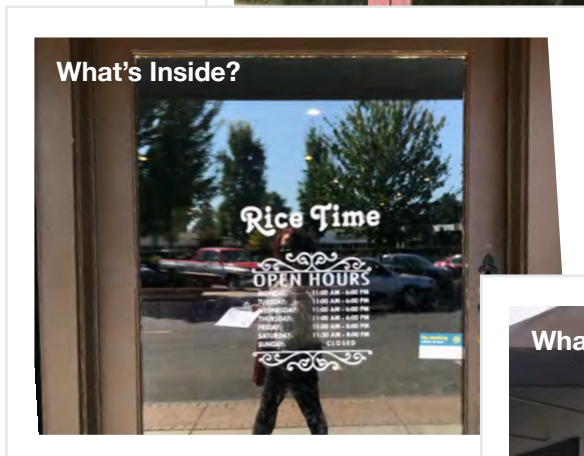
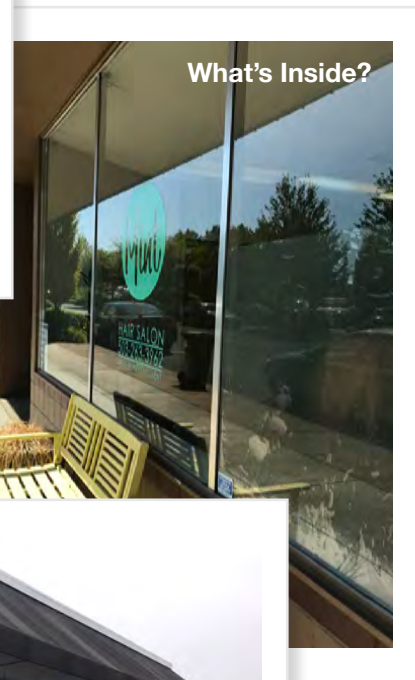
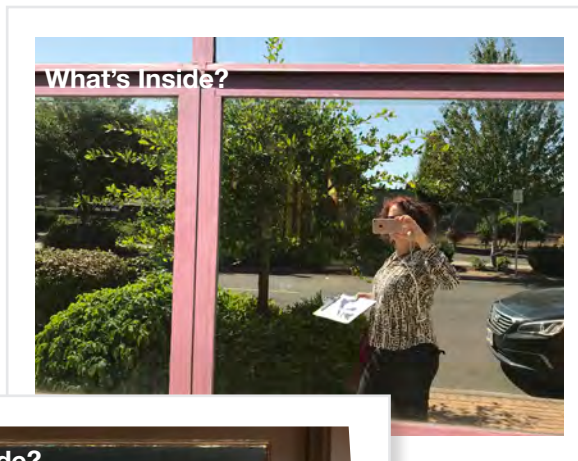
Successful downtowns bring people in the community together, and drive sales by offering 18 hours of activity during the day, with businesses open from the early morning to late at night. Currently, downtown Canby is dominated by a wide mix of professional service businesses — insurance, legal, real estate, and a whole plethora of medical offerings. This means downtown is largely open only from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and it is populated with businesses that don't engage the sidewalk or activate their windows.

Bottom line, if a business is on the ground-floor, it has an obligation, no matter its use, to engage the sidewalk and create dynamic windows.

Dark Windows

We want to see in your windows, Canby!! For the most part, during the day, it was impossible to see in most of the businesses in Canby. The hardest thing a local business has to accomplish is to get people to cross their threshold. If there isn't something in storefront windows or on the sidewalks that reflect target customer's interests, and if visitors can't see into a business, they will be much less likely to walk through the door.

WE WANT TO SEE IN YOUR WINDOWS CANBY!



In general, it is difficult to tell which businesses were open, which were closed, and which were vacant. A lack of window transparency and visual interest means that a) customers are not reminded to enter a business; and, b) visitors are less likely to circulate between businesses.

A good shortcut to determine how a district is doing with cross-pollination is to count the number of lighted red “open” signs in dark windows. Consumers should be able to tell you are open in one second by taking a look at your storefront: you should not have to tell them with a sign. Red lit open signs are like saying, “No no, really, I know it looks like we aren’t open, but we really are!”

Show Me the People

There is a lot of opportunity to improve the showcasing of people when it comes to food service. There are a variety of prepared food offerings in downtown, but it’s hard to tell. There are no transparent windows showing off diners, there are anemic seating areas, there are no gorgeous umbrellas, and there are no street seat/parklet installations.

Restaurants offer multi-sensory experiences, they bring people together of all ages, patrons of them will cross cultural boundaries, and they are the only business in a downtown where a visitor’s job is to sit and hang out.

And since human beings are pack animals who are hardwired to do what we observe others doing, showcasing people is a key part of driving sales for food service specifically, and downtown generally.

Improving this one area of downtown would move the dial on perceptions of downtown’s activity level.

SHOW VISITORS YOU ARE OPEN AND SERVE PREPARED FOOD!



Sidewalk Activation

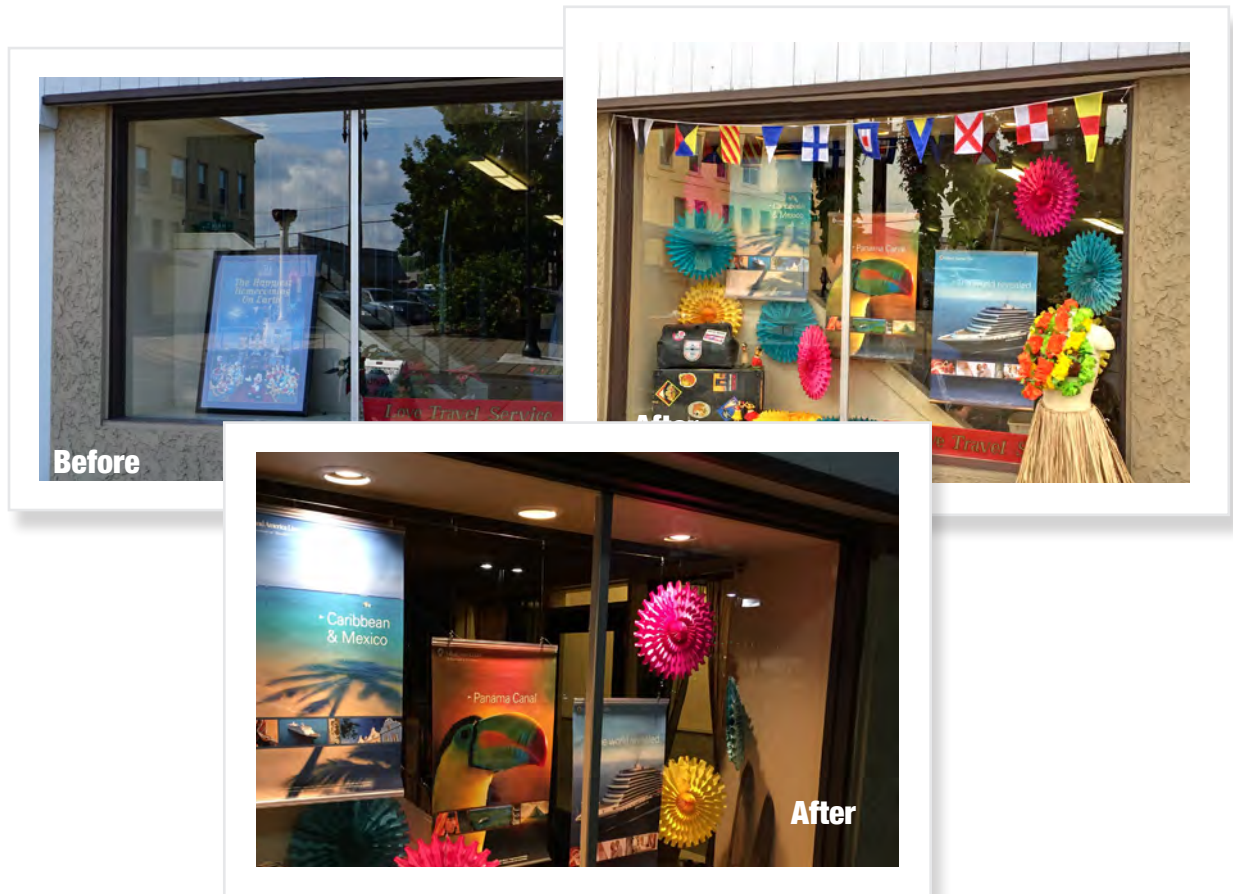
In terms of sidewalk activation, the biggest bright spots are the antique stores, which pretty consistently create a dynamic sidewalk presence. Also, the Barn Door on N Ivy St had a cute display, and an open door with a nice interior. (They were most successful at creating the interior/exterior feel.)

Every business can find a way to bring their story to the sidewalk. Consider this travel agency example below, a service office use. The before photo is their business during opening hours. The after photo during the day shows a well-merchandized window, exterior nautical flags, and a form in Hawaiian gear out front. These items on the sidewalk move in the breeze, catch peoples attention, and remind them they might want to take a cruise.



Sidewalk Activation

SERVICE BUSINESSES CAN ENGAGE THE SIDEWALK



And at night, the travel agency window is spectacular, making downtown Auburn a nice place for those window shopping, or on their way to dinner. And, it serves as a wonderful 24/7 advertisement for the business. Remember, a sidewalk is like a stage, and each business should use it to tell their unique story.

Objective

The “C” in the CORE Story Framework was the longest section of the framework because the physical story of a commercial district is fundamentally important to its performance. In some ways, the C is also the easiest to understand because it is tangible. The remaining elements of the framework (the “ORE”) are equally important, but they are sometimes harder to grasp. They are the hidden parts of story that are having a big impact, but they are less tangible, and therefore harder to quantify. So let’s take a closer look at the ORE... beginning with Objective.

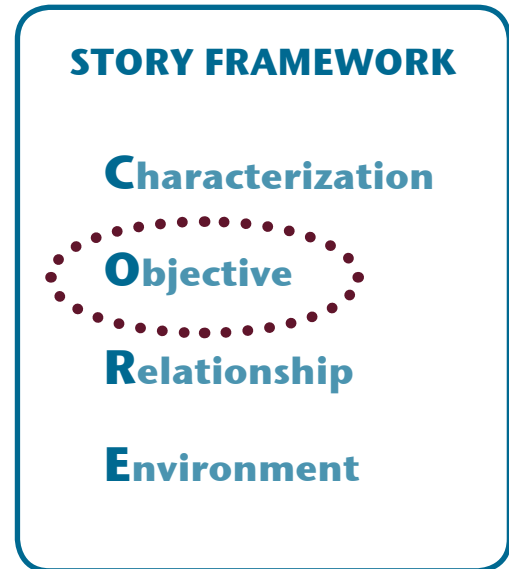
The “O” in the CORE Story Framework is Objective, and speaks to what a character’s motivation is.

Even though we don’t do it consciously, human beings are always making assumptions about what everyone else’s objectives are, and what is motivating them. We must have an idea of what someone’s objective is if we want to engage with them in a story because we need to know what boundaries define our interactions.

In real life, the absence of having a clear understanding of someone’s objective makes us uncomfortable. Human beings feel most at ease with someone whose objective is clear, whether or not we would describe their motivations as good or bad. On the other hand, we do not like interactions where we don’t know, or don’t understand, the objective of the other parties.

This is true of places, as well. We want to know what motivates a place and what experience they want us to have.

For a downtown or a Main St, objective refers to understanding the experience that it intends to provide and the role that the district plays in the city as a whole. As consumers, as residents, as visitors we want to grasp what downtown stands for, what it is about, what motivates it. In other words, why should I connect with it?



In order to get a handle on Objective for Canby, we started by asking workshop-goers and survey takers some interesting questions, which we will dive into in further detail in the following pages. Our first question was about passion; namely, what are people in Canby passionate about?

WHAT ARE PEOPLE IN CANBY MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?



Community, family, and maintaining a **small-town** feel were front-and-center passions for Canby. Next tier passions were **kids, farming, and sports**. There are many ways in which Canby is passionate about being a community, but unfortunately that civic connection is not visible in the downtown. In fact, if someone was to randomly visit downtown, they might think that the state of relationship in Canby is not strong. So making sure Canby is executing on this fundamental identity as a small-town place that loves its community is critical to being a successful downtown.

There are a lot of ways that you can build upon that idea of community while also improving brand, sales, and drawing new visitors.

For example, a place's local creative community can have a big impact on the buildings that call commercial districts home.

This happened in downtown Winnemucca, NV, where a few talented retailers marshalled a group of volunteers, rustled up some paint donations, and single-handedly were responsible for 17 buildings being repainted in a short period of time, changing everyone's perception of downtown and attracting new businesses in the process.

Home » Communications
Downtown Winnemucca gets a much needed facelift
16 FEBRUARY 2016
Beth Clifton - News4Nevada.Com
Tuesday, February 16, 2016 1:00 AM
The Downtown Business Association (DBA) has given the downtown area a facelift in order to attract more businesses — and more customers — to the downtown area. And it's working, said DBA president Jacy Jackson. Several new businesses have started or moved into the area, including the new coffee shop, Cafe 345, owned by Debbie Palmer, Real Deals Winnemucca, owned by Holly Laird, and Essential Oils and More, owned by Katherine Hall.



Jackson owns Le French Twist Salon and Cheers Tap House and several other downtown properties she leases to other businesses. About three years ago, she and Danielle Flores, owner of Simply Trendy, decided that the downtown area was looking pretty shabby. And shabby doesn't draw people in. So they raised the long-defunct DBA from the dead. Jackson said.

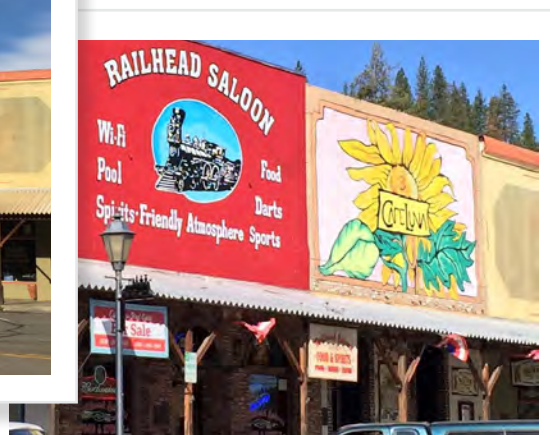
Set Your Creatives Free!

Another good example is shown below. This is from downtown Colfax, CA. This rail town has a small Main St in their town center that features one-story buildings with large parapets that make it almost look as if the storefront has a second floor. A few artists in town got together and started to paint these to improve the look and feel of the district! What a difference.

Colfax Before



Colfax After



He's not a bad place; he doesn't mean to be cranky and slow, but he's stuck in his ways and afraid.

It's an Oregonian trying to keep others from moving here by keeping the nice stuff off of 99 hidden, causing everyone who drives down 99 to think it's drab... just gas, a burger, and continue on their way.

...Trying to get back into shape and is not ready to give up, but maybe doesn't know where to start. When they figure it out, it's going to be in best shape of life!

A bald older history teacher...fine with just getting by in looks and functionality. He knows that he has potential and he wants to be what he aspired to be originally, but what was that? He is so far from where he started, he thinks he can't get back to his purpose.



IF DOWNTOWN CANBY WERE A PERSON...

Christopher Walken

Sweet older person, full of life in their mind.

A young grandma — warm, welcoming, but not old enough to seem uncool or boring. But, she's feeling overwhelmed with all the changes and updates going on... she's a little lost. She wants to find herself again and be relevant, but not in a way that is inauthentic to herself and her roots.

Downtown is like Santa Claus. A few times a year it brings joy to everyone in the community, but it's still an old, white-haired man that is tired.

This question, “*If Canby were a person...*” is the most powerful in the story framework because the answers really reflect the experience that the downtown is offering to visitors. And, the answers represent the way people feel when they are downtown. It is not possible to be economically successful if people feel **sad, lonely** and **tired** in downtown.

Also, the descriptive answers to this question in the surveys revolved around the theme that downtown had little to offer if a person wasn't there for an event, or going specifically to eat at a restaurant, or a trip to the library.

There were a lot of “one and done” trips mentioned about downtown. People shared that they might come to shop at Cutsforth's, or go to the theater, but afterward or beforehand there was little to do. Survey takers mentioned that they don't feel downtown is vibrant or welcoming, and that they don't necessarily appreciate downtown collectively as a place.

One-Trip Draw: Park



One-Trip Draw: Cutsforth's

The last question we asked in Objective is where people had been that offered an experience like the one they wanted Canby to offer. And, we wanted to know what about that experience spoke to them particularly. Their answers are shown on the next page.

The three most popular answers to the previous question were **Oregon City, Silverton, and McMinnville**. Most important, though, is why those places were chosen as offering a great experience: **businesses, people, restaurants, lots of shops, walkable, and variety**.

That's the formula for success right there!

Relationship

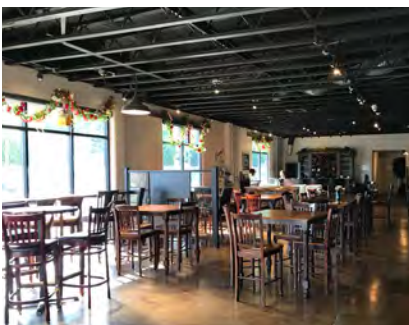
The third item in the CORE Story Framework is Relationship. In traditional storytelling, we use relationships to tell readers something about a character. You can tell a lot about a person by the relationships they maintain, and the same can be said for towns.

What are your most popular events? The most beloved businesses? Who in the community connects with downtown? Who doesn't? Who is moving into the community? Who is moving away? How are the public and private sectors working together?

Relationship is usually the most overlooked element of the framework, but it's vitally important because at the end of the day, a downtown or Main Street is all about people.

Creating economically sustainable communities requires active collaboration between the private, the public sector, and non-profit agencies.

To generate sales per square foot, businesses must work together, share information, and create brand relationships with a wide cross section of the community.



What Do People Relate to?

And to be successful in a small-town environment, downtown has to create strong relationships with the residents of its city. Small towns are small markets, and no district can afford a lack of relationship with its customer base.

So what is the state of relationship in downtown Canby?

STORY FRAMEWORK

Characterization

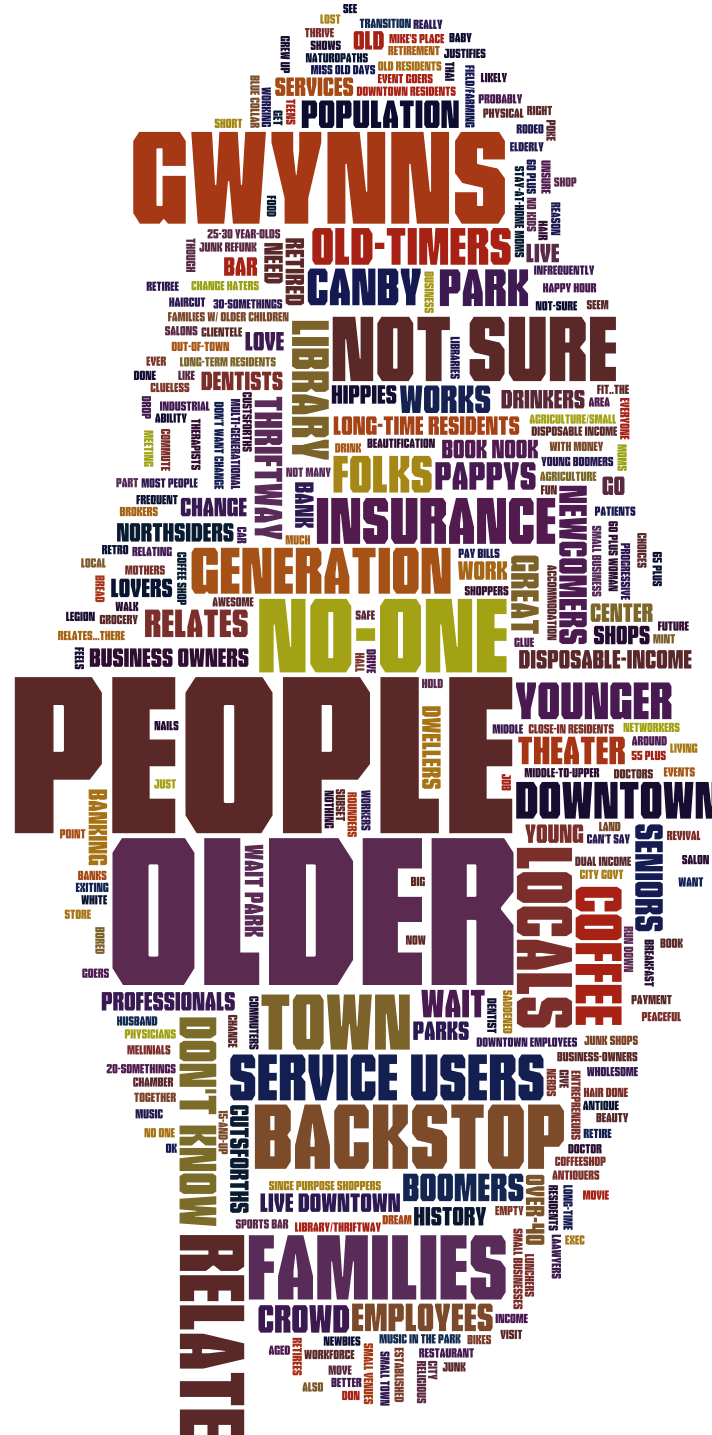
Objective



Environment

The first question we asked was who relates to Canby. And as a part of this, we really saw what people were relating to as well, which you can see below.

WHO RELATES TO DOWNTOWN CANBY?



The biggest themes in regards to who is relating to Canby were: **older people, service users, families,** and **not sure/no-one**. Families were listed as relating to the library and the park. What people related to most strongly were food uses: **Gwynn's** and **Backstop**. The latter is very common—people feel the strongest relationship ties to local businesses and food-based businesses.

The next question we asked is who did not relate to downtown Canby.

WHO DOES NOT RELATE TO DOWNTOWN CANBY?



Canby feels that a wide variety of people did not relate to downtown, including **younger** people, **kids** and **young** folks. Combined they would form the largest answer. Also mentioned were **families, commuters, newcomers, businesses,** and **tourists**. Additionally, **parking** challenges were mentioned as a reason why someone might choose not to come downtown.

It's important to note that the previous word cloud represents a wide cross section of people as not relating to downtown Canby. These are brand relationships that need to be repaired. This is essential work, because in a small downtown, you have a small market, and no one can afford to slice off large chunks of potential clients.

Before we dive into relationship for Canby, it's worth noting that branding and identity-building is fundamentally about how we are building relationships. So let's look at some of the fundamentals of branding place... or building relationship to place!

Property Owner & Business Owner Relationships

The quickest and most effective way to hasten economic improvement downtown is to foster collaboration and relationship between business owners and property owners. If the private sector stakeholders that control buildings and establishments are not sharing information on tenants, marketing, demographics, traffic, and events then downtown is leaving money on the table. In interviews and surveys, there was definitely room for improvement in building relationships between downtown's key stakeholders.

Again, there was a lot of feedback in the surveys that people feel a connection to the events in downtown Canby, but not necessarily the downtown itself, as a place to hang out and experience the city.

Branding Is Relationship

Sales per square foot is built by strengthening connections to who already relates, and forging new connections with new markets. In short, it's all about relationship. So let's take a quick detour in terms of mechanics of relationship-based branding for place.

Good branding and relationship building for place has four root principals:

1. Marketing is not bragging.
2. Never forget your audience.
3. Build from authenticity.
4. Don't shy away from conflict/tension.

Marketing Is Not Bragging

It is tempting when marketing anything, a product or a place, to believe the best plan of attack is to tell people how fantastic it is. This is not a good sales technique. Generally, as consumers, we want to decide for ourselves what is the most fantastic product or the most wonderful place: we don't want to be told.

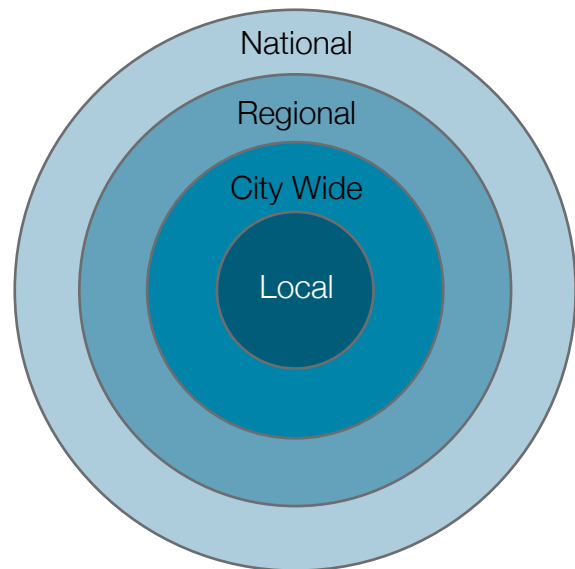
This is a common problem with city tag lines, illustrated by Spokane's, which is "Near Nature, Near Perfect." Or, the Corvallis tag line, which is "Most Innovative City in America."

Branding as bragging is not effective storytelling because instead of building relationship, it provokes these types of reactions:

- ✦ Prove it!
- ✦ I want to judge for myself.
- ✦ This bragging better pan out.
- ✦ What am I going to have for dinner tonight? (Checking out.)
- ✦ I don't like them very much.

Audience

It is nearly impossible to develop campaigns that work for all audience rings: local, city-wide, regional, and national. For example, if Massachusetts were to launch a campaign touting themselves as a great destination for outdoor recreation, that's something that might work with the three innermost rings. But, it wouldn't work on much of the national audience, the fourth ring. It is unlikely that outdoor enthusiasts from Montana, Colorado, or Oregon are going to trek to Massachusetts to go kayaking.



Indeed, it is often true that the way a place might be relevant to one ring, such as locals, is completely different than how it might be relevant to another ring, such as regional. As a general rule of thumb, it is best to focus first on the inner rings, stressing authenticity, and then work outward, unless tourism is a primary industry. If you are a tourist economy, then the brand for your offerings focused on out-of-town visitors will be very different than the brand connections you build with local and regional guests.

Authenticity

A place's genuine identity should inform all aspects of its story and should impact everything from economic development to land-use.

Take the city of Las Vegas. This was a city founded by the Mafia to provide illicit entertainment for adults—gambling, the lounge scene, and vice. It thrived for quite some time. But, by the late 1980s, the entire gaming/hospitality industry was suffering, except for one hotel/casino, which was performing above all others: Circus Circus.

Because of the success of this family-friendly concept, many hotel-casinos on the Las Vegas Strip began implementing a kid-centric business model and, however improbable it may seem today, looked to parents and children as the growth market for their future. Roller coasters, arcades, and elaborate pools abounded. Despite these efforts, Las Vegas foundered even more through a large part of the 90s.

The next reinvention of Sin City was really a return to its authentic roots: adult entertainment. This time though, they expanded options for visitors beyond the illicit, adding classy, big name singing acts, Broadway shows, Cirque du Soleil, and actual nightclubs (following the death of the lounge scene) for younger and hipper tourists.

Following this return to the city's genuine beginnings, a brilliant tag line was developed, which nearly everyone knows: "What happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas." This resonates because it is authentic. It is authentic because it is true to both the past and present of the city, focusing on adult entertainment with a tinge of the illicit. It is also laser focused on the national market, not locals or regional folks. Gaming and entertainment marketing for locals is very different, with a strong Country & Western vibe.

Tension/Conflict

What would you think if I told you this story: "A sleeping man woke up thirsty, got out of bed, obtained a drink of water, and returned to sleep."

Not horribly interesting.

How can this story be more engaging? Create a conflict! Something that makes him unable to get up to get the water. Maybe his legs don't work, or he wakes up in a strange place and doesn't know where he is. Or perhaps his door is locked from the outside. The conflicts are what make the story interesting. Do not shy away from tension, conflict or humor in marketing. We just talked about the authentic tag line from Las Vegas, "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas." This has boatloads of tension: there is a very strong implication that not all that happens may be good. This is part of what makes it interesting and memorable when it comes to marketing.

One of my favorite examples comes from the "Don't mess with Texas!" anti-litter campaign that was designed to motivate young males to stop throwing trash out of their cars on highways in the Lone Star State. It was fantastically effective, but it also grew into so much more, becoming literally the state motto, because

it resonated with one commonality found in the heart of nearly every Texan, and that is a fanatically strong sense of pride in their state. So, it meets the authenticity test. And, if you notice, there's a lot of tension here. It essentially says, we're so proud of our State, we'll give you a beat down in its name. There's nothing perfect or pretty about this tag line. But it's real, and because it's real, everyone connects with it!

Environment

Last up in the story framework is Environment.

We all know the expression that context is everything. Well, it's true. Context is everything. If you told a first date story that took place at a baseball game, you would make one set of assumptions about the characters. If you changed just the context of that first date story, from a baseball game to say... a church, well, your perception of these characters would change a lot.

Some elements of environment can be changed for a place, and some can't. For example, let's imagine a suburban community that has a bit of a downtown, but its network of streets lack a grid. It would be possible to change the environment of that downtown by creating a street grid for it, and blasting some streets through.

On the other hand, you cannot change where a town or a city is located, and the seasonality and market forces that go with that location. Since you can't change a place's "where," understanding it and leveraging it are paramount for planning and economic success.

In considering environment, districts should be asking themselves these questions: What is the setting for your district? Does your environment detract from, or contribute to what people expect your district to be? What sorts of economic pressures arise out of your environment? How does your existing context relate to neighboring environments in your region?

So, how did Canby's residents describe their city's context, and the greater surroundings of the State of Oregon?

STORY FRAMEWORK

Characterization

Objective

Relationship

Environment

al elements included **rural, farming, small town, friendly** and **agricultural**. Oregon was described as being **liberal**, which was offered as a contrast to Canby. **Portland** was listed as something that dominated the context of both places. The reference to **diverse** in this word cloud was speaking to the range of environments that make up the context of Oregon: desert, coast, rainforest, mountains, valleys, etc.

- **Agriculture.** Agriculture was present in many of the word clouds, but there isn't as much connection to that in the downtown as there could be. There is real opportunity to establish a closer connection to ag in Canby. For example, below is a picture of a restaurant in Winters, CA that is decorated with fruit packing crates and tractor parts. They also produce homemade sweet and savory preserves from family recipes. Establishing resources for the production and sale of value-added agricultural products is an area of economic development that should be explored.

INTEGRATE AGRICULTURE MORE STRONGLY



Preserve in Winters, California



Reflects Agricultural Heritage

- **Tactical Urbanism.** More opportunities for gathering and showcasing people downtown on a day-to-day basis would go a long way to improving and connecting people to downtown.

SEATING TACTICAL URBANISM EXAMPLES



PROPERTY OWNER TOOLKIT

Of the three groups that impact revitalization, property owners are the most important because they control how buildings look and what tenants go into those buildings. That is game, set and match right there when it comes to economic improvement. How buildings look and what tenants go into those buildings is the actual toolkit for property owners: implementing a vision for their buildings and tenanting to build long-term value.

Looks Matter!

The single biggest area where all property owners can have a big impact on the economics of downtown, and therefore their building values, is through physical story. There are three areas to consider for immediate action by property owners that will make space easier to lease and that will incubate successful outward-facing businesses that create district identity and strong rents. These action items are going to focus on the ground-floor, because that is where the identity of a district is almost entirely established. If street-level buildings, businesses, and the public sphere are not working hard to get visitor's attention, those consumers will pass by, leaving everything unnoticed, at best, or disliked, at worst.

There is a fundamental rule for retail commercial districts, whether you are a dentist or a women's clothing boutique: *People form their opinion of a business and your district long before they walk in the door!*

Therefore, the most immediate and highest impact way to improve district brand and experience is to work with each individual building to change the story it tells from the street. This is vitally important because a place tells a story 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so every space better be telling a great story, all the time, open or closed. Every building should **show** me something about the district, the area, the businesses, and why I might want to stop there as a customer, or why I might want to lease space if I were a business. How buildings look really matters.

The three areas of focus for property owners are listed below:

- Building Interiors
- Building Exteriors
- Parking Lots

Building Interiors

Subpar interior space is important because the interior experience strongly shapes our perception of a business and its products, and it heavily impacts our mood just as we

are closest to making purchases. The interior of a space also plays a huge role in a) how leasable the space is; and, b) how successful a business will be in a space. In other words, you can take a great business and put them in a horrible looking (or horrible smelling) space, and they will fail. Likewise, you can take a fair business and put it in a rocking space, and it will do well.

Consider the interior of the coffee shop, pictured below left. It is clearly a neighborhood gathering spot and is offering a modern but cozy retail experience on the interior. It's very well done.

You might be surprised to learn that this space is inside a small older little strip mall in Carmichael, CA, pictured below right.



Surprising Strip Mall Interior in Carmichael, CA



The Dated Strip Mall That Houses the Coffee Shop

There are basic elements that create a framework for success in ground-floor commercial space, whether it is in a Small Town Downtown district or a Mid-Century Corridor, which is particularly important in districts that are comprised of local businesses.

These basic elements include:

- *Right Size Spaces.* Most long-term vacancies, or less-than-optimally tenanted spaces, or spaces with a lot of turnover, occur in buildings such as dated strip mall/box infrastructure, or in old downtown department stores and banks. Why? Because these are large spaces, larger than the retail/restaurant/active-use market wants to absorb. In order to appeal to the widest possible pool of tenants and uses, spaces need to be designed so they can be divisible down to sizes more likely to be absorbed by the local market: around 1,000 SF is optimal for retail. One of the most important skills in adaptively reusing buildings is dividing spaces into optimally usable spaces that are going to return the most in rent per square foot. The smaller the space, the higher the return per square foot, typically.

- *Tall Ceilings.* Remove low ceilings, be they acoustical tile drop ceilings or old hard lids. Anything that smacks of a 1980s office space ceiling with fluorescent lighting is not providing a distinct brick-and-mortar experience, which is what small businesses must provide in today's retail climate. In studies on human reactions to ceiling height, psychologist Oshin Vartanian of the University of Toronto-Scarborough found that "participants were more likely to judge a room beautiful if it had a high ceiling" and that "part of the appeal of high ceilings seems to be that they capture our visual attention and engage our desire to observe our surroundings." (Source: Fast Company, *Why Our Brains Love High Ceilings*, Eric Jaffe, March 5, 2015.) Both of these characteristics are great for business!

The formula for ceiling success is to rip out false ceilings, expose the roof deck and/or truss structure, and then put insulation above the roof deck or between roof joists.

- *Make Windows Transparent.* Windows are the eyes into the soul of your commercial district. Landlords need to make sure glass is as transparent as possible, and that any window film allows for maximum visibility. (Window film that prevents UV damage and heat gain, but is still fairly transparent is available.)
- *Introduce Great Light.* It's always easier to attract tenants in light, bright cheerful spaces. Especially if you are completing renovations of dated strip malls. And, the interior experience in spaces with great light is always better. So, every owner should consider installing opaque skylights in one-story buildings and installing reasonable baseline light fixtures too. A good rule of thumb is to create lighting in the color range of 3,000 Kelvin or less (this has a more amber character that makes both product and people look good). Also, encourage bulbs with a CRI (color rendering index) as high as you can afford, generally above 90.

EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR LIGHTING IS THE SECRET SAUCE OF MOOD!



Building Exteriors

The four elements needed to execute on a great exterior building experience, that will draw maximum customer attention and loyalty, are listed below. They are color, highlighting building detail, transparency, and exterior lighting. These four items are easy to implement in phases, they can be approached over time, out of cash flow for the private sector, and they provide the biggest district bang for the lowest cost.

- *Color.* There is no cheaper or easier way to bring vibrancy and excitement to a place than by introducing color. When was the last time that someone called you up and said, “Oh my gosh, the coolest building just got painted in our downtown, you have to come see it!” That is exactly what happened with the building pictured to the right. Every building in all of your districts should be using color to show visitors something about their business, about the area, and about the experience they want to provide.



Second Floor Office Space in Concrete Block Bldg

- *Highlight Building Detail.* Every building has interesting elements or unique materials that can be highlighted to make the structure engaging, eye catching, and inviting. This is doubly important on a corridor, where potential consumers are hard to engage. In the example below, you can see a mid-century building painted all white that was largely used as legal offices. The owner of the practice was retiring and was going to begin leasing space. Using color to make the building more appealing, and to highlight building detail, completely changed market perception of the space.



BEFORE: Fresno Housing Bureau



AFTER: The Magic of Paint and Light

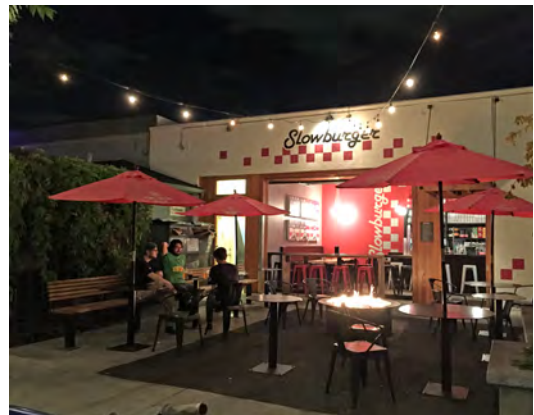
- *Transparency.* The hardest thing that any business has to do is get someone to walk through the door, whether it's for the first time or as a repeat customer. This is particularly true for a small business with which we have no familiarity. The bottom line is that customers do not like to enter businesses unless they can see inside, because they want to first understand the experience on offer. So both the store and the merchandise in the windows must appeal to consumers. This lesson is all too often lost with small ground-floor businesses, especially if they have blocked their windows. Consumers should be able to tell whether a store is open or closed, and know what a business actually does by glancing at the windows for a second or two.



Window Transparency at Small Town Optometrist

This idea of transparency is doubly important for food businesses because their customers are unique—their only job is to hang out and the product is multi-sensory! So every restaurant/bar should be showcasing its customers, essentially making them very visible, in order to attract more visitors. And, it makes a district vibrant!

- *Exterior Lighting.* Every place, every building, and every business is telling a story, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Just because a business closes at 5 pm does not mean their responsibility for contributing to the experience of being in the district ends at 5 pm. It is building lighting, tree lighting, product lighting, sign lighting—everything other than street lighting—that tells us a district is safe, a district is welcoming, a district is interesting, a district is open for business.



Seating Area in Former Parking Lot at Night

Property Owner Toolkit #2: Tenant for Long Term Value

The second major thing every property owner should be thinking about is how to tenant in such a way that they build a good base for stable rents and increased property values. How can owners do this? By finding the right tenants, and by appropriately tenant mixing.

Finding the Right Ground-Floor Businesses

In a nutshell, property owners should always be thinking about how they can tenant to increase sales per square foot in their district. Why? Because the more successful the businesses are, the more sales they generate, and the more sales they generate, the more rent spaces can generate, and the more rent your spaces generate, the more your building is worth.

So landlords are in business with their tenants, in a sense.

In districts that have yet to become mature, stable retail or mixed-use areas, there are two ways to manage property:

- Manage for Short Term Cash Flow
- Manage for Activity

Managing for Short Term Cash Flow. In this scenario, landlords only care about tenant stability and the fact that the tenant is financially able to pay rent every month. On the surface, this may sound like a good way to manage real estate. But, in districts where you are trying to build brand, identity, and sales, it is disastrous. It can actually bring about the death of a district because the very tenants that are the most stable financially are the ones that kill a retail district: accountants, doctors, dentists, lawyers, real estate firms, and insurance agencies.

These kinds of uses are not engaging at the street, they don't always cross-pollinate well with other retail and restaurant uses, and they are often open only from 9 am to 5 pm, which makes it difficult to create an 18-hour district, a goal when creating a thriving commercial node.

So, while I like all these uses, I generally prefer them to be upstairs, or have very small storefronts with spaces toward the rear of a building if it is a Small Town Downtown district. In Mid-Century Corridor Districts, I generally don't want these to dominate the ground-floor either. But if you do have service office uses, then group them in a building theme around like professional services (real estate, or health and wellness, for instance). And, they still have to make it look great from the ground-floor.

Managing for Activity. The other way to manage your property is to tenant for activity. Instead of asking if the tenant can pay the rent every month, your first question should be, "Is this tenant going to add vitality to the building,

create a great sidewalk experience, merchandise some awesome windows, and cross-pollinate with other nearby businesses?”

That’s it. The more you increase activity, the more people want to be there. And the more people you have in one place, the higher your sales per square foot... and we know where that leads: higher property values... eventually!

It can feel like a bit of a leap to tenant your buildings based on activity, because some of these businesses may not make it. And it’s true that this approach does sometimes result in more turnover. But over the long-term, you will make more money as a property owner if you tenant for activity.

As an example, consider Cliff Kohler who owned many properties in Gresham’s downtown. He decided to change only two things about how he managed his property: he delivered more engaging interior spaces with high ceilings and exposed finishes, and he tenanted for activity. On the latter, he chose tenants that would activate storefront windows and the sidewalk. By offering better spaces and choosing only active tenants, in a little over two years, he took a dead block on Main St and made it the most happening block and, in the process, achieved the highest rents he had been able to command up to that point.

Please find sidewalk photos before and after of this Gresham example below:

ACTIVITY & SIDEWALK ACTIVATION IMPROVEMENT



Tenant Mixing

Property owners in every kind of commercial district should be thinking about how to tenant mix, which is grouping businesses around themes and/or with an eye toward what will create the most cross-pollination between businesses.

In small town downtown districts, a mix of what we call “active destination businesses” are the most desirable tenants to attract for success. These are businesses that have an active storefront but whose customers are coming as a part of a planned trip rather than just stopping by purely on an impulse. Examples include:

- Restaurants/Food (Coffee, Bakery, Brew Pub)
- Fabric/Knitting/Quilt Shop
- Specialty Paper/Printing Store
- Eyeglass/Optometrlist Store
- Music/Instrument Store
- Bird Feed/Yard Supplies
- Manufacturer/Showroom
- Wholesaler/Retailer
- Pet Grooming/Specialty Pet Food
- Antiques
- Salon/Spa/Wellness

It is absolutely essential to have a mix of active tenants from a variety of these kinds of categories. If you cluster around just one theme, you will have a dead place. For instance, if you have all salons, then you will have no cross-pollination between businesses because customers don't leave one salon and go into another salon immediately after. In contrast, customers will browse in other stores while waiting for an appointment, or sit in a coffee shop if they are early. That is why every downtown needs a variety of offerings.

PROPERTY OWNER SPOTLIGHT

Property owners in Canby definitely need to focus on tenanting retail and restaurant commercial spaces with active uses. They need to write into their leases that ground-floor uses will engage the sidewalk. And, they need to participate in helping make their spaces offer a framework for tenant success. This should be a priority for owners not because they will be a “good guy” for doing the work, but because it is what is best for owners economically, and it is what is best for the district economically. Anything you do that improves sales per square foot correspondingly increases building value.

The goal is to encourage, highlight, and support activity. Every building needs to offer a visually interesting, appealing, and eye-catching view from the street. And, they need to offer spaces of approximately 1000 SF with an interior experience that reflects today’s shopping tastes (no false ceilings and carpet, lots of natural light and windows).

Any building owner can implement the techniques from this section. Having said that, districts get more of a multiplier effect on brand and commerce when these improvements are made in concentrated areas, and when they are featured in retail and restaurant space, which is the most visible and where people in the community congregate.

Below we will look at the types of redevelopments that should be facilitated and where it should be prioritized in downtown Canby. Please refer to the presentation PDF deliverable for more detailed information and recommendations for the private sector.

Types of Development to Facilitate

- **The Easy Fix.** Buildings that need awning removal, window film removal, the installation of exterior lighting and/or a few cool paint colors are offer a great bang for the public sector investment buck! The chapel is a gorgeous building; just with paint you could highlight all its amazing building details!
- **The Revamp.** These are projects where you take a dated building (these are often buildings built or renovated in the mid-century) and make them more relevant to the market and downtown experience required to be successful today. This can involve both interior and exterior updating. An example of this sort of reuse would be the Bettis Building, shown on the next page.
- **Adaptive Reuse.** These projects are usually bigger and might include taking a vacant building and getting it occupied with an active user. They might involve having to significantly upgrade a building to modern day building code. It might involve a renovation that has complicated structural elements because of the addition of new storefront systems. It could involve demising a large space into smaller space.

- **Site Intensification.** For buildings with large parking lots, I would love to see owners building new structures to improve density. These could be housing, office, or retail depending upon the location upon the lot. Please see page 68 for an example of site intensification.
- **Zero Lot Line New Construction.** Downtown needs less parking lots, more small buildings built right up to the sidewalk, right next to one another. That is what a downtown is.
- **Parking Lot Activation.** Downtown has way too many parking lots, so getting them activated with new construction projects, art, activities, eating, food carts, etc will help downtown.

CANDIDATES FOR THE EASY FIX, THE REVAMP, & ADAPTIVE REUSE (left to right)



Where to Focus

- **Best Building Stock.** Improve your buildings first where there is the most density and active use.
- **Anything Active.** Improvement assistance should go toward active uses first.
- **Make the Back a Front.** Where there is a good run of buildings that are visible from the back as well as the front, fix up these visible sides so they tell the charming downtown story.
- **Highway Gateways.** Pay attention to those critical Highway 99 E gateways shown on the map on page 11.
- **Multi-Story.** Taller buildings are more visible, so renovating these so they have a big visual impact will provide a multiplier effect on the downtown environment.

BUSINESS OWNER TOOLKIT

There are some interesting businesses in Canby, but they are faced with the challenge of being located in buildings that are not offering a framework for success (remember, the retail experience happens long before someone walks in the door). And, many are not executing on the basics of the most important tool for ground-floor businesses: Show, Don't Tell, so that is where we will be focusing.

Biz Toolkit #1: Show, Don't Tell

Every business should pretend that signs are illegal and language doesn't exist. Then, they should consider how they are going to *SHOW* customers what sort of experience they offer, what their business actually is, and why a customer might want to interact with them. Every single ground-floor business should *show* us what they do, not try to *tell* us with a sign.

Consider the photograph to the right. This is a dentist's office in a medical tourism town in Mexico where North Americans come for affordable dental work.

Now consider, how do people feel when they go to the dentist? Nervous. How do they feel going to another country to get medical care? Nervous. Do you think they travel there alone? No.

What is this practice showing us to assuage these concerns? It demonstrates success in the finish work, caring and calmness with the color and design, and they have a great place to sit and wait for those accompanying patients here!



Beautiful Dental Office In Mexican Medical Tourism Town

They are showing patients that they are going to take care of everything!

The three most important areas of execution for Show, Don't Tell are:

- Windows
- Lighting
- Sidewalks

Windows

Windows are really the heart and soul of a commercial district. They are the one item that should always be changing and they should always be engaging. Improving windows is usually the cheapest, quickest, and easiest project to improve district brand and get people walking in the door of businesses.

A checklist for window *Show, Don't Tell* execution is below.

- *Can I see your windows?* You would be surprised at how often I have to ask this! It's very common for storefront windows to be blocked by landscaping, by hanging flower baskets, by signage. If you can't even see a storefront window, that should be fixed.



A Linen Store's Window When Closed

- *Can I See in Your Windows Day and Night?* Storefront windows are a 24/7 advertisement for your business, so make sure they look great when you are open, and that they look great when you are closed. This is not only important for businesses, but it's important for districts too, so it always looks inviting, safe, and active no matter what time of day or evening.
- *Do Your Windows Provide Store Transparency?* When you are a small business, and especially when you are a small business on a busy corridor, your prospective customers are unlikely to commit to walking through your door unless they can get a sense of who you are from the exterior. If you build out window boxes, or otherwise block your windows, it will discourage people from dipping their toe in the pool of what your business has to offer!
- *Are your Windows Merchandised Well?* This speaks for itself. If people walk by your window and never turn their head, if they never look in, then you aren't doing it right! Again, windows are where you market your business, no matter what it is. Make sure they are fantastic.
- *Do Your Windows Change Frequently?* At a minimum, every ground-floor business should be changing their windows every month, with the exception of restaurants. The latter should just be showcasing people in their windows!

Every street level business should answer yes to every one of the above questions.

Lighting

Light impacts our mood very dramatically. It makes products look either alluring or anemic and it also makes human skin appear either alluring or anemic (an important consideration when selling products that require customers to look attractive in a mirror)!

Proper retail lighting could be a report in and of itself. For the purposes of this toolkit, and the fundamentals for Show, Don't Tell, we are going to focus on window lighting specifically because this type of lighting, when done properly, is what makes windows transparent during the day, and it's what makes storefronts look amazing at night. Also, this type of lighting makes product almost appear to hop through the glass, enticing people into businesses.

The keys to good window lighting are pretty simple:

➤ *Install Spot Light Fixtures Just Inside the Window.* Every window should have spot lights just inside the glass, pointed down toward the products and slightly back toward the store.

➤ *Proper Shape/Size/Color of Bulb.* A bulb is essentially a shower head of light. And the size and spread of a bulb must be selected so the light focuses on the products in the window, not above or below them, so you are essentially aiming your shower head of light! To aim light with high ceilings, a bigger bulb with a narrower spread is needed (spread is the width the light angles out from the bulb). For lower ceilings, smaller bulbs with slightly wider spreads are optimal. Again, color should be lower than 3,000 Kelvin for warmth. And the Color Rendering Index, or CRI, should be above 90, if possible.



Lighting Establishes Mood



This Wedding Dress Store Looks Blessed by the Heavens

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are public spaces where we should see people, product, and activity. Human beings are pack animals, and we are wired to go do, and see, what other people are doing. And the sidewalk is the most public place to showcase product, to *show* something about your business, and draw people. The bottom line is that if a district doesn't make its sidewalks appealing and attractive, it is costing sales.

In this report we are going to look at the types of sidewalks we usually encounter in downtowns: building sidewalks.



Giant Ball of Yarn on Yarn Store Sidewalk
(Photo Courtesy of Megan Curry)

Building Sidewalks. This type of sidewalk, built directly next to buildings, is present in both downtown and in corridor development. How can businesses use these sidewalks to improve sales and ramp up positive brand association? Two ways:

1. Know your Zone
2. Follow the Rules!

Know Your Zone!

Building sidewalks have two zones: the “store zone” and the “district zone”.

The Store Zone is the area of the sidewalk right next to businesses. In the store zone, every business should be showing customers something unique and interesting about what they do (like the yarn store, above right).

The District Zone. This is the area near the curb of the building sidewalk. This is where you place repetitive banners, wayfinding for a strip mall, benches, street furniture, district landscaping, etc.

Follow The Rules!

Sidewalk Rule #1. The store zone can invade the district zone. It is perfectly normal, even desirable, for stores to put their own stamp of identity on the entire sidewalk.

Sidewalk Rule #2. The district zone should not invade the store zone. District identifiers are repetitive and, when located right in front of businesses, aren't actually showing



Building Sidewalk Zones

anything unique about the offerings in the establishments. In fact, if the same bench, planter, or piece of street furniture is found in front of all businesses, it will all appear the same to passersby, and they will tune out the businesses because there is nothing distinct to catch their attention.

SHOW, DON'T TELL EXAMPLES

Below are some examples of businesses that are using the principles of Show, Don't Tell. All of these businesses are showing what they do, demonstrating what sort of experience they offer, and giving customers reasons for engaging.



Biz Toolkit #2: Leverage Adjacencies

Adjacencies in retail-theory are the science of what merchandise is placed adjacent to each other in a store to increase sales. The same theories apply to building brand in a retail district. How do you do a better job of connecting what is there and cross-pollinating sales and retail activity between the businesses?

There are two broad types of adjacencies to consider in a district. The first is physical and the second is emotional.

Physical Adjacencies

Everything that is next to a business impacts that business, whether it is a bus stop, a parking lot, or another store. You have to leverage what is adjacent to a place of business so that the sum of the parts is greater than each individual element.

To develop adjacencies, you must first get businesses to work together and get to know each other. Believe me, there is no business that can't figure out how to create an adjacency with their neighbors.

As an example, let's take two disparate uses, such as a dentist and a bar. On the surface, it would seem difficult to create an adjacency. But a creative new dental practice did just that. They thought about what bars need and they came up with coasters. So they created funny, original coasters that could be used as a coupon and provided them to the adjacent bar. The coasters were so popular, he now provides them to other bars on the street, which is a busy corridor that also serves as a State designated "high and wide" freight route.



Dentist's Coaster



Dentist's Coaster Coupon

These are funny. These create connection. They are a great example of creating a physical adjacency between two very different types of businesses.

This same dentist pipes music towards a bus stop next to his office to make waiting for transit a more enjoyable experience for folks on the sidewalk. This is not only thoughtful, but he's really owning the adjacency of the bus stop.

Every business needs to engage with what is next to them, particularly focusing on creating nodes around places where people get out of their car and walk.



Emotional Adjacency: Weddings!

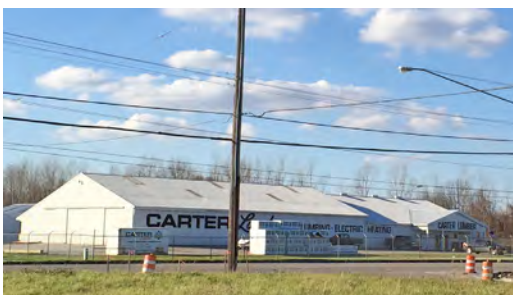
Emotional Adjacencies

Emotional adjacencies are things that you might be able to interconnect within your district, around a vertical market or a theme. Events can also create emotional adjacencies.

Examples:

In Tigard OR, besprinkled around their downtown was a wedding planner, a high-end stationary store, a jewelry store, a caterer, and one of the largest ballroom dance floors west of the Mississippi. These businesses were not physically next to one another, but they had a natural emotional adjacency around weddings they could have been collaborating upon.

One of my favorite possibilities for creating a strong emotional adjacency was in the light-industrial area of Old 27, a former State Highway in central Michigan. The area contained an auto junk yard that was a large regional draw for everyone from artists to car enthusiasts, it had multiple types of lumber yards, a sprinkler contractor, sports bas, auto body shops, kitchen & bath places, and the list goes on and on.



Great Collection of Man Businesses on Old 27

Everyone wanted to “improve” this district by replacing this vibrant set of businesses with establishments such as an Outback Steakhouse. Really though, they already had a very successful district with a distinct brand. They just needed to do a better job of Show, Don't Tell around it being the best **“man district”** in the region!

BUSINESS OWNER SPOTLIGHT

So Where Do You Start?

When working with businesses to improve performance, it's important to do so through the lens of the three fundamental ways you can increase sales:

- 1) By bringing new customers in the door,
- 2) By increasing conversion rate; and,
- 3) By selling more to existing customers.

Bring in New Customers

One of the ways to drive sales in a retail or restaurant business is to simply attract more people to the store. The theory is this. If your business generally makes 2 sales for every 10 people who come in the store, then if you doubled the number who came in to 20, you would make 4 sales.



Curate Experiences

So, everyone should be trying to drive traffic to their store, and they should be tracking that traffic! For a business, and for a district, bringing in new customers is about events, promotions, sales, executing on a great storefront visual that draw people, new products, and curation, curation. In this age of unlimited information, it's exhausting to research everything available to us as consumers. Now, we want curation, people to take some of the choice away from us and make good decisions on our behalf, so we can unplug and just enjoy being along for the ride. Districts in particular need to do this. Consumers don't want a giant walking map plunked in their lap. They want someone to tell them where to go!

Examples

- ✧ Curate a downtown Canby vintage, arts & crafts walk to attract day-trip visitors, or people in town for other events.
- ✧ Place products in each other's stores, and in hospitality locations. An example might be placing an empty growler bottle in an Airbnb that can be filled at a local brew pub, which would drive visitors to a specific restaurant.

- ✧ Test ways to drive traffic downtown for visitors coming to the Canby region for events, fairs, flowers, etc.

Increasing Your Conversion Rate

Conversion rate is the percentage of people who buy something that walk in a business. If traffic is essentially measuring your potential opportunity to sell something to someone, then conversion rate measures how well you have done at capturing that opportunity!

The formula for conversion rate, is as follows:

$$\text{Conversion Rate} = \text{Sales Transactions} / \text{Traffic Count}$$

As an example, if you do 10 sales transactions in your store in a day, and you have 50 people that come in your store per day, then your conversion rate is 10/50, or 20%.

Every industry has its own conversion rates, but does anyone know what they are for mall general retail categories? They have a rough conversion rate of about 17% to 25%.

The good news is that Main street/downtown stores often have a higher conversion rate than malls!

Ways to Increase Conversion Rate

- ✧ Encourage information sharing between businesses to understand who is serving similar client bases and then cross promote between these businesses.
- ✧ Create culture of merchandising best practices with periodic educational offerings.
- ✧ Offer merchandising assistance program for service businesses.
- ✧ Ensure best selling, and high margin products are in most valuable retail real estate. (Eye level, right hand side of entry, near check out, etc.)
- ✧ Offer samples, testers, and un-boxed product to encourage interaction and touching. For most types of products, the more someone interacts with it, the more likely someone is to buy it.
- ✧ Make sure your store smells good! People perceive products as being more valuable and desirable when they are in a good smelling space.

Selling More to Existing Customers

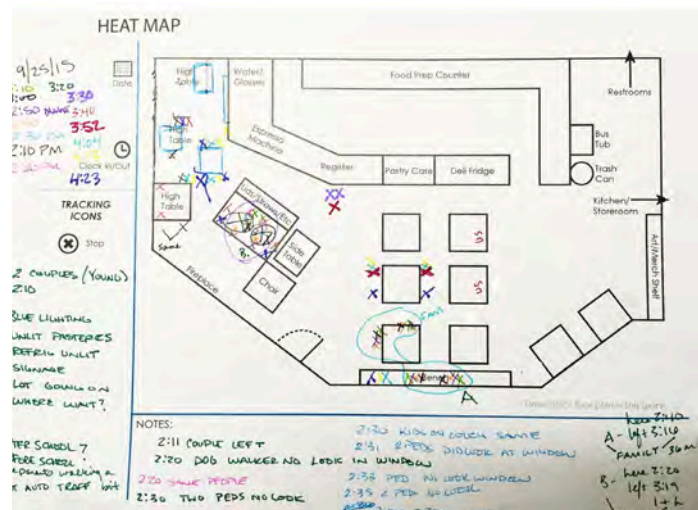
The last way to increase sales is to sell more to your existing loyal customers. This is called increasing “basket size.”

In order to sell more to your existing customers, you have to know who they are and what they do.

To document who they are, there are techniques to do demographic tracking. All downtowns should periodically be doing this and sharing information to drive more sales for everyone.

Second, to further understand existing customers, businesses should track customer behavior more in depth. To do that, we use techniques like heat maps, like the one shown here. It is a coffee shop where we tracked where people were in the store every 10 minutes.

Customer tracking also involves mapping a customer from the time they walk in the door to the time they leave, noting what they touch, what they like, where they go, and where there are pain points.



Coffee Shop Heat Map

With this knowledge, businesses must then test new projects, track how those do, and transform their operations based on that tracking. Areas that usually come under consideration to increase basket size include:

- ✧ Work on store-by-store and downtown demographic tracking, heat mapping, and customer tracking. Share information!
- ✧ Offer new products and services to existing clients.
- ✧ Optimize/change store layout to keep loyal customers in the store longer.
- ✧ Eliminate pain points. Pain points are any glitch in the shopping experience that makes customers unhappy. This could be bad smells, no product baskets, slow check out, squeaky wheels on shopping carts, unfriendly reception, uncomfortable waiting area, not being sure where to find things, etc.

PUBLIC SECTOR/AGENCY TOOLKIT

The public sector and agency role in revitalization is several-fold. First, agencies need to collaborate with the private sector to implement their toolkits, incentivizing and facilitating a series of changes, often small, over a period of time. Second, they need to think about the areas under their bailiwick — roads, the public realm, zoning, code — and how they can be used to boost economic activity. And third, the public sector should be thinking about how to intentionally catalyze development that benefits a wide cross section of people.

Public Sector/Agency Toolkit #1: Incentivize Incremental Improvement

The public sector and agencies interested in revitalization should be creating programs to support and incentivize the private sector activities previously outlined in this report. Just as a district is greater than the sum of its parts, revitalizing a district is about achieving a greater good through a series of small, medium and sometimes large investments.

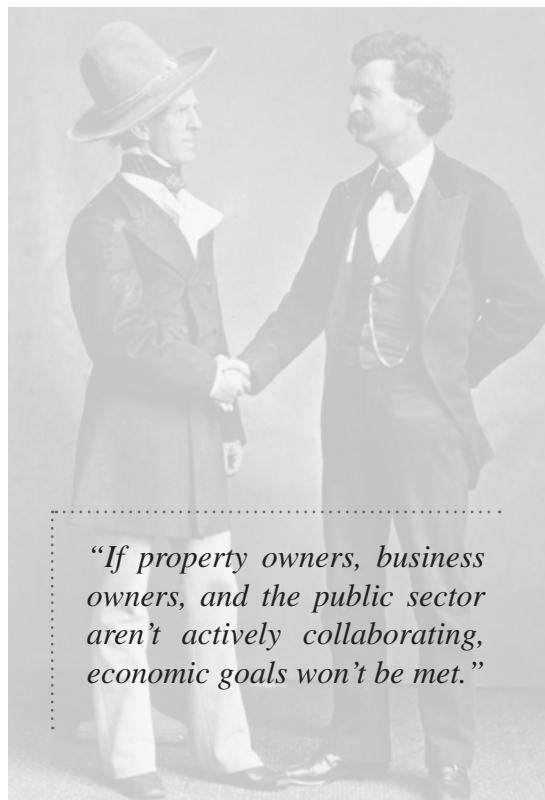
Incentivizing Incremental Changes includes the following steps:

- Quantify & Focus
- Assemble the Team
- Use the Power to Convene
- Create Improvement Programs

Quantify & Focus

While any property owner or business owner can individually implement changes based on the recommendations in this report to improve their core ventures, the public sector and agencies should take a 10,000 foot view of what they would like to accomplish in terms of improving downtown Canby as a whole, prior to zooming in on specific projects and investments.

In general, the public sector and agencies should be encouraging interventions in places where they will have the most economic impact first. And, they should be considering what sorts of district characteristics and identity they are trying to work toward so all of the public sector/agency toolkit is aligned with the end results that are desired.



“If property owners, business owners, and the public sector aren’t actively collaborating, economic goals won’t be met.”

The more concentrated the improvements are in areas that augment active uses and good infrastructure, the more likely it is that these interventions will be successful.

Assemble the Team

Who are the designers, architects, contractors, engineers, planners, development consultants, brokers, and generally talented creative people in your community and region that are interested in collaborating on how to make your existing buildings look incredible, provide a framework for tenant success, and be a good home for active uses? This team can work on everything from building code upgrades, healing bad mid-century storefront remodels, and picking paint colors for a fabulous three-color paint scheme.

When a district's property owners are willing to do something new and different with their buildings, part of the public sector/agency role should be to help connect owners with the resources that can ensure projects will be successful. The public sector needs a go-to list of people that love the "improve what you have" puzzle and enjoy working within the existing fabric of a place that currently has buildings, businesses and a brand.

The Power to Convene

Successful districts usually have a tight-knit band of people working in concert to promote their district, lobby for their district, and advocate for change in their district. Every single business and every single building is impacting every other business and every other building in all of your commercial districts. No man is an island in a commercial district. And if they aren't working together, it's akin to working against each other. The public sector and non-profit agencies are uniquely positioned to use their power to convene to gather together and organize the private sector commercial community to help to improve commerce and experience.

This power is best used to a) bring educational resources to the table for the district; b) provide connections to professional services; and c) create a platform for information sharing between different agencies, groups, and stakeholders in the downtown. The power to convene can be ...as grass roots as gathering a group to repaint a building; ... as simple as assembling artsy creative types to complete window merchandising projects for service businesses; ...as technical as helping a specific property owner with vacancies or inactive buildings through one-on-one technical assistance; as supportive as helping your downtown association; ...or as fun as hosting tours of in-process facade improvement projects so owners can learn from each other!

Notice that the convenings suggested above are usually built around taking direct action on a specific project, or focused on a specific group and bringing tools to the table for their needs. It's always easiest to build relationship around the shared experience of actually doing something to make things better! So try to gather people around action, not organization.

Improvement Programs

It is common for the public sector and agencies to try to catalyze improvement by placing public funds into one large mega project somewhere. Unfortunately, even if you complete one exciting new project somewhere, if the rest of the existing businesses and buildings are not executing on creating a great experience, it won't really matter.

To make real progress, you have to weave together a tapestry of new visual experiences within the existing fabric of Canby. This means incentivizing a mix of changes. The most proven way to do this is through various types of improvement programs. When creating these programs, consider how to take advantage of volunteer help and affordable/guerilla approaches to improvement that can be completed over time, for smaller amounts of money.

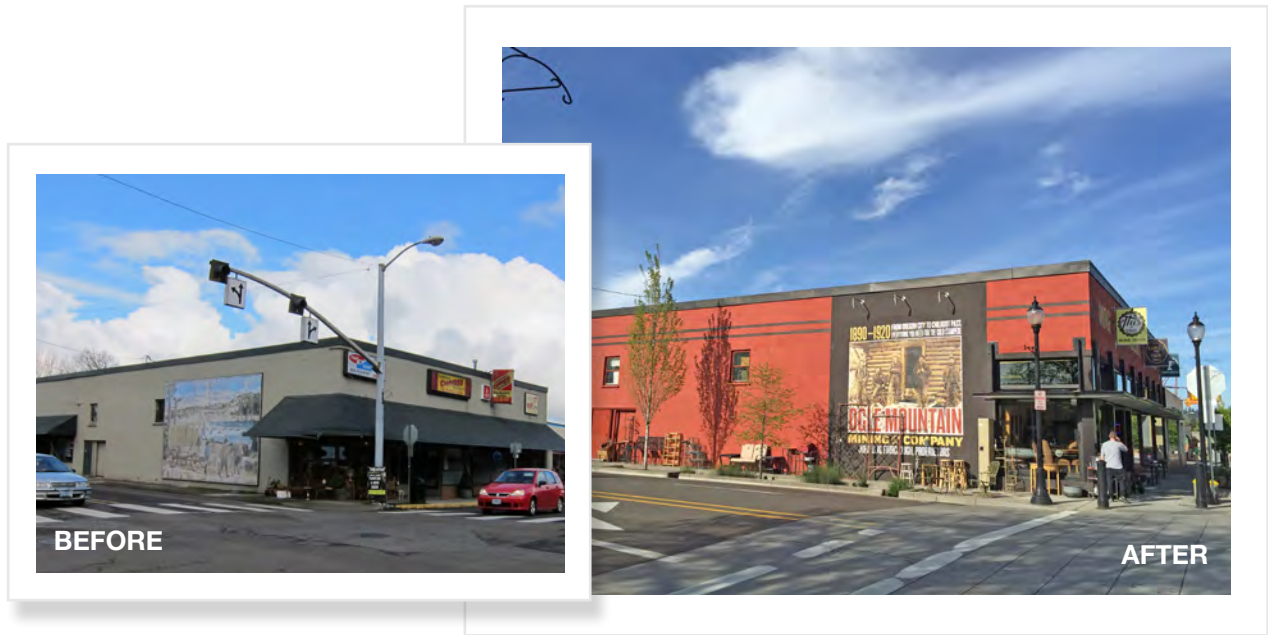
Generally, for smaller communities with limited resources, I like to consider how to develop programs that might appeal to business owners and property owners through modest investments. Examples of three types of programs I would consider right now for Canby include:

WINDOW IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM. Provide financial resources to businesses just for the development of better window displays and making those displays more visible. Infrastructure covered by such a program might include: installation of track lighting with moveable heads, light bulbs, display platforms up to where the storefront window sits, storefront window ceiling grids, replacement of reflective window film with transparent window film, and display fixtures. Assistance could also include merchandising and display classes as a launch for this program. These grants can be matching or not, and they can be as small as \$300 to \$500.

Such a program could be funded by the Urban Renewal Agency and administered by the Economic Development department.

PAINT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM. This would provide dollars toward paint supplies and color consulting to create a bright and cheery counterpoint to the relentless tan currently dominating downtown Canby! The reason why having some design assistance is important is that choosing three colors to go on a building that will highlight building detail is not easy. Without help, people will give up and you will end up with more beige and gray!

COLOR WORKS MAGIC IN DOWNTOWN OREGON CITY, OREGON

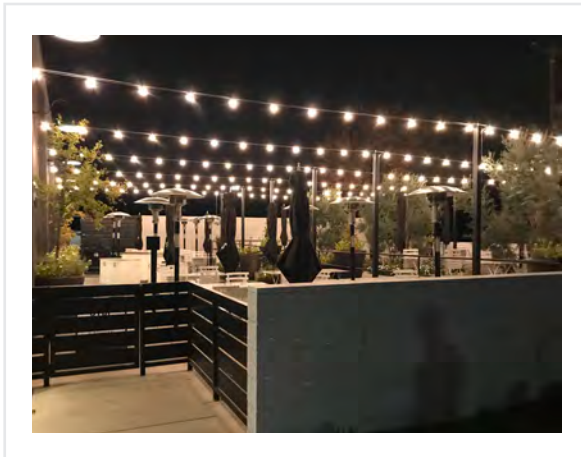


EXTERIOR SEATING PROGRAM. As we have discussed previously, downtown should look for every opportunity to showcase people. And the fastest and easiest way to encourage folks to congregate downtown is to have fabulous seating areas for restaurants, the one business whose customers are supposed to do nothing but hang out!

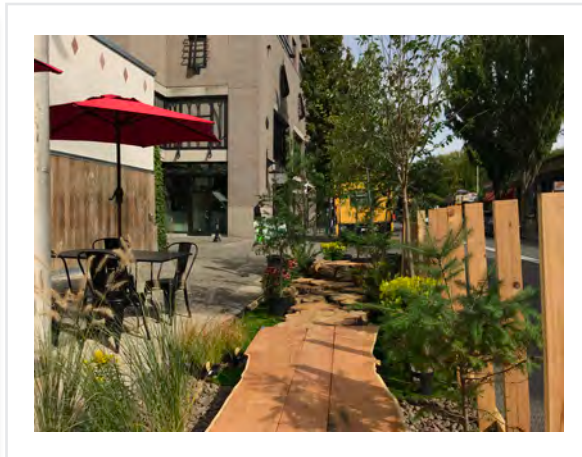
Creating better sidewalk seating and parklet/street seats should be a top priority for all stakeholders hoping to build bridges between the community and downtown.

GREAT SEATING MAKES FOR GREAT PLACES

Mid-Century Safeway to Restaurant



Green Street Seat Installation



Public Sector/Agency Toolkit #2: Seed What You Need!

Generally, development goes through these two stages. First, improve what you have in terms of buildings, roads, place, and businesses. Once you have a stable market, then market rate new construction becomes more viable.

When you are in the “improve what you have” stage, it has to be cheaper and easier to rehabilitate a building than to build new. And, it has to be possible to bring in active uses without triggering building form that hurts the downtown environment or incurs unnecessary fees. Because, as we have seen repeatedly in the identity framework, people in Canby want more activity downtown.

If a place’s fee and code structure is set up to regulate new greenfield development, it can make adaptive reuse, site intensification, and active tenanting almost impossible. If a place has very restrictive parking minimums, it can be difficult to develop with the sort of lot coverage that downtowns need to be successful.

Regulatory Environment

Enticing building owners and businesses to improve their buildings and land, or encouraging the correct type of new construction, usually involves the following from the perspective of the public sector toolkit:

- **Fee & Tax Structure.** If a simple improvement project triggers greenfield-scale impact fees, requires all new utility upgrades, and tacks on street improvements, then rehabilitation will never happen because places with economic challenges cannot support these fees.
- **Zoning and Use.** Active uses and blended uses need to be encouraged and allowed. Zoning in particular needs to allow for a mix of activity and be flexible, especially now as retail is changing. And, zoning needs to be out of the business of regulating mandatory parking (although it can stay in the business of setting parking maximums so downtown doesn’t turn into a single giant parking lot).
- **Circulation.** Downtowns and Main Streets need to be good places to walk around, instead of being easy places to drive through. To be successful, a street in these kinds of districts needs to be safe to cross and safe to walk along. Traffic should slow not because of a posted speed limit but because the road environment causes drivers to travel the correct speed. When it comes time for highway road improvement projects, treatments that stress the Main St function of the road will be paramount.
- **Prize Activity.** To create more cross-pollination, activity, and hopefully more intentional economic opportunity, downtown Canby should continue to encourage and/

or add active businesses and buildings to their commercial districts. In particular, the city can think about programs that attract certain types of active businesses, such as impact fee waivers for restaurants.

- **Permeability.** Wherever possible, new development in downtowns should be interconnected and maximally accessible by pedestrians. In a downtown/Main St environment, if streets are being created, grids should be pursued. If buildings are being constructed, they should be walkable from adjacent buildings and projects and not oriented on parking lots.
- **Parking.** There is not enough real estate in a small-town downtown or Main St to compete with suburban infrastructure in terms of parking ratios. As a result, a downtown or Main St that tries to compete with the high parking ratios and minimums of suburban form will typically be less successful than one that embraces the strengths of being a downtown.

Too much parking in a downtown or Main St means it does not deliver on the fundamental economic building block of downtown commerce: great experiences for walkers.

Now, that doesn't mean you don't do anything about parking. It just means you have to create and implement a downtown parking toolkit that responds to the realities of downtown economics. (Hint: the downtown parking toolkit looks nothing like the suburban parking toolkit!)

There is a great guide to affordable volunteer processes for obtaining parking data that was developed in 2013 by the Oregon Transportation & Growth Management, "Parking Made Easy: A Guide to Managing Parking in Your Community." Specifically, Chapter 7 will be most helpful for developing community-based surveying capacity.

Generally, you want to ensure you are making decisions about parking from a position of knowledge, not myth! So data tracking is critical. You want to quantify your on-street and off-street capacity, your public and private capacity, how capacity is being used, and what turnover is.

Generally, downtowns want to prioritize customers and encourage commerce with their on-street parking. As a downtown organization becomes more solidified, it should create its own downtown parking pledge, perhaps something like the Gresham Customer First plan, which has its own logo, shown above.



A downtown parking pledge should be prioritizing customers for the best on-street spaces, moving employees to the edges. Or, moving long-term parkers, such as people attending a half day spa session, to a shared private lot. Or, encouraging park sharing between businesses on private lots. Or, developing an e-assist bike share program to keep tourists out of their cars. Or, creating a parking improvement district, which taxes owners to pay for maintenance on lots private owners agree to share.

A good rule of thumb for these discussions is to let the 85% rule govern your thinking. The accepted metric in parking is if 85% of your parking is full most of the time, then you are ready to take the next step in your parking plan... timed parking, or seasonal permit parking, or parking meters, or permit parking, or the development of the garage. It depends where you are on the continuum! But you must have the data to make the right decision!

Economic Development

Consider how downtown can become the center of a distributed rural economy. It should be the touch point to visit the region, and should provide opportunity and market for the wide variety of making and growing that happens around the area surrounding Canby.

For inspiration, consider the Methow Made program and the economic development engine created by the TwispWorks Foundation (which began as a city development agency) in the city of Twisp, located in north central Washington, population 900.

In 1994, the forest service had vacated their ranger station in Twisp, consolidating their operations into another location. It sat vacant until 2008, when the 6.4 acre, 17-building site directly adjacent to Twisp's downtown went on the market for sale. The city of Twisp formed a Public Development Authority and found a funder to help them buy the property.

In 2014, ownership of the PDA was transferred to the TwispWorks foundation. It's easier for them to fundraise and complete their work as a non-profit. And now, this group serves as an amazing regional economic development agency.

Some highlights of what they accomplished to date:

- Created the largest native plant garden in Central and Eastern Washington
- Introduced The Methow Made program to help local producers in the valley create, market and sell their goods.

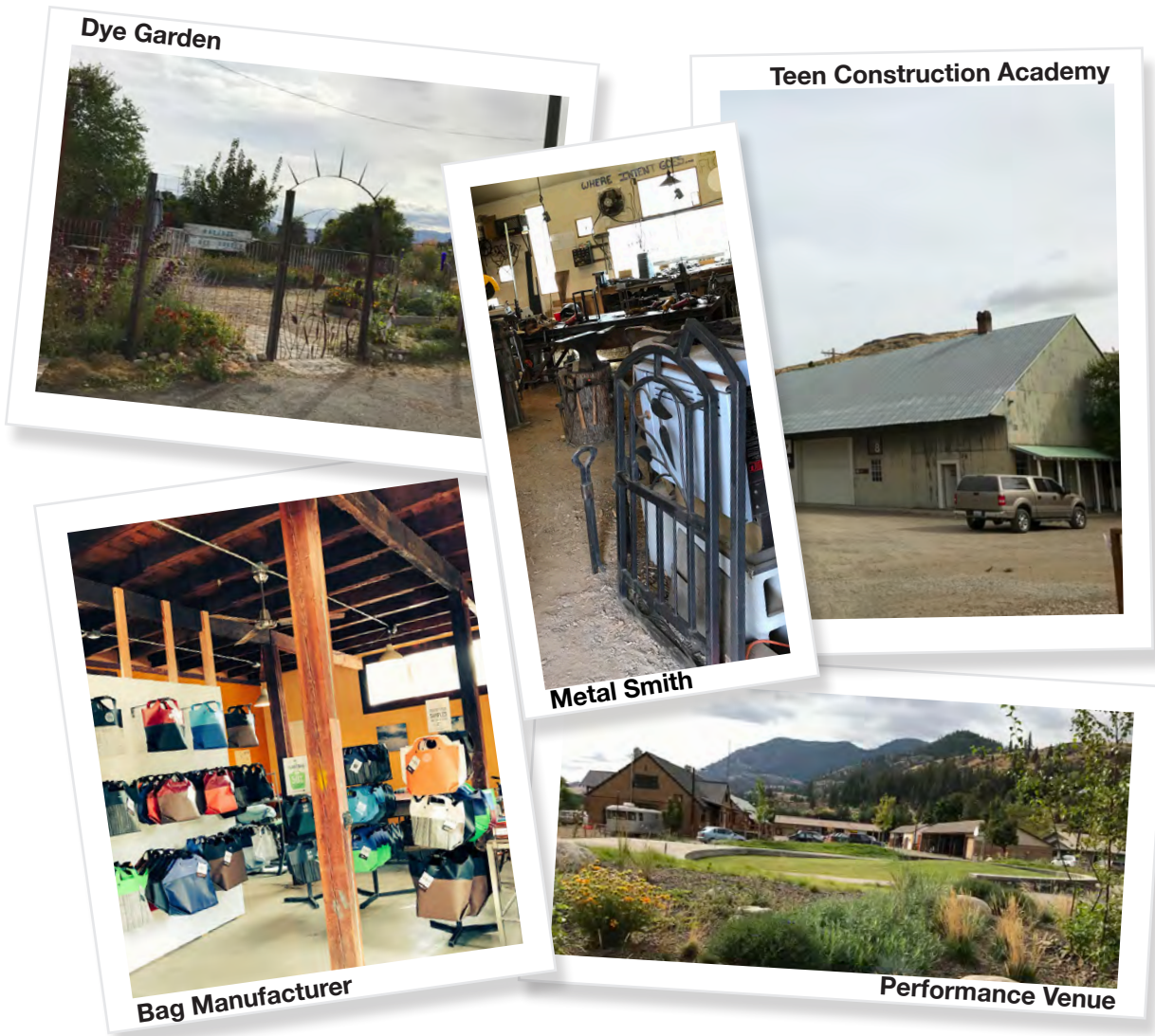


Downtown Twisp, WA

- The “shop” building was rehabilitated, creating space for a high school welding tech program. This program evolved into a Careers in Construction Academy providing vocational training in a variety of construction-related trades for teens.
- The teens in the construction academy renovated another building, which became the home of a local bag manufacturer called EQPD, which has been so successful it needed to expand.
- Developed a plaza for performers and events.

So far, they have rehabilitated more than 38,000 SF of usable space, more than 35 organizations and businesses are supported by the campus, including a glassblower and a Montessori school. Sixty jobs have been brought to town. And a brewpub is on the way! And they did this with buildings that were little more than sheds with dirt floors!

IMAGES FROM TWISPPWORKS



Public Sector/Agency Toolkit #3: Intentionality

Cities should shape the change a city would like to see. This means looking beyond the usual “jobs at all costs” economic development strategy, and instead consider how to foster intentional policy approaches that afford a wide cross section of people access to opportunity, wealth building, and housing in your communities. It’s all about economic gardening!

As an example, consider the Portland Mercado project, which was completed by Hacienda CDC in Portland, OR to create a microenterprise ecosystem around food for the Latino immigrant community.

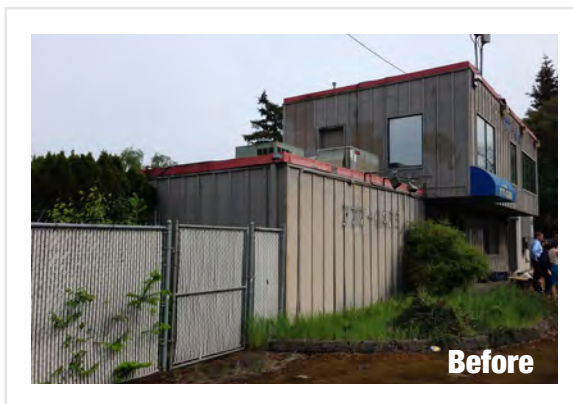
It includes training, start-up food cart spaces for rent, access to a commercial kitchen, and stand-alone market hall spaces for more experienced operators.

In the Portland Mercado’s first year of business, they reported that their kitchen served 44 start-up businesses. According to Hacienda, the kitchen supports low income entrepreneurs of color, particularly women and Latinos, and they have met that goal. “85% of businesses identified as women operated, Latinos or people of color, while 70% reported income at 80% or below the median family income. The current rate at \$14.50 an hour for most renters is designed to achieve our mission to help businesses with barriers succeed.”



The Portland Mercado Is a Beloved Community Asset!

PORTLAND MERCADO





This guerilla redevelopment project completely energized a dead corner with empty parking lots and has become a beloved community asset. And just recently, it catalyzed a new housing project directly adjacent that will provide affordable housing.

PUBLIC SECTOR SPOTLIGHT

Show, Don't Tell with Ye Old Library Building

The City of Canby and the Chamber of Commerce have a unique opportunity to demonstrate all of the techniques discussed in this report and, in the process, serve as a model for the private sector. The City could redevelop the former library building, which it owns, and tenant for activity, redevelop in a visually dynamic manner, and create an interior framework for tenant success. It's an opportunity to do some economic gardening and SHOW the following:

Optimal Building Remodel

The former library building is one of my favorite types of structures to reuse—the ugly box! The concrete block building below was a specialty painting and coating manufacturing facility, and it became a vibrant retail and restaurant hub.

UGLY BOXES ARE THE BEST TO RENOVATE



Economic Gardening

Become a hub for the promotion, sale, and display of regionally developed offerings. A market hall in the center of the city could become a hub for all of the interesting talent distributed around the region, which is common in rural economies. And, you could take a page from the Portland Mercado and install a few food carts in street parking spaces, and rent those as start-up restaurant space to entrepreneurs in the community.



Demonstrate Agriculture

The City could install a small commercial kitchen as a part of the remodel, and have it focus particularly on the production of value-added products from local agriculture, as well as support food start-up concepts. Additionally, this should highlight connections to local agricultural businesses, such as originating a wine and nursery bus tour, agricultural-based products for sale, etc.

Demonstrate Activity

A central market hall focused on active businesses would activate the park, and show to the private sector the power of activity to cross-pollinate and drive sales per square foot.

Showcase People

In addition to implementing great window transparency in the space, so that people outside can see all the people inside, a market hall should create a great street seat/parklet seating area outside that integrates with sidewalk seating. This will



There Could Be Park/Market Hall Cross-Pollination

cross-pollinate well with the park, creating an even greater degree of pedestrianism in the downtown. And, it will demonstrate for other food businesses the power of using people as your best advertisement.

Provide New Home for Visitors Center

It's all too common that visitors centers are located in auto-centric, pedestrian-unfriendly places. This is a huge opportunity to demonstrate collaborative effort by sponsoring a joint project here between the Chamber and the City!

Downtown Association

When a commercial environment is in the low foot-traffic stage, it's easy for downtown stakeholders to think of themselves as an island, and to turn themselves inward. It's important that property owners and business owners start looking outward, and toward each other, because every business and every building is impacting the economic performance of every other business and building downtown.

It's wonderful that the City has staff time and resources devoted to the downtown and implementing the tenets of National Main St. It would be great to direct some of that capacity toward forming a downtown association. (This is preferred over a business association because it creates a larger umbrella. All stakeholders should be at the table: brokers who do business downtown... architects that do business downtown... owners that own buildings downtown... and, of course, businesses that own businesses downtown.)

CONCLUSION

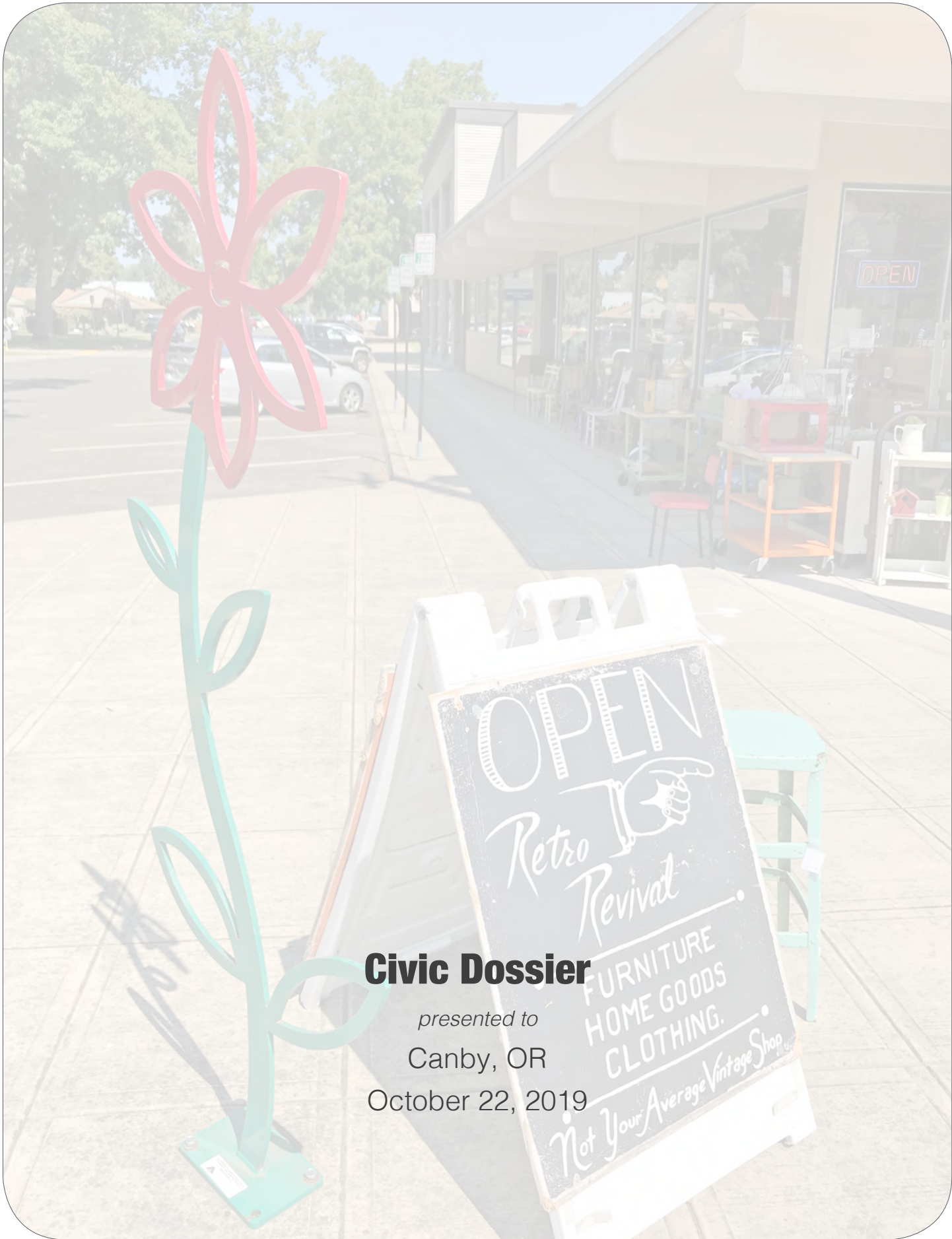
Downtown Canby is really 75% of the way there when it comes to the mechanics of a great downtown. All of the hard stuff is done—great street grid, fabulous buildings, wonderful residential neighborhood, a park, and a lovely community. The rest of it is really about people working together and executing on some of the basic mechanics of brick & mortar commerce in a small-town downtown.

Canby should focus immediately on these areas:

- *Transparent Windows!* Any business in downtown that is an active, ground-floor business should be transparent and telling a great story through their windows. One of the quickest and cheapest ways to make a downtown feel more exciting and less vacant is to just reveal the cool stuff going on that is currently invisible. So window improvement is a priority.
- *Bring on the Building Vibrancy.* There are a great collection of buildings downtown from a mix of eras. But, they are all almost unrelentingly beige. With just some paint and some elbow grease, Canby could highlight the dynamic mix of building infrastructure in the downtown. With a color makeover, Canby could be more visually engaging and visible from the highway.
- *Tenant with Active Uses.* Provide assistance to property owners to encourage tenancing with active uses on the ground-floor to increase their building value over time. And, collaborate with existing small service or manufacturing businesses to create more active tenant space at the front of their buildings.
- *Outdoor Seating.* Everyone's job in a downtown is to showcase people. Restaurants have the easiest job of this since their client's only concern is to relax and stay for awhile! So install the great seating areas. A customer should be able to wander around downtown Canby and immediately get a sense of how many places serve prepared food downtown. Right now, it feels like there are none.
- *Form a Downtown Association.* A downtown is like a single store, and each business is a department in that store. Imagine a store where merchandisers who select the fixtures (property owners) and the store department heads (business owners) never talked to each other. It would be an unsuccessful store. For downtown to fire on all cylinders, everyone should be working together, and a downtown association creates a context for successful collaboration.



Help Canby's Active Businesses Shine!



Civic Dossier

presented to

Canby, OR

October 22, 2019

APPENDIX A

In the following pages are two case studies for development that represent reuse and new construction/densification. The sites are as follows:

- The Bettis Building, a mid-century small office building.
- Cutsforth holdings near the market, both north and south of NE 2nd Ave. These holdings have been divided into two scenarios: *Cutsforth North* and *Cutsforth South*.

Please note, these redevelopment scenarios are intended to be examples of conceptual planning only. These have not been vetted with architects or engineers, field verified, or permitting with the City of Canby.

REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIO: BETTIS BUILDING

The office building to the right is a prime candidate for phased redevelopment focusing on one of the most in-demand segments of the real estate market: small creative office. It is a great contender for this type of renovation because of its location in the town center, walkable to restaurants and amenities. And, lastly, its scale naturally lends itself to the demising plan that leases up most quickly: small spaces!

SUBJECT PROPERTY



Downtown Medical Office to Creative Office Conversion

In Camas, WA, this medical building's small treatment rooms were turned into rentable office spaces and feature a shared conference area. These spaces absorbed well.



Vacant Building out of Bankruptcy Converted Into Small Creative Office Spaces

In Hillsboro, OR, this building with a cold shell upper floor was converted into creative office space, which leased up very quickly at a high value per square foot. The key is to size the spaces down to small enough units to be affordable on a monthly basis, but offer a good return to the landlord per SF.

Phased Approach to Creative Office Space Development

The first step in a project like this is to improve the exterior to provide a framework for tenant success. The second is to improve the common areas and refurbish units as they become available. The key to a good creative office space is wood floors, natural light, operable windows, colorful walls, no acoustical tile false ceilings, high quality lighting, and the right space sizes (units divisible to 200 SF). Plug and play!



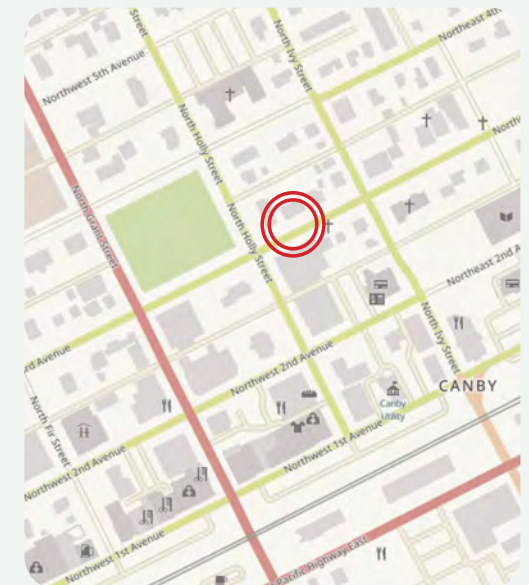
creative office hallway



stairs/shared waiting



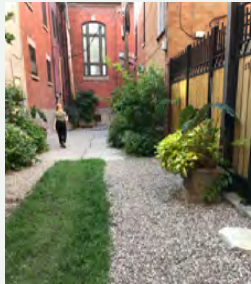
LOCATION



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DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO: CUTSFORTH NORTH

This scenario focuses only on the Cutsforth holdings in the red shaded area to the north of NE 2nd Ave, shown on the map below right. The half lot on the corner of N Ivy St and NE 2nd Ave is a critical place to develop traditional downtown form: buildings built right next to each other, right up to the sidewalk. This corner's "downtownness" is suffering because two of the three structures that frame the intersection are populated with more suburban form: buildings with large parking areas and/or oriented on parking lots.



Garage Loading in the Back, Pass-through to the Alley

Back loading allows for there to be a commercial commons in the front of the project. And remember, just because it's an alley doesn't mean it can't be gorgeous too! (pic on left)

Develop Detached or Attached Row House Concept with Dual Purpose Live/Work Ground Floor Spaces

Spaces 1-5 would be small-lot, three-story structures for sale, with parking to be off-site through the theater parking lot. The ground floor spaces should have tall ceilings and the ability to add a mezzanine. These street-level units can be a) incorporated with the upper floors as a single residence; b) rented out as residential; or, c) rented as commercial space.



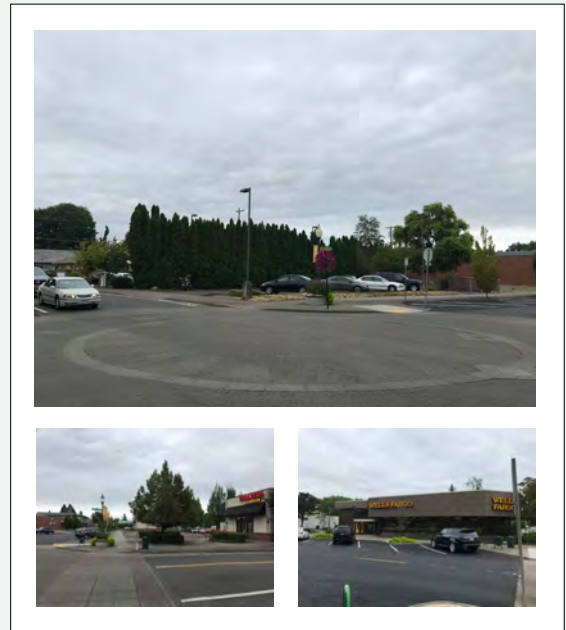
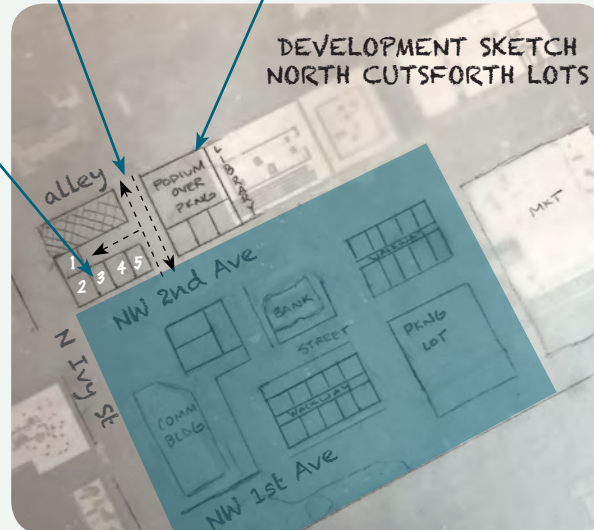
Live/Work



Live/Work

Apartments Over Retail with Parking Podium

The three spaces fronting on NW 2nd Ave could be developed as commercial condominiums and sold to small, active businesses. The City of Canby could partner to create a lending product for these units, building wealth in the community.



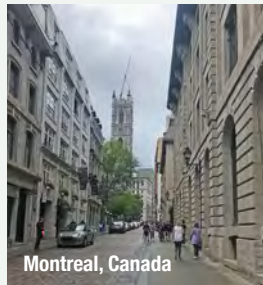
LOCATION & PHOTOS



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DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO: CUTSFORTH SOUTH

The Cutsforth holdings examined for this report (shown in the double red line below right) were developed with a density pattern more reminiscent of suburban, parking-lot oriented design, not downtown scale. There is a lot of land associated with these holdings, and ample opportunity to introduce new levels of lot coverage with mixed-use and housing. One of the most profitable departments in the grocery business is prepared food. And one of the most desirable places to live is near a grocery store. So adding a lot more housing on these holdings would be good for Cutsforth's Market and for downtown.



Create Cute Internal Street Grid Walkable, Pedestrian Scale

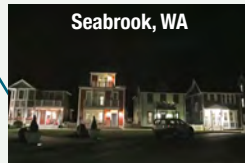
Develop a walkable, small street scale (North American inspiration from Montreal to the left). Retain a small amount of off-street parking behind existing structures.

Construct Restaurant-Focused Mixed-Use/Single Story

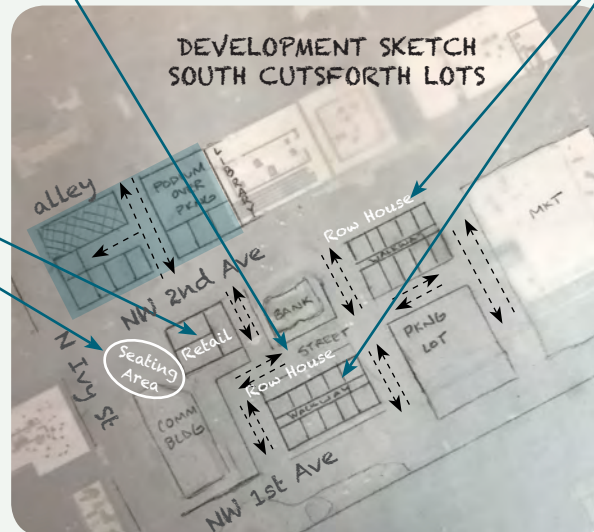
To activate this corner, build off of the existing restaurant on NW 2nd Ave and N Ivy St and use the corner to create a giant, shared, fabulous seating area. The retail space could be single-story, or multi-story with housing above.



Row Houses Look Amazing and Absorb Well



Row Houses have always been a fundamental part of rural in-town living for communities of all sizes. A historic example is above, new construction is shown to the left.



LOCATION & PHOTOS

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